



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن عربی نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا ہم سے شعیب نے بیان کیا، ان سے عبدالمعز بن سہیب نے بیان کیا، ان سے انس رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم جب بیت الخلاء جاتے تو یہ دعا پڑھتے: «اللہم اِنِّیْ اَعُوذُ بِکَ مِنَ الْخُبْثِ وَالْخُبَائِثِ» اے اللہ! میں خبیث چیزوں اور خبیثوں کی برائی سے تیری پناہ مانگتا ہوں۔ (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6322)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Iran's Mojtaba Khamenei 'gravely wounded' but 'mentally sharp'

Iran's new Supreme Leader Mojtaba Khamenei was seriously wounded in the US-Israeli airstrike that killed his father and predecessor Ali Khamenei but is mentally sharp, the New York Times reported on Thursday.



Red Liquid Attack Targets Pahlavi at European Conference

The son of the former Shah appealed to Western countries to join the war against Iran and criticised the decision of the German government not to meet him during his visit to Berlin on Thursday. Someone threw red liquid at Reza Pahlavi as he was leaving the conference. Security quickly intervened and detained the individual responsible.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Meeting on Energy



Timely steps averted crisis as energy security vital part of future planning: PM

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday calling energy security a vital part of the country's future planning, said that the government's timely measures regarding energy conservation in the current regional situation averted a crisis. The prime minister, chairing a high-level meeting regarding energy security, said that work was underway on a plan to maintain strategic reserves of crude oil in the country, keeping in view future energy needs. Besides, he said that for energy conservation and sustainable development, means of transportation should be gradually transitioned to eco-friendly electric vehicles (EVs). The prime minister directed to purchase only electric buses and motorcycles for government use in the future and accelerate the establishment of charging stations for EVs. Calling for a strategy to facilitate the acquisition of batteries for the storage of surplus solar electricity, he said that local manufacturing of high-quality storage batteries should also be encouraged. During the briefing, the participants of the meeting were told that the National Coordination and Management Council (NCMC) was reviewing the energy situation on a daily basis. It was informed that sufficient stocks of petroleum products were available, and the food security situation in the country was also stable. The participants were told that through the continuous efforts of oil and gas companies, local production of gas and oil was increasing and a PC-I was being prepared for two pilot projects for battery storage at the grid level. Besides, the domestic consumers generating solar energy were being encouraged to install battery storage. Federal ministers Musadik Masood Malik, Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Sardar Awais Leghari, Attaullah Tarar, Ali Pervez Malik, Ahsan Iqbal, Advisor to the Prime Minister on Privatization Muhammad Ali, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, and relevant senior government officials attended the meeting.

Canada lauds Pakistan's efforts for advancing regional peace: FO



City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar has reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Canada bilateral relations across diverse sectors. He was talking to the Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ambassador Tarik Ali Khan, who called on him in Islamabad on Thursday. Dar also underscored Pakistan's continued efforts toward promoting lasting peace in the region and beyond. Ambassador Tarik Ali Khan conveyed Canada's appreciation and support for Pakistan's efforts to facilitate engagement aimed at advancing regional peace. According to the Foreign Office (FO), Canada has expressed its appreciation to Pakistan for its efforts to "facilitate engagement aimed at advancing regional peace". Ottawa's sentiments were conveyed by Canadian Ambassador to Pakistan Tarik Ali Khan when he called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, who reaffirmed Islamabad's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations. "DPM/FM underscored Pakistan's continued efforts toward promoting lasting peace in the region and beyond," the FO has said on X.

PM meets Pakistani Astronauts selected for human space mission



City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met Pakistani astronauts Khuram Daud and Muhammad Zeeshan Ali, who have been selected for a human space mission, and described their participation in space research as a landmark achievement for the country and a matter of national pride. Astronaut Attaché Hasnain Iftikhar from Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) was also present during the meeting held here at the Prime Minister's Office, a news release said. Speaking on the occasion, the prime minister expressed deep pleasure over meeting the young astronauts and termed their selection for space research a significant milestone for Pakistan. He said their journey represented a moment of pride not only for him but for the entire nation.

Mohsin Naqvi meets US ambassador to advance Iran dialogue efforts



Spokesman Report
ISLAMABAD: Pakistani Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met US Ambassador Natalie Baker on Thursday to discuss the regional situation and diplomatic efforts to hold a second round of talks between Iran and the United States in Islamabad, the Interior Ministry said. Naqvi welcomed US President Donald Trump's move to extend a ceasefire with Iran and emphasised the importance of continuing diplomatic engagement to reach a lasting solution. He expressed hope for positive progress from Iran and said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir were making efforts at all levels to resolve the issue. In Washington, White House spokesperson Caroline Levitt said a US naval blockade of Iran remained in place and that conditions would not be eased. She said Trump had shown flexibility but that Iran would have to hand over its enriched uranium to the United States. Levitt dismissed reports of a short deadline, saying the president would determine the timeline and that the temporary ceasefire could remain until Iran's leadership gives a unified response to US proposals. She added that economic pressure was bringing Iran to the negotiating table and that US military operations were continuing. Iranian leaders in Tehran sharply criticised the US position. Parliament Speaker Baqir Qalibaf said the ceasefire was meaningless if the economy remained constrained by the blockade, adding that it would be impossible to reopen the Strait of Hormuz under such conditions. He warned that the United States would not achieve its objectives through threats and said recognising Iran's rights was the only path forward. President Masoud Peshkeshian also criticised what he described as contradictions between US actions and statements, calling the blockade and threats key obstacles to negotiations.

Pakistan rejects India's 'baseless propaganda' over Pahalgam incident

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday rejected India's allegations linking it to the Pahalgam incident, calling them "baseless" and part of a recurring propaganda campaign aimed at serving domestic political objectives. In an official statement issued from Islamabad, the Foreign Office said it was "deplorable" that India had once again attempted to associate Pakistan with the incident at a time when Islamabad, in coordination with international partners, is engaged in diplomatic efforts to promote regional and global peace. The statement noted that despite an ongoing regional crisis, India continues to rely on what it described as "weaponising false narratives" against Pakistan for internal political gains. Referring to last year's Operation Buneen-un-Marsoos, the Foreign Office said India had already received a "befitting reply" to its "misplaced adventurism," adding that the latest allegations were part of a broader pattern aimed at creating a smokescreen for its actions in the region.

'Watan ki Khatir' patriotic anthem released to honour martyrs

City Desk
ISLAMABAD: A new patriotic anthem titled Watan ki Khatir has been released, paying tribute to the courage and sacrifice of fallen soldiers. The anthem reflects public sentiment and honours brave martyrs, portraying the valor, resilience, and battlefield dominance of national heroes. Its lyrics highlight the unwavering commitment and faith-driven spirit associated with Pakistan Army. With powerful lines such as "Watan ki khatir jeeen mareenge" (We will live and die for the homeland), the song emphasizes the enduring determination and patriotism of soldiers. Each musical note echoes the resolve of warriors whose strength instills fear in adversaries, reinforcing a message of national unity and readiness. The anthem serves as a strong declaration that the armed forces stand alongside the nation at all times, prepared to defend the country, while also honoring veterans who have served with distinction.



AJK Cabinet praises Pakistani leadership for Middle East peace efforts

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, on Thursday adopted a unanimous resolution paying tribute to Pakistan's civilian and military leadership for their unprecedented role in promoting peace in the Middle East.

The cabinet commended President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir for their diplomatic efforts, noting that Pakistan's role as a peacemaker, including hosting key engagements between US and Iranian representatives in Islamabad, had been widely appreciated.

Describing it as a major diplomatic



achievement, the cabinet said the top leadership's proactive role had enhanced the country's global stature and was a source of pride for the people of Pakistan and Kashmir.

Through another resolution, the cabinet termed last year's Pahalgam incident a "false flag operation," saying

that it was orchestrated by India to advance political and military objectives.

It expressed concern that the incident formed part of a broader strategy aimed at justifying continued repression and military actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

The cabinet strongly condemned

the ongoing human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances and arbitrary arrests in the held territory. The cabinet called for the immediate release of detained leaders, including Masarat Alam Bhat, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Yasin Malik and Asiya Andrabi, as well as other prisoners held in various jails, including New Delhi's Tihar Jail.

It further urged the United Nations to intensify efforts towards implementation of its resolutions on Kashmir to ensure lasting peace in South Asia.

The cabinet also paid tribute to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for highlighting Pakistan's peace initiatives at the international level, and appreciated the policy and development initiatives undertaken by the government

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif meets famous British-Born Pakistani Doctor, Dr. Hassnat Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE, 23 APRIL 2026: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif met a renowned British-born Pakistani doctor, Dr. Hassnat Khan to discuss administrative matters of the newly-constructed Jinnah Institute of Cardiology Lahore. She congratulated him on assuming responsibilities at Jinnah Institute of Cardiology, and praised his spirit of coming from England to Pakistan to serve his compatriots. She reaffirmed her commitment to making Jinnah Institute of Cardiology an exemplary institution.

Chief Minister Punjab said that it is heartening to note that a son of this blessed land has chosen a path of serving his own countrymen. She added that they are striving to provide the best heart treatment facilities not only to every person in Punjab but across Pakistan. She wished to make Punjab a hub of medical tourism in the world.

High Court dismisses writ petition filed by local government representatives against distribution

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has reserved its verdict on the writ petition filed by local government representatives on the sensitive issue of distribution of development funds and dismissed it. A divisional bench comprising Justice Syed Shahid Bihar and Justice Chaudhry Khalid Rashid gave this important verdict today after completing the hearing of the case titled Sardar Javed Sharif and others vs. Members of Assembly. According to the details, this writ petition was filed against the spending of about Rs 5 billion of local government development funds by members of assembly. The local government representatives had taken the stand in the court that these funds should be used in the public interest by local governments only, and not by members of assembly. Earlier, the High Court had admitted the writ petition for hearing but no stay order was issued on it.



Students' protest at Kashmir University Muzaffarabad gains momentum, academic activities suspended for 2 days.

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Kashmir University located in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir, has been closed for the past two days due to student protests, as a result of which all academic activities have been suspended. A large number of students have staged a sit-in in support of their demands, raising strong slogans against the university administration.

Students angry at the administration's "lack of seriousness" Students say that they have presented a 20-point charter of demands to the university administration, but no seriousness or progress has been seen so far. According to the protesters, if the demands are not accepted, the scope of the protest will be further expanded.

World breathes a sigh of relief as ceasefire expands

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations, has stated that the world has taken a collective sigh of relief as tensions between the United States and Iran eased following a crucial extension in the ceasefire, achieved through Pakistan's timely and proactive diplomacy.



He noted that both sides were on the brink of renewed conflict, with military escalation and economic coercion pushing the region towards another devastating phase of war. However, Pakistan's last-minute diplomatic intervention—particularly its advice to extend the ceasefire—played a decisive role in stabilizing the situation. He observed that despite initial hesitation, U. S. President Donald Trump agreed to expand the ceasefire, creating space for negotiations to proceed.

Sardar Masood Khan emphasized that Pakistan's role in mediating between major global and regional powers marks a historic development in diplomacy. "It is rare in classical diplomacy for a country like Pakistan to act as a bridge between powers of such magnitude in an active conflict," he said, adding that this effort has effectively written a "new chapter" in international relations.

Hyderabad Book Fair Opens Amid Arts Council Ultimatum

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: On the occasion of World Book Day, a two-day book fair organized by the Sindh Culture Department was inaugurated in Hyderabad by Provincial Minister for Culture and Tourism, Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah. He stated that if stakeholders fail to reach a consensus on the Hyderabad Arts Council within a week, the government will announce its establishment.



The book fair was formally launched at Sindh Museum, with Commissioner Hyderabad Fayaz Abbasi, the Director General Culture Habibullah Memon, and other senior officials in attendance. The provincial minister, along with the commissioner, visited various stalls and showed keen interest in the displayed books.

Meanwhile, a three-day workshop on the UNESCO World Heritage musical instrument "Borindo" concluded at the Sindh Museum under the Culture Department. The event was also attended by the provincial minister, Commissioner Fayaz Abbasi, DG Culture Habibullah Memon, and Chairman Sindh language Authority Dr. Sher Mehrami along with writers and citizens.

During the workshop, folk artist Zulfiqar Lund trained students in playing the Borindo, while craftsman Allah Jurio Kumbhar demonstrated its making using clay and a potter's wheel. The provincial minister awarded Zulfiqar Lund a cheque of one million rupees and stated that Borindo is an important part of Sindh's cultural heritage and efforts will continue for its preservation.

Preparation for summer

LAHORE: A donkey cart drive loaded with locally made room coolers drive through on a road in the Provincial Capital. The Meteorological Department on Thursday has forecast that heat has been started to increase in the provincial metropolis, where the weather is expected to remain dry and hot.



Photo: Online

AJK Prime Minister warns against social media misinformation

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has stressed the need for responsible use of digital and social media to curb the spread of disinformation and fake news.

Speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office-bearers of the Digital and Social Media Journalists Association here today, the AJK premier said that social media has emerged as a powerful communication tool, widely used by electronic and print media to reach audiences.

Speaking on the occasion, former Press Club president Tariq Naqash said digital media has become an inte-



gral part of modern communication, enabling rapid dissemination of information. Those who took oath, on

the occasion, included President Naseer Chaudhry, Senior Vice President Irfan Akram, First Vice President Osama Zain, Second

Vice President (Women) Ms Alisha Andleeb, General Secretary Raja Shoaib Mahmood, Additional General Secretary Muneeb

Abbasi, Joint Secretary Syeda Zahra Fatima, Secretary Finance Kashif Javed, Secretary Information Abdul Qayyum, and Secretary Records Adil Shahzad.

The ceremony, held at the Prime Minister's House, was also attended by journalists, representatives of civil society and government ministers including Sardar Javed Ayub, Nabila Ayub, and Chaudhry Aamir Yasir, Spokesperson of the Prime Minister Shaukat Javed Mir, Director Public Relations Tariq Jamil Durrani, Chairman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Press Foundation Sardar Zulfiqar, President Central Press Club Muzaffarabad Sohail Mughal, senior journalists including Tariq Naqash, and others.

AJK Agriculture Conference Ushers In New Era of Inclusive Rural Policy Making

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A landmark Agriculture Conference in Azad Jammu & Kashmir concluded successfully, marking a significant step forward in inclusive policy-making and sustainable rural development. The conference prominently highlighted the growing role of women in economic transformation through

the active participation of the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry AJK.

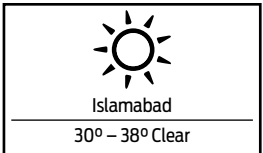
Senior Vice President and CEO of MY Farms & Sons, Ms. Maria Gilani, drew considerable attention with her livestock-focused exhibition stall, which was visited by Prime Minister of AJK, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, along with other senior officials.

For the first time, a broad spectrum



of stakeholders—including representatives from AJK, all four provinces of Pakistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, research institutions, farmers, and the Women

Chamber—were formally integrated into the policy-making process. Their recommendations have been forwarded for cabinet consideration.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr 3:59 am
 Zohr 12:06 pm
 Asr 4:50 pm
 Maghrib 6:45 pm
 Isha 8:14 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
 MH 561116
 Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
 DHQ 5556311-4
 RGH 9290301-7
 Holy Family 9290322-7
 PIMS 9261170-79
 Polyclinic 9218300-09
 Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

DFP concerned over NIA's dilly dallying tactics to prolong Shah's detention

Spokesman Report

SRINAGAR: The Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has expressed serious concern over the continued denial of bail to its incarcerated president, Shabir Ahmed Shah.

DFP spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal said it was deeply unfortunate that despite a clear ruling by the Supreme Court in favour of granting bail to Shah, the NIA authorities were employing delaying tactics to prolong his detention by implicating in false and fabricated case.

This revolving door detention system, he said, was taking a heavy toll on Kashmiri prisoners who after getting bailed in one case were being arrested in another cases.

He stated that the conduct of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) amounted to a blatant disregard for court orders. "It is highly regrettable that the directives of the highest court are being openly flouted," he added.

The spokesperson maintained that the denial of bail and failure to implement the court's ruling were deliberate attempts to keep Shah behind bars.

Own Land...Own Labor, Own Crop... Own Livelihood: Excellent plan for agricultural & economic prosperity in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif launched the official portal of 'Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar' (Own Farm, Own Livelihood) Scheme, a historic project in Punjab to provide landless villagers with agricultural land worth approximately Rs 160 billion.

Under her directive, agricultural land has been

identified considering water availability and fertility of the land. Authorities concerned briefed her that in various districts of Punjab, 88,780 families will benefit from 13,812 agricultural plots, while 101,111 families in Cholistan will benefit from 16,685 plots.

They said that under "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" scheme, each successful applicant will receive agricultural land worth Rs 2.5 to 4 million for cultiva-



tion. Senior Member Board of Revenue (SMBR), Nabil Javed, gave a detailed briefing on the scheme.

He said that successful applicants of the scheme will be given a one-time settlement grant of Rs 50,000 to 250,000 per acre, besides the provision of 124,374 acres of agricultural land along with water availability. He added that under this scheme, landless farmers in villages will be provided agricultural land for a period of 10 years.

Chief Minister Punjab was also apprised by the relevant authorities that under the scheme, 43,938 areas in various districts of the province,

and 83,425 areas in Cholistan have been identified keeping irrigation and fertility in mind.

They said that aspiring farmers can apply from May 2 to May 18 at akarpunjabgovt.pk; and can file appeals with their relevant Deputy Commissioners from June 1 to June 8.

They added that final list of the successful applicants will be finalized on June 19, and land distribution will begin from June 30. They highlighted that in case of multiple applicants for one plot, agricultural land will be awarded for 10 years after a ballot/draw.

In Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: A view of garbage spread on roadside in Sector G-12 in the Federal Capital, creates health and environment issues needs the attention of concerned authorities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

The success of the battle of the right foundation is the success of the entire nation

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Pakistan Ulema Council and National Peace Message Committee Government-Punjab organized a seminar on the right foundation at the Osmania University Razaabad, which was presided over by Allama Tahir-ul-Hassan, Central Deputy Secretary General of the Pakistan Ulema Council. In which the special guest was Hafiz Maqbool Ahmed, Coordinator of the National Peace Message Committee Punjab. The seminar was attended by scholars and mashaikhs of all schools of thought. In which Sahabzada Zahid Mahmood Qasmi, Hafiz Maqbool Ahmed, Maulana Riaz Kharal, Maulana Professor Asif Raza Qadri, Dr. Ifikhar Naqvi, Maulana Habiba-ur-Rehman, Mufti Tayyab, Maulana Yasir Alvi, Qari Ismatullah Naseer, and Anjuman Tajran, Maulana Azam Farooq, Professor Imran Salafi, Maulana Saadullah Ludhianvi, Maulana Obaidullah Gorman and other scholars and mashaikhs participated. Speaking at the ceremony, Sahabzada Zahid Mahmood Qasmi said that the struggle for truth has made the entire nation proud. On this occasion, Hafiz Maqbool Ahmed said that the entire nation stands with its Pakistan Army and security institutions. India's defeat has left India in a state of panic. On this occasion, Maulana Riaz Kharal, Dr. Ifikhar Naqvi, Professor Asif Raza Qadri said that the declaration of the National Peace Message Committee is clear that those who speak against Pakistan will be given an open answer. The Pakistan Army and the nation are on the same page.

Robbery Gang Arrested Attock polic Rs 5 Million cash and Weapons Recovered

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: According to details, on the instructions of District Police Officer (DPO) Attock Sardar Muawara Khan, a crackdown against criminal elements has been ongoing across the district. During this campaign, Pindigheb Police achieved a significant success by arresting a two-member dangerous robbery gang.

Under the leadership of SHO Pindigheb Malik Munwar, the police team conducted an operation and arrested the suspects:

Shiraz Khan son of Taj Khan, resident of Jhandial, Tehsil Fateh Jang
 Abdul Hameed son of Zulfiqar Ali, resident of Dhok Ganjha, Pindigheb

From the possession of the arrested suspects, the police recovered looted cash amounting to Rs. 5 million, along with weapons used in the crime.

The suspects were previously involved in criminal activities and were wanted by police in robbery cases.

DPO Attock Sardar Muawara Khan appreciated the police team for the successful operation and stated that protection of citizens' lives and property is the top priority, and indiscriminate action against criminals will continue.

NGC Convenes Workshop to Tackle Right-of-Way Challenges in Power Transmission Infrastructure

Bureau Report

LAHORE: National Grid Company of Pakistan (NGC) hosted its first-ever workshop on Right-of-Way (ROW) Issues in Transmission Infrastructure in LUMS Lahore. The event brought together legal experts, development partners and power sector stakeholders to chart a path toward a modern legal and operational framework for resolving land access challenges that continue to affect the reliable and timely delivery of Pakistan's power transmission network.

ROW constraints, particularly the legal and practical challenges of securing land access for transmission lines and related infrastructure remain one of the most persistent barriers to grid expansion in Pakistan. Delays in land acquisition directly lead to cost overruns, reduced grid reliability, and slower delivery of affordable power to communities nationwide.

This workshop represents a concrete step toward addressing these challenges. At NGC, ROW issues are the largest obstacle to timely project delivery, which is why the organization is taking the lead in convening experts to develop fair and efficient solutions that can accelerate progress for the benefit of all Pakistanis.

The session was opened by Ms. Maria Rafique, Chief Law Officer of NGC, who outlined the workshop's objectives and framed the day as the beginning of a sustained, structured effort to build a governance model fit for Pakistan's growing transmission needs.

In his keynote address, Dr. Fiaz Ahmad Chaudhry, Chairman of the NGC Board, set the tone for the discussions that followed. "Century-old legal frameworks require corrective measures," he said. "We need to move from a reactive posture to a proactive one anticipating challenges, modernizing our tools, and building frameworks that serve today's development needs."

Punjab Auqaf Secretary Inspects Progress of Baba Bulleh Shah Shrine Renovation in Kasur

Bureau Report

KASUR: Reaffirming the Government of Punjab's commitment to the preservation of spiritual heritage and the upgradation of shrine infrastructure across the province, Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta stated that ongoing development works at the Shrine Complex of Baba Bulleh Shah, Kasur, are progressing in line with modern standards while ensuring full respect for the site's religious and historical significance.

He expressed these views during his detailed visit to



the shrine complex, where he reviewed the pace and quality

of construction and renovation works. Deputy Commissioner Kasur Asif Raza, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Muhammad Murtaza, Director Projects Auqaf Rafique Noor Wattoo, Manager Auqaf Ghulam Mustafa, Executive Engineer Buildings Ghulam Abbas Maitla, and Administrator Lahore Zone East Mian Muhammad Aslam accompanied him during the visit.

Executive Engineer Ghulam Abbas Maitla briefed Dr. Ehsan Bhutta on the overall progress of the project, highlighting major completed and ongoing components of the shrine's rehabilitation and expansion works.

Humnava Releases Noor-e-Nazar, Where Tradition Meets a Global Soundscape

News Desk

LAHORE: Following the release of its first song, Hairan Amanam, to much acclaim, global music platform Humnava now unveils its second release from Season 1, Noor-e-Nazar, continuing its journey of bringing together music, culture, collaboration, and place in one deeply immersive artistic experience.

Noor-e-Nazar, is an Urdu love song that reflects a marriage shaped by tenderness, equality, and shared becoming. Recorded live at Gulmit Old House in Gulmit, Hunza Nagar, the song draws from Hunza's cultural traditions, including a local marriage ritual in which the couple makes roti together to officiate their union, a symbolic act that speaks to partner-



ship, vulnerability, and the strength of growing side by side. In doing so, Noor-

e-Nazar becomes not just a song about love, but a meditation on companion-

ship as a quiet and enduring force. Produced and curated by Xulfi and Sherry Khattak, who also brought the soulful vision of Jhol to life, Noor-e-Nazar serves as the emotional spine of this chapter of Humnava. The track features vocals by Noman Asmet and Noorima Rehan, and brings together a rich ensemble of musicians including Sherry Khattak, Amine Laroug, Melvin Arthur, Muhammad Hunaid, Adnan Karim, Lina Belaid, Blaise Merlin, and Dorian Jonas Goeths. In keeping with Humnava's larger vision, the song itself becomes a global act of creation, bringing together artists and instrumentalists from Pakistan, Algeria, and Europe in a composition that feels both intimate in its roots and expansive in its reach.

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Trump's Shadow War Against China

In a world increasingly defined by polarized narratives, few leaders evoke as intense a spectrum of reactions as Donald Trump. Critics across global media and political corridors have not hesitated to label his actions as reckless, impulsive, or even dangerous—particularly in the context of escalating tensions in the Middle East. Yet, beneath the surface of this widespread criticism lies an alternative interpretation: that what appears chaotic may, in fact, be a calculated and deeply strategic attempt to reorder global power dynamics, particularly through control of energy resources.

At the heart of this perspective is the doctrine of "America First," a policy framework that prioritizes U.S. economic and strategic supremacy above all else. Rather than viewing recent geopolitical developments as isolated events, this lens interprets them as interconnected steps in a broader strategy aimed at securing long-term dominance—especially over emerging rivals like China.

During his political rise, Trump repeatedly identified China as America's foremost strategic competitor. This assessment was not merely rhetorical. China's rapid economic expansion, its integration with over 140 countries through the Belt and Road Initiative, and its dominance in critical sectors such as rare earth minerals positioned it as a formidable challenger to U.S. global influence. Any serious attempt to counterbalance China, therefore, required not just military strength, but economic leverage of equal or greater magnitude.

Simultaneously, attention turned toward other major energy reserves—most notably Venezuela, home to some of the largest proven oil reserves in the world. Through a combination of political pressure, sanctions, and strategic inter-

ventions, the U.S. effectively reduced Venezuela's ability to operate independently in global oil markets, thereby limiting alternative supply channels—particularly those accessible to China.

The next phase of this strategy unfolded in the Middle East, a region that has long served as the backbone of global energy supply. Tensions surrounding Iran's nuclear program—whether viewed as legitimate concerns or strategic pretexts—provided the context for heightened military engagement. In this interpretation, the objective was not solely to neutralize nuclear threats or enforce regime change, but to influence a far more critical variable: the flow of oil through the Strait of Hormuz.

The Strait of Hormuz is one of the world's most vital chokepoints, through which nearly a fifth of global oil supply passes. Any disruption in this narrow passage sends shockwaves across international markets. By escalating tensions and contributing to instability in the region, the United States effectively created conditions under which oil flows could be restricted, redirected, or controlled.

When regional production facilities were damaged and shipping routes became uncertain, global economies—especially those heavily dependent on imported energy—were forced into a state of urgency. In such a scenario, the United States positioned itself as the most reliable alternative supplier. Reports of large numbers of oil tankers heading toward U.S. ports underscored this shift, reflecting a reorientation of global supply chains.

This redirection of energy flows carries profound implications. Countries that

once relied on Middle Eastern oil—many of them key partners of China—are now increasingly dependent on American exports. In effect, energy dependency is being recalibrated, transferring leverage from traditional producers and transit routes to a new central hub: the United States.

For China, this development poses a strategic dilemma. As one of the world's largest energy consumers, China's economic engine depends on stable and affordable access to oil. Historically, it has diversified its sources, importing from Iran, Venezuela, and Russia. However, sanctions, geopolitical tensions, and disruptions in shipping routes have significantly constrained these options. If access to these supplies is reduced or eliminated, China faces the prospect of turning—directly or indirectly—to the United States to meet its energy needs.

Critics argue that such strategies come at an immense cost: regional instability, economic volatility, and human suffering. The disruption of global trade routes, spikes in energy prices, and the threat of prolonged conflict have placed enormous strain on economies worldwide. Journalists and analysts, often operating far from the realities of decision-making at the highest levels, highlight these consequences and question the rationale behind such policies.

However, supporters of this strategic interpretation contend that leadership at this level requires decisions that transcend immediate perceptions. They argue that the complexities of global power competition demand unconventional

approaches—moves that may appear disruptive in the short term but aim to secure long-term advantages.

From this perspective, labeling Trump as irrational or incompetent oversimplifies a far more intricate picture. His background as a businessman—someone who built a vast enterprise and navigated complex negotiations—suggests a familiarity with leverage, risk, and long-term positioning. Whether one agrees with his methods or not, the outcomes of these strategies—particularly in energy markets—indicate a deliberate attempt to reshape global dependencies.

Ultimately, the unfolding scenario represents a broader shift in how power is exercised in the modern world. Military actions, economic policies, and geopolitical maneuvers are increasingly intertwined, forming a cohesive strategy where energy becomes both a tool and a target. The intersection of war and economics, once considered distinct domains, is now central to the pursuit of global influence.

As the world watches these developments, the debate is unlikely to settle into a single narrative. Some will continue to see chaos and recklessness; others will perceive calculated strategy and bold leadership. What remains clear is that the stakes are extraordinarily high—not just for the United States or China, but for the global system as a whole.

In this evolving landscape, one question persists: is the current trajectory a path toward renewed dominance, or a gamble that could redefine the balance of power in unpredictable ways?

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

North Korea, Russia Reportedly Aim to Open New Road Bridge Soon

North Korea and Russia aim to open a road bridge connecting the countries across the Tumen River as soon as possible, North Korean state media KCNA said on Thursday, as the neighboring countries forge closer ties.

The project, which began about a year ago, is "an important business" to boost bilateral cooperation including tourism, trade and the movement of people, KCNA said, according to Reuters.

Construction of the 850-meter (2,789-ft) bridge, which will connect to Russia's highway system, was agreed during a 2024 visit to North Korea by President Vladimir Putin.

Russia and North Korea held a ceremony on Tuesday to mark the joining of the bridge, the Moscow Times reported.

It is being built near the existing "Friendship Bridge," a rail bridge which was commissioned in 1959 after the Korean War.

KCNA said an opening ceremony would be held soon, without specifying a date. The Russian embassy in Pyongyang wrote on Telegram that the bridge would be completed on June 19.

Oleg Kozhemyako, governor of the Primorsky region in Russia's Far East, wrote on Telegram that the bridge would increase trade and expand cultural and tourism ties. He said it would cut the distance between Vladivostok and the border city of Rason to 320 kilometers and the crossing would have the capacity to accommodate up to 300 cars per day.

The update came as several Russian delegations visited North Korea this week.

Russian Interior Minister Vladimir Kolokoltsev met Jo Yong Won, chairman of the Standing Committee of North Korea's Supreme People's Assembly, on Wednesday in what KCNA described as a "favorable atmosphere."

On Tuesday, Russian Health Minister Mikhail Murashko visited the North Korean city of Wonsan to attend a ceremony celebrating the construction of a hospital symbolizing the "friendship" between the countries, KCNA said.

Russia and North Korea in 2024 signed a "comprehensive strategic partnership treaty" during Putin's visit to Pyongyang.

The pact includes a mutual defense provision, and North Korea has sent thousands of soldiers to fight alongside Russian forces in western Russia's Kursk region after a large Ukrainian incursion.

China has also been seeking to strengthen cross-border infrastructure and rebuild ties with North Korea and last month saw the first passenger train service between the countries resume after a six-year gap.



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

India's Reckless Escalation and Pakistan's Emergence as a Regional Stabilizer

The Pahalgalam attack, which killed 26 people, marks a critical escalation point in South Asian tensions. India's immediate attribution to Pakistan, without presenting verifiable evidence, has drawn scrutiny from regional analysts questioning inconsistencies in the narrative. Rather than restraint, New Delhi's response adopted a confrontational posture, intensifying regional instability and raising serious concerns about escalation risks in a nuclearized environment.

India's response was not only disproportionate but also ruthlessly punitive, deepening the suffering of an already besieged population in Jammu and Kashmir. Under the pretext of "intensified military operations," Indian occupation forces unleashed widespread violence that has resulted in at least 74 killings, 160 individuals tortured or injured, and the arbitrary arrest of 4,705 civilians. With 2,850 siege and search operations carried out, entire communities have been subjected to systematic intimidation and coercion. Homes have not been spared either, 43 incidents of arson and 193 cases of property attachment reflect a deliberate strategy of collective punishment, leaving 8 women widowed and 11 children orphaned in its wake.

Rather than pursuing justice, New Delhi has exploited the Pahalgalam tragedy to manufacture war hysteria and legitimize its escalatory actions. In a particularly egregious move, authorities have deported scores of women from Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, forcibly separating them from their children, an act that not only violates basic humanitarian norms but also entrenches a cycle of trauma and dispossession.

Pakistan's response remained grounded in international norms: it demanded credible, verifiable evidence linking the attack to its territory and offered to cooperate in an independent international investigation, an offer India flatly rejected. Instead of substantiating its claims, New Delhi escalated tensions through inflammatory

rhetoric, which soon translated into outright aggression. Under "Operation Sindoor," Indian forces launched missile strikes into Pakistani territory, killing at least 31 civilians and injuring 57 others, including women and children across multiple locations in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). This was not restraint it was a calculated escalation targeting civilian spaces.

Even more alarming was India's unilateral move to place the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) in abeyance, a reckless step that strikes at the heart of regional stability. Signed in 1960 and brokered by the World Bank, the treaty allocates the three western rivers, Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab, to Pakistan, which accounts for nearly 80% of the total water flow critical to its agriculture. By attempting to weaponize water, India is not merely violating a bilateral agreement; it is endangering the livelihood of over 220 million people who depend on this system. Pakistan's response has been unequivocal: any attempt to block or divert its legally guaranteed water share will be treated as an act of war, and the state will take all necessary measures to safeguard its rights.

Faced with Indian aggression, Pakistan responded with calibrated precision and strategic restraint. "Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos" showcased advanced defensive capabilities, successfully neutralizing incoming threats while maintaining full-spectrum readiness along the Line of Control spanning over 700 kilometers. Crucially, Pakistan avoided horizontal escalation, reinforcing a doctrine of controlled deterrence rather than reckless retaliation. The crisis ultimately resulted in a US-mediated ceasefire. In stark contrast, India denied any external involvement to manage domestic optics, while Pakistan openly acknowledged the role of Donald Trump, who praised Shehbaz Sharif and Syed Asim Munir for their restraint and statesmanship. The intervention compelled India to step back, reinforcing Pakistan's image as a disciplined and capable military power.

More importantly, Pakistan translated this military credibility into diplomatic leverage. It assumed a proactive role in easing regional tensions and emerged as a key intermediary between the United States and Iran. The first round of direct talks, held on April 10–11, 2026, after a 47-year hiatus, marked a significant breakthrough. With global energy prices surging by nearly 15% amid regional instability, Pakistan's mediation efforts have gained heightened relevance. Islamabad is now working to organize the second round of talks within the next 72 to 96 hours, while hosting a steady influx of international delegations, positioning itself as a pivotal stabilizing force in an increasingly volatile international system.

Conversely, India continues to play the role of a regional spoiler. Unwilling to accept Pakistan's diplomatic ascendancy, New Delhi has intensified its hybrid warfare against Pakistan. Evidence continues to mount regarding India's covert support for terrorist groups and its manipulation of the Afghan regime to foment instability inside Pakistan. Furthermore, India's strategic alignment with Israel not only undermines the Palestinian cause but also positions New Delhi as a disruptive force in the Middle East, actively sabotaging peace initiatives to maintain a hegemonic stranglehold over the region.

The Pahalgalam fallout exposes a stark divide: Pakistan has pursued deterrence, restraint, and diplomacy, while India persists with majoritarian nationalism, coercion in Jammu and Kashmir, and destabilizing brinkmanship. This is no longer a bilateral issue, it is a test of global resolve. Continued silence enables escalation. The international community must hold India accountable and push for immediate, meaningful dialogue. Pakistan's commitment to stability deserves recognition and support. A durable peace requires compelling India to the negotiating table and fulfilling long-overdue commitments to the people of Jammu and Kashmir, including their right to determine their political future.

The writer is the Chairman of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and can be reached @ email saleemwani@hotmail.com and on X @ sultan1913



Analysis

Altaf Hussain Wani

China's Strategic Shadow Over the Islamabad US-Iran Talks

The marathon negotiations between the United States and Iran held in Islamabad ended without a comprehensive agreement. American Vice President JD Vance, who left for America after 21 hours of talks with the Iranian delegation, said his team had been very clear

on its redlines, and the most important point of difference between them was the nuclear program of Iran. Pakistan, as host and facilitator, earned public thanks from both sides for keeping dialogue alive. Yet the real story extends far beyond the conference rooms of Islamabad. Even without a seat at the head of the table, China's strategic shadow loomed large over these proceedings indirect, understated, but profoundly influential. Pakistan positioned itself as a neutral bridge in a conflict that had already claimed thousands of lives and disrupted global energy flows through the Strait of Hormuz.

The talks built on a fragile two-week ceasefire that Islamabad helped broker earlier. Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf led aspects of Tehran's engagement, while JD Vance led the American team,

which included Special Envoy Steve Witkoff and Senior Adviser Jared Kushner, both considered to be very close to President Trump. Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal, Chief of Army Staff Asim Munir and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar worked tirelessly, relaying messages and creating space for direct engagement, the highest-level face-to-face US-Iran contact in decades.

On the surface, this was Pakistan's moment: an unlikely peace broker changing its image from a country often unfairly associated

with regional tensions, particularly due to India's narrative into a trusted diplomatic bridge between adversaries. However, Pakistan's proactive and confident diplomacy was further strengthened by China's quiet and supportive coordination.

Just weeks earlier, in late March 2026, Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar traveled to Beijing. There, he and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi unveiled a joint five-point initiative for restoring peace and stability in the Gulf and Middle East. President Asif Ali Zardari's unannounced and sudden visit to the Chinese Embassy following the conclusion of the four-party talks on the Middle East crisis

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Asif Khurshid

Maritime Centre of Excellence hosts international conference on 'Emerging Technologies And The Future Warfare'

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: A two-day international conference on "Emerging Technologies and the Future Warfare," hosted by Maritime Centre of Excellence (MCE), culminated in Karachi. Aim of the conference was to bring together maritime experts, academia and defence industry representatives on one platform to discuss changing geostrategic trends and impact of technology on modern warfare. Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest.

While addressing the conference, Chief Guest highlighted the importance of close collaboration between industry, end-users and academia to drive innovation, adaptability and operational relevance. He said that such collaboration would promote indigenization and self-reliance, helping build a cost-effective

and globally competitive defence ecosystem for Pakistan with export potential. He further underlined the Indian Ocean as a key region where the future of warfare is being written due to its vast contribution in global trade flow and any disruption can significantly impact global supply chains, energy prices and economies connected to it.

The conference brought attention to blurring lines between civil and military uses of advanced technologies, creating both opportunities and challenges for Pakistan's defence ecosystem. It also emphasized on how rapid technological innovation is transforming warfare by redefining operational concepts, force structures and their outcomes.

The event was attended by senior military leadership, policymakers, diplomats, academia, industry experts and students from various universities. It concluded with a reaffirmation of the



need for sustained intellectual synergy to navigate technology-driven transformations to harness future trends in warfare.

Chandi Raj Dhakal takes charge in Islamabad, steering SAARC CCI into a bold new era

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry marked a historic transition of leadership at a formal handing-over ceremony held in Islamabad on 19th April 2026. Federal Minister for Railways, Mr. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi witnessed the taking over of SAARC CCI Presidency by Mr. Chandi Raj Dhakal a Nepali industrialist from outgoing President Mr. Md. Jashim Uddin from Bangladesh.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of

the FPCCI, opened the proceedings with a gracious welcome address, in which he extended his warm greetings to the delegations representing the SAARC nations.

Federal Minister for Railways, Mr. Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, speaking as Chief Guest, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to SAARC's ideals. "Pakistan believes that South Asia cannot rise without regional integration. We have kept our borders open for trade in spirit, our airspace for connectivity, and our hearts for people-to-people exchanges," he said,



assuring full government and private sector support to the new President.

In his inaugural address, incoming President Mr. Dhakal laid out a bold vision to transform SAARC CCI from a dialogue-focused forum into an

action-oriented platform delivering measurable outcomes. He emphasized that business cannot stop because of political challenges, pledging to use SAARC CCI as a neutral platform for business diplomacy.

Business Leader Amjad Farooq elected President of Pakistan Cleft Lip and Palate Association

Aziz ur Rehman Mujahid

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Amjad Farooq, a renowned Pakistani businessman, social figure, and Chairman of National Furniture, has been elected as the President of the Pakistan Cleft Lip and Palate Association. Widely recognized for his contributions to business, public welfare, and community service, he has also served for many years as President of the Citizen Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) Gujrat, where he played a significant role in strengthening coordination and trust between citizens and law enforcement agencies. His leadership and dedication to

social causes have earned him respect in business, social, and public circles across Pakistan.

Speaking after assuming his new responsibility, Mr. Amjad Farooq pledged to expand awareness at both national and international levels regarding the world-class treatment facilities being provided for cleft lip and palate patients at Ayesha Bashir Hospital. He stated that the Association will actively highlight the hospital's advanced medical services, experienced healthcare professionals, and humanitarian mission so that deserving patients from across Pakistan and abroad can benefit from

quality treatment and care.

He further emphasized that every possible effort will be made to raise financial funds and attract support from philanthropists, welfare organizations, overseas Pakistanis, and the international community to strengthen this noble cause and ensure treatment opportunities for underprivileged patients.

Mr. Farooq also announced that special focus will be given to promoting medical tourism through engagement with diplomatic circles, particularly within the Diplomatic Enclave, in order to introduce Pakistan's healthcare capabilities and humanitarian



medical services to the global community.

He added that Pakistan possesses highly capable medical professionals and healthcare institutions, and with proper awareness and international collaboration, the country can emerge as an important destination for specialized humanitarian healthcare services.

"Serving humanity is our collective responsibility, and we are committed to making Pakistan a recognized center for quality cleft lip and palate treatment and care," he said.

Development is Not Possible Without Information Technology Education: Jahangir Khan Tareen

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Jahangir Khan Tareen has said that development is not possible without IT education and it is surprising that many of our students are still deprived of basic facilities like computer labs. The educational development and strength of students can lead to the strength of the entire country. Our future is our students and providing them with modern education can guarantee the bright future of Pakistan. He said this while addressing a ceremony held on the occasion of the inauguration of a modern computer lab at Government Graduate College Model Town Lahore. Jahangir Tareen further said that educational opportunities should be equal and the facilities available to the wealthy class should also be available to the children of the poor and middle class, because real change is possible only with equal opportunities. Jahangir Khan Tareen



announced that prizes will also be given to three outstanding students among the students who perform best in the computer labs to be established in Lahore. Muhammad Rafiq (Group Director Finance, JDW), Ansar Azhar (DPI Colleges Punjab), Ahsan Mukhtar (Director Colleges Punjab), Prof. Dr. Ahsan Ali (Princip-

pal, Government Graduate College Model Town Lahore) and Akbar Khan (Chief Executive Officer, Tareen Education Foundation) among other dignitaries addressed the ceremony.

Group Director Finance JDW Muhammad Rafiq while addressing said that the services of Jahangir Khan Tareen in the field of social

development are commendable. He said that he has been associated with Jahangir Tareen's group since 1991 and has learned a lot from him. He further informed that work is underway on the Tareen Institute for Computer Education and Resources (TICER) and Amna Girls Degree College projects in Lodhran at a cost of Rs 2.5 billion, with a total cost of about Rs 3.5 billion.

Chief Executive Officer Tareen Education Foundation Akbar Khan said that Tareen Education Foundation has been actively working to provide quality education since 2010 and is providing modern educational facilities to students through various projects. DPI Colleges Punjab Ansar Azhar said in his address that he is grateful to Jahangir Khan Tareen for using his personal resources for the betterment of students and such initiatives play an important role in the improvement of the education system.

Kamran Ali Assumes Charge as DIG Police Mirpur, Receives Guard of Honour



Choudhary Tabraiz

MIRPUR: Senior police officer Kamran Ali has formally taken charge as Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police Mirpur Division in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Upon his arrival at the DIG Office, a smartly turned-out police contingent presented him with a guard of honour. Senior officers and police personnel were present on the occasion to welcome the newly appointed DIG.

Kamran Ali is regarded as an experienced and professional officer with a strong track record in law enforcement. He has previously served as Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) in Mirpur, where he earned recognition for his firm, disciplined, and transparent approach to policing.

His appointment has been widely welcomed, particularly by members of the overseas Kashmiri community belonging to Mirpur Division. Community representatives described him as a brave, honest, and capable officer, expressing confidence in his ability to effectively lead the police force in the region.

Key Meeting Secures Promise of Government Backing for Sporting Goods Sector

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Hunting and Sporting Knives, Swords and Accessories Association of Pakistan (HSKAAP) has launched a new struggle for the development of the industry. Its purpose is to promote the products along with the establishment of an Industrial Construction Fair in Wazirabad, and to promote exhibitions (Display Centers).

In this connection, Association Chairman Nadeem Ahmed Dar had an important meeting with Provincial Minister for Industry and Commerce Chaudhry Shafay Hussain. During the meeting, which was also attended by former Prime Minister of Pakistan Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, discussions were held on matters of mutual interest and especially on providing full support and coordination on important issues between the two sides.

During the meeting, problems faced by the hunting and sporting products industry in Wazirabad, issues of exports, promotion of industrial mills, establishment of construction fairs, and establishment of display centers were discussed in detail.

Chairman Nadeem Ahmed Dar led the delegation. He said that these projects will not only provide modern facilities to industrialists but will also help in introducing local products to the international level. Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain, on this occasion, highlighted the importance of both projects and assured full cooperation while directing the relevant authorities to ensure effective communication. The Provincial Minister, Chaudhry Shafay Hussain, also assured the Association of his full support.

He expressed confidence that the government will take every possible step for the promotion of this important industry of Wazirabad. The business community expressed happiness over his visit and expressed hope that these measures will prove to be milestones in the industrial development of Wazirabad, create new employment opportunities, and significantly increase the country's exports.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
169,173.37	171,579.30
Day's High	Day's Low
171,561.74	168,416.02
Index Value	Change
20,084,410,942	-2405.93
Percentage	Time
-1.4%	23 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,457.01	-19.45
Percentage	Time
-19.45	23 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,153.55	-336.48
Percentage	Time
-0.68%	23 Apr, 1:26 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
59,140.23	-445.63
Percentage	Time
-0.75%	23 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	197.75	203.70
Bahrain Dinar	726.65	737.55
Canadian Dollar	202.85	207.75
China Yuan	38.65	39.25
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	326.37	331.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.08	36.08
Indian Rupee	2.15	2.35
Japanese Yen	1.7344	1.8341
Kuwaiti Dinar	877.55	889.52
Malaysian Ringgit	65.30	66.75
New Zealand \$	163.35	165.10
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.9
Omani Riyal	721.25	732.34
Qatari Riyal	71.21	72.65
Saudi Riyal	74.25	75.30
Singapore Dollar	217.44	223.75
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	355.87	358.95
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.45
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	76.95
UK Pound Sterling	376.24	382.75
US Dollar	279.2	279.85

Islamabad Talks stabilize global energy after Iran-US clash: Mian Zahid

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum & All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan, Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI, and Former Provincial Minister Information Technology, has termed the recent diplomatic marathon in Islamabad as a landmark achievement for Pakistan's foreign policy, positioning the country as a central "bridge for peace" in a world teetering on the edge of economic collapse.

Mian Zahid Hussain expressed that the 2026 Iran-US conflict, which saw oil prices surge past \$120 per barrel following the closure of the Strait of Hormuz on March 4, has triggered the largest energy supply disruption in history. With the global oil market



rapidly descending into a 1970s-style stagflation. Mian Zahid Hussain said that Pakistan has played a sophisticated role of "limited alignment," maintaining official neutrality while protecting its own economic interests. The war had brought Pakistan's energy security to a breaking point, reducing LNG shipments from twelve in January to just two in March. Domestically, the impact was severe as petrol prices in Pakistan touched a record Rs458.41 per litre in early April, forcing the government to implement a four-day work-week and emergency fuel rationing. The business community highly appreciates the Prime Minister's "5-point initiative," which emphasizes that global energy corridors like the Strait of Hormuz, through which 20% of the world's oil flows, must remain "free and clear" of military blockades.

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Gaps in cybersecurity policies and shadow IT leave organizations in Pakistan vulnerable: Kaspersky



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A recent Kaspersky survey entitled "Cybersecurity in the workplace: Employee knowledge and behavior", showed that 39% of professionals in Pakistan, consider cybersecurity rules in their company to be excessive or not fully appropriate. While 8% noted that their organizations do not have cybersecurity rules or that they are not aware of them. These results show a disconnect between corporate cybersecurity policies and employee commitment

to these rules, underscoring the risks associated with shadow IT and unmanaged device usage in the workplace. Shadow IT is defined as the use of unauthorized software, devices, or services without IT oversight, and it has evolved into a critical business risk. While often driven by employee productivity needs, it creates blind spots for IT departments. The rise of hybrid work environments, increased reliance on cloud-based tools and the spread of AI tools have accelerated this trend.

Harvesting Crops

ISLAMABAD: Farmers busy in threshing the wheat crop in their field in the Golra area of Federal Capital. Pakistan has expanded its research efforts to develop high-yield hybrid wheat, joining the global race to produce more productive and climate-resilient crop varieties.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SITE Industrialists Seek Safe Business Climate



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Industrialists of the SITE Association of Industry have voiced grave concern over rising incidents of extortion, factory robberies, and the absence of a conducive business environment, urging the government to ensure protection and stability for economic activity.

At a meeting held at the SITE Association, members apprised Inspector General of Police Sindh Javed Alam

Odho of the deteriorating law and order situation and requested immediate measures to safeguard industries and provide a peaceful environment for uninterrupted operations. Senior police officials, SITE office-bearers, and a large number of members attended the session.

SAI President Abdul Rehman Fudda strongly condemned the recent firing incident on an industrialist in North Karachi linked to extortion demands. Patron-in-Chief Zubair Motiwala,

Siraj Kassam Teli, Patron Saleem Parekh, Former President Jawed Bilwani, Law & Order Committee Chairman Abdul Hadi also spoke on the occasion.

DIG Traffic Pir Muhammad Shah informed participants that all Station Officers have been provided tablets for reporting violations. He said commuters are being given one month to adopt lane discipline, after which challans will be imposed, starting from Shahrah-e-Faisal. Steps are also being taken to improve traffic flow on Mauripur Road.

TCL Industries Hosts 2026 Global Partners Conference

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's No. 1 LED TV brand, hosted the 2026 TCL Industries Global Partners Conference (GPC 2026) in Shenzhen. Held under the theme "Pioneering for Greatness," the biennial gathering brought together nearly 500 key accounts, strategic partners, and industry leaders from 49 markets, including Pakistan,

to review two years of sustained growth, explore the next wave of innovation, and reinforce a shared commitment to long-term collaboration. "TCL is fully invested in our shared success," said Du Juan, CEO of TCL Industries. "Our theme for this year's GPC, 'Pioneering for Greatness,' is a confident statement on our outlook for the future. Underpinning this optimism are three simple truths: that creating real value empowers us to outlast any market cycle; that integrity is the foundation for enduring partnerships; and that shared growth is what will ultimately lead us forward."

MCB Bank Reports Resilient Performance for Q1'2026 with 90% Dividend Payout

Laure: MCB Bank Limited is pleased to announce its financial results for the quarter ended

March 31, 2026, reflecting resilient performance supported by strong fundamentals, disciplined execution, and balance sheet strength amid a challenging macroeconomic environment.

The Board of Directors of MCB Bank, under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha, reviewed and approved the Bank's financial statements for the quarter ended March 31, 2026. The Board declared a first interim cash dividend of Rs. 9.00 per share, i.e. 90%, reaffirming Bank's commitment to delivering consistent shareholder returns.

Pakistan's Capital Market Shows Resilience Despite Global Shock, War Fallout: SECP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's capital market remained resilient in Q3 FY2026 despite a difficult global backdrop shaped by the US-Iran war, rising oil prices, higher freight and insurance costs, and broad risk-off sentiment.

The SECP has issued a Quarterly Market Review for Q3 FY2025-26, covering equity market performance, investor activity, debt markets, macro trends, global factors, and key reforms.

The report said the conflict pushed Brent crude up by 10-13% in the early days of the war. US software stocks declined about 23%. The S&P 500 fell 4.3%, MSCI Europe ex-UK dropped 3.2%, MSCI Asia slipped 1.1%, and MSCI Emerging Markets eased 0.1%.

Against this backdrop, Pakistan's KSE-100 declined 14.54% during the quarter. Despite this, strong domestic investors participation, continued primary market activity, and regulatory reforms helped sustain market confidence.

The KSE-100 started the quarter at 174,054 points. It reached an all-time high of 191,033 on January 26. It then closed at 148,743 on March 31. The intra-quarter low was 144,119 on March 19, showing a peak-to-trough decline of 22.57%. The KSE All Share index fell 14.85%, while the KSE-30 declined 15.52%.

January remained strong, with the KSE-100 gaining 5.81%. Sentiment weakened in February due to rising costs, geopolitical risks, and profit-taking, leading to a 3.75% decline. The correction deepened in March, with the index falling 11.50%.

Despite the decline, market activity remained strong. Market capitalisation fell from PKR 19.69 trillion to PKR 16.53 trillion, a drop of PKR 3.15 trillion. Total traded volume stood at 48.8 billion shares, while traded value reached PKR 2.68 trillion. Average daily volume was 791.7 million shares and average daily value was PKR 44.03 billion. Around 485 symbols remained active per session,

indicating broad participation.

Domestic investors played a key stabilising role. Foreign investors recorded net outflows of PKR 111.61 billion. Foreign corporates alone sold PKR 117.07 billion. Local institutional and retail investors absorbed this entirely, with net buying of PKR 111.55 billion. Companies led with PKR 73.51 billion in purchases, followed by mutual funds at PKR 23.78 billion and individuals at PKR 20.25 billion.

Trading remained concentrated in blue-chip stocks. National Bank of Pakistan led with PKR 182.42 billion in traded value. It was followed by



Pakistan Petroleum, OGDC, Fauji Fertilizer, and Habib Bank. By volume, K-Electric led with 4.64 billion shares, followed by Bank of Punjab and WorldCall Telecom.

Primary market activity continued. SECP approved three IPOs during the quarter, reflecting sustained confidence in capital markets. On the debt side, three GoP Ijara Sukuk auctions were held with a target of PKR 800 billion. Bids reached PKR 2.03 trillion, with a bid-to-cover ratio of 2.54 times. The government accepted PKR 811.53 billion.

Secondary debt market activity also remained strong. GoP Ijara Sukuk worth PKR 185.14 billion were traded in 2,062 transactions. Trading on the PSX bills and bonds counter reached PKR 260.94 billion. Two privately placed corporate sukuk were also listed during the quarter.

The SECP said the quarter was exceptionally challenging. However, the market showed durability under stress. Strong participation by domestic institutional and retail investors, active debt markets, IPO activity, and regulatory reforms supported stability. These factors indicate improving fundamentals and support long-term growth and investor confidence in Pakistan's capital market.

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Karachi Kings defeated Lahore Qalandars by 5 wickets due to Khushdal Shah's excellent batting

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI/LAHORE: Karachi Kings defeated Lahore Qalandars by 5 wickets due to Khushdal Shah's brilliant batting. Karachi Kings showed Lahore Qalandars the stars on Thursday night in Lahore. In the most important match of PSL 11, they created hopes for 3 teams with a 5-wicket win. If they had lost today, they would have ended the hopes of the Gladiators along with them. The credit for the victory went to Khushdal Shah, who played consecutive hits and made history by scoring an unbeaten 44 runs off 14 balls. Rawalpindi also registered its first victory in PSL history today when they defeated Islamabad.

In a must-win match for Karachi Kings, they won the toss and invited Lahore Qalandars to bat first.

Although Qalandars lost their first wicket for 24 when Muhammad Farooq was dismissed for 18 runs, Fakhar Zaman was supported by Abdullah Shafiq in such a way that both of them reached the score of 134 and the partnership of 110 runs was broken in 13.5 overs when the total score was 134. Fakhar played 41 balls. He hit three sixes, five fours and scored 61 runs. He had scored a brilliant century in the previous match, so he proved the continuity of his performance. After a while, another wicket fell for Lahore Qalandars and after that, another set batter Abdullah Shafiq was dismissed for 62 runs in 36 balls. He hit three sixes and five fours. Then Sikandar Raza scored 18 runs in 12 balls and Daniel Sims scored 20 runs in nine balls to increase the score in the end. Qalandars scored 199 runs for 6 wickets in the allotted 20 overs. Moeen Ali took two wickets for 26 runs. Rizwanullah and Hasan Ali took one wicket each.

In reply, Karachi Kings did not start very well. The reason for this was that Jason Roy returned to the pavilion on the score of 1, Reza Hendricks on a total score of 39, Salman Ali Agha on a score of 69. The 9th over was about to end.



Jason Roy could make 9. Hendricks was out for 10 and Salman Ali Agha for 14. Here, David Warner, who made a comeback, was present at the wicket. He was

joined by Moeen Ali and played a fast innings and both of them quickly took the score to 127 and 14 overs were not even over. Moeen Ali was unlucky here.



His brilliant catch was taken by Sikandar Raza and the bowler was Obaid Shah. He scored 39 runs in 17 balls. He hit four sixes and a four. After that, Azam Khan came to bat. At the score of 146, Azam Khan was also bowled for 14 off 8 balls. 34 runs were left in the last 18 balls. Khushdil Shah and David Warner charged the bat first in the overs of Harris Rauf and then in the overs of Shaheen. As a result, 13 runs were scored in Harris' over and 23 in Shaheen's over and the victory was 12 runs away for Karachi Kings in 12 balls.

Karachi Kings achieved the target of 203 runs for 5 wickets in 18.4 overs and won the match by 5 wickets. With this win, the PSL 11 points table has become dramatic. Hyderabad, Lahore and Karachi have 8 points each and are in the race. Khushdil Shah came out on 44 not out off 14 balls with the help of 5 sixes and 2 fours. David Warner scored 63 off 44 balls with 9 fours and 1 six. Both of them scored the fastest 57 runs off 19 balls for the sixth wicket. Obaid Shah took 3 wickets for 41 runs.



It is said that if you drown yourself, you will drown too. Rawalpindi had already gone out, now as you go, you have tried to knock Islamabad out as well. Going into its 9th match in PSL 11, its first victory did not benefit it, but the defeat given to Islamabad is a big alarm for the federal fortress. Islamabad United's team was bowled out for 137 runs in 20 overs. Devon Conway scored 40, Mark Chapman scored 23 and Chris Green scored 29 runs. Mohammad Amir and Saad Masood took two wickets each. In reply, Rawalpindi started a little better. At one point, they had only one player out for 78 runs. After Kamran Ghulam was dismissed for 42 and Mohammad Amir for 45, another wicket fell, which made Islamabad United come back into the match.

Islamabad United's joy was short-lived as the target was modest and as a result, no more wickets fell and Rawalpindi secured their debut victory in PSL by six wickets after eight matches. Terrell Mitchell remained unbeaten on 32 runs. Next match of PSL 11 Friday, April 24. Islamabad United vs Hyderabad Kings PSL 11 points table Peshawar Zalmi 9 matches-17 points Multan Sultans 9 matches-12 points Islamabad United 8 matches-9 points Hyderabad Kings 8 matches-8 points Lahore Qalandars 9 matches-8 points Karachi Kings 9 matches-8 points Quetta Gladiators 9 matches-6 points Rawalpindi 9 matches-2 points

Madina Town Hockey Stadium in Dilapidation: Return of International Hockey Subject to Actions by Commissioner Faisalabad

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: () In a meeting with District Hockey Association President Shahid Tanveer Gul, deep concern was expressed over the demise of international hockey from the city due to the dilapidated condition of Madina Town Hockey Stadium.

During the meeting, the following bitter truth was highlighted:

- Glorious Past: This stadium has hosted many international matches in the past and the city has been a major hub for hockey.

- PHF Preservation: Due to the poor condition of the stadium and lack of necessary facilities (such as AstroTurf and other repairs), the Pakistan Hockey



Federation is unable to host international matches in Faisalabad.

- Construction Stall: Demands by the contractor to increase rates and a 14-year closure have put the future of hockey in the city at stake.

Now all the expectations of the sports circles of Faisalabad are attached to the Commissioner Faisalabad. It is hoped that he will immediately start the stalled work of the stadium and restore it to international standards so that once again international teams can be seen in action in the fields of Faisalabad and local talent will get a chance to see their heroes in front.

This increase makes it clear that this is not just a matter of repairing a ground but of restoring the dignity of Faisalabad.

PSL Pakistan Super League

Rawalpindi achieved its first victory in PSL by defeating Islamabad United by 6 wickets after 9 matches

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: In the Pakistan Super League match, Rawalpindi Cricket Team finally achieved its first victory in PSL by defeating Islamabad United by 6 wickets after 9 matches. Rawalpindi had already been eliminated, but now it tried to eliminate Islamabad as well. Going into its 9th match in PSL 11, its first victory was not to its advantage, but the defeat given to Islamabad is a big alarm for the federal fortress.

Islamabad United team was dismissed for 137 runs in 20 overs. Devon Conway scored 40. Mark Chapman scored 23 and Chris Green scored 29 runs. Mohammad Amir and Saad Masood took two wickets each.

In reply, Rawalpindi started a little better. At one point, they were out for 78 runs with only one player out. After Kamran Ghulam was dismissed for 42 and Mohammad Amir for 45, another wicket fell, bringing Islamabad United back into the match.

Pakistan Customs won the Senior, Junior and Under-18 National Hockey Championship, 2026

Tahir Amin Malik

In a landmark achievement for Pakistan's national sport, Pakistan Customs has swept the board by winning the Senior, Junior, and Under-18 National Hockey Championships. This unprecedented feat has set a new benchmark in domestic hockey and is being hailed as a turning point in the revival of the game across the country.

Head Coach and Olympian Danish Kaleem described the achievement as a defining moment in Pakistan's hockey journey. "Our institution's top priority is to bring the national sport back to its former heights," he said,

underlining the broader mission of Pakistan Customs to restore hockey's lost glory. Kaleem emphasized that the institution is not only investing in sporting excellence but also ensuring job security and professional opportunities for young athletes, alongside access to world-class facilities.

The historic sweep was made possible through collective effort and vision. Kaleem credited Member Customs Syed Shakeel Shah for his leadership, while acknowledging the pivotal role of Olympian Tauqeer Dar in building and nurturing the team. Administrative support from Collectors Asif Abbas, Mohsin Rafiq, Abbas

Ali Babar, and Syed Agha was also highlighted as a cornerstone of the success, ensuring that the players had the resources and backing needed to perform at the highest level.

"Pakistan Customs has positioned itself as a leading patron of hockey, with a clear focus on grassroots development. By identifying and nurturing young talent, the institution is ensuring that the pipeline of future stars remains strong. The victory across all three age categories demonstrates the depth of talent being cultivated and the effectiveness of the support system in place.

"Looking ahead, Pakistan Customs

has reaffirmed its commitment to sustaining this momentum. The institution aims to continue investing in infrastructure, training, and opportunities for youth, ensuring that hockey regains its rightful place as a sport of pride and national identity.

"This triple triumph is more than just a sporting victory — it is a symbol of revival and resilience. Pakistan Customs' success across senior, junior, and U-18 levels reflects a holistic approach to hockey development, combining institutional support, grassroots engagement, and professional opportunities. For Pakistan hockey, this moment may well mark



the beginning of a new era of excellence," added Danish.

China's Strategic Shadow Over the Islamabad US-Iran Talks

Continued from Page 4

is also considered part of the same series of diplomatic engagements.

The plan called for an immediate ceasefire, protection of shipping lanes and critical infrastructure (especially the Strait of Hormuz), humanitarian access, respect for sovereignty, and a quick return to talks without threats of force.

China did not send a large, high-profile delegation to Islamabad to seek attention. However, different reports indi-

cated a Chinese team arrived to "assist" mediation, with Beijing open to offering guarantees in any eventual deal. Yet Beijing's approach remained deliberately low-key classic Chinese diplomacy of strategic patience and proxy leverage. Before the ceasefire, Chinese officials encouraged Iran to show flexibility, which gave Tehran confidence that diplomatic options were supported by a major economic partner and a counterbalance to Western pressure.

Pakistan's bridge role was also cemented due to this develop-

ment. The hosting of delicate talks involving the US and Iran is risky due to the possible political repercussions, security concerns, and failure resulting from a lack of credibility. The support that was offered by China made it easy for Pakistan's role to be seen as part of a larger strategy. Pakistani officials could operate with greater confidence, knowing their "all-weather" ally stood behind them. In turn, this alignment shields Pakistan's own vulnerabilities, including the security of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC),

Gwadar port, and Balochistan, where spillover from Middle East instability could prove costly. Pakistan thus functions as a geographic and diplomatic bridge in a China-influenced regional order. Iran represents both a neighbor and a potential partner for energy and connectivity extensions. A stabilized Gulf reduces threats to Chinese investments and personnel across the region. Through Islamabad, Beijing is able to further its interests in security of the sea routes, multilateral discourse, and safety of its

BRI investments without being directly engaged in the power struggle between the great powers. This strategy has been highlighted by many analysts as an example of Beijing's clever maneuvering, where it gets the benefit of using a known and reliable proxy for projecting influence at a minimum cost. Despite ending in a stalemate, the negotiations kept the lines of communication open for the future.

Pakistan has already signaled its willingness to continue facilitation. The absence of a grand bargain should not obscure the

deeper pattern: China's preference for indirect influence is proving effective in a fractured region. Beijing reassured Iran through cooperation, quiet persuasion, and coordination, while strengthening its allies such as Pakistan and promoting a framework based on de-escalation and connectivity rather than escalation.

The talks may have been held in Islamabad, but the real architecture extended from Beijing through Islamabad to Tehran and beyond.

In an era of multipolar compe-

tion, this model of indirect power projection offers lessons. Great powers need not always dominate the room to shape outcomes. Sometimes the most effective influence operates from the shadows, coordinating, reassuring, and stabilizing through reliable partners. Whether "Islamabad Talks 2.0" materializes or not, China's strategic shadow has already lengthened across the region. The question now is how durable this architecture will prove as the fragile ceasefire holds or frays under continued pressure.

Security Alerts

ISLAMABAD: Army personnel stand guard D Chowk in the Federal Capital. Security remains beefed up in the capital for accepted Iran-US talks. ONLINE PHOTO



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM Shehbaz meets Chinese Ambassador

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday met with Ambassador of the People's Republic of China, Jiang Zaidong, during a courtesy call paid on him, where the regional situation in the Middle East and Pakistan's peace efforts also came under discussion.

The prime minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Development & Special Initi-



atives Dr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataulah Tarar, SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister conveyed his warm regards and greetings for President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang. While expressing his satisfaction at the positive trajectory of Pakistan-China bilateral relations, the prime minister reaffirmed that Pakistan took great pride in its All-Weather Cooperative Strategic Partnership

with China. He also spoke of his resolve to continue working closely with the Chinese leadership, to ensure that the relationship grows from strength to strength.

The Chinese Ambassador thanked the prime minister for receiving him and expressed China's appreciation of Pakistan's diplomatic efforts for lasting peace in the region. He reaffirmed China's commitment to strengthening its ironclad ties with Pakistan and to take them to new heights, as envisioned by President Xi Jinping.

India intensifying psychological, economic siege in IIOJK: Mishal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organization, Mishal Hussain Malik on Thursday strongly condemned the continued psychological and economic siege of the Kashmiri people, saying that both human and political rights in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) were being systematically strangled.

Talking to a private news channel, she highlighted that Kashmiris were not only facing economic sanctions but were also being subjected to sustained psychological warfare, aimed at suppressing their voices and weakening resistance.

She pointed out that India was registering the bogus cases against Hurriyat leadership at rapid pace.



She expressed grave concern over recent developments, including the verdict against Asiya Andrabi, describing it as part of a broader crackdown on Kashmiri leadership.

She also drew attention to the prolonged legal battle involving Yasin Malik, stating that his case, which initially resulted in two life sentences, had now been expedited further.

The chairperson emphasized that Yasin Malik's health was deteriorating significantly over time, yet he was allegedly denied proper medical treatment despite serious illness.

Calling the situation deeply alarming, Mishal Hussain urged the international community to take notice and stressed the need for intervention to safeguard fundamental human rights of IIOJK people.

Gallup survey reveals businessmen confidence declining sharply in Pakistan

News Desk

The survey, released by Gallup Pakistan, revealed that business confidence in the country has declined significantly due to the ongoing energy crisis and rising regional tensions, with fears that conditions could worsen further in the coming months.

The Gallup Pakistan survey identified rising energy costs and geopolitical instability as the primary factors behind the decline.

It found that key indicators, including current business conditions, future expectations and overall economic direction, have all turned negative.

Only 41 percent of businesses described their current operations as good or very good, reflecting a sharp decline of 27% in overall positive sentiment.

Companies also appeared increasingly pessimistic about the future, with 57 percent expressing negative



expectations, while just 43% hoped for improvement in the coming months.

Confidence in the country's overall economic direction has also weakened, with the index falling to negative 32, compared with negative 8 in the previous quarter.

Inflation and energy shortages were cited as major challenges. Around 37% of businesses identified inflation as the most pressing issue, while 57 percent complained about load-shedding, marking a 15 percent increase compared with the previous quarter.

Rising production costs were also highlighted by 62 percent of respondents.

Concerns about governance were evident, with 46 percent of participants expressing a lack of confidence in government performance, while only 33 percent voiced trust.

Regional instability has further compounded the situation, with 81 percent of businesses reporting a negative impact from tensions in the Middle East.

Additionally, 58 percent pointed to rising energy costs and 73 percent to overall increases in operational expenses.

The survey indicated that 76 percent of businesses expect conditions to deteriorate over the next three months if uncertainty persists, warning that a combination of domestic economic pressures and regional instability could further strain the business environment.

Reporter: Waqas Azeem

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

Pakistan emerges as strong voice for peace, dialogue, and stability: Engr Amir Muqam



Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam here Thursday said that Pakistan is emerging as a strong voice for peace, dialogue, and stability.

He said that Pakistan has always played a positive role as a responsible, balanced, and peace-loving state, and that nations are built through the hard work, vision, and character of their youth.

He expressed these views while addressing, as chief guest, a ceremony held on Thursday at the Institute of Management Sciences Peshawar for the distribution of laptops among students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme.

He paid tribute to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for his wise and visionary leadership, stating that his vision is of a Pakistan moving towards knowledge, research, digital development, and economic stability.

The laptop program, he added, is a continuation of that vision, aimed at preparing youth according to modern-day requirements.

Pak-Rwanda collaboration to help address food security: Harerimana Fatou



Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Rwanda High Commissioner to Pakistan H. E. Harerimana Fatou said that Pak-Rwanda collaboration particularly in the field of agriculture would help benefit from each other experiences and address food security issues.

She visited University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) and called on UAF Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfikar Ali and all Deans and Directors at Syndicate Room. During discussion, both sides explored potential avenues of collaboration in education, research and particularly the agriculture sector.

They agreed to enhance institutional linkages and work together on future initiatives aimed at academic excellence and agricultural development.

H. E. Harerimana Fatou said that agriculture remains a vital sector for Rwanda, with nearly 65% of our population engaged in it.

She said, "Expertise of UAF holds great value for us. With student and

faculty exchange programs, as well as technology transfer, we can build meaningful partnerships that will contribute to sustainable agricultural development and mutual growth.

UAF Vice Chancellor Dr Zulfikar Ali said that this visit marks an important step toward strengthening academic and research collaboration.

He noted that they are committed to promote exchange programs for students and faculty to share knowledge and agricultural innovations. He said that UAF stands ready to support Rwanda by offering expertise and facilitating the transfer of modern farming technologies.

"We believe that such partnerships will not only enhance food security but also foster long-term cooperation and development between our two nations," he added.

Later, Rwanda High Commissioner to Pakistan H. E. Harerimana Fatou also visited the Pak Korea Nutrition Center, Center for Advanced Studies, Expo Centre and Solar Park.

PTA takes action against digital content involving illegal therapeutic goods sale

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) came into action against the illegal sale of therapeutic goods via websites and social media pages and got the content removed, according to a press statement issued by the authority on Wednesday.

The therapeutic goods may include medicines, medical devices, and vaccines, it was learnt.

PTA said in the statement that it initiated action against websites and social media pages that were involved in the sale of unauthorised and unregistered therapeutic goods upon receiving a request from the

Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP).

"PTA undertook necessary enforcement measures to restrict access to the identified content. The concerned websites have confirmed removal of the illegal products, while the matter is being actively pursued with social media platforms for early takedown of reported pages and groups," the statement read.

"PTA remains committed to supporting national regulatory efforts to safeguard public health and prevent misuse of digital platforms, and will continue to take timely action in accordance with applicable laws and regulations."