



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے ابن سلام نے بیان کیا کہ ہم کو کبھی
نے خبر دی، انہیں سفیان نے، انہیں منصور
نے، انہیں ابراہیم نے، انہیں اسود نے، اور
ان سے عائشہ رضی اللہ عنہا نے بیان کیا کہ
رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ وہاں
اس کے ساتھ قائم ہوگی جو تبت سے ہے اور
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(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6760)

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Punjab extends Section 144, outdoor drone ban for 30 days

According to a spokesperson for the provincial Home Department, the decision has been taken in view of security concerns to ensure public safety, maintain law and order, and protect property. The restriction will remain in place until May 25.



Islamabad allows transport entry, revises business hours

The Islamabad administration has allowed all types of public and goods transport to enter the city, while introducing revised business timings under a fresh notification. Officials said bus terminals across the federal capital have been reopened, except for the Faizabad terminal, which will remain closed until further notice.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Red zone continuously closed

ISLAMABAD: A view of D-Chowk closed due to security reasons, in the Federal Capital, as the district administrations in Islamabad and Rawalpindi on Saturday granted permission for all types of public and goods transport to enter the twin cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz express concern over Trump event attack



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif have expressed deep concern over the shooting incident at the Washington press dinner attended by US President Donald Trump. According to the report, both leaders also expressed relief that President Trump, First Lady Melania Trump and other guests were reported safe following the security scare.

President Zardari strongly condemned the attack, saying

no level of condemnation would be enough. He described the incident as a tragic and ugly form of terrorism.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said he was deeply shocked by the disturbing reports of gunfire during the dinner event.

He added that it was reassuring to learn that President Trump, the First Lady and all other attendees remained unharmed.

The prime minister further said that his prayers and best wishes were with US President Donald Trump.

US official says Trump was likely target of shooting at White House Correspondents' dinner

Reuters

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump and officials in his administration were the likely targets of a suspect who fired on a security agent guarding the White House Correspondents' Association dinner in Washington, U. S. Acting Attorney General Todd Blanche said on Sunday.

The man fired a shotgun at a Secret Service agent at a checkpoint in the Washington Hilton hotel before being tackled and arrested. Trump and first lady Melania Trump were rushed out of the dinner.

"It does appear that he, he did, in fact, set out to target folks that work in the administration, likely including the president," Blanche told NBC News' "Meet the Press," adding that the suspect likely traveled by train from Los Angeles to Chicago and then to Washington.

The suspect will be charged



in federal court on Monday with assault of a federal officer, discharging a firearm and attempting to kill a federal officer, Blanche said, adding he did not know if there was an Iran connection to the attack.

tion to the attack.

Trump told reporters at a briefing at the White House after the attack that the Secret Service agent was saved by his bulletproof vest and was in "good shape." U. S. Secret Service spokesperson Anthony Guglielmi confirmed the officer had been released from hospital.

Trump told reporters he believed that he was the target of the attack. The president has survived two previous attempts on his life since 2024, a period of deepening political polarization in the United States.

Around the world, leaders condemned the attack, adding they were relieved that Trump and all present were safe and expressing their solidarity with the United States. NATO leader Mark Rutte called it an attack "on our free and open societies" and leaders stressed violence had no place in a democracy.

DPM deeply shocked at shooting incident at White House Correspondents' dinner

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar said he was deeply shocked by the cowardly shooting incident at the White House Correspondents' Dinner.

In a post on X, he said, "We are relieved that President Trump, Vice President Vance and First Lady are safe. We strongly condemn all forms of violence which is enemy of diplomacy and intolerable in any civilized



society. Our best wishes go out to the US President and the American people."

Tarar recalls PM's Kakul address, reiterates stance on Pahalgam false flag operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Saturday recalled Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's address at the Pakistan Military Academy (PMA) Kakul delivered one year ago, and reiterated Pakistan's consistent position on the Pahalgam false flag operation, emphasizing the country's commitment to counter-terrorism, regional stability and a transparent, impartial investigation into the episode.

He was speaking to media on the key points of the national stance regarding the Prime Minister's historic address delivered one year ago at Pakistan Military Academy and the Pahalgam false flag operation.

The minister said that the prime minister, while speaking to cadets at PMA Kakul on April

26, 2025, had clearly articulated Pakistan's stance on the Pahalgam incident, rejecting baseless allegations and calling for an end to the blame game associated with such events.

He recalled that a meeting of the National Security Committee held on April 24 last year had also given a comprehensive response to the allegations, followed by the prime minister's visit to Kakul where he delivered a historic address responding to the Pahalgam false flag operation.

Tarar said the prime minister had termed the Pahalgam incident a "tragedy" and expressed sympathy with the victims, while conveying Pakistan's concern and sorrow at the international level. "The prime minister made it clear that the recurring pattern of baseless accusations under the cover of such incidents must stop," he added.

Kashmiris face heightened fear and intimidation as authorities target homes, land and livelihoods

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indian forces in the Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) have ramped up brutal operations across the valley, carrying out raids, arbitrary detentions and ruthless property seizures in a vicious campaign to crush the Kashmiri people under false pretenses.

According to Kashmir Media Service, these operations were launched across multiple districts, with a particular focus on South Kashmir's Islamabad district, where police conducted search operations at around 20 identified hotspots.

Multiple teams raided the residences of locals, deepening fears of harassment and further repression among the popula-

tion.

In the latest crackdown, properties worth approximately Rs 3.5 crore were seized under draconian laws. In the Sangam area, two immovable properties linked to Shakeel Ahmad Ganie and Farooq Ahmad Mir, residents of Kreshbal Noorbagh, were confiscated.

These included double-storey residential houses and one kanal of land each, valued at over Rs 2 crore and Rs 1.5 crore, respectively. Critics have condemned these actions as part of a broader strategy of dispossession aimed at weakening Kashmiri resistance.

Authorities have also begun surveys of properties they claim were acquired illegally, but analysts argue that the system-

atic seizure of Kashmiris' properties has become a disturbing norm, especially since August 2019. Hundreds of locally owned properties have been confiscated, exacerbating the economic and psychological strain on the people. Rights observers and analysts maintain that these property confiscations are part of a wider agenda to break the Kashmiri resolve for freedom, aligning with what they describe as India's settler-colonial project in the region.

They believe that the Modi regime is using these measures as a form of political vendetta to deprive Kashmiris of their land, homes, and livelihoods, while demolitions and repeated cordon-and-search operations continue to fuel public distress.

Suspect Thought to be 'Lone Wolf,' Trump says



Reuters

A law enforcement official identified the suspect as Cole Tomas Allen, a California resident about 31 years old. Little was immediately known about Allen's background, but social media postings suggested he was a teacher in Torrance, near Los Angeles.

Washington interim Police Chief Jeffery Carroll said the suspect was armed with a shotgun, a handgun and multiple knives. He was taken to a local hospital to be evaluated but it was too soon to say what his motivation was, Carroll said.

Based on preliminary information, he was believed to have been a guest at the hotel, Carroll added.

The chaotic events from around 8:35 p.m. (0035 GMT on Sunday) raised fresh questions about the security of top U. S. officials, many of whom were gathered in the hotel's expansive ballroom.

A focus of the investigation is likely to be how the gunman was able to smuggle the shotgun into the hotel, which hosts the annual White House Correspondents' Association dinner, a marquee fixture of Washington's social calendar.

The black-tie event was attended by many members of Trump's cabinet and other senior administration officials amid heavy security. It was the first time Trump attended the event as president, having boycotted it in previous years.

AJK PM Rathore receives grand, historic welcome in Kotli



City Desk

KHOI RATTA: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore visited Kotli at the invitation of Azad Kashmir Information Minister Chaudhry Rafique Nayyar, where he was given a historic and unprecedented welcome at Dehari Bagh in Khoi Ratta.

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also addressed a public meeting held at

Dehari Bagh. Thousands of workers and the public were present at the Dehari Bagh ground to welcome the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir.

As soon as the Prime Minister reached the meeting place, the atmosphere echoed with slogans, the workers gave him a warm welcome by raising slogans, while the workers also showered flowers on the convoy of the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir. On this occasion, slogans were also raised in favor of

Shaheed Bibi and Shaheed Bhutto.

The public meeting was attended by President Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, government ministers Chaudhry Rafiq Nayyar, Zafar Iqbal Malik and Chaudhry Akhlaq, Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, former candidate for the Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Walid Inqilabi and other important personalities.

On this occasion, President Pakistan People's Party Azad Kashmir

Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, government ministers Chaudhry Rafiq Nayyar, Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, former candidate for the Legislative Assembly Chaudhry Walid Inqilabi, Azhar Badralvi, Mushtaq Gors, Qayyum Qamar and others joined hands on the stage to express solidarity and in their respective speeches called for unity and victory in the upcoming elections. Expressed determination to struggle with unity.

Azad Kashmir slams KP CM's 'Irresponsible' Remarks Against AJK Premier

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: The Azad Kashmir government has strongly condemned the irresponsible and provocative statements made by Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi in his address regarding Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, especially the irresponsible remarks like "blocking his path", "imperious Prime Minister". In his response, Syed Azadar Hussain Kazmi, Political Assistant to the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, said that Sohail Afridi's statement is not only tantamount to scattering the ashes of political decency and constitutional values, but it is also a direct attack on the clear democratic mandate of the people of Azad Kashmir. Calling Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore an "imperious Prime Minister" and making baseless and false accusations against him of "blocking the path" is actually a serious insult to the opinion, dignity and political consciousness of millions of Kashmiris, which cannot be tolerated under any circumstances.

Kashmir has also voted for Imran Khan like Pakistan



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail Afridi has said that the relationship between Kashmiris and Pathans is centuries old, it has never been broken and will never be broken. They are making sacrifices for Pakistan and will continue to make sacrifices. Imran Khan has always fought the Kashmir-Palestine case courageously and has not let any expedient get in the way. Pakistan and the people of Azad Kashmir are struggling to free themselves from exploitation. Imran Khan is enduring the hardships of imprisonment in jail, but for the sake of Pakistan and the people of We are not ready to compromise on dignity. Our goal is that the right to live, freedom, justice and equality should be the same for everyone. This country belongs to the people. The people should get all the rights and facilities that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees. He expressed these views while addressing a public meeting held in Aprada Lal Chowk, the capital of Muzaffarabad. Upon reaching Muzaffarabad, PTI workers gave him a warm welcome and brought him to the meeting place in the form of a big rally. The meeting was also addressed by President Tehreek-e-Insaf Azad Kashmir Abdul Qayyum Niazi, parliamentary leader Khawaja Farooq Ahmed and local leaders.

Later, Chief Minister Sohail Afridi attended the oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Central Bar Association Muzaffarabad at the District Complex. Sohail Afridi administered the oath to the newly elected office bearers and also addressed the lawyers.

AC Kamalia Erum Shahzadi Inspections of Petrol Pumps

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi conducted surprise inspections of various petrol pumps in the city in light of public complaints and government directives. During the inspections, she thoroughly reviewed petrol measurement standards, official rates and the quality of petroleum products being provided to consumers. Special attention was given to checking petrol dispensers, the prominent display of rate lists and the quantity of petrol delivered to customers.

On this occasion, Assistant Commissioner Erum Shahzadi strictly directed petrol pump owners and staff to ensure the supply of high-quality petroleum products in full quantity at government-prescribed rates and to avoid any negligence or irregularities. She made it clear that under-measurement, overcharging, sale of substandard petrol or any other violations would not be tolerated under any circumstances and strict legal action would be taken against violators without discrimination.

Grade-9 ASI Allegedly Controls Entire District's Operations

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A police ASI in Hyderabad has allegedly become highly influential, running the entire district's police station culture, including cases, appointments, and transfers, while informed circles have expressed distrust over the prosecution process. According to details, the matter of illegal powers exercised by a Grade-9 ASI of Hyderabad Police has come to light. Sources said that ASI Adnan, posted in the Legal Branch of the SSP Office Hyderabad, allegedly holds extraordinary influence over police affairs across the district. It is reported that SHO's of various police stations are bound to seek his instructions before registering cases or submitting challans, while decisions regarding granting relief in cases are also made according to his wishes. Meanwhile, the DSP Legal appears helpless in the entire matter.

In this regard, a questionnaire was sent to ASI Adnan to obtain his version, but he did not respond. Attempts were also made to seek comments from DIG Hyderabad Tariq Razaq Dharjo and SSP Shalzeb Chachar, but they also did not reply to the questions sent to them.

Action against professional begging; 48 arrested in recent crackdown by ICT admin

ISLAMABAD: A total of 48 beggars were arrested in a recent crackdown in Islamabad as the district administration carried out operations in at least five sectors, including Blue Area, F-6, F-7, E-11 and nearby localities. The action was taken on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Islamabad, who also asked citizens to report such activities through a control room number.

The district administration launched a campaign against professional begging in different parts of the federal capital. Officials said the operations were conducted in areas with high public movement to check the presence of organized beggars. According to details, the team led by Assistant Commissioner City arrested 34 individuals during operations in Blue Area, F-6 and F-7. All of them were shifted to police lock-ups for further process. Officials said these areas were selected due to repeated public complaints about begging activities.

Inauguration

ABBASPUR: AJK Premier Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore inaugurates new Police Station at Sehra in Abbaspur Constituency flanked by Sardar Amjid Yousaf senior PPP leader and DIG Poonch Division and others notables.



Wheat harvesting ceremony held at Toba Tek Singh Research Farm

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Wheat harvesting ceremony was held at Toba Research Farm located in Chak No. 405 JB (Muqem Pur), where Dean Faculty of Agriculture Dr. Muhammad Ghulam Murtaza Sandhu, Director Farms Dr. Muhammad Aslam, Research Farms Manager Mian Nazir renowned farmer and Chairman Union Council Mian Muhammad Arshad Jamil, Mian Muhammad Yaseen Numberdar, Mian Muhammad Asif along with other farmers and local dignitaries, participated in the harvesting activity.

The visiting officials from the University of Agriculture Faisalabad formally inaugurated the wheat harvesting process. Addressing the participants, they stated that the University of Agriculture Faisalabad



is introducing high-yield crop varieties to enable farmers to achieve maximum production.

They paid tribute to the hard-

working farming community and emphasized that modern agricultural technology must be made accessible to farmers so that agriculture can become

a profitable business.

They added that the prosperity of farmers is directly linked to the prosperity of the country.

International Sindhi Diaspora Conference successfully held in London United Kingdom

The Sindhi Association of North America (SANA) successfully organized a landmark International Sindhi Diaspora Conference in London, United Kingdom, bringing together Sindhi organizations from across the globe along with a large number of professionals, intellectuals, and community leaders. The conference witnessed broad participation from prominent global Sindhi bodies including Sindhi Association of Europe, Sindhi Association of Japan, Sindhi Association of Muscat, UK Sindhis, Sindhi Doctors Association UK, and Sindh Wasi, reflecting the unity, diversity, and shared vision of the Sindhi diaspora worldwide.

The program commenced with a soulful rendition of Shah Latif's Wae presented by SANA Adbi Committee Chair Ishaq Tunio, setting a deeply



cultural and spiritual tone for the gathering. In his welcome address, SANA General Secretary Asad Ali Shaikh emphasized that the conference was centered on a powerful and unifying vision of strengthening Sindhi identity through global

networking while preserving language and culture.

SANA President Dr. Maqbool Halepota, in his inaugural address, noted that in today's rapidly changing world, diaspora communities face the challenge of maintaining their cultural

roots while integrating into diverse societies.

Speakers expressed their views and appreciation during the conference. SANA Vice President (Women) Shahida Shaikh, Dr. Rohit Kumar, SANA Treasurer Akash K. Ramani, Arc's Zulfikar Khawaja, Ayub Mahar, Dr. Shah Bakhsh Lashari, and Dr. Fahad Memon, Dr. Dileep Doltani, Abbas Channa, Najia Mir, Sajjan Channa, Member of Parliament Enn Clarke, Ayaz Latif Palijo, Dr. Abdul Rauf Shaikh and Recica William shared their perspectives on professional collaboration and community engagement. Also addressed the gathering, highlighting the importance of cultural preservation, diaspora unity, and collective responsibility toward Sindh.



Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:55 am
Zohr 12:06 pm
Asr 4:51 pm
Maghrib 6:47 pm
Isha 8:18 pm

EMERGENCY

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

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

Crane Party banned in Azad Kashmir, will PTI also be affected? Government issues ordinance

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections (Amendment) Ordinance 2026 has been issued.

Under the Interim Constitution of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 1974, the President of the state has issued the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections (Amendment) Ordinance 2026, amending the Elections Act 2020.

The ordinance will come into force immediately. The aim of the ordinance is to further improve the electoral system and make it compatible with the current circumstances.

After the amendment, the right to vote of refugees will be facilitated. Under the ordinance, 1989 refugees who have changed their residence from one camp to another or within Azad Kashmir have been allowed to register and vote at their new place of residence.

The Election Commission has been directed to formulate necessary procedures and arrangements for the convenience of such persons. Similarly, the Election Commission has been authorized to prepare supplementary or updated electoral lists for the implementation of this provision so that the rights of any voter are not affected.

CM Punjab announces establishment of Punjab Film City over 50 acres in IT City

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the establishment of Punjab Film City spanning 50 acres in Nawaz Sharif IT City, Lahore.

She said the Film City project would be

the country's first fully "end-to-end" media production hub, aimed at reviving Pakistan's film industry through modern technology, advanced facilities and integrated resources. State-of-the-art infrastructure for film, television, animation and digital media will be provided under one roof.

Facilities for visual effects (VFX) and

post-production will be developed locally to reduce dependence on foreign services. The project will also include modern studios, sound stages, and post-production laboratories, along with comprehensive shooting facilities, purpose-built sets and a central lake.

Convention halls will be constructed

to host international events and award ceremonies. A media trade hub, as well as film and music schools, will also be part of the initiative.

The chief minister said the project would create thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities, while promoting growth in animation, gaming

and digital media sectors.

Describing it as a significant step towards strengthening the creative economy, she said the Film City would bring together talent, technology and business on a single platform. The project will be completed in phases, with further details expected to be announced soon.



Capital in Chaos

ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Srinagar Highway due to VVIP movement, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Governor inaugurates solar water supply scheme in Jand

News Desk



ATTOCK: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Sunday inaugurated a solar-powered water supply scheme in Langar village in the Jand town of Attock, reaffirming his commitment to improving basic infrastructure in Attock district.

An inauguration ceremony was also held, attended by local elders and citizens in significant numbers. Addressing the gathering, the governor said that the development of Attock district remained among his top priorities and that concrete steps were being taken to ensure the provision of basic facilities to the public.

He emphasized that access to clean drinking water is a fundamental right of every citizen, adding that the solar water supply scheme in Langar village was part of broader efforts to address this essential need.

Highlighting the party's vision, he stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party believes in public service and is actively working to expand development projects in underdeveloped areas. The governor further noted that he was personally aware of the challenges faced by residents of Attock and assured that practical measures would continue to be taken to resolve them.

Continuous increase in petroleum prices is oppression against the public, says Syed Aman Shah

News Desk

QUETTA/KARACHI: Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, Syed Aman Shah, has strongly reacted to the frequent increases in petroleum prices by the government, stating that the current policies have made the lives of the public extremely difficult.

He said the government first makes a major increase in petroleum prices and then reduces a few rupees to soften public reaction, which is completely unjust and misleading.

Syed Aman Shah demanded that petroleum prices be determined transparently in accordance with the international market and that immediate steps be taken to provide relief to the public.

He warned that if the government fails to address public difficulties, public reaction may intensify.



Traders demand relief in business hours for twin cities

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: The enforcement of different regulations within the same country has raised serious concerns. While the Sindh government, after consulting stakeholders, has relaxed business hours, the Punjab government has imposed strict restrictions, fines, raids, and sealing of business centers, which traders say is damaging businesses and hurting their dignity. Under the pretext of the energy crisis, conflicting policies have come under criticism. In Sindh, shops are allowed to operate until 9:00 PM and food outlets until 11:30 PM, whereas stricter limits in Punjab have caused unrest among traders and citizens.

Trader organizations questioned whether the burden of the energy crisis is being placed solely on Punjab. They argue that the Punjab government is making unilateral decisions without effective consultation, affecting business activity and putting livelihoods at risk. Sheikh Abdul Waheed, President of Anjuman Tajiran Liaquat Road Rawalpindi, termed the policy contradictory, stating that two different rules in one country are unacceptable.



Wheat Harvesting Ceremony held at Toba Tek Singh Research Farm.

Jashn-e-Baharan 2026 Celebrated

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Jashn-e-Baharan was celebrated the spirit of spring with a lively day full of food, fashion, creativity & entertainment! at Askari 11, Sector A Playground, Lahore. There were lot of programmes was organized during this the event which was included Magic Show, Drum Circle, Open Mic, Live Music concert and performances, Food & Lifestyle Stalls.

On this occasion there were distinguished guests were present which included Ch. Akhtar Hussain, Tazem Ahmed, Sulehria, Kamboh, Falk Sher Wattoo, Dr. Madiha, Dr Dua Moeed, and Miss. Batool. They all enjoyed from this event and appreciated



the live performance of Music Concert and liked the different food and other stalls.

SLS Achieves Prestigious Gold Partner Status Again, Reinforcing Leadership in IELTS Excellence

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant achievement for the education sector, SLS College of IELTS has once again been awarded the prestigious Gold Partner B2B Partnership Certificate by the British Council, reaffirming its position as a leading institute in IELTS preparation and English language training.

The certificate was formally presented by Sabeeh Ejaz, Account Support Officer at British Council Pakistan, to Sarfraz Malik, CEO of SLS College of IELTS, in recognition of the institute's consistent performance and outstanding contribution to English language education.

Speaking on the occasion, the British Council's representative highly appreciated the long-standing partnership with SLS College, highlighting that maintaining Gold Partner status over the years reflects remarkable consistency, continuous progress, and adherence to



high standards. He noted that SLS has demonstrated exceptional growth by increasing the number of IELTS candidates each year while delivering excellent results, particularly in IELTS and UK Spouse English A1 programs.

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Gunfire in Washington Shocks the World

When gunfire erupted near the White House Correspondents' Dinner in Washington on April 25, 2026, President Donald J. Trump, Vice President JD Vance, and other senior officials were swiftly evacuated by the Secret Service. A suspect armed with weapons was apprehended, and an officer narrowly escaped serious injury. The incident, unfolding just outside a gathering meant to celebrate democracy and free speech, sent a chilling signal across the nation and the world.

This was not merely a security scare. It reflected a deeper strain—psychological, political, and strategic—emanating from a war that is no longer confined to the Middle East. At a moment when America was projecting power abroad, it suddenly appeared vulnerable at home. The symbolism was stark: a superpower engaged in high-stakes geopolitical confrontation while facing instability within its own borders.

The timing made the situation even more consequential. Only hours earlier, President Trump had abruptly canceled the planned visit of his top negotiators to Islamabad, effectively derailing a second round of peace talks with Iran before they could begin. Iran's Foreign Minister had already departed Pakistan, and President Masoud Pezeshkian made it clear in discussions with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif that Tehran would not engage in negotiations under pressure, threats, or blockade. The diplomatic process, already fragile, collapsed under the weight of distrust.

At the heart of this breakdown lies the Strait of Hormuz, one of the most critical energy chokepoints in the world. What appears to be a military standoff is, in

reality, a much broader strategic maneuver. The United States is not simply attempting to pressure Iran—it is reshaping global energy flows and redefining economic leverage on a global scale.

By restricting access to this vital waterway, whether directly or indirectly, the United States creates a supply shock in global oil markets. That disruption compels energy-importing nations to seek alternatives, and increasingly, those alternatives are found in American oil and gas. This is not an unintended consequence—it is a structural shift. As traditional supply routes become uncertain, demand for U.S. energy rises, strengthening America's position as a dominant exporter.

This strategy also reduces reliance on prolonged military engagement. Precision-guided weapons are expensive and often used against targets of relatively low economic value. Instead of relying solely on kinetic warfare, the United States appears to be leveraging economic pressure as a more efficient tool. By controlling access to energy supply chains, it can exert influence over entire economies without the need for sustained battlefield operations.

This leads to a critical observation: the United States currently has little incentive to fully reopen the Strait of Hormuz. As long as the disruption persists, American exports expand, global dependence increases, and strategic leverage grows. The blockade becomes not just a temporary measure, but a sustained instrument of economic and geopolitical influence.

However, this approach is triggering a significant global response.

European leaders such as Emmanuel

Macron and Keir Starmer are increasingly advocating for alternative systems that reduce reliance on the United States. There is a growing effort to develop independent financial, trade, and investment mechanisms that can operate outside the influence of U.S. sanctions and economic controls. This shift is not limited to Europe. Countries across Asia, the Global South, and major economies like China, India, and Brazil are gradually aligning toward a more multipolar system. If these economies—many of which already rival or exceed the United States in combined output—coordinate their efforts, they could form one of the most powerful economic blocs in modern history. Such a coalition would significantly reduce America's ability to unilaterally influence global markets and political outcomes.

While this emerging alignment is still in its early stages, it is gaining momentum. The more the United States uses military and economic tools to enforce its objectives, the more other nations are incentivized to create parallel systems that bypass its influence. The dominance of the dollar, the reach of sanctions, and the structure of global trade are all being quietly reexamined.

Meanwhile, the Middle East remains highly unstable. In Lebanon, the fragile cease-fire between Israel and Hezbollah continues to hold only on the surface. Israeli strikes ordered by Benjamin Netanyahu and retaliatory attacks by Hezbollah keep the region on edge. The risk of escalation remains constant, and any miscalculation could trigger a broader conflict.

Against this backdrop, the Washington shooting incident takes on a deeper signif-

icance. While it may ultimately be determined as an isolated act, it reflects the broader atmosphere of tension and uncertainty. Prolonged conflict, aggressive rhetoric, and global instability can influence domestic environments in unpredictable ways. The line between external and internal security becomes increasingly blurred.

The events of April 25 are therefore not isolated. They represent interconnected developments in a rapidly changing global order: the collapse of diplomacy in Pakistan, the continued blockade in the Strait of Hormuz, the fragile cease-fire in Lebanon, and a security scare at the heart of American political life.

The world is entering a new phase—one where economic power is weaponized, alliances are shifting, and traditional systems are being challenged. The United States may achieve short-term gains through increased exports and expanded influence, but it also risks accelerating the formation of a counterbalancing global structure.

The choice ahead is critical. A strategy based on pressure and control may deliver immediate results, but it may also erode long-term stability. A more sustainable path would require restoring trust, respecting international norms, and engaging in genuine diplomacy.

If current trends continue, the incident in Washington may be remembered not just as a moment of domestic alarm, but as a symbol of a world in transition—where power is contested, systems are redefined, and the future of global order hangs in the balance.

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

Drug cases and question of lenient sentences

The recent decision of the Lahore High Court is not merely the resolution of a single case; it is a reaffirmation of an important legal principle within Pakistan's criminal justice system. By declaring the trial court's sentence of four and a half years' imprisonment in a case involving the recovery of 1,500 grams of hashish as unlawful, the Court has made it clear that deviation from the legally prescribed minimum sentence in narcotics cases is unacceptable under any circumstances.

This ruling carries significance on multiple fronts. First and foremost, the Court has established that for the recovery of more than one kilogram of hashish, a minimum sentence of nine years' imprisonment is mandatory. This is not just an interpretation but a reminder of a legal requirement that is sometimes overlooked by lower courts.

Trial courts often show leniency in certain circumstances, awarding lighter sentences to the accused. While this may appear humane on the surface, such leniency becomes a deviation from the fundamental principles of justice when the law is explicit. The High Court highlighted this aspect, noting that after the Amendment Act of 2022, a clear legal framework exists for sentencing in narcotics cases, making it obligatory for courts to adhere to minimum prescribed punishments.

This raises an important question: does judicial discretion still exist? The answer is that where the law prescribes a minimum sentence, judicial discretion becomes limited. This is precisely why the Lahore High Court not only set aside the trial court's decision but also declared it contrary to law.

The 11-page written judgment by a division bench comprising Justice Farooq Haider and Justice Ali Zia Bajwa has been declared a judicial precedent. This means that lower courts will be bound to consider this ruling in similar cases in the future. It also reinforces judicial discipline within the legal system.

The Court did not acquit the accused; instead, it remanded the case for a fresh trial. This demonstrates that the Court's objective is not merely to enhance punishment but to ensure a fair and lawful trial. The direction to the special court in Faisalabad to conclude the retrial within one month is also a step toward preventing delays in justice.

It now remains to be seen to what extent lower courts adopt this judicial precedent and whether this decision will truly help bring consistency and transparency to narcotics-related cases.



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

Another Indian Drama: 24 Seats “Reserved” for AJK in IIOJK Assembly

The Delimitation of Constituencies Bill, 2026, introduced by the Government of India, has heightened regional tensions by proposing changes to the electoral structure of Jammu and Kashmir while controversially extending its scope to Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a territory outside India's control. The bill allows the Election Commission of India to carry out constituency delimitation in these areas under the condition that they come under Indian administration, while simultaneously reserving 24 legislative seats for them and keeping those seats permanently vacant. Critics argue this creates a symbolic legal framework that incorporates AJK into India's political system without actual governance. Supporters describe it as reaffirming India's constitutional claims, but opponents view it as a unilateral assertion of sovereignty rather than a genuine democratic initiative.

The bill is also seen as part of a broader political trajectory following the 2019 revocation of Article 370, which removed Jammu and Kashmir's special status and restructured it into a Union Territory. By formally fixing the assembly's total strength at 114 seats—including 24 unfilled ones representing AJK—the legislation embeds this territorial claim into the constitutional structure. Reactions have been strongly negative in Kashmir, where many dismiss the move as impractical and symbolic, citing the lack of any mechanism to conduct elections across the heavily militarized Line of Control. Within India, the proposal has triggered political debate, with opposition parties and legal experts questioning its constitutional validity and warning that legislating for a territory outside India's jurisdiction may conflict with international law, reinforcing perceptions that the measure is more political symbolism than actionable

policy. The international human rights community has also weighed in, expressing deep concern over the potential for this legislation to further destabilize an already hyper-volatile region. While major organizations like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have yet to issue their final, detailed reports, their early statements have focused on the violation of democratic principles inherent in the concept of “vacant representation.” True democratic representation, they argue, is predicated on the consent of the governed and the ability of a populace to elect their representatives through free and fair elections. By reserving seats for a population that cannot vote, India is creating a new category of disenfranchisement. It is asserting a right to represent people who have not asked to be represented, under a constitution they do not recognize, by a government they reject. This is the antithesis of self-determination, a principle enshrined in numerous UN Security Council resolutions regarding the dispute of Jammu and Kashmir. The 1994 unanimous resolution of the Indian Parliament calling for Pakistan to vacate AJK is cited by the government as a precedent, but critics argue that a domestic resolution cannot override binding international commitments or the UN Charter.

Furthermore, the specific political dynamics within Azad Jammu and Kashmir have rendered the Indian government's move an exercise in self-defeating propaganda. The government of AJK, led by its prime minister, has issued a formal statement rejecting the Indian “Delimitation Bill” as a nullity. All major political parties across the spectrum in AJK—from the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI)—have passed unanimous resolutions condemning

Continued on Page 7

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

Big Leap in Punjab Healthcare

Punjab, the beating heart of Pakistan and home to over half its population, is writing a bold new chapter in public health—one that is already transforming millions of lives. Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, six flagship health initiatives have collectively extended services to more than 21 million patients in a remarkably short period, a scale of outreach that deserves national recognition and serious attention from global health observers.

This transformation is firmly anchored in the global imperative of Universal Health Coverage (UHC), a cornerstone of the World Health Organization Sustainable Development Goal 3 and the Regional Strategic Operational Plan 2025–2028. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has made it a priority to ensure that Punjab's vast population receives quality healthcare, driving measurable progress against longstanding challenges such as infant and maternal mortality, which for decades remained insufficiently addressed.

At the heart of this strategy is the “Clinic on Wheels” program, a last-mile delivery model fully aligned with WHO's vision of people-centred primary care. Mobile clinics have treated approximately 18.2 million patients, performed around seven million ultrasound procedures, and immunised 1.2 million children. Field hospitals have recorded 2.8 million patient visits, over 448,000 laboratory tests and more than 170,000 diagnostic imaging examinations. Together, these achievements reflect a decisive shift from reactive hospital care to proactive, community-based outreach that genuinely meets people where they live.

Perhaps the most humane dimension of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's health agenda is the integration of home-based care for chronic and infectious diseases. Over 30,000 patients now receive essential medicines at their doorstep. More than 2,200 diabetic patients are supplied with two months of insulin at a time, sparing them repeated and costly trips to distant facilities. Over 14,000 hepatitis patients and nearly 13,900 tuberculosis patients benefit from regular home delivery of treatment regimens, helping them complete treatment without disrupting their livelihoods or family responsibilities. Punjab's home-delivery model also directly supports Pakistan's national hepatitis C elimination program, launched in 2024, which aims to test and treat 50 percent of the eligible population by 2027.

For the first time in Punjab's history, renovations of 1,217 health facilities have been completed under this government, transforming Basic Health Units and Rural Health Centres into functional and welcoming primary care hubs serving populations

of 25,000 to 50,000 each. A third phase covering 895 additional facilities is now under construction, backed by a significant health budget. Punjab has recorded a remarkable 24 percent increase in health spending, with Rs42.6 billion allocated for primary and secondary healthcare development alone. This level of investment reflects a government that treats public health not merely as an administrative responsibility, but as a moral obligation.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has also championed a data-driven governance model that sets Punjab apart in health system innovation. Community health inspectors have registered over 63 million individuals, mapping nearly eight million households and around ten million homes. The GIS team of the Health and Population Department has completed area mapping for more than 58,000 localities, enabling precision resource allocation and ensuring that even the most remote communities are visible to planners and policymakers. A network of 251 digital surveillance assistants monitors service quality in real time and the results are striking: average patient waiting time has fallen to under five minutes at participating facilities—a benchmark competitive even by international standards.

Specialised cardiac services, once limited to major urban centres like Lahore, have now been brought closer to ordinary citizens across the province. Catheterisation laboratories are operational in four DHQ hospitals in Jhelum, Jhang, Mianwali and Vehari where 1,628 procedures have been performed, including more than 1,000 angiographies and 559 angioplasties. For a patient facing a cardiac emergency in rural Punjab, this decentralisation is not merely administrative reform; it is often the difference between life and death.

What Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has set in motion is more than a series of health programmes. It is a redefinition of the state's relationship with its citizens, built on compassion, accountability and the conviction that every person in Punjab, regardless of geography or income, deserves dignified, accessible and quality healthcare. Punjab is steadily emerging as a proof of concept for equitable, technology-enabled healthcare delivery across South Asia, offering a model that other provinces and developing regions would do well to study.

The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratu@gmail.com

Analysis



Qudrat Ullah

Reviving Lyallpur's Literary Soul

A Pragmatic Path Toward Lyallpur Tea House in Faisalabad



Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif

Cities earn their true distinction not merely through economic strength, but through the richness of their intellectual and cultural life. In Pakistan, one of the most enduring symbols of such vibrancy has been the Pak Tea House—a historic sanctuary where literature, philosophy, and dissent once flourished in dynamic harmony. Within its walls, luminaries such as Faiz Ahmed Faiz, Nasir Kazmi, Ahmad Faraz, Munir Niazi, Munnu Bhai, Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, and Ashfaq Ahmed transformed informal gatherings into movements that shaped national consciousness.

Against this powerful legacy, a compelling question emerges: why does Faisalabad—once Lyallpur—still lack a recognised literary sanctuary of its own?

Widely known as the "Manchester of Pakistan," Faisalabad stands as a major centre of industry, commerce, education, and science. Yet despite this progress, its literary ecosystem remains structurally underde-

veloped. While lawyers gather in bar rooms, journalists in press clubs, traders in chambers of commerce, and elite circles in venues such as the Chenab Club, poets, writers, publishers, and intellectuals remain without a comparable inclusive institutional platform.

Historically, Lyallpur's intellectual life thrived in Katchery Bazar, where literary exchange was embedded in civic culture. Establishments such as Lateef Coffee House, Caffè Taskeen, Javed Hotel, Khayyam Hotel, Cosmos Hotel, Rays Hotel, and other informal spaces served as vibrant cultural arenas. Even today, Jhanda Tea Stall near the district courts continues to host literary interaction. These were not merely eateries—they were crucibles of thought. Their disappearance has created a cultural void.

Despite this, Faisalabad continues to produce a strong body of literary voices. Prominent among them are Dr Riaz Majeed, the late Dr Anwer Mahmood Khalid, Afsar Sajid, Dr Shabeer Ahmad Qadri, Anjum Saleemi, Maqsood Waqfa, Shafiqat Ullah Mushtaq, Qamar Bukhari, Riaz Qadri, Mahmood Raza Syed, Dr Salma Umer, Dr Qadir Mushtaq, Hameed Shakir, Riaz Ahmad Parvaz, Kausar Ali, Afzal Khaksar, Dr Farrukh Bukhari, Dr Muhammad Jalal Arif, and other emerging writers.

The literary tradition is further enriched by figures such as the late Afzal Ahsan Randhawa, Arif Bukhari, Ahmad Saeed, the late



Professor Ashfaq Bukhari, my mentor, the late Zaheer Salemi, A. H. Atif, and the late Ashiq Kang. The translational contribution of Anwer Anique, who rendered Allama Iqbal into Punjabi, expanded intellectual accessibility. Diaspora voices including Bakhsh Lyallpuri, Ashfaq Kashif, and Zubair Nabi continue to carry Lyallpur's literary identity globally.

Faisalabad's cultural landscape is further strengthened by the musical legacy of Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, with lyrical contributions from Naz Khialvi, Barea Nizami, Rafique Pasha, and Allama Saem Chishti. Spiritual dimensions are reflected in figures like Baba Abeer Abuzari, while women writers including Dr Shahida Yousof, Dr Tahira Iqbal, Razia Usmani, Mah-e-Anjum, Naseem Sehrai, Rehana Qamar, Dr Sadaf Naqvi, Maimoona Roohi, Ambreen Ashar, and Gulfam Naqvi add vital intellectual diversity.



commendable contribution by publishing books of poets and writers at affordable cost, ensuring accessibility and continuity of literary expression.

Abid Misal Publishers also play a distinct and valuable role by publishing works of poets and writers, similarly contributing to the promotion and dissemination of literature.

These efforts are crucial in sustaining literary culture and supporting emerging as well as established voices.

Despite this immense intellectual capital, literary activity remains fragmented, lacking a unified institutional platform.

The establishment of a Lyallpur Tea House is therefore not merely nostalgic—it is a cultural necessity.

However, administrative realities must be acknowledged. A full-fledged institution requires Planning & Development approval,

budget allocation, and phased execution—beyond the immediate scope of district administration.

A Pragmatic Interim Path

As an immediate solution, a designated "Baithak" space may be allocated within the Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Auditorium under the Faisalabad Arts Council.

This space can serve as a functional precursor to the Tea House, hosting literary sittings, poetry sessions, and intellectual dialogue.

Its management may be entrusted to Halqa Arbab-e-Zauq, ensuring credibility and continuity.

This approach:

- * Requires minimal resources
- * Falls within administrative facilitation
- * Delivers immediate cultural value

The worthy Divisional Commissioner is respectfully

requested to support this interim initiative as a meaningful step toward reviving Lyallpur's literary heritage.

The Way Forward

In the long term, a permanent Lyallpur Tea House may be developed through public-private partnership and cultural investment.

This initiative ultimately recognises that poets, writers, publishers, translators, musicians, and thinkers are central to a civilised society.

A Lyallpur Tea House—beginning as a baithak and evolving into a permanent institution—will not just be a place.

It will be a movement: a revival of Lyallpur's literary soul.

It is respectfully requested that Ms. Musarrat Jabeen, Divisional Commissioner Faisalabad, the Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad, Capt. (R) Nadeem Nasir, Director General FDA, and Mian Asif may kindly extend their favourable consideration and administrative support for this initiative. Their patronage can play a pivotal role in facilitating the establishment of the Lyallpur Tea House in both its interim and permanent forms, contributing meaningfully to the revival of Faisalabad's cultural and intellectual life.

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif is Former Professor & Head of Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture Faisalabad

PIDE calls on State Bank to hold policy rate at 10.5% as War-Driven Inflation Risks Outweigh the Case for Further Easing

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: As the State Bank of Pakistan's Monetary Policy Committee convenes on 27 April 2026, the Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) is calling for the policy rate to be held unchanged at 10.5 percent. The main message is "keep the policy rate status quo, no urgency to increase it, the committee will have another chance to meet after 1.5 months." In

Policy View Point, authors Dr. Irem Batool, Anna Riaz, and Dr. S. M. Naeem Nawaz argue that the central question before the committee has shifted: it is no longer whether inflation has fallen far enough from its 2023 peak to permit easing, but whether Pakistan can safely ease at all into a period of renewed geopolitical and commodity-market stress. On that question, PIDE's answer is an unambiguous no.

The inflation picture alone

counsels restraint. Headline CPI rose to 7.3 percent year-on-year in March 2026, reversing February's 7.0 percent reading, while rural core inflation climbed to 8.4 percent — driven by supply-chain inefficiencies, higher transport costs, and the outsized weight of food in rural consumption baskets. The March uptick is troubling not just in magnitude but in timing: prices firmed precisely as energy risks were intensifying, raising the prospect that fuel, freight,

and import-cost pressures could broaden further. Cutting rates in this environment, PIDE warns, risks signalling that the State



Bank is prioritising short-term sentiment over its inflation-anchoring mandate — a perception costly to reverse.

Growth, meanwhile, provides no urgent case for easing. Real GDP expanded at 3.89 percent in Q2 FY2025-26 and industry surged to 7.4 percent growth, reflecting the gains from the State Bank's prior easing cycle since July 2025. The economy is in recovery, not distress — and PIDE is clear that a rate cut is warranted when urgent support is needed, not simply because conditions have improved. The marginal growth gain from a fifty-basis-point cut in April

would be limited; the potential cost in weakened inflation expectations could be materially larger.

PIDE's verdict, having weighed all three options, is to hold. A cut cannot be justified given re-accelerating inflation, an improving growth picture that removes urgency, and material war-driven upside risks. A hike is equally premature: the real policy rate is already positive at 3.2 percentage points above headline CPI, and market yields

signal caution rather than alarm. Maintaining 10.5 percent with a mildly hawkish communication bias preserves disinflation credibility, avoids overreacting to what may prove transitory, and gives the committee time to assess whether conflict-driven pressures fade or deepen. A hike should remain on standby — a contingency to be deployed only if oil, exchange-rate, and inflation dynamics worsen sharply.

The full Policy Viewpoint can be accessed online

Islamabad to Host 6th International Students Convention and Expo on 3-6th May 2026

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 6th International Students Convention and Expo (ISCE) 2026 will be held in Islamabad from May 3 to May 6, 2026 in Islamabad, bringing together thousands of students, universities, and industry representatives from across Pakistan and abroad.

Organizers announced that the four-day event is expected to attract more than 30,000

students along with participation from over 100 universities, educational institutions, and corporate partners. The convention is considered one of Pakistan's largest student-led academic and cultural platforms, with previous editions successfully organized in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Northern Sindh, and Faisalabad.

The collaboration of the Higher Education Commission, OIC-COMSTECH, and other leading institutions for

the upcoming edition further enhances the academic significance of the event. These events including inauguration ceremony will be organised at Quaid-i-Azam University Islamabad, Riphah International University, Pak Austsia Fachhochschule, Institute of Applied Sciences and Technology and National Skill University.

The convention will feature a wide range of activities, including more than 35 student competi-

tions, indoor sports, 5 workshops, innovation and industrial Pavilions, an education expo,



cultural showcases, and interactive sessions aimed at promoting dialogue, creativity, and collaboration.

Student competitions will

provide a platform for young participants to showcase their talent, academic abilities, and creative ideas in various fields. Indoor sports events will encourage teamwork, discipline, and healthy competition among students from different institutions.

The innovation and industrial pavilions will highlight emerging technologies, research projects, and entrepreneurial ideas developed by students and organiza-

tions. Meanwhile, the education expo will help students explore admission opportunities, scholarships, and academic programs offered by leading universities.

Cultural showcases and interactive sessions will celebrate Pakistan's diversity while promoting unity, inclusion, and understanding among participants from different regions and countries.

Organizers have invited universities across the country to participate through institutional stalls,

student delegations, competitions, exhibitions, and joint branding opportunities. Educational institutions have also been requested to nominate focal persons to ensure smooth coordination and active engagement in the event.

The organizers expressed hope that the 6th edition of ISCE would become a landmark event for youth development, academic networking, and national collaboration.

Sports Tourism to Thrive in Pakistan

Flair Travel Signs Strategic Sponsorship MoU with Pakistan Tennis Federation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Flair Travel has entered into a strategic partnership with the Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF), coming on board as an official sponsor in a move aimed at strengthening tennis development and promoting sports tourism in Pakistan. The Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation and Pakistan's leading tennis icon, and Shahzad Faisal Khan, Chief Executive Officer of Flair Group of Companies here in Islamabad today.

This partnership reflects a shared commitment to advancing Pakistan's sports ecosystem by supporting tennis talent, enhancing international exposure for athletes, and positioning Pakistan as a destination for regional and global sporting events.

Flair Travel, a leading name in Pakistan's travel and tourism industry founded 19 years ago, sees sports tourism as a growing avenue for national development. Through this collaboration, the company aims to facilitate greater engagement between sports and tourism by supporting events, athlete mobility, international participation, and global visibility for Pakistan's tennis landscape.

Speaking on the occasion, Shahzad Faisal Khan, CEO of Flair Group of Companies, said: "At Flair Travel, we believe sports are a powerful bridge between nations, communities, and opportunities. Our partnership with the Pakistan Tennis Federation is not just about sponsorship—it is about investing in Pakistan's future talent and strengthening the country's image as a hub for sports tourism. Tennis has immense untapped potential in Pakistan, and we are proud to support initiatives that bring international attention and opportunities to our athletes."

He further added, "Pakistan has the talent, the passion, and the potential to host world-class sporting events. By supporting

PTF, we hope to contribute toward building an ecosystem where sports and tourism grow together, creating economic value and national pride."

Speaking at the signing ceremony, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, President of the Pakistan Tennis Federation, said, "This partnership with Flair Travel is a significant step forward for tennis in Pakistan. Corporate support is essential for developing young talent, improving competitive opportunities, and building a stronger sporting culture. Flair's vision for sports tourism aligns perfectly with our mission to elevate Pakistan's presence on the international tennis stage." He added,

"Pakistan has incredible tennis talent waiting to be discovered and nurtured. With the right partnerships and sustained support, we can create pathways for our players to compete globally and inspire the next generation of athletes."

The collaboration aims to create greater opportunities for emerging players, support national and international tennis events, and strengthen Pakistan's standing as a destination for sports excellence and tourism growth. This strategic alliance marks another step toward building a stronger sports infrastructure in Pakistan—one that not only nurtures talent but also contributes to economic development through interna-



tional sporting engagement and tourism.

Founded 19 years ago, Flair Travel is one of Pakistan's leading travel and tourism companies and a flagship entity of the Flair Group of Companies. With a strong reputation for excellence, innovation, and customer trust, Flair Travel provides comprehensive travel solutions including corporate travel management, leisure travel, visa facilitation, destination management, and international

tourism services.

Over the years, Flair has built a strong presence both locally and globally by connecting Pakistan to international markets and promoting the country as a destination for business, leisure, and cultural exchange. The company remains committed to supporting national development through strategic partnerships, tourism promotion, and initiatives that create long-term social and economic impact.

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

New Auto Players Bypass Local Parts Makers, Fueling Import Dependency: Mashood Khan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Auto sector expert, Mashood Ali Khan, claimed that vendors are not getting the required orders from the new entrants for parts making.

The auto sector, instead of evolving into a localised manufacturing base, is increasingly shifting toward an assembly-driven model.

Rising consumer demand for hybrid electric vehicles (HEVs), plug-in hybrids (PHEVs), and battery electric vehicles (BEVs) — estimated at 35,000 to 40,000 units annually — is largely being met through imported

CKD/SKD kits, restricting the growth potential of Pakistan's industrial ecosystem, particularly SMEs.

"Pakistan's experience over the past decade has been marked by stagnant localisation levels. New entrants, despite policy commitments, have largely relied on CKD/SKD imports, benefiting from concessional tariffs without meaningful investment in local supply chains," he said, adding that in many cases, parts are imported under multiple HS codes to minimise duties, effectively bypassing the spirit of localisation policies.

As a result, SMEs are now facing declining

demand, reduced production, and limited technological advancement, he said.

Pakistan's current IMF-supported economic framework is gradually steering the country toward an import-led auto industry, raising serious concerns about its long-term sustainability. While such policies may provide short-term macroeconomic stability, they risk undermining local manufacturing, technological development, and job creation, he said.

Policy inconsistency, weak enforcement, and continued incentives without accountability have contributed to the current imbal-

ance. As a new auto policy is under consideration, it is essential to evaluate past outcomes rather than repeat past mistakes, he said.

Key reforms in the new auto policy must include a clear definition and strict monitoring of CKD/SKD structures, enforcement of time-bound localisation targets, linking incentives to actual technology transfer and local investment and protection and support for domestic auto parts manufacturers.

Chinese automotive success is not based on frequent model launches, but on deep localisation, scale production, and strong state-backed industrial policy, Mashood said.



Shopping

LAHORE: People are busy in buying secondhand clothes from a roadside vendor, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

MG Launches All-New MG HS in Pakistan, Introducing Hybrid+ and Super Hybrid Variants

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: MG Motor Pakistan has officially unveiled its newest model, the All-New MG HS, at its Lahore facility, introducing two new variants to Pakistan's rapidly evolving New Energy Vehicle (NEV) market. The launch marks MG's first major advancement in design and technology since its entry into the country.

"We are very excited to bring more options and innovation to Pakistan. Since 2020, we have been at the forefront of driving the NEV transition in Pakistan, and with the launch of this new model, we aim to take that momentum even further," said CEO Jianqiang Shao.

Speaking at the event, Faisal Afridi, Chairman of MG Automotive Pakistan/JW-SEZ Group, said, "This is just the beginning. In partnership with SAIC, we plan to bring new



models to Pakistan, ranging from hatchbacks to sedans. Our Lahore facility has the capacity to expand production, and we

aim to begin exports in the near future. Our goal is to contribute meaningfully to Pakistan's economy, with the long-term

ambition of being recognised as a company that has significantly supported the country's GDP growth."

SAARC Chamber gets new President: Malik Hails 'Green Shoots' for Regional Trade

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Ifthikhar Ali Malik Sunday felicitated Chandni Raj Dhaka, a tycoon of Nepal for assuming the prestigious office of President SAARC chamber for next term.

In a statement here today Ifthikhar Ali Malik hoped that new leadership will revitalise this important forum and achieve its objectives mainly aimed at economic integration and development



among all member countries besides regional peace and cooperation.

removal of unnecessary hurdles and tariff barriers for promoting trilateral trade as South Asia is home to 1/5th of total world population and its contribution to global trade is abysmal. He said in prevailing global scenario and emerging alarming situation in the region such platform must be revitalised to promote peace, stability and mutual close cooperation. He called upon member countries, particularly India, to move beyond rigid postures and contribute positively towards

PFC sends budget proposals to federal government



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan Furniture Council, Sundry sent a set of comprehensive viable budget proposals to the federal government strategically designed to invigorate the furniture industry and elevate its status through various growth-oriented measures.

Chairing a board of directors meeting on zoom from China today, CEO PFC Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the proposals underscore our commitment to leveraging governmental support to bolster furniture exports, which play a crucial role in driving economic development and creating employment opportunities. Through targeted initiatives and policy interventions, PFC envisions a thriving furniture sector capable of meeting international standards and

satisfying diverse market demands.

By advocating for industry status, PFC aims to position the furniture sector as a pivotal contributor to Pakistan's economy, thereby fostering its growth and competitiveness on a global scale. Granting industry status would not only enhance the sector's visibility but also provide it with access to necessary resources and incentives, facilitating expansion and innovation within the industry, he added.

PFC proactive engagement with the federal ministries reflects dedication to advancing the interests of the furniture industry and underscores the importance of collaboration between the public and private sectors in achieving sustainable economic growth, he concluded.

FPCCI Convener: Farmer-Friendly Policies Can Slash Pakistan's Food Import Bill by \$10 Billion

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran, Sunday said Pakistan can comfortably save up to \$10 billion annually on its food import bill by adopting farmer-friendly policies and offering baskets of incentives to boost agricultural productivity.

Talking to a 30 member delegation jointly led by Usman Akhter head of

Murasaki Japanese Learning School and Nouman Akhter Principal Murasaki Japanese Learning School he urged policymakers to prioritise agriculture as a backbone of the economy, stating that a focused and sustained strategy could transform Pakistan into a self-sufficient and export-oriented agricultural economy. He said empowering farmers through subsidies, training, and market access would not only enhance local production but also stabilize food prices and ensure food security.

Gold prices increase by Rs 2,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold increased in the local market on Saturday, with 24 karat gold per tola gaining Rs 2,300 to settle at Rs 493,162 compared to Rs 490,862 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold rose by Rs 1,971 to Rs 422,806 from Rs 420,835, whereas 10

grams of 22 karat gold went up by Rs 1,807 to Rs 387,586 against Rs 385,779.

In the international market, the price of gold increased by \$23 to \$4,708 per ounce from \$4,685.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs 92 to Rs 8,049 from Rs 7,957, while the price of 10 grams of silver also rose by Rs 79 to Rs 6,900 from Rs 6,821.

Iran-Pakistan Pipeline and Rare Earth Minerals: Pakistan's Economic Game Changers

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said Iran-Pakistan gas pipeline and rare earth minerals hold immense promise for Pakistan's long-term economic stability and growth.

Talking here today to a delegation of exporters led by Nisar Ahmad Hanif Gujjar he said Iran-Pakistan Gas Pipeline can significantly ease Pakistan's chronic energy shortages by supplying affordable natural gas to power plants and industries. This would reduce reliance on expensive imported fuels, lower electricity costs, and enhance industrial productivity. Studies suggest the pipeline could help bridge major electricity shortfalls and save billions of dollars in oil imports annually, strengthening fiscal stability and boosting GDP growth. Beyond energy, Pakistan's untapped reserves of Rare earth minerals offer a transformative opportunity. These minerals are essential for modern technologies such as renewable energy systems, electronics, and defense industries. By investing in exploration, processing, and value-added exports, Pakistan can diversify its economy, reduce import dependence, and generate high-value exports for decades.

Leader of the delegation Hanif Ahmad Hanif Gujjar said together, these two sectors can create employment, attract foreign investment, and promote regional connectivity. The gas pipeline can position Pakistan as an energy corridor, while mineral development can integrate the country into global supply chains. If managed with sound policies and geopolitical balance, both initiatives can deliver sustained economic dividends and strengthen Pakistan's strategic economic position for generations, he concluded.

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Islamabad United defeated Multan Sultans by 4 wickets due to poor ground fielding of Multan Sultans

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI/ LAHORE: Islam United defeated Multan Sultans by 4 wickets due to poor ground fielding of Multan Sultans cricket team. PSL 11 play-off matches schedule confirmed, Sultans defeated by Islamabad. Cricket breaking news is that Multan Sultans lost by 4 wickets in an important match against Islamabad United. As a result, they are out of the top 2 teams. Instead of the qualifiers, they will have to play Elementor 1.

Islamabad United secured second position in PSL 11 with 13 points from 10 matches with a 4-wicket win. Peshawar Zalmi was in first place with 17 points. Multan Sultans moved to third place with 12 points. Hyderabad Kings entered the playoffs with 10 points plus a better net run rate in fourth position. Lahore Qalandars and Karachi Kings were in 5th and 6th positions with 10 points each, while Quetta Gladiators and Rawalpindi were in 7th and 8th positions with 6 and 2 points, respectively. The playoffs will begin in Karachi on Tuesday, April 28, after a one-day break.

Multan Sultans lost the toss but maintained their composure till the end when invited. It would not be wrong to



say that they consolidated the score by scoring more than 65 runs in the last 5 overs. A good start of 60 runs in 6 overs was a good one, but both openers Steven Smith and Sahibzada Farhan were dismissed for 30 off 19 balls and 30 off 18 balls. Salman Mirza and Shadan Khan were the successful bowlers. Josh Phillip and Shan Masood took the score to 102 in the 12th over but the pace was slow. Here Josh Phillip was the target of Imad Wasim after making 11 off 13 balls. Captain Ashton Turner failed today and was caught by Green on his ball after making 9 off 5 balls. After a short

while, Shan Masood was dismissed for 44 and 5 runs off 33 balls, while Multan Sultans were 102 runs for 2 wickets and 136 runs for 6 wickets. During this time, the game lasted for about 4 overs. 32 runs Made, 4 wickets fell. From here, Arafat Minhas and Mohammad Wasim literally rescued their team and adopted a hangman style. Both of them quickly added 56 runs in just 21 balls for the 7th wicket. Arafat Minhas, who was run out on the last ball, scored 31 runs in 19 balls, while Mohammad Wasim returned unbeaten with 26 runs in just 9 balls, hitting 2 sixes and 2 fours.

Multan Sultans managed to score 192 runs for 7 wickets in 20 overs. Salman Mirza got 53 runs for one wicket in 3 overs and Salman Irshad got 37 runs for one wicket in the same number of overs. Imad Wasim took one wicket in 4 overs, giving away only 23 runs and Chris Green took one wicket each, giving away 29 runs.

In reply, Islamabad United did not start well. Sameer Minhas was dismissed for 10 and Devon Conway was dismissed for 18 on 41. Sultans got their third win on 72 when Mohsin Riaz was dismissed for 25 off 17 balls. From here,

Shadab Khan and Mark Chapman took charge. Both of them increased the score with ease. Both of them took the score to 124 runs for 3 wickets in 13 overs. At a total of 135, Shadab Khan was caught by Smith off Wasim's ball after making 36 off 28 balls. Haider Ali was caught by Faisal Akram on 154 for 13. The catch was taken by Sahibzada Farhan. At 171, when Sultans were in despair, Mohammad Imran took a brilliant catch of Faheem Ashraf on a Peer Sadal ball, scoring 13 runs. United needed 16 runs in the last 2 overs to win. The biggest obstacle was Mark Chapman.

Islamabad United reached the target 8 balls early. Mark Chapman played an unbeaten innings of 69 runs off 33 balls with the help of 6 sixes and 4 fours. Won by 4 wickets. Faisal Akram took 2 wickets for 41 runs.

PSL 11 Playoff Matches Schedule
Tuesday, April 28. Qualifier. Peshawar Zalmi vs. Islamabad United. Karachi Wednesday, April 29. Elementor 1. Hyderabad Kingsmen vs. Multan Sultans. Lahore
Friday, May 1. Elementor 2. Qualifier loser vs. Elementor 1 winner. Lahore Sunday, May 3. Final. Lahore

PSL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Hyderabad Kingsmen's brilliant batting and bowling defeated Rawalpindiz by a huge margin of 108 runs and knocked them into the demi-finals

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI/LAHORE: Hyderabad Kingsmen's brilliant batting and bowling defeated Rawalpindiz Cricket Team by a huge margin of 108 runs and knocked them into the semi-finals. Rawalpindiz could not save Lahore, Qalandars out of PSL 11, Hyderabad Kings in the playoffs. Sixes, fours, hits, roar, Hyderabad Kingsmen ahead, Lahore Qalandars out of PSL 11 playoffs. Usman Khawaja's brilliant fifty also did not help Lahore Qalandars. Hyderabad Kingsmen were out of the PSL playoffs despite scoring big. But the miracle happened. Peshawar Zalmi, Multan Sultans, Islamabad United and Hyderabad Kingsmen have become the confirmed teams for the playoffs. The first playoff will be with Peshawar from Multan or Islamabad, which will be decided after the match this evening. In the 39th match of PSL 11 on



Sunday at the National Stadium Karachi, Rawalpindi captain Muhammad Rizwan won the toss and decided to bowl first and Hyderabad Kingsmen got the full opportunity to score as much as they wanted and try to win by a margin of at least 85 to 86 runs. Hyderabad Kingsmen started the innings quickly but could not score as many runs in the closing

overs as they had started in the first 8 overs. The innings ended at 244 runs for 6 wickets in 20 overs. Glenn Maxwell was in form for the first time. He scored 70 runs off 37 balls with the help of 3 sixes and 8 fours. Apart from him, Usman Khan scored 54 runs off just 26 balls with 4 sixes and 4 fours. Kushal Perair returned unbeaten with 50 off 30 balls. Moaz Sadaqat scored 28

off 11 balls and Hassan Khan scored 4 balls. But 16 runs were also noteworthy. Mohammad Amir was bowled out for 57 runs in 4 overs. Saad Masood took 2 wickets for 34 runs.

After this total, Kingsmen had to restrict Rawalpindi to at least 158,

otherwise Lahore Qalandars would have qualified with a better net run rate. Rawalpindi did not start well in reply. They lost their first wicket at 13. They lost 3 wickets by 56. Shahzeb Khan was one, Mohammad Rizwan was 26 and Kamran Ghulam was out. In the

10th over, Sam Billings went for 23 on a total of 94, so Kingsmen now had a tough challenge of restricting them to 158 runs. Dean Forster also went for 6 on 102, and half the team was out. Kingsmen's hopes were brightened. The sixth wicket of Saad Masood fell on 113 and the seventh wicket of Imad Butt on 122, so Kingsmen were close to their destination. The big obstacle was Usman Khawaja with a fifty-plus. Maxwell also clean bowled Mohammad Amir on a total of 125. Now 8 wickets had fallen. Asif Afridi was run out on 136. Then the entire team was bowled out for 136 in 17.1 overs. Thus, Hyderabad Kingsmen entered the playoffs with a better net run rate by winning this Pakistan Super League match by 108 runs. Lahore Qalandars were eliminated. Huneen Shah took 4 wickets for 22 runs and Akif Javed took 3 wickets for 38 runs. Usman Khawaja was not out on 66.

Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament.

Sports Desk

KARACHI: In the 3rd and Final day of the 2nd round matches of the Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament Zone-VII Continue to win their 2nd Match against Zone II in a row and Zone-V also won their first Match after beating Zone-I.

Scores in Brief:
At UBL Sports Complex Zone-VII beat Zone-II by 222 runs. Zone-VII 244 and 271.

Zone-II 94 and 199 all out in 43.2 overs. Syed Shaheer Ali 66 12x4 1x6. Asad Akhtar 30 4x6, Arif Yaqoob (sla) 3/28, Inam ul Haq (mf) 3/43, Muhammad Usman Bin Rashid (rb) 3/58.

At Baqai Ground. Zone-V beat Zone-I by 6 Wickets. Zone-I 252/6 and 208 all out in 56.1 overs. Muhammad Raza 51 6x4 2x6 Zainuddin 31, Bahadur Ali 27, Malik Zainul Abideen 25. Sahil Iqbal (mf)



3/49 Muhammad Ali Butt (ob) 3/52, Saifullah Khan (rb) 2/35.

Zone-V 242 and 220/4 in 50.5 overs. Muhammad Ali Butt 78 8x4 3x6 not out, Syed Shah Raza Naqvi 41 1x4

2x6, Shahzad Khan 33, Muhammad Hassan 24, Muhammad Shoaib Khan 24 not out.

3rd Round of the Tournament will be from 28-30th April as under:

Zone-V vs Zone-IV (KCCA Stadium), 2) Zone-II vs Zone-VI at UBL Sports Complex), 3) Zone-III vs Zone-VII (Baqai Cricket Ground).

Attock Secretary RTA was awarded a Shield

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A Capacity Building Training program was organized by the Transport Department Punjab on April 20 and 21, 2026. Officers from various districts participated in the training.

Upon successful completion of the program, Mr. Zaheer Ahmad Khan, Secretary of the Regional Transport Authority, was awarded a shield and certificate in recognition of his professional competence, integrity, and outstanding services in the transport sector.

On this occasion, Mr. Salman Majeed, Director Planning and Information Technology, Transport Department Lahore,



presented the shield and certificate to him.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Zaheer Ahmad Khan said that this achievement reflects teamwork, dedication, and a strong commitment to public service. He also expressed special gratitude to Mr. Rao Atif Raza, Deputy Commissioner of

Attock, stating that this success was made possible through his trust and guidance.

He further shared that Attock currently ranks fifth across Punjab in achieving its revenue target, which is a clear testament to the district's exemplary departmental performance.

Another Indian Drama: 24 Seats "Reserved" for AJK in IIOJK Assembly

Continued from Page 4

the legislation. They argue that the 10.4 million people of AJK have their own elected legislature, their own judicial system, and their own identity, and that no parliament in New Delhi has any jurisdiction whatsoever over their land. The AJK Legislative Assembly went a step further, passing a symbolic resolution declaring that any Indian attempt to enforce such delimitation would be treated as an act of war. This is not a fringe view; it is the unanimous position

of the elected representatives of that territory. For the people living along the LoC, who have suffered the consequences of cross-border shelling and military standoffs for decades, the bill is not a theoretical legal maneuver but a direct threat. They see it as India creating a "paper justification" for future military aggression, disguised as a democratic exercise.

The response from within the Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir has been one of deep political alienation. Mainstream Kashmiri political leaders,

including those from the People's Conference and the National Conference, have used the legislative debate to highlight the hypocrisy of the central government. Sajad Lone, a prominent MLA from north Kashmir, recently cautioned in the assembly that unresolved issues of reservation and political injustice pose an existential threat to Kashmiri youth that could trigger a bigger crisis than the rigged elections of 1987, which led to the armed insurgency in the valley. He argued that while the govern-

ment talks about giving rights to people in AJK, it is systematically excluding and disempowering the Kashmiris living on its side of the LoC through policies of "otherisation" and unfair reservation quotas that leave only 30% of government jobs for the general category, despite the majority of the population falling into it. The comparison is damning: the Indian government claims to be concerned about the political representation of a population it does not control, while simultaneously ignoring the legitimate

grievances of the population it has occupied for decades. As Lone pointed out, Kashmiri Muslims are treated as anti-nationals in their own homeland.

The Delimitation of Constituencies Bill, 2026, with its provisions for Azad Jammu and Kashmir, represents a dangerous and unprecedented escalation in India's long-standing territorial dispute with Pakistan and its suppression of Kashmiri self-determination. By attempting to legislate over a territory it does not control and a people who have

consistently rejected its claims, India is not only violating international law and United Nations resolutions but also creating a constitutional and political fiction that can only lead to further instability. The move has been universally rejected by the people of AJK, the people of IIOJK, mainstream Kashmiri political parties, human rights organizations, and even critical voices within India. The 24 seats will remain, in reality, forever vacant, serving as a permanent monument to the failure of political negotiation and

the triumph of unilateral, irredentist fantasy. As the world watches, the people of Kashmir, on both sides of the LoC, continue to assert their right to self-determination, and they see in this latest "Indian drama" not a legitimate legislative act, but a desperate and delusional attempt to legitimize an occupation that has already lasted seven decades too long. The only certainty is that this bill, rather than bringing any resolution, has poured more fuel on a fire that threatens to consume the entire region.

Meeting

CHANGSHA, China: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Hunan Party Secretary Shen Xiaoming on Sunday.

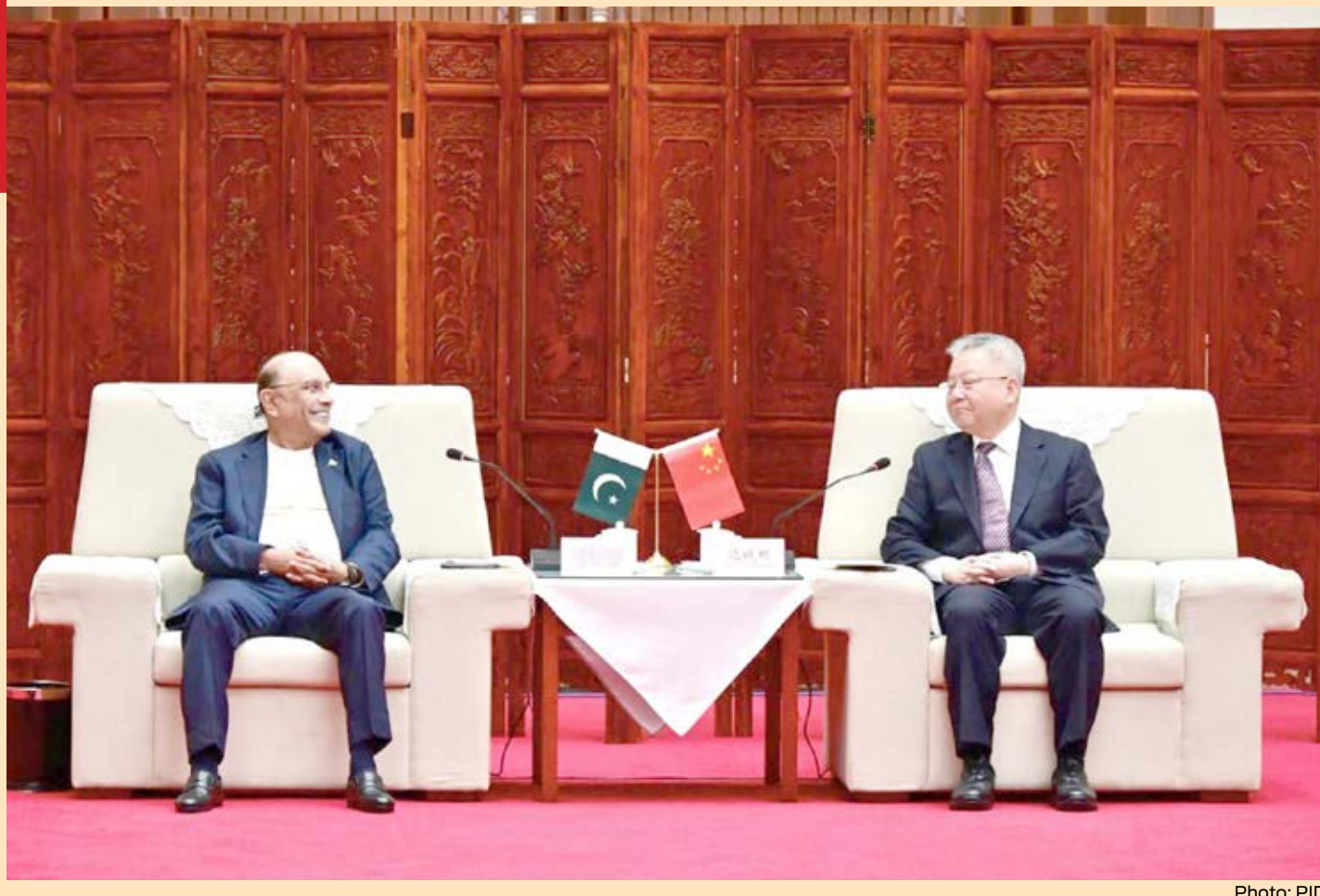


Photo: PID

President meets Hunan leadership, discusses cooperation in key sectors

Spokesman Report

CHANGSHA, CHINA: President Asif Ali Zardari, currently visiting Changsha in Hunan province of China, held a meeting with Mr Shen Xiaoming, Party Secretary of Hunan Province, and attended a banquet hosted in his honour by Governor of Hunan Province, Mr Mao Weiming.

The engagement focused on advancing practical cooperation in agriculture, health,

education and trade, while reaffirming the enduring strength of Pakistan-China relations.

During the meeting, the President invited Mr Shen Xiaoming to visit Pakistan in connection with the 75th anniversary celebrations of diplomatic relations between the two countries. He underscored that Pakistan-China ties remain a cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and continue to enjoy broad-based support.

He also referred to his long-standing personal connection with China, recalling that his family, including his late father-in-law Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and his late wife Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, had always attached special importance to relations with China. He said this tradition is now being carried forward by the next generation, including his son, former foreign minister Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto

Zardari. Speaking at the banquet, the Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong remarked that the President's decision to visit Hunan reflects his special regard for Chairman Mao. He noted that Pakistan and China are expanding collaboration in agriculture, industry and minerals, and expressed hope that the visit would further strengthen bilateral cooperation, bring the two peoples closer and add significance to

the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Senator Saleem Mandviviwalla; Mr Sharjeel Inam Memon, Senior Provincial Minister, Government of Sindh; Mr Ali Hassan Barohi; Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh for Investment and Public-Private Partnership Projects; Chief Secretary Sindh and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi were also present on the occasion.

Gilani stresses sustained efforts to ensure global peace

Kiran Asim

LAHORE: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani has emphasised the need for sustained efforts to ensure global peace.

Addressing a ceremony in Lahore, Yousuf Raza Gilani stressed the need to address emerging global challenges, including technological advancement and climate change by adapting to evolving global realities.

Highlighting Pakistan's role in promoting peace and dialogue internationally, the Acting President mentioned Pakistan's proactive diplomacy to promote regional stability, including initiatives to reduce tensions and build



trust between Iran and the United States.

Also Read: Gilani hopes Pakistan can mediate US-Iran tensions

Talking about the Pahalgam false flag operation, Yousuf Raza Gilani said that Pakistan is a responsible nuclear state, and although India not only carried out an attack but also unilaterally revoked the Indus Waters Treaty, Pakistan acted strictly in self-defence as a nuclear state.

He noted that Pakistan's armed forces and leadership sent a clear message of restraint and responsibility, while its call for an independent inquiry into the Pahalgam incident gained international recognition.

Power Division asks NEPRA to abolish fee, license requirement for solar consumers of 25 kW & below

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Power Division has formally requested the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA) to abolish application fees and remove licensing requirements for solar consumers with systems up to 25 kilowatts, following directions of Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari.

According to an official statement issued on Sunday, the Power Division had previously alerted NEPRA about the adverse effects of this decision and requested that it be aligned with the old regulations.

Under the previous 2015 regulations, distributed generation facilities of 25 kilowatts or below did not require a license from NEPRA. Applications



were processed directly by Distribution Companies (DISCOs) without any fee, serving as a major fiscal incentive for residential users. However, the new Prosumer Regulations centralize

approval authority with NEPRA and impose application fees even on these small facilities.

The Power Division noted that the Private Power and Infrastructure

Board (PIIB) had flagged the regulatory shift and requested NEPRA to maintain consistency with the earlier approvals regime for systems of 25 kW or below. Additionally, during public hearings, the Pakistan Solar Association, Primage (Pvt) Ltd, the Pakistan Alternative Energy Association, and Siddiq Renewable Energy (Pvt) Ltd formally objected to the changes, arguing that removing approval authority from DISCOs creates unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles.

Following the Minister's directive, the Power Division has now formally requested NEPRA to reinstate the earlier practice for systems of 25 kW and below, warning that the current approach risks slowing the national drive toward alternative energy adoption.

Pakistan's fuel supply stable: Ali Pervaiz Malik



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik emphasized that resolving world conflicts is crucial to permanently control petrol prices, affirming that Pakistan's fuel supply is secure, unlike India, where citizens faced long queues and

horthages on petrol pumps.

During an exclusive conversation with a local news channel, Ali Pervaiz Malik stated that efforts are ongoing to stabilize fuel prices and maintain balance in the market.

He emphasized that Pakistan's

situation remains comparatively stronger than many countries like India facing economic stress due to global conflicts.

He praised the leadership of the Prime Minister, the Field Marshal Asim Munir and the Deputy Prime Minister for their proactive measures, expressing admiration for their efforts in ensuring energy security and economic stability.

The minister also highlighted that Pakistan has an agreement with the IMF which must be honoured, warning that any failure to comply could have serious consequences for the country's economic situation.

Maritime Minister announces storage relief at KPT terminals to ease exporters' burden amid shipment delays



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry on Sunday announced storage charge waivers ranging from 25 to 50 percent at Karachi Port Trust (KPT) terminals to facilitate exporters affected by recent disruptions in Gulf-bound shipments.

Following constructive engage-

ment with terminal operators to address exporters' concerns, Rear Admiral Shahid Ahmed (ret'd), Chairman of KPT, led the effort on the minister's direction, securing waivers of 50 per cent at KGTL from March 1 to 20, 2026; 50 per cent at KICT from March 1 to 10, 2026; and 25 per cent at SAPT from March 11 to 31, 2026.

These measures cover export containers stranded at terminal yards that could not be loaded due to operational issues, the minister said. "The waivers aim to reduce financial pressure on importers and exporters, clear pending consignments, and boost cargo clearance efficiency."

Lauding KPT's efforts, Junaid Chaudhry said it marks a positive step to support the export sector, ensure trade continuity, and ease logistical bottlenecks. "Maritime institutions are being encouraged to adopt a more facilitative and trade-friendly approach so that operational delays do not translate into avoidable costs for stakeholders," he added.

Govt to promote women-led digital commerce and industrial participation: Anusha Rahman



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Senior Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on Information Technology Senator Anusha Rahman visited the Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (WCCI), here on Sunday.

The senator met women entrepreneurs and discussed their economic activities and business challenges. The delegation was received by WCCI President Falahat Imran and other office-bearers, while DG TDAP Rafiah Syed was also present on the occasion.

During the interaction, Senator Anusha Rahman lauded the talent and resilience of Pakistani women, saying they had proved their capa-

bilities in every field. She stated that the promotion of information technology and women empowerment remained among the top priorities of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She encouraged women entrepreneurs to use digital platforms and e-commerce for marketing their products, adding that the establishment of an e-commerce gateway was the need of the hour to expand their market access.

She further assured that the government would facilitate women entrepreneurs by supporting their participation in national and international industrial exhibitions and providing maximum opportunities for business growth.