



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے مسلمان اور انہی فریبیوں نے بیان کیا، کہا ہم سے ہمارے نبی نے بیان کیا ان سے اسٹیبلشمنٹ کے لیے اللہ تعالیٰ نے اور ان سے اس نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم ﷺ نے اپنے پیروں کو کھینچے اور فرمایا کہ یہ امید ہے اور یہ موت ہے، انسان اسی حالت (امیدوں تک پہنچنے کی) میں رہتا ہے کہ قریب والا خدا (موت) اس تک پہنچاتا ہے۔  
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6418)  
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### Great respect for Pakistan, they have really tried: Trump

United States President Donald Trump on Sunday again commended Pakistan's efforts for peace talks, stating that he has "great respect for Pakistan" and that it has been "terrific". "Great respect for Pakistan, but I will, because they've been terrific. They've really tried, and they'll stay involved," he said in an interview on Fox News.



### Mohsin Naqvi pledges complete removal of encroachments in Islamabad

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has said that restoring Islamabad to its original state and completely eliminating encroachments remains a top priority. A large-scale, indiscriminate operation against encroachments is ongoing in the federal capital. During the operation, an FC camp office built on a green belt near Marriott and Aabpara Chowk was also demolished under the supervision of Mohsin Naqvi.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding development of gemstone sector on Monday.



Photo: PID

## PM for boosting gemstones exports using local resources

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday said that Pakistan had been blessed with abundant natural resources, including precious stones, and stressed that the sector offered strong potential to increase exports using local resources.  
The prime minister chaired a high-level review meeting focused on aligning Pakistan's gemstone mining and processing sector with international standards and enhancing exports, including the establishment of three Centers of Excellence across the country.  
The prime minister stressed that transparency must remain a key element in the establishment of the centers of excellence.  
The prime minister assigned the Ministry of Planning the task of formulating a comprehensive strategy to boost exports of processed gemstones. The ministry was expected to present the plan soon, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.  
*Continued on Page 7*

## DPM, UK Foreign Secretary discuss regional situation



**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday spoke with UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.  
They discussed latest developments in the region.  
The UK Foreign Secretary appreciated Pakistan's facilitation and continued efforts to promote dialogue and diplomacy.  
Both sides underscored the importance of sustained engagement for peace and stability in the region and beyond. They agreed to remain in contact.

## Pakistan seeks to bridge US-Iran gaps as face-to-face talks stall

**Reuters**  
Work has not halted to bridge gaps between the United States and Iran, sources from mediator Pakistan said, despite the failure of face-to-face diplomacy after Donald Trump called off a trip by his envoys and told Iran to phone when it wants a deal.  
Hopes of reviving peace efforts have receded since the US president scrapped a visit on Saturday by his envoys Steve Witkoff and Jared Kushner to Islamabad, where Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araqchi shuttled in and out twice over the weekend.  
Araqchi, who also visited Oman, arrived on Monday in Russia to meet President Vladimir Putin, a longstanding ally.  
With the warring sides still seemingly far apart on issues



including Iran's nuclear ambitions and access through the crucial Strait of Hormuz, oil prices resumed their upward march when trade reopened on Monday.  
Brent crude was up around 2.5% at around \$108 a barrel. In a sign that no face-to-

face meetings are planned any time soon, streets reopened in Islamabad, which had been locked down for a week in anticipation of talks that never took place.  
Pakistani officials said negotiations were still taking place remotely, but there were no plans to convene a meeting in person until the sides were close enough to sign a memorandum.  
"The draft will be negotiated remotely till they reach some consensus," said a Pakistani source familiar with the negotiations.  
Although a ceasefire has paused the US-Israeli strikes on Iran that began on February 28, no agreement has been reached on terms to end a war that has killed thousands, driven up oil prices, fuelled inflation, and darkened the outlook for global growth.

## DPM/FM Dar, Canadian FM discuss latest regional developments, peace efforts



**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand, Monday, discussed the latest developments in the region and ongoing efforts to promote peace and stability.  
The DPM/FM spoke with the Canadian FM and reiterated Pakistan's continued commitment to dialogue and diplomacy, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.  
The two leaders also reviewed bilateral relations, including cooperation in trade, agriculture, and other sectors and emphasized importance of high-level exchanges to further strengthen Pakistan-Canada ties.

## Pakistan, Türkiye to form joint team to boost health sector cooperation

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal on Monday announced the formation of a joint team comprising health experts from Pakistan and Türkiye to identify areas where both countries can benefit from each other's experience in the health sector.  
He shared these remarks during a meeting with the Turkish ambassador, attended by high-level delegations from both sides, where prospects for promoting health tourism and providing quality medical facilities to international patients were also reviewed.  
The meeting featured detailed discussions on enhancing bilateral cooperation in the health sector. Participants were briefed on the health systems and institutional frameworks of both countries, highlighting opportunities for investment and administrative collaboration in hospitals.  
Matters related to promoting public-private partnerships and exploring investment avenues to strengthen the health sector also came under discussion.  
Both sides agreed to expand cooperation in the production, trade, and technology transfer of medical devices and other health-related products.  
The CEO of DRAP and Joint Secretary, Admin, have been designated as focal persons for this initiative.

## Leghari invites EU investment in Energy sector, highlights key reforms

**Commerce Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari on Monday briefed a visiting European Union delegation on the comprehensive transformation underway in Pakistan's power sector, highlighting four strategic areas for modernization and inviting European investors to participate in the country's ongoing privatization and infrastructure initiatives.  
During the meeting, the Minister underscored that the Power Division has prioritized the digitization of the national grid, with a specific focus on the large-scale deployment of smart meters, the expansion and upgrading of transmission lines, the integration of utility-scale battery storage systems, and the local manufacturing of power sector equipment, said a press release.



He further informed the delegation that the government is moving forward with the privatization of electricity distribution companies (DISCOs), offering lucrative opportunities for European firms to take part in the bidding process.  
Awaiz Leghari also detailed additional structural reforms, including the divestment of old, inefficient RFO (residual fuel oil)-based power plants. He noted that by excluding approximately 7,000 megawatts of expensive, committed power plants from the Indicative Generation Capacity Expansion Plan (IGCEP), Pakistan has successfully achieved savings of 17 billion dollars.

## Heatwave alert: Temperatures set to soar above normal

**City Desk**  
ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department has issued a nationwide alert warning of an intense heatwave expected to grip the country over the coming weeks.  
According to the forecast, temperatures are likely to remain 4 to 6 degrees Celsius above normal, with southern Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan



# PPP confident of electoral victory based on performance, says Nayyar

**Spokesman Report**

LONDON: Minister for Information and Religious Affairs of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayyar held a detailed meeting with senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz. During the meeting, the current political situation in Azad Kashmir was discussed in detail.

In the meeting, both leaders emphasized the need for political harmony, promotion of democratic traditions and joint efforts to resolve public issues. Minister for Information Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayyar said that the public popularity of the Pakistan Peoples Party in Azad Kashmir is continuously increasing and the party is getting stronger day by day.

He said that the PPP has always made public service, promotion of democratic values and protection of public rights the axis of its politics, thanks to which



the trust of the people is being restored.

He said that the PPP has taken significant steps for public welfare in the past as well and will continue its journey of service with the same spirit in the future as well.

Chaudhry Rafiq Nayyar said that in

the upcoming elections, the Pakistan Peoples Party will achieve complete success on the basis of its performance, strong public relations and a clear manifesto and will be in a position to form the government again.

He said that the party leadership and

workers are united and are determined to solve the people's problems.

On this occasion, Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz appreciated the performance of the people's government of Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir.

## PPP Women Wing Celebrates Faryal Talpur's Birthday with Show of Loyalty



**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: A grand ceremony was organized at the Central Secretariat of Pakistan Peoples Party on the occasion of the birthday of its central leader Faryal Talpur under the auspices of President Women's Department Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Shaheen Kausar Dar. In-charge Central Secretariat Syed Sibtul Haider Bukhari and Member Punjab Assembly Nargis Faiz Malik attended the ceremony as special guests.

A large number of women workers and party office bearers were present at the ceremony, including Kausar Altaf, Azra Younis, Mussarat Gujjar, Fehmida Butt, Fatima Anwar, Mehvish Chughtai, Faiza Gulfraz, Kausar Sohail and Afshan Kiani, among others. The participants expressed their full solidarity with their leadership and reiterated their commitment to the ideology and mission of the party. The speakers further said that the Pakistan People's Party is a people's party which is continuing its struggle for public service, promotion of democratic values and national unity in the light of the ideals of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

## Azad Kashmir Elections set for July 15 despite political noise

**City Desk**



JUNDALA: The general elections of Azad Kashmir will be held by July 15 in any case. Those who are making noise will not get anything. Some people are doing their best to contest the elections, but now is not the time for them to participate in the elections. Anyone's agitation will not have any impact on the elections. The Pakistani army

is the pride of all of us. The current fame was achieved by the brave and fearless Chief of the Pakistan Army and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. Today, Pakistan's name is shining due to the decisions taken by the nation in difficult times. From the Bangui Kashmir will become Pakistan Convention, Sardar Azhar Nazar, Dr. Irfan Ashraf, Sardar Naseem Ejazi, Sardar Munawar Shaheen, Sardar Shaheen, Sardar Irshad Khan, Sardar Attique Ahmed Zubair Khan, Sardar Manzoor Scholar, Sardar Ijaz Abbasi and others addressed the gathering. Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan said, "We are the ones who built the GHQ. The first brigade of the Pakistan Army is named after the Qayyum Brigade, which reflects the historical connection of the Muslim Conference with the security of Pakistan." Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan also mentioned his intellectual differences with the late Amanullah Khan on the idea of autonomous Kashmir in a balanced manner and said that despite the differences, a relationship of mutual respect remained.

## AJK PM condemns 'unethical talk' by KPK Chief Minister

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman Youth Wing All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sardar Usman Ali Khan strongly condemned the unethical talk made by the Chief Minister KPK about Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore at the Muzaffarabad rally and said that how did Buzdar and you get your name? You are the product of a slip of paper, then it is not appropriate to talk like this about an elected Prime Minister. Kashmiris are not cheap goods that people will listen to whatever you say. It is not appropriate for the Chief Minister of any province to humiliate another constitutional officer. Such statements harm the brotherhood between the Federation and Azad Kashmir. Sohail Afridi should take back his words and apologize to the Kashmiri nation and Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. Political differences have their place, but respect for institutions and positions is obligatory on all of us. All political parties should show solidarity on the Kashmir cause, not character assassination of each other.



It is not appropriate for the Chief Minister of any province to humiliate another constitutional officer. Such statements harm the brotherhood between the Federation and Azad Kashmir. Sohail Afridi should take back his words and apologize to the Kashmiri nation and Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. Political differences have their place, but respect for institutions and positions is obligatory on all of us. All political parties should show solidarity on the Kashmir cause, not character assassination of each other.

## Azad Kashmir Bans Entry of Pakistan-Proscribed Groups to Local Elections



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has taken a revolutionary step to ensure political transparency and security in the state and has issued a presidential ordinance amending the Election Act.

Under this new law, no organization or group banned in Pakistan will be allowed to participate in the elections in Azad Kashmir.

According to this amendment ordinance issued by the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, all political parties or groups banned in Pakistan under the Anti-Terrorism Act or other laws will be immediately banned from contesting elections in Azad Kashmir.

According to the law, individuals directly or indirectly associated with such organizations will neither be able to form a political party nor contest elections as independent candidates.

In recent years, it was seen that some banned groups were trying to enter the political arena with new names, which has now been legally blocked.

## 1st Commemoration on Marka e Haq

ISLAMABAD: Commuters move past a roadside billboard in the Federal Capital to commemorate the completion of one year of Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos (Marka-e-Haq).



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PML-N leader Shah Ghulam Qadir demands transparent AJK polls, affirms party readiness



**Bureau Report**

RAWALAKOT: President Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Assembly Shah Ghulam Qadir has said that he wants a clean, transparent and impartial election to be held on time and the Pakistan Muslim League (N) will participate

in the upcoming elections of Azad Kashmir on the basis of its election manifesto and performance.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in Rawalakot to mark the formal joining of former PPP candidate for local council Sardar Aqib Sabir Khan and Jammu and Kashmir Peoples Party City Rawalakot Vice President Malik Azhar along with

hundreds of his colleagues in the PML-N.

Former government minister and central vice president Sardar Tahir Anwar Khan, Rawalakot city constituency president Khawaja Imran Ashraf, Arshad Niazi, Javed Naz Advocate, Sardar Aurangzeb, Sardar Aqib Sabir Khan, Malik Azhar and others also addressed the ceremony.

On this occasion, Pakistan Muslim League-N Azad Jammu and Kashmir Central Vice President Sardar Naseem Ahmed Sarfraz Khan, General Secretary of Women's Wing Nasira Khan, Central Joint Secretary Sardar Sajid Yaqoob, Sardar Usman Saddozai, Chairman Central Investment Board Sardar Abdul Jabbar Khan, Sardar Qamar Jahangir and a large number of people of the area were also present.

## Army-organized sports tournament unites local community at scenic spot

**City Desk**

NEELAM: The grand sports tournament was organized at a tourist spot organized by the Pakistan Army, in which various local teams participated in full force.

The chief guest of the event was Lieutenant Colonel Khurram Mahfouz, who distributed prizes among the players and appreciated their performance.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest said that the young generation should always actively participate in positive and healthy activities.

He said that where sports fields are populated, hospitals are deserted, therefore, promoting sports is the need of the hour.

He further said that the Pakistan Army and the people are like one body and the mutual relationship between the two is strong and invincible.

The ceremony was attended by a large number of dignitaries of the area and fans, including DSP Sharda. At the end of the tournament, the successful team was awarded trophies and cash prizes, while prizes were also distributed among other outstanding players.





Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:53 am  
Zohr ..... 12:06 pm  
Asr ..... 4:51 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:48 pm  
Isha ..... 8:19 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**EU supports revival of the flood-hit livestock sector in Balochistan**

Rafiullah Mandokhel

ZHOB: In rural Balochistan, livestock is not just an economic asset but a lifeline for the local communities. For thousands of rural families across the province, especially in northern districts, sheep, goats, cattle, poultry, and dairy farming remain the main sources of livelihood, food security, and financial stability. In Pakistan's largest province by area, where development indicators remain lowest in the country, livestock is considered one of the major sources of income.

The poverty-hit Balochistan continues to grapple with underdevelopment, fragile infrastructure, and financial insecurity, despite being rich in natural resources. The indigenous rural communities living far from urban centers solely rely on livestock and agriculture.

In 2022, the catastrophic floods worsened the already dire situation. The devastating floods severely damaged houses, destroyed standing crops, washed away roads and irrigation systems, and caused the death of thousands of livestock. For many families, particularly in Zhob, Loralai, Pishin, and other districts, the floods damaged their properties and took away the main source of income.

**ISSI-PAIDAR Commemorate Zimbabwe's National Day**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Zimbabwe's National Day. The proceedings, which began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Zimbabwe were moderated by Dr. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA. Speakers included Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BoG, ISSI; H. E. T. M. J. Abu-Basutu, (RTD) Air Marshal, Ambassador of Zimbabwe to Pakistan; Mr. Muhammad Amjad Aziz Qazi, Ambassador of Pakistan to Zimbabwe. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, President PAIDAR.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood highlighted the significance of Zimbabwe's National Day, marking its independence on April 18, 1980, and paid tribute to its resilience and struggle for sovereignty. He underscored the strong Pakistan-Zimbabwe relationship, rooted in mutual respect and South-South cooperation, and recalled Pakistan's consistent

support for Zimbabwe's independence.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed highlighted that Pakistan's relationship with Zimbabwe dates back to its nationalist struggle, when Pakistan was among the first countries to extend political, diplomatic, financial, and material support against British colonial rule.

Ambassador T. M. J. Abu-Basutu, in his remarks, appreciated the ISSI for organising the celebration of Zimbabwe's 46th National Day and highlighted the longstanding, brotherly ties between Zimbabwe and Pakistan. He acknowledged Pakistan's consistent support since Zimbabwe's independence, particularly in defence cooperation and the training of Zimbabwe's Air Force. Emphasising the need to expand bilateral ties, he pointed to the untapped potential in sectors such as trade, mining, tourism, and infrastructure, and called for greater collaboration between the governments and private sectors of both countries to foster economic growth and deepen the partnership.

Ambassador Amjad Qazi said that Pakistan and Zimbabwe enjoy cordial relations and support each other at multilateral forums, including the United Nations. He noted that an MoU



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

on bilateral cooperation will be signed, with defence cooperation as an important aspect of ties.

**Dangerous**

ISLAMABAD: A boy dangerously travelling of motorbike's rear seat at Constitution Avenue in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

**Rifah International Colleges Sheikhupura Road Campus Grand Opening Draws Dignitaries**

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: On the occasion of the inauguration of the grand classes of Rifah International Colleges Sheikhupura Road Faisalabad Campus, the special guest Deputy CEO Rifah International Colleges Salman Qureshi and the guest of honor Welfare Officer Education Board Faisalabad Dr. Sardar Babar Dogar were welcomed by the Director of the institution Dr. Tanveer Aslam Dhillon, Principal Haseeb Akram and other staff with flower petals, garlands and bouquets.

A large number of local people, students and their parents who had entered the college participated on the occasion.

The program began with the recitation of the Holy Quran and Naat. Special guests, students and parents jointly inaugurated the grand classes of Rifah International Colleges Sheikhupura Road Faisalabad Campus by cutting the ribbon and offering prayers.

On this occasion, Principal Aspire Group of Colleges Gulberg Campus Akbar Ali Haral, Director Admin Cambridge International College Jatranwala



Moazzam Mahmood Advocate, Chairman All Pakistan Private Schools Alliance Sadaqat Hussain Khan Lodhi, Principal Allied School Iqra Campus Hamid, Atta Al-Muncem Principal Cambridge International College Jatranwala, and others were also present. Deputy CEO Rifah International Colleges Salman Qureshi said in his address that in our educational institutions, we not only adorn the students with the jewels of education but also play an important role in making them good human beings and good citizens.

**Ceasefire holds, yet Hormuz blockade continues to hold the world's breath: Masood Khan**

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, has stated that while the continuation of the ceasefire between Iran and the United States has brought temporary relief, global stability remains fragile due to unresolved strategic and economic pressures.

He noted that the world has not yet returned to normalcy, primarily because of tensions surrounding the Strait of Hormuz and the continued naval blockade. "Until these critical issues are resolved, the global energy market and supply chains will remain under stress, and uncertainty will persist," he said.

Ambassador Khan observed that the current diplomatic approach—marked by indirect engagement, back-channel communications, and third-party facilitation—is both pragmatic and effective under the prevailing circumstances. He highlighted that Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has actively engaged regional and international stakeholders, including visits to Pakistan and consultations with countries such as Oman, Turkey, Egypt, and Saudi Arabia, reflecting a coordinated effort to build momentum towards a negotiated settlement.

**Hurriyat Conference Convenes High-Level Meeting to Forge Future Strategy**

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A very important, high-level meeting of the All-Party Hurriyat Conference (Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan branch) was held under the leadership of Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi, in which representatives of all affiliated units participated in full.



The meeting took unanimous and principled decisions after serious, insightful and in-depth deliberation on the current political situation in the region, the sensitive nature of the Kashmir cause and various aspects of the future strategy.

The meeting was attended by senior Hurriyat leaders Muhammad Farooq Rahmani, Mahmood Ahmed Saghar, General Secretary Advocate Pervez Ahmed, Altaf Hussain Wani, Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Sheikh Abdul Matin, Hassan Al Banna, Javed Jahangir, Nisar Mirza, Syed Ijaz Rahmani, Raja Khadim Hussain, Dawood Khan, Chaudhry Shaheen, Zahid Safi, Kifayat Hussain Rizvi, Zahid Ashraf, Haji Muhammad Sultan, Muhammad Shafi Dar, Imtiaz Wani, Mian Muzaffar, Muhammad Ashraf Dar, Syed Gulshan, Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Sheikh Abdul Majid, Zahid Mujtaba, Nazir Karnahi and Secretary Information Mushtaq Ahmed Butt.

**Pakistan exposes 'false propaganda' over alleged Kunar strike**

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday rejected and "exposed" false propaganda by Afghan media alleging that Pakistani forces carried out strikes in Kunar Province, targeting a university and civilian areas.

The response came after TOLONews reported that missile or jet strikes on April 27 hit Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University and nearby residential areas, resulting in casualties.

In a strongly worded statement, the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting dismissed the claims, stating: "The Afghan media claim is a blatant lie and an attempt to gain sympathy to cover up support by Afghan Taliban to Fitna Al Khwarizj."

It stressed that Pakistan's military actions are "precise and intelligence based," adding: "No strike has been carried out on Sayed Jamaluddin Afghani University. The claims are frivolous and fake."

The ministry accused Afghan media outlets of orchestrating disinformation campaigns to deflect attention from alleged militant safe havens, saying: "The pattern is a page of the old play book where Afghan media creates fake news to cover up the support to terrorist groups and proxies like the Fitna al Khwarizj and gets amplification from Indian media. Truth prevails over falsehood."

In a separate post, the ministry labelled the reports "fake propaganda," asserting that repeated claims of "phantom strikes" reflected reliance on misinformation.

"Continuous propaganda around phantom strikes in Kunar by Afghan media and officials backed by the Indian propagandists indicate that the Afghan Taliban regime, having nothing to offer to [its] citizens in terms of service, welfare and governance, only relies on misinformation and hate," it said.

**Youth Awareness Session on Population Challenges Held at Rajana College**

Zafar Chishty

TOBA TEK SINGH: The District Population Welfare Office Toba Tek Singh organized a comprehensive and informative youth engagement orientation session along with the screening of documentary films at Government Associate College Rajana.

The event was held as part of the mobilization campaign under the Chief Minister Punjab's "Population Management and Family Planning Program" being implemented through the Annual Development Program

(ADP) with the objective of creating awareness among youth regarding population-related challenges and their solutions.

District Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem attended the event as the chief guest. College administration, faculty members, female students and officials of the Population Welfare Department were also present on the occasion. Addressing the participants, Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem stated that the rapid population growth being faced by Pakistan is a serious national challenge



and the youth must play a constructive

role in addressing it.

He emphasized that educating and sensitizing the younger generation about the social, economic and environmental impacts of population growth is the need of the hour.

Speakers highlighted that youth are the country's greatest strength and if provided with proper guidance and awareness, they can become effective ambassadors of positive social change. They stressed that balanced population growth is essential for improved health, education, economic stability and sustainable national development.

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# Psychological Warfare in the US-Iran Confrontation

The recent escalation surrounding Donald Trump and Iran has unfolded not only on battlefields and in diplomatic corridors, but also in the realm of narratives—carefully constructed, strategically deployed, and globally amplified. At the center of this evolving geopolitical drama lies a striking contradiction: while Washington projects Iran as fractured, leaderless, and internally conflicted, Tehran continues to demonstrate operational cohesion, strategic resilience, and an ability to withstand immense external pressure. This divergence between narrative and reality is not accidental; it is a calculated instrument of psychological warfare.

The claim that Iran's leadership is divided—torn between moderates, hardliners, and military elites—has become a recurring theme in American political and media discourse. Statements suggesting “confusion,” “infighting,” and “lack of clear leadership” are designed to create an image of instability. The strategic objective is clear: weaken Iran's negotiating position, sow doubt within its governance structure, and signal to the international community that Tehran is incapable of functioning as a coherent state actor.

However, a closer examination reveals a more complex reality. While differences in political approach undoubtedly exist within Iran—as they do in any political system—these divisions have not translated into strategic paralysis. On matters of national security, sovereignty,

and external threats, Iran has historically demonstrated a unified posture. Its ability to respond swiftly to military challenges, reorganize leadership structures after targeted strikes, and maintain continuity in decision-making underscores a system that, while diverse in internal viewpoints, remains cohesive in its core objectives.

This contrast becomes even more significant when placed alongside the internal dynamics of the United States itself. American political life is currently marked by deep partisan polarization, legislative gridlock, and public disagreement over foreign policy decisions. Debates in Congress regarding military engagement, economic sanctions, and executive authority reflect a nation grappling with its own internal divisions. Yet, despite this visible discord, the United States continues to function as a powerful, centralized actor on the global stage.

The parallel is instructive. Internal disagreement does not equate to institutional weakness—neither in Washington nor in Tehran. In both systems, debates, rivalries, and competing perspectives coexist with mechanisms that ultimately produce unified external action. The difference lies in perception: while U. S. internal divisions are often framed as democratic discourse, similar dynamics in Iran are portrayed as signs

of systemic collapse.

This asymmetry in narrative serves a broader strategic purpose. By projecting Iran as unstable, the United States seeks to justify its own actions—whether military, economic, or diplomatic—as necessary responses to a dysfunctional adversary. At the same time, it aims to influence international opinion, encouraging allies and neutral states to view Iran as an unreliable partner.

Beyond rhetoric, the conflict has increasingly shifted toward economic warfare. Control over critical global chokepoints, particularly the Strait of Hormuz, has emerged as a central lever of influence. Any disruption in this vital waterway—through blockades, seizures, or military presence—has immediate and far-reaching consequences for global energy markets. The mere threat of instability can drive oil prices upward, disrupt supply chains, and place immense pressure on economies worldwide.

In this context, actions targeting maritime routes are not merely tactical maneuvers; they are strategic signals. They demonstrate the capacity to influence global economic stability and underscore the interconnected nature of modern geopolitics. Both the United States and Iran understand that control over energy flows translates into leverage—not just over each other, but over the entire international system.

At the same time, military posturing continues to play a critical role. The sustained deployment of forces, the reinforcement of regional bases, and the accumulation of advanced weaponry all contribute to an atmosphere of heightened tension. Yet, despite this buildup, both sides appear cautious about crossing the threshold into full-scale war. The costs—economic, human, and political—are simply too high.

Instead, what has emerged is a prolonged contest of endurance. Economic sanctions, cyber operations, proxy engagements, and information campaigns have replaced direct confrontation as the primary tools of conflict. Each side is testing the other's resilience, seeking to determine who will yield first under sustained pressure.

Within this framework, the narrative of Iranian “infighting” takes on additional significance. It is not merely a description; it is a tactic. By emphasizing division, the United States attempts to accelerate internal stress within Iran, hoping that economic hardship and political uncertainty will lead to concessions at the negotiating table. Conversely, Iran counters this narrative by projecting unity, resilience, and defiance—reinforcing the message that external pressure will not fracture its core.

The interplay between these competing narratives highlights a fundamental truth about modern conflict: perception is as important as reality. In an era of instantaneous communication and global media reach, shaping how

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Enhance Judicial Efficiency and Institutional Performance

A Full Court Meeting of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan (FCCP) was convened under the chairmanship of the Honorable Chief Justice, Mr. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan. The meeting was attended by all Honorable Judges of the Court, along with the Registrar, Mr. Mohamed Hafeezullah Khan.

The deliberations focused on critical administrative and judicial matters aimed at strengthening institutional performance, improving operational efficiency, and reinforcing the Court's commitment to the expeditious dispensation of justice. Several key decisions of strategic importance were taken, which are anticipated to have significant and long-term impact on the functioning of the Court.

Emphasizing the constitutional imperative of timely justice, the Honorable Chief Justice underscored the need for accelerated disposal of cases and directed all benches to adopt effective case management practices to substantially reduce the existing backlog. The Court reaffirmed its resolve to ensure prompt adjudication in order to uphold public confidence in the judicial system and the constitutional order.

The meeting also reviewed ongoing capacity-building initiatives within the institution. The Honorable Chief Justice expressed appreciation for the in-house training programs being conducted for ministerial staff (BS 8-16). These initiatives are aimed at enhancing administrative competence and professional standards across the Court's workforce.

The training modules, encompassing information technology proficiency, workplace discipline, and office ethics were acknowledged as integral to fostering a modern, efficient, and responsive institutional framework. The Honorable Chief Justice highlighted that continuous professional development of staff is indispensable for ensuring administrative excellence and institutional integrity.

Reiterating the Court's commitment to transparency, efficiency, and adherence to constitutional principles, the Honorable Chief Justice emphasized the importance



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

## Inclusive Education in Pakistan: Intellectual Change in Our Society

Education is widely recognized as a fundamental human right and a powerful driver of social progress. In recent years, the concept of inclusive education has gained increasing attention across the globe. Inclusive education refers to a system where all children—regardless of their physical abilities, socio-economic background, language, gender, or learning differences—learn together in the same environment. For a developing country like Pakistan, embracing inclusive education is not only a policy requirement but also a pathway toward intellectual and social transformation.

Traditionally, education systems in Pakistan have been segmented. Students with disabilities or learning challenges were often placed in separate institutions, while marginalized groups faced limited access to quality education. This separation not only restricted opportunities for these learners but also reinforced social divisions. Inclusive education challenges this mindset by promoting equality, diversity, and shared learning experiences.

At its core, inclusive education is about recognizing that every child has the right to learn and the ability to contribute. It shifts the focus from “fitting the child into the system” to “adapting the system to the child.” This approach encourages schools to accommodate diverse learning needs through flexible teaching methods, accessible infrastructure, and supportive classroom environments. The intellectual impact of inclusive education on society is profound. When students from different backgrounds and abilities learn together, they develop empathy, tolerance, and mutual respect. These values are essential for building a cohesive and harmonious society. Inclusive classrooms expose students to diverse perspectives, enhancing critical thinking and broadening their understanding of the world.

In Pakistan, where cultural, linguistic, and socio-economic diversity is vast, inclusive education can play a transformative role. It can help bridge gaps between

urban and rural populations, reduce stigma associated with disabilities, and promote gender equality. By ensuring equal educational opportunities, society can unlock the potential of individuals who have historically been marginalized.

Teachers are central to the success of inclusive education. They must adopt student-centered approaches that accommodate different learning styles and abilities. This includes using visual aids, interactive methods, differentiated instruction, and continuous assessment. Teachers also need training in special education techniques and classroom management strategies to effectively support diverse learners.

However, implementing inclusive education in Pakistan is not without challenges. Many schools lack the necessary infrastructure, such as ramps, accessible classrooms, and assistive technologies. Overcrowded classrooms and limited teaching resources further complicate the situation. Additionally, there is a shortage of trained teachers who can address the needs of students with disabilities and learning differences. Social attitudes also present a significant barrier. In many communities, misconceptions about disabilities and gender roles persist. Some parents hesitate to send children with special needs to mainstream schools due to fear of discrimination or lack of support. Changing these perceptions requires sustained awareness campaigns and community engagement.

Government policies have increasingly emphasized inclusive education, but effective implementation remains a challenge. There is a need for stronger coordination between policymakers, educational institutions, and community organizations. Investment in teacher training, infrastructure development, and learning resources is essential to make inclusion a reality rather than a theoretical concept.

Technology offers new opportunities to support inclusive education. Digital tools, online learning platforms, and assistive technologies can help overcome

barriers to learning. For example, audio-visual materials, screen readers, and educational apps can make learning more accessible for students with disabilities. However, access to technology must be expanded, especially in rural areas, to ensure equitable benefits.

Parental involvement is another key factor. Parents must be encouraged to actively participate in their children's education and collaborate with teachers. Awareness programs can help parents understand the importance of inclusion and support their children's learning journey.

Inclusive education also has long-term economic and social benefits. By educating all segments of society, Pakistan can develop a more skilled and diverse workforce. Individuals who receive inclusive education are more likely to become independent, productive, and socially engaged citizens. This contributes to national development and reduces social inequality.

Furthermore, inclusive education promotes intellectual growth at a societal level. It encourages innovation, creativity, and problem-solving by bringing together diverse perspectives. A society that values inclusion is more likely to embrace new ideas and adapt to changing global demands.

To move forward, Pakistan must adopt a holistic approach to inclusive education. This includes policy reforms, increased funding, teacher training, and community awareness. Schools must be transformed into spaces where diversity is celebrated and every learner is valued.

In conclusion, inclusive education is not just an educational reform; it is a movement toward intellectual and social change. For Pakistan, it represents an opportunity to build a more equitable, compassionate, and progressive society. By ensuring that every child has access to quality education, the country can unlock its true potential and pave the way for sustainable development. Inclusive education is, therefore, not merely a necessity but a moral and intellectual imperative for the future.

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Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

## Silent Data, Spreading HIV

A troubling haze appears to be settling over the landscape of public health in Sindh one in which the contours of reality have blurred, and speculation, conjecture, and unverified reports have begun to shape a deeply unsettling narrative. When it comes to a disease as sensitive and consequential as HIV/AIDS, the absence of credible data and the lack of official clarity do not merely reflect administrative inefficiency; they signify a departure from the foundational principles of public health governance. The situation currently unfolding in Sindh points to a complex and potentially escalating crisis, where ignorance and ambiguity may prove more dangerous than the disease itself.

Unofficial figures emerging during the first quarter of the year suggest a noticeable rise in new cases. Yet, the precise nature of this increase its geographic spread, demographic concentration, and transmission dynamics remains obscured due to the absence of verified data. This informational vacuum inevitably breeds anxiety and suspicion. When state institutions respond with silence or vague generalities, it is only natural to question whether the reality is more severe than what is being withheld. In matters of public health, transparency is not merely an ethical imperative; it is a functional necessity. It underpins

policy formulation, guides resource allocation, and enables the design of effective awareness campaigns.

A recent white paper issued by the Medical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases Society of Pakistan sounded a serious alarm regarding the growing spread of HIV across the country, with particular reference to outbreaks in

Sindh. This document was not merely observational it was cautionary. It indicated that the issue may no longer be confined to isolated cases but could be evolving into community-level transmission. In such a context, official silence or ambiguous rebuttals only amplify concern and erode public trust.

When the Sindh Health Department dismisses media reports as “unverified” without presenting alternative, evidence-based data, it creates a dangerous void. Such a vacuum becomes fertile ground for misinformation, irresponsible narratives, and public confusion. The reluctance of responsible officials to provide direct figures, opting instead for generic statements, suggests either a weakness in data collection systems or a hesitation to disclose findings. Both scenarios are equally alarming and demand urgent scrutiny.

Globally, institutions such as the World Health Organization and UNAIDS emphasize that timely, accurate, and transparent data is the

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

# Saadi of Shiraz: Teacher of Humanity and Ethics

In the Iranian Solar Hijri calendar, the first day of the month of Ordibehesht is dedicated to commemorate one of the greatest luminaries of Persian literature, Saadi of Shiraz. As someone who speaks the Persian language, I believe that the voice of Saadi—this renowned sage of Shiraz—is not only a national treasure for Iran, but also a firm bridge connecting hearts and a universal heritage for all humanity. In this piece, I will briefly discuss his personality and his influence on the literature of the subcontinent, especially the part which is Pakistan now, and I will also, in Saadi's own voice, condemn the war and aggression that today has been inflicted upon his homeland, Iran.

## Saadi's Character and Status

Sheikh Muslih al-Din Saadi Shirazi (c. 606–691 AH) is one of the greatest poets and writers of the Islamic world, whose works have transcended the boundaries of language, nation, and century. He was born in Shiraz, studied in Baghdad, and undertook long jour-

neys to Syria, the Hejaz, India, and Central Asia. He crystallized these vast human experiences in his immortal works—Golestan and Bustan.

Saadi is not merely a poet; he is a teacher of human ethics. A line from his Golestan—"Human beings are members of one body"—is inscribed at the United Nations, demonstrating that his message belongs to all humanity.

## Saadi's Influence on the Literature of the Subcontinent

Saadi's influence on Urdu, Indo-Persian, and Punjabi literature has been profound and deeply rooted:

Allama Iqbal of Lahore—the philosopher-poet of Pakistan—considered Saadi his spiritual master. Iqbal repeatedly referred to Saadi's wisdom in his poetry and adopted his lyrical-ethical style as a model. His famous poem "Lab pe aati hai dua ban ke tamanna meri" carries within it the moral spirit of Saadi.

Mir Taqi Mir, Ghalib, Zauq, and other classical Urdu poets directly benefited from Golestan and Bustan.

For centuries, traditional schools in the subcontinent taught Saadi's Golestan as the primary textbook of Persian. In other words, from Saadi's own time, his presence and works were so widespread in the subcontinent that they were taught as textbooks in schools and literary circles.

This influence extended beyond the boundaries of the Persian language and affected great poets in local languages such as Sindhi, Urdu, and Bengali. For instance, the impact of Saadi's thought on Sindhi literature in Hyderabad, Pakistan, has been researched many times in literary gatherings and works.

Even in present-day Pakistan, Saadi holds a special place—Persian is our shared cultural bond, and Saadi is a symbol of this connection.

Moreover, people in Pakistan, even in Urdu, often recite Saadi's verses and expressions.

## Saadi's Counsel in the Face of War and the Killing of Innocents

At a time when our world is once again witnessing the suffering caused by war and aggression, Saadi's message shines like a bright lamp, illuminating the path of humanity. The foundation of his thought rests on peace and the avoidance of war. He explicitly says: "In my view, peace is better than war."

However, his most prominent and universal message against all forms of violence and aggression is this immortal verse from the Golestan:

*Human beings are parts of one single body, Created from the same essence. When one limb is afflicted by pain, The other limbs cannot remain at rest. If you are indifferent about the suffering of others, You do not deserve to be called human.*

In these verses, Saadi removes the

artificial boundaries of geography, race, and religion and emphasizes the fundamental unity of humankind. He teaches us that the pain and suffering of any human being, anywhere in the world, affects the entire body of humanity.

In the face of today's bitter events—including any aggression and war against our dearest Iran—Saadi's message makes our duty clear: we cannot remain indifferent to the pain inflicted upon any part of this single body. Saadi's thought calls us to empathy, responsibility, and the protection of human dignity, and condemns all forms of violence and division. His words are a cry against discrimination, war, and separation.

These verses today carry a direct message for us in Pakistan—as a Muslim and humanitarian nation: the suffering of one innocent human being is the suffering of all of us.

In the Bustan, Saadi says: "When the fire of the enemy's fire of cruelty burned the harvest of a friend, my heart burned—what was his fault

in this?"

And elsewhere: "How beautifully an old man said at the Altar and pulpit: God does not befriend the one who sheds blood."

## Conclusion

Saadi is not merely the poet of Shiraz or Iran; he is the voice of the awakened conscience of humanity. In this turbulent age, when divisions and human crises have scarred the face of life, returning to such a way of thinking is not just a cultural choice but a civilizational necessity. Whether in Pakistan or in Iran, honoring Saadi is in fact honoring a wisdom that has shown us the right path for centuries.

I hope these lines have been able to convey at least a glimpse of the greatness of this shared heritage. In conclusion, I invite my dear readers to read Saadi's two valuable books, Golestan and Bustan.

May his memory be honored, and his message everlasting.

Thank you for your attention to our shared literary and cultural heritage.



Analysis

Dr. Mehdi Taheri

# BARD Foundation Onboards 13 Athletes Nationwide for Training and Development Programme

## Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Bilquis and Abdul Razak Dawood Foundation (BARD) has onboarded 13 emerging athletes from across Pakistan under its Athlete Training and Development Programme, an initiative designed to identify, nurture, and prepare promising sports talent to represent Pakistan at national and international levels.

The programme is designed to support talented athletes through a structured, athlete-centred development model, enabling them to progress safely and sustainably from grassroots to elite competition. BARD's approach integrates high-performance training,

access to professional coaching with expert consultants such as Mr. Salman Butt, nutrition, mental preparedness, and competition exposure, ensuring athletes are equipped to compete at national and international levels.

The cohort includes squash players Muhammad Mustafa (U13), Sohail Adnan (U15), Huzaifa Shahid (U15), Abdul Ahad Butt (U17), Muhammad Umair Arif (U17), Abdullah Nadeem Butt (U19), Kaleem Ullah Shoaib (Senior), Anas Ali Shah (Senior), Muhammad Ahmed (Senior), and Danyia Khan (U15). Additionally, Saim Masih, Usama Hassan, and Faiqa Riaz have been inducted under the athletes' development category, reinforcing

BARD's commitment to inclusive access and talent identification across regions and backgrounds.

Speaking at the onboarding ceremony, Mr. Abdul Razak Dawood, President of BARD Foundation, said,

"When we established the BARD Foundation, our objective was not only to support talented athletes, but to build a system that prioritizes long-term development, dignity, and opportunity. Sport has the power to shape confident individuals and responsible citizens. Through this programme, we aim to create clear pathways for athletes to grow, perform, and represent Pakistan with pride on the international stage."



# Linguist Amar Fayaz Buriro Resigns Amid Financial Crisis and Security Threats

## Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Linguist Amar Fayaz Buriro, known for his work on the digital development of the Sindhi language, has announced his resignation from the Abdul Majid Bhurgri Institute of Language Engineering. He made the announcement during a live video statement on social media, citing financial difficulties and security concerns as the primary reasons behind his decision.



He revealed that he had been personally covering the institute's expenses for the past seven months, but could no longer bear the financial burden. He noted that the lack of government support had made it increasingly difficult to sustain

the institution, despite its significant progress in Sindhi language digitization and artificial intelligence within a short period.

He also made serious allegations regarding threats to his safety, stating that unidentified individuals intercepted his vehicle the previous night and issued threats, even mentioning his children to intimidate him. He emphasized that under such circumstances, he could not ignore the safety of his family. Amar Fayaz further stated

that individuals working positively in the country are often neglected and even subjected to conspiracies and false cases, making it harder to continue their work.

The Abdul Majid Bhurgri Institute of Language Engineering, operating under the Sindh government's Culture Department, has played a key role in digital development, computational linguistics, and artificial intelligence for the Sindhi language. Under Buriro's leadership, the institute also

represented Sindhi at the international level.

He added that he now wants to dedicate time to his family, especially his children, as he had been unable to do so due to his professional responsibilities. He admitted to facing severe mental and financial pressure, which ultimately led to his decision to step down.

Concluding his remarks, he thanked the public for their support and said he now wishes to live a peaceful life, while expressing uncertainty about

his future.

Meanwhile, Provincial Minister for Culture and Tourism Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah has taken notice of the threats and harassment faced by Amar fayaz Buriro and contacted the DIG Hyderabad, directing strict action against those responsible. He instructed that modern technology and CCTV footage be used to ensure the arrest of the culprits, condemning the incident and assuring full support to Buriro, whom he described as a valuable asset of Sindh.

# Huawei Pakistan Concludes Digital Week Showcasing Commitment to Nation's Digital Transformation

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD:- Huawei Pakistan today concluded its weeklong Digital Week Pakistan 2026, an initiative launched last week to highlight the company's ongoing contributions to Pakistan's digital transformation. The event brought together a diverse group of participants, including senior government officials, ICT experts, representatives from leading telecom companies, industry specialists, members of the media, and students from various universities. Over the course of the week, attendees engaged in workshops, exhibitions, panel discussions, and hands-on demonstrations focused on cloud technologies, digital skills, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and next-generation ICT solutions.



Mr. Ethan Sun CEO Huawei Pakistan highlighted the central role of cloud technologies in enabling modern digital infrastructure. He said that cloud platforms are essential for improving efficiency, enhancing security, and supporting the rapid adoption of emerging technologies across industries.

Mr. Ahmed Bilal Masud CEO AI and Cloud Business Huawei Pakistan said the company remains committed to supporting Pakistan's digital development through long-term investment, capacity building, and

advanced technology solutions. He said that Digital Week Pakistan 2026 provided an important platform to engage with partners, share global best practices, and explore new areas of cooperation. He added that Huawei Pakistan is proud to work alongside national stakeholders to help build a more connected, innovative, and digitally empowered Pakistan.

As a closed, invitation-only event, participants visited various technology zones where they were briefed by Huawei specialists, explored the latest innovations through interactive showcases, observed live demonstrations, and engaged directly with technical teams to better understand the

practical applications of next-generation ICT solutions. Teams from the Ministry of IT and Telecom (MOITT) and the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) were among the first to attend, followed by representatives from Jazz, Telenor, FAB, CMPak, the State Bank of Pakistan, the Board of Investment, and the Ministry of Planning. Members of the media also toured the experience areas, received detailed briefings, and interacted with experts to gain deeper insights into Huawei's ongoing digital initiatives in Pakistan.

Throughout the week, Digital Week Pakistan 2026 hosted a series of technical sessions led by local and international experts, covering topics

such as cloud migration strategies, AI-powered enterprise solutions, data protection frameworks, and digital talent development. Members of the media also toured the experience areas, received detailed briefings, and interacted with experts to gain deeper insights into Huawei's ongoing digital initiatives in Pakistan.

A special segment of the event focused on youth engagement, where 100 students and young professionals took part in training workshops, innovation challenges, and mentorship sessions designed to enhance digital literacy and encourage entrepreneurship. During their visit, university representatives, academic leaders, and media observers were

also briefed on Huawei's talent development programs and expressed appreciation for the company's continued efforts to support skill development and create opportunities for the next generation of ICT professionals.

The event also facilitated networking and collaboration among industry leaders, telecom operators, and technology partners, enabling discussions on future digital initiatives, cloud adoption, and sector-specific digital transformation strategies. Many participants noted that the week provided valuable insights into global technology trends and highlighted the importance of strengthening Pakistan's digital ecosystem.

Huawei Pakistan reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with partners across the country to support innovation, strengthen digital capabilities, and contribute to Pakistan's long-term digital transformation. The company stated that it will continue to invest in local talent, expand its technology offerings, and collaborate with stakeholders to accelerate the nation's digital journey.

The audience expressed strong appreciation for the depth and quality of the sessions delivered throughout the week. Participants shared positive feedback on the detailed briefings, interactive demonstrations, and the opportunity to engage directly with Huawei's technical teams.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
169,497.35	170,672.04
Day's High	Day's Low
171,306.61	169,268.33
Index Value	Change
24,185,086,906	-1174.69
Percentage	Time
-0.69%	27 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,321.09	-57.99
Percentage	Time
-0.56%	27 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,190.26	-40.45
Percentage	Time
-0.082%	27 Apr, 1:35 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
60,537.36	+821.18
Percentage	Time
+1.38%	27 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

## Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.25	202.70
Bahrain Dinar	729.10	739.85
Canadian Dollar	202.90	206.85
China Yuan	39.25	39.75
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	326.88	332.25
Hong Kong Dollar	35.13	36.14
Indian Rupee	2.25	2.45
Japanese Yen	1.7342	1.8340
Kuwaiti Dinar	879.50	890.42
Malaysian Ringgit	65.15	66.55
New Zealand \$	162.66	168.70
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.9
Omani Riyal	723	733.45
Qatari Riyal	72.25	73.25
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.3
Singapore Dollar	216.53	222.75
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	353.24	358.50
Thai Bhat	8.45	8.60
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	76.95
UK Pound Sterling	375.87	381.25
US Dollar	279.25	279.90

# PTCL & Ufone crowned 'Effective Marketer of the Year' in addition to 8 honors at Effie Awards 2026

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's leading telecommunication and digital services providers, PTCL & Ufone, emerged as the biggest winners at the prestigious Effie Awards Pakistan 2026, securing eight awards, including three Gold, two Silver, and three Bronze accolades.

PTCL & Ufone also received the coveted 'Effective Marketer of the Year 2025-26' title, awarded to the top-performing marketing organization across industries. Recognized globally as one of the most credible benchmarks of marketing effectiveness, the Effie

Awards celebrate ideas that deliver measurable business results and are rigorously judged on strategy, execution, and impact. This recognition reinforces PTCL & Ufone's leadership in creating campaigns that drive results while building strong connections with audiences nationwide.

A key highlight this year came in the Internet & Telecom category, where PTCL & Ufone secured both Gold and Silver awards. Ufone's flagship "Data Bohhaat Hai" campaign won Gold, while its "Babar's Phone Lost" execution also earned Gold in Social Media (Services), along with Silver for its "Sohni Mahiwal"

campaign.

Additional honors included Gold in Passion for Pakistan for "Hockey Hai Pakistan Ki Shaan," Silver in Positive Change - Social Good (Brands) for "Dil Se Ba-Ikhtiar," Bronze in Seasonal Marketing for UPaisa, Bronze in Brand Integration & Entertainment Partnership for Peshawar Zalmi x Ufone, and Bronze in Corporate Reputation for "Dil Se" - PTCL & Ufone Social Impact platform.

These achievements reflect PTCL & Ufone's ability to combine creativity, cultural relevance, and purposeful storytelling to deliver meaningful outcomes. From humor-led digital

engagement and modern storytelling to celebrating national pride, empowering women entrepreneurs, strengthening strategic partnerships, and advancing social inclusion, each campaign showcased the commitment by PTCL & Ufone in building a brand that create lasting value for customers and communities alike.

Spanning telecom services, digital platforms, sports, culture, and purpose-led initiatives, the wins demonstrate PTCL & Ufone's holistic approach to marketing where commercial success and societal impact go hand in hand.



## Painting Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Visitors take keen interest in paints during painting exhibition by Faisal Niaz at an art gallery, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Double-digit interest rates widen gap with regional competitors, says Faisal Moiz Khan

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Faisal Moiz Khan, President of the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (Nkati), has strongly condemned the State Bank of Pakistan's decision to raise the policy rate by one percentage point, warning that the move will prove deeply damaging to industrial growth at a time when the country's manufacturing sector is already grappling with a host of serious challenges.

In a statement, Faisal Moiz Khan said that the rate increase would make financing considerably more expensive, directly pushing up the cost of doing business and making it significantly harder for industrialists to sustain their operations. "Our industrialists are already crushed under the dual burden of high production costs and runaway inflation — this rate hike will



only make things worse," he said.

He pointed out that a particularly alarming aspect of the situation is that while regional economies operate with single-digit interest rates, Pakistan continues to saddle its industry with double-digit borrowing costs. This growing disparity, he warned, is eroding Pakistan's industrial competitiveness and driving investors away at a time when the country can least afford it.

# Mian Zahid Hussain Commends Bilal Azhar Kayani Visit to FPCCI

## Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman of the Budget Advisory Council of FPCCI, President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum & All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan, Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI, and Former Provincial Minister Information Technology, has lauded the federal government's decision to initiate a nationwide consultative process for the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-27. Speaking in the context of the recent high-profile visit of State Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, to the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Mian Zahid Hussain said that the inclusion of the business community in the policymaking process is a prerequisite for achieving sustainable economic stability and breaking the destructive boom-and-bust cycles that have historically plagued the nation-



al economy.

Mian Zahid Hussain stated that the Minister's engagement with the industrial leadership at FPCCI underscores the Prime Minister's "whole-of-economy" approach. He noted that during the deliberations, the Minister stated that Paki-

stan has witnessed measurable macroeconomic stabilization, supported by lower inflation, IMF review completions, and stronger foreign reserves since February 2024.

The veteran business leader highlighted the significance of the nine specialized working groups constituted by the Prime Minister, which include experts and stakeholders from various sectors. These groups are tasked with formulating targeted policy recommendations to enhance industrial competitiveness and foster an export-led growth model. Mian Zahid Hussain remarked that moving away from import-led consumption toward a productivity-driven economy is the only way to ensure long-term prosperity. He also appreciated the Minister's assurance that the government remains responsive to global energy price hikes, and maintaining targeted subsidies to the general public, farmers, and the transport sector to mitigate the impact of the rising global oil prices.

# CCP releases Study on Cement Sector: Calls for Reforms to Address Market Distortions

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has released a report titled "Competition Assessment Study of the Cement Sector in Pakistan," addressing competition-related challenges in the Cement Sector. The report outlines recommendations to foster competition and improve efficiency.

Pakistan's manufacturing sector remains a cornerstone of the national economy, with Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM) contributing approximately 67.5 percent of total manufacturing output and nearly 8 percent to national GDP. Within this framework, the cement industry plays a pivotal role,

accounting for around 1 percent of GDP and serving as a fundamental input for infrastructure development and housing sectors that are vital for sustained economic expansion.

Despite its strategic importance, the sector has recently experienced a slowdown. During FY2025, domestic consumption declined in both the Northern and Southern regions. This trend reflects broader macroeconomic pressures and subdued construction activity. Moreover, the report notes that Pakistan's per capita cement consumption remains significantly below the global average, indicating substantial untapped growth potential.

# OPPO Find X9 Ultra: The Peak Smartphone of 2026 Sets a New Benchmark in Design and Imaging

## Commerce Desk

LAHORE: OPPO has officially launched the all-new Find X9 Ultra in global markets, introducing a bold new design language and next-generation imaging capabilities that are already drawing widespread attention. As OPPO's most

advanced flagship to date, the Find X9 Ultra represents what can truly be defined as the peak smartphone of 2026, combining cutting-edge hardware with a refined, camera-inspired design philosophy.

Designed to stand out, the Find X9 Ultra showcases a premium build with striking

color options inspired by professional camera finishes. Its iconic circular camera module and sleek form factor create a distinctive visual identity, reflecting OPPO's continued focus on blending craftsmanship with innovation.

The launch also builds on



OPPO's strong credibility in smartphone imaging. Its predecessor, the Find X9 Pro, received a top camera award from globally renowned tech

creator MKBHDF (Marques Brownlee), widely considered one of the most influential voices in consumer technology. With the Find X9 Ultra,

OPPO raises the bar even further, delivering what can be seen as the most advanced smartphone imaging hardware available in 2026.

## TCL Marks 100 million AC Units Produced

### Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's leading consumer electronics brand, is reinforcing its long-term commitment to innovation in clean, healthy air and sustainable cooling ecosystems following the inauguration of its new Guangzhou Smart Manufacturing Base, a milestone that underscores the scale of the company's global air conditioning ambitions as demand for advanced cooling solutions continues to rise across international markets, including Pakistan.

Sunny Yang, General Manager of TCL MEABG, said, "Reaching 100 million air conditioning units in just five years is a significant milestone for TCL and reflects the growing trust consumers around the world continue to place in our products. The opening of this new smart manufacturing base demonstrates our long-term commitment to innovation, operational excellence, and the ability to meet rising demand with greater speed and precision across key markets, including Pakistan."

## Punjab Auqaf Secretary Inspects Shrine Development, Vows No Compromise on Quality

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, has stated that the Government is firmly committed to enhancing public service delivery at shrines across Punjab. He emphasized that there will be no compromise on the quality of work in ongoing development projects, directing all concerned authorities to ensure that every aspect of construction strictly adheres to prescribed standards and requirements.

He reiterated that the provision of state-of-the-art facilities for devotees and visitors remains a foremost priority of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz, and Chief Secretary Punjab, Zahid Akhtar Zaman.

# PM Shehbaz Greenlights PSL Fans' Return for Semi-finals and Final

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi meets With Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif in Islamabad

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi had recommended to Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif for the entry of the public into the stadiums for the remaining matches of the Pakistan Super League, on which Prime Minister Mian Shahbaz Sharif gave permission to the Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman to allow the public to watch the PSL semi-finals and final matches live in the stadiums. In the meeting, the Prime Minister asked PCB Chairman and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to allow cricket fans to enter the stadiums on public transport and make adequate security arrangements.

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif congratulated Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi and his team for successfully organizing PSL matches in Pakistan and paid tribute to PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi for the large participation of foreign and Pakistani cricketers in the Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11 and expressed hope that despite the changing situa-



tion in the region, Pakistan has sent a message to the whole world by organ-

izing the Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship that Pakistan and the

Pakistani people are peace-loving and great fans of sports.

## Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

Asim Tanveer

KARACHI: The HBL Pakistan Super League 11 has entered the business end of the tournament with Peshawar Zalmi, Islamabad United, Multan Sultans and Hyderabad Kingsmen qualifying for the Playoffs. On Tuesday, 28 April Peshawar Zalmi and Islamabad United will face off in the Qualifier at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi.

Multan Sultans, who shelled the chance to play the Qualifier by losing to United by four wickets in last league match, will now face Hyderabad Kingsmen in the Eliminator 1 on Wednesday, 29 April at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore. The second Eliminator is scheduled for 1 May, while the final of the tournament will be played on 3 May with

spectators allowed in the tournament for the first time.

Defending champions Lahore Qalandars and 2020 HBL PSL winners Karachi Kings both finished with 10 points – equal to Hyderabad Kingsmen – but failed to make it to the top four due to less net run rate.

Peshawar Zalmi's duo of Kusal Mendis and Babar Azam are still ruling the runs-scoring charts with 500 and 485 runs, respectively. On the bowling front, Sufyan Moqim is the leading wicket-taker with 19 scalps to his name followed by Shaheen Shah Afridi (16).

27 April is a rest day in HBL PSL with Hyderabad Kingsmen and Multan Sultans travelling to Lahore. Peshawar Zalmi touched down in Karachi on Sunday, 26 April.



## PM for boosting gemstones exports using local resources

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He also appreciated the efforts of his Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar and his team for promoting the development of the sector, terming their initiatives commendable.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Dr. Musadik Malik, Jam Kamal Khan, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad, chief secretaries of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir and other senior officials.

During the briefing, participants were informed about ongoing efforts to introduce modern mining and

gemstone processing techniques.

The meeting was informed that three centers of excellence were being established to provide international-standard training in cutting, polishing, and preparing gemstones for use in jewelry.

Pieces of land had already been identified for the establishment of such centers in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while work was underway to identify a site in Islamabad.

The meeting was further informed that Pakistan would host its first international gemstone exhibition in July 2026. Additionally, initiatives were underway in collaboration with Sri Lanka and China to train skilled

manpower in specialized gemstone processing.

The officials also briefed the prime minister on measures taken by the ministry of petroleum to promote mining practices that minimize wastage.

It was highlighted that joint projects were being launched in consultation with local communities, and around 1,000 individuals were being trained in internationally compliant mining techniques.

The prime minister was also briefed on the timelines and progress of the projects and he directed the ministry of planning to expedite the preparation of a comprehensive road-map to increase exports from the sector.

## ECC Notes Emerging Price Stability

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The ECC also discussed a summary submitted by the Ministry of Defence regarding allocation of Rs. 5.985 billion in favour of PIA Holding Company Limited (PIAHL) for settlement of liabilities of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited (PIACL). Out of the total amount, the Committee approved funding for reimbursement of medical and pension payments as well as for salary disbursements and asked for taking up the matter regarding payment to the National Insurance Company Limited (NICL) with the relevant revenue authority for adjustment, in line with the recommendations of auditors.

The ECC further approved a summary submitted by the Commerce Division for amendments to the Import Policy Order (IPO), 2022 in line with Pakistan's commitments under International

Labour Organization (ILO) conventions to introduce a prohibitory clause on import of goods produced through forced labour. In another summary submitted by the Commerce Division, the ECC approved amendments to the Import-Cum-Export Scheme of IPO, 2022 and Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS), 2021 to allow temporary import of used vehicles and auto parts for repair, refurbishment, and subsequent re-export under a pilot project, with directions for review after one year.

The ECC also considered a summary submitted by the National Food Security & Research Division seeking approval of recommendations regarding export of donkey meat and hides from Gwadar Donkey Slaughter House, and approved a proposal for disposal of existing inventory as per the applicable regulations and export protocols. The ECC further considered a summary submitted

by the Power Division regarding the Public Service Obligation (PSO) Agreement with Ex-WAPDA Distribution Companies (XWDISCOs) and asked for referring the matter to the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCSOEs), for it being the suitable forum.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Commerce Mr. Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain (virtually), Federal Minister for Planning Development & Special Initiatives of Pakistan Prof. Ahsan Iqbal Chaudhary (virtually), Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan, along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory authorities.

## Silent Data, Spreading HIV

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cornerstone of any effective response to HIV. It is this data that determines where interventions are most needed, which populations are at greatest risk, and how healthcare services should be scaled. When this cornerstone is weakened, the entire framework of response becomes compromised and ineffective.

Within the socio-cultural fabric of Sindh, the challenge is further complicated by stigma. HIV/AIDS continues to carry a heavy social burden, often deterring individuals from seeking testing or treatment due to fear of discrimination. In such an environment, the absence of clear and authoritative information only deepens fear and drives the disease further underground. Combating this silent spread

requires not just data transparency, but also a deliberate effort to reframe HIV as a medical condition rather than a social stigma.

From a policy perspective, the absence of reliable data is a critical impediment. Decision-making without accurate information is akin to navigating in darkness. Determining where to establish testing centers, how to ensure the supply of antiretroviral therapy, and which communities require targeted screening all depend on robust data. Without it, resources are misallocated, opportunities are lost, and the disease gains ground unchecked.

Ultimately, it is the ordinary citizen who bears the brunt of this opacity. Deprived of accurate information, individuals are unable to assess risk or adopt preventive measures in a timely manner. In public health crises,

access to information is as vital as medical intervention itself. It empowers communities, fosters responsible behavior, and builds collective resilience. In contrast, silence and ambiguity not only allow the disease to spread but also cultivate fear and distrust.

The historical precedent of outbreaks in regions such as Larkana where even children were affected and global attention was drawn should have served as a catalyst for strengthening surveillance and reporting mechanisms. Yet, the current scenario suggests that those lessons remain insufficiently institutionalized. This is not merely a lapse; it is a warning signal for the future.

What is urgently required is a decisive shift towards transparency. The Sindh Health Department must release comprehen-

sive and verifiable data detailing new cases, affected regions, age groups, and possible transmission patterns. This should be accompanied by structured communication through press briefings to dispel misinformation and restore public confidence. Collaboration with health experts, civil society, and media is equally essential, as such crises cannot be addressed by government action alone.

In essence, the challenge of HIV/AIDS transcends the boundaries of medicine. It is a test of governance, societal maturity, and collective responsibility. Success in this test depends on transparency, timely action, and informed engagement. If silence and ambiguity continue to prevail, the cost in human and social terms may become far greater than anticipated.

## Psychological Warfare in the US-Iran Confrontation

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events are understood can be as decisive as the events themselves.

Looking ahead, the path toward de-escalation remains uncertain but not impossible. Both nations have strong incentives to avoid a prolonged, destructive conflict. Economic stability, regional security, and global market confidence all depend on a reduction in tensions. However, any meaningful progress will require a shift in approach—from coercion and confrontation to dialogue and mutual recognition.

Crucially, such dialogue must be grounded in parity. Durable agreements are rarely achieved when one side seeks dominance over the other. Instead,

they emerge when both parties recognize each other's core interests and negotiate as equals. This principle is particularly relevant in the current context, where attempts to impose unilateral terms have repeatedly led to stalemate.

In the end, the narrative of division—whether in Iran or the United States—should be understood for what it is: a strategic tool, not an objective reality. Both nations possess complex political systems, internal debates, and competing factions. Yet both also retain the capacity to act decisively when national interests are at stake.

The challenge, therefore, is not to eliminate internal differences, but to ensure that they do not escalate into external conflict.

If managed wisely, these differences can coexist with stability. If exploited recklessly, they can become catalysts for deeper confrontation.

As the world watches this high-stakes standoff, one conclusion becomes increasingly clear: the future of U. S.-Iran relations will be determined not by narratives of weakness, but by the ability of both sides to move beyond them—and engage in a process that recognizes strength, sovereignty, and the necessity of coexistence.

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

## Hamdard University Launches Sports Week 2026



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Hamdard University has commenced its Sports Week 2026 from Monday, April 27 to Thursday, April 30, 2026. This four-day event will feature competitions in a total of 13 indoor and outdoor sports, along with additional activities including wrestling, an auto show, and food stalls. The purpose of this event is to promote healthy activities among students, enhance their physical and mental development, and strengthen team spirit within the institution. The sports competitions scheduled during Sports Week include tape ball cricket, football, futsal (girls), basketball, badminton, table tennis, throwball, volleyball, Ludo, chess, tug of war, 100-meter race, and 400-meter relay race.

According to the schedule, the competitions began on Monday with events such as tape ball cricket and football. On Tuesday and Wednesday, matches will start at 9:00 AM and continue throughout the day. Additionally, special competitions including Ludo, chess, tug of war, and races will also be held on Wednesday. The final matches and key events will take place on Thursday, April 30, 2026. The Chancellor of the University, Ms. Sadia Rashid, will attend as the Chief Guest.

While addressing the opening ceremony, Vice Chancellor of Hamdard University, Prof. Dr. Imran Amin, said Sports Week is an excellent co-curricular activity that plays a vital role in improving students' physical and mental health. It generates enthusiasm among students and encourages them to engage in positive activities. Hamdard University has always promoted co-curricular activities alongside academics. Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said himself was a great sportsman and a skilled badminton player. The active participation of students in Sports Week reflects their understanding of its importance and their desire to enhance their abilities.

He expressed hope that Sports Week 2026 would prove to be a memorable and healthy event for students. On this occasion, the Vice Chancellor also unveiled the Sports Week trophy and formally inaugurated the event by playing badminton along with Registrar Syed Faizullah Jawad. The ceremony was attended by deans, faculty members, directors, and other distinguished guests, including Director MCEL, Admission & Sports Mr. Shahryar Pasha.

## Heatwave alert: Temperatures set to soar above normal

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expected to be the worst affected regions.

In extreme cases, temperatures could climb as high as 52°C, particularly in inland areas.

The current spell of heat is expected to persist from the final days of April into early May, with broader heatwave conditions potentially lasting up to two months.

Coastal areas, including Karachi, are also expected to experience rising temperatures combined with high humidity,

increasing discomfort levels.

Authorities have advised citizens to avoid unnecessary exposure to direct sunlight, increase water intake, and take special care of vulnerable groups, including children and the elderly.

Emergency services and relevant departments have been placed on high alert to respond to any heat-related incidents.

The meteorological department also noted that dust-laden winds may affect some areas due to western weather systems, although high temperatures are expected to persist into early May.

## MoU Signing ceremony

CHANGSHA, China: President Asif Ali Zardari witnesses the signing of an MoU between MESKAY & FEMTEE Trading Company, Hunan Tea Group and Jialong International Technology (Hainan) on cooperation in the tea sector on Monday.

the Understanding to Deepen Comprehensive Cooperation in All Tea Industry Quality Development of the Tea Industry, and Enhance Bilateral Economic



Photo: PID

# Pakistan, China sign three MoUs to boost cooperation in key development sectors

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Three Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed between institutions from Pakistan and China in a ceremony held in Changsha, attended by Asif Ali Zardari.

The agreements focus on cooperation in desalination of seawater, agricultural technology, and the tea sector.

The first MoU was signed between the Sindh Local Government Department and Loxin Environmental Technology Group to collaborate

on a seawater desalination project aimed at increasing urban water supply.

The second agreement was signed between the Sindh Local Government Department and Longping High-Tech Information Company to enhance cooperation in agri-

cultural technology.

The third MoU, related to the tea industry, was signed between Muske and Femte Trading Company, Hunan Tea Group, and Jialong International Technology (Hainan), aiming to support the development of the tea industry

while strengthening economic, trade, and people-to-people ties.

The MoUs reflect a coordinated effort to expand practical cooperation between Pakistan and China across key sectors and promote broader industrial collaboration.

## Pakistan participates in SCO security talks in Moscow

### Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: An important consultative meeting of deputy foreign ministers from Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) member states was held at the Russian Foreign Ministry on regional security and international activities, with Pakistan actively participating.

The meeting, held on April 24, 2026, focused on enhancing coordination among SCO member states and making the organization's global engagement more effective.

Participants also discussed strengthening the regional security framework and adopting modern measures to address current challenges.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Russia Faisal Niaz Tirmizi represented the country at the meeting and highlighted Pakistan's diplomatic efforts



regarding the Islamabad talks.

He described the SCO as an important platform for promoting regional peace, security and cooperation, adding that Pakistan remains committed to the organiza-

tion's principles, the United Nations Charter and international law.

The Pakistani envoy emphasized the need for joint measures against terrorism, extremism and illegal drug

trafficking, while underlining the importance of cooperation for inclusive security and sustainable development in the region.

On the sidelines of the meeting, Ambassador Faisal

Niaz Tirmizi also held meetings with heads of delegations from Russia, Belarus, Tajikistan, China and Kyrgyzstan to discuss matters of mutual cooperation under the SCO framework.

## High Court Grants Protection Stay Order to Acting President Shahid Mir



### Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Senior Judge of the High Court Justice Shahid Mir has issued an important order on the writ petition filed by Acting President Shahid Mir and granted a protection stay order. Mr Muhammad Ayub Khan had challenged the appointment of Acting President Shahid Mir in the High Court.

After the initial hearing, the Apex Court issued notices to the Azad Kashmir government and other relevant parties and sought their response.

## Over 1.6 million benefit as Punjab govt expands social welfare net

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday announced an expansion of key social welfare initiatives after more than 1.6 million people benefited from various schemes, including ration cards, Himmat cards and minority cards.

The announcement came during a high-level meeting chaired by the chief minister, where Social Welfare and Baitul Maal Secretary Saira Umar briefed participants on the progress of ongoing programmes. The meeting reviewed multiple welfare initiatives aimed at supporting low-income and vulnerable groups across the province.

Officials informed the meeting

that over 1.4 million people are receiving monthly financial assistance through ration cards, while more than 100,000 persons with disabilities have been supported under the Himmat Card programme. The government plans to extend financial assistance to an additional 200,000 individuals through Himmat cards in the current fiscal year.

It was also decided to include 50,000 more beneficiaries in the ration card scheme through the "Tell Maryam" programme. Meanwhile, around 100,000 underprivileged minority citizens are receiving quarterly financial assistance of Rs10,500 through the minority card initiative.

Under a special programme,

more than 16,000 individuals have been provided wheelchairs and 16 types of assistive devices. The chief minister also highlighted the success of the Dhee Rani Programme, under which 5,000 mass marriage ceremonies have been organized so far. She directed authorities to achieve the target of 9,000 ceremonies and expand the programme to include more families.

Maryam Nawaz further directed the establishment of facilities for maintenance and cleaning of assistive devices, along with the creation of regular orphanages for abandoned children. She asked officials to collaborate with credible NGOs to enhance welfare services for women and children.

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## PM directs probe into TI Pakistan's complaint over PPRA rules violations by SNGPL



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday took notice of a complaint by Transparency International Pakistan against the Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) regarding the violations of Public Procurement Regulatory Authority (PPRA) rules.

The prime minister has directed the relevant authorities to conduct a transparent investigation into the complaints concerning irregularities in SNGPL's tendering process, according to a PM Office statement.

He further instructed that if the allegations were substantiated during the inquiry, strict action must be taken against those found responsible.

## DPM, Egyptian FM exchange views on latest developments



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday spoke with Egyptian Foreign Minister Badr Abdelatty, to exchange views on latest developments in the region.

The Egyptian FM appreciated

DPM/FM's efforts and Pakistan's continued role in advancing dialogue and diplomatic engagement. He also apprised DPM/FM of his outreach with various regional and international counterparts in this regard.

Both sides highlighted the importance of maintaining sustained engagement to support peace and stability in the region and beyond.

## DPM reviews latest regional developments

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Monday chaired a meeting with Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch and senior officials of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to review the latest regional developments.

The DPM/FM reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue playing a constructive role through dialogue and diplomacy to promote peace and stability in the region.

## ECC Notes Emerging Price Stability, Easing Inflationary Pressures on Essential Commodities

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

At the outset, the ECC was briefed by the Chief Economist, Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, on recent trends in key economic indicators, particularly price movements of essential commodities and overall inflation dynamics. The Committee was informed that, following a period of volatility, recent data indicates gradual stabilization in prices supported by coordinated efforts at the federal, provincial, and district levels. Institutional mechanisms, particularly through the National Price Monitoring Committee, have strengthened market oversight and enabled timely interventions.

Later, the ECC took up regular

agenda items and approved a number of proposals, including Technical Supplementary Grants (TSGs) across ministries and divisions. These included Rs. 100 million in favour of the Cannabis Control & Regulatory Authority (CCRA) under the Cabinet Division for renovation and operationalization of its facilities; Rs. 311 million in favour of the Government of Balochistan under the Finance Division to support the Prime Minister-approved incentive package for PAS/PSP officers posted in the province; Rs. 372 million in favour of the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) under the Ministry of Law and Justice to support digital transformation and implementation of AI-based systems; and Rs. 30.00 million in favour of the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination for grant of financial rewards to the Pakistan National Hockey Team for qualifying for the FIH Hockey World Cup after eight years, as approved by the Prime Minister.

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