



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے عثمان بن عفان نے کہا کہ ہم سے  
موت بن لی تیلہ سے بیان کیا ان سے اور جاہ  
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جہنم میں جھانک کر دیکھا (شب معراج میں)  
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(صحیح بخاری، صفحہ نمبر 546)  
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## Governor Kundi lauds "Mashal-e-Aman" initiative, assures support for youth development

A delegation of the group initiative "Mashal-e-Aman" called on Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi at the Governor House on Wednesday.



## Balochistan reviews mineral royalties, focuses on mining sector development

The Mineral Investment Facilitation Authority (MIFA) convened on Wednesday under the chairmanship of Provincial Finance and Minerals Minister Mir Shoaib Noshervani to deliberate on reforms in the mining sector. The meeting was attended by Adviser to the Chief Minister on Environment Naseem-ur-Rehman, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Parliamentary Affairs Mir Zareen Khan Magsi and others.

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## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs the meeting of the Federal Cabinet on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

## Pakistan approves first-ever national vaccine policy, paving way for local production

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal, on Wednesday announced that federal cabinet has approved Pakistan's first-ever National Vaccine Policy, paving way for its local production.

While talking on the occasion, he termed the approval a major milestone in strengthening Pakistan's healthcare system, said a statement.

He noted that, until now, Pakistan lacked a comprehensive national policy on vaccines. The newly approved framework has been developed through extensive consulta-

tions with key stakeholders to ensure a robust and sustainable approach.

The minister highlighted that Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, Minister of State for Health Dr Malik Mukhtar Ahmed Bharath, and the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) played a pivotal role in shaping the policy.

Mustafa Kamal emphasized that establishing local vaccine production capacity had become essential for the country, adding that the initiative represents a significant step toward national self-reliance in the health sector.

## Pakistan's efforts to maintain regional peace continue: PM Shehbaz

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday said that Pakistan was still continuing its efforts to maintain peace in the region, highlighting the country's proactive diplomatic role in easing tensions and promoting stability.

Addressing the cabinet, the prime minister highlighted that marathon talks between Iran and the US held in Islamabad on April 11 lasted for 21 hours and marked a significant diplomatic breakthrough. He said Pakistan made sincere and coordinated efforts for the success of the negotiations, with contributions from Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister

Ishaq Dar, and other senior officials.

As a result of these efforts, he noted, the ceasefire between Iran and the United States was extended and continues to hold.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also played an important role in the process, he added.

The prime minister informed the cabinet that Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi visited Pakistan with his delegation and held multiple rounds of talks, including a two-hour session with him. He said Araghchi assured that Iran would respond positively after consultations with its leadership.

However, PM Shehbaz expressed concern over rising global crude oil prices, noting that new prices

were expected to be determined on Friday. He said this was a very challenging situation, but he expressed confidence that collective wisdom and coordinated efforts would keep matters under control.

He appreciated Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik and his team for ensuring stability in domestic fuel supply, adding that Pakistan averted panic situations at petrol pumps unlike other countries.

The prime minister said the country's oil import bill had surged from \$300 million before the conflict to \$800 million, placing additional pressure on the economy. He also noted a reduction in petroleum consumption during the current week compared to the previous one.

## DPM Dar chairs 5th meeting on Fuel Subsidy, Austerity; reaffirms govt commitment



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired the 5th meeting of the Steering Committee on Fuel Subsidy and Austerity and reaffirmed the government's commitment to implementing the proposed measures in both letter and spirit.

The committee reviewed progress on the fuel subsidy initiative and assessed the implementation of the Prime Minister's austerity measures, a DPM's Office news release said. The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, MoS on Finance, Federal Secretaries for Petroleum, and IT, as well as concerned officials from provincial departments and governments of AJK and GB.

## Pakistan-EU cooperation vital for innovation-driven, sustainable growth: Musadik Malik

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik on Wednesday said that enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and the European Union was essential to drive innovation-led, sustainable economic growth and long-term wealth creation.

Addressing the Pakistan-EU Business Forum 2026, the minister underscored that partnerships between Pakistan and Europe were not only vital for trade but also for fostering an "innovation ecology" capable of delivering sustained productivity and shared prosperity.

He said that while short-term productivity could be achieved through technology, long-term and sustainable growth depended on building strong systems of innovation. "At the heart of wealth creation lies productivity, but sustainable productivity only comes from a system of innovation," he remarked.

He noted that the EU's financial support, including a €20 billion framework, would help Pakistani SMEs undertake carbon audits, adopt green certifications, and enhance innovation capacity. "This demonstrates that our partners are not only setting standards but also enabling us to meet them," he observed.

## Acting President approves transfer of IHC judges on PM's advice



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousof Raza Gilani on Wednesday approved, on the advice of the prime minister, the recommendations of the Judicial Commission of Pakistan regarding the transfer of judges from the Islamabad High Court.

Accordingly, Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani, Senior Puisne Judge of the Islamabad High Court, has been transferred to the Lahore High Court, a Presidency's news release said.

Justice Babar Sattar has been transferred from the Islamabad High Court to the Peshawar High Court.

Justice Saman Rafat Intiaz has been transferred from the Islamabad High Court to the Sindh High Court.

## Pakistan can rise as regional economic power through maritime reforms: Junaid Anwar Chaudhry

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry stated that Pakistan can emerge as a rising regional economic power through bold maritime reforms.

Speaking at a seminar titled "The impact of current geopolitical situation on maritime trade in the Indian Ocean region", the minister described the Indian Ocean as a vital corridor linking Middle Eastern energy, Asian industry, African resources and European markets.

He emphasised that the Indian Ocean's geopolitical tensions extend beyond trade and shipping, threatening global econo-

mies, regional stability and national futures.

On Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's directives, he said, a high-level committee formed in March positioned Karachi Port, Port Qasim and Gwadar Port as trans-shipment hub.

"Swift and coordinated decisions in the national interest have reduced risks to trade, energy and logistics," Junaid Chaudhry said.

Karachi Port set a monthly record with 111,300 TEUs of trans-shipment cargo in March, Port Qasim handled 3,485 TEUs with spare capacity, and Gwadar managed its first dedicated trans-shipment shipment, four such vessels have arrived so far.

He said reforms with the Federal Board of Revenue replaced 100% scanning with risk management, slashing clearance times and enabling Less than Container Load (LCL) operations for small traders. The exporters at Karachi Port saw charges cut by 60%, perishable exports limited to 4% scanning.

Decisive action cleared years of container congestion as Port Qasim reached zero backlog, Karachi waived extra storage fees and auctioned surplus goods, and for the first time in its 137-year history operations ran through Eid holidays with over 2,500 container movements, the minister added.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONVENTION & EXPO  
SECURING OUR FUTURE  
6TH INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONVENTION & EXPO 2026

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT CONVENTION & EXPO  
SECURING OUR FUTURE

Daily The Spokesman  
Official Media Partner

We are proud to announce that Daily THE SPOKESMAN has officially joined the 6th International Students Convention & Expo 2026 as a Media Partner

May 03 - 06, 2026, at Islamabad

# Azad Kashmir PM authorizes 30KM road projects per constituency



**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that each MLA has been authorized to undertake road projects of up to 30 kilometers in their respective constituencies.

He made these remarks during a session of the Legislative Assembly while responding to a call attention notice by Sardar Mir Akbar Khan. The prime minister assured the member from Sharqi Bagh that road projects in his constituency would be approved by the CDC and tenders issued shortly.

Responding to a query by Khawaja Farooq Ahmed regarding the adverse impact of faulty sewerage lines, he said measures would be taken to prevent sewage from contaminating river water. He added that the government

was actively working to complete pending projects under ERRA and SERRA. The prime minister further said that a Rs360 million solid waste management project had already been launched to improve cleanliness in Muzaffarabad.

A committee has been constituted to oversee the installation of sewerage systems and provision of clean drinking water in Muzaffarabad and Kotli. The

issues will be addressed on a priority basis in light of its recommendations," he said.

Acknowledging the federal government's continued support for ongoing development initiatives, he said that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had approved Rs1 billion on his request for the completion of ERRA and SERRA projects, for which he expressed gratitude.

## Public Notice: Verify your vote in Muzaffarabad Preliminary Electoral Rolls now

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Spokesperson of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission hereby informs the public through a press release that the Preliminary Electoral Rolls have been published.



If the vote of any eligible voter is left out of the list or is registered in the wrong constituency/wrong location, he can get his/her vote corrected within the stipulated period. Applications for this purpose can be submitted to the concerned Revising Authority (Deputy Commissioner) from 28th April to 04th May 2026. The public is requested to ensure the registration and accuracy of their vote by submitting the application on time so that there is no deficiency or error in the final electoral roll. The Election Commission appeals for full cooperation from the public so that a transparent and accurate electoral roll can be prepared.

## Kotli faces environmental crisis amid poor solid waste management

**Bureau Report**

KOTLI: The city is grappling with a worsening environmental and public health crisis due to the absence of an effective solid waste management system. With no proper mechanism in place for waste disposal, garbage has accumulated across streets, markets, and public squares, creating unhygienic conditions and spreading foul odors throughout the area.

According to local observations, approximately sixty tons of waste are generated daily in Kotli. However, the lack of a designated dumping site has compounded the problem, leaving municipal authorities struggling to manage the growing volume of refuse.

Instead of adopting scientific and environmentally safe waste disposal methods, Kotli Municipal Committee has reportedly resorted to burning garbage under the cover of darkness. This practice is releasing harmful smoke and toxic gases into the air, posing serious risks to the environment and the health of residents. Meanwhile, the District Health Officer (DHO) Kotli has formally written a letter to the District Magistrate, warning about the heaps of waste scattered across the city and expressing serious concerns over the possibility of disease outbreaks as a result of the deteriorating sanitary conditions.

During the recent visit of Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore to Kotli, members of the media also drew his attention to the issue, highlighting the urgency of the situation and the need for immediate intervention.

The current crisis underscores the urgent need for proper planning, including the establishment of a regulated dumping site and the introduction of environmentally friendly waste disposal systems, to protect public health and restore ecological balance in Kotli.

## Simultaneous lifting of blockades, sanctions seen as viable path to end war: Masood Khan

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, has stated that the ongoing Iran-U.S. crisis has reached a critical juncture where both sides are under intense military, economic and political pressure, making a negotiated settlement inevitable but complex.

He noted that despite the absence of formal face-to-face dialogue, sustained backchannel communication between Abbas Araqchi and Steve Witkoff, along with repeated assertions by Donald Trump of ongoing contact, indicate that diplomacy remains active, albeit indirect. He emphasized that Pakistan has emerged as a credible and trusted intermediary, with Iran expressing reservations about direct engagement with the United States. Sardar Masood Khan underscored that both countries are incurring heavy costs. Iran's economy has been severely impacted due to the blockade of its ports and disruption of oil exports, while global markets are experiencing volatility, with oil prices surging sharply. He added that the crisis is no longer confined to bilateral tensions but has become a global economic concern affecting energy security and financial stability.

## COMSATS University Islamabad launches life skills program aimed at social and economic uplift

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) on Tuesday launched a comprehensive Life Skills Program at its Islamabad Campus, with a core objective to primarily enable staff and students to acquire alternative career skills and improve their professional and socio-economic prospects.

Invisioned by Rector Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, the initiative reflects a strategic institutional focus on equipping staff grade employees with practical, market-relevant competencies that extend beyond their existing roles. The program is designed not only to support organizational efficiency but also to create pathways for income diversification and long-term career mobility among staff and students.

Addressing the launch ceremony, Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar stated that CUI is transitioning into a new digital phase, where a majority of administrative and academic services are being shifted to digital platforms. This transformation across the country, he noted, requires the development of new skill sets and adaptive roles across the University.

He emphasized that existing human resources will be given priority in accessing these training opportunities, ensuring that the current workforce remains central to the University's evolution. He further observed that such structured upskilling can serve as a replicable model for other institutions in Pakistan.

## Goodwill Gesture

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi, presents a traditional cultural shawl to the Ambassador of Nepal, Ms. Rita Dhital, as a gesture of goodwill.



Photo: PID

## AJK Chief Secretary Stresses Career Vision at Youth Leadership Workshop Closing



**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Secretary Azad Jammu and Kashmir Khushal Khan said that the main objective of activities like Job Festival and Youth Leadership Workshop is to provide the youth with a clear direction, strong career vision and effective guidance to move forward in the practical field.

In today's era, the youth have numerous opportunities to showcase

their talents and professional development and such platforms provide them with a practical opportunity to highlight their skills and set the direction for the future.

He expressed these views while addressing as the chief guest on the last day of the Youth Leadership Workshop in connection with the two-day AJK Job Festival organized at the Kashmir Institute of Management in collaboration with the Department of Sports, Youth and Culture and Young Patriots

Network. Secretary Sports, Youth and Culture Ansar Yaqoob was also present on the occasion.

The Chief Secretary, while describing the youth as the true architects of the nation, said that in the current global context, many traditional concepts are changing and Pakistan is receiving positive recognition at the international level, while the national leadership is moving forward with unity and stability.

He said that unlike the limited professional fields in the past, today there are wide opportunities available for the youth and the current generation stands out in terms of its capabilities, speed and innovation.

Finally, he appreciated the efforts of Secretary Sports, Youth and Culture Ansar Yaqoob and congratulated him for organizing the successful event in a short time and distributed certificates among the young participants.

## AJK Police Chief vows total commitment to law, public service

**Abdul Majeed Tahir.**

MIRPUR: Inspector General of Police Azad Jammu and Kashmir Captain (retd) Liaquat Ali Malik has said that the police is a valuable asset of the state, which has taken an oath to protect the lives and property of the people, establish the supremacy of law and constitution, and eradicate all kinds of crimes from the region. It should be fulfilled at all costs and dedicate its services to the state and the people. Azad Kashmir Police is being developed on modern lines. The Counter Terrorism Department is being established at a cost of



Rs 2 billion, in which new posts, police buildings, vehicles and other facilities will be provided. By bridging the gap between the public and the police, the public is restoring their trust in the police.

The continuous communication of DIG Kamran Ali and SSP Khurram Iqbal with the public has made the police proud, for which every individual and

employee of the Mirpur district police is commendable. Police employees will be required to take four holidays in a month.

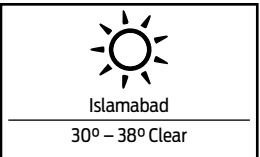
Azad Kashmir Police will be provided with facilities equal

to those of the army in CMH, CSD, APS. There should be no difference between a soldier and an officer in the police. Every police employee, including me, is accountable to the people of

the state.

He expressed these views while addressing the members of the Police Darbar and the Chamber of Commerce and Industries during his visit to

Mirpur. On this occasion, Assistant Inspector General of Police Abid Ali Mir, Deputy Inspector General of Police Region Mirpur Kamran Ali, SSP Khurram Iqbal were also with him.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:51 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	4:52 pm
Maghrib	6:49 pm
Isha	8:21 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

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

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

**Council of Islamic Ideology meeting held**

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of the Council of Islamic Ideology held on Wednesday under the chairmanship of the Chairman of the Council, Allama Dr. Muhammad Raghīb Hussain Naeemi in which members of the Council participated online as part of the federal government's austerity policy.

While paying tribute to the Pakistani armed forces for their great victory in last year's, the Chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology, Allama Dr. Muhammad Raghīb Hussain Naeemi, said that just three hours after the false flag operation carried out by the Indian government in the Pahalgam area of Anantnag district in occupied Kashmir on April 22, 2025, Indian media outlets distorted the facts and began blaming Pakistan.

Pakistan rejected these baseless allegations and offered an impartial and transparent investigation, he said.

In response to Indian aggression, he said, Pakistan launched Operation Banyan Marsus, in which Allah Almighty granted a historic victory to the Pakistani armed forces.

On the completion of one year of the "Banyan Marsus" the Council of Islamic Ideology paid tribute to the Pakistani armed forces, especially Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, the chairman said.

# CM Maryam Nawaz meets Oscar-Winning Filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, agrees on Punjab Film City Collaboration

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Academy Award (Oscar)-winning Pakistani-origin filmmaker and journalist Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif today.

The chief minister appreciated Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy's professional achievements and expertise, and termed her efforts in highlighting social issues through documentary filmmaking as commendable.

During the meeting, Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy praised Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for her contributions to arts and culture. Both sides discussed the Punjab Film City project in NSIT City and agreed on mutual

**collaboration.**

The chief minister said the Punjab Film City project would become Pakistan's first "end-to-end" media production hub. She added that the project would provide facilities for film, television, digital media, VFX, and post-production.

She further stated that Punjab Film City would include modern studios, sound stages, post-production labs, shooting locations, and a lake. A convention hall, media trade hub, and film and music school are also part of the project.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif also directed the Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) to restore the Digital History Museum at Minar-e-Pakistan.

Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy said that the chief minister is doing commendable work and described her leadership as exemplary, adding that people of Karachi also acknowledge her efforts.

She noted that the revival of the Basant Festival after decades is a result of the chief minister's efforts, adding that prominent Hollywood personalities have shown interest in the festival and would be formally invited next year to promote it internationally.

She also appreciated the revival of the Horse and Cattle Show in Punjab, stating that such festivals provide quality entertainment opportunities to the public.



**A view**

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of clouds hovering over the sky Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Book Launch Event – Risk Management in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

**City Desk**

The official launch of Risk Management in the Age of Artificial Intelligence, authored by Salman Qureshi, was successfully held at Rawalpindi Arts Council. The event brought together industry professionals, academics, and thought leaders to discuss the evolving landscape of risk in the age of artificial intelligence. The book highlights the urgent need for organizations and leaders to rethink traditional risk management approaches and adopt adaptive, intelligence-driven strategies to address modern digital challenges.

The event was graced by Chief Guest Ammar Jafri, whose presence added significant value and insight to the occasion. Several distinguished guests from various sectors also attended, contributing to meaningful discussions around cybersecurity, governance, and emerging technologies.

Director Rawalpindi Arts Council Muhammad Shakoor, in his address,



thanked the distinguished participants and speakers for their valuable contributions and appreciated the successful launch of the book. He stated that such intellectual and literary initiatives are

vital for promoting knowledge, critical thinking, and dialogue on contemporary issues, and reaffirmed the Council's commitment to organizing similar events in the future.

## Pakistan Faces Public Health Crisis as Banned Reusable Syringes Fuel Disease Spread

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Healthcare Devices Association of Pakistan (HDAP) expresses grave concern over confirmed reports of the illegal manufacture, supply and use of banned reusable disposable syringes across Pakistan — and the even more alarming discovery of syringes being fraudulently labelled as Auto-Disable when they remain fully reusable. These are not merely regulatory violations. They are facts that have directly contributed to the transmission of HIV and other blood-borne infections among the most vulnerable members of our society, including children.

HDAP strongly condemns the illegal availability, distribution and use of banned reusable disposable syringes, whether through unauthorized manufacturing, import or any other unlawful channel, as these products pose a grave threat to public health and safety in Pakistan. The continued use of such unsafe products significantly increases the risk of transmission of blood-borne diseases including Hepatitis B, Hepatitis C and HIV.

In line with HDAP's mission to promote and protect the highest standards of patient care and ethical standards through networking, advocacy and expertise enhancement, the Association reiterates its firm commitment to the promotion and supply of only proven quality, safe and internationally compliant healthcare products that meet approved regulatory standards.

## Career Fair held in Shaheed Benazirabad to Promote Employment Opportunities

NAWABSHAH: A significant career fair titled "ACCESS. ABILITY. CAREERS 2026" was organized in a local hall in Shaheed Benazirabad to enhance employment opportunities for persons with disabilities. The event was held with the collaboration of the Sindh Government's Department of Special Education, the Sindh Persons with Disabilities Protection Authority (SPDPA), and ConnectHear.

The event was attended by Member of Sindh Assembly Ghulam Qadir Chandio, Secretary Special Education Taha Ahmed Farooqi, and Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Division Shahrir Khan Bhutto as chief guests. Various public and private organizations set up stalls to offer employment opportunities to persons with disabilities.

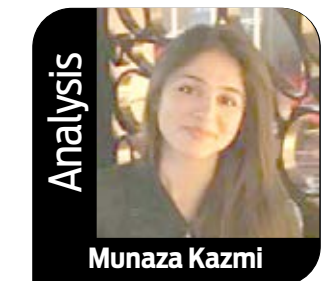
The event was also attended by Deputy Commissioner Shaheed Benazirabad Abdul Samad Nizamani, Deputy Commissioner Sanghar Sarah Javed, CEO ConnectHear Azeema Dhanji, DG SPDPA Ghulam Farooq Laghari, Regional Director Special Education Nisar Ahmed Brohi, VC Quest Dr Saleem Raza Samon, President NDF Abid Lashari, along with officials from various departments, experts, company representatives, and a large number of persons with disabilities.

## Youth Engagement Session Held on Population Awareness in Commerce College TT Singh

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the auspices of the District Population Welfare Office Toba Tek Singh, a comprehensive and informative Youth Engagement Orientation Session was organized at Government Commerce College Toba Tek Singh to raise awareness among youth about the growing population challenges and their solutions. Awareness-based documentaries were also screened during the session. The activity was part of the mobilization campaign under the Chief Minister Punjab's "Population Management and Family Planning Program" launched through the Annual Development Program (ADP).

## Inflation along Artificial Inflation resulting the Conflict



Munaza Kazmi

You must have heard the idiom, "Gahu ke sath ghun bhi pista hai", means "When the bull fights, the grass gets

trampled". That turned the fate of Pakistan this 2026.

Iran-US conflict has heavily aggravated Pakistan's already fragile economy, with inflation projected to hit 7.5%-11.5% due to skyrocketing global fuel prices, supply chain disruptions, and artificial inflation from hoarding. The war has severely affected markets, triggering record high fuel prices and disrupting energy supplies, forcing the government to cut development budgets and introduce austerity measures.

Hence, by April 2026, fuel prices have surged by about 66% since the conflict began, with petrol prices

surpassing Rs458 per litre. The conflict has disrupted the Strait of Hormuz, affecting 85-99% of Pakistan's oil and LNG imports. Which impacted the Rural and Urban mobility, hampering the agriculture markets, closure of educational institutions, offices, business hubs.

Sadly, amidst the structural crisis, local markets are witnessing artificial inflation. Instead of becoming empathetic, retailers and suppliers started exploiting the wartime situation by hoarding essential items to create artificial shortages, further driving up prices beyond the impact of imported inflation.

Along, high energy costs have increased production expenses, particularly for export-oriented sectors like textiles and cement, which operate on narrow margins, limiting their competitiveness.

The government has been forced to slash the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) by Rs173 billion to fund fuel subsidies and manage the soaring import bill, which has risen from \$1.7 billion to nearly \$4.5 billion monthly.

Moreover, security concerns and economic instability related to the West Asia crisis have stalled major investment projects, including development



at the Reko Diq mine, impacting future growth prospects.

While the government initially aimed to keep inflation in check, the

deepening conflict has prompted upward revisions of inflation projections, with experts warning of double-digit inflation if the war continues.

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# Field Marshal- Trump One-on One Meeting That Reshaped Pak-US Relations

A turning point in 2025 reshaped U. S.–Pakistan relations through a blend of crisis management and calculated diplomacy. During a dangerous India–Pakistan escalation, Pakistan’s military under Asim Munir exercised restrained force and back-channel engagement to avoid full-scale war, enabling a ceasefire. Pakistan’s leadership, including Shehbaz Sharif, then credited Donald Trump with preventing a nuclear crisis, appealing to his desire for recognition and reframing Pakistan as a capable partner. A June 2025 White House meeting reinforced this shift, with Trump expressing admiration for Pakistan’s resilience and strategic strength, prompting a reassessment of its role even as India under Narendra Modi maintained an independent stance.

This evolving dynamic weakened the long-standing U. S. tilt toward India and replaced it with a more transactional approach that favored engagement with Pakistan. Trade and investment opportunities expanded, particularly in Pakistan’s resource sector, while tensions surfaced between Washington and New Delhi over claims of U. S. mediation in the ceasefire. Trump publicly credited Munir despite Indian denials, straining ties and fueling political backlash in India. Meanwhile, growing personal rapport between Trump and Munir translated into tangible gains for Pakistan, including U. S. policy support and economic backing. The relationship deepened further with high-stakes requests, such as potential Pakistani involvement in a Gaza stabilization plan, placing Islamabad in a difficult position between maintaining U. S. favor and managing strong domestic support for the Palestinian cause.

It is in these moments of extreme pressure that the mettle of a leader is truly tested. And according to the diplomatic cables that later surfaced, Munir maneuvered with the precision of a surgeon. He did not refuse Trump. Instead, he engaged in a process of “constructive negotiation” that has since become a case study in diplomatic pushback. Pakistan offered to lead the diplomatic charge for the plan within the Muslim world, using its clout with Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and others to build consensus. They agreed to the principle of an international force, but cleverly inserted caveats: the force must have a UN mandate (introducing Chinese and Russian veto power), and its mission must focus purely on humanitarian reconstruction, not the disarmament of “resistance groups” (i.e., Hamas). While this might have looked like obstructionism to a lesser politician, Trump, who prides himself on his deal-making skills, took it as a challenge to negotiate. The back-and-forth actually deepened his respect for Munir, whom he viewed as a “smart cookie” who was loyal to his country but willing to meet the US halfway.

Ultimately, the relationship emerged stronger. Trump began referring to Munir as “my favorite Field Marshal” in public speeches, even bringing Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on stage at international forums to bask in the reflected glory of the “great relationship” the US had with Pakistan. In Islamabad, the mood was nothing short of euphoric. For decades, Pakistan had suffered from a national neurosis, a fear of being “abandoned” by the West after

the Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan and a fear of being “betrayed” during the war on terror. Now, their top general had done what no civilian diplomat could: he had made Pakistan relevant again. The “Trump-Munir” relationship became the shorthand for a new era of dignity and respect. From the halls of the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi to the tea shops of Lahore, a sense of pride swelled. People spoke of their Field Marshal with a reverence usually reserved for national poets and cricket heroes, crediting him with changing the “American mindset.”

To understand the depth of this pride, one must revisit the specific words Trump spoke after that first meeting: “You know what kind of people these Pakistanis are...” It was a phrase that struck at the heart of Pakistani identity. For years, the world had pitied Pakistan or chastised it. But Trump looked at the nuclear bomb, a project born of insecurity and national fear after the 1971 debacle, and saw not a threat, but a badge of honor. He looked at the military’s complex history with India and saw not a stalemate, but a victory of grit over size. This psychological validation was worth more than any aid package. It told the Pakistani establishment that their strategic choices—prioritizing the bomb and the army over economic industrialization in the 20th century—had a payoff. It told them that “strategic depth” and “minimum credible deterrence” were not just jargon for think-tankers, but concepts that an American president could fear and respect.

The ripple effects of this single meeting continue to reshape the geo-

political architecture of Asia. The united front between India and the US that was supposed to contain China has developed a crack, and through that crack, Pakistan has inserted itself as a necessary third player. As Washington grows wary of New Delhi’s strategic autonomy (such as buying Russian oil and hedging with BRICS), the White House has begun to fondly recall the days when Pakistan was a reliable “ally,” however transactional that alliance was.

When a journalist recently asked Donald Trump who his favorite world leader was, the president didn’t hesitate. He didn’t mention the Prime Minister of Japan, the Chancellor of Germany, or the Crown Prince of Saudi Arabia. He smiled that half-smile, leaned into the microphone, and said, “I like Prime Minister Sharif, but I love the Field Marshal. He’s fantastic. He’s my favorite.” In Pakistan, this quote was printed on the front pages of every newspaper and replayed on every news channel. For a nation that has spent the last decade feeling invisible, dismissed as a “terrorist haven,” and bullied by international financial institutions, the idea that the most powerful man in the world had declared their military leader his “favorite” was a balm to the national psyche. It confirmed their belief in their own exceptionalism: that despite the poverty, despite the chaos, Pakistan is a nation that matters; a nation that, as Trump so succinctly put it, made the atom bomb and stood tall against a giant. And for that transformation in perception, for that surge in global standing, Pakistanis feel a debt of gratitude to the man in uniform who walked into the Oval Office and walked out with the keys to a new world order, proving once again that in the brutal game of nations, perception is often just as powerful as power itself.



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

## PARC Achieves Milestone in Commercializing Seed Research

In a historic and landmark development for Pakistan’s seed sector, “PATCO Seeds,” an initiative of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), has successfully secured approval as a Seed Business Enterprise from the National Seed Development and Regulatory Authority (NSDRA). This milestone marks a significant step forward in strengthening Pakistan’s seed industry and enhancing the availability of high-quality seeds for farmers across the country.

Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, has demonstrated strong leadership and unwavering commitment to modernizing Pakistan’s agriculture sector, particularly the seed industry, through innovation, regulatory reforms, and enhanced private sector engagement.

The Federal Minister stated that the approval of PATCO Seeds as a Seed Business Enterprise is a major step toward transforming Pakistan’s agriculture into a modern, resilient, and competitive sector. He emphasized that the government remains committed to empowering national institutions, including PARC, to deliver innovation directly to farmers and to ensure sustainable food security.

Under the Minister’s guidance, PARC has undertaken strategic initiatives to strengthen institutional frameworks, promote public-private partnerships, and facilitate investment in agri-business ventures. These efforts aim to bridge the gap between agricultural research and its commercial application.

The approval of PATCO Seeds underscores PARC’s continued commitment to translating research into practical and commercial success. As a certified Seed Business Enterprise, PATCO Seeds is now well-positioned to play a transformative role in the production, processing, and distribution of certified seeds, contributing to improved crop yields and national food security.

Chairman PARC, Dr. Syed Murtaza Hassan Andrabi, welcomed the development and termed it a significant milestone in PARC’s journey toward commercialization of research. He highlighted that PATCO Seeds will serve as a vital link between cutting-edge agricultural research and its application at the farm level, ultimately benefiting farmers nationwide.

PATCO Seeds will focus on ensuring the commercial availability of high-quality, climate-resilient, and high-yield seed varieties tailored to Pakistan’s diverse agro-ecological zones. The initiative is expected to enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen rural livelihoods, and create new employment opportunities.

In the context of emerging challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and population growth, the Federal Minister’s forward-looking vision, coupled with PARC’s innovative initiatives like PATCO Seeds, reflects the Government’s commitment to building a resilient, sustainable, and self-reliant agricultural sector.



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

## The Theatre of Image: Zelensky’s PR, Azov, and the Politics of Whitewashing

In modern conflict, battles are waged not only with weapons but with words and images. Ukraine’s struggle against Russia has unfolded alongside a parallel war of narratives, where public relations campaigns are as decisive as artillery. Yet, as Marta Havryshko’s recent exposé on X reveals, the line between advocacy and manipulation is perilously thin. Her account details how President Volodymyr Zelensky’s PR team orchestrates encounters between Western celebrities and carefully curated representatives of the Azov Battalion, presenting a sanitized image of a controversial force. This episode compels reflection on the ethics of wartime communication, the responsibilities of democratic leadership, and the dangers of mythmaking in moments of crisis.

The Azov Battalion has long been a lightning rod in Ukraine’s defence discourse. Born as a volunteer militia, it quickly gained notoriety for ultranationalist elements and symbols linked to extremist ideologies. Though later integrated into Ukraine’s National Guard, the shadow of its origins persists. Western coverage has oscillated between portraying Azov as heroic defenders of Mariupol and condemning it as a haven for farright extremism. In this contested space, Zelensky’s PR strategy seeks to recast Azov as humanitarian—a project Havryshko suggests relies heavily on stagemanaged theatre.

The formula, she notes, is simple but effective. Invite a Western celebrity—Prince Harry is cited—who dutifully praises Ukraine as the “vanguard of freedom and democracy.” Then arrange a meeting with Azov fighters, carefully chosen to avoid troubling insignia. Women speak warmly of medical and social services, and the encounter ends with a symbolic gift—a medalion inscribed “Love is Care.” The optics are heartwarming, the message choreographed, the audience

primed to absorb compassion rather than controversy. It is, in Havryshko’s words, pure spectacle.

The ethical problem is not Ukraine’s desire to defend its image—every nation at war seeks support—but the deliberate erasure of contested realities. By curating encounters that obscure Azov’s history, Zelensky’s team risks substituting propaganda for transparency. Democracies, even under siege, must resist the temptation to whitewash. To do otherwise undermines the very values—freedom, accountability, pluralism—that Ukraine claims to defend. As Machiavelli warned in *The Prince*: “Men are so simple, and so subject to immediate needs, that he who deceives will always find someone who will let himself be deceived.” The lesson is timeless: deception may win applause in the moment, but it corrodes trust in the long run.

This episode also illustrates the phenomenon of celebrity diplomacy. In an age of fragmented media, global figures amplify causes and mobilize audiences. Yet endorsement can trivialize conflicts into spectacles of sentiment. Prince Harry’s hypothetical role underscores the danger: a royal voice lending gravitas to a staged tableau, while deeper controversies remain unaddressed. The result is not enlightenment but emotional manipulation.

From an academic perspective, the case invites us to revisit theories of political communication. Jürgen Habermas emphasized rational discourse in the public sphere. Wartime PR, however, privileges affect over reason. The medallion reading “Love is Care” epitomizes this: appealing to emotion, bypassing inquiry, reframing a battalion with a contested past as a symbol of tenderness. Such strategies may yield sympathy, but they corrode discourse. When narratives are engineered to elicit tears rather than thought, the public sphere is impoverished.

The whitewashing of Azov also carries international implications. Western governments and publics are

vital stakeholders in Ukraine’s survival. If their support is mobilized through selective storytelling, the eventual revelation of inconvenient truths could breed disillusionment. History offers cautionary parallels: when wartime propaganda collapses under scrutiny, backlash erodes trust not only in leaders but in the causes they champion. Ukraine, which seeks legitimacy through democratic values, cannot afford such erosion.

None of this diminishes Ukraine’s just struggle against aggression. Russia’s invasion is a violation of sovereignty and international law, and Ukraine’s defence is both necessary and legitimate. But justice does not require erasing complexity. Acknowledging Azov’s contested nature could strengthen Ukraine’s moral standing, demonstrating a willingness to confront uncomfortable realities rather than conceal them. Transparency, even when painful, is the bedrock of credibility.

The exposé also raises questions about the role of PR firms and entertainment industries in wartime narratives. Zelensky, a former actor and producer, understands the power of performance. His speeches to foreign parliaments, tailored with historical references, have been lauded as masterful communication. Yet the same theatrical instinct, when applied to controversial battalions, risks crossing from persuasion into manipulation. Leaders must balance mobilization with honesty.

In conclusion, Havryshko’s revelation is more than a critique of a single PR stunt; it is a warning about the fragility of discourse in war. The temptation to whitewash, choreograph, and sentimentalize is immense. But democracies must resist. Ukraine’s strength lies not only in its soldiers but in its claim to embody values that distinguish it from its adversary. To compromise those values through manipulative PR is to weaken the foundation of its struggle. The integrity of perspective demands that we confront realities, however uncomfortable, and ensure that the theatre of war does not become a theatre of illusion.



Analysis

S. M. Hali

## It is obligatory for Dead Bodies to respect the Line of Control

The blood-stained Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir has not only divided the land into two parts, but has also torn apart the emotions, feelings and relationships of Kashmiris. Because of this cursed line, families remain separated... here, a father’s grave lies on one side, while the son, standing helplessly on the other, can only watch his father’s funeral from a distance, filled with longing and despair.

Recently, another such tragic incident occurred. On one side, the real brothers funeral was taking place, while on the other side of the LoC, the brothers, sisters and the entire family stood with tearful eyes, complaining to their Lord: “O God, why have You placed such a great suffering upon the people of Kashmir?”

Recently, Mr. Liaquat Ali Khan (son of the well-known freedom activist Raja Izhar Khan) passed away. During the time of migra-

tion, he had remained in Kupwara (in Indian Occupied Kashmir) with his uncle, while the rest of the family moved to Azad Kashmir. There, he completed his education and rose to the position of Tehsildar. Raja Izhar Khan was a multifaceted personality.

Today, the scene of Liaquat Ali Khan’s funeral was heart-breaking. On one side, his body was brought from Srinagar to Keran (Indian Occupied Kashmir), while on the other side, the entire family stood helplessly at Keran (Azad Kashmir). Just less than a

minute distance... yet they could neither attend the funeral nor have a final glimpse. What kind of division is this, where even death is guarded?

This LOC is a black spot on the face of civilized world along with humanitarian organizations and so called United Nations. May almighty Allah break this blood-stained line and make the movement of people of Kashmir free to visit each other. Ameen.



Analysis

Kh. Muhammad Iqbal

# European Union inaugurates a Centre of Excellence to unlock Digital job opportunities for women in Peshawar

News Desk

PESHAWAR: The government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the European Union (EU) today inaugurated a Centre of Excellence for Digital and Hi-Tech Skills for women at the Institute of Management Sciences

(IM Sciences) in Peshawar, expanding opportunities for women to access jobs in Pakistan's growing digital economy. The centre and its wider network will train around 1,000 women from across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, including merged districts, in digital and high-tech skills over the next two years.

The Centre is a flagship project under the EU's Global Gateway investment strategy and its job-focused skills training (TVET Sector) Support Programme.

H. E. Mr. Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, said: "This Centre of Excel-



lence reflects the European Union's commitment to supporting Pakistan's digital transition and investing in its people. By aligning training with market demand, we aim to create pathways to jobs and entrepreneurship for women.

Mr. Muhammad Sohail Afridi, Chief

Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said: "The Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa remains committed to strengthening skills development as a driver of economic growth and employment."

Mr. James Hampson, Country Director, British Council in Pakistan,

said: "We are proud to team up with the EU Delegation and our partners at GIZ to launch the Centre of Excellence today in Peshawar. Connecting young women from across KP with high-tech skills and qualifications will help them achieve their ambitions and Pakistan's economy succeed."

# AIOU Starts Cardiac Screening Drive Following Employee Health Concerns

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has launched a free cardiac screening program for its employees in response to growing health concerns, particularly after the recent sudden deaths of several staff members due to heart-related illnesses.

The initiative has been introduced under the directives of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood who took immediate notice of the situation and approved the program to ensure the well-being of university employees. The screening is being conducted at the university's Healthcare Center and aims to facilitate early diagnosis and prevention of heart diseases.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the Vice Chancellor emphasized that timely diagnosis plays a vital role in preventing life-threatening conditions and saving precious lives. He reaffirmed the administration's commitment to prioritizing employee health and stated that no negligence would be tolerated in this regard.

Under the program, around 800 employees will undergo initial medical tests in phases. A total of 20 batches have been formed to ensure



smooth and timely screening. The test reports will be reviewed by Dr. Shaheera Kabsha who will provide further medical guidance based on individual cases.

Director Administration and Coordination, Prof. Dr. Syed Amir Shah,

stated that a comprehensive plan has been developed to ensure the effective implementation of the program and timely screening of all employees.

The ceremony was attended by

senior university officials, including Dean Faculty of Science Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad, Director General Regional Services Dr. Malik Tauqeer Ahmed Khan, Registrar Raja Umar Younis and other principal officers.

# Strategic Evolution of Pakistan-UAE Economic Ties, Diwan Fakhruddin

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Diwan Fakhruddin, Chairman Pak-UAE Business Council FPCCI, bilateral trajectory between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has transcended traditional diplomacy, crystallizing into a sophisticated strategic partnership rooted in a brotherly relationship established in 1972. Anchored by mutual trust, the UAE has remained a steadfast partner, consistently supporting Pakistan through its most difficult times. This alliance now serves as a vital anchor of stability amidst the shifting sands of the global geopolitical economy.

The surging volume of bilateral trade is a testament to this deepening integration, further bolstered by the geographical proximity of the two nations, which allows for highly efficient, short-distance trade logistics. Dubai, in its capacity as a preeminent global entrepôt, has become the primary conduit for Pakistan's entry into international value chains. We are witnessing a qualitative shift; trade is no longer merely expanding—it is diversifying into high-value sectors, creating a more resilient framework for private-sector collaboration.

In conclusion, the Pakistan-UAE partnership is at an inflection point.



By prioritizing legal discipline and institutional continuity, both nations can ensure that this brotherhood

remains an enduring blueprint for regional economic synergy and shared progress.

# No compromise on Pakistan's sovereignty: says Asma Butt

City Desk



RAWALPINDI: Ms. Asma Butt, Chief Executive of Dolphin Communication, stated that the people of Pakistan will not make any compromise on the protection of their country's sovereignty. Every citizen and every segment of society stands firmly alongside the Pakistan Armed Forces.

In her important statement, she said that the success in Marka-e-Haq is a clear reflection of the professional capabilities of our brave forces and national unity. She reaffirmed the resolve that the entire nation stands like a solid wall with its security forces. Asma Butt further stated that in difficult times, friendly countries including China, Türkiye, Saudi Arabia, and Azerbaijan demonstrated their long-standing friendship by supporting Pakistan. She appreciated that these countries rejected India's baseless stance regarding the Pahalgam false flag incident and supported Pakistan's demand for transparent and independent investigations.

# Experienced Guidance and Following the Prophet (PBUH) Are Essential for Success, Allama Riaz Hussain

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah emphasized that success in life requires experienced guidance and adherence to the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH).

A weekly Zikr and Dars-e-Quran gathering was held under Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Pakistan, attended by a large number of devotees. The event was hosted by Deputy Director Sheikh Muhammad Qasim. Addressing the gathering, Patron-in-Chief Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said that the life of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) is the best example for humanity, and following the Sunnah ensures success.

He stressed that seeking guidance from experienced individuals is wiser than relying solely on personal experience.

He explained that knowledge can be gained either through personal struggle or by following those who have already successfully passed through life's challenges. Citing the Quranic verse, "Indeed, in the Messenger of Allah you have an excellent example," he said the Prophet's (PBUH) life offers complete guidance.

# UNICEF warns Afghanistan could lose up to 25,000 female health workers, teachers

UNITED NATIONS: Restrictions on girls' education and women's employment in Afghanistan could leave the country with a deficit of over 25,000 female teachers and health workers by 2030, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) warned on Tuesday.

The agency said the crisis is already depriving children of learning and healthcare, while also weakening Afghanistan's economy and the essential services that depend on trained women professionals.

A new UNICEF analysis, The Cost of Inaction on Girls' Education and Women's Labour Force Participation in Afghanistan, found that female representation in the civil service fell from 21 per cent to 17.7 per cent between 2023 and 2025.

# Hotel One Expands Presence with the Launch of Hotel One Gujranwala

Commerce Desk

GUJRANWALA: Hotel One is proud to announce the opening of its new property, Hotel One Gujranwala, on 21 April 2026, further reinforcing its national footprint and extending its commitment to offering affordable, value-driven hospitality to travelers across Pakistan. With a portfolio of 25+ properties spanning 17+ cities, Hotel One continues to make accessible, quality accommodation a reliable option for both business and leisure travelers.

Located centrally in Gujranwala, Hotel One Gujranwala has been thoughtfully designed to provide easy access to the city while offering modern, welcoming interiors and essential amenities to ensure a comfortable, stress-free stay. Whether traveling for business, family visits, or as a stopover, guests can expect dependable service, modern conveniences, and a welcoming atmosphere that feels like home.

The hotel features 24 well-appointed rooms, including Deluxe King, Deluxe Twin, and Suite categories, equipped with high-quality in-room amenities such as high-speed Wi-Fi, smart TVs, minibars, and in-room dining services. Guests can begin their

day with a complimentary breakfast and enjoy contemporary dining options at the on-site restaurant, offering approachable meals in a relaxing environment.

Speaking at the inauguration, Mr. Bastien Blanc, CEO PC Hospitality, stated: "The opening of Hotel One Gujranwala represents the latest evolution of the Hotel One brand and aligns with our ongoing strategy to expand standardized, high-quality hospitality across key cities in Pakistan. We are committed to providing guests with an experience that combines comfort, convenience, and value, no



matter where they are traveling from."

The inauguration ceremony was attended by distinguished guests, including Mr. Faisal Sattar Mughal, Vice President

of the Gujranwala Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Mr. Adeel Bukhari, Mr. Yasir Usman Khokhar, and Mr. Adil Jamil Butt, executive members of the Chamber; Mr. Rana

Ansar Shehzad, President of the Gujranwala Press Club; and property owner Mr. Qurban Ali. Mr. Bastien Blanc, Mr. Asif Raza, Vice President of Business Development & Commercial Performance, along with

members of the Sales and Marketing team, corporate stakeholders, and media representatives were also present to celebrate this milestone.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
165,823.87	168,412.23	
Day's High	Day's Low	
169,686.03	165,391.46	
Index Value	Change	
27,500,641,511	-2588.36	
Percentage	Time	
-1.54%	29 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,213.11	-119.68	
Percentage	Time	
-1.16%	29 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
48,826.21	-315.72	
Percentage	Time	
-0.64%	29 Apr, 1:20 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
59,917.46	-619.90	
Percentage	Time	
-1.02%	28 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.14	203.25
Bahrain Dinar	729.10	740.85
Canadian Dollar	203.31	206.85
China Yuan	40	40.25
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	326.34	331.02
Hong Kong Dollar	35.15	36.11
Indian Rupee	2.35	2.55
Japanese Yen	1.7342	1.8340
Kuwaiti Dinar	879.50	894.28
Malaysian Ringgit	65.15	66.55
New Zealand \$	161.99	167.70
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.9
Omani Riyal	723	733.65
Qatari Riyal	73.25	74.25
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.40
Singapore Dollar	216.94	222.85
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	353.24	358.50
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.70
U.A.E Dirham	76.02	77.02
UK Pound Sterling	376.82	381.92
US Dollar	279.25	279.90

## Group photo

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik, EU Ambassador in Pakistan Raimundas Karobolis and ambassadors of the EU countries in Pakistan in a group photo at the concluding session of the EU-Pakistan Business Forum at local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online Sultan Bashir

## JS Bank Reports Profit After Tax of PKR 1.045 Billion Q1 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Bank Limited (PSX: JSBL) today announced its financial results for the quarter ended March 31, 2026, reporting a Profit before tax of PKR 2.175 billion and Profit after tax of PKR 1.045 billion, translating into Earnings Per Share (EPS) of PKR 0.51.

JS Bank's balance sheet showed moderate growth, with total assets reported at PKR 682.877 billion, reflecting a 4% increase over December 2025. The growth in total assets was primarily driven by investments, which increased by PKR 89.076 billion on a net basis from December 2025. The Bank's deposit base remained stable at PKR 544.898 billion. More importantly, the Bank's non-remunerative deposit mix continued to remain

over 40%. Improved recoveries against non-performing loans in the current quarter further aided bottom line profitability, as the bank reported a net reversal of PKR 78.428 million for the current period as against a charge of PKR 742.336 for the corresponding period last year. Operating expenses were kept in check, growing by 4% year on year.

Commenting on the results, Basir Shamsie, President & CEO of JS Bank stated, "JS Bank continues to invest in areas that drive real economic growth, particularly SME and other priority sectors, where we remain among the leading contributors. The first quarter reflects steady growth, while our focus remains on maintaining a strong and low-cost deposit mix."

# Pakistan, EIB sign Euro 100 mln agreement for Climate Resilience

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the European Investment Bank (EIB) here on Wednesday signed Euro 100 million financing agreement for Sindh Flood Emergency Housing Reconstruction project, marking significant step toward strengthening climate resilience and sustainable recovery.

The project aims at rebuilding communities affected by the catastrophic 2022 floods, according to

press release issued by Economic Affairs Ministry.

It said, the landmark agreement was signed by Federal Secretary for the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Muhammad Humair Karim Kidwai and a senior official of the EIB on the sidelines of EU-Pakistan Business Forum.

It was witnessed by the EU's Ambassador to Pakistan, Raimundas Karobolis, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Economic Affairs, Saeed Ashraf Siddiqi



and other officials of the Ministry of Economic Affairs and the European Union.

Sindh Flood Emergency Housing

Reconstruction project is one of the largest reconstruction initiatives in the world under which approximately 1.7 million homes, severely damaged by the 2022 floods in the rural areas of Sindh, are being reconstructed.

Major Development Partners including the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank, and the Islamic Development Bank are financing the project alongside the government of Sindh.

With a total estimated cost of the project nearing Euro 1.9 billion, including the Euro 100 million funding from the EIB which will be used to construct 116,580 units of housing, the programme is set to benefit nearly 40 percent of rural households in Sindh.

The initiative reflects a coordinated international effort and underscores a shared commitment to building back better and ensuring long-term resilience against climate-induced disasters.

## Mehmood Arshad appointed Chairman of Economic Council by Employers' Federation of Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mehmood Arshad has been appointed as the Chairman of the Economic Council by the Employers' Federation of Pakistan (EFP).

This decision was made by the Board of Directors during their recent meeting, which was held by the newly elected Board.

Mr. Arshad is already a member of the EFP Board and has a wide range of experience in economic diplomacy, financial services, and corporate leadership.

At present, he holds the position of Group Executive Director at Pak-Qatar Group and is also part of the boards of several prominent local and international organisations.

The EFP leadership welcomed the appointment and expressed confidence that Mr. Arshad's expertise and vision will enhance the Economic Council's role in promoting policy discussions and supporting sustainable economic growth.

In response to his new role, Mr. Arshad stated that the Economic Council will continue working



towards its goals of promoting exports and attracting investments for Pakistan's economy.

He also pointed out that recent geopolitical developments in the region have increased Pakistan's strategic and economic importance. In this context, he said the Economic Council will focus on identifying opportunities and supporting initiatives that help harness the country's growing potential.

The Employers' Federation of Pakistan remains dedicated to improving the business environment, encouraging communication between the private sector and policymakers, and contributing to economic development through informed advocacy and research.

## Energymart.pk Driving Pakistan's Solar Growth with Global Alliances "Powering Pakistan with Reliable Energy Solutions" Official Distributor of TIANNING Batteries & C&D Solar Panels in Pakistan

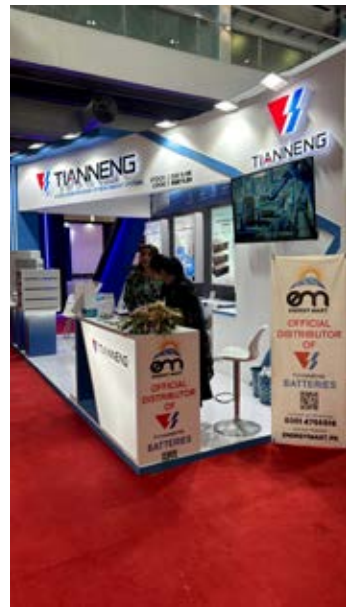


The Interview Mubashar Zubair, CEO of Energymart.pk, shared that the company, established in 2021, has rapidly positioned itself as a trusted name in Pakistan's solar industry. He explained that Energymart.pk focuses on delivering complete wholesale solar solutions, including inverters, lithium batteries, and solar panels, primarily serving installers and EPC companies with reliable products and consistent support.

"Our mission is simple — to provide dependable solar solutions that our partners can trust without compromise," he stated.

Highlighting the company's global partnerships, he said that Energymart.pk is the official distributor of TIANNING Lithium Batteries and C&D Solar Panels in Pakistan, bringing internationally recognized technology into the local market. He further added that the company is also working as a local distributor of Solis and AUXSOL inverters, ensuring customers have access to multiple high-performance options based on their project needs.

"We are connecting global energy



brands with the local market to create long-term value," Mubashar emphasized.

Speaking about product performance, Mubashar noted that TIANNING batteries have received excellent

market feedback, particularly for their durability, stable output, and advanced battery management system, making them highly suitable for Pakistan's energy conditions.

"The performance of TIANNING batteries in Pakistan has been exceptional — customers are seeing real reliability and long-term results," he added.

Discussing future plans, he shared that the company is actively expanding its nationwide distribution network in collaboration with TIANNING and other partners, aiming to improve accessibility and strengthen after-sales support across different regions of Pakistan. He also mentioned the company's participation in Solar Pakistan Expo in Lahore, where Energymart.pk received a strong response from industry professionals and customers.

"Our goal is to build a strong dealer network so that quality solar products are available in every corner of Pakistan," he said.

Concluding the interview, Mubashar Zubair stated, "We are not just supplying products — we are contributing towards Pakistan's energy independence by making clean energy more accessible and reliable."

## Service Long March Tyres Announces IPO to Raise upto Rs 7.8 billion to Fund Passenger Car Tyre Expansion

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Service Long March Tyres Limited, one of Pakistan's leading manufacturers of truck and bus radial tyres, has announced its Initial Public Offering (IPO) at the Pakistan Stock Exchange, marking a significant milestone as the company moves into its next phase of growth with entry into the passenger car radial (PCR) tyre segment. The company has received approval from PSX.

The company is offering 389,738 million ordinary shares, representing 5 percent of its post-IPO paid-up capital, through the book-building method at a floor price of Rs14.25 per share that can rise upto 40% to reach Rs. 19.95 per

share subject to interest by investors. Of the total offer, 75 percent comprises the book-building portion for institutional investors, while the remaining 25 percent will be offered to retail investors at the strike price.

The book-building phase of the IPO is scheduled to take place in May, during which institutional investors and high-net-worth individuals will be able to submit bids within the announced price band. The process will determine the strike price based on demand, following which the offer will move to the general public subscription phase.

Market participants expect strong interest given the company's growth trajectory, export footprint and expansion

plans, positioning the book-building round as a key milestone in the overall offering process.

Arif Habib Limited is acting as Consultant to the Issue and Lead Manager.

The IPO proceeds, estimated at upto 7.8 billion, will support the company's planned expansion into passenger car radial tyre manufacturing, a move expected to reduce Pakistan's reliance on imported tyres and strengthen local industrial capacity.

Commenting on the IPO, Omar Saeed, Chief Executive Officer of Service Long March Tyres Limited, said the offering marks a pivotal step in the company's evolution.



# Project Director Ignores Queries as Pakistan's UK Consular Contract Sparks Serious Procurement Questions

**Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah**

LONDON: Single-bid contract, missing documentation, and transparency concerns raise serious questions. Project Director fails to respond before publication

Serious concerns have surfaced over the outsourcing of consular services at the Pakistan High Commission in London and its four consulates across the United Kingdom, placing Jawad Ahmad Chatha, Secretary and Project Director, under scrutiny. Documents reviewed by Daily The

Spokesman suggest that the contract was awarded to Gerry International under a single-bid process, raising questions about fairness, transparency, and compliance with procurement rules.

Despite repeated efforts to obtain clarification, including a formal questionnaire sent prior to publication, Jawad Ahmad Chatha did not respond, further deepening concerns surrounding the process.

Contract awarded under single-bid scenario, Full tender record not publicly available, Technical and financial evaluation details missing



Contract awarded under single-bid scenario, Full tender record not publicly available, Technical and financial evaluation details missing

Questions over compliance with PPRA Rule 38(b) No clarity on independent audit or legal vetting Questions Sent to Jawad Ahmad Chatha

What was your exact role in the evaluation documentation or active decision-making? Did you personally approve the recommendation or act under instructions? Did you forward the summary without the High Commissioner's approval? Where is the complete tender record, including advertisements and evaluation sheets? Why are technical scoring details not attached? Why was the process

continued with only one bidder? Was the tender re-advertised? Why was the bid not rejected due to lack of competition? Who calculated the financial score and on what basis? Is there any market comparison to justify the cost? Was an independent audit conducted? Can you prove full compliance with PPRA Rule 38(b) Were any procurement rules bypassed? Was legal vetting carried out? Were all 13 members independent, Did anyone raise objections, How was conflict of interest prevented?

Was there any political or corpo-

rate pressure? Were there unofficial contacts with the bidding company? Why has this process not been made public? Will you release all documents for scrutiny? Will you accept responsibility if irregularities are found?

Final Question Can you defend every step of this process before an audit or inquiry?

Daily The Spokesman remains committed to transparency and public accountability. This story will be updated if Jawad Ahmad Chatha or relevant authorities provide an official response.

## Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament

# All-round Performance by, Muhammad Ali But, Brilliant Batting by Muhammad Abiss, Imran Shah and Kashif Ali and Deadly bowling by Abdul Rafay

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: The highlights of the 2nd day of the 3rd round of the Regional Inter District Senior (Karachi Region) Cricket Tournament was all-round Performance by Muhammad Ali Butt first he scored 80 and then capturing 4 Wickets for 26 Fine batting by Imran Shah 99 and Kashif Ali 80 and deadly bowling by Abdul Rafay 7/35.

**Scores in Brief:** At KCCA Stadium Zone-V 1st innings 295 first Innings lead 93 and 2nd

Innings 217/6 in 55 overs. Muhammad Abiss 92 10x4 Watan Dost 32 at the crease Muhammad Hassan 84 10x4. Afnan Khan 4/45. Zone-V. Zove-V over all lead 310 and 4 wickets in hand

Earlier Zone-IV 202 in first Innings Imran Shah 99. Salah Khan 29, Muhammad Uzair Ali Khan 28 not out. Muhammad Ali Butt (ob) 4/26, Saifullah Khan 2/40.

At UBL Sports Complex Zone-II 1st innings 195 after concede 122 runs 2nd Innings 136/6 on 48 over. Syed Shaheer Ali 27, Wahaj Riaz 27,

Ali Hassan 21, Umar Farooq 29 at the crease. Muhammad Makki 2/25 Aarish Ali Khan 2/32. Zone-II Lead only 24 runs.

Zone-VI first Innings 317/6 in 70 overs. Kashif Ali 80 9x4 4x6, Aibaad Khan 67 13x4, Aashir Ahmed Siddiqui 50 4x4 not out, Haider Abbas 37, Ghulam Ashraf 29. Wahaj Riaz 3/71.

At Baqai Cricket Ground Zone-VII First Innings 287 after first lead 64. Zone-VII 2nd Innings 121 all-out in 42.4 overs. Asif Ali Khan 25, Muhammad Abdullah 21, Huzaifa

Muneer 20. Abdul Rafay 7/35, Muhammad Luqman 3/51.

Earlier Zone-III 223 allout in 64.2 overs. Abdul zBasit 52 8x4 1x6, Muhammad Fahad Ameen 35, Syed Adil Hussain 28, Waqas Akbar 24, Muhammad Luqman 21. Najebeur Rehman 3/27, Huzaifa Muneer 2/30, Muhammad Usman Bin Rashid 2/44. Zone-III in 2nd Innings 81/4 in 14.4 overs. Abdul Basit 30, Obaisullah 25. Kafid un Nabi 2/10. Najebeur ur Rehman 2/13. Zone-III still required 104 runs for victory.

# 39 LED Screens Distributed in Attock Schools Under "Learn and Earn" E-Learning Initiative

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: As part of ongoing efforts to strengthen e-learning infrastructure, 39 LED screens were distributed at Government MC High School Attock in a ceremony attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Anil Saeed and CEO Education Dr. Muhammad Azhar.

The LED units were provided by the Developments in Literacy (DIL), a non-profit organization working to improve education quality in under-served communities across Pakistan. These screens have been allocated to 13 selected schools in Tehsil Attock with the objective of integrating modern teaching tools into traditional classrooms.

Speaking on the occasion, officials highlighted that the initiative is part of the district administration's flagship Learn and Earn Programme, which focuses on equipping students with digital skills and enhancing access to



technology-driven education. They emphasized that the introduction of LED screens will facilitate interactive learning,

enable multimedia-based instruction, and make lessons more engaging and effective for students.

The "Learn and Earn" program, launched by the district administration, aims to bridge the digital divide by introducing e-learning facilities in government schools, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas. The initiative aligns with broader national efforts to promote digital literacy and prepare students for emerging job markets in the technology sector.

Education experts note that similar public-private partnerships—such as those involving organizations like DIL—have shown positive results in improving student engagement, teacher training, and academic performance in various parts of the country.

Officials reaffirmed their commitment to expanding the program to more schools in the district, ensuring that students benefit from modern educational resources and are better prepared for future academic and professional challenges.

## Jahangir Khan Tareen Says Seeing someone's Eye Sight being Restored Brings a Peace Beyond Words



**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: With the special support of Jahangir Khan Tareen, the Lodhran Pilot Project organized a free Eye Camp at 12 MPR Geelay Wal in District Lodhran

During the two-day free eye camp, 732 patients received free check-ups and medicines while more than 300 surgeries were successfully performed, restoring vision for many individuals and bringing new light into their lives.

Jahangir Khan Tareen visited the camp, inspected various wards and met patients undergoing treatment. Speaking to them, he said:

"The peace one feels upon seeing light return to someone's eyes cannot be described in words. My constant effort has always been to ensure that our resources reach those who truly deserve them. If we can bring ease into even one person's life, that is our greatest success."

## Rs. 2.962 Trillion Recovered

**Continued from Page 1**

To expedite and optimize this recovery process, the Government of Punjab and Sindh have constituted their dedicated taskforces, under the supervision of the Senior Member, Board of Revenue, marking the initiation of a coordinated institutional mechanism aimed at expediting State land recovery, its regularization and disposal process.

The cumulative progress across provinces highlights a comprehensive and coordinated national response to asset recovery, with particular emphasis on leveraging provincial collaboration and insti-

tutional alignment. The ongoing initiatives are expected to further accelerate recovery proceedings and contribute significantly to strengthening transparency, governance, recovery of state land and public trust. NAB remains committed to pursuing accountability in a fair, transparent and merit-based manner, while continuing to enhance its operational capabilities in line with emerging challenges. The Bureau reiterates its resolve to safeguard public assets and ensure that proceeds of corruption, mis-utilized / under-utilized State lands are effectively recovered and returned to National Exchequer.

# Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq: The Eternal Wall of Truth — Field Marshal Asim Munir and the Triumph of National Resolve

**Kiran Asim**

One year ago, history paused and took notice. From 22 April to 10 May 2025, Pakistan confronted a grave test of its sovereignty in what will forever be remembered as Marka-e-Haq — the Battle of Truth. What India intended as a campaign of aggression and miscalculation became a defining triumph of justice, professionalism, and unbreakable national will. Today, as the nation observes Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq, declared by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, we do not simply recall dates or operations. We honour a sacred covenant: when truth is assaulted, a united Pakistan rises as an impregnable fortress.

The spark was the tragic Pahalgam incident of 22 April 2025 — an event Pakistan consistently described as a false flag designed to justify aggression amid Indian domestic politics. India responded with Operation Sindoor, launching missile strikes on Pakistani territory that claimed innocent civilian lives, including women, children, and the elderly. In the face of this blatant violation, Pakistan exercised restraint, offered cooperation for transparent investigation, and appealed for peace. Yet when aggression continued, the response came with divine precision on 10 May: Operation Bunyan-un-

Marsos. Named after the Quranic verse from Surah As-Saff — "as if they were a solid structure of lead" — this operation embodied the highest ideal of defensive warfare. The Pakistan Armed Forces — Army, Navy, and Air Force — operated in seamless synergy, a true joint force displaying network-centric warfare at its finest. Precision strikes targeted key Indian military installations, including multiple air bases such as Udampur, Pathankot, Adampur, and others. Advanced aerial threats were neutralised, strategic balance was restored, and the adversary's illusion of superiority was dismantled with clinical, proportionate effectiveness. ISPR records stand as testament: this was not revenge, but justice — measured, professional, and devastatingly successful.

In the crucible of this crisis, true leadership revealed itself not in rhetoric, but in resolve. At the helm stood Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), then Chief of Army Staff and later the nation's first Chief of Defence Forces (CDF). As the overall commander of Pakistan's defence during those fateful nineteen days, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir orchestrated Operation Bunyan-un-Marsos with masterful precision. Drawing from the Quranic metaphor of a "solid structure of lead," he forged an unbreakable synergy among the Army, Navy, and Air Force. Real-time

intelligence, network-centric operations, and decisive joint strikes targeted Indian military installations with clinical effectiveness. Enemy aircraft were neutralised, strategic bases were hit, and the adversary's miscalculations were exposed. This was not impulsive retaliation; it was calibrated deterrence at its finest — proportionate, professional, and overwhelmingly successful.

What set Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir apart was his ability to lead with both steel and wisdom. While directing military operations from the front, he simultaneously steered high-level diplomatic engagements that prevented escalation. His personal coordination with international actors, including the United States, helped broker a swift ceasefire, preserving Pakistan's image as a responsible nuclear power while restoring strategic balance. For this extraordinary leadership, the federal cabinet unanimously elevated him to the rank of Field Marshal in May 2025 — only the second in Pakistan's history after Field Marshal Ayub Khan — recognising his pivotal role in repelling aggression and safeguarding national honour.

Marka-e-Haq will echo through generations not merely for battlefield

feats, but for the extraordinary national unity it awakened under his command. From Gilgit-Baltistan to Karachi, every Pakistani — civilian and soldier, politician and journalist, youth and elder — stood as one. The blood of martyrs, both civilian and military, became the binding mortar of this Bunyan-un-Marsos. Families who lost loved ones turned grief into granite resolve. Political parties set aside differences. The diaspora amplified the voice of truth. Media and civil society reinforced the narrative of sovereignty. In that crucible of crisis, Pakistan proved that its real strength lies not only in weapons but in the collective heartbeat of 240 million souls welded into an unbreakable wall.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir became the living embodiment of this Bunyan-un-Marsos. He rallied the entire nation — political leadership, civil society, media, youth, and diaspora — into a unified front. He hosted dinners honouring political unity, paid tribute to the shuhada, and repeatedly credited the collective resolve of the Pakistani people. His public addresses emphasised faith, professionalism, and unity, declaring that divine assistance was felt during the operation. Under his vision, the armed forces and the nation stood

as one impregnable wall. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq as a permanent national day was an act of profound statesmanship. It immortalises the courage of our forces under Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's leadership, the sacrifices of our shuhada, and the resilience of our people. It reminds the world that Pakistan seeks peace, but never at the cost of dignity. The swift ceasefire that followed, facilitated through diplomatic channels, further highlighted Islamabad's maturity as a responsible nuclear power — strong enough to deter, wise enough to de-escalate.

One year on, the lessons of Marka-e-Haq burn brighter than ever. They demand relentless investment in defence modernisation and technological self-reliance. They call upon our youth to emulate the heroes of Bunyan-un-Marsos by excelling in science, strategy, and service. They urge economic resilience to complement military strength, for a prosperous Pakistan is the ultimate guarantor of deterrence. Most importantly, they command us to protect internal unity with the same vigilance we guard our frontiers. Division is the only enemy that can weaken a wall built of lead.

This was never about hatred or triumphalism. Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq is a day of gratitude, reflection, and rededication. It speaks to the world in

the language of history: when a nation believes in its truth, when its armed forces — led by a commander of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's calibre — display unmatched professionalism, and when its people stand united, no aggression can prevail.

The Kashmir dispute — the core issue — remains a live wound on the conscience of humanity, demanding just resolution.

As the first CDF, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir continues to shape Pakistan's defence posture for the future — modernizing capabilities, promoting self-reliance, and inspiring the youth to serve the nation with the same dedication. His leadership proved that when a commander combines strategic foresight, moral courage, and unshakeable faith, even the strongest aggressor cannot prevail. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir did not merely lead a military operation. He led a nation to rediscover its strength, reaffirmed its deterrence, and wrote a new chapter of glory in Pakistan's history.

As flags fly higher across the homeland today, let us bow our heads in prayer for the shuhada, salute the men and women in uniform who guard our frontiers with unyielding courage under the leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir, and renew our solemn pledge. The wall of lead still stands firm. The spirit of Marka-e-Haq pulses in every Pakistani chest.



**Kiran Asim**

## Investments meeting

SANYA, HAINAN, China: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Mr Wang Jian, CEO of Hangzhou Jinjiang Group on Wednesday.



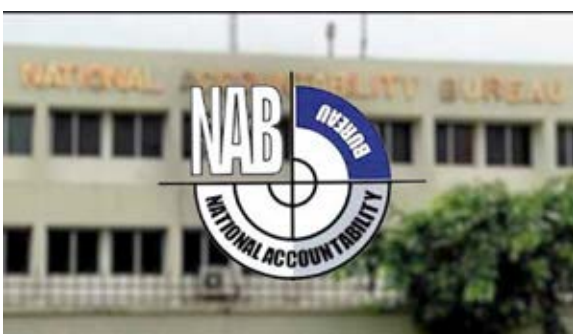
Photo: Online

## Rs. 2.962 Trillion Recovered

# NAB Sets the Tone with High-Impact 1st Quarter of 2026

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB), through the implementation of targeted reforms and sectoral prioritization, has commenced the year 2026 with a strong and impactful performance. During the first quarter of 2026, NAB has achieved recoveries amounting to Rs. 2,962 billion (Rs. 2.962 trillion), reflecting a substantial and unprecedented increase of 33 times compared to Rs. 91.01 billion recovered in first quarter of 2025 and demonstrating enhanced institutional



efficiency and enforcement capacity.

With the coordinated efforts, during the first quarter of 2026, a total of 4,034 acres of State land, valued at Rs. 23.33 billion, was recovered

by NAB Lahore & Multan. Similarly, NAB Karachi & Sukkur recovered 54,387 acres of State land worth Rs. 2,891.38 billion (Rs. 2.89 trillion). In the same period, NAB Balochistan recovered 51,577

acres of State land with an estimated value of Rs. 36.54 billion. In addition to State lands recovery, NAB made other direct recoveries of Rs. 11.085 billion in the form of plea bargains, auctions, settlements and Court fine. Further, 6,475 affectees of Cheating Public at Large cases have been settled with disbursements of Rs. 1.78 billion. This significant performance underscores NAB's renewed strategic focus on high-value sectors, improved case management and strengthened inter-departmental coordination. The Bureau's reform-driven approach has

enabled accelerated identification, tracing and recovery of State lands.

In continuation of this effort, National Accountability Bureau, in close coordination with provincial Governments, has also traced / tracked substantial recovery potential, comprising approximately 900,000 acres of misappropriated State land in the province of Punjab, with an estimated value of Rs. 4.37 trillion. Additionally, 452,968 acres of misappropriated State land of worth Rs. 10.96 trillion are being traced / tracked in the province of Sindh.

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## President invites greater Chinese investment in priority sectors

### Spokesman Report

SANYA, HAINAN, CHINA: President Asif Ali Zardari met Mr Wang Jian, CEO of Hangzhou Jinjiang Group, and encouraged the company to expand its footprint in Pakistan, particularly in energy, industrial and agricultural sectors.

During the meeting, the President was briefed that the group is already engaged in multiple projects in Pakistan and ranks among the top 100 business groups in China, with operations spanning heavy industry, fertiliser, oil and gas, coal gasification, renewable energy, agriculture and irrigation.

The President noted that Pakistan is actively encouraging foreign investment in various sectors, espe-

cially water treatment, electric vehicle battery systems and alternate energy. He emphasised that such partnerships could support sustainable growth and industrial development.

He further stated that the Government of Sindh would extend all possible facilitation to foreign companies seeking to invest in the province, particularly under public-private partnership frameworks.

The meeting was attended by Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Mr Sharjeel Inam Memon, Senior Provincial Minister, Sindh, Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Sindh for Investment and Public-Private Partnership Projects and Chief Secretary, Sindh.

## PM for safe railway travel, robust freight services to boost economy

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday directed Pakistan Railways to ensure public convenience and safe rail travel across its network, and to make railway freight services more effective and robust to boost economic activity.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Federal Minister for Railways Mohammad Hanif Abbasi, who called on him here, expressed satisfaction over the recent steps taken by Pakistan Railways to improve facilities for passengers.

Besides discussing the ongoing development projects, the minister briefed the prime minister on the ministry's operational matters and the progress of various initiatives to improve infrastructure.

They also exchanged views on other matters of mutual interest.



## DPM Dar, Saudi envoy discuss recent regional developments



### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar in Islamabad today.

Discussions between the two sides centered on recent regional developments.

The Deputy Prime Minister emphasized the importance of dialogue and engagement between parties for peace and stability in the region. He expressed gratitude for Saudi Arabia's support and appreciation of Pakistan's ongoing efforts in this regard.

Both sides underscored the enduring and fraternal relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

## Privatisation Commission Board Recommends Transaction Structure for Privatisation of ZTBL

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board, in its 251st meeting held today under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation, made key recommendations to the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP) regarding the privatisation of Zarai Taraqiati Bank Limited (ZTBL).

The Board endorsed the proposed transaction structure and a comprehensive restructuring plan for Zarai

Taraqiati Bank Limited, following a detailed presentation by the financial adviser. The proposals were refined after extensive deliberations, with a focus on maximising value for the Government of Pakistan.

These recommendations will now be submitted to the CCoP for consideration at its forthcoming meeting.

The Board reaffirmed its strong commitment to advancing the government's privatisation agenda with efficiency, transparency, and strategic focus.

## PAC sub-committee concerned over illegal drilling contracts, memberships by OGDCL

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Public Accounts Committee Sub-Committee Meeting which met under the chair of Syed Naveed Qamar, reviewed the audit objections related to Petroleum Division and case of awarding illegal contract to drilling company by OGDCL, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

During the meeting, Naveed Qamar said Ministry of Law should

tell whether the extension of the contract was against the rules or not. "Yes, absolutely, the extension of the contract was an unregulated move", said an official of the Ministry of Law, adding that MD had the authority to extend the contract", officials of the Ministry of Petroleum.

"It remains to be seen whether the MD had the authority at that time to direct the audit", said Syed Naveed Qamar. Meanwhile, Sub-Com-

mittee reviewed audit objections where OGDCL provided club membership worth Rs 27 million to 27 officers. The membership of 15 officers continued even after retirement. Audit officials said that the membership was given to officers in their names instead of their positions. Convener Committee Syed Naveed Qamar expresses surprise over policy and directed complete review of policy.

## Federal Minister Sheikh Makes Historic Address at UK Defence & Security Forum

### News Desk

LONDON: In a rare and historic diplomatic engagement, Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, addressed a prestigious defence and security institution in London—an honour traditionally reserved exclusively for Heads of Government, Prime Ministers, and senior military leadership. Notably, this marks the first time that a serving Federal Minister from Pakistan was invited to address such a high-level forum, underscoring Pakistan's rising global stature and diplomatic relevance.

The distinguished forum, held at the globally renowned venue in Pall Mall, brought together an influential audience comprising senior diplomats, high commissioners, British parliamentarians, officials from the UK Foreign Office, defence experts, and

leaders from the legal, economic, and medical sectors.

In his keynote address, the Minister highlighted Pakistan's growing role at the intersection of defence and economic diplomacy, emphasizing the country's strategic importance as a gateway connecting the West to the East and the East to the West. He underlined Pakistan's unique geo-strategic location and its increasing significance in global trade, connectivity, and security frameworks.

Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh also shed light on Pakistan's increasing investment potential, particularly in key sectors such as Information Technology, agriculture, and industrial development, noting that the Government of Pakistan is committed to facilitating international investors through progressive reforms and investor-friendly policies.