



# Senate Chairman, KP Governor attend Quran recitation for Late Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa

**Kiran Asim**

DERA GHAZI KHAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani and Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi attended the Quran recitation ceremony organized to pay their respects to the late former Governor of Punjab Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa.

The ceremony was held at the central Eidgah of Dera Ghazi Khan, where the Sajjada Nashin Darbar Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed Syed Abul Hassan Gilani led a collective prayer. On this occasion, former member of the provincial assembly Syed Ahmed Mujtaba Gilani, provincial minister Sher Ali Gorchani, advisor to the minister for traders Mian Muhammad Naeem Mir, former governor Rafiq Ahmed Rajwana, members of the national and provincial assemblies Sardar Ammar Owais Leghari, Rana Tanveer Ahmed, Ahmed Khan Leghari, Nadeem



Afzal Chan, in addition to Sardar Nasrullah Khan Dareshk, Khawaja Aamir Koreja, Sardar Yousaf Khan Leghari, Syed Abdul Aleem Shah, Hafiz Iqbal Khan Khakwani, Sardar Mohsin Atta Khosa, Sardar Ahmed

Ali Dareshk, former Chief Minister of Punjab Sardar Usman Buzdar, and other dignitaries were present.

The participants prayed collectively for the elevation of the deceased's rank and forgiveness.

The sons of the deceased, Sardar Hussamuddin Khosa, Sardar Saifuddin Khosa and Sardar Dost Muhammad Khan and family members were present on the occasion. The ceremony was attended by Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa's eldest son, Sardar Hussamuddin Khan Khosa, former minister Hafiz Iqbal Khan Khakwani and former MNA Sardar Amjad Farooq Khosa.

In addition, Sardar Hussamuddin Khan Khosa was appointed as the chief of the tribe. Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, in his address, paid tribute to Sardar Zulfiqar Ali Khan Khosa's political services, principledness and efforts for the development of the region.

He said that the deceased was a thoughtful, dignified political and people-friendly leader whose absence will always be felt. A large number of citizens participated in the Quran recitation and prayers were offered for the deceased.

## AJK PM offers condolences to Gilani family at Golra Sharif



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore visited Golra Sharif and expressed condolences on the death of Pir Syed Mehr Faridul Haq Gilani, son of Pir Syed Moinul Haq Gilani. He presented a pasha to the Pir and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family. On this occasion, Pir Syed Moinul Haq Gilani prayed for the elevation of the deceased's rank. He also prayed for the long life, health and safety of the Prime Minister, the freedom of Jammu and Kashmir and the glory of Pakistan.

## Attock education model praised at divisional review meeting

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Punjab Minister for School Education Rana Sikandar Hayat chaired an important meeting in Islamabad attended by Chief Executive Officers Education and Deputy Directors Colleges from across the division, where the performance of the education sector and ongoing reforms were reviewed in detail.

During the meeting, CEO Education Attock Dr Muhammad Azhar Mahmood gave a comprehensive briefing on the key initiatives being carried out in Attock district under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza.

The meeting was told that 850 schools in the district had been beautified to improve the academic environment, while Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) rooms had been established in 429 schools.

It was further informed that solar systems had been installed in 238 schools, while more than 10,000 students had so far benefited from the "Learn and Earn Programme" aimed at equipping children with practical skills.

The participants were also informed that LED screens had been installed in 407 schools to promote e-learning in line with modern educational requirements, while rainwater harvesting projects had been launched in 800 schools across the district.

Punjab Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat appreciated the performance of CEO Education Attock Dr Muhammad Azhar Mahmood and described the initiatives launched in Attock under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza as a model for other districts.

He directed officials of other districts to replicate the Attock model so that uniform educational improvement could be ensured across the province.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr Muhammad Azhar Mahmood termed the achievement a result of teamwork, congratulated his officers and staff, and thanked them for their dedication and hard work.

He reaffirmed his commitment to continue the journey of educational development in Attock with the same spirit and to further expand reform measures in the district.

## Sardar Attique Expresses Deep Sympathy Over Demise of Prominent Golra Sharif Figure



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan expressed his condolences to the Sajjada Nashin of Dargah Ghausia Golra Sharif, Hazrat Pir Syed Moinul Haq Shah Gilani, his elder son, and Pir Syed Qutbul Haq Gilani, his nephew, on the death of Pir Syed Mehr Faridul Haq Mehr Gilani.

The President Muslim Conference expressed his heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family of the deceased, all the Pirs of Golra Sharif and all the devotees, and prayed that Allah Almighty may grant the deceased a high place in His mercy, forgive him completely, and grant patience to the bereaved family.

## Hurriyat Chairman Slams NIA Over 'Baseless' Arrest of Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah



**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: In a statement issued to the media, he said that the arrest by the Indian investigation agency NIA in a baseless and fabricated case three decades old is not only a continuation of political vendetta but also a systematic attempt to suppress the Kashmiri leadership.

Uzair Ahmed Ghazali said that Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah, who is called a "prisoner of conscience", has spent a major part of his life in Indian jails. He is currently suffering from a serious illness, yet his repeated arrest is a clear violation of basic human values and international laws.

He said that if peacefully struggling for the right of the Kashmiri people to self-determination, talking about the restoration of human dignity, demanding social justice and raising voice against oppression is a crime, then Syed Shabbir Ahmed Shah has always been steadfast in this "crime". But the fact is that all these actions are part of the universally recognized basic human rights.

Uzair Ahmed Ghazali further said that India's attempts to suppress the freedom movement of the Kashmiri people through black laws, forced arrests and political revenge tactics will never succeed. He said that thousands of Kashmiri political prisoners are currently imprisoned in various Indian jails, where they face the worst conditions, mental and physical torture and deprivation of justice.

## Metro station closed

RAWALPINDI: People return back from a closed metro station due to security reasons at Liaquat Bagh station, in the city.



Photo: Online

## AJK PPP launches third phase of public outreach campaign starting April 21

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir has announced the start of the third phase of its public relations campaign from April 21, according to which the party's Central Secretary General and Prime Minister of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore will address the Women Workers Convention and inaugurate the membership in the capital of Muzaffarabad.



On April 22, he will attend the first historic agricultural conference on the runway of the airport as a special guest. He will review the stalls set up by government and private institutions and the Pakistan Army there. On April 23, he will leave for Kotli district where he will address a large public gathering in Khoi Ratta constituency and meet party officials, workers and the people of the area.

On April 24, he will address a grand public meeting in Samahni constituency of Bhimber district.

Briefing the media yesterday, the party's Central Deputy Secretary for Information, candidate for Assembly Constituency Seven Lipa Valley, Spokesperson for the Prime Minister Shaukat Javed Mir said that Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore will review the pace and quality of work on development projects during his visits, while in response to a question, he said that the four-month tenure of the PPP has proved to be a breath of fresh air for the people and a confidence-building mountain.

## Tribute Paid to Kashmir Freedom Icon Raja Muhammad Haider Khan on Death Anniversary

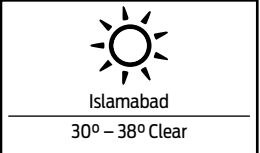
**Bureau Report**

RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique said that he pays tribute to Raja Muhammad Haider Khan, a close friend of Mujahid I, for his services to the Kashmir freedom movement and the ideology of accession to Pakistan. Raja Haider Khan was a true champion of the Kashmir freedom movement. He stood with the people on the political and social fronts at the same time. Even the difficulties of imprisonment and hardship could not divert him from

his path. He worked hand in hand with Rais-ul-Ahrrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. He expressed these thoughts in his message on the occasion of the 60th death anniversary of former President of the Muslim Conference Raja Muhammad Haider Khan. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan also paid tribute to the services, sacrifices and commitment to the Jamaat of the late brother Raja Muhammad Latif Khan and Begum Raja Haider Khan and expressed satisfaction that we have held the flag of Raja Haider Khan and appeal to his descendants to play their role in



strengthening the legacy of Raja Haider Khan and the Muslim Conference.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**  
 Fajr ..... 4:05 am  
 Zohr ..... 12:07 pm  
 Asr ..... 4:48 pm  
 Maghrib ..... 6:42 pm  
 Isha ..... 8:10 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad ..... 9222596  
 Rawalpindi ..... 9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH ..... 561111  
 MH ..... 561116  
 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

**Railway Workers' Union Gears Up for Action Post-Middle East Stability**

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Railway workers are ready to come to the field under the banner of Prem Union under the leadership of Ziauddin Ansari and Sheikh Muhammad Anwar to solve their problems. Prem Union will be in the field after the situation in the Middle East normalizes. Prem Union Secretary General Khair Muhammad Tunio, while talking to Faisalabad Station workers on his visit to Rawalpindi Division along with Malik Muhammad Aslam and Habibullah Mehr, said that Prem Union has opposed the privatization of Railways in the past and still opposes it. It also opposes recruitment on contract in operational categories in Railways. Railway administration should immediately announce a referendum in Railways. At Faisalabad Station, Prem Union Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry, Zonal Vice President Nooruddin and Zonal Organizer Bao Tahir were welcomed by the workers under the leadership of Khair Muhammad Tunio. Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry said that the real reason for the problems of railways and railway employees is the lack of interest of the past and present governments.

# Cultural night held in honour of Sikh pilgrims at Hazuri Bagh

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A colourful cultural night and dinner were hosted at Hazuri Bagh in honour of Sikh pilgrims on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, showcasing Punjab's rich cultural heritage and commitment to interfaith harmony.

Provincial Minister for Minorities Affairs and President Pakistan Sikh Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee

Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora attended the ceremony as chief guest, while Provincial Minister for Finance Mujtaba Shuja-ur-Rehman, Provincial Minister for Health Khawaja Salman Rafique, Special Assistant to Chief Minister Uzma Kardar, Commissioner Lahore Maryam Khan and Deputy Commissioner Lahore Capt (R) Ali Ejaz were also present.

The event featured vibrant cultural performances, with Sikh pilgrims enthusiastically participating and dancing to



traditional dhol beats, while slogans of "Jo Bole So Nihal" and "Pakistan Zindabad" echoed across the venue. Renowned artists Saleem Albel, Ifthikhar Thakur and Jawad Wasim added to the festive atmosphere with their performances. The pilgrims expressed gratitude to

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora for the warm hospitality extended to them during their stay. Addressing the ceremony, Sardar Ramesh Singh Arora, on behalf of the chief minister, warmly welcomed Sikh

pilgrims arriving from India and other countries, saying "Ji Aayan Nu." He said comprehensive security arrangements had been ensured on the directives of the chief minister, while the cultural evening was aimed at introducing Punjab's heritage and traditions to Sikh brethren.

## Happy Sunday

ISLAMABAD: Workers busy in preparing traditional breakfast Halwa Puri for customers at their workplace during Sunday holiday, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Sunday issued a power suspension programme for Monday, in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work.

According to an IESCO spokesperson, power supply in Islamabad Circle will remain suspended from 08:00 am to 01:00 pm in F-10 Markaz, F-10 and F-10/3 areas. Additionally, from 09:00 am to 02:00 pm, electricity will remain off in Kuldana, Gharial, Tret, Khana Dak, Burma, Waheedabad, Rehman Enclave, Khanna East, Khana-II, Al Noor Colony, Shareefabad, Ghouri Garden and Scheme-I feeders. In Rawalpindi Cantt Circle,



power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 am to 12:00 pm in Qureshiabad, Rehmatnagar-I, Moorat, Kohala, Fatima Jinnah, Chaklala, Takbeer-I, Takbeer-II, Takbeer-III and Kot Jabbi feeders. Similarly, in Rawalpindi City Circle, electricity will remain unavailable from

07:00 am to 12:00 pm in Sector-IV, APHS and PAF feeders.

In Attock Circle, the power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 am to 12:00 pm in Attock Rural, Teen Mela and Bagh Nelab feeders, while in Jhelum Circle, outages will be observed during the same hours in Khai Kulia, Nath-

wala, Sanghoi and Safdar Shaheed feeders.

Meanwhile, in GSO Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 07:00 am to 05:00 pm in Azad Pattan. Additionally, from 08:00 am to 04:00 pm, electricity will remain off on 132KV New Wah (WAH-05) to POF South (POS-4), while from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm outages will affect 132-KV Chakwal-Bhagwal-Talagang and 132KV Kahuta City-Palandri transmission lines.

The IESCO management apologized to consumers for the inconvenience and said that power supply may be restored earlier than scheduled if the maintenance work is completed ahead of time.

## National Unity Reinforced as Pakistan's Security Leadership Gains Global Recognition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At a defining moment in Pakistan's national trajectory, the country stands united behind its military leadership, security institutions and government, whose strategic foresight, professionalism and unwavering commitment are increasingly being acknowledged at the international level.

Syed Kausar Abbas, Executive Director of the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) stated that Pakistan's proactive engagement in regional peace efforts and its facilitation of constructive dialogue have positioned the country as a credible and responsible actor in global diplomacy.

He added that Pakistan is no longer viewed solely through a security lens but is emerging as a key facilitator of peace, stability and cooperation in a complex geopolitical environment.



## Principal Mian Shahbaz Liaquat Welcomes Students to New Session

Zafar Chishti

MURIDWALA: Principal cum Director of Second House College Muridwala Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Liaquat has warmly welcomed students who have successfully passed their Matriculation Examination and are seeking admission in the new academic session of intermediate classes.

In his message, the Principal highlighted that the start of a new academic year brings fresh opportunities for students to set ambitious goals, achieve new milestones and turn their dreams into reality. He emphasized that Second House College is committed to providing a dynamic and supportive learning environment that not only focuses on academic excellence but also ensures the overall personality development of students. Mian Shahbaz Liaquat stated that the college takes pride in its team of highly qualified and experienced faculty members who are dedicated to teaching, mentoring and inspiring students to reach their full potential. He further added that the institution places strong emphasis on core values such as integrity, respect and excellence, alongside equipping students with essential life skills to face the challenges of an ever-evolving global world.



## QAU announces online classes from April 20-23 amid expected VVIP movement

ISLAMABAD: Quaid-i-Azam University (QAU), Islamabad, has announced that classes will be held online from Monday, April 20 to Thursday, April 23, in view of expected VVIP movement in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.



According to a notification issued on Sunday, all examinations scheduled during this period have been postponed. A revised examination schedule will be announced separately.

Administrative staff have been directed to ensure attendance during regular working hours, from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

A pick-and-drop facility has also been arranged for staff, operating from Faizabad Interchange and PIMS Hospital.

## NA Speaker condoles sad demise of Iqbal Khan's daughter



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the sad demise of the young daughter of Member National Assembly Muhammad Iqbal Khan.

In his condolence message, NA Speaker said that daughter is a source of immense affection, warmth and emotional strength within a family, her passing is an irreparable loss that no words can truly console.

He said that a daughter's presence brings joy, love and light to a household and her absence leaves a void that can never be filled.

The Speaker extended his heartfelt condolences to Muhammad Iqbal and the bereaved family, sharing in their pain during this extremely difficult and heartbreaking time.

Ayaz Sadiq prayed to Almighty Allah to grant the departed soul the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and bless the family with patience, strength, and fortitude to bear this great loss with courage and faith.

# Pakistani Food and Hospitality won Hearts this Iran and US talks

Munaza Kazmi

Pakistan's hospitality and cuisine stole the spotlight during the April 2026 US-Iran talks in Islamabad, with dele-

him on the negotiating team.

On US side, there were Vice President JD Vance, which includes Steve Witkoff, who was a special envoy of US President Donald Trump and Jared Kushner.

While headlines focused on tensions and negotiations, international journalists and reporters present in Islamabad began highlighting a different aspect of the visit—Pakistan's food and hospitality.

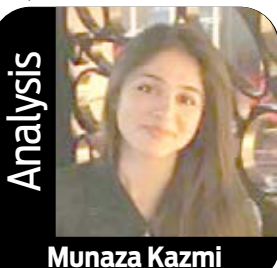
From staff to locals, reports described a warm and respectful environment. Islamabad Serena Hotel itself was transformed into a "diplomatic hub," yet staff and service standards reportedly impressed international delegations and media personnel alike.

Beyond official venues, journalists shared experiences of Pakistani culture—particularly its food and welcoming social atmosphere.



Informal coverage on digital platforms and media reports emphasised on generosity in hosting foreign guests, lush traditional cuisine, respectful and courteous service culture.

Such narratives helped reshape global perceptions, presenting Pakistan not merely as a geopolitical space, but as a culturally vibrant and hospitable nation.



Munaza Kazmi

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## Blockade Politics: Trump Risks Iran Peace Deal

At a moment when the world stood on the brink of economic recovery and geopolitical de-escalation, the sudden reversal in the status of the Strait of Hormuz has once again plunged global stability into uncertainty. What appeared to be a fragile but promising pathway toward peace between the United States and Iran was disrupted in less than 24 hours—transforming hope into renewed confrontation and exposing the deep fragility of ongoing diplomacy.

The timeline of events is critical to understanding the gravity of the situation. On Friday, April 17, 2026, Iran briefly reopened the Strait of Hormuz, allowing controlled commercial passage. This move followed a fragile ceasefire environment in the region and was widely interpreted as a goodwill gesture aimed at supporting ongoing mediation efforts, particularly those facilitated by Pakistan. The impact was immediate: global markets rebounded, oil prices stabilized, and investor confidence surged as trillions of dollars in previously lost market value began to recover.

Whether intentional or incidental, such incidents risk reopening additional fronts, complicating already delicate negotiations elsewhere.

Against this backdrop, the joint initiative by the United Kingdom and France on April 17, 2026, represents a significant geopolitical shift. Convening more than 50 nations, the summit emphasized freedom of navigation, adherence to international law, and the urgent need to reopen the Strait of Hormuz unconditionally. The proposal for a multinational defensive maritime mission signals growing international concern over the weaponization of critical trade routes.

Notably, the relative absence of the United States from this initiative indicates an emerging divergence between Washington and its European allies. The declaration implicitly criticized both the U.S. blockade and Iran's retaliatory restrictions, placing responsibility on all parties to restore normalcy. This development reflects a broader transformation in global geopolitics—one in which Europe is increasingly willing to chart an independent course when global economic stability is at risk.

At its core, the crisis reveals a fundamental contradiction. All parties publicly express commitment to peace, yet their actions often undermine that objective. The United States insists it cannot be pressured, while Iran asserts its sovereign control over its waterways. Both positions, while strategically understandable, become counterproductive when pursued without coordination.

The cost of this contradiction is global. Countries with no direct involvement in the conflict are bearing immense economic burdens—rising fuel costs, disrupted

trade, inflationary pressures, and weakened currencies. The global economy, still recovering from previous shocks, cannot sustain prolonged instability in such a vital region.

There is, therefore, an urgent need for recalibration. Diplomacy must return to its foundational principles: confidentiality, sincerity, and mutual respect. Public rhetoric must align with private commitments. Actions must build trust, not erode it. Incremental progress—however modest—is far more valuable than dramatic reversals that undo hard-earned gains within hours.

The path forward requires discipline and restraint. Negotiations must proceed without unnecessary public exposure, allowing mediators the space to manage complex issues. Confidence-building measures—such as phased easing of blockades and conditional reopening of transit routes—should be prioritized.

Ultimately, the lesson of this crisis is stark. Peace is not achieved through isolated gestures, but through sustained, coordinated actions. The events of April 17 and April 18, 2026, stand as a powerful reminder that diplomacy can collapse just as quickly as it can emerge.

If the current trajectory continues, the world risks not only economic turmoil but also the loss of a rare diplomatic opportunity. But if restraint prevails, if confidentiality is respected, and if sincerity guides action, there remains a possibility—still fragile, but real—that this crisis can be transformed into a turning point.

The choice lies with the actors involved. The consequences, however, will be borne by the entire world.

*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*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Punjab clears major tourism projects in Kotli Sattian

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has granted in-principle approval for the province's first Sky Glass Bridge project in Kotli Sattian, aimed at promoting tourism.

The decision was taken during a special meeting jointly presided over by PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, where progress on the Murree Protection and Rehabilitation Plan was reviewed.

The meeting also decided to engage international experts to address the issue of landsliding in Murree. The chief minister directed immediate measures to counter the mid-flow downhill effect and ordered relief and rehabilitation efforts for those affected by landslides in Chatta Mor, Darya Gali, Bansera Gali, Naml, Jhika Gali and adjoining areas.

Approval was granted for the establishment of three new hospitality zones in Murree's suburban areas — Shawala, Sozo and brewery— where five-star standard hotels will be developed in collaboration with the private sector.

It was further decided to form a team of experts for the Murree rehabilitation project, while the chief minister directed that debris from structures demolished during anti-encroachment operations be removed immediately.

The meeting was informed that Jhika Gali Road and Reach Bil Road would be widened by 10 feet each. The chief minister set a one-month deadline to initiate construction work on the Murree Glass Train project.

A detailed briefing was given on three new parks to be established in Murree, including Angoori Road Park, MIT Park and Ariari Park Kotli Sattian.

Participants were told that a zoological garden, zoological garden eco-zone, bridge crossing and a state-of-the-art conference room would be developed at Bansera Gali. Facilities for wildlife conservation, including a bear house, tiger house and bird aviary, are also planned.

Murree's first glamping pod village will be established at Chewra Hill, designed as a state-of-the-art tourist attraction. Its management will be outsourced to the private sector, as approved by the chief minister.

The meeting also approved the Paragliding Club project in Chewra, and reviewed progress on the Kotli Sattian chairlift project, Punjab House, Forest Rest House and other initiatives.

The chief minister directed that the feasibility report for a bulk water supply scheme from the River Jhelum for Murree district be completed by April 30.

According to a briefing by DC Zaheer Shirazi, rainwater harvesting systems have been successfully implemented in 187,600 homes across Murree and Kotli Sattian, providing relief to women and children from fetching water from distant locations. Water supply schemes in Dhar Jawa and Donga Gali have been completed.

The chief minister also granted in-principle approval for establishing Punjab's first Facility Management Unit, which will oversee construction, maintenance and management of Punjab Houses and other buildings across the province.

However, later on the same day—April 17, 2026—President Donald Trump made it unequivocally clear that the United States would not lift its naval blockade on Iranian ports and shipping, stating that the blockade would remain in full force until a comprehensive agreement was reached with Tehran. This declaration fundamentally altered the diplomatic landscape. What Iran had presented as a conciliatory step was met not with reciprocity, but with continued pressure.

The consequences were swift and decisive. On Saturday, April 18, 2026, Iran reversed its position. Iranian military authorities announced that the Strait of Hormuz had returned to "strict management and control" under its armed forces. By later that day, Iran effectively reimposed

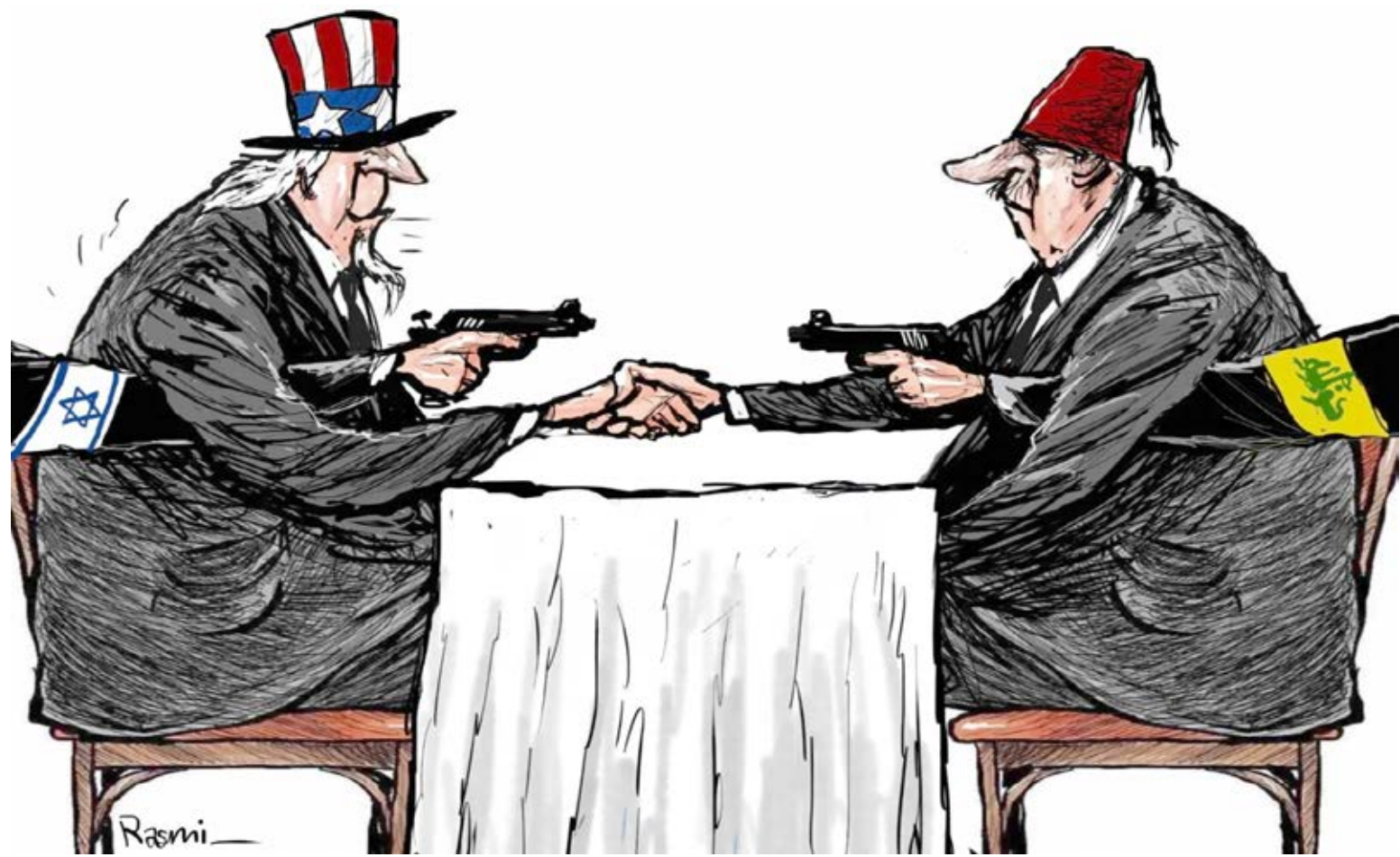
restrictions on the waterway, warning that any unauthorized vessel would be targeted. In practical terms, the Strait was once again closed—this time under a far more militarized and confrontational posture.

This rapid sequence—reopening on April 17, U.S. refusal to ease the blockade later that same day, and reclosure by Iran on April 18—illustrates how fragile and reactive the current diplomatic environment has become. Rather than a gradual breakdown, the process collapsed almost instantly, driven by contradictory actions and absence of coordinated confidence-building measures.

The economic fallout was immediate. Oil prices surged sharply, moving from relative stability into volatile territory. Financial markets, which had rallied just hours earlier, again lost significant value. Supply chains, already strained by weeks of conflict, faced renewed uncertainty. What the world briefly perceived as a turning point toward peace quickly reverted into another phase of instability.

Amid this turbulence, diplomatic efforts led by Pakistan have continued with notable persistence. High-level engagements—including visits by Pakistan's military leadership to Tehran and regional outreach by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif—reflect a sustained commitment to bridging the divide between Washington and Tehran. Yet these efforts are being undermined not by lack of diplomacy, but by lack of discipline within diplomacy.

Simultaneously, developments in Lebanon have added another layer of volatility. The killing of a French UN peacekeeper and subsequent accusations between Israel and Hezbollah highlight how fragile ceasefires can easily unravel.



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

## Tehran Welcomed Field Marshal in Combat Dress

Abdul Basit Alvi  
 In mid-April 2026, following a devastating yet brief war between the United States and Iran, Pakistan emerged as a key mediator during a fragile ceasefire, hosting the first direct US-Iran talks in decades in Islamabad and maintaining diplomatic momentum despite deep mistrust and instability. Field Marshal Asim Munir's immediate visit to Tehran symbolized a bold continuation of this effort, alongside Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's parallel outreach to regional powers, at a time when global stability had been shaken by widespread destruction and economic disruption. Munir's arrival in a war-scarred Tehran was a high-risk act reflecting strong resolve, and his choice to wear a combat uniform conveyed layered strategic messages: solidarity and shared military identity with Iran, contrasted with his civilian attire when engaging US officials, thereby reinforcing Pakistan's carefully balanced diplomacy. This symbolic approach positioned Pakistan not just as a neutral intermediary but as a trusted partner to Iran, while also signaling deterrence to any actors seeking to undermine the fragile peace process.

The significance of the visit was further underscored by the unusually warm reception from Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, whose personal reception and visible rapport with Munir indicated deep trust and effective communication between the two countries, suggesting that diplomatic understandings were reinforced by genuine relationships at the leadership level. This warmth conveyed that Pakistan's role was welcomed as a sincere, brotherly effort rather than external inter-

ference, highlighting a strengthening Pakistan-Iran partnership grounded in shared interests and regional stability, even after the conflict. More broadly, Pakistan's actions challenged traditional assumptions about global diplomacy by demonstrating that a middle power can mediate major conflicts through strategic positioning, credible military backing, and skillful signaling while balancing ties with both the United States and Iran. The episode represents a comprehensive model of modern diplomacy—combining negotiations, symbolic gestures, coordinated regional engagement, and personal leadership—and is likely to serve as a long-term case study in how determined states can actively shape global peace and security.

The role of Pakistan, its Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and its Field Marshal Asim Munir has been nothing short of remarkable during this entire mediation process between the United States and Iran. While the Field Marshal was engaging in the high-stakes symbolic and security dialogue in Tehran, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was simultaneously executing the other half of a brilliant pincer movement. By visiting Saudi Arabia, Qatar and Turkey during the same period, the Prime Minister was ensuring that the wider regional architecture supported the peace process. His meetings with the Saudi, Qatari and Turkish leaderships were critical to securing not only political backing but also the essential economic ballast—in the form of multi-billion dollar deposits and investment pledges—that allowed Pakistan to mediate from a position of strength rather than desperation. This perfect synergy between the civilian and military leadership, each handling the sphere

of their greatest expertise, is a model of national unity that has impressed the entire world. The Prime Minister's diplomatic efforts in the Gulf complemented the Field Marshal's security dialogue in Tehran, creating a comprehensive, whole-of-government approach to peace-making.

As the world now looks forward to the second phase of talks between the United States and Iran, which is widely expected to be held once again in Islamabad, the sense of historic destiny is palpable. Pakistan, its Prime Minister, and its Field Marshal are on the verge of registering their names permanently in the annals of history. The first round broke the ice; the second round, building on the momentum generated by the Field Marshal's crucial Tehran visit and the Prime Minister's Gulf tour, has the potential to produce a framework for lasting peace. The accolades have already begun to pour in from all corners of the globe. President Donald Trump, not known for showering praise on foreign leaders, has publicly appreciated the "great job" being done by Field Marshal Munir and the Pakistani team. US Vice President JD Vance, who experienced the grueling negotiating sessions firsthand, has expressed his gratitude for Pakistan's pivotal role. The Iranian leadership, from the Supreme Leader to President Masoud Pezeshkian, has also conveyed its appreciation for Pakistan's courageous and honest mediation. The whole world, weary from the shockwaves of a devastating war and terrified of a wider conflagration, is watching and hoping, and much of that hope is currently pinned on the diplomatic skills of Pakistan.

Field Marshal possesses a charismatic personality and the skills to bring everyone to the table while engaging all parties effectively. He has returned to Pakistan from Iran and he achieved great success not only in uniting the

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## Effects of Social Media Usage on Mental Health of Youth: Challenges and Remedies

In the digital age, social media has become an integral part of daily life, particularly for young people. Platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok have transformed how youth communicate, learn, and express themselves. While these platforms offer numerous opportunities for connectivity and creativity, their excessive and unregulated use has raised serious concerns about mental health, especially in a developing country like Pakistan.

Social media provides instant access to information, social interaction, and entertainment. For many young individuals, it serves as a platform to share ideas, build networks, and even develop careers. However, the same platforms can also create psychological pressures that negatively impact emotional well-being. One of the most significant issues is the culture of comparison. Youth often measure their lives against carefully curated and idealized online images, leading to feelings of inadequacy, low self-esteem, and dissatisfaction.

Another major challenge is the rise of anxiety and depression linked to excessive screen time. Constant notifications, the need for validation through likes and comments, and fear of missing out (FOMO) create a cycle of dependency. Young users may feel compelled to remain constantly online, leading to sleep disturbances, reduced concentration, and emotional exhaustion. In Pakistan, where awareness of mental health issues is still evolving, these problems often go unrecognized and untreated. Cyberbullying is another critical concern.

Social media platforms can expose young users to harassment, negative comments, and online abuse. Victims of cyberbullying may experience severe psychological distress, including anxiety, depression, and in extreme cases, self-harm tendencies. The anonymity of online spaces often encourages harmful behavior, making it difficult to hold perpetrators accountable.

Moreover, excessive social media use can lead to social isolation. While these platforms are designed to connect people, they sometimes replace meaningful face-to-face interactions. Youth may become more engaged with virtual relationships than real-life connections, weakening social bonds and communication skills. This disconnect can contribute to loneliness and emotional instability.

Despite these challenges, social media is not inherently harmful. When used responsibly, it can promote learning, awareness, and positive engagement. The key lies in balanced usage and informed practices. One of the most effective remedies is promoting digital literacy. Young people must be educated about the responsible use of social media, including understanding its risks and managing their online behavior.

Parents and educators play a crucial role in guiding youth. Open communication about online experiences can help identify early signs of mental stress. Schools and universities should incorporate mental health education and digital well-being into their curricula, enabling students to develop healthy online habits.

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

# Rwandan High Commissioner calls on Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: The High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan, Fatou Haremana, visited Gillani House Multan, where she was warmly received by Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani.

During the meeting, both sides held detailed discussions on the promotion of bilateral cooperation, matters of mutual interest, and the regional situation. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening Pakistan-Rwanda relations at both bilateral and multilateral levels.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani stated that the historic city of Multan is over 5,000 years old and holds a unique identity as the "City of Saints." He highlighted Multan's rich cultural heritage, Sufi traditions, historic shrines, and its world-famous blue pottery, which continues to attract global admiration.

He further said that Pakistan and



Rwanda enjoy cordial relations and stressed the need to enhance cooperation in diverse fields. He added that Pakistan places special importance on strengthening ties with African countries and aims to expand engagement

through shared experiences. He also announced that a Pakistani delegation would soon visit Rwanda.

The Chairman noted that during his tenure as Minister for Tourism, significant steps were taken to

promote tourism in South Punjab, including Multan, and that foreign tourists were provided foolproof security during his time as Prime Minister.

The Rwandan High Commissioner expressed her gratitude for the warm hospitality and said it was her first visit to Multan. She appreciated the city's historical landmarks and praised its renowned blue pottery, calling her visit a memorable experience.

She also planted a sapling at Gillani House and showed keen interest in mango orchards and plantations. In response, Chairman Gillani remarked that Multan's mangoes are world-famous and highly appreciated globally.

Colonel Shyaka Kajugiro Ismail was also present during the meeting. Other attendees included Syed Ali Haider Gillani, Ahmed Mujtaba Gilani, Syed Abul Hassan Gilani, Dr. Javed Siddiqui, Shahid Naseem Khokhar, Syed Hadi Gilani, Makhdoom Syed Murtaza Gilani, and Umair Khokhar.

## SDPI, UCP Lahore ink MoU to promote young talent through joint research

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed between Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and University of Central Punjab (UCP), Lahore to strengthen think tank-academia collaboration for promoting young talent through joint research, academic exchange, policy engagement and capacity-building initiatives.

Under the MoU, both institutions will collaborate on research projects, joint publications, conferences and consulting assignments, while providing internship and volunteer opportunities for students and training support for faculty. The partnership also includes exchange of experts for guest lectures and workshops, access to research and training facilities, participation of students in SDPI's international sustainable development conference, and joint grant-writing opportunities. Both sides agreed to promote institutional linkages through knowledge sharing, resource facilitation and professional development programmes with financial arrangements for activities to be finalized through separate project-level agreements. During the virtual MoU signing ceremony, Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, Deputy Executive Director, SDPI and Dr. Mohammad Irfan Ali Fani, Department of Political Science and International Relations, UCP Lahore signed the document.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Sajid Amin Javed said the Institute looks forward to building this collaboration strong through effective implementation of this MoU in multiple collaborative domains.

He said SDPI believes that academia is the factor of ideas that nurture and nestle young minds by imparting modern skills and education and generating best talent relevant to the market. "Our partnerships go beyond student internships and consider it beyond that as it involves joint research, projects and study initiatives, conferences, symposiums and seminars of mutual interest," he added.

He added that the Institute is based in Islamabad and its partners linked through MoUs are its arms and eyes to function within the provinces that also helps it improve its rankings among academic institutions.

# IAEA Collaborating Centre Plaque Presented at INMOL, Lahore

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Marking a major milestone in Pakistan's collaboration with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) formally presented the IAEA Collaborating Centre (CC) plaque to the Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Oncology (INMOL), Atomic Energy Cancer Hospital, Lahore, at a ceremony held on Saturday.

The designation of INMOL as an IAEA Collaborating Centre follows the signing of a formal agreement on February 16, 2026, in Vienna. The agreement was signed by Deputy Prime Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and IAEA Director General Rafael Mariano Grossi, in the presence of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on the sidelines of a high-level event at the United Nations Office in Vienna.

The ceremony was held to commemorate this important recognition, reflecting Pakistan's continued commitment to strengthening international cooperation in the peaceful applications of nuclear science and technology, particularly in cancer diagnosis and treatment. As an IAEA Collaborating Centre, INMOL will contribute to the Agency's global network through research, capacity building, and technical cooperation initiatives.

Addressing the ceremony, Dr. Shakeel Abbas Rofi, Member (Science), PAEC, appreciated the role of Atomic Energy Cancer Hospitals in delivering quality healthcare services across the country. He described these institutions as a true "Ray of Hope," ensuring that no patient is denied treatment. He emphasized that the Collaborating Centre status brings both recognition and added responsibility, and reflects the inter-

national confidence in Pakistan's capabilities in cancer care.

Dr. Rofi further highlighted that Pakistan now has five institutions designated as IAEA Collaborating Centres, underscoring the country's growing contribution to the cancer care landscape. He also noted that the Nuclear Medicine, Oncology and Radiotherapy Institute (NORI), Islamabad, has been designated as an Anchor Centre under the IAEA's "Rays of Hope" initiative. Other Collaborating Centres include the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), National Institute of Safety and Security (NISAS), Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB), and Pakistan Institute of Nuclear Science and Technology (PINSTECH).

Director General Nuclear Medicine and Oncology, Dr. Shazia Fatima, emphasized the importance of this designation

in enhancing Pakistan's role in regional and international capacity building. She highlighted that with 92 Collaborating Centres across 45 countries, Pakistan's strong representation in this global network is a matter of national pride.

Director INMOL, Dr. Amira Shami, expressed her satisfaction on achieving this distinction and reaffirmed INMOL's commitment to advancing research, training, and excellence in patient care under the IAEA framework.

On the occasion, Member (Science), PAEC inaugurated a state-of-the-art TrueBeam HyperArc Linear Accelerator (LINAC), installed at a cost of approximately PKR 1.4 billion, which will significantly enhance advanced radiotherapy services at INMOL. A newly established Chemotherapy Bay, increasing treatment capacity from 20 to 50 patients, was also inaugurated



by Madam Fehmin Ali, Patron-in-Chief of PAEC Foundation's Hunargah.

INMOL serves over 150,000 patients each year, providing radiotherapy, chemotherapy, and nuclear medicine services at highly subsidized costs. Equipped with

multiple linear accelerators and state-of-the-art imaging facilities, the institute ensures early detection and precision treatment, contributing to improved survival outcomes. It has also played a vital role in training hundreds of oncologists, medical physicists, and tech-

nologists, strengthening Pakistan's healthcare capacity. The hospital is part of the network of 21 Atomic Energy Cancer Hospitals, which together provide care to more than one million cancer patients each year, accounting for approximately 80% of cancer patients in Pakistan.

# D-8 Secretary General urges balanced global investment approach amid geopolitical shifts

**Spokesman Report**

ANTALYA: Secretary General of the Developing Eight (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation Ambassador Sohail Mahmood has stressed the need for a balanced and constructive global approach to investment, highlighting the role of diplomacy in navigating emerging geopolitical and geoeconomic challenges.

Speaking at a panel discussion titled "Investment Across Continents" during the Antalya Diplomacy Forum 2026 held in Türkiye from April 17 to 19, he said that a rapidly evolving global landscape—marked by multi polarity, intensifying major-power competition, and shifting patterns of globalization—was reshaping investment flows and corporate strategies.

He noted that new approaches such as "near-shoring" and "friend-shoring"



were gaining traction as countries and corporations sought to reduce risks,

diversify supply chains, and enhance resilience.

Ambassador Mahmood emphasized that beyond cost considerations, geopolitical dynamics and the changing geoeconomic paradigm were increasingly influencing business decisions, leading to a reconfiguration of value chains and production centers worldwide.

Highlighting the D-8 perspective, he called for prudent policy measures alongside strengthened international cooperation to address challenges in the global investment environment. He underlined that creating a peaceful and stable external environment was essential for promoting cross-continental investment.

He stressed the importance of diplomacy in preventing conflicts, promoting dialogue, upholding international law, and reinforcing multilateralism to foster a conducive climate for sustainable investment.



The D-8 Secretary General further noted that developing countries could attract investments through a combination of domestic preparedness and international collaboration, including ensuring policy predictability, efficient facilitation, reliable infrastructure, and enhanced connectivity.

He also cited Egypt's strong investment performance as a positive example among D-8 member states and high-

lighted the organization's collaboration with the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) in formulating guiding principles for investment policymaking.

Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Mahmood said that while "mapping tomorrow" requires strategic vision, effective leadership remains crucial for "managing uncertainties" in an increasingly complex global environment.

# The Importance of Honorary Consuls in Pakistan "DIPLOMACY"

In an increasingly interconnected world, diplomacy is no longer confined to federal capitals alone. Provinces play a central role in trade, investment, political, tourism, cultural exchange and people-to-people engagement. In this evolving landscape the role of Honorary Consuls in Pakistan, particularly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) has become more important than ever. These distinguished individuals quietly and selflessly serve as bridges between nations, fostering economic, cultural and social ties that benefit both Pakistan and the countries they represent.

Countries appoint Honorary Consuls through their Embassies recommendations after a rigorous and lengthy process involving two Governments. The selection is never casual. It is deliberate, detailed and based on merit. Typically, Embassies choose individuals mainly from the entrepreneurial and corporate community; People who are respected, well-connected, financially stable, well educated and capable of representing their country with dignity and responsibility. Once appointed, they become trusted representatives, holding Diplomatic recognition and operating

under the framework of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations, 1961 & Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone, there are currently 12 Honorary Consuls representing Tunisia, Czech Republic, Türkiye, Bulgaria, Finland, Russia, Romania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Japan, South Korea, Tajikistan, and Brazil, with a few more in process. For a province with an approximate population of 40.5 million people, the presence of only 12 Honorary Consuls highlights both their importance and the responsibility placed upon them. Their strength, impact and strategic value are crystal clear.

In 2022, Ammad Rasheed (Honorary Consul of the Republic of Tunisia Peshawar for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has developed the Honorary Consul Corps KP which has been in full swing since then with the support of its members. The Dean of these Corps started by, Mr. Afan Aziz, Mr. Ammad Rasheed, Mr. Asad Saleem and for the current year we have Mr. Assad Saifullah Khan serving as Honorary Consul Corps Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

To understand their importance, one must first understand Diplomatic

hierarchy. When one country represents itself in another sovereign state, the official representative is the Ambassador or High Commissioner. However, within provinces and regions where embassies do not have a full-time presence, they

appoint the Honorary Consul. This individual acts as the Embassy's official representative in that province. In essence, the Honorary Consul ensures the full-time presence of that country's Diplomatic engagement at the provincial level. The importance of this role is clear and undeniable.

Honorary Consuls wear two hats simultaneously. One hat represents Pakistan, their homeland. The other represents the country that has entrusted them with Diplomatic responsibility. Their work must balance both loyalties with integrity and transparency. They promote mainly trade, tourism, education, cultural exchange and investment opportunities between the two nations. They facilitate visiting delegations, assist citizens, guide business leaders, and support community

engagement; all often through their own personal and corporate resources.

The Honorary Consuls Corps in KP is an active and forward-looking body committed to enhancing bilateral relations between Pakistan and their

respective countries. Their work directly benefits the corporate sector, which remains the backbone of every economy. Through business forums, cultural events, Diplomatic receptions, trade delegations and policy dialogue, they create opportunities that may not otherwise exist. They serve as catalysts for partnerships, investment inflows and knowledge exchange.

Economically, the value they bring is significant. They help local businesses connect with foreign markets. They facilitate B2B meetings, trade exhibitions and networking platforms. They encourage foreign investors to explore opportunities in Pakistan. They guide Pakistani exporters toward international markets. These activities may not always make headlines, but they quietly contribute to economic growth

and job creation.

Culturally, they build bridges of understanding. Through National day celebrations, educational exchanges, tourism promotion, and people-to-people connections, they foster goodwill and mutual respect. In a world where misunderstandings can escalate quickly, cultural diplomacy plays a powerful role in sustaining harmony.

Yet, despite their contributions, Honorary Consuls largely operate on personal initiative and private resources. Unlike career Diplomats, they do not receive Government salaries. Their offices, events and initiatives are often funded independently. What they seek is not privilege but facilitation, coordination and institutional support to maximize their impact.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) and the Government of Pakistan would benefit immensely by further acknowledging, supporting, and assisting Honorary Consuls in a structured and productive manner. Providing streamlined coordination, protocol support and policy alignment would enhance outcomes for the country as a whole. When an Honorary Consul succeeds in attracting investment or boosting tourism, Pakistan succeeds.

These individuals are, in many ways, unsung heroes. They represent Pakistan with dignity before foreign Governments and represent foreign nations with respect within Pakistan. They work quietly, consistently and selflessly to strengthen relationships that bring long-term national benefits.

In a province of over 40 million people, 12 Honorary Consuls serve as official Diplomatic bridges to the world. Their value is not symbolic, it is strategic.

Recognizing and empowering them is not merely a courtesy; it is an investment in Pakistan's global engagement and economic future.

Indeed, the Honorary Consuls are among the real heroes of Pakistan's Diplomatic outreach.

The Government of the Republic of TUNISIA has appointed Honorary Consuls in Karachi, Lahore & Peshawar, Pakistan.

*The writer is Entrepreneur, (Honorary Consul of the Republic of Tunisia Peshawar for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, CEO & Founder of WINGS International Magazine, Islamabad. He can be reached at ammadkhalid15@gmail.com, tunisiaconsulatepeshawar@gmail.com*



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

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
173,939.01	169,911.95
Day's High	Day's Low
174,404.03	170,758.25
Index Value	Change
55,554,880,494	+4027.06
Percentage	Time
+2.37%	17 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,667.63	+77.64
Percentage	Time
+0.73%	17 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,516.30	+937.58
Percentage	Time
+1.93%	17 Apr, 2:05 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
58,475.90	-1,042.44
Percentage	Time
-1.75%	17 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	198.78	204.95
Bahrain Dinar	729	739.75
Canadian Dollar	202.05	207.9
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	328.79	332.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.25	36.15
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.22
Japanese Yen	1.7387	1.8386
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.15	889.30
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.65
New Zealand \$	162.4	164.05
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	723.65	734.10
Qatari Riyal	71.55	72.77
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.35
Singapore Dollar	217.73	223.25
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8.05	8.25
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.05
UK Pound Sterling	378.34	383.65
US Dollar	279.04	280.05

# Expand the tax net, not the burden, OICCI tells Minister Bilal Azhar Kayani

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: During the visit of Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kayani to the Chamber, the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) elaborated its key tax recommendations for the Federal Budget 2026-27, developed through extensive member consultations. Dr. Najeeb Memon, Director General, Tax Policy Office (TPO), also participated virtually.

The Chamber proposed reducing the corporate tax rate to 28 percent in FY2026-27, with a phased reduction to 25 percent over three years, and the gradual abolition of the Super Tax. It noted that the combined impact of Corporate Tax, Super Tax, Workers Welfare Fund and Workers Profit Participation Fund raises the effective tax rate to nearly 46 percent. OICCI also highlighted that disproportionately high



taxation on the banking sector can act as a constraint on economic growth by affecting banks' ability to efficiently deploy capital, which in turn impacts the availability and cost of working capital for businesses across the economy.

OICCI Secretary General M. Abdul Aleem said the proposals aim to deliver a fair, predictable and investment-friendly tax system, anchored in documentation and digitisation. Emphasising the need to expand the tax net rather than increase the burden on existing taxpayers, he noted that all segments of the economy, including agriculture, retail and wholesale, real estate and services, should contribute proportionately to their economic share.

During the meeting, foreign investors raised operational concerns, including delays in tax refunds, excessive compliance notices despite strong records, and weak coordination between federal and provincial systems.

## Gift of summer

ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying watermelons at a Sunday weekly bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

## Toyota flags policy instability as auto sector growth stalls, capacity utilization drops

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's automotive sector continues to face structural challenges, including policy inconsistency, low capacity utilization, and rising reliance on used car imports, even as it retains significant growth potential within the regional market. These issues were discussed during a recent industry engagement hosted by Indus Motor Company, where company leadership shared insights on market trends and policy direction with a group of media representatives.

During the session, Chief Executive Officer of Indus Motor Company, Mr. Ali Asghar Jamali, presented insights into Pakistan's automotive performance relative to regional peers.

Pakistan remains one of only 16 countries worldwide capable of manufacturing passenger cars, trucks, and buses. Seven of the top ten global automotive brands now operate in Pakistan, positioning it as a potential investment destination for original equipment manufacturers.

Jamali expressed his sincere appreciation to Mr. Haroon Akhtar, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Mr. Saif Anjum, Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production, and Mr. Hamad Ali Mansoor, CEO of the Engineering Development Board, for their concerted efforts in abolishing the baggage scheme for used car imports.

## Solar Pakistan 2026 concludes successfully in Lahore



**Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: The three-day Solar Pakistan 2026 exhibition successfully concluded today at the Expo Centre Lahore, marking a significant milestone in accelerating Pakistan's transition to alternative energy. Organized by Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd., the event attracted more than 400 companies from 10 countries, energy experts, poli-

cymakers, and received an overwhelming response.

The closing ceremony was graced by Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol (President of the Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry) (LCCI) he said, "Solar Pakistan is an essential initiative in unlocking the alternative energy potential of regions like Punjab. With abundant sunlight and growing awareness, this region is well-positioned

to lead in sustainable energy solutions.

Speaking on the success of the exhibition, Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO of Fakt Exhibitions, stated: "We are pleased to see the enthusiastic participation and engagement from both national and international stakeholders. Solar Pakistan continues to serve as a catalyst for innovation and collaboration, shaping the future of Pakistan's energy landscape."

## 11 Officials of Shah Shams Police Station suspended over corruption allegations in Multan

**Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: In a major development raising serious concerns over police accountability, 11 officials of Shah Shams Police Station in Multan have been found involved in corruption and subsequently suspended.

According to initial reports, the suspended personnel include two Sub-Inspectors, three Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs), one Head Constable, and five Constables. The action was taken after allegations of corruption were substantiated during preliminary investigations.

The incident has sparked widespread public concern, with citizens questioning the credibility of law enforcement institutions. Observers note that when a significant

number of officials from a single police station are implicated, it reflects not just individual misconduct but a deeper institutional issue.

Further inquiries have been initiated against (SHO). Authorities are investigating whether senior officials were unaware of these activities or complicit in facilitating them.

Public sentiment remains critical, with many questioning where citizens should turn for justice if those responsible for enforcing the law are themselves involved in wrongdoing. The case has intensified calls for systemic reforms and stricter accountability mechanisms within the police department. Officials have assured that the investigation will be carried out transparently and that those found guilty will face strict legal action.

## Middle East crisis opens window of opportunity for Pakistan

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said ongoing regional crisis of Middle East presents a window of opportunity for Pakistan over the medium to long term.

Chairing here today board of directors meeting he said although it's painful situation which we can't escape immediately but it can help position Pakistan to benefit from future opportunities. He urged urgent reforms, closer financial sector coordination and a shift towards energy self reliance to navigate the unfolding exogenous shocks. At the macroeconomic level, he pointed to energy disruptions and rising global energy prices as the most immediate threats cautioning that these would significantly increase the cost of doing business. He identified remittances as another potential risk area while flows have remained stable so far, prolonged conflict could disrupt inflows from the Gulf, which accounts for around 55 percent of Pakistan's remittances which he added could potentially widen the current account deficit.

## Tesla expands robotaxi service to Dallas, Houston

Tesla is rolling out its robotaxis in Dallas and Houston, the electric vehicle maker said on Saturday, marking further expansion of its nascent service in the United States since its Austin, Texas, launch last year.

Tesla's official robotaxi account on X announced the launch and posted two videos showing its best-selling Model Y SUVs running in the two cities with no human driver or monitor in the front seats. It posted two map images outlining service boundaries, but did not disclose further details such as fleet size or pricing.

"Try Tesla Robotaxi in Dallas & Houston!" CEO Elon Musk said reposting the X post.

## The Madman Theory in the U. S.-Iran Conflict

The idea of the Madman Theory has resurfaced in discussions about tensions between the United States and Iran, particularly in relation to the leadership style of Donald Trump. Originally associated with Richard Nixon during the Cold War, the theory proposes that a leader can gain strategic advantage by appearing unpredictable or even irrational, thereby pressuring adversaries into concessions.

In the context of the U. S - Iran relationship, this approach can be seen in the pattern of alternating rhetoric and policy signals. On one hand, there are strong warnings, military posturing, and economic sanctions. On the other, there are sudden openings to negotiation or claims of willingness to reach a deal. This fluctuation

creates uncertainty for Iran, making it difficult to anticipate the next move and potentially encouraging caution in its responses.

However, applying the Madman Theory to Iran presents unique challenges. Unlike Cold War adversaries, Iran has demonstrated resilience under prolonged economic pressure and a willingness to engage in indirect forms of retaliation. Its strategic culture blends ideological commitment with calculated patience, meaning that unpredictability from the United States does not necessarily lead to quick concessions. Instead, it may reinforce resistance and encourage Iran to adopt its own

asymmetric tactics.

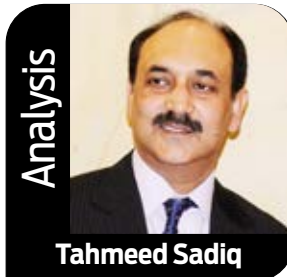
Another important factor is the global context. In today's interconnected world, actions taken under the guise of unpredictability can have immediate and widespread economic and political consequences. Rising tensions in the Middle East often affect global energy markets, international trade routes, and diplomatic alliances. This reduces the ability of any one leader to fully control the outcomes of a strategy based on calculated instability.

Moreover, the risks of miscalculation are significant. When both sides interpret each other's actions through a lens of uncertainty,

the chances of unintended escalation increase. A move intended as a signal could be perceived as a genuine step toward conflict, prompting a stronger-than-expected response. In such an environment, the line between strategic performance and actual confrontation becomes dangerously thin.

The Madman Theory offers a framework for understanding certain aspects of U. S. behavior toward Iran, its effectiveness remains uncertain. What may have once served as a tool of leverage in a bipolar world is far more complex in today's geopolitical landscape, where unpredictability can just as easily undermine stability as it can create advantage.

The writer is worked in Banking sector and currently working as Compliance Consultant for remittance companies at Birmingham-UK



Tahmeed Sadiq

## PK Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

# Arafat Minhas brilliant performance: Multan Sultans defeated Karachi Kings by 11 runs



Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Arafat Minhas produced a match-winning all-round display as Multan Sultans beat Karachi Kings by 11 runs in Match 28 of HBL Pakistan Super League 11 here at the National Bank Stadium on Sunday afternoon.

The 21-year-old claimed three for 32 including the prized scalps of Jason Roy and Salman Ali Agha in the powerplay and effected two run outs in the field. He also struck a handy 17 off 12 balls lower down the order as Multan consolidated second place on the standings with 10 points from seven matches.

Karachi slipped to seventh after a fourth consecutive defeat as they managed 196 all out in 19.4 overs in reply to Multan's 207 for seven in 20 overs.



Mohammad Abbas Afridi's blistering 34 off 16 balls and Hasan Ali's 23 from 10 deliveries threatened to pull off a remarkable heist in the final overs but their eighth-wicket stand of 25 came too late as Multan held their nerve at the death.

While chasing, Karachi lost Roy for 16 in the third over caught off Arafat who then bowled Salman for two in the fifth over. Saad Baig made 21 from 15 balls before falling to Peter Siddle caught by Muhammad Imran as Karachi found themselves 47 for three inside the powerplay.

Reeza Hendricks and Moeen Ali

rebuilt with a 67-run fourth-wicket stand that briefly gave Karachi hope.

Hendricks struck five fours and two sixes in his 32-ball 49 before falling one short of a half-century, caught off Muhammad Imran. Moeen contributed 27 from 23 balls with two sixes before Ashton Turner had him caught by Imran in the 15th over with the scoreboard reading 129 for five.

Khushdil Shah fell for four to Momin Qamar (3-0-25-1) and Arafat returned to trap Shahid Aziz leg-before-wicket for a duck as Karachi slumped to 160 for seven in 16.4 overs. Abbas then counter-attacked



with three fours and two sixes in his 16-ball cameo while Hasan struck two sixes in a 10-ball blitz to bring the equation down to 22 from the final 11 balls.

Siddle (4-0-28-2) ended Abbas's resistance in the penultimate over before Arafat ran out both Adam Zampa and Hasan in quick succession to seal the win for the Sultans.

Earlier, Multan were put in to bat and lost Steve Smith for a duck in the second over, falling to Khushdil Shah. Debutant Muhammad Awaiz Zafar (36, 27b, 5x4s, 1x6) and Philippe put on 66 for the second wicket before Khushdil (4-0-35-3) struck again to

bowl Philippe for a quickfire 44 from 23 balls including five fours and two sixes.

Shan Masood then took charge with 46 from 25 balls striking three fours and three sixes before being stumped by Saad Baig off Moeen Ali (4-0-30-2) in the 14th over. Awaiz fell shortly after as the scoreboard read 121 for three after 12.1 overs.

Multan's innings lost momentum briefly through the middle overs as Turner made 11 and Arafat 17 (2x4s) before Imran launched a sensational late assault. The left-hander smashed an unbeaten 26 from just eight balls with two fours and two sixes while Mohammad Wasim Jnr chipped in



with an unbeaten seven as the pair plundered 33 from the final 11 deliveries to lift Multan past 200.

Scores in Brief

Match 28—Multan Sultans beat Karachi Kings by 11 runs at National Bank Stadium, Karachi

Multan Sultans 207-7, 20 overs Shan Masood 46. Josh Philippe 44. Muhammad Awaiz Zafar 36. Muhammad Imran 26 not out. Arafat Minhas 17 Khushdil Shah 3-35 Moeen Ali 2-30

Karachi Kings 196 all out, 19.4 overs (Reeza Hendricks 49, Mohammad Abbas Afridi 34, Moeen Ali 27, Hasan Ali 23, Saad Baig 21 Arafat Minhas 3-32 and Peter Siddle 2-28

Player of the Match—Arafat Minhas From Multan Sultans

## Successfully holds CM Punjab National Marathon and Cycling Race

### Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Youth Affairs and Sports Department successfully organised Chief Minister Punjab National Marathon and Cycling Race, the biggest sports event in the country's history at Liberty Chowk on Sunday.

More than 11 thousand male and female athletes and citizens of diverse age groups participated in the mega sports event in which Women's 5-km Marathon, Women's 5-km Cycling Race, 2-km Family Fun Race and 1-km Wheelchair Race were also conducted.

Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar, who also participated in the cycling race, was the chief guest on this occasion.

Vice-Chairman Sports Board Punjab Malik Suleman, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali, Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, Director Admin Abid Shaukat,

Director Sports Chand Perveen, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed, former Olympian Shabana Akhtar, sports officials and a large number of sports enthusiasts were also present on this occasion.

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar distributed hefty cash prizes of Rs 38 lakh among the winners and prominent performers of marathon and cycling races.

Talking to media, Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the grand event is the true picture of Chief Minister Punjab's vision of Khelta Punjab. "We are targeting the registration of one lakh athletes in our next mega event planned for October/November this year."

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that it was the biggest sports event in the history of Pakistan in which male and female athletes and citizens of different age groups participated. "It is nice to see athletes from Sindh, KPK



and other parts of the country participating in the mega event. We are ready to cooperate with other provinces for holding mega sports events like this".

Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar also lauded the role of Rescue-1122, police and other relevant departments for making event a success. "I congratulate the administration of Sports Board Punjab for the excellent arrangements and successful organization of sports extravaganza".

Sprinters from Sahiwal dominated the proceeding in the 21-km Men's Marathon. M Akhtar won the first position in the 21-km Men's Marathon. M Amir secured the second position while M Irfan got the third position. The cash prizes of Rs 5 lakh, Rs 3 lakh and Rs 1 lakh were given to the first, second and third position holders respectively.

Karachi's Ali Ilyas excelled and attained first position in Men's 21-km cycling event. Aqib Shah of Lahore remained runners up while Sanaullah of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa finished third in this event. Cash prizes of Rs 2 lakh, Rs 1 lakh and Rs 50,000 were awarded to the top three position holders respectively.

In the 5-km Women's Marathon, the top three positions were taken by Mahnoor, Nazia Ehsan, and Maria. They were awarded cash prizes of Rs 2 lakh, Rs 1 lakh and Rs 50,000 respectively.

The girls from Karachi—Zainab, Anisa and Rabia dominated the 5-km Women's Cycling event and secured top three positions. They were awarded cash prizes of Rs one lakh, Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 respectively.

In Wheelchair Race, the top three positions were claimed by Ahmed Yar, Zahid Nazir and Nawaz Rashid respectively. They bagged cash prizes of Rs 75,000, Rs 50,000 and Rs 25,000 respectively for their excellent performance in the wheelchair race. Rabia Fayaz was the only female athlete in the Wheelchair Race. She was awarded a cash prize of Rs 50,000. It may be noted here that all the athletes participating in the Wheelchair Race were awarded cash prizes of Rs 10,000 each. Cash prizes were also given to athletes from 4th to 20th position in all other races.

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## Over 1500 Lace Up for Pakistan's First Ever Run for Inclusion



Iram Asim

LAHORE: Lahore witnessed a powerful show of unity as over 1500 participants gathered at Park Avenue for the inaugural Run for Inclusion (R4I)—the city's first-ever night run dedicated to advancing awareness for Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD).

More than just a sporting event, Run for Inclusion brought together families, corporate teams, fitness communities, and advocates in a shared commitment to build a more accessible and inclusive society. Participants took part in 1KM, 5KM, and 10KM categories, with the 1KM unified walk emerging as a defining moment, symbolizing collective participation in celebration of neurodivergent and neurotypical communities.

While speaking to the media during the ceremony, politician and social leader Barrister Taimur Malik said that this is the first race of its kind organized to raise awareness about autism. He added that they aim to spread full awareness in this regard so that neurodivergent children can become an active part of society.

"This platform is about shifting mindsets at scale," said Rubab Gardez, Host of Run for Inclusion. "We're moving beyond passive awareness into active integration; creating spaces where differences are not just accepted but genuinely embraced."

"At its core, inclusion is about dignity, access and opportunity," said Maheen Gul Malik, Founder of Lahore Autism Initiative. "What we're building here is not a one-off event but a sustained effort to ensure individuals on the autism spectrum are seen, supported, and meaningfully included in every aspect of society."

## Tehran Welcomed Field Marshal in Combat Dress

Continued from Page 4

Muslim Ummah globally but also in saving the lives of millions of people and preserving the economies of all countries. This was a highly successful diplomatic maneuver to which Field Marshal made a tremendous contribution: he engaged Saudi Arabia, Iran, and other Middle Eastern nations, and successfully gave confidence to world powers to pursue peace. Thanks to his remarkable personality, vision, and wisdom, Field Marshal used his abilities to discuss, talk, and bring all involved people to the table for dialogue—recognizing that dialogue is the ultimate solution to the world's problems.

If the goals of peace are achieved—if a durable ceasefire is converted into a lasting peace treaty, if the issues of Iran's nuclear program and the security of the Gulf are resolved through dialogue, and if the guns fall silent for good—then the name of Pakistan will be written in golden letters in the history of international peace-keeping. And at the very top of that list of peacekeepers, along-

side the greatest mediators and statesmen in history, will stand the name of the Iron Man of Pakistan, its Field Marshal. He will be remembered as the leader who had the boldness to walk into a war zone in combat uniform, the wisdom to use symbolism as a strategic weapon, and the heart to see a brother nation through its darkest hour. The people of Pakistan, watching their nation rise to this unprecedented level of global influence and respect, feel an immense and justifiable sense of pride. They feel proud of their country, which is proving to be not just a geographical expression but a nation with a soul, a purpose, and a role on the world stage.

They feel proud of their civilian leadership, led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, for its sagacious handling of complex alliance politics. And they feel profoundly proud of their military leadership, of the Field Marshal who wore his uniform not as a symbol of war, but as a badge of commitment to a just and lasting peace, a true Iron Man in every sense of the word, forging a future of stability from the fires of conflict.

## Effects of Social Media Usage on Mental Health of Youth: Challenges and Remedies

Continued from Page 4

Setting boundaries is another essential strategy. Limiting screen time, avoiding social media before bedtime, and taking regular digital breaks can significantly improve mental well-being. Encouraging youth to engage in physical activities, hobbies, and social interactions outside the digital world can restore balance in their lives.

Social media platforms themselves also have a responsibility. Implementing stronger privacy controls, content moderation, and anti-bullying measures can create safer online environments. Reporting mechanisms should be accessible and

effective to protect users from harmful content.

Government and policymakers in Pakistan must also take proactive steps. Awareness campaigns on mental health, stricter regulations on harmful online content, and support services for affected individuals are necessary to address this growing issue. Collaboration with technology companies can further enhance efforts to ensure digital safety.

Importantly, youth must be encouraged to adopt a mindful approach to social media. Instead of passive consumption, they should use these platforms for learning, skill development, and constructive

engagement. Following positive content, limiting exposure to harmful material, and practicing self-reflection can help maintain emotional balance.

An often-overlooked aspect is the role of peer influence in shaping online behavior. Young individuals tend to adopt digital habits based on their social circles, which can either reinforce unhealthy usage patterns or promote positive engagement. Encouraging peer-led awareness initiatives, student counseling groups, and youth ambassadors for digital well-being can create a supportive environment where responsible social media use becomes a shared value rather than an

individual struggle.

Furthermore, the role of families cannot be ignored in addressing this issue. A supportive home environment, where parents actively engage with their children and understand their digital experiences, can significantly reduce the negative effects of social media. Setting healthy boundaries, encouraging open dialogue, and modeling balanced digital behavior can help youth develop a responsible relationship with technology from an early age.

In conclusion, social media has become a powerful force in shaping the lives of young people in Pakistan. While it offers significant benefits, its

negative impact on mental health cannot be ignored. Challenges such as anxiety, depression, cyberbullying, and social isolation require urgent attention. By promoting digital literacy, encouraging responsible use, and strengthening support systems, society can mitigate these risks. A balanced and mindful approach to social media will enable youth to harness its potential while safeguarding their mental well-being, ultimately contributing to a healthier and more resilient generation.

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## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani, engages with Karachi's business community at the FBR office to discuss tax reforms and gather stakeholder feedback for the upcoming federal budget in Karachi on Sunday.



Photo: PID

## Bilal Kayani engages with Karachi business community to streamline tax reforms

## Bureau Report

KARACHI: Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani, held a productive consultative session with members of the business community at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), Tax office in Karachi. The meeting aimed to foster collaboration, address concerns, and incorporate feed-

back from stakeholders into the upcoming federal budget.

During the dialogue, Minister Kayani underscored the government's unwavering commitment to simplifying the tax regime. He stated, "Our objective is to introduce a simplified, transparent, and user-friendly taxation system that respects the ground realities of the business community.

We aim to design a process that eliminates the need for complex consultancy and empowers taxpayers through a straightforward, one-page declaration format."

The Minister highlighted the government's efforts to ensure policy continuity, emphasizing that long-term fiscal strategies are being formulated to promote

growth. He announced that the government is actively working to increase direct tax collection while gradually reducing the burden of indirect and withholding taxes to facilitate ease of doing business. Furthermore, he noted the success of the long-term tariff policy, aimed at systematically reducing additional custom and regulatory duties

by 2030, ensuring a predictable environment for traders and industrialists.

Minister Kayani concluded by inviting the business community to submit comprehensive written proposals, emphasizing that the government views the business sector as a vital partner in Pakistan's journey toward sustainable economic prosperity.

## Pakistan emerging as influential UN-style mediator on world stage; says Mustafa Kamal

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health and MQM-P leader Syed Mustafa Kamal on Sunday said Pakistan is lucky to have strong leadership in the form of Field Marshal Asim Munir, stating that the country is playing an active mediator role in world affairs and standing as a bridge of peace among nations.

In an exclusive conversation with a local media channel,



Mustafa Kamal said that after Marka-e-Haq, Pakistan

has been elevated from earth to the skies in terms of global recognition and diplomatic standing, calling it a matter of great fortune for the country to have a courageous leader like Field Marshal Asim Munir at its helm.

He further appreciated the Prime Minister's strategy and policies, stating that they have contributed significantly to strengthening national stability and improving Pakistan's international image.

He said that such coordinated leadership has helped the country move in a positive direction despite global challenges. He added that Pakistan has earned widespread appreciation on the world stage and has effectively played a UN-like mediator role among nations, promoting peace, dialogue and cooperation.

He noted that the country's diplomatic efforts are being acknowledged internationally as constructive and impactful.

## Efforts to control fuel prices underway with priority; says Minister

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Ali Pervaiz Malik, on Sunday thanked the Prime Minister for backing the petroleum sector, stating that efforts were in progress to stabilize the prices and maintain balance, asserting that Paki-

stan's situation was relatively stronger than many countries under global war-related economic stress.

While speaking to a local media channel, Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said that the government was prioritizing the common man as efforts continue to ease fuel price

pressure.

He stated that steps were being taken to ensure stability in the petroleum sector while keeping public relief at the center of policy decisions.

He added that ongoing measures aimed to balance economic challenges with public needs and expressed

confidence that continued reforms and support from the leadership would help maintain price stability and provide relief to consumers across the country.

He further stated that the country's civil and military leadership, including the Field Marshal, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif

and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, merit recognition for their sustained diplomatic engagements and efforts to strengthen Pakistan's international standing. He added that such coordinated efforts were helping strengthen Pakistan's position and contribute to overall national stability.

## Transport suspended in Islamabad, Rawalpindi ahead of possible US-Iran talks

## Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: Authorities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi have suspended public and goods transport services until further notice as security measures are tightened ahead of a potential second round of US-Iran talks.

The deputy commissioner of Islamabad announced the suspension of heavy and public transport across the city, without providing a reason.

A similar directive was

issued in Rawalpindi, where all private, public, and goods transport has been halted with immediate effect.

The move comes amid reports that Islamabad may host another round of negotiations between Washington and Tehran next week, although no official confirmation has been issued by Pakistan, United States, or Iran.

Security in Rawalpindi has been significantly increased on the directives of City Police Officer Syed Khalid Mahmood



Hamdani. More than 10,000 police personnel have been deployed across the city, with over 600 checkpoints set up to monitor entry and exit points. Elite Commandos,

snipers, and rapid response units—including the Elite Force and Dolphin Force—are conducting continuous patrols. Authorities have also intensified search, sweep, and intelligence-based operations, keeping a close watch on suspicious activities.

Security has been further strengthened around sensitive installations and key locations, with round-the-clock monitoring through Safe City systems and CCTV surveillance.

## DPM, Iranian FM emphasize need for continued dialogue



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar spoke Sunday afternoon with Foreign Minister of Iran Abbas Araghchi.

DPM/FM emphasized the need for continued dialogue and engage-

ment as essential to resolving the current issues as soon as possible for promoting the peace and stability in the region and beyond.

Both leaders agreed to remain in close contact and also concurred on a phone call between the President of Iran and the Prime Minister of Pakistan, later on Sunday.

## DPM, Canadian FM review regional developments



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar Sunday spoke with Canada's Foreign Minister Anita Anand.

They reviewed ongoing regional developments. FM Anand appreciated and expressed support for Pakistan's continued efforts to advance

sustained dialogue and constructive engagement between the parties.

Both sides expressed hope for lasting peace and a durable ceasefire across the region, including in Lebanon, while reaffirming their commitment to broader stability and cooperation.

## DPM/FM Dar, his Polish counterpart reaffirm commitment to further strengthening of bilateral cooperation



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister of Poland, Radoslaw Sikorski, Sunday, appreciating the positive momentum in Pakistan-Poland relations, reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

DPM/FM Dar received a tele-

phone call from his Polish counterpart, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

They also held an in-depth exchange of views on the current regional and global issues.

The Polish DPM/FM commended Pakistan's efforts in facilitating a ceasefire between Iran and the United States and appreciated Pakistan's continued commitment to dialogue and diplomacy in promoting peace and stability.

## Asad Qaiser welcomes Iran-US talks, calls for broader peace efforts

## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former National Assembly Speaker Asad Qaiser on Saturday welcomed the ongoing talks between the United States and Iran, terming them a positive development for regional peace.

Speaking to the media in Swabi, he said that such diplomatic efforts are encouraging and added that similar dialogue should be initiated with Pakistan's neighbouring countries

to promote stability in the region.

Asad Qaiser stated that his party had postponed a scheduled public meeting in Rawalpindi in light of the ongoing talks, emphasizing that they did not want the government to use any excuse to target or blame PTI.

He said that the planned public gathering is not only aimed at seeking the release of the jailed former prime minister Imran Khan but also represents the voice of all oppressed segments of society.