



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
اے رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے مروی ہے کہ ام سلمہ رضی اللہ عنہا نے عرض کیا کہ رسول اللہ! اے آپ کا خادم ہے اس کے لیے دعا فرمائیے نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا «اللهم آکثر مالاً ولہودہ وبارک لہ فیما أعطیہ» اے اللہ! اس کے مال اوراد میں زیادتی کر اور جو کچھ تو نے اس میں برکت عطا فرما۔  
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6380-6381)  
**Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited**



## Ayaz Sadiq discusses austerity measures, legislative reforms

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Thursday met with Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, and Member National Assembly Syed Naveed Qamar. Deputy Speaker Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah was also present on the occasion.



## SAPM Haroon forms committee to fast-track SME visa, export facilitation

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Thursday chaired a meeting on SMEDA clusters and the challenges faced by Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in accessing international markets. During the meeting, representatives of SME clusters expressed serious concerns over visa-related issues faced while participating in international exhibitions.

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## High-level meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a high level meeting to review austerity measures in the wake of regional situation, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## DPM Dar, Uzbek FM discuss regional developments



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan, Bakhtiyor Saidov, and reviewed recent regional developments and agreed to maintain close contact on matters of mutual interest.

During the call, Foreign

Minister Saidov commended Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace, stability, and de-escalation.

He also appreciated Pakistan's hosting of a recent meeting of four foreign ministers in Islamabad, a DPM Office's news release said.

Saidov expressed support for the Pakistan-China Five-Point Initiative aimed at fostering peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East.

# PM calls for austerity, protection of poor & agriculture sector as Pakistan responds to regional war fallout

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday outlined a series of policy measures to shield Pakistan's economy from the adverse effects of the ongoing regional conflict, emphasizing austerity, protection of vulnerable segments, support for agriculture, and national unity to

sustain economic stability and growth.

Addressing a high-level meeting attended by federal and provincial leadership, the prime minister said Pakistan had made all possible efforts to help secure a ceasefire in the region and reduce tensions through diplomatic engagement led by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar

and the military leadership, including Field Marshal Asim Munir. He noted that Islamabad's efforts to promote peace were continuing and expressed hope that stability would soon return to the region.

The prime minister said Pakistan's economy, which had stabilized over the past two years through coordinated efforts by federal and provincial govern-

ments, was now facing renewed pressure due to global uncertainty and supply disruptions. He stressed that the government had already taken difficult decisions to manage fuel prices and maintain stability in essential sectors.

He said the government absorbed a major portion of the fuel price shock by reducing the petroleum development levy and equalizing diesel and petrol

prices through a Rs55 adjustment. He described it as a necessary step to protect citizens from a heavier financial burden.

Earlier, the prime minister welcomed the deputy prime minister, the field marshal, chief ministers of all the four provinces including Gilgit Baltistan, the Prime Minister of AJK and the federal cabinet members who participated in the meeting.

## Eight Muslim nations condemn Israel's death penalty law targeting Palestinians

### Reuters

ISLAMABAD: A group of Muslim countries, including Pakistan, strongly condemned the Israeli occupying power's enactment of a law in its Parliament (Knesset) that allows the imposition of the death penalty in the occupied West Bank and its de facto application against Palestinians.

The foreign ministers of Paki-

stan, Turkiye, Egypt, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the UAE have issued a joint statement to condemn it.

The ministers warned against the increasingly discriminatory, escalating Israeli practices that entrench a system of apartheid and a rejectionist discourse that denies the inalienable rights and the very existence of the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory (OPT).

They underscored that this legislation constituted a dangerous escalation, particularly given its discriminatory application against Palestinian prisoners, and stressed that such measures risk further exacerbating tensions and undermining regional stability.

The foreign ministers also expressed deep concern over the conditions of Palestinian prisoners in Israeli detention,

warning of mounting risks amid credible reports of ongoing abuses, including torture, inhumane and degrading treatment, starvation, and the denial of basic rights. They emphasized that these practices reflect a broader pattern of violations against the Palestinian people.

The ministers reaffirmed their opposition to Israel's racially discriminatory, oppressive, and aggressive policies targeting

Palestinians.

The Ministers further emphasized the urgent need to refrain from measures imposed by the occupying power that risk further inflaming tensions on the ground.

They stressed the importance of ensuring accountability and called for strengthened international efforts to uphold stability and prevent further deterioration.

## Rising electricity demand reflects success of govt policies: Leghari

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Thursday said that the steady increase in electricity consumption in the country reflects the success of the government's energy policies and reform measures.

He expressed these views during a meeting with World

Bank Country Director Bolormaa Angaabazar, who called on him here, said a press release.

The minister said the government is working to make electricity tariffs competitive to support key sectors of the economy. He informed that after reviewing concessional tariffs for industries, the Power Division is now working on Time-of-Use proposals aimed at further

enhancing energy competitiveness.

Highlighting future plans, Leghari said the government intends to tap the country's vast solar potential while offering concessional tariffs to industries. He added that consultations with stakeholders are currently underway in this regard.

The minister also noted that major policy decisions are being

considered to utilise indigenous resources for electricity generation. He said the evolving situation in the Middle East has reinforced the government's resolve to reduce reliance on external energy sources.

Appreciating the World Bank's continued support, Leghari acknowledged the successful implementation of various energy sector projects and reaffirmed

the government's commitment to further strengthening cooperation.

On the occasion, the World Bank Country Director lauded the Power Division's reform agenda and reiterated the Bank's commitment to supporting Pakistan in key areas, including tariff rationalisation, transmission and distribution improvements, and renewable energy integration.

## Pahlgam False Flag Operation exposed New Delhi's reliance on manufactured crises, says Khawaja Asif

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that repeated rhetoric reflects not strength, but visible strategic anxiety as the anniversary of the staged false flag operation in Pahlgam approaches—an episode that failed to withstand international scrutiny and exposed New Delhi's reliance on manufactured crises.

"Such threat-mongering is not new; it is part of a predictable pattern—externalising internal fragility and attempting to provoke escalation under the garb of unsubstantiated allegations for vested political interests," he wrote on his social media handle X.

He said that history stands as a stark reminder that miscalculation has consequences. Marka-e-Haq remains fresh in our minds. The next time, our response

will be even more forceful and decisive.

"Let there be no ambiguity: Pakistan remains committed to peace and regional stability, but its resolve to defend sovereignty is absolute, its preparedness complete, and its response will be swift, calibrated, and decisive, InshaAllah," the defence minister said.

"Let me remind @rajnathsingh that the illusion of space for war between two nuclear states is inconceivable and has drastic consequences." Asif said that India would be better served by confronting the growing unease within its own strategic and diplomatic space.

## Mohsin Naqvi inspects several under-construction projects in Islamabad

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi had conducted a whirlwind tour of the federal capital on Thursday morning inspecting a number of under-construction development projects. Firstly, the interior minister reviewed the progress of the under-construction Islamabad Model Jail project.

On the interior minister's instructions, the first phase of the Model Jail will be converted into a high-security prison.

On this occasion, Mohsin Naqvi said training of personnel assigned to the Model Jail will be completed by the end of April.

During his visit to Capital Police College, the interior

minister sought an upgradation plan for the college.

Mohsin Naqvi directed that the training programmes be modernized with special focus on AI, IT and physical training.

He also reviewed the facilities provided at the Police Khidmat Centre in F-6 where he visited various counters and observed the process of service delivery to the people.

The minister said the government will continue its efforts at all levels to improve citizen services.

Mohsin Naqvi also laid the foundation stone for the extension project of Ataturk Avenue.

The interior minister also attended a ceremony during which two armoured personnel carriers (APCs) were handed over to the Islamabad police.

# AJK Election Commission announces dates for voter list revision

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission has issued a new schedule for the year 2026 for the preparation, revision and correction of Electoral Rolls across the state.

According to a notification issued by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission, the final publication of the electoral rolls will be done on April 30, 2026.

The process of providing new entries and data in the draft rules



will continue from March 24 to April

07. The provision of initial electoral rolls by NADRA will be completed by April 10, after which the initial lists will be published for public inspection on April 13, 2026.

Citizens will be able to submit their applications for registration of their names, correction or objection to any irrelevant name to the relevant offices from April 13 to April 17.

The applications received will be heard from April 17 to 20 and all decisions will be forwarded to the registration officers by April 21.

After all amendments and correc-

tions, the final publication of the electoral rolls will be on April 30, 2026.

According to Election Commission officials, the aim of this campaign is to completely update the 2022 lists so that the names of all eligible citizens can be included in the voter list and the most transparent data is available for the upcoming elections.

Instructions have been issued to all relevant departments, including NADRA and Deputy Commissioners, to ensure the completion of all steps within the stipulated time.

## National tree plantation campaign

MIRPUR: Chief Justice of AJK Raja Saeed Akram Khan and Judges Supreme Court Justice Raza Ali Khan, Justice Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry and President District Bar Association Babar Ali Khan are offering prayers after inaugurating the national tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling in the premises of the District Bar Association



# Environment Minister cracks down on plastic bag use in Muzaffarabad Division

**Bureau Report.**

MUZAFFARABAD: A meeting was held at the office of Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division under the chairmanship of Environment Minister Nabila Ayub regarding the implementation of Ban on Polythene Bags Regulations 2023. In which Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Badar Munir, Director General Environment Chaudhry Shaukat Ali, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad, Neelum and Jhelum Valley Districts, Director Environment Shafiq Abbasi, Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Muzaffarabad Zulfiqar Alam, Assistant Commissioners Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Jhelum



Valley, Municipal Magistrate Sardar Imran Khan, Representative of Central Anjuman Tajran Muzaffarabad Hafeez Hamdani participated. The environment minister informed that the Ban on

Polythene Bags Regulations 2023 are in force in the state of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and under its Regulation 3, the manufacture, import, sale, storage and use of plastic bags within the state limits

are prohibited.

The administration assured the environment minister that the ban on plastic bags will be implemented strictly and a meeting will be held with all stakeholders in this regard

and a timeline will be set. It was decided in the meeting that a publicity campaign will be launched in this regard in which people will be informed about the harms of plastic bags.

# Maryam Nawaz Launches Eco-Friendly Transport Initiative

Under the dynamic leadership of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the launch of green electric buses across the province marks a highly commendable step toward improving public services and promoting environmental sustainability. This initiative is poised not only to ease daily commutes for citizens but also to play a significant role in curbing air pollution and enhancing the urban landscape.

Traffic congestion and deteriorating air quality in urban centers have become pressing global challenges. By introducing a modern transportation system centered on green electric buses, the Punjab government has directly addressed these issues. Unlike conventional petrol or diesel vehicles, electric buses have a significantly lower environmental footprint, contributing to cleaner air and a healthier atmosphere. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision extends beyond solving immediate transit problems, it lays the groundwork for a sustainable and eco-friendly transportation network for future

generations. One of the most notable advantages of this initiative is its focus on affordability, safety and convenience. Citizens will now benefit from reduced travel costs without compromising on comfort. These state-of-the-art buses come equipped with modern amenities, including energy-efficient systems, noise reduction technology, air conditioning, comfortable seating, and advanced security features. Operating on fixed, regular routes particularly in densely populated urban areas they promise smooth and reliable transit for daily commuters. The project's impact goes beyond transportation. By creating opportunities for local maintenance and repair of electric vehicles, it is set to generate new jobs and boost the provincial economy. Furthermore, this initiative serves as a pioneering model for investment in modern public transport, offering a practical blueprint for other provinces to follow.

From an environmental perspective, the benefits are profound. Traditional petrol and diesel vehicles emit harmful gases that endanger public health and contribute to global warming. In contrast, green electric buses drastically reduce these emissions, helping to ensure cleaner air in urban areas. This shift is expected to have a direct positive impact on public health, particularly in reducing respiratory diseases among children and the elderly. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's commitment to this project reflects a broader governmental priority: the fusion of public welfare with modern technology. By enhancing the reliability and quality of public transport, the initiative strengthens public confidence in government institutions. Additionally, the introduction of these buses is expected to improve traffic management, alleviate congestion, and reduce the risk of accidents in cities. Equally important is the educa-

tional and awareness dimension of this project. By familiarizing the public with clean energy, modern technology and eco-friendly transportation, it fosters a culture of environmental responsibility. Children, youth and adults alike have the opportunity to become part of this positive change, adopting environmentally conscious habits in their daily lives.

In conclusion, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's initiative to introduce green electric buses is not merely a step toward public convenience it is a significant leap forward for environmental protection and modern urban mobility. This project will pave the way for sustainable development across Punjab while tangibly improving the quality of life for its citizens. Residents are encouraged to make full use of this service and cooperate with the government to ensure its continued success. This initiative stands as a shining example that development and environmental sustainability can, indeed, go hand in hand allowing the people of Punjab to experience a cleaner, more modern and comfortable urban transportation system.



Analysis

Zafar Chishti

## Alleged Corruption Case at Civil Hospital Hyderabad: Dr. Poonam Jatoti Responds to Claims

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Allegations of Rs. 300 million corruption against Dr. Poonam Jatoti, AMS Training at Civil Hospital Hyderabad, circulating on social media and other platforms have sparked widespread attention. However, Dr. Jatoti has now come forward with her response, offering a different perspective on the matter.

According to sources, following the allegations, an inquiry committee has been formed, and Dr. Poonam Jatoti has been removed from her position and directed to report to the Secretariat.

Rejecting the accusations, Dr. Jatoti stated that she is completely innocent. In her clarification, she said: "I have not committed even a single rupee of corruption; these allegations are baseless."

She further explained that she is currently on an official one-month leave and was not formally informed in advance about any inquiry or allegations against her.

Dr. Jatoti added that if an inquiry committee has been established, she is fully prepared to appear before it and answer all questions. She emphasized that she possesses complete records and documentation, which she will present before the relevant forum.

Termining the allegations as fabricated, she said they are an attempt to damage her reputation. She expressed confidence that the truth will soon emerge and that she will clear her name through legal means.

The issue has also triggered discussion within medical circles in the city, with calls for a transparent investigation to establish the facts.



## China's inclusion makes the peace process momentous and anchors it in multilateralism, Masood Khan

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, former ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has underscored that the inclusion of China in ongoing mediation efforts has significantly strengthened the prospects for de-escalation in the Middle East, describing it as a "momentous" development for a peace process still at an embryonic stage.

In a statement issued on Thursday, Khan noted that the evolving diplomatic framework—initially shaped by a quadrilateral grouping of Pakistan, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, and Egypt—has now effectively expanded into a "four-plus-one" mechanism with China's endorsement and substantive contributions. He emphasized that this development has added both credibility and structure to ongoing negotiations.

## Condolences Continue Over Passing of Minor Girl

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Condolences continue to pour in following the passing of 5-year-old Preesa Shakoore, niece of senior journalists Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi and Qayoom Sarohi, as people from various walks of life visit the bereaved family to express sympathy.

From journalistic circles, senior journalist and writer Dastagir Bhatti, columnist Advocate Wahab Mansani, Farooq Tabassum, Gulzar Sargani, Nawab Ahmed Rajput, Mumtaz Memon Halai, Advocate Shahid Shams Memon, Asad Noonari, PRO Hyderabad Police Shahid Usman, Owais Rajput, and Abdul Samad, among others, visited and offered condolences, praying for the departed soul.

Among political figures, JUI leaders Maulana Azam Jahangiri, Molvi Ghulam Shabbir Jamali, Nisar Shar, and others also visited and expressed deep sorrow over the loss.

Meanwhile, several personalities, including SSP Hyderabad Shahzeb Chaachar, senior journalist Ghulam Hussain Laghari, and Sakar Lashari, conveyed their condolences via telephone.

Prayers were offered for the forgiveness of the departed child and for strength and patience for the grieving family, while a somber atmosphere prevailed during the condolence gatherings.



## PTA strengthens 5G readiness through strategic training with Rohde & Schwarz



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), in collaboration with Rohde & Schwarz (R&S), successfully conducted a comprehensive 5G Training Session at PTA Headquarters, Islamabad.

According to a news release, the program featured in-depth technical sessions on network testing, 5G migration, methodologies and standards, analytics, and TDD measurements, delivered by experts from R&S Pakistan (RSPK), R&S MENA, and trainers from Europe.

Dr. Khawar Siddiq Khokar, Member (Compliance & Enforcement), PTA, in his closing remarks, highlighted PTA's longstanding partnership with R&S and appreciated the contributions of Managing Director (RSPK) Haris Ali and international experts.

He reaffirmed PTA's commitment to compliance, transparency, and consumer-centric regulation. The session emphasized aligning testing methodologies with global best practices and strengthening regulatory oversight to support Pakistan's sustainable 5G future.

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	4:30 am
Zohr	12:12 pm
Asr	4:41 pm
Maghrib	6:29 pm
Isha	7:55 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249

**Six killed, several injured as rain wreaks havoc in Karachi**

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: At least six people were killed and three others injured in rain-related incidents as torrential downpours inundated large parts of the city, prompting authorities to impose a rain emergency and urge residents to stay indoors.

Intermittent heavy rain continued through the day after an intense spell in the morning left major roads submerged, paralyzing traffic and exposing gaps in drainage infrastructure.

Fatalities were reported from multiple areas.

In Golimar, a house wall collapsed onto a rickshaw, killing a 40-year-old driver, Irshad, on the spot. Five others — including a 12-year-old girl — died in separate electrocution incidents in Surjani Town, PIB Colony, Super Highway, Ahsanabad and M. A. Jinnah Road.

In Orangi Town, three children were injured when a wall collapsed near a gathering point. The injured were shifted to the hospital for treatment.

Key arteries, including Shahrah-e-Faisal, were submerged, with the Nursery stretch resembling a pond and long queues of stranded vehicles were reported. Several underpasses, including Karimabad, were flooded, while roads caved in at multiple locations, such as Jinnah Avenue and Malir.

**CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Dream: Beautiful & Clean Punjab**

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated WASA Punjab Sewerage Fleet Phase-I in order to materialise her dream of a beautiful and clean Punjab. She said that for the first time in Punjab's history, WASA has been established in 41 districts. She inspected the sewer jetting machine, sewer suction machine, and other vehicles, and inquired about their functioning. She praised drivers of the sewer machines and vehicles, and urged upon them to serve the

public. She also appreciated Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin, Secretary Housing Noor-ul-Amin Mengal, and their team for making WASA Punjab functional.

Chief Minister Punjab handed over keys of sewerage vehicles to Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin, who briefed her about WASA Punjab Sewerage Fleet. He said that in the first phase of WASA Punjab Sewerage Fleet, 552 vehicles and machines; including sewer suction machines, sewer jetting machines, desilting machines, water bowsters, and other modern machinery; are being given to



15 districts. He added that the WASA Fleet also includes dewatering pumps, water bowsters, dumpers, truck cranes, and loader rickshaws. He highlighted that in the first phase, modern sewerage machines have reached Jhelum, Gujrat, Okara, Hafizabad, Sialkot, Sheikhpurra,

Nankana, Jhang, and Sahiwal; while sewerage machines and vehicles have also been provided to Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Multan, and Dera Ghazi Khan. He underscored that in Phase-II, 937 sewerage machines and vehicles will be given to 22 districts.

Chief Minister Punjab vowed that public convenience and ease are their guiding principles. She said that they will fulfill the commitment of drainage arrangements in all cities before monsoon, as the promise of establishing WASA across Punjab has been fulfilled.

**Convocation**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui and Principal Prof Sadia Ibrar awarding degree to a student during 23rd Convocation of Model College for Girls G-10/4, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**IMCG (PG) G-10/4 Celebrates 23rd Convocation in Grand Style!**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Under the venerable patronage of Chief Guest Dr. Khalid Maqbool Federal Minister of Education, and the gracious presence of the host college Principal Prof. Sadia Ibrar, IMCG (PG) G-10/4 dazzled with its 23rd convocation ceremony.

Among the eminent souls illuminated were Ms. Rabia Naseem Farooqi Parliamentary Secretary, DG FDE Syed Junaid Akhlaq, Mr. Hassan Saqlain Additional Secretary, Director Academics Ms. Riffat Jabeen and Director Administration Mr. Javed Iqbal Mirza whose gracious presence transformed the occasion into the tableau of prestige.



Highlighting the essence of excellence, Ms. Kirn Zubia from BS Zoology, Session 2020-2024 was adorned with a prestigious gold medal in attaining a flawless 4 CGPA. Moreover, there was a special

salute to long-serving champions Miss Zeenat Firdous, Miss Sobia Naveed among the teaching staff and Mr. Zaheer-ud-Din, Mr. Mushtaq Ahmed and Ms. Bushra Yasmin among assisting staff,

marking 25 years of dedicated service. The event echoed with the names of Ms. Uzma Nazeer, Ms. Sumaira Qurat ul Ain, Ms. Farah Gul, Ms. Sadia Iftikhar, Ms. Zara Mansoor,

**Jay Salik protests against forced eviction of slums and Federal Constitutional Court's decision**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Former Federal Minister Jay Salik held a peaceful protest for five hours at Awami Church, Rimsha Colony H-9, against the forced eviction of five Christian slums in Islamabad and the Federal Constitutional Court's decision to allow the marriage of minor Christian girls to Muslim boys. A large number of men, women, children and elderly people from slums participated in the protest. On this occasion, former Federal Minister Jay Salik said that the state should ensure practical protection of their rights, evicting the affected families without providing alternative housing is an inhumane act and displacing poor people in the current situation is tantamount to "anti-nationalism". About 4,000 families and more than 20,000 people are at risk of eviction. Appealing to the President, Prime Minister and other high officials to take notice Jay Salik further said that the decision to demolish the slums should be reviewed and the poor people should not be "taken away from their roofs", forced evictions should be stopped immediately, the victims should be provided with suitable alternative accommodation and compensation, effective legal and judicial measures should be taken to protect the rights of minorities, and the issues should be resolved in a constitutional and democratic manner. Jay Salik termed this issue not just a housing issue but a human and minority rights issue and said that the state should play a "motherly role" and protect the vulnerable sections of society.

**DC Rao Atif Raza Attock chairs DCC meeting**

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: A significant meeting of the District Coordination Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza, in which a detailed review of ongoing government initiatives, enforcement of law, and public service delivery across the district was conducted.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner General Attock Anil Saeed, Secretary Regional Transport Authority Zaheer Ahmed Khan, District Education Officer (Elementary) Taqi Abbas Shah, District Traffic Officer Mirza Khurram, Excise and Taxation Officer Farukh Saeed Butt, along with other relevant officers and representatives of law enforcement agencies.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General Anil Saeed briefed the participants on ongoing initiatives in various sectors.

**Coalition urges accelerated action on population agenda**

**Rafiqullah Mandokhel**

QUETTA: The Population Council, with support from UNFPA, convened a meeting of the CSOs Coalition on Population to strengthen government-CSO partnerships and ensure the implementation of the Council of Common Interests (CCI) National Action Plan remains a national priority. The meeting sought to solidify the partnership between the government and civil society, aiming to institutionalize a structured interface that keeps the Council of Common Interests (CCI) endorsed National Action Plan on Population at the forefront of the national agenda.

Opening the session, Dr. Ali Mohammad Mir, Senior Director Programs, Population Council, stated "The coalition serves as a vital bridge to feed grassroots realities into government policy". "By creating this synergy, we ensure that both sectors can leverage each other's unique strengths to effectively address Pakistan's demographic challenges."

The meeting provided a platform for member organizations—including Aahung, ACT, Bedari, Greenstar Social Marketing, HANDS, ISYD, MSS, PODA, Rahnuma-FPAP, SDPI, SOGP, SPO, and Khwendo Kor—to share critical field-level insights ranging from reproductive health rights to youth development.

The meeting was also attended by representatives from organizations such as RSPN, MAHEC, NRSP, Taraqee Foundation, AMAN, Hujra, Search for Justice, Jhpiego, HDF, and the White Ribbon Alliance.

**Fire drill, mock emergency exercises conducted in IHC**

ISLAMABAD: A fire drill and mock emergency exercise was organized in Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Thursday to prepare for natural disasters and potential security threats.

During the exercise, announcements were made through megaphones simulating an emergency situation. Upon hearing the alerts, judges, officials, lawyers, litigants, and members of the public began an immediate evacuation process.

Everyone present was directed to exit the building through designated emergency routes and assemble at safe points. Participants were instructed to remain at these locations until further directions from the safety team, and the use of elevators was strictly prohibited during the drill.

Court staff assisted litigants and persons with disabilities in safely evacuating the premises. The drill was monitored by fire safety teams, emergency response units, and the Islamabad Police. No one was allowed to re-enter the building until an official "all clear" announcement was made.

**Pakistan Railways is Trying to Provide Maximum Facilities to Business Community**

**Iram Asim**

MULTAN: Divisional Superintendent Pakistan Railways Multan Division Muhammad Hanif Gul along with his team visited the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, where he met with the President of the Chamber, Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh. In the meeting, issues related to railway cargo, corporate business, Multan Dry Port Trust and leasing of railway assets were discussed in detail, while various suggestions and mutual consultations were also considered. Vice President Azhar Baloch, former President and Chairman Multan Dry Port Trust Khawaja



Muhammad Hussain, Member Executive Committee Ehteshamul Haq and Secretary General of the Chamber

Muhammad Shafiq were also present on the occasion. While the railway officials were Divisional Commercial Officer

Ramla Shahid, Divisional Transportation Officer Adnan Marwat, Deputy Director Property and Land Ms. Sadaf Iqbal, Assistant Transportation Officer Rizwan Khalid and PRO Rao Tasleem. In the meeting, detailed discussions were held on the improvement of the railway cargo system, effective use of dry ports and the procedure for leasing railway assets. On this occasion, Speaker Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh said that the seaports in the country should be effectively connected to the rest of the country through railways so that the rising cost of production due to expensive petrol and transport costs can be reduced.

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# Are the USA and Israel Terrorists — or Is Iran?

The ongoing war involving Iran has exposed a profound paradox, a striking contradiction, a concealed truth, and a manufactured lie. At its core lies a deeply unsettling question: who defines terrorism, and by what moral authority? The very states that stand accused globally of war, civilian casualties, and widespread destruction are the ones labeling another nation—Iran—as a “terrorist state.” This contradiction is not merely political; it is philosophical, moral, and deeply human.

If one were to objectively assess Iran’s historical conduct, the narrative becomes far more complex than the labels suggest. Iran, for centuries, has not engaged in expansionist wars in the way major global powers have. Unlike repeated military interventions seen in Iraq, Afghanistan, and elsewhere, Iran’s posture has largely been framed as defensive or reactive within its sphere of influence. Yet, despite this, it continues to be branded as the “world’s leading sponsor of terrorism.”

This labeling becomes even more paradoxical when juxtaposed against the actions of powerful nations. The United States has been involved in prolonged wars—from Vietnam to Iraq and Afghanistan—resulting in immense civilian suffering. Similarly, Israel’s military operations have drawn sustained criticism for disproportionate force. Yet these actions are rarely framed within the same terrorism narrative. Power, it seems, does not merely influence outcomes—it defines

vocabulary. The contradiction deepens further when examining the language used by political leadership. In recent months, figures such as Donald J. Trump, Marco Rubio, and Pete Hegseth have employed rhetoric that is not only confrontational but deeply dehumanizing. Iranian leaders have been described as “lunatics,” “religious fanatic zealots,” and “radical clerics,” while their military has been portrayed as “decimated,” “rats running,” or facing “certain death.” Statements such as “annihilate,” “wipe out,” and “no mercy” reflect not diplomacy, but domination.

In the current 2026 conflict—widely referred to as Operation Epic Fury—this language has reached a new and alarming intensity. The successive elimination of Iran’s top leadership through three coordinated waves of U. S.-Israeli strikes has been framed not as a tragic necessity of war, but as a moment of triumph. President Trump described the killing of Ali Khamenei as “justice for the world,” calling him “one of the most evil people in history,” while declaring the Iranian regime “decimated, destroyed—they’re all dead.” He dismissed subsequent leadership tiers as “mostly dead,” suggesting that Iran’s governing structure had been “wiped out” and replaced by something more “reasonable.”

Meanwhile, Secretary Hegseth adopted a tone that stripped away even the last remnants of diplomatic civility, remarking that the remaining Iranian leaders were “toast,” boasting that “Trump got the last laugh,” and repeatedly describing the campaign as one in which targets were “hunted down and killed.” He went so far as to characterize this approach as “negotiating with bombs.” Secretary Rubio reinforced this posture, referring to Iranian leaders as “religious fanatic lunatics” and stating that those who once engaged diplomatically with the United States

were now “no longer on planet Earth.” When these remarks are placed in the broader equation of diplomacy, commerce, and international order, they reveal something far deeper than policy—they expose a mindset. A mindset in which the elimination of leadership is celebrated, where human beings are reduced to targets, and their deaths to rhetorical victories. The language—“wiped out,” “toast,” “hunted,” “no longer on planet Earth”—is not merely undiplomatic; it is profoundly cruel, shockingly heartless, and reflective of an extraordinary level of hubris. It suggests a worldview in which power grants the right not only to kill, but to celebrate killing.

Yet, strikingly, Iran’s official responses have largely avoided descending into similar linguistic hostility. While firm and assertive, Iranian leadership has generally refrained from using overtly dehumanizing language against American or Israeli leaders. This asymmetry in discourse reveals another dimension of the paradox: the side with overwhelming military superiority often adopts the most aggressive rhetoric, while the targeted state attempts to retain diplomatic restraint.

Another dimension of this conflict lies in the proportionality of violence, and here the numbers tell a far more revealing story than rhetoric. In Iran alone, approximately 3,486 people have been killed, including 1,568 civilians and at least 236 children and more than 20,000 wounded. Lebanon has reported over 1,200 deaths, including at least 124 children, as Israeli strikes intensified across its territory. In stark contrast, Israel reports 19 civilian deaths, alongside a small number of military casualties, while the United States has recorded 13 military deaths and no significant civilian losses on its own soil. Elsewhere, countries such as Iraq have reported around 100 deaths, with additional casualties scattered across Gulf states, Syria, and other affected regions.

If terrorism is defined as violence against civilians to achieve political objectives, then the clarity of labeling becomes increasingly blurred. Can a state responsible for large-scale civilian destruction still claim exclusive moral authority? Or does power itself redefine morality?

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis  
**Qamar Bashir**

## When rainbow meets sunshine: Galiyat becomes a living postcard

A gentle spell of rain followed by rainbow and radiant sunshine has transformed the lush hills of Galiyat into a scene of rare beauty, drawing visitors from across the province to witness nature in its most enchanting form.

From Thandyani to Nathiagali, Bagnotar to Ayubia, the Galiyat valley is alive with movement and colour after last night rain.

The overnight showers have washed the landscape clean, leaving behind glistening leaves, emerald slopes, and air so fresh it seems almost untouched.

At dawn, a soft mist lingers over pine-covered hills, slowly lifting as golden sunlight filters through drifting clouds.

Streams, now fuller and clearer, wind through the valleys like ribbons of glass, reflecting the sky above. Every corner offers a picture-perfect moment.

Families picnic under open skies, children laugh as they play along walking tracks, and couples stroll hand-in-hand through rain-washed meadows. Photographers pause at every turn, trying to capture fleeting rainbows stretching across green hillsides.

“I visited Thandyani before, but I have never seen it beautiful like this,” said Haseeb Khan, a visitor from Peshawar. “The rain makes everything come alive, and when the sun comes out, the whole valley seems to glow in colours.”

In Ayubia, the energy is equally vibrant where tourists from Punjab were also seen in substantial numbers where they are exploring forest trails, while families gather near the famous chairlift, eager for panoramic views of the revitalized landscape.

Among them was Zeeshan Khan, who arrived early Sunday with his family. For him, the trip was more than a getaway but was a chance to reconnect with nature.

As his family prepared to hike the scenic Miranjani-Nathia Gali trail, Zeeshan paused to take in the moment as sunlight breaking through clouds, cool winds brushing past, and the distant echo of laughter.

“Ayubia feels magical after the last night heavy rain,” he said, watching his son play nearby. “It’s not just about travel but it’s about making memories.”

Across the region, similar scenes unfold in Galiyat. Friends trek through forest paths, families share simple meals, and the aroma of chapli kebabs and freshly grilled barbecue fills the crisp mountain air.

For local businesses, the surge in visitors has brought renewed hope. Hotels are nearing full occupancy, roadside tea stalls are bustling, and handicraft vendors are welcoming a steady stream of customers.

“This is the season we wait for,” said Sajid Abbasi, a shopkeeper in Nathia Gali. “When tourists are happy, everyone benefits.”

Officials saw the growing influx as a promising sign for the region’s tourism future. Efforts are underway to restore hiking trails, develop natural sites, and expand eco-tourism infrastructure to attract both local and international visitors.



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

## A Global-Standard Model from Gilgit-Baltistan for Youth Mental Health

Set against the dramatic landscapes of Gilgit-Baltistan—home to towering peaks, clear rivers, and enchanting valleys—the region reflects both natural splendour and the resilience of its people. This breathtaking environment, coupled with a responsive governance structure, creates a unique foundation for progressive social initiatives. Yet, alongside this charm, a pressing challenge has emerged: youth mental health.

While celebrated for its serene environment, many young people in Gilgit-Baltistan face stress, anxiety, and emotional instability. Limited access to specialized services, social stigma, and gaps in awareness intensify these challenges.

In response, the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan, in partnership with Faisalabad Medical University (FMU), launched the “Growing Minds Support Services – Student Mental Health & Suicide Prevention Initiative.” This collaboration reflects a global-standard approach, integrating policy leadership, academic expertise, and community engagement to address a complex public health concern.

At the institutional level, FMU has demonstrated remarkable agility and leadership by developing comprehensive modules for mental health screening, early identification, and teacher training. The 10-day Training of Trainers (ToT) programme equips educators with evidence-based tools to detect early warning signs and provide immediate psychosocial support. By positioning teachers as front-line responders, mental health care begins where students spend most of their time—within classrooms and campuses.

The Chief Secretary of Gilgit-Baltistan, Mr Abrar Mirza, has shown visionary leadership by prioritizing the empowerment of youth through

impactful initiatives. His support for programs focused on mental health, counseling services, and awareness campaigns demonstrates a deep understanding of the challenges faced by young people today. His efforts are fostering a resilient, confident, and productive generation, laying the groundwork for a healthier society.

Equally significant is the role of FMU’s Vice-Chancellor, Dr Zafar Chaudhry, whose strategic governance has strengthened the university’s engagement with this initiative. His commitment to academic excellence and socially responsible programs ensures that FMU not only provides technical and academic support but also contributes to sustainable frameworks for youth mental health.

A key pillar of this initiative is the leadership of eminent psychiatrist Dr Imtiaz Dogar, Head of Psychiatry and Behavioural Science, Allied Hospital II, who has served twice as President of the Pakistan Psychiatric Society and represented the SAARC Psychiatric Society multiple times. His clinical expertise and strategic vision enhance the credibility of the program. Under his guidance, the initiative is implementing advanced screening protocols, structured referral pathways, and targeted therapeutic interventions, ensuring a culturally sensitive and sustainable mental health framework.

To contextualize rehabilitation within mental health systems, one must acknowledge the pioneering work of Fountain House in Pakistan. This initiative adopts a multi-dimensional framework encompassing early diagnosis, accessible counseling, family and community engagement, and economic empowerment through skills training. Critical to success is dismantling stigma and fostering an environment where mental health is openly discussed and addressed without fear or discrimination.

Globally, youth mental health is recognized as a defining challenge of the 21st century. Countries like the United States and the United Kingdom employ technologically advanced and system-wide approaches, including telepsychiatry, AI-driven screening tools, digital therapy platforms, and school-integrated counseling services. Telehealth in the U. S. has revolutionized access to mental health care, particularly in rural regions, while the U. K. embeds mental health services within educational institutions through structured national frameworks.

The Gilgit-Baltistan initiative aligns with these global practices while remaining rooted in local realities. Strategic partnerships, visionary leadership, and academic excellence drive meaningful change. More importantly, it reflects a fundamental principle: investing in youth mental health is not just a social responsibility but a strategic imperative for sustainable development. A particularly noteworthy aspect of the program is the planned establishment of around 20 psychological support units, offering structured online counseling sessions. This hybrid model—combining physical outreach with digital connectivity—addresses the geographical constraints of the region and aligns with global best practices in tele-mental health.

By prioritizing mental well-being, fostering resilience, and enabling young individuals to realize their full potential, Gilgit-Baltistan is establishing a replicable model for regions facing similar challenges. Strategic leadership, institutional support, and expert guidance ensure that the program is not only comprehensive but sustainable.

In an era where mental health is increasingly recognized as integral to human development, initiatives like this stand as a testament to what can be achieved through commitment, innovation, and compassionate governance.

The writer is Policy Analyst | Former Professor & Chairman, Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF).



Analysis  
**Professor Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif**

## My PhD Journey: A Story of Persistence, Growth, and Discovery

Embarking on a PhD is never just an academic decision; it is a life-changing commitment. My journey toward earning a Doctor of Philosophy began when I submitted the admission form in September 2017 and enrolled in April 2018 at QUEST Nawab Shah. I appeared in the GAT Subject NTS for admission and qualified for admission. There was a time when

the idea of pursuing a PhD felt both exciting and intimidating. Today, as I reflect on my journey, I realize it has been one of the most challenging yet rewarding chapters of my life. Each of these accomplishments strengthened my confidence and deepened my expertise. My perfectly right time research area was suggested by my dearest friend, Dr. Azeem Ayaz Meerani. He suggested a few fruitful points about the topic and proposal drafting, and indeed the topic is suitable as per need and time. What truly pushed me toward a PhD was our down-to-earth friends Dr. Sarang Karim Khoso and Najam U Din Sohu, and my dream to be well-educated, serve my community, and be a good human being. That was the turning point when I decided to leap into the world of research.

Choosing a research topic was not as straightforward as I had imagined. After exploring several ideas, I finally committed to my topic under the guidance of my Supervisor. At its core, I found myself deeply interested in the Water Quality field, using IoT and AI technology.

Some unforgettable moments during my PhD studies were when my father was a cardiac patient, I attended most of the exams and classes during my father’s hospitalization period, the COVID-19 disturbance, the dangerous floods in 2022 July to October disrupted Pakistan very much, and when nothing seemed to work.

So Much Lucky Got Reimbursement Tuition fees from the PM Pakistan Scheme in Master’s as well as in PhD, received the PM Laptop, and PM Muhammad Nawaz Sharif Signed Certificates of Appreciation of Laptop & Reimbursement. I bear all other expenses of my M. E and PhD myself on my part. There were moments of doubt when I questioned my abilities and my decision to pursue this path. But each obstacle taught me something valuable.

A PhD is not just about the final thesis; it’s about the small victories along the way. I still remember the feeling of getting my first papers accepted, completing a tough phase. These moments kept me going and reminded me why I started. There were days filled with excitement, like when my two publications were published in the W category and third in IF.

I learned how to stay patient when progress is slow, embrace failure as part of growth, manage time and priorities effectively, believe in myself, even when things felt uncertain, and most importantly, I learned Patience every time, everything has its own time.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis  
**Dr. Mushtaqe Ahmed Rahu**

# Gilani Praises NAB's Role in Promoting Prosperity, Cites Annual Report

**Kiran Asim**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has said that efforts to eliminate corruption and strengthen transparency are aligned with the global agenda, particularly the United Nations' 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which underscore the importance of strong institutions and reduced corruption for sustainable development. He expressed these views during a meeting with Chairman NAB Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, in his chamber at Parliament House Islamabad.

Highlighting the pivotal role of the National Accountability Bureau, the Chairman Senate appreciated its contribution towards promoting good governance and national prosperity. He acknowledged with profound appreciation the Bureau's relentless efforts in combating corruption and upholding transparency and accountability across all sectors of Pakistan.

Chairman Gilani remarked, "Throughout my journey, from serving as Prime Minister to Speaker of the National Assembly and now as Chairman Senate, I have consistently championed the ideals of transparency and accountability." He emphasized that "these are not merely administrative concepts but, in fact, the two main pillars upon which good governance stands."



Referring to NAB's Annual Report 2025, Chairman Gilani termed it an exceptionally significant document that provides valuable insights into the Bureau's performance and strategic direction. He also highlighted that the Senate of Pakistan publishes its own annual report, reflecting a shared institutional commitment to transparency

and accountability and ensuring that the public remains informed about performance and progress.

Chairman Gilani reiterated that NAB's continued commitment to combating corruption and ensuring accountability is vital for Pakistan's progress and stability. He assured that the Senate of Pakistan stands firmly

with NAB in its critical mission to achieve a truly corruption-free Pakistan.

During the meeting Chairman Senate standing committee on Finance Senator Saleem Mandviwala, Chairperson Senate Functional Committee on Human Rights Senator Samina Mumtaz Zehri were also present.

## Pakistan and Tajikistan explore enhanced cooperation in legal and justice sector



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Republic of Tajikistan to Pakistan, H. E. Sharifzoda Yusuf Toir, along with his delegation, called on Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Law and Justice, at the Ministry of Law and Justice, Islamabad today.

During the meeting, both sides discussed the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Tajikistan, underscoring the shared cultural heritage, historical linkages, and mutual goodwill that form the foundation of bilateral ties. The discussions also highlighted the importance of further strengthening cooperation across legal and institutional domains.

A key area of deliberation was a proposal to sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on mutual legal cooperation between the Ministry of Law and Justice of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and the Ministry of Justice of the Republic of Tajikistan. The proposed MoU aims to promote collaboration in legal affairs, facilitate exchange of expertise, and enhance institutional linkages between the two countries.

Both sides emphasized expanding cooperation in the legal and justice domain through exchange of legal experts, judges, and professionals; capacity building and specialized training programs; and sharing of best practices in areas such as commercial law, dispute resolution, and regulatory frameworks. Cooperation in the fields of arbitration, mediation, and cross-border dispute resolution was also highlighted as a key priority.

It was further noted that enhanced coordination between the two Ministries would contribute to improving access to justice, strengthening institutional efficiency, and promoting investor confidence by ensuring transparent and predictable legal systems.

The Honourable Minister appreciated the Ambassador's efforts in further deepening bilateral relations and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to enhancing engagement with Tajikistan across all sectors, particularly in the legal and judicial spheres.

The meeting concluded on a positive note, with both sides agreeing to continue close coordination for finalization and early signing of the proposed MoU.

## Oman, Belarus sign healthcare cooperation roadmap

MUSCAT: Dr. Hilal Ali Al Sabti, Minister of Health, received today Alexander Khodzhaev, Minister of Health of the Republic of Belarus.

The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest and reviewed ways to expand the scope of partnership and cooperation between the two countries across various health-related domains.

The two sides signed a roadmap concerning cooperation in the field of healthcare and pharmaceuticals, which encompasses general guidelines for the legal framework of cooperation, as well as key areas including the regulation of medical care, medical education, pharmaceuticals and medical equipment.

Dr. Hilal affirmed that international cooperation between the Sultanate of Oman and other nations serves as a fundamental pillar for benefiting from the experiences and expertise of other countries across various fields.

# Nadeem Afzal Chan Marks Bhutto Death Anniversary Plans in Faisalabad Visit

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Pakistan People's Party Central Information Secretary Nadeem Afzal Chan visited Faisalabad, where he met important leaders at the residence of the party's Divisional Information Secretary Umaima Iftikhar.

Speaking on the occasion, Nadeem Afzal Chan said that this time on April 4, the 47th death anniversary of Quaid-e-Awam Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto will be celebrated with simplicity but utmost devotion and respect at every district headquarters



across the country, including Punjab.

During the meeting, while political and organizational matters were discussed, some pleasant moments were also witnessed.

Central Information Secretary Nadeem Afzal Chan congratulated Divisional Information Secretary Umaima Iftikhar on her marriage and also presented sweets.

The current political situation in the country, the party's organizational matters and future strategy was discussed in detail in the meeting.

# SPDC and SPARC Call for Increase in Cigarette Taxes in Federal Budget 2026-27

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC) in collaboration with Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child (SPARC) launched the Pakistan Tobacco Fact Sheet to highlight the cigarette taxes contribution for Federal Budget 2026-27 to protect public health and strengthen fiscal outcomes.

Presenting the key findings, Muhammad Asif Iqbal, Managing Director of SPDC, highlighted that tobacco use remains a major public health crisis in Pakistan, causing over 192,000 deaths annually. He noted that the economic health burden of smoking related diseases is estimated at Rs 1,835 billion in 2024-25, far exceeding the Rs 266 billion collected in tobacco taxes.

"Pakistan continues to have some of the lowest cigarette prices in the region, largely due to stagnant tax rates and declining real taxation," he said.

Mr. Iqbal further stated that federal excise duty (FED) rates on cigarettes have not increased since February 2023, resulting in reduced tax share in retail prices and increased affordability, particularly of low cost brands. SPDC recommends increasing FED by Rs 35 per pack on economy brands and Rs 21 on premium brands, alongside a gradual move toward a unified tax tier structure.

Mr. Nelson Azeem, Parliamentary Secretary of the Ministry of National Health Services Regulations and Coordination (NHSR&C), stressed the serious consequences of tobacco use on public health and its widespread

impact on society. "The health of our future generations is at stake, and this is a challenge we cannot afford to overlook," he stated. "The repercussions of inaction are severe, not just in terms of health, but also in terms of the economic and social costs involved."

Speaking at the event, Dr Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Member of the National Assembly stressed the importance of tobacco taxation as a public health measure. She highlighted that stronger fiscal policies can play a critical role in reducing preventable diseases and easing pressure on Pakistan's healthcare system. "Increasing tobacco taxes is not just a revenue measure; it is a vital investment in the health and future of our population," she stated.

Mr. Mohammad Riaz Fatyana,

Member of the National Assembly strongly urged the government to make this tax increase a priority in the 2026-27 budget. He emphasized that raising the FED on cigarettes will not only support economic growth but also save lives by reducing tobacco use. By implementing this measure, Pakistan can take a significant step towards a healthier and more prosperous future.

Dr. Khalil Ahmad, Program Manager of SPARC, emphasized the alarming rise in tobacco use among youth, noting that lower priced cigarettes disproportionately attract young and low income smokers. "Higher taxes are one of the most effective tools to reduce youth initiation. Global evidence shows that price increases significantly discourage smoking among young people," he said.



According to SPDC estimates, the proposed FED tax increase can generate an additional Rs 51 billion in revenue, prevent 369,000 youth from initiating smoking, and 271,000 fewer smokers. The speakers also urged that recent price hike in oil prices due to the overall regional situation has severely impacted the general public and overall

economy, it will be more beneficial to focus on increasing the cigarette taxation measures instead of increasing the prices other basic necessity items. They called on policymakers to take bold action in the upcoming budget to ensure tobacco taxation supports public health goals and aligns with international best practices.

# The Manufactured Narrative: Is Pakistan Really a "Slave State"?

In recent years, a persistent and emotionally charged narrative has gained traction within certain segments of society: that Pakistan is somehow a "slave" of the United States. This claim, repeated endlessly across social media platforms and amplified by influencers and political rhetoric, deserves serious scrutiny—because when examined against facts, it collapses under its own contradictions.

Pakistan is the only Islamic country that developed nuclear weapons and conducted nuclear tests with undeniable confidence and sovereignty. This was not merely a scientific achievement; it was a declaration of strategic independence in a world dominated by global powers. A "slave state" does not defy international pressure, sanctions, and threats to secure its national defense.

Yet ironically, within Pakistan itself, certain disruptive elements continue to propagate the idea that the country is subservient to Washington.

Let us consider another reality:

Pakistan remains the only Islamic country where the United States does not maintain a permanent military base. In contrast, many countries—both in the Muslim world and beyond—host American military installations openly. Despite this, narratives are selectively constructed to portray Pakistan as dependent.

Interestingly, American analysts themselves frequently appear in their own media acknowledging that Pakistan's military leadership has remained deeply loyal to national interests. Many have openly admitted that it was precisely this independence that complicated U.S. objectives in Afghanistan and contributed to its eventual failure there. If anything, these assessments challenge—not support—the "slave state" argument.

Pakistan is also often cited as having played a role in sensitive nuclear developments in the region, including alleged cooperation with countries like Iran. Whether one agrees with these claims or not, one thing is clear: such actions, if they occurred, would

be impossible without institutional awareness. Again, this contradicts the idea of a state acting under foreign control.

Moreover, Pakistan has never formally recognized Israel, despite sustained international pressure. For decades, this position has remained consistent, rooted in ideological and geopolitical considerations. A country truly under foreign domination would not be able to maintain such a stance against the wishes of powerful allies.

Pakistan has also demonstrated its strategic autonomy through its defense capabilities. It has developed and deployed systems that neutralized regional threats, including those backed by global powers. This ability to counter adversaries—sometimes those being strengthened to balance against other rising powers like China—further reflects independence,

not submission.

Speaking of China, Pakistan today stands as one of its closest and most significant strategic and military partners in the world. From defense cooperation to economic initiatives like CPEC, the relationship reflects a deliberate choice of alignment based on mutual interests. If Pakistan were truly a "client state" of the United States, such a deep and multifaceted partnership with China would not be possible.

Globally, defense analysts—including those from rival states such as India—often acknowledge the cohesion and institutional strength of Pakistan's military. Some describe it as the "binding force" that has held the country together through decades of internal and external challenges. This perspective stands in stark contrast to domestic narratives that attempt to delegitimize the same insti-

tution.

And yet, despite all these realities, a particular political discourse continues to insist that Pakistan is enslaved, and that its armed forces operate at the behest of foreign powers.

This raises an important question: Why is this narrative being pushed so aggressively?

The answer lies not in facts, but in influence. Through social media ecosystems, certain influencers and political actors have systematically planted seeds of distrust among the younger generation. Complex geopolitical realities are reduced to simplistic slogans. Emotional manipulation replaces informed debate. Over time, repetition transforms perception into "truth," regardless of evidence.

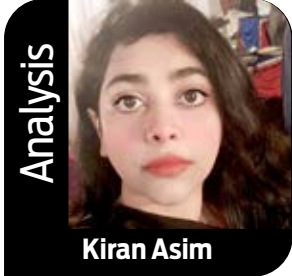
As a result, we are witnessing a troubling inversion of values. Soldiers who sacrifice their lives daily for the defense and dignity of the nation are labeled as traitors. Meanwhile, individuals who spend their time constructing anti-state narratives online are celebrated as patriots.

This distortion is not just misleading—it is dangerous.

Criticism of state institutions is not only legitimate but necessary in any democracy. However, criticism must be grounded in facts, not fueled by propaganda or external agendas. When narratives are built on selective information and emotional manipulation, they weaken national cohesion and undermine public trust.

Pakistan, like any country, has its challenges, contradictions, and policy missteps. But to reduce its entire identity to that of a "slave state" is not analysis—it is a deliberate misrepresentation.

The need of the hour is intellectual honesty. Citizens must question, verify, and think critically rather than accepting viral narratives at face value. Patriotism is not blind loyalty, but neither is it blind cynicism. In the end, the strength of a nation lies not only in its military or strategic alliances, but in the clarity and conviction of its people. And that clarity begins by distinguishing fact from fiction.



**Kiran Asim**

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
152,011.26	155,511.56
Day's High	Day's Low
152,272.63	150,022.43
Index Value	Change
16,030,106,881	-3500.30
Percentage	Time
-2.25%	2 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,436.29	+71.50
Percentage	Time
+0.69%	2 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
46,438.48	-127.26
Percentage	Time
-0.27%	2 Apr, 1:31 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
52,463.27	-1,276.41
Percentage	Time
-2.38%	2 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	188.78	193.77
Bahrain Dinar	728.99	740.15
Canadian Dollar	198.02	204.50
China Yuan	36.50	37.65
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	321.19	328.55
Hong Kong Dollar	35.01	36.01
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.40	901.45
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	156.66	162.57
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	719.91	731.95
Qatari Riyal	73.81	74.45
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.50
Singapore Dollar	213.93	219.85
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.20
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	368.15	377.35
US Dollar	279.1	280.20

# SECP Fast-Tracks Corporate Account Opening with Askari Bank, NayaPay

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan has signed Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) with Askari Bank Limited and NayaPay to make it easier and faster for companies to open corporate bank accounts.

The MoU signing ceremony was attended by SECP Commissioners Mr. Muzzafar Ahmed Mirza, Mr. Imtiaz Haider, and Mr. Ali Farid, along with senior officials of the participating organizations.

The MoU was signed by Commissioner SECP Mr. Muzzafar Ahmed Mirza, Askari Bank's Group Head Retail Banking Mr. Shaikh Raashed Rauf, and NayaPay's CEO Mr. Danish Ahmad Lakhani. The ceremony was attended by SECP Chairperson Dr. Kabir A. Sidhu, President Askari Bank Mr. Zia Ijaz, and senior officials.



This step is part of SECP's "Paper to Platform" initiative. The aim is to digitize processes and improve ease of doing business. It also builds on SECP's earlier partnerships with financial institutions.

Speaking at the event, Chairperson SECP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said that close coordination between SECP and financial institutions will help provide complete digital onboarding for businesses. He said this will reduce barriers, improve transparency, and support financial inclusion.

Officials of Askari Bank and NayaPay welcomed the initiative. They said it will not only make account opening easier but also support future cooperation in lending and digital financial services.

Earlier, SECP signed similar agreements with Mobilink Microfinance Bank Limited, Easypaisa Bank Limited, Mashreq Bank, and Raqami Islamic Digital Bank Limited.

The initiative will help companies start operations faster after registration. It will also strengthen links between banks and capital markets and support a more efficient and transparent business environment in Pakistan.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with the US Chargé d'Affaires to Pakistan, Ms. Natalie Baker, at the Finance Division on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Pakistan govt hikes petrol price to Rs458, diesel to Rs520 per litre



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The government on Thursday sharply increased petroleum prices, raising petrol to Rs458.41 per litre and high-speed diesel to Rs520.35 per litre.

The announcement was made at a press conference by Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik along-

side Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The latest hike marks a significant jump from the previous notified prices earlier in March, when petrol was priced at Rs321.17 per litre and HSD at Rs335.86 per litre, indicating an increase of over Rs137.24 per litre in petrol, and Rs184.49 per litre in HSD.

## Veon CEO lauds Mobilink Bank's 35% green energy transition

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank is setting a new benchmark for sustainable banking in Pakistan, rapidly advancing its ESG-led transformation to become the country's most forward-looking, responsible, and future-ready financial institution. With more than one-third of its nationwide branch network now powered by renewable energy, the Bank is decisively leading the shift toward low-carbon, inclusive finance at scale.

During a recent visit to Mobilink Bank, Kaan Terzioglu, Chief Executive Officer and Board Member of VEON Group, reviewed the Bank's digital-first operating model, customer-centric innovations, and sustainability initiatives. He engaged with customers and observed firsthand how Mobilink Bank is delivering secure, accessible, and future-ready financial services at scale.

Kaan Terzioglu, Chief Executive Officer of VEON, said, "Mobilink Bank's progress in embedding sustainability into its operations is both timely and impactful. The scale at which the Bank is advancing green financing, along-



side expanding digital financial access, highlights its commitment to responsible growth.

Commenting on the Bank's direction, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, President and CEO Mobilink Bank, said: "Sustainability is not a parallel agenda for Mobilink Bank; rather, it is the engine

of our growth. We are building Pakistan's leading bank for small businesses through a model that is digital-first, ESG-driven, and built for long-term impact. From green financing to renewable-powered operations, we are embedding responsibility into every layer of our business."

## Schools need to be on the frontline to empower autistic populations

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN: Pakistan's march towards autism inclusivity needs to be powered through the education sector, as was concluded by Kreative Kinder Haus's conference 'Breaking Barriers: Inclusive Education for Autistic Learners' held on account of World Autism Awareness Day 2026.

"We work with children who are all gifted in their own capacities, and are proud of the young, talented individuals they continue to become,



which is testament to our team's and community's hard work and belief in this cause" said Sabeen Bilal, Founder of Kreative Kinder Haus, stated during her address. "Unfortunately, Pakistan lacks a formal database regarding its neurodivergent population, and with most numbers being mere extrapolations, there is no clue as to how many autistic individuals currently exist in the country, where they lie on the spectrum, or what interventions are being used to make their lives better" she added.

of the young, talented individuals they continue to become,

## L'Oréal Pakistan Launches Women of Worth, A National Platform Celebrating Women Creating Impact

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: L'Oréal Pakistan has announced the launch of Women of Worth Pakistan, a national recognition platform designed to celebrate women whose work is creating measurable impact across society. The initiative aims to spotlight women whose leadership, resilience, and sustained contributions are shaping Pakistan's social, cultural, scientific, and

economic future.

For over seventeen years, L'Oréal Pakistan has played a defining role in shaping the country's beauty, fashion, and empowerment landscape through initiatives such as PFDC L'Oréal Paris Bridal Week, Ambassador of Fashion, Beauty for a Better Life, and digital literacy programmes. Women of Worth represents the next evolution of that journey—expanding the idea of beauty beyond appearance to

recognize the impact women create in communities, institutions, and across industries.

Commenting on the launch, Rehan Saeed, Executive General Manager at L'Oréal Pakistan, said "For many years, L'Oréal Pakistan has celebrated beauty and creativity in this country. With Women of Worth, we are expanding that definition to honor the women whose impact is shaping Pakistan's future. This platform is

designed as a long-term national recognition body that celebrates contribution, courage, and leadership across sectors. By building a credible and transparent framework for recognition, we hope to spotlight inspiring stories that deserve to be seen, heard, and remembered."

Nominations will open through multiple channels later this month. The inaugural Women of Worth cycle will run from April to July 2026.



# PSB Board endorses reform agenda, approves key decisions

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has endorsed a comprehensive reform and development agenda aimed at revitalizing the country's sports sector, while approving major policy and financial decisions to strengthen governance, athlete development and infrastructure.

PSB Board endorses reform agenda, approves key decisions

The decisions were taken at the 36th meeting of the PSB Board, chaired by Federal Minister for Inter-Provincial Coordination and PSB President Rana Sana Ullah Khan, held at the PSB Headquarters.

PSB Board endorses reform agenda, approves key decisions

Director General PSB Yasir Pirzada presented the bi-annual performance report for July–December 2025, outlining progress in governance reforms, infrastructure development, athlete facilitation and international participation. The Board appreciated the efforts of the PSB management and unanimously approved the report, describing it as a reflection of improved



institutional performance and strategic direction.

In a landmark move, the Board approved the Long-Term Athlete Development Programme (LTADP), marking a shift from an activity-based framework to a performance-driven model aligned with international best practices and Olympic cycles. Under the new frame-

work, all national sports federations have been directed to submit four-year development plans within 90 days, with future financial support to be linked to measurable performance and compliance standards.

The Board also approved a substantial increase in the PSB's budget, recommending an enhancement from approx-

imately Rs1.2 billion to Rs4.9 billion to meet the growing requirements of athlete training, international exposure, coaching and sports infrastructure. The proposal will be forwarded to the Prime Minister for final approval.

Reviewing governance issues, the Board stressed strict adherence to tenure regulations for office-bearers of sports federations in line with the National Sports Policy 2005. It underscored the importance of ensuring transparency and fairness in electoral processes and proposed the formulation of standardized election guidelines.

Reiterating its firm stance against doping, the Board adopted a zero-tolerance policy, particularly in light of recent violations linked to officials of the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation. It emphasized the need for strict enforcement of anti-doping regulations to safeguard the integrity of sports in the country.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment to promoting merit, transparency and professionalism across all tiers of sports administration in Pakistan.

# Shadab's all-round prowess, Sameer's unbeaten 82 power Islamabad past Quetta

Tahir Amin Malik

Sameer Minhas's unbeaten 82 and Shadab Khan's 69 not out with the bat and three for 23 with the ball helped Islamabad United cruise past Quetta Gladiators by eight wickets as they chased the 184-run target with 10 balls to spare in the first game of the third double-header of HBL Pakistan Super League II here at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Thursday.

Islamabad moved up to fourth in the table with three points, just behind third-placed Peshawar Zalmi who edge them on net run rate.

With United 61 for two in 6.5 overs after Abrar struck to remove Devon Conway (18, 19b, 2x4s, 1x6) and Andries Gous (2, 4b) in his successive overs, Shadab stitched an unbeaten match-winning 128-run partnership for the third wicket with Sameer to take their side home.

The duo took some time to settle in before striking 22 off Tom Curran in the 12th over. Sameer bagged a boundary off the first ball while Shadab hit two fours and a six.

At 113 for two after 13 overs, Shadab and Sameer ran riot, producing 76 runs off the next 5.2 overs, taking their side home comfortably.

Shadab struck Usman Tariq



for a six in the 14th over that gained 12 runs before hitting another six and a boundary off Ahmed Daniyal in the next, an

over that gained 16 runs.

The duo thumped another six and a boundary off Usman in the 13-run 16th over, before doing the same to Abrar in the next one, getting 14 runs.

Sameer brought an end to the contest in style as he hit Ahmed for a six over fine leg in the 19th over. Sameer shone with 82 off 48 balls; his highest maiden half-century in all competitive cricket, aided by eight fours and three sixes.

Shadab backed his bowling performance as he struck five fours and four sixes in his 39-ball 69 not out.

Earlier, Quetta Gladiators had recovered from a precarious position courtesy an unbeaten 90-run partnership between Hasan Nawaz and Tom Curran to post 183 for five.

With Quetta 93 for five after 11.5 overs, top-scorer Hasan Nawaz and Tom Curran rebuilt the innings with a steady rotation of strike as the duo gathered 16 runs off the next three overs.

The pair then broke the shackles, plundering 21 runs off the 16th over of the innings bowled by Imad Wasim, with Hasan and Curran striking a four and a six each.

The two then ransacked 20 runs off the penultimate over, before scoring another 11 off the last to lift their side to a fighting total.

Batting first, captain Saud Shakeel and Shmyl Hussain provided an explosive start, racing to 50 in 26 balls. Shmyl fell for 21 off 15 in the fifth over, caught off Salman Irshad's back-of-a-length delivery.

Saud continued fluently, striking three fours and three sixes in a classy 42 off 26 before Shadab had him caught at backward point via a leading edge.

Shadab then brought his side back into the contest as he clean-bowled Ben McDermott and followed it up next ball by having debutant Bevon Jacobs caught and bowled for a golden duck.

Khawaja Mohammad Nafay had already fallen to Imad Wasim moments earlier and in the space of 14 balls, Quetta had crumbled from 71 for two to 93 for five.

Scores in brief:

Islamabad United beat Quetta Gladiators by eight wickets at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore

Quetta Gladiators 183-5, 20 overs (Hasan Nawaz 66 not out, Saud Shakeel 42, Tom Curran 29 not out, Shmyl Hussain 21; Shadab Khan 3-23)

Islamabad United 189-2, 18.2 overs (Sameer Minhas 82 not out, Shadab Khan 69 not out; Abrar Ahmed 2-29)

Player of the match: Shadab Khan (Islamabad United)

# Finance Minister holds dialogue with ABF on economic reforms, business climate

Continued from Page 8

The discussion also focused on sector-specific issues, the press release said adding representatives from the pharmaceutical sector highlighted the potential to significantly increase exports with regulatory reforms, noting that the industry could expand exports from approximately USD 1 billion to USD 3-5 billion without requiring fiscal subsidies.

They stressed the importance of modernizing regulations and ensuring consistency in pricing decisions.

Participants from the IT and services sectors underscored the need to facilitate foreign exchange retention and incentivize export-oriented growth. Issues related to digital payments, corporate card usage, and taxation of cross-border transactions were also

raised, with stakeholders calling for streamlined processes to support digitalization and ease of doing business.

The delegation shared a range of proposals related to tax policy and the overall business environment, including perspectives on tax structure, incentives, and administrative processes.

They also highlighted the importance of continued reforms in customs and tax administration, as well as further improvements in digital systems and procedural efficiency to facilitate ease of doing business.

Senator Aurangzeb acknowledged the valuable input provided by the delegation and reiterated the government's commitment to fostering a business-friendly environment.

He assured participants that many of the proposals are already under

consideration and that the upcoming budget would reflect a clear direction toward tax rationalization and regulatory reforms.

He emphasized that policy-making is being aligned with broader economic value considerations, with a focus on promoting exports, encouraging investment, and ensuring long-term sustainability. He also highlighted ongoing efforts to separate tax policy from revenue collection functions to improve transparency and efficiency.

Towards the end, both sides agreed to maintain close engagement and continue dialogue to support Pakistan's economic transformation and attract increased foreign investment.

The Finance Minister invited the Forum to share further actionable proposals, particularly in light of

emerging regional opportunities, to help position Pakistan as a competitive investment destination.

The delegation comprised senior representatives of leading multinational and domestic companies, including Osman Khalid Waheed (CEO, Ferozsons Laboratories Limited); President, ABF, Dr. Mazhar Qureshi (Country CEO, Stewart Pakistan), Ahmad Irfan Khan (CEO, Jockey Pakistan), Vaseem Anvar (CEO, ECHO West), Dr. Faisal Hashmi (Director, Coca-Cola Pakistan), Khurram Shah (Director, PepsiCo), Usman Ashraf (CEO, Hardee's MDS Foods), Malik Bajwa (CEO, Bajco Group), Sohail Nisar (Director, Millat Tractors Limited), Ms. Ayesha Haq (Executive Director, Pharma Bureau, representing Abbott Pakistan Limited), and Robert Newsome.

# Matloob Ahmed lead first day of 12th J.A. Zaman Golf Championship

Tahir Amin Malik

The first round ended with full glory for the leading professional player M. Matloob Ahmed of Lahore Garrison Golf Club. The way he played was magical. his shot making was perfect and unbelievable was the way he putted on the greens. and the resultant score of gross 64, eight under par reflected control and composure. placed in second position behind malloob was zahir Khan of Peshawar golf club. he managed a score of 66, six under par and statistically two shots behind the champion m.matloob. the players functioned like true champions and treated each stroke with commanding ability and lot of command. the birdies were there with tremendous regulating and made these superb players look unbeatable. for the sake of competition the other skilled ones seemed to look like pigmies although their performances were certainly appreciable. and these well known players had rounds like waqar Hassan of margalla 69, Muhammad shabbir the defending champion also 69, and another excellent player m.saqib of Lahore Garrison at 69. a few more competitors are jafal Hussain at 69, followed by Adam Syed at a good looking 70, two under par. the match continues tomorrow with immense competitive vigor.



Matloob Ahmed of Lahore Garrison Golf Club. The way he played was magical. his shot making was perfect and unbelievable was the way he putted on the greens. and the resultant score of gross 64, eight under par reflected control and composure. placed in second position behind malloob was zahir Khan of Peshawar golf club. he managed a score of 66, six under par and statistically two shots behind the champion m.matloob. the players functioned like true champions and treated each stroke with commanding ability and lot of command. the birdies were there with tremendous regulating and made these superb players look unbeatable. for the sake of competition the other skilled ones seemed to look like pigmies although their performances were certainly appreciable. and these well known players had rounds like waqar Hassan of margalla 69, Muhammad shabbir the defending champion also 69, and another excellent player m.saqib of Lahore Garrison at 69. a few more competitors are jafal Hussain at 69, followed by Adam Syed at a good looking 70, two under par. the match continues tomorrow with immense competitive vigor.

# PHF rejects 'fake' social media reports, warns of legal action

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Thursday strongly refuted what it termed as "fabricated and misleading" reports circulating on social media regarding its internal affairs, including alleged circulars and committee appointments.

In an official statement issued by its Media Cell, the federation clarified that several posts and news items being widely shared online over the past few days had no connection with reality and were based on misinformation.

The PHF emphasized that all official communications, including circulars and announcements, are issued strictly through its authorized platforms after due approval from the PHF President.

The federation also dismissed reports concerning the appointment of the selection and management committees, terming them as baseless and fake.

"The PHF categorically denies such news and reserves the right to initiate legal proceedings against individuals involved in spreading false information," the statement added.

# Are the USA and Israel Terrorists — or Is Iran?

Continued from Page 4

Historically, legitimacy has often been shaped not by actions alone, but by control over narrative. The ability to define terms, to repeat them through global media, and to embed them into public consciousness has allowed powerful nations to position themselves as arbiters of justice—even when their actions are contested.

The war has also exposed the strategic use of information. From the outset, claims that Iran's capabilities had been "90 percent degraded" were widely circulated. Yet, continued retaliatory strikes and sustained operational capacity challenge these assertions. The gap between declared success and observable reality highlights how information itself has become a weapon of war.

Iran, by contrast, has maintained a relatively consistent message: that any attack on its territory would be met with reciprocal force. Whether through threats to energy routes, regional strikes, or broader escalation signals, its actions have largely aligned with its stated doctrine. This consistency stands in contrast to the shifting narratives and evolving justifications presented

by its adversaries.

The Iran conflict is therefore not merely a military confrontation—it is a battle over definitions: of terrorism, legitimacy, and morality. It forces the world to confront uncomfortable truths about power and perception, and to question whether moral authority truly lies with those who possess the greatest force.

In the end, the paradox remains unresolved. A nation labeled as a terrorist state asserts its right to defend itself, while those waging war in the name of security claim moral superiority. Between these competing narratives lies a complex and often uncomfortable reality—one that cannot be reduced to slogans or labels.

The true measure of humanity is not in the ability to dominate, but in the capacity to uphold dignity even in conflict. If the language of war continues to strip away that dignity, then the line between justice and aggression will fade into obscurity. And perhaps that is the most dangerous truth of all.

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

# My PhD Journey: A Story of Persistence, Growth, and Discovery

Continued from Page 4

Beyond academics, this journey has been transformative on a personal level. I developed skills in Critical thinking and problem-solving. Time management and discipline. Academic writing and communication, and Collaboration and networking.

As I moved into the final phase of writing my thesis titled I experienced a mix of exhaustion, relief, and pride. Defending my work in 2024 was surreal. It was the moment where years of effort, struggle, and learning came together.

During compulsory & Elective subjects, my Class fellows were Mr. Saeed Ahmed, Dr. Mehboob Ali Jatoti, Dr. Ghullam Yameen Mallah, Ghullam Mustafa Khaskheli, Zulfiqar Ali Keerio, Dr. Marina Baloch, Mehdiia Mehmood Khand, Manzar Bashir Arain, Mr. Jairam Das Bathar, Najam Uddin Sohu, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Dahri, Dr. Baqir Ali Zardari, Aakasha Memon, Naveed Mohsin, Murk Chandio, Fatima Qureshi, Rajev Oad, Fozia Panhwar, and Dr. Safia Ameer Dahri.

Prominent Professors conducted our classes during

PhD Studies i-e Prof. Dr. Abdullah Saand, Dr. Shakeel Ahmed Kamboh, Dr. Abdul Fattah Chandio, Dr. Sarang Karim Khoso, Dr. Azeem Ayaz Meerani, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Dahri, Sayed Mazhar Ali Shah, Sarfraz Soomro, Pir Riaz Ahmed Assistant Director PGS, and Ghullam Shabir Lakhoo-Superintendent PGS, supported in whole journey in Masters as well

My Family, My Kind Hearted Supervisor Dr. Abdul Fattah Chandio, Dr. Sarang Karim Khoso, Dr. Azeem Ayaz Meerani, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Dr. Nisar Ahmed Dahri, Sayed Mazhar Ali Shah, Sarfraz Soomro, Pir Riaz Ahmed Assistant Director PGS, and Ghullam Shabir Lakhoo-Superintendent PGS, supported in whole journey in Masters as well

as in my PhD in difficult times, troubles, and played a vital role in my PhD Journey. Special thanks to Prof. Dr. Rasool Bux Mahar, Vice chancellor BBSUTSD Khairpur Mirs, for fruitful suggestions.

From 2018 to 2024, there was only one sentence pinned in my mind, "either I will complete my Journey or not, I don't know if I will do it or not".

Now, as I look ahead, I am excited about the future. I hope to get a Postdoc and continue working in Water Quality using advanced Digital Technologies. Relax, Peace of mind, contin-

uous one-week relaxation, even not touching the Laptop after completion of the PhD Journey. The PhD may be ending, but the journey of learning never will.

If there's one thing I would say to anyone considering a PhD, it's this: it's not an easy road, but it is worth it. This journey shaped me into a more resilient, curious, and confident individual. And for that, I will always be grateful. If I had to describe my PhD journey in one word, it would be transformational.

Unbelievable and can't imagine that I am highly thankful to my near and dear

friends and relatives who celebrated my Success and gave me a treat, a delicious Lunch and dinner on my PhD Completion, A marvelous and big start by Engr. Zeeshan Ali Gazar, Dr. Sarang Karim Khoso, Engr. Abdul Jabbar Khoso, Engr. Ali Murad & Saleh Khaskheli, Engr. Ghullam Murtaza Jatoti, Zahid Hussain Khoso, Engr. Sayed Mazhar Ali Shah, Hakim Ali Otho, Gulzar Ali Rahu, Gul Munir Otho, Ghullam Shabir Shaikh, all Subject Specialists of GHSS Kazi Ahmed, All Staff GHSS Kazi Ahmed, Ramzan Lashari Peaceful Supporting

Hands, my younger Brother Zeeshan Ali Rahu, Muhammad Ismail Rahu, Mumtaz Ali Dahri, Rizwan Mahar, Raja Ali Rahu, my cousin Khalid Hussain Rahu, Dr. Azeem Ayaz Meerani, cousin Ammar Yasir Rahu, Sarfraz & Rizwan Rind, Javed Ahmed Juno, Rizwan Mahar and few others.

A proud moment is to receive my PhD Degree from Muhammad Ismail Rahu, Minister of Universities and Boards, in the Convocation held on 20th December 2025. Finally, Dr. Prefix was added with my name.

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with the Pakistan Business Council (PBC) delegation led by Vice Chairman Mr. Ziad Bashir at the Finance Division, on Thursday.



Photo: PID

## Finance Minister holds dialogue with ABF on economic reforms, business climate

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, during a meeting with the American Business Forum (ABF) delegation here Thursday, highlighted improving macroeconomic indicators, ongoing reforms, and the government's commitment to a business-friendly environment.

The ABF delegation was led by its President, Osman Khalid Waheed, according to press release issued by the finance ministry.

The finance minister briefed participants on Pakistan's improving macroeconomic outlook, highlighting progress on the fiscal and external fronts, as well as constructive engagement with international financial institutions and development partners.

He noted that despite global uncertainties and regional challenges, the government remains committed to maintaining macroeconomic stability and pursuing structural reforms to support sustainable growth.

He apprised the participants of ongoing government efforts to manage energy sector challenges, strengthen supply chains, and ensure effective coordination across

key ministries through a high-level committee chaired by him.

He emphasized that the government is closely monitoring developments and remains fully engaged with both domestic and international stakeholders to safeguard economic stability.

The delegation members appreciated the government's reform agenda and shared a range of proposals aimed at

improving the overall business environment. Key areas of discussion included tax policy rationalization, reduction in compliance burden, incentivization of exports, and facilitation of foreign exchange inflows.

The delegation emphasized the need for predictable and consistent policies to encourage long-term investment.

Continue on Page 7

## Eight Indian proxy fighters killed in fierce border clash



## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: On 1 April 2026, movement of a group of khwarij along Pakistan-Afghanistan border in North Waziristan District was picked up by the security forces.

Own troops effectively engaged this group of khwarij. As a result of precise and skillful engagement, eight khwarij belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarij were sent to hell. Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from Indian sponsored killed khwarij.

The engagement once again substantiate our repeated stance regarding abject failure of Afghan Taliban regime to ensure effective border management on their side of the border. Afghan Taliban Regime

must fulfil its obligations and deny the use of Afghan soil by khwarij and involvement of its citizens in terrorism inside Pakistan.

The Security Forces of Pakistan remain resolute and unwavering in their commitment to defend the nation's frontiers. Sanitization operation is being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored Kharji found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

## President, PM praise Security Forces for successful operation against Fitna-al-Khawarij in N Waziristan

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to the Security Forces for their successful operation against Fitna-al-Khawarij militants in North Waziristan, in which eight terrorists were killed near the Pakistan-Afghanistan border.

In a statement from the presidency, President Zardari commended the professionalism of the security forces for their effective and timely action against the terrorists. He added that the force's role in defending the homeland and safeguarding the country's borders was a matter of national pride. He also urged the Afghan interim government to ensure that its territory is not used for terrorist activities against Pakistan.

In a separate statement from



the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif appreciated the officers and personnel of the Security Forces for their professional capabilities demonstrated during the operation and praised them for eliminating eight Khawarij terrorists. He reaffirmed that the fight against terrorism would continue until its complete eradication and said that he, along with the entire nation, stood shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan's armed forces in the country's unwavering resolve against terrorism.

In a separate statement from

## Chinese Ambassador meets Fazl, discusses regional security and Pak-China ties

## Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zedong Thursday called on JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman at his residence in Islamabad, where both sides held detailed discussions on regional developments, peace, and bilateral relations.

According to sources, the meeting focused on the evolving security situation in the region, including the ongoing tensions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran. Both leaders expressed concern over the attacks on Iran, terming them a violation of international law and Iran's sovereignty.

The two sides agreed on the need for collective efforts to promote peace and stability, emphasizing that dialogue and peaceful means remain essential to maintaining regional harmony.

They also warned that in the absence of an immediate ceasefire, the conflict could have far-reaching economic consequences, not only for the Middle East but also for Europe and the wider global economy.

During the meeting, both leaders highlighted the importance of

continued cooperation under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), noting that alignment in perspectives between Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam and China would contribute positively to regional peace and development.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador Jiang said that Pakistan-China friendship has endured through all circumstances and expressed confidence that joint efforts could help shape a better future for the region.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman reaffirmed his party's commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-China relations, stating that JUI-F has played a constructive role in promoting bilateral ties and will continue to do so.

He also stressed the importance of fostering brotherly relations among neighbouring countries, calling it a necessity for regional stability.

A luncheon was also hosted by Maulana Fazlur Rehman in honour of the visiting Chinese delegation

## The Interview Abdul Ghafoor Butt, CEO Butt Footwear, Sialkot



Abdul Ghafoor Butt, CEO Butt Footwear, Sialkot

## Tahir Amin Malik

Abdul Ghafoor Butt, CEO Butt Footwear, (Leather products) said in an interview our Company is located in Sialkot and our Company is doing the work Nationally and Internationally and is known for Manufacturing and Exporting and we have high quality products which included Race wear products, Car racing products, Pilot Gloves, Pilot Suits, Customers Suit Design, Sublimation Sports-Wear, Karate and Boxing Shoes, MotorBike wear, Fashion Shoes, Women's Joggers, and Sandals/Slippers, Men's Dress Shoes, Fire Resistant Cotton, Nomex Shoes, Nomex Undergarments, Nomex Gloves, Nomex Balaclavas, Nomex Socks, Motor Bike products, Gymnastic Shoes, Pilot Gloves and Police Gloves and these products are available every time according to the customers requirements. Abdul Ghafoor Butt further said that Butt Footwear is SFI approved certified manufacturer and supplies the high quality products to national and international customers. He said the response of



Customers is excellent. At last he said We participated in the Footwear Machinery Exhibition which was held recently in Expo Center Lahore and we received a huge response from the visitors. These kind of Exhibition played a vital role for the promotion of Footwear



Products.

### BUTT FOOTWEAR INDUSTRY

THE LANDMARK OF QUALITY SAFETY INNOVATION (Group of Industries)

**Abdul Ghafoor Butt**  
CEO  
Butt Footwear, Sialkot

- 1. F1 Race Gear (Professional Racing Excellence):** Manufacturing professional gear for Formula 1 Racing from Level 1 to Level 20. We specialize in high-performance Racing Shoes, specialized Suits, and Gloves designed for ultimate safety and speed.
- 2. Protect Plus Safety Shoes (Steel Toe Series):** Engineered for industrial safety, our Steel Toe shoes provide maximum protection against heavy impacts. These shoes ensure durability and superior grip in the toughest environments.
- 3. Butt Surgical Instrument (Beauty Division):** Leveraging our precision in surgical manufacturing, we are now excelling in the Beauty Instruments sector. We produce high-quality, professional beauty tools with surgical-grade accuracy and finish.
- 4. Farhad Instrument Beauty:** State-of-the-art professional beauty instruments designed for precision and used by experts worldwide.
- 5. Butt Footwear (Exquisite Products):** Exquisite products crafted from premium quality pure leather, representing a perfect blend of elegance and strength.

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## CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Health Service Delivery Projects Bring New Hope to Thousands of Lives



## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a special meeting to review progress on health service delivery projects, stating that these initiatives have brought new hope to thousands of patients across the province. She directed the authorities concerned that all health programs be made more effective and efficient to further improve public service delivery. She was briefed by the relevant authorities that under CM Punjab Children's Heart Surgery Program, 16,625 patients have been registered, while 11,466 children have successfully undergone heart surgeries in a record time, and have returned home healthy. They said that out of these, 7,664 surgeries and procedures were conducted in public hospitals, while 3,802 children received treatment in private hospitals at government expenses. They added that under CM Special Initiative for Transplant Program, 2,001 patients have been registered, with 1,574 successful transplant procedures completed. These include 255 free liver transplants, for which Government of Punjab paid approximately Rs. 6.5 million per transplant, 799 kidney transplants, 460 cochlear transplants, 32 corneal transplants, and 28 bone marrow transplants provided completely free of cost.

The meeting was further informed that under CM Special Initiative for Dialysis Program, 38,125 patients have been registered, with a record of over 1.5 million dialysis procedures performed. A report on free medicine project was also presented during the session. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif emphasized that the government remains committed to expanding quality healthcare access and ensuring that life-saving treatments are available to all segments of society without financial burden.