



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

ہم سے عروین عالم نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے ہمارے بیان کیا ان سے قادیان سے کہ میں نے اس ریحی اللہ عنہ سے پوچھا کہ کیا صلاؤ کا دستور نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کے صحابہ میں تھا؟ انہوں نے کہا کہ جی ہاں ضرور تھا۔ (کنز الدقائق، حدیث نمبر 6263)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

PM arrives in Turkiye to attend 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum

Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday arrived in Turkiye on an official visit to attend the 5th Antalya Diplomacy Forum. The Governor of Antalya, Hulusi Sahin, warmly received the prime minister and the Pakistani delegation at the airport. Pakistan's Ambassador to Turkiye, Yusuf Junaid, along with senior diplomatic officials, was also present on the occasion



Chairman Senate lauds successful test of anti-ship missile

Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday extended heartfelt congratulations to the Pakistan Navy, scientists, engineers, and the entire nation on the successful test of Pakistan's anti-ship missile. He described the achievement as a significant milestone in further strengthening the country's national defence.

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Meeting

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets Amir of Qatar, H.H Sheikh Tamim Bin Hamad Al Thani on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan Navy successfully tests indigenous ship-launched anti-ship missile



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: In a resolute display of preparedness and precision-strike capability, Pakistan Navy successfully conducted a Live Weapon Firing of an indigenously developed Ship-Launched Anti-Ship Missile, accurately engaging its target with high speed at extended range.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff, along with leading scientists and engineers, witnessed the missile firing.

The missile integrates a cutting-edge guidance system and advanced maneuverability, enabling it to evade

threats, adapt to dynamic conditions, and deliver with precision and lethality. The successful launch of this indigenously developed missile underscores the fusion of technological excellence and operational expertise. This missile firing is a manifestation of Pakistan Navy's commitment to maintaining credible sea-based deterrence in conventional domain and ensuring maritime security and stability in the region.

The President, Prime Minister, Chief of Defence Forces, and Services Chiefs have commended the participating units and scientists on achieving this milestone.

PM arrives to a warm welcome in Doha for bilateral talks

Spokesman Report

DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday arrived here on an official visit to meet the country's leadership and discuss Pakistan's ongoing peace efforts, on the second leg of his tri-nation tour.

As the prime minister landed at Doha airport along with a high-level delegation, he was warmly received by Qatar's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs, Soltan bin Saad Al-Muraikhi.

A smartly turned-out contingent of the Qatari armed forces presented a salute to the prime minister and his delegation.

The Doha airport and the city were

decorated with Pakistani flags marking the warmth of brotherly relations between the two countries.

Earlier, upon entering the Qatari airspace, fighter jets of the Qatar Air Force escorted the prime minister's special aircraft.

Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed gratitude to the Qatari leadership and the pilots for the warm and impressive welcome extended to him.

The prime minister will hold bilateral talks with the Amir of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, and exchange views on Pakistan's ongoing efforts for peace in the region and the world.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi and the PM's Spokesperson for International Media Musharraf Zaidi are accompanying the prime minister.

Prime Minister Shehbaz arrived here from Jeddah, where he met Crown Prince and Prime Minister Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The prime minister will later proceed to Turkiye to attend the Fifth Antalya Diplomacy Forum, where he will join the world leaders at the Leaders' Panel to present Pakistan's perspective.

Field Marshal Asim Munir meets Iranian speaker amid diplomatic push

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir met Iranian Parliament Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf in Tehran on Thursday, as Islamabad continues its diplomatic efforts to facilitate dialogue between Tehran and Washington.

Field Marshal Asim Munir arrived in the Iranian capital on Wednesday and is leading a high-level political and security delegation comprising officials from Pakistan's Foreign Ministry, security institutions, and technical experts.

According to sources and official statements, the delegation's discussions are focused on exploring a framework for a possible second round of indirect negotiations. Islamabad has emerged as a potential venue for the next round of talks following an earlier round of discussions.

Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesperson Esmail Baghaei confirmed that the Pakistani delegation was holding talks in Tehran, noting that indirect communication between Iran and the United States is ongoing.

"Following the talks that took place in Islamabad, and discussions the Pakistani side has had with the United



States, our positions have been conveyed and heard," Baghaei said.

He added that the visit would include detailed exchanges of views on the negotiating process.

The diplomatic engagement comes as a two-week ceasefire between Iran and the United States remains in place, after being brokered with Pakistan's mediation following weeks of intense hostilities.

ECP orders MQM-P to hold intra-party polls by October 15, 2026

News Desk

KARACHI: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Thursday ordered the MQM-P to hold intra-party elections by October 15, 2026. A three-member bench, headed by Chief Election Commissioner Sikandar Sultan Raja, heard the case.

Speaking on the occasion, DG Political Finance said that the MQM-P was supposed to hold the elections on January 16, 2026. "Later, the deadline given to the party was extended until March 16, 2026," he said, adding however, the party said it would hold the polls until December 2026.

Barrister Farogh

Naseem, who represented the MQM-P, said that in January 2023, there were three factions within the party. "One of the factions tried to include its blue-eyed boys in the party."

He informed that presently the party was compiling electoral lists which were in final stages. "As per the party's constitution, it is mandatory to hold elections after every four years," he said.

On April 7, the ECP rejected MQM-P's request for a two-month extension to hold its intra-party elections, with the chief election commissioner (CEC) questioning the grounds for delay and warning of serious consequences for non-compliance.

Internet, power outages deepen crisis across Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is facing a worsening crisis as prolonged electricity outages are now being compounded by widespread internet disruptions, particularly during evening hours.

Consumers report that internet services deteriorate significantly after 5.00 p.m., with both mobile data and call signals severely affected. Users say mobile towers begin to lose connectivity as soon as power outages occur, leading to frequent signal drops.

A spokesperson attributed the disruption to ongoing repairs of a submarine cable, stating that the work is expected to be completed by April 20.

Authorities said services would return to normal once the repair process is finished. The connectivity issues come amid an escalating power crisis, with electricity

shortfall reaching around 6,500 megawatts.

Demand has surged to approximately 22,000MW, while generation stands near 15,400MW.

The gap has led to extended load-shedding across urban and rural areas, with outages in some regions lasting up to 16 hours, far exceeding official schedules.

Officials say hydropower is contributing around 1,500MW, thermal sources about 9,250MW, wind 1,200MW, solar 400MW, bagasse 200MW, and nuclear energy roughly 2,850MW.

Authorities maintain that load management of two to two-and-a-half hours is being scheduled between 5.00 p.m., and 1.00 a.m., to reduce reliance on expensive fuel. However, consumers report much longer and often unannounced outages, disrupting daily life and economic activity.

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Pakistan scores major diplomatic triumph, emerges as global peacemaker, Masood Khan

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, former ambassador to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has described that Pakistan has achieved a landmark diplomatic breakthrough, successfully facilitating high-stakes engagement between the United States and Iran, positioning itself as a credible peacemaker on the global stage. Describing the development as a "spectacular success," former ambassador Masood Khan emphasized that Pakistan delivered where many regional and international actors had struggled.

Khan highlighted that Pakistan's success was rooted in proactive and sustained diplomacy. From the

very outset of the crisis, Islamabad engaged not only the principal parties but also key regional stakeholders, building consensus through continuous communication and strategic outreach. This groundwork ensured that by the time delegations arrived in Islamabad, the environment was conducive for constructive dialogue.

Rejecting narratives of failure, Khan termed the negotiations a "work in progress," noting that there has been no indication of a return to hostilities. Statements from both Washington and Tehran acknowledged a positive and respectful atmosphere during talks, with both sides moving significantly closer to a comprehensive agreement before last-minute divergences stalled a breakthrough.



Strong condemnation of religiously motivated violence, demand for punishment of those responsible

Abdul Majeed Tahir

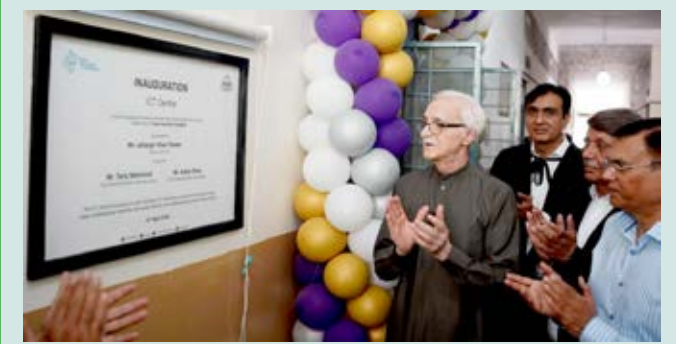
MUZAFFARABAD: Expressing deep sorrow and grief over the tragic incident that took place in Ramsu area of Ramban district (illegal occupied Jammu and Kashmir), Information Secretary Mushtaq Ahmed Butt has said that the death of 25-year-old youth Tanveer Ahmed Chopan is a very sad, inhumane and condemnable incident.



According to reports, the youth was targeted when he was carrying a milch cow and two calves, and was forced to jump into a local drain in an attempt to save his life, as a result of which he lost his life.

Mushtaq Ahmed Butt said that the role of the Bharatiya Janata Party, Shiv Sena and other extremist Hindu organizations behind this heart-breaking incident is extremely worrying, while the silence and criminal negligence of the occupation administration is also directly responsible for this tragedy. He said that the patronage of such elements and the failure of law enforcement agencies have promoted religious extremism and intolerance in the region, resulting in the lives of unarmed citizens becoming unsafe.

Jahangir Khan Tareen inaugurated a State-of-the-Art Computer Lab



Kiran Asim

LAHORE: Jahangir Khan Tareen inaugurated a state-of-the-art computer lab at Government Shuhada-e-APS Memorial Model High School, Model Town. The initiative aims to equip students with modern technological skills and enhance access to quality education.

Addressing the ceremony, Jahangir Khan Tareen stated that children from underprivileged and middle-income backgrounds have the same right to modern and quality education as those from financially stable families. He noted that the high fees of private educational institutions are beyond the reach of the common man, making it a shared responsibility of the government and philanthropists to provide facilities to children with limited resources.

He further added that although he has stepped away from active politics, he is dedicating his full attention and resources to education, healthcare and social welfare to create better opportunities for the underprivileged segments of society. He emphasized that alongside major development projects, the government must prioritize initiatives that directly contribute to improving education for children from low-income backgrounds.

On this occasion, Chief Executive Officer of the District Education Authority Lahore, Tariq Mahmood, while addressing the ceremony, appreciated the efforts of Jahangir Khan Tareen for children's education.

FIA Cracks Down on Copyright Violation in Multan

Special Correspondent

MULTAN: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Composite Circle Multan has carried out a successful crackdown against copyright infringement.



Acting on the directions of Director FIA Multan Zone, Mr. Hammad-ur-Rehman, and under the supervision of the Deputy Director FIA Circle Multan, a raid was conducted on April 14, 2026.

The operation was launched following a complaint filed by Procter & Gamble (Private) Limited Karachi, with the FIA Multan raiding team taking swift action.

During the raid, the accused, Muhammad son of Rehman Jamal, was found involved in the illegal manufacturing and sale of counterfeit products of a well-known company.

The suspect was operating without any license or legal authorization and was engaged in producing and trading fake goods.

A large quantity of counterfeit items was recovered from the site and taken into custody. A case has been registered against the accused, and further legal proceedings are underway.

Protest

LAHORE: Clerks hold a protest in favor of their demands in front of Civil Secretariat, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Indian RAW Agent Arrested in Azad Kashmir in Major Intelligence Operation

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Police, in collaboration with intelligence agencies, arrested an agent of the Indian intelligence agency "RAW" in a major operation in Rawalakot.

Inspector General of Police Azad Jammu and Kashmir Captain (ret'd) Liaquat Ali Malik presented the confessional statement of "RAW" agent Irfan and the material seized from him to the media in a press briefing in this regard. "RAW" agent Irfan was in contact with "RAW" through social media and was sending videos and locations of sensitive buildings, military installations and children's schools



to "RAW".

The police and agencies have obtained the details of the places visited by the "RAW" agent in Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. The enemy

country's intelligence agency "RAW" used to give him tasks. IGP Azad Kashmir said that our message to the enemy on the eastern border is that the national security agencies, police

and the public will jointly destroy the enemy's evil intentions, we are vigilant on every front and we will go to any extent to sanctify our land."

The IG Police told the briefing that the enemy country's agency "RAW" is trolling the youth through Facebook, TikTok and other social media applications, luring them with money online, then blackmailing them and demanding videos of sensitive installations, mosques and important buildings, which are used against our homeland.

Giving a briefing about the arrested RAW agent, he said that all the details of where this agent went are available. SSP Poonch Khawar Ali Shaukat was also present along with the Inspector General of Police.

Public Relations Department Honors Retiring Director Muhammad Bashir Mirza

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A grand farewell ceremony was organized by the departmental officers and staff on the occasion of the retirement of former Director Public Relations Muhammad Bashir Mirza. The ceremony was attended by Secretary Information and IT Muhammad Rashid Hanif, Secretary Tourism Ansar Yaqoob, Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani, Deputy Director Mohtarma Quratul Ain Shabbir, departmental officers Raja Muhammad Sohail Khan, Syed Asif Hussain Naqvi, Khawaja Hanif, Khizr Hayat, Raja Abdul Basit, Shamim Anjum Aziz, Asif Ali Naqvi, Sajid Nazir, Faheem Kiyani and other officers and staff.

for the newly appointed Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani. Muhammad Bashir Mirza was warmly welcomed upon arrival at the ceremony and presented with a bouquet of flowers.

Secretary Information and IT Muhammad Rashid Hanif said in his address that Muhammad Bashir Mirza established his identity as a responsible, talented and honest officer in the Information Department. Muhammad Bashir Mirza was the hallmark of the Public Relations Department.

Muhammad Bashir Mirza's professional skills and positive attitude will always be remembered. He said that Muhammad Bashir Mirza played an important role in the development and stability of the department. Such sincere and hardworking officers are an asset to any institution. Secretary Tourism Ansar Yaqoob said in his address that Muhammad Bashir Mirza always

prioritized the dignity of the institution, worked with hard work and dedication, Mirza Sahib's personality had a beautiful combination of hard work, dedication, modesty and patience.

He performed every responsibility in a very good manner during his service and played his full role in making the Information Department a strong and functional institution. Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani said in his address that Muhammad Bashir Mirza rendered exemplary services in the Public Relations Department.

Muhammad Bashir Mirza's hard work, dedication and guidance brought stability and progress to the institution. He said that Muhammad Bashir Mirza not only performed his responsibilities well but also guided his staff in the best way. Muhammad Bashir Mirza's services will always be appreciated and remembered. He

expressed his best wishes for Muhammad Bashir Mirza's post-retirement life.

Addressing the ceremony, the chief guest Muhammad Bashir Mirza thanked the current and former secretaries of the Information Department, all the officers and officials of the Information Department and said that he made honesty, hard work and sincerity his motto throughout his service.

The time spent in the Information Department is a valuable asset of his life and he will never forget the cooperation of his colleagues. He said that he was proud to have served in an organization that plays an important role in providing accurate and timely information to the public.

He said that he was happy that there are professional and capable officers in the Information Department. Congratulating the newly appointed Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani, he said



that he will play a full role in the development of the department as a professional, experienced and talented head. The speakers paid tribute to the services of Muhammad Bashir Mirza and vowed to work with dedication and passion under the leadership of the newly appointed Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil.

Deputy Director Ms. Quratul Ain Shabbir said that Muhammad Bashir Mirza was an officer who always put the dignity

of the organization first and dedicated all his abilities for the betterment of the department. She said that Mirza Sahib's guidance and experience have been a valuable asset for the young officers, his absence will always be felt. Information Officer Raja Muhammad Sohail Khan paid rich tribute to Muhammad Bashir Mirza for his professional services, high character and valuable efforts for the organization and said that Muhammad Bashir

Mirza is a legend of the Information Department. Muhammad Bashir Mirza not only strengthened the organization with his long experience and insight but also established an excellent role model for young officers.

His services will always be remembered. Assistant Director Advertisement Syed Asif Hussain Naqvi said that along with professional skills, high moral values were also present in the personality of Muhammad Bashir Mirza.

He was known as a refined, kind and cooperative officer, who always encouraged his colleagues and provided them with opportunities to move forward. Information Officer Khizr Hayat said that Muhammad Bashir Mirza was known as a very talented, thoughtful and far-sighted officer who discharged every responsibility during his service in a very efficient and professional manner.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr4:09 am
Zohr12:08 pm
Asr4:47 pm
Maghrib6:39 pm
Isha8:07 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police9266044
Motorway Police9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

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MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8,9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-89266316
Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi0331-5022125

Made in Pakistan: Spotify Marks 5 Years of Music Discovery and Homegrown Growth

News Desk

KARACHI: In Pakistan, listeners are exploring more music than ever before—moving across genres, generations, and languages in ways that are reshaping how music is discovered and experienced. Five years since its launch in the country, Spotify is marking a milestone defined not just by growth, but by a shift in how deeply audiences are engaging with music.

Since 2021, Spotify has become an integral part of how music is experienced in Pakistan. Over this period, listenership on the platform has grown by more than 750%, while listeners have created over 15 million user-generated playlists, highlighting how actively audiences are curating and shaping their own music journeys.

This shift is also reflected in listening behavior. Today, the average Spotify listener in Pakistan streams more than 140 different artists per year, pointing to a highly discovery-driven audience where exploring new music is the norm.

Punjab launches first fast train, ushering in new rail era

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A new era of railway transport has begun in Punjab under a historic Memorandum of Understanding MoU between the Government of Punjab and Pakistan Railways. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi signed the MoU.

Under the agreement, Pakistan's first fast train will run between Lahore and Rawalpindi, completing the journey in two and a half hours. Officials briefed that modern trains will operate on 8 local routes across 20 regions covering 1,415 kilometers.

Punjab will provide modern DMU trains for regional routes under the agreement.

Train services will operate on Shahdara-Narowal (79 km) and Narowal-Sialkot (62 km) routes. A new train will also run on the 370-kilometer Raiwind-Kasur-Pakpattan-Lodhran route.

Services will also be introduced on Sheikhpura-Jaranwala-Shorkot (220 km), Lala Musa-Malakwal-Sargodha (147 km), Faisalabad-Chak Jhumra-Shaheenabad (68 km), and Kot Addu-Dera Ghazi Khan-Kashmore (303 km) routes.

The Government of Punjab will introduce new railway engines and



modern coaches on these routes.

Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi appreciated the Chief Minister, saying that Pakistan Railways aims to transform its history by following her example. He

added that with Punjab government's support, nearly 90 million people will benefit from 9 routes.

He said revolutionary steps have been taken in Punjab under the leadership

of Maryam Nawaz Sharif, including the launch of the Suthra Punjab project and major initiatives in health, education, and IT sectors.

Hanif Abbasi said that the pace of

work under the Chief Minister has put the entire province "on auto mode," adding that over 70 percent of people have expressed satisfaction with her leadership.

Countrywide electricity load shedding

ISLAMABAD: A night view of Federal Capital from Daman e Koh. IESCO had announced a reduction in electricity generation due to the ongoing international petroleum crisis, leading to load management across its service areas on the other hand the government on Wednesday apologised to power consumers for higher than promised "load management" arising out of lower water availability for power generation.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Officials Laud Talents of Visually Impaired Students at Bin Qasim Center

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Director Social Welfare Umme Farwah Hamdani has said that blind people are our pride. We all want to make them good and useful human beings.

With a little attention from us, they can become excellent citizens. The Punjab government is running many programs for the blind and disabled people and more are coming.

She expressed these views while addressing the annual results ceremony at Muhammad Bin Qasim Blind Center yesterday as a special



guest. Director Blind Center Sadia Kirmani said that if the Punjab government sponsors us, then

our blind students all over Punjab should prove their worth. The guests of honor were Mrs. Jena Ijaz, Chairman

of Inverwell District 343, and Mrs. Muqaddas from Bloomfield School said that these blind people are in no way behind the sighted people, but they are better than the sighted people.

You should come here and see their discipline and talent. They are definitely visually impaired, but they have immense talent.

Deputy Director of Special Education Imran Khan, Dr. Janshed from Nawaz Sharif Agriculture University and others also addressed the ceremony. Finally, prizes were distributed among those who took the positions.

PML-N Leader Warns AƳK Against PPP 'Trap' Promise

Bureau Report

NEELAM VELLY: President of Pakistan Muslim League-N and Opposition Leader of Azad Kashmir Shah Ghulam Qadir has said that the people of Azad Kashmir should not fall for the trap of the PPP and should not let it play with their future. The future of the people is the Pakistan Muslim League-N. Today, the PPP is giving the people a job for 500,000 rupees, that you should give 500,000 rupees all the time when you get the order, and 50,000 rupees before the order because there are expenses. During the visit, President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz and Opposition Leader in Azad Kashmir Shah Ghulam Qadir visited Lower Neelum constituency LA 26 Neelum 2 Dhakki, Syedpura, Talpatra, Jabbar, Barhua, Bagnar, Khari, Falakan, Barian, Athmaqam, and Keran while in Upper Neelum constituency Nagdar, Lawat, Visiting the homes of those who died in Duvarian, Dudhniyal, Khwaja Siri, and Sharda, expressing condolences to the families and reciting Fateha.



Rawalpindi Restaurant Association demands extension of dining hours till 12 AM

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A core committee meeting of the Rawalpindi Restaurant, Caterer, Sweet & Baker Association demanded extension of dining hours from 10 PM to 12 AM and warned of a province-wide protest if the demand is not accepted.

The meeting was chaired by Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, President of the Association, with Mumtaz Ahmad Chairman, and Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, Patron-in-Chief, attending as special guests. The meeting was also attended by group leader Faeem Ashraf, Zahid Mehmood, Chaudhry Imtiaz, Adnan Mehmood, Hashim Ijaz Butt, Chaudhry Zafar, Huzaifa Anser, Sardar Mehmood Hussain, Sheikh Munir, Naveed Abbasi, Tariq Khan, Sardar Ijaz Wilayat, Shehzad Khan, Arshad Farooq, Haji Abdul Waheed, Saleem Sher Zaman, Usman, Raja Usman, Raja Ghazir Iqbal, Ali Muhammad Nawaz, Attaullah Qureshi, Chaudhry Mezbab, Muzammil Ashfaq, Muhammad Iqbal Khan, Danish Zafar, and others.

Participants expressed concern that restricted dining hours are severely damaging businesses, putting millions of jobs at risk and forcing owners to downsize operations. The association announced that no employee will be laid off and urged the government to immediately review the policy.

Appeal from Overseas Pakistani Leads to Swift Anti-Encroachment Action in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Concerns of Overseas Pakistani Addressed: Deputy Commissioner Attock Meets Arif Naqvi, Orders Immediate Action Against Encroachments

Following concerns raised by overseas Pakistani Arif Naqvi regarding inaction on his applications, the Deputy Commissioner of Attock invited him to his office for a meeting. The meeting was arranged through senior journalists Syed Farooq Hassan Bukhari and Syed Inaam Kazmi, during which Naqvi's concerns were heard and addressed.

IPAK Group Net Profit Jumps Over 200% to PKR 2.36 Billion in Nine-Month Strong Performance

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: IPAK Group has delivered a strong performance for the nine months ended 31 March 2026, with consolidated net profit increasing significantly to PKR 2.36 billion compared to PKR 749 million in the corresponding period last year, translating into earnings per share (EPS) of PKR 3.50. This performance reflects improved operating dynamics, higher capacity utilization across subsidiaries, and continued cost discipline across the Group.

Group's consolidated sales increased by 16.8% to PKR 30.43 billion (2025:

PKR 26.06 billion), supported by improving demand conditions and the strength of the Group's integrated manufacturing platform across BOPP, BOPET, and CPP film segments.

Exports remained a key pillar of growth, with consolidated export sales rising to PKR 7.34 billion (2025: PKR 6.07 billion), representing approximately 24.14% of total sales, reflecting sustained traction in international markets and the Group's focus on value-added specialty films.

Profitability improved significantly during the period, with consolidated gross profit rising to PKR 5.78 billion (2025: PKR 3.62 billion), while oper-

ating profit reached PKR 4.64 billion (2025: PKR 2.76 billion), reflecting margin expansion and enhanced operational efficiency.

Finance costs declined by 13.42% to PKR 1.44 billion despite higher business volumes, driven by effective working capital management and stronger internal cash flow generation.

On a standalone basis, IPAK delivered stable sales of PKR 9.94 billion, while profitability improved significantly due to a favorable product mix and operational efficiencies. Gross profit increased by 26.6% to PKR 2.24 billion, and net profit nearly doubled to PKR 810 million compared to PKR

424 million in the same period last year.

Group CEO Naveed Godil highlighted the Group's achievements for the third quarter ending March 2026. Despite significant disruptions in the supply chain, IPAK emerged as the only film manufacturing group capable of meeting dominant share of the nation's food packaging demand. He added that "this accomplishment underscores our strong operational capabilities and exceptional supply chain management, as our dedicated team worked tirelessly to ensure the country's essential packaging needs were met. Alhamdulillah, we remain committed to maintaining this level of excellence going forward".



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Pakistan and the Trillion-Dollar Peace Dividend

At a moment when the world stood dangerously close to a wider regional inferno, Pakistan has emerged not merely as a bystander, but as one of the few states able to talk to all sides and keep diplomacy alive. As of April 15, 2026, there is still no final U.S.-Iran agreement, and no official ceasefire extension has been publicly confirmed. But Washington says fresh talks may happen in Pakistan within days. President Trump is signaling optimism, Pakistan's military chief has been in Tehran, and regional diplomacy is now visibly revolving around Pakistani mediation. That alone marks a dramatic shift in Pakistan's standing in the current geopolitical crisis.

The facts matter. The first 21-hour round of talks in Islamabad ended without a deal, with Vice President JD Vance saying Iran had not accepted core U.S. demands, especially on the nuclear issue. Yet Pakistan did not walk away after that setback. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif publicly said Pakistan's "full effort" remained focused on ending the conflict, while Field Marshal Asim Munir traveled to Tehran in an attempt to narrow differences before the ceasefire expires. That is the real significance of Pakistan's role: not that it solved the war in one stroke, but that it kept open the only serious diplomatic corridor after formal negotiations collapsed.

This matters because the war's costs are no longer theoretical. The conflict that began on February 28 has already killed more than 5,000 people across the region. The repair costs to damaged energy infrastructure alone may reach as high as \$58 billion. The Strait of Hormuz, through which about one-fifth of global oil and LNG normally passes, remains the central

choke point in the conflict. Even after the April 8 ceasefire, traffic through Hormuz had at one stage fallen to less than 10% of normal, while ships and crews remained trapped and insurers, traders and governments braced for a prolonged shock.

That is why Pakistan's diplomatic intervention should be understood not only in moral or political terms, but in financial ones. No government or international institution has yet issued an official dollar figure for what Pakistan has "saved." Still, scenario-based calculations grounded in World Bank, IMF and Reuters reporting suggest that if Pakistan's mediation helps convert the fragile ceasefire into a durable settlement, the avoided losses could plausibly run from the high hundreds of billions into the low trillions. This is not propaganda; it is what the macroeconomic numbers imply.

Start with global growth. The IMF cut its 2026 global growth forecast to 3.1% because of the war and warned that, in a severe scenario, growth could fall to 2.0%. The World Bank separately warned that even in a best case the war could shave 0.3 to 0.4 percentage points off global growth, and as much as 1 point in a prolonged conflict. WTTC data showing global travel and tourism alone contributed \$11.7 trillion in 2025, equal to 10.3% of global GDP, implying a world economy of roughly \$113.6 trillion. On that basis, preventing a 0.3-0.4 point hit means protecting roughly \$341 billion to \$454 billion of global output. Preventing a 1-point hit protects about \$1.14 trillion. Preventing the IMF's 1.1-point slide from 3.1% to

2.0% implies roughly \$1.25 trillion in avoided output loss.

And that is only the macro layer. Add the already-estimated \$58 billion energy repair bill, the IMF's warning that more than a dozen countries may need \$20 billion to \$50 billion in support, the World Bank's preparedness to mobilize \$80 billion to \$100 billion for war-hit economies, and the UNDP estimate that just \$6 billion in emergency support could keep 32 million people from falling into poverty due to the war-driven energy shock. Even before counting military fuel, munitions, deployment costs, higher insurance, rerouted shipping, lost industrial output and inflation spillovers, the visible tally of avoided or containable damage quickly rises into the hundreds of billions.

Pakistan's importance in this crisis is therefore not accidental. It has managed to present itself as credible to Washington, acceptable to Tehran, relevant to Gulf capitals and increasingly necessary to wider regional diplomacy that now also involves Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Egypt. President Erdogan has openly referenced Pakistan's mediator role, while the White House has acknowledged Pakistan as the likely venue for the next round. In a fractured region where many actors are aligned too heavily with one bloc or another, Pakistan's value lies in being politically connected, militarily serious, diplomatically flexible and geographically impossible to ignore.

Still, the argument must remain grounded. Pakistan has not yet "saved

the world" in any final sense, because the war is not formally over, the Hormuz issue is unresolved, Lebanon remains volatile, and the hardest questions — nuclear verification, sanctions, shipping access and war damages — are still on the table. The IAEA chief has warned that any real settlement will require detailed inspections, and Reuters says U.S. economic pressure on Iran is still intensifying even while diplomacy continues. So the credit Pakistan deserves today is not for a completed peace, but for preventing diplomatic collapse and preserving the one path that could still save the region from a second explosion.

If the second round succeeds, Pakistan's diplomatic dividend will be immense. It will not simply have hosted talks; it will have helped prevent a wider energy shock, a deeper inflation spiral, further destruction across Iran and the region, and perhaps a global recession. In scenario terms, that would place Pakistan's peace dividend somewhere between roughly \$341 billion and \$1.25 trillion in avoided world output loss, before adding infrastructure, humanitarian and fiscal savings. For a country long described as fragile, indebted and peripheral, that would be a stunning reversal. Pakistan may still be economically constrained, but in this crisis it has demonstrated something rarer than wealth: strategic usefulness. And in the modern world order, the country that can stop a war may matter more than the country that can afford one.

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Qamar Bashir

Pakistan, Uk Partner to Advance Mineral Sector Development Through Geoscience Capacity-Building Initiative

Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik jointly launched, along with British High Commissioner to Pakistan H. E. Jane Marriott, a capacity-building initiative aimed at strengthening Pakistan's geoscientific capabilities and supporting the development of the country's mineral sector. The programme was formally inaugurated at the Geological Survey of Pakistan (GSP), marking a significant step in Pakistan-UK collaboration.

The initiative is being delivered through the UK-funded REMIT programme in partnership with International Geoscience Services (IGS), a UK-based geoscience consultancy with extensive experience in supporting geological survey organizations worldwide. The programme will run from April to July 2026 and aims to strengthen GSP's technical capability through hands-on training aligned with international standards.

Speaking at the event, the Minister expressed gratitude to the High Commissioner for support and said that the timing of the initiative was particularly appropriate, noting that recent geopolitical developments and conflicts have once again exposed the vulnerabilities associated with excessive dependence on hydrocarbons. He emphasized that strengthening institutions such as GSP is essential to position Pakistan as an attractive destination for mineral exploration and investment, especially in view of the growing global demand for minerals.

He reiterated the Government of Pakistan's commitment to developing the mineral sector in a sustainable, transparent, and investor-friendly manner. The Minister appreciated the support of the British High Commission and the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and acknowledged the personal engagement of the High Commissioner in advancing the collaboration. He welcomed greater participation of international partners, particularly from the United Kingdom, across different segments of Pakistan's mineral value chain.

He said the programme launched at GSP would help equip Pakistani scientists with modern tools, improve workflows, and enhance institutional capability.

British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriott reaffirmed the United Kingdom's commitment to supporting Pakistan's economic development through technical cooperation and institutional strengthening. She praised Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for peace and noted that British Prime Minister Keir Starmer had also expressed gratitude in the UK Parliament to the Pakistani government for its efforts to promote peace.

She further said that Pakistan has extraordinary geological potential, but realizing it depends on trustworthy data collated through modern methods. "Through this partnership, the UK is supporting Pakistan to build the skills, systems and credibility needed to attract responsible investment and unlock long-term economic potential across the country," she added.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awzat)

Pakistan's Quiet Diplomacy in a Volatile World: From Iran-US-Israel Tensions to Ceasefire Efforts

In an era defined by intensifying geopolitical rivalries and fragile international trust, the recent tensions involving Iran, the United States, and Israel once again underscored the urgent need for restraint, dialogue, and diplomatic coordination. Amid fears of wider escalation, Pakistan played a visible and constructive role by providing diplomatic space, facilitating engagement, and ensuring smooth high-level interactions in Islamabad. This engagement highlighted Pakistan's growing relevance as a responsible peace-oriented state in moments of global crisis.

A key feature of this diplomatic episode was the arrival of Iranian and United States delegations in Islamabad, where they were received under high-level protocol arrangements. The coordination of these engagements reflected Pakistan's careful diplomatic management and its ability to host sensitive international interactions with dignity, security, and professionalism. The presence of international observers and media attention further reinforced the global significance of Islamabad as a venue for dialogue during a critical period.

At the centre of Pakistan's national security and defence leadership stands General Syed Asim Munir, whose leadership of the armed forces reflects discipline, foresight, and operational clarity. As Chief of Army Staff, he has strengthened Pakistan's defence posture through a strategy based on readiness, restraint, and credible deterrence. Under his leadership,

Pakistan's armed forces have demonstrated strong coordination, professional competence, and the ability to safeguard national integrity and internal stability during periods of heightened regional tension.

During recent Pakistan-India tensions, General Asim Munir's leadership was widely associated with maintaining strategic stability and preventing escalation. The armed forces of Pakistan, under his command, demonstrated operational preparedness and institutional cohesion, reinforcing the country's defence credibility. This approach reflected a doctrine focused not on escalation but on controlled response, deterrence, and the protection of national sovereignty through professional military discipline.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif played a central role in shaping Pakistan's diplomatic posture during this sensitive regional environment. His government emphasized dialogue, diplomatic engagement, and back-channel communication as essential tools for crisis management. Through consistent outreach, Pakistan projected itself as a country committed to peace, regional stability, and constructive international cooperation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar further strengthened Pakistan's diplomatic messaging by engaging with international stakeholders and reinforcing calls for de-escalation. His efforts contributed to presenting Pakistan's consistent position in favor of dialogue over confrontation,

particularly during a time when global tensions required careful diplomatic balancing.

The coordination between civil and military leadership was evident throughout this period. The armed forces ensured security preparedness and operational stability, while civilian leadership focused on diplomatic facilitation and international communication. This combined approach allowed Pakistan to function effectively as a host for sensitive diplomatic interactions involving Iranian and US delegations.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi ensured strong internal security arrangements in Islamabad, enabling uninterrupted diplomatic engagement. Effective law and order management during high-profile international visits reinforced Pakistan's image as a secure and reliable location for global diplomatic activity.

The Pakistan Air Force also maintained its professional excellence during this period, contributing to national defence readiness and reinforcing airspace security. Its operational discipline and technological capability remain key components of Pakistan's overall deterrence framework, ensuring balance and stability in a complex regional environment.

Pakistan's broader foreign policy approach during this crisis reflected maturity and balance. Rather than aligning with confrontation, Islamabad emphasized communication, neutrality in mediation, and facilitation of dialogue between conflicting parties. This approach enabled Pakistan to contribute indirectly to de-escalation efforts and support international diplomatic momentum toward reducing tensions.

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When the World Held Its Breath Pakistan Pulled the Ceasefire

The final hours before the ceasefire carried the weight of a region on the edge. The threat between the United States and Iran had moved beyond warnings. It had narrowed into a deadline tied to the Strait of Hormuz, a choke point through which nearly a fifth of the world's oil supply moves. Closure meant economic shockwaves. Military escalation meant human devastation. The clock was not simply ticking; it was closing in.

In those final hours, when statements hardened and options narrowed, the announcement by PM Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif did not read like a routine diplomatic update. The gap between escalation and restraint was measured in hours. The agreement for a two-week ceasefire arrived when military options were already in motion. The pressure was visible across capitals. The margin was razor-thin. Less than two hours separated escalation from restraint.

This was not luck. It was an INTERVENTION.

Behind the announcement stood a quiet, sustained effort that had unfolded away from public view. Islamabad had, for weeks, moved carefully between adversaries who no longer trusted direct engagement. Channels that had collapsed elsewhere were reopened through persistence. Messages were carried, recalibrated and returned. In a climate where even symbolic gestures were scrutinized, Pakistan's approach avoided spectacle and focused on substance.

At the centre of this effort was Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. The coordination between security leadership and the civilian government

allowed decisions to move without delay. The communication with multiple actors required discipline. Diplomatic signals had to align with security assessments. Any misstep could have deepened mistrust rather than reduced it. The coordination between the civilian government and military leadership proved decisive. It allowed Pakistan to operate with clarity at a moment when ambiguity could have been fatal.

The engagement with China strengthened the effort. The consultations with regional states helped build support for de-escalation. The approach taken by Pakistan avoided public pressure. The work remained focused on results rather than visibility. The aim was to secure an immediate pause and prevent the situation from crossing into open conflict.

Global reactions that followed were not merely procedural acknowledgments. They carried an undertone of relief. António Guterres emphasized adherence to international law, signaling the fragile legal and humanitarian balance that had been preserved, at least temporarily. Anwar Ibrahim described Pakistan's diplomacy as tireless and courageous, reflecting a recognition that engagement in such circumstances demands political risk as much as strategic foresight.

From New Zealand to Australia and across parts of the Middle East, the responses converged on a single point: this pause mattered. Not because it resolved the conflict, but because it prevented an escalation that could have spiraled beyond control. Even Iraq, itself deeply exposed to the consequences of

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Professor Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif



Mehr un Nisa Rehman

IRS Hosts High-Level Dialogue on Strengthening Governance for CPEC 2.0

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, convened a high-level policy dialogue titled "Strengthening Governance and Implementation Strategies for CPEC 2.0," alongside the launch of two reports: "Unlocking CPEC Phase II: Building Capacity for Business-to-Business Cooperation with China and Central Asia" and "From Infrastructure to Impact: Conceptualizing the Strategic Corridors (5Cs) Under CPEC 2.0."

In his keynote address, Federal Minister for the Board of Investment, Qaisar Ahmad Shaikh, outlined key lessons from China's economic transformation, highlighting Pakistan's widening trade gap and the need to boost exports. He noted that nearly 70% of regulatory reforms—eliminating redundant approvals and red tape—have been completed, and urged businesses to move beyond imports toward technology transfer and investment partnerships with China.

Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, underscored that Pakistan



stands at a critical juncture, with CPEC 2.0 offering significant opportunities for economic transformation.

Mr. Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission at the Chinese Embassy, highlighted CPEC Phase I's role in easing Pakistan's energy shortages and upgrading infrastructure, and outlined the five corridors of CPEC 2.0—Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green, and Open. He noted over \$20 billion in energy investments, \$400 million in revenue and 6,000 jobs from

the Haier-Ruba Economic Zone, 27 firms at Rashakai SEZ, and over 1,000 daily patients at Gwadar Friendship Hospital.

Ambassador Masood Khalid emphasized removing regulatory bottlenecks, improving federal-provincial coordination, and strengthening institutional coherence to attract FDI into SEZs and operationalize CPEC 2.0. He also highlighted the importance of the ML-I track in modernizing Pakistan's railway, which is key

to development.

Mr. Asim Khan Niazi, Ms. Amna Munawwar Awan and Mr. Shehryar Khan also speak. The event convened policymakers and representatives from the Chinese diplomatic mission to examine governance and regulatory reforms for CPEC Phase II, identify pathways for B2B investment and technology transfer, and strengthen public-private policy dialogue. The session was moderated by Ms. Nabila Jaffer, Lead, China Program at IRS.

An Asset-Light Innovation Reshaping Pakistan's Islamic Capital Market

News Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's first-ever Sovereign Hybrid Sukuk marks a transformative step in the evolution of the country's Islamic financial landscape, addressing long-standing structural challenges faced by Islamic banks, particularly the limited availability of scalable and Shariah-compliant investment avenues.

The Sukuk was structured with the support of State Bank of Pakistan—Islamic Finance Development Department (SBP-IFDD) and a consortium of Islamic financial institutions acting as Joint Financial Advisors, including Meezan Bank Limited, Bank Alfalah Limited (Islamic Banking), Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan Limited, Bank Islami Pakistan Limited and Standard



Meezan Bank
The Premier Islamic Bank

Chartered Bank (Islamic banking). As the country's first and largest Islamic bank and one of the leading banks of Pakistan, Meezan Bank has played a pivotal role in conceptualizing, structuring, and executing this landmark

transaction. By introducing an innovative hybrid model combining Ijarah and Commodity Murabaha, the Bank helped overcome the traditional asset constraints associated with sovereign Sukuk, enabling the Government to

access a more flexible and sustainable funding mechanism.

The inaugural issuance, amounting to Rs. 109 billion against total bids of Rs. 290 billion, reflects strong investor demand and growing confidence in Shariah-compliant investment instruments. The Sukuk was issued under two denominations, i.e., 1-year Discounted Sukuk and 10-year Variable Rate of Return (VRR) Sukuk, with cut-off rates of 11.80% and 6 month T-bill + 35.00 bps, respectively. The Hybrid Sukuk has been designed to support the expansion of the Islamic banking and finance industry, while also aligning with the broader national objective of eliminating interest-based financing in accordance with the directives of the Federal Shariat Court and Article 38(f) of the Constitution.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer Calls on Commerce Minister of Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), called on H. E. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan for Commerce, on Thursday at the Ministry of Commerce in Islamabad.

During the meeting, both sides had a comprehensive discussion regarding various initiatives for enhancing bilateral cooperation across trade, investment, connectivity, tourism, and culture to further strengthen their ties.

They also agreed on establishing a Joint Trade Committee in line with the bilateral trade agreement signed in 2023 between the two sides.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer underlined the critical need for enhanced connectivity between Ethiopia and Pakistan, noting that improved logistics are crucial to promote trade, investment and tourism ties.

He highlighted the vast investment potential of Ethiopia especially in the



agriculture, manufacturing, ICT, and mining sectors, inviting Pakistani business community to explore the opportunities.

The Federal Minister acknowledged

the immense potential for growth across these multiple sectors, recalling his recent visit to Ethiopia during Pakistan's Single Country Exhibition that held in Addis Ababa in 2025.

He assured the Ambassador of his full support and commitment to fostering a more integrated and prosperous economic partnership between the two countries.

Japan Contributes US\$2 Million to Support Communities affected by Disasters in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) welcomes a contribution of US\$2 million from the Government of Japan to support vulnerable communities affected by disasters across Pakistan.

This contribution will enable WFP to provide food assistance to more than 45,000 people, impacted by monsoon floods and other shocks. It will also help communities restore assets and stabilise livelihoods for a stronger future.

"Japan values its long-standing partnership with Pakistan and the World Food Programme in supporting vulnerable communities," said H. E. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan. "Through this contribution, Japan aims to ensure that families facing hardship have access to essential food while supporting efforts that help communities recover."

"We appreciate Japan's ongoing support for the people of Pakistan," said Coco Ushiyama, WFP Country Director and Representative in Pakistan. "This contribution not only addresses immediate food needs, but also assists families to protect what they have, recover from losses, and strengthen their ability to withstand future shocks. As climate risks intensify, such investments are critical to breaking the cycle of vulnerability and supporting more resilient communities across Pakistan."

EPF Anniversary Ceremony Held in Toba Tek Singh



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A ceremony was held in Toba Tek Singh to mark the completion of one year since the establishment of the Environment Protection Force (EPF) under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The event was led by Deputy Director Environment Shamim Ahmed Khan. Among the participants were DEO Education Shahid Khushnood, District Information Officer Muhammad Shahbaz Ansari, DDEO Abid Hanif and Rescue and Safety Officer Basharat Hameed along with officials from various departments. Representatives of Members of Assembly, including Farrukh Chaudhry, Arif Saeed and Rana Abdul Qayyum also attended the ceremony. A large number of environmental inspectors, field staff and representatives from government and the public were present on the occasion. A special documentary highlighting EPF's one-year performance and the "Green Punjab" vision was presented, showcasing practical measures taken for environmental improvement and smog control.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Director Environment Shamim Ahmed Khan stated that effective actions had been taken over the past year against pollution and smog. He added that the establishment of EPF has further strengthened environmental monitoring and all departments will continue working together to make Toba Tek Singh clean and green.

PSCA Launches Virtual Security Center to Safeguard Polio Workers Under CM's "Safe Punjab Vision"

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Under Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Safe Punjab Vision", the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has established a "Virtual Center for Polio Workers' Security"



to ensure safety and protection of polio teams across the province. This initiative aims to provide effective monitoring and immediate security support to polio workers in the field.

The spokesperson further stated that polio workers are also facilitated to share videos of any critical incident directly with the Safe City. Through "Connect to PSCA" feature, mobile camera of polio workers can be linked live with the Safe City system, enabling real-time monitoring of on ground situations. Additionally, the Public Safety App offers polio workers access to Emergency-15 alert buttons, along with live chat and video call features, ensuring prompt and effective communication during emergencies.

The spokesperson underscored that the Punjab Safe Cities Authority remains committed to strengthening a robust, reliable, and technology-driven security system across the province.

EU Pours 1 Million Euros into Pakistan Project to Empower Women with Disabilities

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The European Union has committed 1 million euros to fund a 3-year project, Beyond Barriers, which is being implemented by Sightsavers, along with key civil society partners, to advance women's rights and economic empowerment for women with disabilities. The launching ceremony for the project took place today in Islamabad.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Jeroen Willems, Head of Co-operation, European Union shared that, "On behalf of the European Union, I extend my warmest congratulations to Sightsavers, PODA, and AwazCDS for spearheading

Beyond Barriers—a groundbreaking initiative on women's disability inclusion in Pakistan. The EU takes immense pride in championing inclusion as the cornerstone of our development cooperation. Next year, Pakistan will integrate the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) into its GSP+ framework that aligns perfectly with our shared vision of leaving no one behind. By the end of the third year, we aspire to see tangible progress: the elimination of gender-based violence and harassment (GBVH) and the economic empowerment of women with disabilities. Together, let us turn these ambitions into reality."

Ms. Munazza Gillani, Director Pakistan & Middle East, Sightsavers, emphasized the significance of the initiative, stating, "Today's commitment marks a significant milestone in our collective journey to break down barriers that hold back women, especially women with disabilities, from leading economically empowered and dignified lives."

With this launch, Sightsavers and the EU delegation mark the beginning of a powerful partnership to drive disability inclusion and gender equality in Pakistan. This ceremony celebrates a shared vision for a more inclusive future, and we look forward to the change we will create together.



Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
169,911.95	168,519.94	
Day's High	Day's Low	
170,899.16	168,941.31	
Index Value	Change	
33,882,228,704	+ 1392.01	
Percentage	Time	
+0.83%	16 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,589.99	+30.4	
Percentage	Time	
+0.29%	16 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
48,482.05	+18.33	
Percentage	Time	
+0.038%	16 Apr, 12:53 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
59,518.34	+1,384.10	
Percentage	Time	
+2.38%	16 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	198.78	204.95
Bahrain Dinar	729	739.75
Canadian Dollar	202.05	207.9
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	328.79	332.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.25	36.15
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.22
Japanese Yen	1.7387	1.8386
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.15	889.30
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.65
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.05
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.65	734.10
Qatari Riyal	71.55	72.77
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.35
Singapore Dollar	217.73	223.25
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.25
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.05
UK Pound Sterling	378.34	383.65
US Dollar	279.04	280.05

Mobilink Bank ranks among Top 10 organizations at GDEIB Awards 2026

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading digital micro-finance bank, Mobilink Bank, has been named among the 'Top 10 Inclusive Companies of the Year' at the prestigious Global Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Benchmarks (GDEIB) Awards 2026. The Bank secured recognition across all 15 award categories, reflecting its deep-rooted commitment to global DEI best practices and its continued efforts to drive inclusive growth in Pakistan.

Mobilink Bank has embedded DEI across its organizational and leadership structures, earning recognition at the highest 'Best Practice' level in multiple GDEIB categories, including leadership accountability, recruitment, advancement and retention, learning and development, and sustainability. The Bank also ranks among the top organizations in Pakistan based on its overall GDEIB scoring, further strengthening its position as a national benchmark for inclusive excellence.

Mobilink Bank's progress is further reflected in its leadership composition, where

women represent 38% of the Executive Leadership Team (ELT) and 30% of the Future Leadership Team (FLT), demonstrating a sustained commitment to gender-balanced leadership and inclusive decision-making.

Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, President & CEO Mobilink Bank said, "Diversity and inclusion are central to how we grow and lead. We've moved from diversity as representation to inclusion as a real outcome. This recognition reinforces the impact we're creating and our commitment to building a progressive, future-forward organization."

Aleena Tanvir, Chief People Officer, Mobilink Bank, stated: "At Mobilink Bank, DEI is embedded across the entire employee lifecycle, from how we hire and develop talent to how we lead and make decisions. Our focus is on creating equitable opportunities while fostering a culture where every individual feels valued, heard, and empowered to perform at their best. This recognition is a testament to the collective commitment of our people, who bring our core values to life every day."



Launched

Islamabad: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik jointly launched, along with British High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Jane Marriott at GSP on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Mega Motor Company (MMC) and TPL insurance collaborate to launch MMC Cares for BYD Owners in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mega Motor Company (MMC), the official partner of the world's no.1 NEV brand, BYD in Pakistan has entered into a strategic partnership with TPL Insurance, one of Pakistan's leading general insurance providers, to introduce MMC Care, a comprehensive protection plan designed exclusively for BYD owners nationwide.

Danish Khaliq, VP Sales & Strategy, BYD Pakistan-MMC added, "Leading the NEV transition in Pakistan, this partnership reflects MMC's commitment to delivering a safe, reliable, and customer-first experience tailored to the country's evolving mobility landscape. Our collaboration with TPL Insurance marks another milestone, enabling a more holistic ownership experience for BYD customers. A vehicle is a significant investment, and with MMC Care program, our goal is to ensure that customers can protect that investment with



confidence."

Mr. Syed Ali Hassan Zaid, COO of TPL Insurance said, "We are excited to collaborate with MMC to introduce specialized insurance offerings for BYD vehicle owners.

As the automotive landscape evolves, particularly with the rise of electric vehicles, it is essential to provide protection solutions that are equally innovative and forward looking."

Bank of Khyber Expands Lahore Footprint with New PIA Road Branch Inauguration

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Bank of Khyber has inaugurated its new branch on PIA Road, Lahore, further strengthening its presence in one of the country's key commercial hubs. The branch was formally inaugurated by Hassan Raza, Managing Director & CEO BoK, along with Fawad Saddozai, Group Head RAM, Gul Buhar Khan, Group Head Retail, Asif Shahzad, Head Transactional Banking along Regional Heads in the presence of Area Manager and Branch Manag-

ers from across Lahore.

Speaking on the occasion, the MD & CEO highlighted the Bank's continued focus on expansion and customer-centric service delivery, emphasizing that the new branch will enhance accessibility and provide convenient, efficient banking solutions to customers in the area.

With this addition, the Bank of Khyber now operates 13 branches in Lahore, reflecting its growing footprint in the city. The new branch will offer a comprehensive range of Shari-



ah-compliant financial solutions, along with digital banking solutions including a state-of-the-art mobile application and an exten-

sive Mastercard cards range, reaffirming the Bank's commitment to innovation and service excellence.

BingX Renews Chelsea FC Partnership Bolstering Leadership in Global Sports Strategy

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: BingX, a leading cryptocurrency exchange and Web3-AI company, today announced it will renew its partnership with Chelsea FC, reinforcing its long-term position as a global leader in sports partnerships. The partnership with Chelsea FC has paved the way for BingX's immersion into sports, evidenced by the recently announced partnership with Scuderia Ferrari HP. The extension with Chelsea demonstrates BingX's strategy of aligning with world-class institutions, expanding its international presence, and connecting the

rigorous discipline of elite teams with the performance of next-gen crypto trading.

John Rogers, Chelsea FC's Head of Partnerships, said: "We are proud to extend our partnership with BingX, and continue the strong work delivered with our Principal Partner and training kit partner already. From day one, they have shared our vision of embracing innovation while putting fans and their community at the heart of everything we do together. This extension reflects the strength of our relationship and our belief in the potential of the digital world to enhance the experiences of our global fanbase."

foodpanda partners with Karachi Traffic Police for rider safety workshop

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a collaborative effort to enhance road safety, foodpanda hosted a comprehensive traffic awareness session at its head office, recently, organized under the directives of DIGP Traffic Karachi and SSP East, Amjad Hayat. Led by SI Masood Ahmed from the Tariq Road Traffic Section, the program focused on educating delivery partners about essential traffic laws and the importance of preventive measures while on Karachi's busy streets. The initiative highlights foodpanda's commitment to ensuring that its fleet is not only efficient but also highly compliant with the provincial traffic regulations.

During the training, riders received detailed briefings

on critical safety protocols, including the mandatory use of helmets for both riders and pillion, ensuring bike fitness with functional mirrors and chain covers, and the strict use of original number plates. The session



also addressed specific safety concerns such as avoiding overspeeding and one-way violations, navigating heavy vehicle blind spots, and protecting female passengers from clothing-related accidents. Additionally, riders were briefed on the new faceless e-challan system, emphasising the role of technology in modern traffic enforcement.

SECP Proposes Swing Pricing System for Mutual Fund Investors

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has proposed a new system called Swing Pricing to make mutual fund investing fairer for all investors. In this regard, SECP has issued a consultation paper and invited comments from all stakeholders before finalizing the proposal.

The concept is based on the fact that during sudden market changes, such as economic or political events, many investors may withdraw funds, make new investments, or switch their investment options at the same time.

This increased activity forces mutual fund managers to quickly buy or sell assets, leading to additional costs such as brokerage and transaction charges. At present, these costs are shared by all investors, including those who did not make any transaction. This reduces the returns of long-term investors, which is not fair.

To address this, SECP is proposing Swing Pricing. Under this system, the extra costs will be borne by those investors who cause them through large or sudden transactions, instead of passing them on to others.

This will protect long-term investors, improve transparency, and make mutual funds more stable during market stress. It will also bring Pakistan in line with international best practices.

Gold prices increase by Rs 1,400 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold increased in the local market on Thursday, with 24 karat gold per tola rising by Rs 1,400 to settle at Rs 504,862 compared to Rs 503,462 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold increased by Rs 1,200 to Rs 432,837 from Rs 431,637, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 1,100 to Rs 396,781 against Rs 395,681.

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Hyderabad Kings Defeated Rawalpindi By 5 Wickets After a Brilliant Competition



Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: In the Pakistan Super League match, Hyderabad Kings defeated Rawalpindi Cricket Team by 5 wickets after a brilliant competition. Hyderabad became the fourth position on the table.

In PSL 11, the word failure seems to be associated with the name of Rawalpindi as if it has been associated forever this

season. Sixth consecutive defeat. It has become impossible for the team playing under the captaincy of Rizwan to stay in the event now. It has become the first team to be eliminated from the Final Four race. On the other hand, Hyderabad Kingsmen have won their third consecutive win after losing the first 4 matches and have 6 points. They became the fourth position on the table.



In this PSL 11 match played at the National Bank Arena in Karachi, the captain of Hyderabad Kings won the toss and decided to field first and Muhammad Rizwan's team Rawalpindi Pindi could only score 121 runs for 5 wickets in 20 overs. Sam Billings scored 26 and

Yasir Khan scored 24 runs. Mohammad Rizwan was dismissed for 15 runs off 16 balls and looked disappointed with his poor form. Pacers Mohammad Ali took three wickets for 21 and Haneen Shah for 18.

In reply, Hyderabad Kingsmen



did not start well either. They also lost three wickets by 29 runs. Moaz Sadaqat was four, Saim Ayub was 15 and Usman Khan was on zero. Kushal Perera, along with captain Marnus Labuschagne, took his team's score forward, but captain Marnus



Labuschagne was also dismissed for a total of 68. They made 35 runs off 21 balls.

Rawalpindi got another big win on a score of 69 when dangerous batter Glenn Maxwell returned to the pavilion for zero. The joy was temporary. Kushal Perera and Irfan Khan scored 100 in 14 overs.

Kingsmen won the match

by 5 wickets, chasing the target in 16.3 overs. Irfan Khan Niazi remained unbeaten on 34 and Perera on 32. Asif Afridi took 2 wickets, Mohammad Amir and Ben Sears took one wicket each.

With this win, Hyderabad Kings moved ahead of Karachi Kings to fourth position with 6 points from 7 matches. Karachi has a poor net run rate.

CM Punjab Swimming Championship concludes

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Age Group Swimming Championship concluded with a grand prize distribution ceremony at state-of-the-art Punjab International Swimming Complex here on Thursday.

Secretary Sports Punjab M Ali and DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi were the guests of honour at the closing ceremony where they distributed prizes to the winning swimmers.

While talking to the media, Secretary Sports Punjab M Ali said that the participation of more than 400 male and female athletes in the swimming championship is an encouraging sign. "Several fresh talented swimmers have been identified from Chief Minister Punjab Age



Group Swimming Championship.

DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi, in his media talk, said that cash prizes

worth Rs 10 lakh have been distributed among the top performing swimmers. "The top position holders will be given

more training so that they can excel and clinch more laurels for the country at international level".

Qureshi said that CM Punjab National Marathon and Cycling Championship will be organised on April 19 (Sunday) in which more than 10,000 male and female athletes will participate. "Punjab Sports Department has provided top standard sports infrastructure to talented athletes across the province".

Following are the best swimmers:
U-8: Zoraiz Umar Fayyaz (LGS), Taimoor Shaikat Karim (AC)
U-10: Azlaan Sharjeel (LA), Mustafa Shehryar Rana (LA)
U-12: M. Abban Kashif (AC)
U-14: Ch. Hassan Ali (DHA)
U-16: M. Dayyan Kashif (AC).

NAB conducts Special Training on Global AML framework and investigation procedures

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA), the specialized training wing of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) commenced the first Capacity Building Course (CBC-1) and an Intensive Mock Trial under its Annual Training Plan, 2026 which was inaugurated by the Worthy Chairman NAB, Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed. This program was designed to help investigators and prosecutors better understand modern money laundering trends and laws. It aimed to give these professionals the tools and legal techniques they need to fight financial crimes effectively.

The training sessions featured a series of high-level briefings from leading experts in the field.

Deputy Chairman NAB, Mr. Sohail Nasir, provided a comprehensive examination of the Bureau's revised Standard Operating Procedures for money laundering cases, focusing on the integration of robust evidence collection with streamlined inter-agency protocols.

This was complemented by an



in-depth session from Dr. Ehsan Sadiq, Director General of the National AML/CFT Authority, who analyzed Pakistan's ongoing compliance journey with FATF standards and the vital importance of implementing risk-based approaches in corporate governance.

Technical expertise was further expanded by Mr. Muhammad Tahir, Director General of the Special Investigation Division, who conducted a detailed session on the Anti-Money Laundering Act of 2010. His presentation focused on the evolving methodologies of asset tracing and the prosecution of illicit enrichment.

Additionally, Ms. Noor us

Sahar, Deputy Director of the Financial Monitoring Unit, shared critical insights into the role of financial intelligence and the national risk assessment framework in identifying suspicious transactions.

The program concluded with a practical, outcome-driven workshop titled "Mock Trial of Leading NAB Money Laundering Cases," facilitated by Additional Director Mr. Mohsin Ali Khan. This courtroom simulation provided participants with hands-on experience in the legal intricacies of trial proceedings, ranging from the submission of remand applications to the complex process of witness examination and property

attachment. By simulating the transition from investigation to adjudication, the exercise significantly bolstered the professional competencies of the attending officers.

Addressing the participants of the training course, the Worthy Chairman NAB Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed underscored the Government of Pakistan's resolute stance against financial crimes and the critical necessity of reinforcing institutional frameworks to ensure national economic security.

The Chairman described PACA as the vanguard of national accountability, emphasizing that the complexities of modern governance demand a workforce that is not only skilled in traditional investigation but also proficient in international best practices. He highlighted that the 2026 training cycle is specifically designed to foster greater inter-agency coordination and to equip officers with the sophisticated tools required to meet emerging global challenges in the fight against corruption.

Syed Ihtesham Qadir Shah, Prosecutor General of Account-

ability (PGA), in his address commended the initiative, noting that such structured and practical training is essential for sustaining the professional growth of the Bureau. He emphasized that the Academy's focus on real-world simulations ensures that NAB remains a premier platform for excellence, contributing directly to the principles of transparency, accountability, and good governance across the country.

Meanwhile, the Director General PACA, Mr. Ghulam Safdar Shah, outlined the Academy's vision for the current year in his address. He reaffirmed PACA's dedication to providing cutting-edge instruction in financial investigations, forensic analysis, and academic research. Mr. Shah pointed out that the current curriculum is strictly aligned with global standards, particularly those concerning Anti-Money Laundering (AML) and Counter Financing of Terrorism (CFT), ensuring that Pakistan's investigative body remains a highly effective force within the international accountability landscape.

When the World Held Its Breath Pakistan Pulled the Ceasefire

Continued from Page 4

regional instability, called for sustained dialogue built on this opening.

Yet the scale of what was avoided often escapes immediate comprehension. Had the deadline passed without agreement, strikes on civilian infrastructure were anticipated. Retaliation would have followed. The geography of conflict would not have remained contained. It would have expanded, across shipping routes, energy markets and fragile states already under strain. The humanitarian cost would have been immediate and severe, measured not in policy shifts but in lives disrupted and lost.

The impact on Pakistan would have been direct. The economic strain from disrupted energy routes would have

added pressure. The regional instability would have carried security risks. The situation would have placed the country under severe stress. The ceasefire, therefore, was not only a diplomatic success. It was a moment of collective exhalation, a crisis that came close enough to be felt, then receded just enough to be survived.

Describing this as a "win" risks oversimplification. The agreement is temporary. The underlying tensions remain unresolved. But within the narrow frame of what was possible in those final hours, the outcome represents something more precise: a deflection. A shift away from immediate confrontation toward conditional restraint. That shift required a state willing to assume the burden of mediation without guarantees of recognition or success. It required leadership capable

of synchronizing political authority with institutional discipline. And it required timing of when to press, when to hold and when to present an option that both sides could accept without appearing to concede.

The image of protesters gathered outside the White House, fearing imminent escalation, captures the emotional landscape of those hours. Anxiety was not confined to one region. It was shared, diffuse and deeply human. The ceasefire did not erase that fear, but it interrupted its progression. The risk has not disappeared. The coming days will determine whether this pause can be extended into a more stable arrangement. The outcome still carries weight. Pakistan's role in that interruption will be examined in strategic terms in the days ahead.

Analysts will map the channels, decode the language and assess the implications. But beneath that analysis lies a simpler truth. In a moment defined by the possibility of irreversible decisions, a different outcome was secured.

The ceasefire represents a bullet avoided. The region stepped back from the edge. The cost of failure would have been immediate and severe. The success of this effort lies in preventing that outcome at the final hour. A war that seemed within reach was held back & for now that is ENOUGH.

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Col. Muhammad Akram Malik appointed Patron-in-Chief of Pakistan Blind Sports Federation

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Col. Muhammad Akram Malik has been appointed as the Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Blind Sports Federation (PBSF). According to an official statement issued by the federation, which is registered as a legal entity under Section 42 of the Companies Act with the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), Col. Malik has formally accepted the role upon the federation's request. The statement further noted that Col. Muhammad Akram Malik has been a long-standing benefactor and sincere supporter of the federation. His continued association over the years has played a significant role in encouraging and uplifting the morale of visually impaired athletes across the country.

President of the Pakistan Blind Sports Federation, Salman Elahi, and CEO Bilal Javed expressed their optimism regarding this development. They stated that Col. Malik's consistent patronage would be instrumental in revitalizing the federation and injecting new energy into its operations.

Largest Solar Exhibition Solar Pakistan, 2026 will begin today

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The largest exhibition in Solar Energy Solar Pakistan, 2026 will begin today at Expo Center, Lahore and this Exhibition is organizing by Fakt Exhibition Pvt Ltd. The inauguration ceremony will be held at 11.30 AM Hall No.1. Muhammad Mansha-Ullah-Butt, Minister for Labour and Human Resources Punjab will inaugurate the Solar Pakistan Exhibition, 2026. In Solar Pakistan there will be number of National and International Stalls will be displayed in different halls in Expo Center, Lahore. The Main Sponsors included AIKO is Platinum Sponsor, while KSTAR, CROWN, ITEL Energy, ZIEWNIC Solar Energy are Diamond Sponsors and TCL Solar and TALESUN are Gold Sponsors. There will be number of Solar Energy Companies will display their stalls which are some name Nizam Energy, AE Power, Solectra By SM Solar Pvt Ltd, Sunlife Solar Inverter, Lcapton Solar, Yingli Solar, Skyworth, JD Energy, Goodwe, Royal Solar, Max Power, Growatt, Risen, FMZ, Alp Solar, Ars Solar, Sunray Green, Trina Solar, Primax, Fusion, Smk Solar, Power Vision, Unicorn Energy, Inb Solar, Trisun, MD Batteries, etc. The Solar Pakistan will be 3 days event which is starting today 17 April, to 19th April and there will be large number of Visitors are expected to visit through out the country to watch this largest Solar Pakistan Exhibition, 2026.

Pakistan's Quiet Diplomacy in a Volatile World: From Iran-US-Israel Tensions to Ceasefire Efforts

Continued from Page 4

In addition to its diplomatic engagement, Pakistan's armed forces have consistently demonstrated their capability to protect national sovereignty and maintain stability during periods of external pressure. Under General Asim Munir's leadership, the military has upheld professionalism, strategic discipline, and readiness, reinforcing confidence in Pakistan's defence architecture and its ability to respond to evolving security challenges.

Pakistan's approach is also shaped by historical experience and a long-standing understanding of regional security dynamics. These experiences have reinforced the importance of deterrence, stability, and diplomatic engagement as core pillars of national policy.

In conclusion, Pakistan's role during the Iran-US-Israel tensions reflects a broader evolution in its strategic and diplomatic outlook. Under the coordinated leadership of General Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, Pakistan demonstrated its ability to combine security preparedness with diplomatic facilitation. By hosting high-level delegations, maintaining internal stability, and supporting dialogue-oriented engagement, Pakistan reinforced its position as a country committed to peace, balance, and responsible international conduct in a highly volatile global environment.

The Writer is Former Professor & Head of Department, Entomology University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF), Pakistan

Productive meeting

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a productive meeting with Mr. Alvaro Lario, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026 in Washington D. C., on Thursday.



Photo: Online

Finance Minister meets IFAD President to discuss agricultural transformation and partnership

Commerce Desk

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a productive meeting with Mr. Alvaro Lario, President of the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD), on the sidelines of the World Bank-IMF Spring Meetings 2026.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister appreciated that Pakistan is currently

IFAD's largest core borrower, with the most extensive programme of work across any single country in IFAD's portfolio.

Senator Aurangzeb underscored that agriculture remains a national priority for Pakistan, while candidly noting that the country continues to underperform relative to its potential in terms of yields, productivity, and value chain development.

Highlighting the Prime Minister's focus on agricultural

transformation, the Finance Minister outlined key initiatives, including induction of new leadership, training of young graduates in modern agricultural practices through international exposure, and deregulation of key commodity sectors.

He informed the IFAD President that end-to-end deregulation of the sugar sector has already been approved, while the wheat sector is also being liberalized, with the federal

government stepping back from procurement.

The Finance Minister emphasized the importance of improving financial access for smallholder farmers and addressing critical gaps in the agricultural value chain, particularly in relation to post-harvest losses and the need for investment in storage infrastructure.

Both sides agreed on the need for a more structured and scaled-up partnership,

including the possibility of bringing in multilateral partners such as the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and the World Bank as co-financiers to enhance the impact of IFAD's interventions.

The Finance Minister further proposed a ground-level engagement between IFAD and the Prime Minister's Agricultural Task Force to better align ongoing programmes with Pakistan's national priorities.

Iran can't trust US, Pakistan's mediation efforts commendable: Reza Amiri

News Desk

Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam has thanked Pakistan for supporting Iran during US and Israeli aggression against Tehran.

Addressing roundtable conference at IRS on regional consequences of Israel-US war against Iran and Pakistan's mediation efforts, Reza Amiri said that Iranians were grateful to the Pakistani government for its role as a mediator. He said Iran values Pakistan's mediation efforts. He said that since revolution, Iranian nation was under pressure and injustices from the US and Zionist powers.

He said Iran has suffered huge financial losses in this war but Iran was standing. Iranian Ambassador said, "We do not trust America, We have also told Pakistan this."



"The mediation efforts of the Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Field Marshal are commendable", Iranian Ambassador asserted. He said United States cannot make any decision without the will of the

Zionists and Netanyahu.

He said these powers failed to achieve any success in their efforts. Iranian Ambassador said conflicts have been going on for half a century and were getting deeper and deeper.

He said Iran was in a sensitive position in the region.

Iranian Ambassador said after the revolution, Iran did not allow America to interfere in its internal affairs. He said the recent war has been imposed on Iran.

The Ambassador said Iran was not in favor of aggression against anyone. There have been 17,000 martyrs in Iran as a result of US and Israeli terrorism which include our President and Prime Minister.

Iran focused on acquiring anti-nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes. Iranian ambassador said no country has been able to provide evidence that Iran is building nuclear weapons. Iranian ambassador said Israel wants its supremacy in the Middle East and United States also supported the Zionists.

PML-N Forms Parliamentary Board for AJK 2026 Polls

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (N) has constituted a parliamentary board for the upcoming 2026 general elections of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

According to a notification issued by the party, the board will be authorised to select candidates and issue party tickets. The board includes senior leaders such as Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Mian Shehbaz Sharif, Ishaq Dar, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Khawaja Muhammad Asif, along with other key figures.

The notification bears the signature of the party president. As per the statement, the board will play a crucial role in selecting suitable candidates for the forthcoming elections.

Party sources stated that the move aims to ensure a more organised and transparent electoral process, bringing forward strong and capable candidates.

NA speaker reaffirmed Pakistan's continued role as a facilitator for peace and dialogue

ISLAMABAD: The Speaker of the National Assembly of Pakistan addressed the 152nd Assembly of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) in Istanbul.

He expressed his sincere gratitude to the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye for its warm hospitality. Speaking on the theme "Nurturing hope, securing peace and ensuring justice for future generations," the Speaker described it as a critical test of the collective role of parliamentarians in the contemporary global order.

He noted that the international system, established through the collective will of humanity over eight decades ago, is currently facing a critical point of inflection amid unresolved conflicts, prolonged disputes, and emerging global crises.

He said that ongoing wars across



various regions continue to cause immense human suffering, displacement, and erosion of trust in the global peace architecture.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment, the Speaker stated that Pakistan firmly believes in parliamentary diplomacy as an essential instrument for building trust, fostering cooperation, and promoting conflict prevention and resolution.

He stressed that adherence to the core principles of the United Nations Charter—including the non-use of

force, self-determination, sovereign equality, territorial integrity, non-interference, and peaceful settlement of disputes—remains indispensable for global peace and security. He further emphasized that durable peace cannot be achieved through power projection but only through dialogue, mutual respect, and inclusive diplomacy.

He highlighted that while the UN Charter provides comprehensive mechanisms for peaceful dispute resolution, these tools remain underutilized or selectively applied.

Referring to regional issues, he stated that the continued suppression and denial of the right to self-determination of the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) remains a key source of instability in South Asia.

Pakistan-Türkiye Joint Counterterrorism Drills Conclude Successfully in Türkiye



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Pakistan-Türkiye Joint Commando and Special Forces Exercise Jinnah-XI-II was successfully conducted in Türkiye, focusing on counterterrorism operations. Combat teams from the Pakistan Army participated alongside their Turkish counterparts, with training activities held in Ankara and Isparta.

The exercise achieved all its training and military diplomacy objectives. Troops from both countries demonstrated the highest

standards of professionalism and operational excellence throughout the exercise.

The primary aim of the exercise was to refine drills, procedures, and techniques related to counterterrorism operations. Special emphasis was placed on combat in built-up areas and countering improvised explosive devices (IEDs) through joint training. Additionally, the exercise served to further strengthen the longstanding and historic military-to-military relations between the two friendly nations.

Chairperson BISP Meets Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, met with Deputy Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, Saleemullah, in Karachi today. The meeting focused on enhancing the effectiveness, transparency, and ease of the payment system for BISP beneficiaries. Detailed discussions were held on introducing interoperability in the payment mechanism to allow beneficiary women the flexibility to choose any bank according to their

convenience.*

Other important matters related to facilitating beneficiaries were also discussed during the meeting. Both sides agreed on further improving the payment system to make it more transparent, secure, and accessible. The State Bank team assured full cooperation with BISP and emphasized that joint measures would be taken to provide improved services to beneficiaries.

Director General Cash Transfers, BISP, Muhammad Idrees Mian, and DG Sindh, Sanaullah Rind, were also present at the meeting.

Aleem Khan approves key highway projects to enhance GB connectivity

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan on Thursday approved a series of key road infrastructure projects in Gilgit-Baltistan aimed at boosting tourism and better connectivity.

Chairing a high-level meeting here at the National Highway Authority headquarters, the minister reviewed ongoing and proposed highway schemes and issued directives to expedite development work across the region.

During the meeting, detailed discussions were held and key decisions were approved regarding the construction and development of highways in the region. To promote tourism and provide better travel facilities to remote areas in Gilgit Baltistan, it was decided to construct several new roads. These projects include the construction of a 54-kilometer road from Astore to Chilam Chowki and a 31-kilometer road from Deosai to Skardu. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan also directed that a formal survey be conducted for the Skardu-Deosai Road.

Aleem Khan approves key highway



projects to enhance GB connectivity

Emphasizing the importance of wider roads in difficult and mountainous terrain, the minister instructed that all newly constructed roads in Gilgit-Baltistan must have a minimum width of 7.3 meters while existing roads should be widened in phases. The meeting approved the reconstruction of Upper Kachura, Basha Road and Shigar Road. Additionally, it was decided to construct a 36-kilometer road from the Karakoram Highway to Naltar Satrapa Lake. Furthermore, approval was granted to include the 12-kilometer challenging road from Ray Kot to Fairy Meadows in the tourism development package to improve access.