



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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جہانگاہوں میں رہنے والے اکثر غریب لوگ
تھے اور میں نے دوزخ میں جہانگاہوں کو
دایاں اکثر غریبوں میں دیکھا ہے۔ اور جہانگاہوں کے ساتھ
اس حدیث کو ایوب سختیابی اور عوف اعرابی
نے بھی روایت کیا ہے اور صحیحین میں بھی ہے اور
تاریخین میں بھی ہے اور اس حدیث کو ایوب جاسم
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Araghchi arrives in Islamabad for fresh talks

Araghchi is expected to hold key meetings with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar during his visit, which officials say could pave the way for the second round of negotiations between Tehran and Washington.



Captain Arbaz Khan recalls heroism of Pakistani soldiers in Marka-e-Haq

"My courage has grown even more after Marka-e-Haq," he said as the nation commemorates the first anniversary of Pakistan's notable success in the Operation Buzan Al Marsos. He described the challenging conditions on the front, noting that Indian drones were flying over his gun platform when orders were received. "Despite the situation, we delivered a response that reflected our training and preparedness," he added.

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High Alert

ISLAMABAD: Police block the Srinagar Highway in the Federal Capital. Iranian Foreign Minister, Abbas Araghchi, is expected on Friday night with a small delegation, in what officials said was a key step towards the resumption of direct talks with the United States aimed at ending their war.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Trump to send Witkoff and Kushner for Iran talks: CNN



Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United States is dispatching senior envoys to Islamabad for fresh talks with Iran, as Tehran's foreign minister prepares to arrive in Pakistan amid renewed diplomatic activity following a fragile ceasefire.

According to a CNN report citing US administration officials, President Donald Trump is sending special envoy Steve

Witkoff and adviser Jared Kushner to Pakistan to engage in negotiations with Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi over the weekend. Vice President JD Vance is not expected to attend initially but will remain on standby to travel to Islamabad if progress is made. His potential counterpart, Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad-Bagher Ghalibaf, is also not participating at this stage, officials said.

Pakistan urges UNSC to push India to restore Indus Waters Treaty a year after its suspension

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has urged the UN Security Council (UNSC) to address India's suspension of the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty (IWT), warning of "grave" security, environmental, and humanitarian risks for 240 million people.

A letter from Pakistani Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister, Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, addressed to Ambassador Jamal Fares Alrowaiehi of Bahrain, which hold the 15-member Council's presidency for the month of April, draws attention to India's "illegal" deci-

sion to hold the IWT in abeyance one year after its suspension amid heightened political tensions with Pakistan.

The letter was handed over to the Security Council President by the Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, at UN Headquarters in New York on Thursday, according to a press release issued by the Pakistani Mission.

DPM/FM Dar urged the Security Council to take cognizance of the alarming situation and call on India to restore the full implementation of IWT,



resume all Treaty-mandated cooperation and data-sharing without delay, desist from any form of water coercion, and

comply fully with its international obligations in good faith. In this regard, Ambassador Asim Ahmad also briefed the

Security Council president on the "regurgitation of baseless allegations and propaganda by India at a time when Pakistan is engaged in serious mediation efforts to promote regional and international peace and security."

The Pakistani envoy also underscored that the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute—a longstanding item on the Security Council's agenda—was the root cause of instability in South Asia that necessitated a just and lasting settlement in accordance with relevant Council's resolutions and wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Araqchi-led Iranian delegation arriving in Islamabad tonight after talks with Field Marshal and Dar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Amid Pakistan's strong diplomatic efforts for a ceasefire between Iran and the US, Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi is arriving in Islamabad tonight with a delegation after telephonic chat with Field Marshal General Asim Munir and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday.

Meanwhile Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said that he was embarking

on his "timely" regional tour of Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow to "closely coordinate with our partners on bilateral matters and consult on regional developments".

"Our neighbours are our priority," he adds in a post on X.

According to government sources, the second round of Islamabad peace talks is expected to be held as a result of important discussions are expected between the mediation teams of Iran and US.

Continued on Page 7

US burns through \$35bn in weapons in Iran conflict: NYT

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United States expended an estimated \$28 billion to \$35 billion worth of weapons during the recent Iran conflict, significantly straining its advanced munitions stockpiles and raising concerns about military readiness, according to a report by The New York Times.

The report said the large-scale use of high-end missiles and air defence systems over a short period has not only reduced reserves but also triggered questions about Washington's preparedness for potential conflicts elsewhere, particularly with major rivals such as China and Russia.

Since the onset of hostilities, US forces have reportedly fired around 1,100 long-range stealth cruise missiles —

many originally reserved for a possible conflict with China — along with more than 1,000 Tomahawk missiles, nearly ten times the country's annual procurement.

The report further noted that approximately 1,100



JASSM-ER missiles, each costing about \$1.1 million, were used, leaving an estimated 1,500 in US inventories.

Additionally, over 1,200 Patriot air defence missiles — each priced at more than \$4 million — were expended, alongside more than 1,000 advanced ground-attack missiles.

Pentagon chief: US blockade on Iran 'going global'

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Secretary Pete Hegseth said on Friday that the US blockade on Iran is going global, adding Tehran had a chance to make a "good deal" with Washington.

"Our blockade is growing and going global," Hegseth told reporters. "No one sails from the Strait of Hormuz to anywhere in the world without the permission of the United States Navy," he said.

Hegseth went on to criticise Europe, "America and the free world deserve allies who are capable, who are loyal, and who understand that being an ally is not a one-way street. It's a two-way street," he said.

"We are not counting on Europe, but they need the Strait of Hormuz much more than we do, and might want to start doing less talking and having less fancy conferences in Europe, and get in a boat. This is much more their fight than ours."

Standing next to top US General Dan Caine, Hegseth said the US was "not anxious" for a deal with



Iran, and repeated Trump's previous comments of having "all the time in the world."

"Iran knows that they still have an open window to choose wisely ... at the negotiating table. All they have to do is abandon a nuclear weapon in meaningful and verifiable ways," he said.

Caine said the US Central Command continues to maintain a strict blockade on all ports in Iran. Thirty-four ships had been turned around as of Friday morning, he said. The US military would continue to interdict Iranian vessels

in the Pacific and Indian oceans, Caine added.

"We're enforcing the blockade across the board against any ship of any nationality that is transiting to or from an Iranian port or territory," Caine said.

"We're closely tracking vessels of interest headed towards Iran and those moving away from Iran that were outside the blockade area when this blockade was ordered, and ... we're prepared and postured to intercept them," he said.

The US naval blockade of Iran began on April 13.

Explosion in Indian-occupied Kashmir sparks crash rumours, IAF denies

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: A loud explosion in the forested region of Kishitwar in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir on Friday triggered speculation about a possible Indian Air Force (IAF) aircraft crash, though authorities swiftly denied the claims.

According to Indian media reports, residents in the Paddar area heard a powerful blast and later observed thick smoke rising from the nearby forest.

Videos circulating on social media showed plumes of smoke, fuelling rumours that an IAF jet had gone down.

Some unverified claims suggested the aircraft may have been brought down by India's own air defence system due to a technical malfunction.

However, no independent confirmation of such assertions has emerged.

An IAF spokesperson rejected the reports, stating that claims of an aircraft crash near Kishitwar were "false" and not based on any factual information.

Officials have yet to provide a definitive explanation for the explosion or the source of the smoke, leaving the incident shrouded in uncertainty.

Azad Kashmir PM unveils comprehensive education package, cites ground-level reforms

KOTLI: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the government had introduced a comprehensive education package following complete rationalisation to ensure meaningful and sustainable reforms at the ground-level.

Addressing a public gathering at Dhari Bagh in Khoi Ratta, the prime minister Rathore said the government had moved beyond announcements and taken practical steps to strengthen key sectors including agriculture, education, health and tourism.

Referring to the recently held investment and agricultural conferences, he said that they were part of government's policy to boost economic activity and bring neglected sectors into the center of focus.

He said the government had made governance more accessible by opening "the doors of power" to the public,

pointing to increased citizen presence in the secretariat.

Referring to various public welfare initiatives, the present government had undertaken, the pm said that the initiatives such as restoration of health cards and a reduction in property tax, reflected the government's commitment to public relief.

On education package, the pm assured that any gaps or shortcomings in the package would be addressed.

Announcing a series development schemes in the area, the prime minister said a municipal committee would be established in Khoi Ratta, while PC-1 for the Cheeri Bridge would be prepared as soon as possible. He said that approval had been granted for the Bandial Dhanan Bridge while the issue of Sawan Bridge would also be taken up.

Describing large turnout at the gathering as a sign of growing public trust



on the party, he urged PPP workers to maintain unity ahead of the upcoming elections.

He expressed confidence that the party could secure all seats in the district if it remained united.

The prime minister said political parties were defined by their ideologies, adding that the PPP had consistently pursued people-centric politics.

He said the PPP government had assumed office at a critical juncture, however, despite many challenges the

situation in the region had improved considerably due to its prudent and pro-people policies.

He expressed confidence that the PPP would return to power with public support and continue its development agenda.

Speaking on the occasion, the PPP president Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and other party leaders and ministers praised the government's reforms, particularly in the education and health sectors.

Rawalpindi also closed

RAWALPINDI: A view of deserted Murree Road due to traffic flow is low during security high alert in the city, as Pakistan prepares to host the U.S. and Iran for the second phase of peace talks in Islamabad.



Photo: Online

PPP AJK celebrates Rs 2.7 billion education package approval as political and moral triumph

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir, calling the approval of the education package worth Rs 2.7 billion and 99 million in the first four months of the short tenure of the party government led by Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore a political and moral victory, celebrated a day of thanksgiving throughout Azad Kashmir and offered prayers of thanksgiving and distributed sweets after the Jumma prayers.

President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairperson Ms. Faryal Talpur, central senior leader Chaudhry

Riaz, Acting President Chaudhry Latif Akbar, paid tribute to the guidance of Party President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin and congratulated the nation. Appreciating the long-term strategy of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore for countering the palace conspiracies of political opponents in the approval of the education package with wisdom and wisdom, it is a national breakthrough for the new generation. Spokesperson for the Prime Minister Shaukat Javed Mir said that education, health, employment, provision of infrastructure, social justice, supremacy of merit, good governance, corruption, recommendation commissions have played an



exemplary role in providing relief to the people from the outdated system

of red tape.

On this occasion, Ulema Mashaikh Wing Central Secretary General Sahibzada Fazal-ur-Rasool Tahir, Member District Council Syed Abid Kazmi, party officials Syed Shaq-ul-Hassan Gilani, Syed Qalb Abbas, Shaukat Rathore, Chaudhry Naveed-ul-Hassan, Mehtab Abbasi, Raja Ahmed Khan, Muqaddas Iqbal, Khawaja Bilawal, Munir, Aqib Abbasi, while expressing their views on the party leadership. Appreciating the decisions, he thanked those who nominated Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore as the Leader of the House, whose competence and ability are acknowledged even by critics.

AJK Health Minister meets Lachhrat Women PPP leaders to discuss wing reorganization

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: An important meeting of the women of the People's Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir of the Lachhrat constituency of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Health Minister Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi was held in Muzaffarabad.

The meeting was presided over by the President of the Women's Wing of the People's Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir, former Deputy Speaker, Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar, in which Secretary General Shagufta Noreen Kazmi Kazmi, Senior Vice President, Fawzia Habib, District President Musarrat Sheikh and women workers participated.



The meeting was convened by Saika. Noreen and Nazia. Health Minister Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi specially attended the meeting. During the meeting, the reorganization of the PPP Azad Kashmir Women's Wing was discussed and the women gave their suggestions.

In the meeting, full confidence was expressed in the leadership of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman PPP Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Ms. Faryal Talpur, while the democratic services of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Ms. Nusrat Bhutto and Shaheed Ms. Benazir Bhutto were

paid in wonderful words.

Addressing the meeting, Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar said that the large number of women participating in the consultation meeting of the women of the Health Minister's constituency today has made it clear that the women of Lachhrat are conscious and active.

Addressing the meeting, Health Minister Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi congratulated Ms. Shaheen Kausar Dar on becoming the president of the women's wing and said that we will continue the mission of Shaheed Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir. He said that Lachhrat is an achievement of the PPP for which we are working hard to develop it.

Major Political Shift in Kotli: Key Families Defect to Pakistan Peoples Party

Bureau Report

KOTLI: Union Council Badrali Basota Member District Council Chaudhry Abid Iqbal, with the full efforts of the constituency Kotli Union Council Badrali, the candidates of PML-N, PTI, have been given a big political setup. Many families have joined the Pakistan Peoples Party. President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Minister for Local Government of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Aamir Yasin Chaudhry, senior leader Pakistan Peoples Party and member District Council Shahnawaz Yasin Chaudhry have trusted the leadership of Chaudhry and announced the joining of many family heads in the Pakistan Peoples Party. The President of Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir welcomed those who joined by wearing garlands. Those who joined included Chaudhry Zamrud Hussain, Chaudhry Waheed Hussain, Chaudhry Rashid Ahmed, Chaudhry Muhammad Ansar, Chaudhry Babar Saghir, Chaudhry Armaan Saghir, Sheikh Zulfikar Ahmed, Syed Shah Pir, Syed Abbas Shah, Chaudhry Yunus Hussain, Zahid Hussain Chaudhry, Inayat Qureshi, Sabir Hussain Shah, Zarob Hussain. Shah, Chaudhry Saeed, Chaudhry Nazim, Chaudhry Adeel, Hafiz Qadir, Chaudhry Zahid, Hafiz Safir, Ishtiaq Shah, Shaban Inayat, Ali Hameed, Rizwan Ahmed, Ghulam Abbas, Matlab Hussain Shah, Arif Hussain and others also joined. Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, while expressing his views at the participation program, said that my life and politics are like an open book whose goal is to improve the quality of life of the people and provide and protect their rights.



AJK Supreme Court's big decision, ban on recruitment of grades 1 to 15 lifted



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The full bench of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Supreme Court has upheld the open merit decision of the High Court regarding government jobs and admissions to educational institutions. The Supreme Court has ordered the lifting of the stay order against appointments of grades 1 to 15 in all departments.

A full bench comprising Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan, Senior Judge Justice Raza Ali Khan and Justice Khalid Rasheed heard this important case. Earlier, the Supreme Court had imposed a ban on recruitment of grades 1 to 15 through an interim order, due to which the recruitment process in government institutions was suspended. The court had fixed today's date on the request of the government for an urgent hearing, while earlier the hearing of the case was to be held on April 30.

A total of 17 appeals were filed in the Supreme Court in this regard. The matter came up against the August 16, 2025, decision of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, which ordered the abolition of the quota system for government jobs.

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

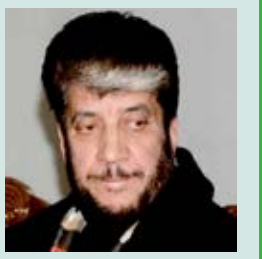
Spokesman Report

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.



Azad Kashmir Polls: No Alliances, PML-N ready to win alone, says Raja Farooq Haider

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: Former Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Muslim League (N) leader Raja Farooq Haider Khan has said that the refugees residing in Pakistan are a part of our existence and no one can separate them. No development plan or package can be given 120 days before the general elections.

Pre-election rigging has started at the government level. The Muslim League (N) will not form an alliance with any party. They will form the government on winning the elections alone. The parliamentary board under the chairmanship of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif will issue tickets to party candidates in the next few days. The Muslim League (N) has more than one candidate in each constituency. Even 26 candidates have submitted applications from one constituency. The PPP and the Muslim Conference have established a tradition of giving the right to vote to non-state persons.

Those who have gone to the courts against the 13th Amendment do not know themselves. They went to seek permission from the government of Pakistan for the amendment to show that the government of Pakistan also supports the people of Azad Kashmir across the Line of Control.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:57 am
Zohr	12:06 pm
Asr	4:50 pm
Maghrib	6:46 pm
Isha	8:15 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
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
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

inDrive retains #1 spot as Pakistan's top ride-hailing app across App stores

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: inDrive has once again reinforced its leadership in Pakistan's ride-hailing market by maintaining its position as the #1 top free app in the Maps & Navigation category on the Google Play Store. The platform has also secured the #1 spot among free travel apps on Apple's App Store, further solidifying its cross-platform dominance.

This sustained performance reflects more than just download numbers. It signals consistent user trust in a highly competitive and rapidly evolving mobility landscape. While new entrants continue to emerge, inDrive's value proposition of transparent pricing and user-driven fare negotiation appears to be resonating strongly with Pakistani consumers.

"Maintaining our position as the number one mobility app in Pakistan comes from consistently delivering value to our users.

At inDrive, we focus on giving people choice, transparency, and fairness in how they move. Pakistan is a key market for us, and we remain committed to improving our platform for both passengers and drivers," said Awais Saeed, Country Manager, inDrive Pakistan.

CM Maryam Nawaz lauds Pakistan's diplomacy on International Day of Multilateralism

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her special message on the International Day of Multilateralism and Diplomacy for Peace, paid tribute to Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, and Field Marshal Asim Munir for their successful diplomatic efforts during the recent global crisis.

The chief minister appreciated the efforts and role of Pakistani diplomats



in promoting global peace. She stated that, owing to Pakistan's successful diplomacy, a potential global war was averted, saving millions of human lives.

She said Pakistan, through diplomacy, has generated a new hope amid the prevailing global situation. "Diplomacy is the solution to disputes and conflicts, and Pakistan's stance has been acknowledged worldwide," she added.

CM Maryam Nawaz said diplomacy alone can promote peace, trade and tourism across the world. She further remarked that the Kashmir issue could also be resolved through positive diplomacy.

The chief minister noted that through diplomacy, collective efforts to address climate change, poverty and conflicts can be translated into practical outcomes.

"Successful diplomacy in the recent global crisis has further strengthened Pakistan as a responsible state in the international community," she said.

She added that diplomacy reflects a commitment to resolving conflicts and fostering cooperation among nations, emphasizing that dialogue, engagement and mutual understanding can help resolve even the most complex issues.

After public transport is closed

ISLAMABAD: Ride service motorcyclists parked on NO Parking area outside PIMS in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Boxes of Kindness Organization played a prominent role in helping the flood victims

Iram Asim

MULTAN: A grand ceremony was organized on the completion of 9 years of Boxes of Kindness, in which social services and welfare activities were fully appreciated.

The purpose of the ceremony was to highlight the welfare services of the organization and promote the spirit of serving humanity.

Mrs. Aniqah Warda, Chairperson of Boxes of Kindness, said that our organization has been helping people without discrimination for the past nine years under the spirit of serving humanity.

Especially during the summer season, food and water are provided on the rooftops of countless people in Multan city and other cities. Mrs. Aniqah Warda further said that all these activities have been possible with the cooperation and hard work of Boxes of Kindness members, and the service will be continued with the same spirit in the future as well.



Arsalan Ansari, Vice Chairman of Boxes of Kindness, said that our mission is to serve the suffering humanity, complete social and welfare projects, and promote community, education, sustainable health, social harmony, poverty and pollution eradication, tree plantation campaign, and provision of clean water.

Dr. Umair, Dr. Saleem, Dr. Arsalan, Taha Baneri, Akash Feroze, Faraz Inam,

Hadiqa Islam, Arsalan Ansari, Anas Ansari, Muhammad Naeem, Jalali, Sheesh, Ibad, Hassan, Talha, Fahad, Saim, Abdul Hadi, Owais, Zohaib Fahim, Shoaib Saeed, Mehdi Raza, Muhammad Owais, Ramna Bashir, Talha Tariq, Armaan Ali, Tayyab Aamir, Daniyal Danish, Bisma Islam, Imsab Mahfouz, Abdul Rehman and others addressed the ceremony.

Punjab Minister for local Government received briefing on Suthra Punjab

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab Minister for Local Government, Zeeshan Rafiq, received a detailed briefing today from Mr. Aneel Saeed, Managing Director of the Punjab Suthra Program and Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Attock.

During the briefing, an in-depth discussion was held on various aspects of the Punjab Suthra Program, and key performance indicators (KPIs) were thoroughly reviewed.

The meeting was attended by Mr. Aneel Saeed, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, Attock and Managing Director of the Punjab Suthra Program, along with district managers, tehsil managers, and other relevant officials. Various matters relating to further improving the sanitation system, enhancing operational performance, and expanding public service delivery were discussed.

Minister Zeeshan Rafiq appreciated the ongoing initiatives under the Punjab Suthra Program in Attock and commended the performance of the officers. He stated that the sanitation work being carried out in Attock is exemplary and serves as a model for other districts.

He further directed that a comprehensive and coordinated strategy be adopted to further improve sanitation standards and ensure maximum relief and better services for the public.

Prisoner Commits Suicide in District Jail Attock; Preliminary Report Issued

Raza naqvi

ATTOCK: A tragic incident of suicide by a prisoner has been reported at District Jail Attock. According to the spokesperson for District Jail Attock, preliminary information indicates that prisoner Asif Ali, son of Sabir Ali, a resident of District Attock, who was under custody in a narcotics case, committed suicide while in detention on April 24, 2026.

According to jail authorities, the prisoner was transferred to District Jail Attock on April 10, 2026. He was a habitual offender and had been involved in multiple cases of various nature. During his incarceration, he fell ill and was shifted to hospital for medical treatment. After his condition improved, he was transferred back to the jail.

The report further states that there is no record of any family visit during his imprisonment. Jail authorities noted that the prisoner was suffering from mental stress and personal issues, which may have contributed to this unfortunate act.

Upon receiving information about the incident, the Superintendent of District Jail Attock, the Magistrate, and other relevant officials immediately reached the scene. After completing the necessary legal formalities, the body was shifted to the District Headquarters Hospital, Attock, for post-mortem examination, where doctors were fully briefed on the circumstances.

According to the preliminary report, no evidence of torture or mistreatment has been found. However, further investigation is underway, and all legal requirements are being fulfilled.

Red Zone sealed, Expressway closed as ITP enforces traffic plan

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Traffic Police (ITP) will enforce a special traffic plan on Saturday in the federal capital, with complete closure of the Red Zone and extended Red Zone, along with suspension of traffic on Islamabad Expressway from Korral to Zero Point.

An ITP official told APP on Friday that traffic on Srinagar Highway may also be stopped at different times due to security arrangements.

Entry of all types of heavy traffic into Islamabad will remain banned, while transporters have been advised to avoid traveling towards the capital.

Residents of G-5, G-6, G-7, F-6 and F-7 can use Margalla Road and 9th Avenue for travel to and from Rawalpindi.

Traffic from Faisal Avenue towards Zero Point will be diverted to 9th Avenue.

In case of closure between Zero Point and Korral Chowk, commuters can use Srinagar Highway to 9th Avenue, then Stadium Road, Murree Road (Chandni Chowk) and Rawal Road to reach Korral.

Traffic from Park Road towards Club Road will be diverted to Tramri Chowk.

Commuters traveling from Bhara Kahu to Rawalpindi are advised to use Korang Road, Bani Gala and Lehtrar Road.

Traffic from Rawalpindi Saddar to Islamabad can use Colonel Sher Khan Road via Faqir Aipee Road or 9th Avenue.

Heavy traffic from Peshawar to Lahore will be diverted via Taxila Motorway, Chakri Interchange, Chak Beli Road and Rawat GT Road.

Similarly, heavy traffic from Lahore to Peshawar will use Rawat GT Road, Chak Beli Road, Chakri Interchange and Taxila via the motorway.

Citizens have been advised to follow alternate routes and cooperate with traffic police.

Further updates can be obtained through ITP's WhatsApp channel, Islamabad Police social media platforms and ITP FM 92.4.

Multan Bar meets LHC Chief Justice Alia Neelam to pledge support

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chief Justice Lahore High Court Justice Miss Alia Neelam was met by High Court Bar Association Multan President Chaudhry Umar Hayat, General Secretary Fayyaz Hussain Khan Leghari, President District Bar Syeda Bushra Naqvi,

General Secretary Malik Saadat Hussain, Vice President High Court Bar Malik Zahid Kabir Khakhi, Library Secretary Sameera Siddique, Finance Secretary Chaudhry Noman Ahmed and Executive Members Chaudhry Waqas Anjum Gujjar and Miss Maha Azam Rajput.

In the meeting, President High



Court Bar Multan Chaudhry Umar Hayat praised and paid tribute to Chief Justice Lahore High Court Justice Alia Neelam for implementing the principles of the constitution, law

and justice, improving the judicial system and providing speedy justice to the people of Punjab and assured full support and cooperation for all her policies.

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How Iran War Is Grounding the World Economy

The war in the Middle East has now moved far beyond the battlefield. What initially appeared as a regional military confrontation has evolved into a systemic global crisis—one that is tightening its grip not only on governments and markets, but on ordinary people struggling to sustain daily life. The closure of the Strait of Hormuz, combined with targeted disruption of oil infrastructure, has triggered a cascading breakdown across energy supply chains, aviation networks, and tourism-dependent economies. The world is no longer merely watching a war; it is experiencing its economic consequences in real time.

At the center of this unfolding crisis lies the global jet fuel market—a sector often overlooked in geopolitical analysis, yet one that sustains the arteries of globalization. Prior to the conflict, global jet fuel demand had recovered strongly, reaching approximately 107 billion gallons annually in 2024, with projections climbing to nearly 7.2 million barrels per day by early 2026. This demand was supported by a finely balanced supply network spanning North America, Asia, and the Middle East. Today, that balance has been violently disrupted.

The Middle East, which typically contributes around 20% of global jet fuel supply, has seen a dramatic collapse in its effective output. War-related damage to refineries, combined with the strategic closure of the Strait of Hormuz, has removed an estimated 320,000 tons of jet fuel per day from global circulation. At the same time, approximately 3 million barrels per day of refining capacity across the region has either been shut down or rendered inoperable. This is not a marginal disruption—it is a structural shock to the global energy system.

Jet fuel prices have responded accordingly. Within weeks, prices surged from

approximately \$85–90 per barrel to well above \$200, representing one of the sharpest increases in modern energy market history. For the aviation industry, where fuel accounts for up to one-third of operating costs, this is nothing short of catastrophic. Airlines are no longer operating in a demand-driven environment; they are navigating a survival crisis defined by cost pressures and supply scarcity.

The impact is most visible in Europe, where the aviation sector—and by extension, the tourism economy—is deeply exposed. Europe imports roughly 25–30% of its jet fuel from the Persian Gulf. With supply lines disrupted, airlines have begun aggressive capacity cuts. Major carriers have canceled thousands of flights ahead of the critical summer season. Lufthansa alone has reportedly removed tens of thousands of flights from its schedule, while other carriers are grounding aircraft, optimizing routes, and operating only essential services.

This contraction strikes at the heart of Europe's economic model. Tourism is not a peripheral sector; it is a foundational pillar. The continent generates between \$600 and \$700 billion annually from tourism, supporting millions of jobs and contributing significantly to GDP in countries such as Spain, Italy, France, and Greece. This entire ecosystem depends on affordable, reliable air travel. Without it, hotels remain empty, restaurants lose customers, and entire regional economies begin to contract.

The crisis is not confined to Europe. In Asia-Pacific, where airlines depend heavily on Middle Eastern fuel flows, the situation is even more acute. Carriers have entered emergency operational

modes, securing limited fuel supplies and preparing for prolonged disruption. Even in the United States—buffered by its status as a major producer—airlines face massive financial strain. Leading carriers have warned of billions of dollars in additional fuel costs, threatening profitability and forcing difficult operational decisions.

What makes this crisis particularly dangerous is its compounding nature. Aviation is not only about passenger mobility; it is a critical component of global trade. High-value goods, pharmaceuticals, and time-sensitive cargo depend on air freight. As flight capacity shrinks, supply chains tighten, prices rise, and inflationary pressures intensify. Indeed, energy analysts have already warned that this crisis could add nearly 0.8% to global inflation—an alarming figure in an already fragile economic environment.

Meanwhile, the maritime dimension of the conflict is adding further instability. The Strait of Hormuz, through which nearly one-fifth of the world's oil supply normally passes, has become a contested zone. Tankers are being intercepted, diverted, and in some cases seized. Insurance costs have soared, discouraging shipping companies from entering the region. Even where fuel is available, the ability to transport it safely has become uncertain.

China's position offers a temporary buffer but not immunity. With substantial strategic reserves and a diversified energy portfolio, including large-scale investments in renewable energy, China can withstand short-term shocks. However, as the world's manufacturing hub, any prolonged disruption will inevitably impact its output. A slowdown in Chinese production would have global

consequences, affecting supply chains and economic growth worldwide.

This brings into focus a critical strategic question: what is the underlying objective of this disruption? One interpretation—gaining increasing traction—is that the closure of the Strait of Hormuz is not merely a byproduct of conflict, but a strategic lever. By constraining Middle Eastern supply, global demand is redirected toward alternative producers, most notably the United States. Over the past decade, the U.S. has transformed into a leading exporter of oil and liquefied natural gas. In a constrained market, its leverage increases significantly.

For Iran, the situation presents a profound strategic dilemma. Maintaining the closure of the Strait exerts pressure on adversaries but simultaneously inflicts economic pain on the wider world. Reopening the waterway, on the other hand, could reposition Iran as a stabilizing force while exposing the broader dynamics at play. It would restore global supply flows, ease economic pressures, and potentially shift international opinion.

From a strategic standpoint, reopening Hormuz could neutralize the leverage derived from disruption. It would deny the United States to exploit scarcity and would reestablish a degree of economic normalcy. More importantly, it would demonstrate that stability—not disruption—is the stronger strategic position in an interconnected global system.

The Strait of Hormuz is no longer just a geographic chokepoint. It has become the pivot on which the global economy now turns.

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

Pakistan Starts World Immunization Week 2026

Every year, the Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI), under the leadership of the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, in collaboration with provincial/area EPIs and partners, commemorates World Immunization Week across Pakistan. Observed in the last week of April, the week highlights the significant role of vaccines in protecting lives from vaccine-preventable diseases.

This year's theme, "For Every Generation, Vaccines Work," reinforces the enduring power of vaccines in saving lives and safeguarding communities across generations. With the call to action, "Your decision makes a difference. Get vaccinated," the campaign emphasizes the vital role of individual and collective responsibility in ensuring a healthier future for all. In view of the current situation and in line with austerity measures, activities will primarily be conducted through digital platforms and electronic media, ensuring continued outreach, awareness, and engagement with communities nationwide.

"Routine immunization is the foundation of a healthy nation," said Dr. Musa Khan, Director General, Federal Directorate of Immunization. Dr. Musa further added that "ensuring that every child receives all vaccines on time is critical not only for individual protection, but also for building resilient communities. As we commemorate World Immunization Week 2026, we are reminded that every vaccination is a step towards a healthier Pakistan. It is imperative that parents ensure their children receive all routine immunizations on time, protecting them against 13 life-threatening diseases".

He further added, "Despite significant progress, there are still children who miss out on essential vaccines, particularly in underserved and hard-to-reach areas. Reaching these zero-dose children remains a top priority. Through strengthened outreach, community engagement, and building trust, we can ensure that no child is left behind."

Reinforcing these efforts, Pakistan also continues to accelerate progress towards polio eradication as part of its broader immunization agenda. With only one polio case reported so far this year, the country stands at a critical juncture—closer than ever to interrupting transmission.

The Federal Directorate of Immunization, all provincial/area EPIs along with its partners i.e. Gavi, World Health Organization, UNICEF, Gates Foundation, Polio Eradication Initiative, JHPIEGO, Oxford Policy Management, Mannion Daniels and CSOs continues to work tirelessly to enhance immunization coverage, strengthen service delivery, and promote awareness about the benefits of vaccination. Special focus is being given to reaching zero dose children, addressing misinformation, and fostering community confidence in vaccines.

World Immunization Week 2026 serves as a renewed call for action for parents, caregivers, community leaders, health workers, media, and all stakeholders to play their role in ensuring that every child is fully immunized. By making informed decisions and prioritizing vaccination, we can protect our children, families, and future generations.



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

Comparing Autonomy: AJK Amendments 13 and 15 vs. Governance in IIOJK

The governance of Jammu and Kashmir presents a stark dichotomy between the administrative frameworks of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), reflecting divergent approaches to the dignity and rights of the Kashmiri people. Pakistan has fostered a system in AJK characterized by genuine legislative autonomy and political empowerment, most notably through the implementation of the 13th and 15th Amendments. These constitutional reforms shifted executive authority from the federal level to the elected representatives in Muzaffarabad, ensuring that the Prime Minister and the Legislative Assembly hold substantial control over internal affairs such as finance, health, and education. This devolution of power demonstrates a commitment to the will of the governed, allowing the region to maintain a distinct political identity and a vibrant civil society where local leaders are held accountable by their own constituents rather than an external authority.

In contrast, the situation in IIOJK has devolved into what is described as a draconian regime of colonial-style subjugation following India's unilateral abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A in August 2019. This move stripped the region of its nominal special status and protections for its demographic identity, effectively annexing the territory and placing it under the direct control of New Delhi. The local population is now subjected to harsh laws like the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), which facilitate indefinite detention without trial and the

criminalization of political dissent. The region has been transformed into a heavily militarized zone where fundamental civil liberties are suppressed through mass arbitrary arrests, communication blackouts, and the systematic silencing of the press, creating a pervasive environment of fear and state-sponsored oppression.

This profound disparity in governance reveals a fundamental difference in sincerity regarding the welfare and self-determination of the Kashmiri people. While Pakistan's framework in AJK treats the population as partners in a national cause by protecting their cultural heritage and political rights, India's actions in IIOJK are marked by egregious human rights violations and an intentional policy of demographic manipulation. By allowing non-Kashmiris to purchase land and settle in the region, India is accused of engaging in settler-colonialism designed to dilute the Muslim-majority character of the territory. Ultimately, the contrast between the empowerment seen in AJK and the brutal occupation of IIOJK highlights a moral imperative for international intervention to address Indian atrocities and support the unequivocal desire of the Kashmiri people to live in freedom.

The difference in sincerity between Pakistan and India could not be more pronounced when one examines the relationship between the governing state and the Kashmiri political will. Pakistan's sincerity is demonstrated through its consistent diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri right to self-determination, as enshrined in the United Nations Security Council Resolution 47 of 1948. Pakistan does not claim AJK as an integral part

of its territory; rather, it views AJK as a liberated part of the disputed state of Jammu and Kashmir, whose final status is yet to be decided by a UN-supervised plebiscite. The autonomy granted to AJK through the 13th and 15th Amendments is a reflection of Pakistan's principled stance that the Kashmiri people must have the freedom to shape their own destiny. In stark contrast, India's insincerity is reflected in its refusal to implement the very UN resolutions it once accepted. Having taken the Kashmir dispute to the United Nations in 1948, India subsequently abandoned the promise of a plebiscite and has since illegally declared Kashmir an "integral part" of India through brute force. India's revocation of Article 370 was an attempt to bury the dispute unilaterally, but it has failed utterly. Rather than bringing peace, the move has intensified the alienation of the Kashmiri people, turning the region into a tinderbox that the international community recognizes as a potential nuclear flashpoint. The insincerity of India is further exposed by the fact that even within the puppet political structures it has created in IIOJK, the demand for the restoration of autonomy is undeniable. In November 2024, the newly elected legislative assembly in IIOJK, dominated by parties opposed to the BJP, passed a resolution demanding the restoration of the region's special status, calling upon the Indian government to initiate dialogue with elected representatives. This internal rebellion against New Delhi's diktat proves that the Kashmiri people have not accepted the 2019 annexation. However, the Indian response was swift and ruthless; Prime Minister Modi restored that "no power" in the world could restore Article 370, effectively telling the Kashmiris that their democratic voice is irrelevant and that they will be ruled by New Delhi's bayonets whether they like it or not. This is the behavior of a state that

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Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

Kashmir and the International Legal Order: Between Principle and Practice

At what point does sovereignty lose its legal and moral legitimacy? International law does not grant states unlimited power over people, especially in territories whose status is disputed. It places clear obligations on governments to respect human rights, uphold justice, and allow people a voice in determining their future. Nowhere is this tension more visible than in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), where the actions of India continue to raise serious concerns about compliance with international law and the protection of fundamental rights.

The Kashmir dispute is not simply a political disagreement between India and Pakistan. It is, at its core, a legal issue rooted in the right to self-determination. Since 1947, the territory has been recognized by the United Nations as disputed. Through UN Security Council Resolution 47, the international community established a clear framework: the people of Kashmir were to decide their future through a free and fair plebiscite. More than seventy years later, this legal commitment remains unfulfilled, raising serious questions about the credibility of international law itself.

Over time, instead of moving toward a political solution, the region has experienced increasing militarization and legal centralization. The removal of Article 370 in August 2019 by the government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party BJP marked a turning point. This decision ended the limited autonomy of IIOJK and brought it under direct federal control. While the Indian government described this as a

step toward integration and development, the method of implementation marked by mass detentions, communication blackouts, and heavy troop deployment drew widespread concern.

Security policies introduced after 2019 have further expanded state control. What has been described as Delhi's "Seven Pillars" security doctrine is presented as a framework for stability. However, in practice, it resembles what many observers describe as "seven bars of an iron cage," extending surveillance and restrictions into nearly every aspect of civilian life. Movement, communication, and political expression are closely monitored, limiting the space for normal civic life.

The human cost of this approach is significant. According to reports by the Research Section of Kashmir Media Service, Indian forces including the army, paramilitary units, Border Security Force, Special Operations Group, and police have killed over 1,059 Kashmiris since August 5, 2019, including at least 22 women. The same reports indicate that at least 2,690 individuals have been critically injured due to the use of pellet guns, tear gas, and other forms of force against protesters and civilians. While these figures are disputed by Indian authorities, they are widely cited by observers to highlight the scale of alleged abuses.

Under international law, the use of force by state authorities must meet strict standards of necessity and proportionality. The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights guarantees the right to life, freedom of expression, and

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Analysis

Laraib Ehsan

Hemani Marks Historic Milestone as First Exporter in Landmark Transit Breakthrough Connecting Kyrgyzstan to Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI-PAKISTAN: -Hemani proudly announces a historic achievement in regional trade connectivity, coinciding with a groundbreaking develop-

ment in cross-border logistics. Pakistan has marked a major milestone as the first truck from Kyrgyzstan arrived at Sost Dry Port carrying transit goods, successfully bypassing Afghanistan. This first-ever movement

of its kind by a Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) country using its own transport signifies the opening of a new alternative trade corridor into Pakistan.

Hemani is honored to be

among the first exporters to capitalize on this strategic breakthrough, reinforcing its leadership in international trade and logistics innovation. The shipment was facilitated by a partner company of



the National Logistics Corporation (NLC) in Kyrgyzstan, and is being widely recognized as a pivotal step toward enhanced regional integration and economic cooperation.

"This is not just a logistical success, it is a transformative moment for regional trade," said at Hemani. "Being part of this milestone underscores

Hemani's commitment to pioneering new trade routes and strengthening economic ties across Central and South Asia."Hemani pays tribute to and extends its sincere gratitude to the Pakistan Embassy in Kyrgyzstan for their unwavering support and facilitation, which played a crucial role in making this achievement possible. The

successful transit highlights the growing potential of alternative corridors that improve efficiency, reduce dependency on traditional routes, and open new avenues for exporters and importers alike. Hemani remains dedicated to leveraging emerging opportunities and contributing to the evolution of global trade networks.

Govt Promoting Handicrafts, Empowering Artisans in South Punjab: Fawad Hashim Rabbani

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Additional Chief Secretary South Punjab, Fawad Hashim Rabbani, has said that on the directions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, practical steps are being taken to effectively promote handicrafts in South Punjab and enable artisans to become financially self-reliant.

He expressed these views while presiding over the Handicrafts Exhibition and Certificate Distribution Ceremony organized by the Punjab Small Industries Corporation (PSIC) at the Pakistan Handicrafts Centre in Multan. He appreciated the initiatives taken by PSIC to implement the Chief Minister's "Skilled Punjab Vision."

Addressing artisans, including tile-makers, sculptors, and other craftsmen actively preserving the region's heritage, Rabbani said that Multan's cultural legacy and craftsmanship date back centuries and continue to receive recognition at local, national, and international levels.

He revealed that through PSIC Multan, the Government of Punjab has so far disbursed Rs542 million among 3,076 individuals associated with handicrafts, including artisans, tile-makers, and sculptors. Furthermore, under the Punjab Rozgar Scheme, Rs16 billion will be spent to promote 6,323 small businesses and crafts.

He emphasized that Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz Sharif envisions a province where every child is skilled, enabling them not only to support their education financially but also to achieve economic independence. He added that equipping youth with skills would help eliminate unemployment, and the government will extend full support to skilled individuals, including easy loans to start businesses. "In the future, skilled individuals will drive the country's economy," he said.

Earlier, upon his arrival as chief guest at the event, Regional Director PSIC Multan, Amara Manzoor, warmly welcomed him. Traditional Jhoomar and Daachi dances were performed in his honor.

Rabbani visited various stalls showcasing Kashikari (tile work), blue pottery, Ghughu Ghora crafts, Khussa making, sculpture and pottery, block printing, and other traditional crafts. He showed keen interest in the artisans' work.

He also visited the library at the handicrafts centre named after Syed Muhammad Ali Wasti and inaugurated the exhibition featuring traditional crafts prepared by artisans and their students.

During the ceremony, certificates and shields were distributed among artists, tile-makers, and craftsmen, along with ceremonial turban presentations in recognition of their contributions.

Barrister Aqeel Malik Leads Pakistan Delegation at UN Committee Against Torture



Zafar Chishti

ISLAMABAD: Barrister Aqeel Malik, Minister of State for Law and Justice, led Pakistan's delegation at the 84th Session of the United Nations Committee Against Torture (CAT). The delegation included Secretary, Mr. Abdul Khaliq Shaikh, Director General (HR), Mr. Muhammad Arshad, Director General (IC), Dr. Muhammad Arif, Director (IC), Mr. Aziz Iqbal and Director, Mr. Zeeshan Munir from the Ministry of Human Rights, Director General (CPI), Ms. Rabbea Hadi and Inspector General (Prisons), Punjab, Mian Farooq Nazeer.

During a constructive and substantive dialogue with the Committee, Pakistan presented its progress in addressing torture and reaffirmed its unwavering commitment to eliminating torture in all its forms. The delegation highlighted key legal and policy reforms, strengthened institutional accountability mechanisms and measures aimed at safeguarding human dignity. Pakistan underscored its resolve to fully uphold its international human rights obligations and reiterated its commitment to continued engagement and cooperation with the United Nations human rights mechanisms and international partners.

King Salman Relief Successfully Completes Distribution of Food Packages

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The King Salman Humanitarian Aid and Relief Centre (KSrelief) has successfully completed the distribution of food packages to 8,500 families in Punjab under the final phase of the Food Security Support Project in Pakistan. The initiative was aimed at ensuring the provision of essential food supplies to food-insecure and deserving populations.



Under this intervention, food packages weighing 97 kilograms each were distributed among vulnerable communities in Punjab, most of whom were affected by recent floods. A total of 8,500 food packages were distributed across 10 districts, including Multan (Jalalpur Pirwala) 1,000, Bahawalpur 1,000, Muzaffargarh (Alipur) 900, Bahawalnagar 1,600, Rajanpur 500, Nankana Sahib 500, Khanewal (Kabirwala) 700, Rahim Yar Khan 700, Chiniot 800, and Toba Tek Singh 800.

Each package included 80 kilograms of flour, 5 liters of cooking oil, 5 kilograms of sugar, 5 kilograms of Daal chana, and 2 kilograms of dates, ensuring essential nutritional support for beneficiary families. The distribution process was carried out in a transparent and well-coordinated manner with the support of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), district administrations, and KSrelief's implementing partners, Hayat Foundation and the Peace and Development Organization.

This initiative reflects KSrelief's continued commitment to strengthening food security across Pakistan by providing timely assistance to vulnerable communities. It further underscores KSrelief's broader humanitarian mission to alleviate suffering and promote sustainable development worldwide.

Health Mela Organized at DHQ Hospital TT Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A Health Mela organized at DHQ Hospital Toba Tek Singh, in collaboration with the Punjab Family Planning Program proved to be a significant milestone in providing public health facilities and raising awareness among citizens.

The event placed special emphasis on maternal and child health, family planning and the promotion of basic healthcare services, offering free medical facilities to deserving and underprivileged patients.

During the Health Mela, expert doctors and paramedical staff conducted free medical check-ups for

hundreds of patients. Various diseases were diagnosed and patients were given valuable medical advice according to their health conditions.

The event was graced by the presence of Divisional Coordinator of the Punjab Family Planning Program, Mr. Anwaar Ahmed and Senior Regional Manager of Martin Dow Marker Ltd, Mr. Muhammad Aslam.

They appreciated the initiative, stating that such efforts play a vital role in delivering basic healthcare services at the doorstep of the public.

In the end, Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Ch. Muhammad Naeem thanked the organizers, medical staff and distin-



guished guests. He highlighted that such activities not only raise public awareness about health but also play

a key role in promoting family planning and building a healthy and prosperous society.



PIEAS alumnus Sualeh Asif all set for \$60bn deal with Musk's SpaceX

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: An alumnus of the STEM Careers Programme, a joint initiative of PIEAS (administered by the Atomic Energy Commission of Pakistan) and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), Sualeh Asif is making global headlines as his co-founded AI startup Cursor moves toward a potential \$60 billion acquisition deal with SpaceX, owned by Elon Musk.

The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) was founded in 1967 as Reactor School with the sponsorship of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC).

Sualeh Asif has proven to be an exceptional alumnus of the STEM Careers Program, a joint venture of PIEAS and the Higher Education Commission, Pakistan. His co-founded startup, Cursor AI, is set for a \$60 billion acquisition deal with Elon Musk's SpaceX.

He represented the Pakistani team at the International Mathematics Olympiad (IMO) on multiple occasions and won a bronze medal for Pakistan in 2017. His stellar performance and participation in the IMO didn't just earn him accolades, but they also paved the way for his admission into MIT.

Sualeh's story proves that

with the right platform, Pakistani students can compete with the best and secure their place in the global tech industry. To all the young enthusiasts eager to represent Pakistan in International Science Olympiads, the institution invites you to become a part of the STEM Careers Programme. You can register by visiting stem.edu.pk.

Join in congratulating Sualeh Asif on his incredible achievements and wishing him the best as he continues to make Pakistan proud! Sualeh has emerged as one of Pakistan's leading tech entrepreneurs. His startup Cursor, an artificial intelligence-powered coding platform,

has gained global traction and is now reportedly linked to one of the largest tech acquisition deals in recent years.

Before his entrepreneurial success, Sualeh represented Pakistan at the International Mathematics Olympiad multiple times, securing a bronze medal in 2017. His performance at the prestigious competition played a key role in his admission to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he further honed his skills.

Adding to his achievements, Sualeh Asif has also been featured in the Forbes Billionaires List 2026, showing the massive success of Cursor in the global tech industry.



His journey shows how Pakistani talent, when provided with

the right opportunities, can compete at the highest interna-

tional level and secure a strong position in the global innovation landscape.

According to reports, SpaceX has secured the right to acquire Cursor later this year, while an alternative arrangement may include a \$10 billion payment for collaborative projects if the acquisition does not proceed. The proposed partnership aims to integrate Cursor's AI coding capabilities with SpaceX's advanced computing systems.

The company is reportedly generating over \$1 billion in annualised revenue and serves millions of developers worldwide, positioning it among the fastest-growing AI startups globally.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
170,672.04	169,173.37
Day's High	Day's Low
171,641.32	166,380.71
Index Value	Change
29,412,695,457	+ 1498.67
Percentage	Time
+0.89%	24 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,379.08	-77.93
Percentage	Time
-0.75%	24 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,173.87	-136.45
Percentage	Time
-0.28%	24 Apr, 2:48 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
59,716.18	+575.95
Percentage	Time
+0.97%	24 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	197.03	201.70
Bahrain Dinar	726.75	736.85
Canadian Dollar	202.16	206.75
China Yuan	39.25	39.75
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	325.94	331.41
Hong Kong Dollar	35.05	36.05
Indian Rupee	2.15	2.35
Japanese Yen	1.7342	1.8340
Kuwaiti Dinar	877.45	889.42
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.65
New Zealand \$	161.60	165.25
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.9
Omani Riyal	721.30	732.45
Qatari Riyal	71.30	72.75
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.35
Singapore Dollar	216.53	222.75
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	352.16	358.25
Thai Bhat	8.35	8.55
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	76.95
UK Pound Sterling	375.87	381.25
US Dollar	279.25	279.90

FPCCI, Guangzhou Chamber sign MoU to strengthen Pak-China bilateral trade

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: A significant milestone in Pakistan-China economic relations was achieved

as the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) and the Guangzhou Chamber of Commerce & Industry inked a Memorandum of Understanding



(MoU) aimed at strengthening bilateral trade and investment ties between the two countries.

The MoU was signed during a high-level meeting held at the Consulate General of Pakistan in Guangzhou, between FPCCI Senior Vice President Saquib Fayyaz Magoon and Guangzhou Chamber Chairman Richard Wu.

The agreement outlines key areas of collaboration, most notably the establishment of dedicated Arbitration Desks at both FPCCI and the Guangzhou Chamber to ensure swift and efficient resolution of business disputes. The MoU further focuses on enhancing bilateral trade volumes, reducing trade barriers, and improving the ease of doing business between Pakistan and China.

Pakistan's Consul General in Guangzhou, H. E. Sardar Mohammad, along with Commercial Attaché Mohammad Imran, Hosted the signing ceremony. The FPCCI delegation comprised leading industrialists and traders representing a wide cross-section of sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Saquib Fayyaz Magoon expressed gratitude to Consul General Sardar Mohammad for facilitating the engagement and reaffirmed that China remains Pakistan's most trusted and reliable economic partner. He underscored Pakistan's unwavering support for China's vision of inclusive global growth through international collaboration.

Waiting for customers

ISLAMABAD: Shopkeepers of F-6 Flowers Market in the Federal Capital waiting for customers. The businesses suffered due to locked-down like situation in the Red Zone due to possible second phase of peace talks between Iran and US.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

ABHI Microfinance Bank, Dastak Logistics to Launch Merchant Lending Services for SMEs

Commerce Desk

ABHI Microfinance Bank Ltd. has entered into a strategic partnership with Dastak Logistics (Private) Limited to introduce Merchant Lending Services aimed at supporting small and medium-sized businesses across Pakistan with easier access to working capital and business financing.

The agreement was formalized at a signing ceremony where Muhammad Umer Rauf, Head Transaction & Employee Banking - ABHI Microfinance Bank, and Intizar Hussain, Chief Executive Officer - Dastak Logistics, signed on behalf of their respective organizations. The ceremony was also attended by senior representatives from both institutions.

Under this partnership, eligible merchants operating within Dastak Logistics' ecosystem will gain access to tailored financing solutions from Abhi MFB. These facilities are designed to help businesses manage cash flow needs, purchase inventory, expand operations, and strengthen day-to-day working capital without lengthy traditional banking processes.

The collaboration addresses one of the biggest challenges faced by SMEs and merchants in Pakistan - limited access to timely and convenient financing. By lever-



aging Dastak Logistics' merchant network and operational data, Abhi MFB aims to create a seamless lending journey with faster assessments, simplified onboarding, and quicker disbursement of funds.

With this collaboration, Abhi MFB continues to strengthen its commitment to

merchant-focused financial services, while Dastak Logistics expands value-added support for businesses within its growing network, creating a stronger foundation for long-term business growth nationwide.

SECP Strengthens Anti-Money Laundering Framework

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, APRIL 24: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has proposed major amendments to the AML/CFT/CPF Regulations, 2020 to strengthen anti-money laundering safeguards while enabling fully digital onboarding of investors, introducing IBAN-based verification, mandatory use of verified bank accounts/e-wallets, and multi-biometric authentication.

Under the proposed framework, IBAN verification through SECP-notified entities, including the National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL) via RAAST, will be accepted as valid proof of identity, subject to compliance with all AML requirements. Investors will be required to transact only through IBAN-verified bank accounts or e-wallets, improving traceability and reducing risks of unauthorized transactions.

The amendments also introduce a

multi-biometric verification system, including facial recognition, aligned with systems of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), to further strengthen identity authentication.

SECP has clarified that Regulated Persons (RPs) will continue to bear full responsibility for KYC, due diligence, transaction monitoring, and AML compliance.

The draft amendments have been issued for public consultation and are available on SECP's website for feedback within 14 days.

FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited announces Q1, 2026 results

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL) announced its financial results for the first quarter ended 31st March 2026.

The Company has witnessed net sales growth of 10.4% to PKR 28.7 billion versus the same period last year. The growth was driven by in-market execution, selective brand investment and route-to-market fundamentals supporting the Company's commercial performance during the quarter.

The packaged milk market continues to operate below its pre-tax levels, driven by the 18% sales tax imposed on UHT milk in July 2024. The

uneven playing field versus loose milk, which remains outside the tax net, continues to suppress volumes in the formal dairy sector.

The Company maintained its focus on cost discipline and operational efficiency across the value chain, resulting in gross margin increase and continued to actively engage with relevant government stakeholders to advocate for equitable taxation, underscoring the adverse impact of the current tax regime on public health, farmer livelihoods, and the documented dairy economy.

Emerging geopolitical tensions in the Middle East from March 2026, have introduced uncertainty that will weigh heavily on category affordability and demand



Mian Zahid Hussain with Governor Balochistan, Chinese Consul General Yang Yundong, S. M. Tanveer, Mir Alauddin Marri, former Chief Minister Balochistan, and other dignitaries at Chinese Consulate General Karachi.

Leading Saudi company inks MOU with Chenone for boosting exports

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: A leading Saudi company "SMSA" Friday inked a historic Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with "Chenone" group for boosting export of products in global markets.

ChenOne and SMSA - WF Integral Express (Licensee of SMSA Express), marks a strategic collaboration aimed at strengthening logistics, distribution, and operational capabilities.

The agreement was formally signed by Mian Muhammad Araib Kashif, Director Sales and Marketing ChenOne, and Waseem Ali Khan Chair-

person of SMSA franchise WF Integral Express. The occasion was also graced by Hussein Hachem, Chief Executive Officer of SMSA, Mian Umar Ashfaq Director Chenone, Mati ur Rehman CFO Chenone, Ms Maria Tauqir GM Chenone Interiors.

Muhammad Araib Kashif on the occasion said this partnership reflects a shared vision to enhance service excellence, explore new avenues of growth and innovation in the retail and logistics sectors which signifies an important step toward fostering collaboration and strengthening business ties within the region.

AlphaX Launches 24/7 TradFi Futures Trading

Pakistan: AlphaX, a high performance on-chain cryptocurrency exchange committed to delivering a simplified, efficient and reliable trading experience, today announced the launch of zero-fee TradFi perpetual futures trading on its platform, marking a significant expansion beyond digital assets and into traditional asset markets.

By integrating these products into its platform, AlphaX enables seamless access to globally recognized commodities while maintaining the efficiency and flexibility of crypto-native trading infrastructure. The launch of TradFi futures reflects AlphaX's ongoing commitment to diversifying its product suite and providing users with broader market access.

Meezan Bank Announces Financial Results for the Quarter Ended March 31, 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Meezan Bank, has approved the financial statements of the Bank for the quarter ended March 31, 2026. The meeting was chaired by Mr. Riyadh S. A. A. Edrees - Chairman of the Board.

The Bank reported quarterly Profit After Tax of Rs 23.4 billion, registering a 6% growth over March 2025. This resulted in an annualised Return on Equity of 34%, reflecting Meezan Bank's focus on enhancing shareholder value.

The Board of Directors has approved an interim cash dividend of 75% (Rs 7.50 per share). Retail deposit growth drove a 10% increase, taking total deposits to Rs 3.6 trillion and reinforcing Meezan Bank's position among one of the largest banks in Pakistan by deposits. Total assets remained stable at Rs 4.79 trillion since the start of the year.

Pakistan Hockey Olympians praise China's support and friendship

Sports Desk

PESHAWAR: Former renowned Pakistani hockey Olympian Samiullah Khan, famously known as the "Flying Horse," said that Pakistan-China friendship is everlasting and widely recognized around the world. He expressed these views during his visit to the Chinese cultural center China Window in Peshawar.

He was accompanied by seven other Pakistani Olympians, including Naeem Akhtar, Nasir Ali, Ayaz Mahmood, Dr. Atif Bashir, Shakeel Abbasi, Rahim Khan, and Kashif Jawad. Former Pakistani squash champion Qamar Zaman was also present on the occasion.

Speaking to the media, Samiullah Khan said that he was very pleased to

visit China Window and was impressed to learn that the cultural center is playing an important role in strengthening Pakistan-China friendship. Samiullah, who also serves as the Chief Selector of the Pakistan Hockey Federation, added that he had participated in several tournaments in China, where he received great warmth and hospitality. He noted that this is the reason why the people of both countries share a deep bond of love.

He further said that China is also keenly interested in Pakistan's economic development, which is why the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is being described as Pakistan's economic lifeline. Samiullah emphasized that both countries are also very close in the field of sports and expressed his desire for friendly hockey series between Paki-



stan and China, so that regular hockey competitions can be organized between the two nations.

Other Olympians also congratulated the people of China, especially

the athletes, on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China friendship and expressed confidence that this friendship will grow even stronger in the years to come.

Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Islamabad United qualified for the semi-finals by defeating Hyderabad Kingsmen by 8 wickets



Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: Islamabad United cricket team qualified for the semi-finals by defeating Hyderabad Kingsmen by 8 wickets. Islamabad United team has become the third team to reach the playoffs of PSL 11. Hyderabad Kingsmen suffered a big defeat by 8 wickets, its efforts have suffered a big blow. Now 3 teams are left to compete for

the final place.

Hyderabad Kingsmen lost the toss in the 36th match of PSL played at the National Bank Arena on Friday. After being invited to bat first, the entire team was dismissed for only 80 runs in 15.5 overs. Usman Khan 25. Kushal Perera and Asif Mahmood were prominent with 12 and 12. Richard Gleeson took 9 runs, Shadab Khan 13 and Imad Wasim took 3 wickets for 21 runs.



In reply, Islamabad United achieved the target in just 6.4 overs for 2 wickets. Mohsin Riaz scored 42 and Sameer Minhas scored 27 runs. Muhammad Ali took both wickets.

With this result, Islamabad United has also qualified for the PSL 11 playoffs after Peshawar Zalmi and Multan Sultans. Along with this, Quetta Gladiators have also been eliminated from the race. Now Lahore Qalandars, Karachi Kings and Hyderabad Kings are competing for the last place. All three have one match left. No one can



touch Islamabad's 11 points now. The next team will be one with 10 points. Yes, in one case, there will also be a team with 8 points, if Quetta defeats Karachi and Peshawar Zalmi defeats Lahore while Rawalpindi defeats Hyderabad.

2 matches on Saturday, April 25

Karachi Kings vs Quetta Gladiators. Gaddafi Stadium Lahore
Lahore Qalandars vs Peshawar Zalmi. Gaddafi Stadium Lahore

Kashmir and the International Legal Order: Between Principle and Practice

Continued from Page 4

peaceful assembly. Excessive or indiscriminate use of force against civilians raises serious legal concerns and demands accountability.

Equally concerning is the legal framework that supports such actions. Laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act grant broad powers to security forces, including arrest without warrant and extended detention without trial. These provisions have been criticized by human rights organizations for undermining due process and enabling a culture of impunity.

The prolonged detention of Aasiya Andrabi illustrates this issue clearly. A 64-year-old political activist and founder

of Dukhtaran-e-Millat, she has spent over 15 years in prison under charges such as "waging war against the state" and "terror-related conspiracy." Her case is widely cited by critics as an example of how counter-terrorism laws, particularly the UAPA, can be used to suppress political dissent. The law's vague definitions and restrictive bail conditions have raised serious concerns about fair trial rights and the shrinking space for dissent.

In addition to human rights law, international humanitarian law is also relevant in situations of prolonged conflict and heavy military presence. The Fourth Geneva Convention sets clear standards for the protection of civilians. While India does not consider Kashmir an occupied territory, the scale of military

operations and repeated allegations of civilian harm invite continued legal scrutiny under these international norms.

Meanwhile, the situation on the ground remains fragile. Incidents such as the Pahalgam attack of April 2025 show that instability continues to define life in the region. While such events are often framed in terms of counter-terrorism, they also highlight the failure of existing policies to bring lasting peace. Civilians remain the primary victims, living between fear, uncertainty, and limited opportunities.

At its core, the Kashmir issue is not about territory alone. It is about justice, rights, and the credibility of international law itself. Legal principles such as self-determination, human dignity, and protection from arbitrary state power

are not meant to be selective, they are meant to be universal. Yet, when these principles remain unenforced in cases like IIOJK, and similarly in places such as Palestine, where prolonged conflict and unresolved legal questions persist despite decades of international attention, the gap between law and reality becomes impossible to ignore. Each instance where the United Nations fails to ensure accountability weakens global confidence in the system it was created to uphold.

The author is serving as a member of HEAL Pakistan Organization, an initiative dedicated to promoting Humanity, Education, Awareness and Leadership in collaboration of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). She can be reached at laraihehans5@gmail.com

Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The 2nd round matches of the Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament began here on Friday at various Grounds of the City.

The highlights of the first day Brilliant 118 by Sabeeh Siddiqui and Unbeaten 100 by Aibaad Khan, Fine batting by Bahadur Ali 95, Muhammad Taha Mehmood 93 and Deadly bowling by Saifullah capturing 5 Wickets for 18 and Najeeb Rehman got 4 for 27.

Scores in Brief:

At the Close of Play on the 1st Day.

At KCCA Stadium Zone-III 1st Innings 94 all out in 31.5 overs. Abdul Basit 32, Waqas Akbar 23. Saifullah (ob) 5/18, M. Tariq Khan (sla) 3/25, M. Makki 2/25.

Zone-VI 1st Innings 257/in 61 overs. Aibaad Khan 100 100x4 1x6 at the crease, Muhammad Arbaz Khan 55 8x4 2x6, Adeel Meo 27, Kashif Ali 23. M. Fahad Ameen 2/38.

In the 2nd Match at UBL Sports Complex Zone-VII 1st Innings 244 all out in 65.2 overs. Sabeeh Siddiqui 118 17x4 1x6, Samiullah 28, Arif Yaqoob 23. Asad Akhtar 2/25, Ali Shanwari 2/51, Wahaj Riaz 2/76.

Zone-II 1st Innings 71/6 in 27 overs. Ali Hassan 20. Najeeb Rehman 4/27

In the 3rd Match at Baqai Ground. Zone-I 252/6 in 70 overs. Bahadur Ali 94 10x4 1x6, Muhammad Taha Mehmood 93 9x4 3x6, Muhammad Jawad 24. Syed Shah Raza Naqvi 2/23.

Zone-V 1st Innings 73/2 in 23 overs. Muhammad Hussain 29, Muhammad Ali Butt 27 at the crease.

Pakistan Awaam Pledges Full Support After Successful Khyber Anti-Terror Operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Awaam has lauded the successful intelligence-based operation conducted by security forces in Khyber and announced its full solidarity



and strong support for the Pakistan Armed Forces and all security institutions. The ongoing effective operations against terrorism under the leadership of Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir are highly commendable for ensuring peace, stability, and the protection of the people in the country.

In a joint statement, Chaudhry Inam Zafar, Central Vice President of Pakistan Awaam, and Hafiz Usman Abbasi, Additional General Secretary, said that the successful operation in Khyber is a clear reflection of the professionalism and sacrifices of the security forces for the peace and stability of the homeland. They expressed complete confidence in the counter-terrorism operations being conducted under the leadership of Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, stating that the Pakistan Armed Forces are making unmatched sacrifices for the defense of the country, establishment of peace, and elimination of terrorism sacrifices that the entire nation is proud of. The leaders also expressed deep sorrow and grief over the martyrdom of a 10-year-old innocent child during the Khyber operation. They extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the bereaved family, calling the incident a matter of deep anguish for the entire nation. Pakistan Awaam leaders reaffirmed that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces in the war against terrorism and will not hesitate to render any sacrifice for the peace, stability, and security of Pakistan.

Long live Pakistan

Araqchi-led Iranian delegation arriving ...

Continued from Page 1

The US logistics and security team is already in Islamabad for the negotiation process.

Iran state media confirmed that Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi would travel on Friday to Pakistan, which has been mediating between the Islamic republic and the United States in a bid to end the Middle East war.

"Iran's Foreign Minister will begin a regional tour on Friday evening, April 24, travelling to Islamabad, Muscat and Moscow," the official IRNA news agency said, after a Pakistani official disclosed the visit. "The purpose of this trip is to hold bilateral consul-

tations, discuss ongoing developments in the region, and review the latest situation regarding the war imposed by the United States and the Israeli regime against Iran."

Islamabad has been gearing up for an anticipated second round of talks between the United States and Iran, but it was not clear whether Araghchi and the delegation accompanying him would meet any US officials to discuss the Middle East war.

Islamabad had a heavy security presence on Friday, with checkpoints around the city and road closures in the "red zone" surrounding the expected negotiation venue.

Comparing Autonomy: AJK Amendments 13 and 15 vs. Governance in IIOJK

Continued from Page 4

has no interest in justice or the welfare of the Kashmiri people—only a hunger for territorial expansion and the suppression of Muslim identity.

The love of the Kashmiri people for Pakistan and their desire to merge with it is not a propaganda slogan; it is a lived reality rooted in shared identity, religion, culture, and a common struggle against oppression. On the Pakistani side of the LoC, the people of AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan live in peace and prosperity, enjoying economic development, educational opportunities, and political freedom.

They proudly wave the Pakistani flag, celebrate Pakistani

national days, and send their youth to serve in the Pakistan Armed Forces.

The bond between AJK and Pakistan is not forced; it is organic, built on decades of mutual sacrifice and support. In IIOJK, despite facing the worst military occupation in modern history, the desire for freedom and accession to Pakistan remains the dominant political aspiration.

Every act of Indian brutality—every bullet fired, every house demolished, every child detained—only strengthens the resolve of the Kashmiri people to resist Indian rule. India has tried to break this spirit through a strategy of repression and demographic change, but the soul of

Kashmir refuses to be crushed. The people of IIOJK look across the border and see in Pakistan a genuine homeland, a country that respects their dignity and fights for their cause at every international forum, from the United Nations to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). They see that Pakistan has never recognized Indian sovereignty over their land and never will. They see that while India imposes curfews and cuts the internet, Pakistan has given AJK the right to govern itself.

This stark contrast has not gone unnoticed by the international community. Human rights organizations, the European Parliament, and the United Nations have all condemned

India's actions in IIOJK, calling for the restoration of human rights and the implementation of self-determination. Yet, India, emboldened by its economic size and military power, continues to ignore these calls, hiding behind the false rhetoric of "bilateralism" while simultaneously refusing to hold any meaningful dialogue with Pakistan or the Kashmiri leadership.

Given this reality, the world has a moral and legal obligation to act. The international community can no longer remain silent while India perpetuates a slow-motion genocide against the Kashmiri people.

The United Nations Security Council must enforce its own resolutions, which have been

gathering dust for over seven decades, and mandate a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir to allow the people to decide their own future. The world must urgently urge India to cease its state-sponsored terrorism against unarmed civilians, to repeal the draconian laws that suppress freedom, to release all political prisoners, to reverse the demographic changes brought about by illegal land grabs, and to allow UN observers to monitor the human rights situation on the ground.

The current status quo is unsustainable. The Indian occupation is not a solution; it is a ticking time bomb that threatens not only South Asia but global peace. Pakistan has repeatedly shown its commitment to peace

and dialogue, even offering independent investigations into incidents of violence and supporting mediation efforts to de-escalate tensions. However, Pakistan has also made it clear that it will never abandon the Kashmiri people.

The suspension of the Simla Agreement by Pakistan was a strategic recalibration to re-internationalize the dispute, signaling that the era of futile bilateralism is over. Pakistan has successfully exposed India's false claims of being a democracy by highlighting the systematic persecution of Muslims and the suppression of dissent within IIOJK and across India. By comparing the autonomy of AJK with the tyranny of IIOJK, the truth shines brightly: Paki-

stan is the sincere guardian of Kashmiri rights, while India is the ruthless occupier.

The world must take notice of the atrocities and human rights violations in IIOJK and must act decisively. The Kashmiri people have already made their choice. They love Pakistan, they want to live with Pakistan, and no amount of Indian brutality will ever change that.

The winds of change are blowing across South Asia, and the people of Kashmir are ready to finally breathe the air of freedom under the flag of Pakistan. It is time for the international community to stand on the right side of history and support the Kashmiri people's inalienable right to self-determination.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting with Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to review evolving regional and global dynamics.



DPM Ishaq Dar chairs high-level foreign policy review meeting

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar chaired an important meeting to review regional and global developments, according to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Pakistan.

Foreign Office spokesperson said the meeting was attended by Foreign Secretary Anna Baloch and senior

officials, where a detailed assessment of the regional and international situation was conducted.

Ishaq Dar emphasized the need for effective and continuous diplomatic engagement on priority issues.

He also underscored the importance of dialogue in resolving regional challenges and directed the Foreign Office to maintain an active, policy-driven strategic approach.

DPM Dar, Russian FM Lavrov discuss rescheduling of PM Shehbaz visit to Russia



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday held a telephonic conversation with the Foreign Minister of the Russian Federation, Sergey Lavrov.

During the interaction, reiterating the importance of maintaining regular high-level engagements, both the dignitaries discussed rescheduling of the visit of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to Russia at an early mutually convenient date. The DPM/FM also extended an invitation to FM Lavrov

to visit Pakistan, a DPM's Office news release said.

The two leaders discussed bilateral relations and cooperation at multilateral fora in support of international peace & security.

FM Lavrov appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States.

The DPM/FM underscored Pakistan's resolve to continue contributing to efforts aimed at promoting dialogue and diplomacy to resolve all issues.

Both sides agreed to remain in touch.

UAE says rebuilding trust with Iran will take 'ages'

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: Rebuilding trust between Abu Dhabi and Tehran will take "ages and ages", UAE presidential advisor Anwar Gargash said on Friday, after Iran targeted the United Arab Emirates during the Middle East conflict.

"You can't be attacked with 2,800 missiles and drones and then talk to me about trust. That will take ages and ages," Gargash said at a World Policy Conference in the town of Chantilly north of Paris.

The top official said that 89 per cent of the Iranian attacks targeted "civilians, civilian infrastructure, energy infrastructure".

"Tehran was telling the Arab Gulf countries that you don't



matter in my calculations, and I think this is going to last for a very long time," he said.

"To the region — to the United Arab Emirates and other countries, Iran will be

seen as a strategic threat," Gargash said. Israeli-US strikes on Iran in

late February sparked region-wide conflict, with Tehran targeting US allies in the Gulf. A ceasefire was agreed at the start of the month, but peace talks in Pakistan have stalled in recent days.

Since the truce, the United States and Iran have shifted their focus to the Strait of Hormuz, a waterway through which a fifth of the world's oil and liquefied natural gas exports ordinarily flow.

Iran has all but closed it in retaliation for the war, while the US has imposed a blockade of its own on Iranian ports.

Gargash said earlier this month he thought Israeli influence in the Gulf would increase as a result of Iran's strategy in the region.

China rejects Trump's 'gift' claim over seized Iran ship

Reuters

China's foreign ministry on Friday rejected an accusation by US President Donald Trump that an Iranian-flagged cargo ship intercepted by US forces was a "gift from China."

The US said it fired on and seized an Iranian cargo ship that tried to evade its blockade of Iranian ports. Iran's military said the ship had been travelling from China and vowed retaliation against what it called "armed piracy by the US military."

Trump on Tuesday told CNBC the ship "had some things on it, which wasn't very nice. A gift from China



perhaps, I don't know."

China's foreign ministry rejected the comments.

"China opposes any accusations and associations that lack a factual basis," ministry spokesperson Guo Jiakuan told reporters in Beijing.

"Normal international trade relations between countries should not be subject to interference and disruption," he added.

The container ship *Touska*, which was boarded and seized by US forces on Sunday, is likely to have what Washington deems dual-use items that could be used by the military on board, maritime security sources said on Monday.

Pirates seize oil tanker off Somalia, 11 Pakistanis among hostages

Agencies

ISLAMABAD: According to shipping sources, armed pirates attacked the vessel, identified as *Owner 25*, on April 21 near Somalia.

The assailants reportedly boarded the tanker and took control of it after a brief confrontation with the crew.

The vessel was later moved to an undisclosed location believed to be under the pirates' control.

Officials said 11 Pakistani nationals were among the crew members taken hostage. Families of the affected sailors have expressed grave concern, saying they have received no official information regarding the whereabouts or well-being of their loved ones.

Sources in Pakistan's maritime sector said the Directorate General of Ports and Shipping, operating under the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, has so far been unable to establish contact with the crew.



No statement has yet been issued by the shipping company operating the tanker, further deepening the

anxiety of the hostages' families.

Reports suggest that negotiations may be underway for the

crew's release, with some international maritime channels said to be in contact with the pirates.

GB development tops priority of Govt, says Amir Muqam

Saif ur Rehman

SKARDU: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, said here Friday that the development of Gilgit-Baltistan is the government's foremost priority.

He said that projects like road construction, solarization, and Daanish Schools are progressing, putting the region on the path to growth and prosperity.

The Government of Pakistan is taking practical steps to empower youth, and the "Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme" is an important initiative in this regard, helping students align with modern requirements.

Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam was addressing the ceremony of the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme as the chief guest at the University of Baltistan, Skardu. A large number of attendees, including the Vice Chancellor, faculty, male and female students, and distinguished guests, were present on the occasion.



In his address, Engineer Amir Muqam said that the establishment of the University of Baltistan was a valuable gift to the people of Gilgit-Baltistan by former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. He added that it has played a key role in promoting higher education in the region and providing local opportunities to youth. He appreciated the efforts of the university's administration and faculty, stating that the institution has achieved a prominent position in a short time.

Iran resumes int'l flights from Tehran after weeks-long halt

Web Desk

Iran has resumed international passenger flights from Tehran's Imam Khomeini International Airport following a prolonged suspension caused by weeks of conflict, state media reported.

According to Press TV, flight operations restarted from Saturday, ending a disruption that lasted more than 50 days. Initial routes include services to Istanbul and Muscat, with plans to expand gradually.

Airport authorities said foreign passenger flights would resume in phases starting April 25, while cargo operations had continued during the closure. Several international airlines had earlier relocated aircraft during the suspension.

Ramin Kashed Azar, CEO of Imam Khomeini Airport City, confirmed that return flights to Istanbul and Muscat have been approved, with additional routes and airline permissions to follow in stages.