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A Leading National Daily



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(بخاری ص 596)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



CM Maryam Nawaz rejects proposal to close Punjab markets at 8pm

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has firmly rejected a proposal to close markets across the province at 8pm, providing relief to the business community and traders who had expressed serious concerns over the move. The chief minister emphasized that the current economic situation does not allow for additional pressure on traders.



Sindh gov bans increase in school van fares

On the directives of Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah, the provincial government has issued an order prohibiting any increase in school van fares across the province. Following the chief minister's instructions, the School Education Department has circulated an official notification to all public and private schools, directing them to strictly maintain existing transport charges.

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274th Corps Commanders' Conference

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, presided over the 274th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ).



Photo: ISPR

DPM/FM Dar, Norwegian FM discuss recent developments in ME

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Norway Espen Barth Eide, Tuesday, discussed recent developments in the Middle East and the wider region.

The DPM/FM held a telephone conversation with the Norwegian foreign minister, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The Norwegian foreign minister expressed appreciation and full support for Pakistan's efforts toward dialogue and diplomacy for peace and stability in the region.

Both agreed to remain in close touch.

PM reaffirms Pakistan's unflinching solidarity, support to KSA

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering and unflinching solidarity and support for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, in the wake of the ongoing attacks, and reiterated Pakistan's condemnation of the attack at the Al Jubeil oil facility in Saudi Arabia earlier today.

The prime minister held a telephone conversation with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. During their warm and cordial

conversation, the two leaders discussed the ongoing hostilities in the region.

The prime minister assured the crown prince that the people and the Government of Pakistan would always



stand shoulder to shoulder with their Saudi brothers and sisters, just as the Saudi leadership and people had always supported Pakistan, through thick and thin.

He lauded the wisdom and sagacity of the Saudi leadership in exercising maximum restraint during the ongoing crisis and said that Pakistan was working assiduously for the success of the peace efforts, in partnership with other countries.

He also apprised the crown prince on latest developments in Pakistan's mediation efforts to de-escalate the Middle East crisis.

The prime minister conveyed his warm wishes and respectful regards for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The crown prince appreciated Pakistan's peace efforts, aimed at restoring peace and stability in the region.

Field Marshal Munir Directs Commanders to Uphold Peak Readiness Against All Threats

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, presided over the 274th Corps Commanders' Conference (CCC) at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

The Forum offered Fateha for the Shuhada of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and innocent civilians who laid down their lives in defence of the motherland. Paying solemn tribute to their unmatched

sacrifices, the Forum reaffirmed that their legacy remains the bedrock of Pakistan's national security.

The COAS & CDF expressed his satisfaction and commended the Pakistan Armed Forces for their unwavering professionalism, operational excellence, and steadfast commitment towards defence of the country and sustained, intelligence-based counter-terrorism operations. He underscored that through the synergy of the Government, Armed Forces, and the people, Paki-

stan continues to consolidate security gains, strengthen economic resilience, and enhance its regional and global standing.

The Forum undertook a comprehensive review of the prevailing internal and external security environment, reaffirming that all terrorist proxies operating on behest of Indian and other external sponsors, along with their facilitators and abettors, will be pursued and eliminated, relentlessly, and without exception.

Continue on Page 7

Govt tackling economic challenges responsibly, focuses on reforms, energy security: Finance Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday said that the government is managing the economic crisis responsibly, ensuring that subsidies reach those most in need while continuing structural reforms and planning for energy

security and macroeconomic stability. Speaking in the National Assembly, he said, "The government is pursuing a holistic strategy that balances fiscal responsibility, subsidy management, energy security, and structural reforms, ensuring Pakistan's macroeconomic stability in challenging times."

Senator Aurangzeb said that from

March 14 to April 4, fuel price transmission was temporarily halted, and a blanket subsidy was provided to prevent further increases.

"The total subsidy amounts to Rs 129-130 billion. This was not left to mere discretion or speculation—it was carefully funded and monitored by the Finance Division," he added.

PM urges fuel conservation; warns of strict action against petroleum products hoarding

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Tuesday, emphasized that given the seriousness of the regional situation, the entire nation must contribute to the drive aimed at fuel conservation and austerity.

He maintained that hoarding petroleum products was an "unforgivable" act, and strict legal action would be taken against those involved in such heinous practices.

The prime minister chaired a high-level review meeting to assess the implementation of measures related to petroleum conservation, energy efficiency, and austerity amid the current regional situation, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

Highlighting the country's energy challenges, he noted that a portion of electricity generation relied on petroleum products.

He further opined that market closures and other austerity measures were designed not only to save valuable foreign exchange but also to ensure uninterrupted electricity supply.

The meeting was briefed on steps



taken to enforce austerity decisions aimed at ensuring economic stability in light of rising regional tensions.

The officials apprised the prime minister about the steps taken for the closure of markets and shopping malls across Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and Islamabad at 8:00 pm, effective from today.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Ishaq Dar, ministers including Ahsan Iqbal, Abdul Aleem Khan, Dr Musadik Malik, Ahad Khan Cheema, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Awais Ahmed Leghari along with Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, special advisers Tariq Bajwa and Talha Burki, Governor State Bank, chief secretaries, officials and inspectors general of police from all provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan.

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SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:22 am
Zohr	12:10 pm
Asr	4:44 pm
Maghrib	6:33 pm
Isha	7:58 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
Motorway Police	92706044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883

Administrative Affairs at Shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh in Disarray, Visitors Face Hardships

News Desk

AGHAM KOT: Administrative affairs at the shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh, Bibi Maham Syyida Khadija (SA) binte Imam Musa Kazim (AS) have reportedly fallen into disarray due to alleged negligence and inefficiency of the Auqaf Department-appointed manager, causing serious difficulties for thousands of visitors arriving from across the country.

According to reports, despite repeated complaints, no effective action has been taken by the concerned authorities, and the situation continues to deteriorate.

Sources stated that about a month ago, a large tree fell on the sacred flag (Alam Pak) installed at the shrine, posing a serious risk of damage. However, despite the passage of time and multiple complaints, no remedial measures have been undertaken by the Auqaf Department.

Members of the Central Advisory Council of the Azadar Rabta Committee Hyderabad have expressed grave concern over the situation and urged the Government of Sindh to take immediate notice of the alleged negligence.

Delegation of Chinese companies called on CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A delegation of leading Chinese companies, Kunlun Group and Sunder Green Group called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif today. Agreements were reached to begin solar panel manufacturing in Lahore through joint collaboration, and to send 50,000 students to China for advanced vocational and industrial training.

Approval in principle was granted for establishment of 1,000-acre industrial estate in Lahore, and discussions were held regarding transferring technology for producing petrochemical products from coal in Punjab.

The Chief Minister assured full support to both Chinese and local investors for the promotion of industrialization. During the briefing, it was informed that the new projects would generate approximately 18,000 job opportunities in Punjab.

She reiterated that the government is following the "Start Today" policy to promote industrial growth and stressed that the government's role is to support entrepreneurs rather than engage in business itself.

The delegation included CEO Wang Jin Human Sheng from Inner Mongolia Coal Mine, CEO Zhao Gangbo from an investment company, Chairman



Muhammad Abid of Sunder Green Group, CEO Azim Iftikhar, Director Rana Faisal Hayat, and CEO Danish Ahmad of Oasis, among others.

Souvenir

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence, Khawaja Muhammad Asif presenting a souvenir to H. E General Levent Ergun, Deputy Chief of Turkish General Staff on Tuesday.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Jhelum Administration Cracks Down on Fertilizer Adulteration to Protect Farmers

News Desk

JHELUM: On the direction of Deputy Commissioner Jhelum Mir Reza Ozgen, an important meeting of the District Agriculture Advisory Committee and the Anti-Adulteration Task Force sub-committee was held. The session was presided over by ADCR Saneeca Safi and attended by relevant departmental officials.

During the meeting, the supply and pricing of fertilizers and pesticides across the district were reviewed in detail. The ADCR emphasized that the District Administration



tion is taking all legal steps to ensure the availability of high-quality agricultural inputs to farmers at official rates. ADCR Saneeca Safi mobilized the anti-adulteration

task force and directed a crackdown against those selling substandard fertilizers and counterfeit pesticides. She stated that elements involved in the economic exploitation of farmers would face strict legal consequences without exception.

The session concluded with instructions to field officers to conduct regular inspections of dealers' stocks and measurements. The District Administration remains committed to protecting the interests of the farming community to ensure the transparent achievement of agricultural production targets.

Mehar-un-Nisa Confirms Ideological Focus for Muslim Conference Ticket Distribution

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary General of the Muslim Conference and former Deputy Speaker Ms. Mehar-un-Nisa has said that the party will enter the electoral fray with full force in the upcoming elections and tickets will be issued to political workers with strong ideological and ideological affiliations on all seats, including refugees. Speaking during a meeting with party workers and other officials yesterday, Ms. Mehar-un-Nisa said that the Muslim Conference is a state party and is fully representing the people of the state at every forum. It is continuing its struggle to provide basic facilities, development, prosperity and equal employment opportunities to the people of Azad Kashmir. Ms. Mehar-un-Nisa said that the Muslim Conference will continue to play its role for the freedom movement and the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people. The Secretary General of the Muslim Conference said that tickets will be issued to those who perform well in the party conventions in all districts of the state. She directed the workers to conduct a vigorous public relations campaign for the success of the party candidates.

Private Schools Apex Body Congratulates New NPC Leadership



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of the All Pakistan Private Schools Association, led by its Central President Dr. Abrar Hussain Malik visited the National Press Club and congratulated the newly elected leadership of the NPC.

The delegation included Vice President Malik Din Awan, Central Finance Secretary Qasim Abbas, and Central Executive Member Intikhab Hussain. They extended their congratulations to newly elected NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial, Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao, Finance Secretary Abid Abbasi, and other office bearers, expressing hope that they would play an effective role in resolving the issues faced by the journalist community. Dr. Abrar Hussain Malik assured that efforts would be made to address admission-related issues faced by journalists' children in educational institutions. On this occasion, NPC President Abdul Razzaq Sial, Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao, Finance Secretary Abid Abbasi, Senior Vice President Ihtisham-ul-Haq, Joint Secretary Chaudhry Javed Bhagat, Aamir Rafiq Butt, Asim Jilani, Tanveer, Nisar Ahmed, and Mudassar Lang thanked the delegation and expressed their commitment to working together in the future.

Hardworking and Honest Employees are the Asset of any Organization: Dr Maryam

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Chief Postmaster GPO Dr. Maryam Noreen Afzal has said that hardworking and honest employees are the asset of any organization. The honorable retirement of a government employee is also no less than an honor. She expressed these views while addressing the farewell ceremony held on the occasion of the retirement of Postmaster Kachhari Branch Khalid Majeed in Raza Hal. Obaidullah Bhatti, Munawar Bhatta, Muhammad Saleem Gunawan, Faiz Rasool and a large number of other employees participated in the ceremony. Later, Postmaster Khalid Majeed thanked Obaidullah Bhatti, the head of the department and employees for organizing the ceremony with dignity on the occasion of his retirement.



Traders protest across South Punjab against fuel price hike

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: On the call of the Chamber of Small Traders, widespread protest demonstrations were held across South Punjab against the massive increase in petroleum prices, fixed taxes in electricity bills, and rising inflation.

In Multan, a protest was planned at Bohar Gate Chowk. However, according to trader representatives, police and local administration conducted late-night raids at the homes of chamber office-bearers in an attempt to stop the protest. No arrests were made, but by the morning of the protest, Bohar Gate Chowk was heavily cordoned off by police, with a large contingent deployed along with prisoner vans.

Addressing the protesters and media, senior trader leader and



Chairman of All Pakistan Anjuman-e-Tajiran, Khawaja Muhammad Shafiq, stated that the movement was launched to defend the rights of small traders, salaried individuals, and laborers. He announced that, upon the request of the local administration, the protest movement would be postponed for one week.

Khawaja Shafiq demanded that the government reduce petrol and diesel prices, abolish fixed taxes in electricity bills, and take concrete steps to control inflation. He criticized the government for imposing what he termed a "petrol bomb" on the public instead of providing relief, adding that pre-election promises such as free electricity

units had not been fulfilled.

Other trader leaders, including Chamber of Small Traders South Punjab President Chaudhry Tariq Karim, Multan District President Sheikh Tahir Anjad, City President Zafar Iqbal Siddiqui, City Chairman Ihtesham-ul-Haq, Senior Vice Chairman Punjab Mumtaz Ali Babar,

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone: +92 51 2227123,
 WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com
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The Man Between Fire and Peace: Asim Munir

The Middle East today stands dangerously close to the edge of an abyss. What began as a regional confrontation between Israel and Iran has expanded into a multi-layered conflict involving the United States, proxy actors, and a widening arc of instability stretching from the Gulf to the Eastern Mediterranean. Civilian populations are bearing the brunt of the devastation, critical infrastructure lies in ruins, and the global economy trembles under the threat of disruption to vital energy routes. At the heart of this unfolding crisis—where the specter of a wider, even nuclear, confrontation looms—stands one pivotal figure attempting to reverse the tide: Pakistan's Army Chief, Field Marshal Asim Munir.

Munir's emergence as a central mediator is neither accidental nor symbolic. It is rooted in a demonstrated ability to navigate crisis, build trust across rival blocs, and deliver results under pressure. Having stabilized Pakistan during a period of acute economic, political, and social turmoil—through strategic engagement with China, Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, and Qatar—Munir now applies the same disciplined approach to a far more volatile international theatre.

At the core of his current diplomatic effort lies what has come to be known as the Islamabad Accord, a structured, two-phased framework designed not only to halt hostilities but to address the deeper causes of conflict. Unlike previous fragmented peace attempts, this initiative integrates immediate de-escalation with a pathway toward sustainable peace. The framework rests on a series of clearly defined points, factors, and conditions that collectively shape the possibility of ceasefire, stabilization, and long-term resolution.

The first and most urgent pillar is the immediate ceasefire, intended to halt ongoing military operations across all fronts. This is not merely a pause in fighting but a critical intervention to stop further civilian casualties, prevent destruction of infrastructure, and create diplomatic breathing space. Closely tied to this is the reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, a vital artery through which a significant portion of global oil and gas flows. Restoring navigation through this choke-point is essential not only for regional stability but for preventing a cascading global economic crisis.

The second phase of the Islamabad Accord envisions a time-bound negotiation window—ranging from 15 to 45 days—during which all stakeholders would engage in structured dialogue aimed at reaching a comprehensive settlement. This phase is designed to transform a temporary truce into a durable peace agreement by addressing the underlying drivers of conflict. Among the most critical factors shaping the success of this process is the issue of mutual security guarantees. Iran has made it clear that any agreement must include firm assurances against future attacks by the United States and Israel. Without such guarantees, Tehran remains reluctant to commit to even temporary concessions. On the other side, Washington seeks verifiable commitments regarding Iran's nuclear program, including assurances that it will not pursue nuclear weapons. Bridging this gap requires a carefully balanced framework that provides both deterrence and reassurance.

Equally significant is the question of sanctions relief and economic normalization. The proposed framework includes provisions for the release of frozen Iranian assets and the gradual lifting of sanctions in exchange for compliance with agreed terms. This economic dimension is not merely transactional; it is fundamental to rebuilding trust and integrating Iran into a stable regional order. Another key factor is the establishment of a regional security architecture, particularly concerning the Strait of Hormuz. The proposal envisions a cooperative mechanism involving regional stakeholders to ensure freedom of navigation while addressing Iran's security concerns. This would mark a shift from unilateral control and confrontation toward shared responsibility and oversight.

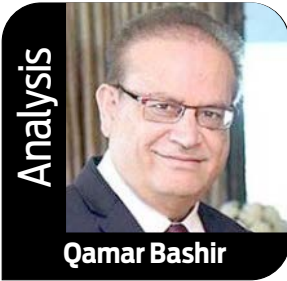
The success of the Islamabad Accord also hinges on addressing the pervasive trust deficit that defines the current conflict. Years of hostility, broken agreements, and proxy warfare have created deep skepticism among all parties. As observers have noted, this is not merely a strategic conflict but a psychological one, driven by ego, fear, and historical grievances. Overcoming this requires not only policy solutions but credible mediation—something Munir has worked to establish through sustained engagement with all sides.

In this regard, his ability to maintain direct lines of communication with key actors is critical. He is actively coordinating with Donald J. Trump, whose shifting negotiation posture adds complexity to the process, as well as with Iranian leadership, which remains firm in its demands. His ongoing dialogue with JD Vance, Steve Witkoff, and Abbas Araghchi reflects a continuous effort to align positions and narrow differences. Beyond these immediate stakeholders, the framework also incorporates broader regional and global considerations. Engagement with countries such as Turkey and coordination with major powers like China and Russia are essential for ensuring that any agreement is not only accepted but supported by the wider international community. This multi-layered diplomacy acknowledges that the conflict's implications extend far beyond the immediate parties involved.

Timing, too, plays a decisive role. The narrow window leading up to critical diplomatic deadlines has intensified negotiations, creating both urgency and pressure. While parties seek to maximize their strategic advantage, there is also a growing recognition that prolonged conflict offers diminishing returns and escalating risks. This convergence of urgency and pragmatism may provide the opening needed for agreement.

Yet the path forward remains fraught with challenges. Iran's reluctance to accept externally imposed deadlines, the United States' demand for rapid compliance, and the broader geopolitical rivalries at play all complicate the process. The possibility of miscalculation or escalation cannot be ruled out. However, the

Continued on Page 7



Another key factor is the establishment of a regional security architecture, particularly concerning the Strait of Hormuz. The proposal envisions a cooperative mechanism involving regional stakeholders to ensure freedom of navigation while addressing Iran's security concerns. This would mark a shift from unilateral control and confrontation toward shared responsibility and oversight.

Chief Minister Punjab approved a free transport pilot project

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed the relevant authority (PERA) to regulate LPG prices across the province and gave a two-week deadline to improve the cleanliness situation. She sought a report within 24 hours to determine transport fares per kilometer and directed officials to consider launching free transport in 17 districts where public transport is unavailable. During the meeting, the impact of global oil prices on transport fares was reviewed, and a detailed report was presented. Prices of 23 essential food items, including onions, tomatoes, potatoes, bananas, and pulses, were also reviewed across all districts including Lahore.

Officials briefed that flour prices in Punjab are lower than other provinces by Rs. 427 compared to Sindh, Rs. 823 compared to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Rs. 790 compared to Balochistan. It was also discussed that pulses, fruits, and vegetables are relatively cheaper in Punjab, with sufficient stock of lentils and gram available. The Chief Minister urged citizens to avoid purchasing items sold above officially notified prices and directed strict action against hoarding of essential commodities. She instructed assistant commissioners to conduct surveys of ponds and water bodies in every street and directed commissioners to submit daily reports with photographs. Orders were also given to ensure safety measures for ponds in every union council.

The CM emphasized focus on key areas such as tree plantation, dog bite prevention, zebra crossings, street lights, green belts, and other KPIs. She also ordered restarting the cleanliness drive in graveyards under the "Suthra Punjab" programme. Expressing displeasure over the cleanliness situation in Jhang, she ordered complete cleaning of selected union councils within 24 hours.

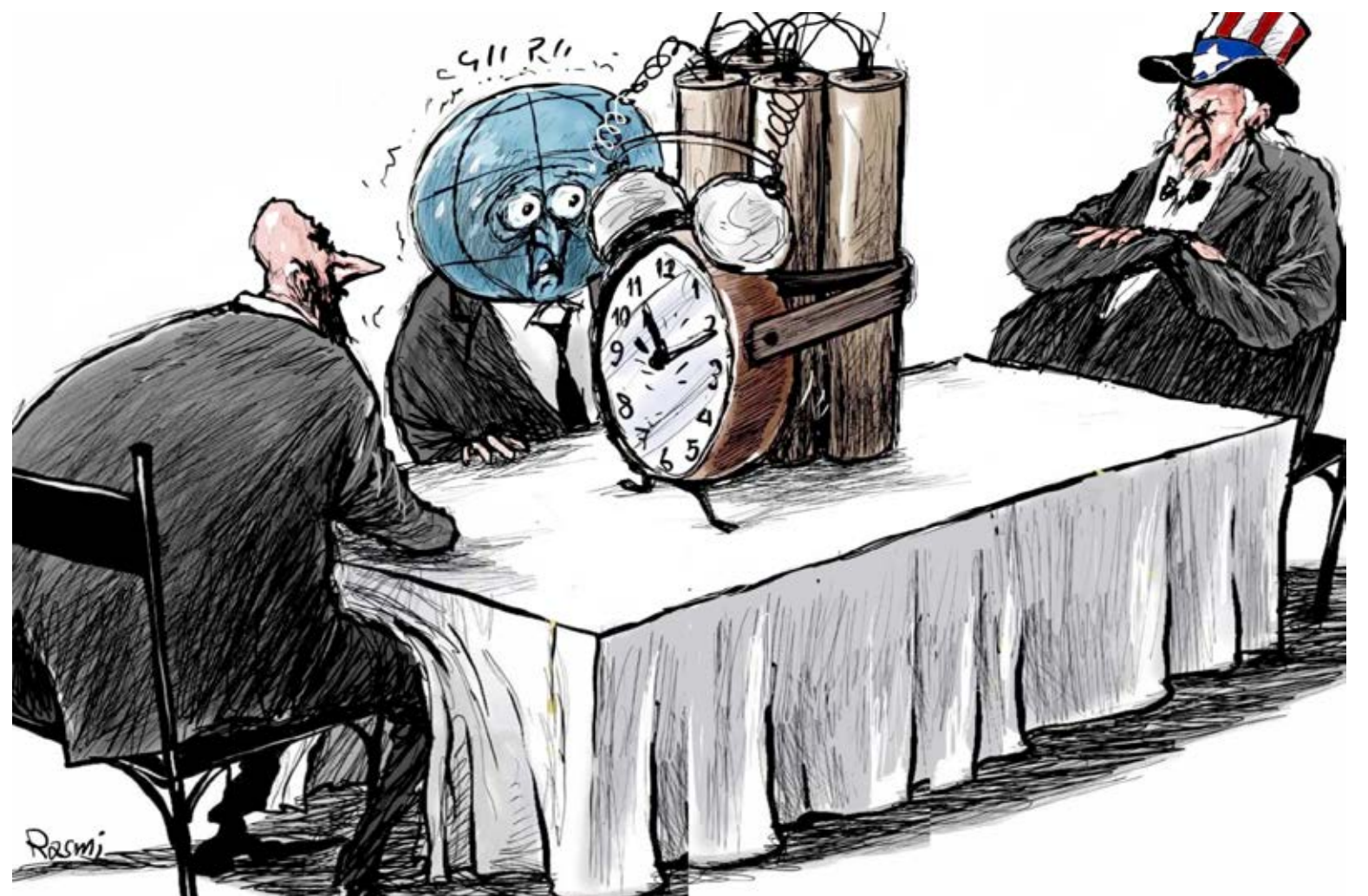
A detailed review of beautification and upgradation projects in all districts was conducted, including photographic inspections. The CM directed that all such projects be completed by June and emphasized maintaining their quality afterward. Projects in various cities, including Attock, Rahim Yar Khan, and Faisalabad, were reviewed. She appreciated the quality work in Attock and praised the Deputy Commissioner.

She also appreciated improvements at the Clock Tower area in Faisalabad, particularly the removal of roadside drainage issues and electric wires. The Chief Minister expressed serious concern over deaths caused by open drainage systems and stated that the presence of unsafe ponds will be considered administrative failure.

She showed displeasure over complaints of garbage piles in different cities, calling it unacceptable.

The meeting also discussed the targets of the Suthra Punjab program in detail. It was decided to introduce AI-based monitoring systems, including digital mapping for real-time tracking of sanitation workers in every union council.

A new AI-based complaint system named "Suthra Punjab Hero" will be launched, along with a pilot project for AI-based waste detection vehicles. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed further improvement in sanitation across the province and stated that visible garbage heaps in cities are unacceptable.



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

A Region on the Edge: Escalation, Chokepoints, and Strategic Anxiety

The current phase of the Middle East conflict has entered a deeply volatile and unpredictable stage, marked by widening participation, intensifying rhetoric, and growing fears of a broader regional war. One month into the latest escalation, reports indicate that the Houthis have entered the conflict in a more direct and active manner, launching missiles and increasing pressure on maritime routes in the Red Sea.



Security analysts argue that while the Houthis possess a significant number of missiles, their operational strength and precision are not sufficient to deliver a decisive military blow against Israel. However, their strategic value lies not in decisive destruction, but in disruption. By targeting shipping lanes and threatening maritime stability, they are able to impose disproportionate economic and psychological pressure on global trade routes.

This development carries serious implications for one of the world's most critical chokepoints—Bab-ul-Mandab. This narrow passage, connecting the Red Sea to the Gulf of Aden, is a vital artery for international trade. Its previous disruptions have already demonstrated how fragile global supply chains can be. The possibility

of its closure once again raises alarm across global capitals. Analysts recall that during earlier disruptions, even former US President Donald Trump was compelled to pursue negotiations to ensure stability in the region.

At the same time, tensions around the Strait of Hormuz remain unresolved. Despite threats and strategic signaling, the waterway has not been secured through military means. Given that a significant portion of the world's oil supply passes through this route, any disruption could trigger severe global economic consequences—rising oil prices, inflation, and potential financial instability.

In this context, the Houthi intervention adds another layer of complexity. While their missiles may not be decisive in a conventional military sense, their ability to disrupt shipping routes places them in a position of asymmetric influence. They effectively contribute to a multi-front pressure strategy that stretches the resources and attention of multiple actors.

Meanwhile, the broader narrative surrounding Iran and its alleged military losses remains highly contested and politically charged. Some reports and claims circulating in media suggest extensive destruction within Iranian

territory, including civilian infrastructure such as schools, hospitals, and residential buildings. There are also claims of civilian casualties, including children and medical workers. However, these figures vary widely across sources and remain difficult to independently verify. In conflict zones, information warfare often runs parallel to military operations, making it essential to approach such claims with caution and critical scrutiny.

What is clear, however, is the growing humanitarian concern. Any escalation that affects civilian populations, medical facilities, or humanitarian workers raises serious questions under international law and intensifies global pressure on all parties involved.

From a strategic standpoint, the United States finds itself in a difficult position. Former President Donald Trump, who has been vocal in his rhetoric, appears to be navigating a complex balancing act. On one hand, there is pressure to maintain a strong stance in support of allies such as Israel. On the other, there is a growing need to avoid a prolonged ground war in Iran—a scenario widely considered to be one of the most dangerous and costly military engagements possible.

Analysts argue that Trump's current position reflects a broader dilemma: escalating further risks entanglement in a long-term conflict, while de-escalation could be perceived as a strategic retreat.

Continued on Page 7

Rising Tensions in the Middle East: A Threat to Global Peace and Economic Stability

The escalating military tension between Iran, the United States and Israel has emerged as a serious challenge for global politics and the world economy. In recent months, the Middle East has witnessed a steady rise in instability, posing a significant threat not only to regional peace but also to global stability. The situation has become so delicate that even a minor incident could trigger a large-scale conflict. The roots of this confrontation are deeply embedded in historical, political and strategic factors. The longstanding hostility between Iran and Israel remains a central issue, while the United States' unwavering alliance with Israel further complicates the dynamics. Iran is frequently accused of expanding its regional influence by supporting various armed groups, whereas Israel views Iran as a direct threat to its national security. The United States, asserting its position as a global power, continues to support Israel while applying political and economic pressure on Iran. Recent developments including limited military strikes, cyber warfare, and the exchange of aggressive rhetoric have intensified tensions even further. Although the United Nations and other international organizations are attempting to manage the crisis, ground realities indicate that the situation is deteriorating rather than improving. This growing instability has created a climate of uncertainty across the globe, affecting multiple sectors.



From an economic standpoint, the energy sector has been the most severely impacted. The Middle East serves as a critical hub for global oil and gas production and any disruption in the region directly threatens the supply of these essential resources. Sharp fluctuations and increases in oil prices pose a significant risk to the global economy, contributing to rising inflation and higher production costs. Developing countries, already struggling with economic challenges, are disproportionately affected.

Furthermore, global trade is under considerable strain. Key maritime routes most notably the Strait of Hormuz,

through which a large portion of the world's oil supply passes are increasingly at risk. Any disruption in these routes could impact not only energy supplies but also the transportation of essential goods. Such disruptions could severely affect global supply chains, leading to shortages of basic commodities and further price hikes.

The investment environment is also facing heightened uncertainty. During periods of geopolitical instability, international investors typically shift away from high-risk markets, resulting in volatility in stock markets. Many investors redirect their capital toward safer assets such as gold and other precious metals, creating imbalances in financial systems. This trend particularly harms developing economies, where declining investment slows growth and development.

Moreover, the human cost of escalating tensions cannot be ignored. A full-scale conflict could result in widespread displacement, significant loss of life, and a new refugee crisis. There is also an increased risk of terrorism and prolonged regional instability, with far-reaching consequences for global peace. Environmental concerns add another layer of complexity. Military conflict in the region could damage oil infrastructure, leading to severe marine and air pollution. Such outcomes would further intensify the already critical global environmental crisis.

Given these circumstances, it is imperative for global powers to exercise wisdom and restraint. Prioritizing diplomacy over confrontation is essential. Through dialogue, mediation, and confidence-building measures, tensions can be reduced. Failure to act responsibly and in a timely manner could result in consequences that extend far beyond the Middle East, affecting the entire world.

In conclusion, the current crisis represents a crucial test for global leadership. Ensuring peace, stability and economic progress requires patience, cooperation and a firm commitment to dialogue. War is never a sustainable solution, instead, it often deepens crises and prolongs instability.

President Zardari Receives Credentials from Envoys of Six Countries, Discusses Expanding Bilateral Cooperation

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Ambassadors-designate of the Republic of Cuba, Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia, Portuguese Republic, Kingdom of Spain and United Republic of Tanzania, as well as the High Commissioner-designate of the Republic of Singapore, presented their credentials to President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr today.

The President felicitated the envoys on the commencement of their diplomatic responsibilities in Pakistan and conveyed his best wishes for a productive tenure. He expressed the hope that their assignments would contribute to strengthening bilateral relations and advancing cooperation in areas of mutual interest.

During his interaction with Ambassador-designate of Cuba, H. E. Mr. Damian Cordero Torres, the President reaffirmed the longstanding and friendly relations between the two countries. He appreciated Cuba's



support in healthcare and education, including medical scholarships, and emphasised the potential for cooperation in health, biotechnology and tourism, as well as continued collaboration at multilateral forums. The President also conveyed Pakistan's deep appreciation for Cuba's support during the 2005 earthquake, noting that this humanitarian assistance remains a lasting symbol of solidarity between the two nations.

In his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Ethiopia, H. E. Dr.

Oumer Hussein Oba, the President welcomed the opening of Ethiopia's Embassy in Islamabad and the resumption of direct flights. He noted the growing engagement between the two countries and emphasised the need to expand cooperation in trade, aviation, education and technology.

In his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Portugal, H. E. Mr. Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues, the President underlined the importance Pakistan attaches to its relations with Portugal, both bilaterally and within

the European Union framework. He noted the upward trajectory in trade and emphasised the need to expand cooperation in trade, investment, IT, agriculture and blue economy, while also highlighting the role of the Pakistani diaspora and prospects for labour mobility and academic exchanges.

In his meeting with Ambassador-designate of Spain, H. E. Mr. Carlos Aragón Gil de la Serna, the President noted the milestone of 75 years of diplomatic relations and appreciated Spain's commitment

to multilateralism. He highlighted strong trade ties supported by GSP Plus, encouraged greater investment and cooperation, and underscored the importance of safe and legal migration, as well as cultural and academic exchanges. He appreciated the principled stance taken by Spain in the current Gulf crisis and noted that it reflects a commitment to dialogue, de-escalation and adherence to international law.

Talking to Ambassador-designate of Tanzania, H. E. Lt. Gen. (R) Yacoub

Hassan Mohamed, the President reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening ties with Tanzania and the East African Community. He emphasised the need to enhance trade, investment and technical cooperation, and called for stronger business linkages, improved connectivity and greater people-to-people exchanges.

Meeting the High Commissioner-designate of Singapore, H. E. Mr. Ishak Bin Ismail, the President highlighted Singapore's importance as a key regional partner and underscored prospects for expanding cooperation in trade, fintech, infrastructure and services. He also emphasised the role of the Pakistani diaspora, the potential for enhanced connectivity and collaboration in climate and digital economy initiatives.

Upon arrival, the envoys were presented with a guard of honour. National anthems were played and the envoys reviewed the parade before proceeding to present their credentials.

Gilani terms Rwanda genocide one of darkest chapters in modern history

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani attended a solemn commemoration of the genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda as chief guest at a local hotel on Tuesday.

The event, organized by the High Commission of the Republic of Rwanda in Islamabad, marked the 32nd anniversary of the 1994 genocide. It was attended by federal ministers, ambassadors, members of parliament, media representatives, and people from various walks of life.

Addressing the gathering, Gilani described the tragedy as one of the darkest chapters in modern human history, noting that in just 100 days, over a million innocent lives were brutally taken, leaving behind shattered families and scarred communities. He expressed profound grief and



solidarity with the people of Rwanda.

He paid tribute to the resilience and courage of the Rwandan nation, commending its remarkable journey of transforming immense suffering into a powerful narrative of unity, reconciliation, and national rebuilding. He said Rwanda's progress stands as a global example of healing and devel-

opment.

The chairman said the memory of such atrocities resonates deeply with the people of Pakistan, recalling the country's own painful experiences during independence, when countless lives were lost in communal violence and mass migrations. He added that these shared experiences strengthen bonds of empathy and solidarity among nations.



Gilani emphasized that remembrance is not only an act of mourning but also a call to action, warning that hatred, if left unchecked, can lead to devastating consequences. He stressed that unity, tolerance, and justice are essential for lasting peace.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to peace and human dignity, he said the rights of marginalized and oppressed communities must remain central to the global

agenda, adding that silence in the face of injustice amounts to complicity.

He urged the international community to work collectively to strengthen institutions, promote inclusive governance, and foster a culture of tolerance and coexistence. He also highlighted the importance of education in nurturing empathy and mutual respect to ensure that the pledge of "Never Again" is upheld.

Technology drives global progress, says Dr. Atta-ur-Rahman at Children's Health Conference



By Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Modern technology has brought a revolution in the world. Easy access to knowledge on the internet has given people new opportunities to learn, carry out research, and achieve personal and national progress. These views were expressed by Prof Dr Atta-ur-Rahman, a renowned scientist, researcher, and former Federal Minister. He was speaking as the chief guest at the International Children's Health Conference, organised by Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP), hosted by its President, Ms Sadia Rashid, at a local hotel yesterday.

The conference followed the World Health Organization theme: "United for Health, Stand with Science."

Distinguished participants included Dr Mukhtar Bhayo, Provincial Head of WHO Sindh, Fatima Munir Ahmed, MD/CEO of Hamdard Pakistan, Faisal Nadeem, COO, and Syed Muhammad Arsalan, Director HFP. Young speakers from Pakistan and other countries also shared their views via Zoom.

Dr Atta-ur-Rahman said that technology is advancing rapidly in every field, and in the coming decades the world may become entirely different and more advanced. Medical research is making remarkable progress. New chips are being developed to treat brain diseases such as Parkinson's. Humans may soon operate machines through their minds. The impact of artificial intelligence is already visible. Advances are also taking place in computing, chemical sciences, biology, and other fields of engineering.

He added that these fields offer great opportunities for the younger generation. Knowledge is no longer limited to a few countries, as it is widely available online. He stressed the need for modern universities and trained teachers. He also said that success depends on hard work, honesty, and a strong desire to learn.

Earlier, in welcome address, Sadia Rashid said that science helps us understand nature and protect ourselves from hidden dangers such as germs. She noted that this vision was inspired by Hakim Mohammed Said, who believed that children should learn not only from books but also through practical platforms. She emphasised that mastering science is essential for a bright future.

Fatima Munir Ahmed said that modern health challenges require a system aligned with nature, supported by stronger scientific research. She added that, through the efforts of Hakim Mohammed Said, Unani medicine has developed into a modern healthcare system, showing that traditional knowledge can be revitalized through science.

In their special messages, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Dr Hanan Balkhy, and Ellen Thom praised Hamdard Foundation's long-standing services under the leadership of Ms. Sadia Rashid.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer Presents Credentials to the President of Pakistan

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Dr. Oumer Hussein Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE), presented his Letters of Credence to H. E. Asif Ali Zardari, the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, during an official ceremony held at the Aiwan-e-Sadr in Islamabad on Tuesday.

Following the ceremony, the Honorable President held a bilateral meeting with the Ambassador to review the full spectrum of Ethiopia-Pakistan relations.

Both sides, during the meeting, reaffirmed a shared

commitment to deepen their cooperation across both bilateral and multilateral platforms. Their discussions focused on exploring the immense potential in strategic sectors such as climate change, aviation, agriculture and business to further strengthen the bilateral relations.

On the occasion, Ambassador Dr. Oumer conveyed the warm greetings and best wishes of H. E. President Taye Atske Selassie and H. E. Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed Ali (PhD) to the President and the people of Pakistan.

During the exchange, the Ambassador expressed Ethiopia's profound appreciation



for Pakistan's "Look Africa and Engage Africa" policies

and its resolute commitment to strengthen ties with the East African nations including Ethiopia.

H. E. President Asif Ali Zardari reciprocated the warm greetings to the leadership of Ethiopia and wished the Ambassador a successful tenure.

The Honorable President emphasized Pakistan's desire to elevate the diplomatic and economic relations with the FDR Ethiopia.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer reaffirmed his commitment to work closely with the Government of Pakistan to foster a robust and mutually beneficial partnership during his mission in Islamabad.

World Health Day

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum Calls Health a Holistic Concept, Urges Zero Tolerance Against Quackery

By Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, in a comprehensive and insightful message on World Health Day, stated that health is not merely the absence of disease but a complete state of physical, mental, and social well-being.

He highlighted that April 7 is observed globally each year to promote awareness about health-related issues. In Pakistan, the Ministry of Health, Pakistan Medical Association, various healthcare organizations, and NGOs organize events to educate citizens about adopting a healthy lifestyle.

Expressing concern, Anjum noted

that a large segment of society is facing a health crisis. While many people are aware of physical illnesses and their treatments, there remains a significant lack of awareness regarding preventive care and overall well-being. He pointed out that thousands of children in Pakistan lose their lives annually due to unsafe drinking water and malnutrition, calling it a tragic situation that demands urgent awareness campaigns.

He further stated that his organization ensures the provision of clean drinking water and safe, quality food for workers, officers, and engineers in factories and offices. "We do not celebrate World Health Day merely as a formality but actively implement its

principles to promote a healthy, safe, and balanced environment," he added.

Anjum appreciated the recent healthcare policy of the Punjab government, emphasizing that its effective implementation is the administration's foremost responsibility. Referring to a meeting chaired by Dr. Muhammad Saqib Aziz, he said that SOPs, licensing, and inspection systems in public hospitals were reviewed in detail. The meeting also decided to intensify actions against illegal clinics and quack practitioners.

According to reports, Amir Karim Khan has announced the enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy against quackery, stressing the importance of public awareness campaigns. Instruc-

tions have also been issued to establish facilitation desks in District Headquarters Hospitals, ensure the availability and transparent display of medicines, and prominently display contact numbers of relevant officers for prompt complaint resolution.

Calling it a people-friendly initiative, Anjum said master trainers will be prepared for medical superintendents and health officers to strengthen and streamline the healthcare system. He emphasized that effective coordination between district administration and police is essential to eliminate quack doctors and fake practitioners.

He demanded a strict ban on fraudulent treatments and misleading advertisements, along with firm action



against those facilitating quacks. He also urged immediate legal action against individuals who resist opera-

tions against illegal medical practices, stating that such elements pose a serious threat to human lives.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
151,673.45	151,207.81
Day's High	Day's Low
152,013.05	149,129.41
Index Value	Change
17,500,793,052	+465.64
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	7 Apr, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,348.79	-87.50
Percentage	Time
-0.84%	7 Apr, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
46,451.20	-218.68
Percentage	Time
-0.47%	7 Apr, 1:32 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
53,429.56	+15.88
Percentage	Time
+0.030%	7 Apr, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	190.68	197.74
Bahrain Dinar	725.70	735.75
Canadian Dollar	198.72	208.08
China Yuan	36.45	37.55
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	321.65	326.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.06	36.06
Indian Rupee	2.03	2.27
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	877.00	888.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	157.14	162.25
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	720.85	731.90
Qatari Riyal	71.21	72.50
Saudi Riyal	74.40	75.60
Singapore Dollar	215.07	220.50
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.9	77.2
UK Pound Sterling	367.89	374.14
US Dollar	279.00	280.10

SECP Expands Pension Reform, Approves Additional Funds for Balochistan and Punjab

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has further advanced Pakistan's pension reform agenda by approving eight additional pension funds for the Government of Balochistan and one for the Government of Punjab.

With these latest approvals, the total number of authorized pension funds for Balochistan has risen to fifteen, while Punjab's total has reached twenty-five. The newly approved funds for Balochistan will be managed by JS Investments Limited, Alfalah Asset Management Limited, NBP Fund Management Limited, and UBL Fund Managers



Limited. The Punjab fund will be managed by AWT Investments Limited.

This development builds on SECP's earlier approval of seven pension funds for Balochistan under the Contributory Pension Scheme Rules, 2025, marking

the initial implementation of the Defined Contribution (DC) pension model in the province.

The approvals are part of the government's broader strategy to transition from the traditional Defined Benefit (DB) pension system to a more sustainable, transparent, and fiscally responsible Defined Contribution framework.

SECP continues to play a central enabling role in this nationwide transition. The DC model is expected to reduce long-term pension liabilities, improve fiscal sustainability, and provide greater transparency and individual ownership of retirement savings through professionally managed pension funds.

Supernet Technologies Builds Multi-Billion Pipeline as It Transitions to PSX Main Board



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Supernet Technologies Limited (STL) has entered a new growth phase with Rs9.2 billion in FY2025 revenue and a multi-billion project pipeline, as the company scales up its presence across cybersecurity, telecom and digital infrastructure across telecom, banking, and defense segments, as the company positions itself for its next phase of growth following its transition to the Main Board of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX).

In an investors briefing session the company said that following the merger of Supernet Limited into STL the combined entity is now operating at a significantly larger scale, with enhanced market visibility, improved

liquidity and a stronger platform to attract both institutional and retail investors.

Supernet said its revenues of FY 2025 were broadly split across its core verticals, with over Rs4.2 billion secured in Services revenue (connectivity and telecom-related projects), and more than Rs5 billion in non-service revenue which covers orders in cybersecurity, IT infrastructure and enterprise solutions.

Historically, for the period 2021-2025, service revenue has grown at a CAGR of ~21%, while non-service revenue has recorded a higher CAGR of ~65%. In terms of currency exposure, around

90% of non-service revenue is USD-denominated, while approximately 50% of service revenue is billed in USD.

Economy savings campaign

ISLAMABAD: A shopkeeper closed his shop at local market, in the Federal Capital. The federal government decided that markets and shopping malls close by 8pm under energy conservation measures.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

ABHI Microfinance Bank and PEMRA Partner to Provide Earned Wage Access to Employees

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: ABHI Microfinance Bank Limited has entered into an agreement with the Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority (PEMRA) to provide Earned Wage Access (EWA) services to its employees, enabling them to access a portion of their earned salaries before the end of the monthly pay cycle.

The collaboration establishes a framework through which PEMRA employees can avail short-term salary advances through ABHI's digital platform. The initiative is aimed at improving financial flexibility and supporting employees in managing their day-to-day financial needs without relying on informal or high-cost borrowing options.

The agreement was signed by M. Umer Rauf, Head of Digital Financial Services at ABHI Microfinance Bank, and Shamim Gul Durrani, Executive Director General (Finance) at PEMRA, along with representatives from both



organizations.

Through this initiative, ABHI Microfinance Bank and PEMRA aim to promote financial well-being by providing

employees with timely access to their earned income, supporting greater financial stability and reducing dependence on short-term credit alternatives.

FIA Multan Zone Director Visits at Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Multan Zone Director Atta-ur-Rehman met with the President and other officials of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Multan. President Multan Chamber Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh warmly welcomed the distinguished guest at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The meeting was attended by Azhar Baloch Vice President, Khawaja Muhammad Hussain, Former President, Sheikh Asim Saeed, Former Vice President, Zafar Iqbal Siddiqui, Ehtesham-ul-Haq, Secretary General House Muhammad Shafiq, Khawa-

ja Hammad Deputy Director FIA, Haroon Mahe Assistant Director FIA and other members of the Chamber. On this occasion, President Multan Chamber Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh appreciated the role of FIA in protecting the financial interests of the public and especially the business community of South Punjab. The Director FIA appreciated the suggestions given by the Chamber members and assured that the FIA will implement the laws as well as provide all possible facilities to the business community. Finally, Azhar Baloch thanked the distinguished guest while Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh presented the



Chamber's commemorative shield to the Director FIA. Multan-Upon arrival at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry, President of the House, Mian

Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh, presents the emblem of the House to FIA Director Multan Zone, Atta-ur-Rehman. Azhar Baloch, Khawaja Muhammad Hussain,

Sheikh Asim Saeed, Zafar Iqbal Siddiqui, Ehtesham-ul-Haq, Khawaja Hammad, Haroon Mahe, Muhammad Shafiq are standing with him.

Local Knife Makers Gain Trade Edge as IMO Launches at Wazirabad Post Office

Commerce Desk



LAHORE: Chairman of the Hunting & Sporting Knives, Swords and Accessories Association of Pakistan (HSKSAAP), Mr. Nadeem Ahmed Warraich, has informed the press about the upcoming opening ceremony of an International Mail Office (IMO) at the Wazirabad Post Office. This

initiative aims to facilitate and enhance export activities for the local manufacturing sector, particularly exporters based in Wazirabad.

Mr. Warraich stated that the establishment of the IMO will play a significant role in boosting international trade by providing exporters with improved logistical support and streamlined mailing services.

He further shared that several high-level officials from various government departments are expected to attend the opening ceremony. These include representatives from the Prime Minister's Office, the Directorate General of Pakistan Post, as well as senior officials from Customs and the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF).

In addition, Mr. Nadeem Ahmed Warraich has recently been selected as an active member of the Delegation Committee of SMEDA (Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority), Government of Pakistan. His inclusion in this committee is expected to strengthen representation and support for the sector at the national level.

The initiative reflects ongoing efforts to promote exports and provide institutional support to local industries in Wazirabad, a city well known for its craftsmanship in knives and related products.

Gold prices decline by Rs 3,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold decreased in the local market on Tuesday, with 24 karat gold per tola falling by Rs 3,000 to settle at Rs 488,462 compared to Rs 491,462 on the previous trading day, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold declined by Rs 2,572 to Rs 418,777 from Rs 421,349, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 2,358 to Rs 383,892 against Rs 386,250.

In the international



market, the price of gold decreased by \$30 to \$4,657 per ounce from \$4,687.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola remained unchanged at Rs 7,744, while the price of 10 grams of silver also stayed constant at Rs 6,639. The price of silver in the international market remained unchanged at \$72.60 per ounce.

Sports Dept launches Capacity Building Programme

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali along with Director GG Punjab M Tariq Qureshi inaugurated high-profile Capacity Building Programme of Punjab Youth Affairs and Sports Department at the Institute of Sports Sciences Punjab (ISSP) on Tuesday.

The programme is being conducted in collaboration with Health Services Academy, Islamabad in which leading health and sports master trainers will impart modern training to sports officers, coaches, trainers, administrators and athletes relating to sports administration, coaching and physical education.

Project Director Dr Ijaz Asghar presented a detailed overview of Capacity Building Programme at the inaugural ceremony.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Secretary Sports Punjab Muhammad Ali said that the Capacity Building Programme has been designed to enhance the performance of our coaches



and athletes. "Under this programme, modern techniques will be taught to Punjab's coaches and trainers regarding injury management, suitable nutrition and rehabilitation process".

He said that it is very important to equip our coaches and trainers with latest training in accordance with the modern day requirements. "There is no

doubt that proper training is just like oxygen for an athlete to increase his/her performance".

DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi, in his address, said that Capacity Building Programme aimed to produce master trainers in multiple games. "These master trainers can play a vital role in producing world class coaches and male

and female athletes".

He said since CM Punjab has declared 2026 as 'Year of Youth' so we are organizing sports and youth affairs activities across the province with maximum participation of youth. "Efforts are underway to engage maximum number of students from schools and colleges in healthy sports activities".

Snooker Tournament

ISLAMABAD: Focal person PM youth program Sheikh Dawood in opening of Photojournalist Association snooker tournament in a ceremony held at National Press Club on Monday.



World Health Day: Kaspersky Warns of Data Breach Risks in Telemedicine

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On World Health Day, Kaspersky warns of risks tied to the digitization of healthcare and use of telemedicine. Recent incidents show that medical services can be breached, and as a result, medical records may be leaked and then traded on the dark web. The operations of healthcare services can get disrupted. Another aspect is that healthcare platforms may share user data with third parties that handle it irresponsibly.

Telemedicine has moved from a convenience to a core part of healthcare delivery, but its security model has not kept pace with its adoption, and the risks are not theoretical. Recent incidents highlight how real these risks have become. In 2023, it was disclosed that Cerebral, a major telehealth provider focused on mental health services, had been sharing sensitive patient data with third-party platforms such as social media and advertising networks. Millions of users were affected over several years.

PSB approves Investment Policy for Sports Endowment Fund

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) has approved a comprehensive Investment Policy for the Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund, marking a significant step towards ensuring sustainable financial support for sportspersons across the country.

The decision was taken during the 36th Board meeting of the PSB. Director General PSB Yasir Pirzada presented the policy which was unanimously endorsed by the Board members.



The Board was informed that the fund, which had an initial reinvestment base of Rs. 60 million, has now grown to Rs. 68.757 million through prudent financial management.

The profit generated from these investments shall be utilized to provide financial assistance to veteran sportspersons and their dependents.

To further expand the scope and impact of the initiative, it was appraised that a request has been made to the Federal Government for seed money of Rs. 5 billion to significantly enhance the size and outreach of the Endowment Fund.

Importantly, the Board directed that the principal amount of the Endowment Fund shall remain intact and shall not be utilized under any circumstances, ensuring long-term sustainability of the initiative.

It is pertinent to note that the Federal Cabinet had earlier approved the Pakistan Sports Endowment Fund Scheme, 2025, replacing the earlier 2007 framework following the Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif's announcement to establish a more robust financial support system for sportspersons.

Field Marshal Munir Directs Commanders

Continued from Page 1

The pace of Operation Ghazab-lil-Haq will be maintained till the culmination of terrorists' safe heavens and use of the Afghan soil against Pakistan is decisively brought to an end.

The Forum appreciated the hectic efforts by the Government, to bring an end to the War in the Middle East, echoing the call for restraint, dialogue, and de-escalation, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to principled diplomacy and constructive engagement.

The Forum reiterated Pakistan's role as a responsible regional stakeholder, actively contributing to peace and stability as a Regional Security Stabiliser.

The Forum noted with concern and vehemently condemned latest attacks on KSA's petrochemical and industrial complex as an unnecessary escalation which spoils sincere efforts to resolve the conflict through peaceful means.

Forum noted that restraint and calmness so far exhibited by KSA, despite

grave provocations, enabled mediation and diplomatic resolution, however, such unwarranted aggressions have serious repercussions, to spoil the ongoing peaceful options and conducive environment.

The Forum categorically rejected persistent disinformation, baseless allegations, and false flag narratives attributed to India, noting that such tactics stand discredited internationally.

The Forum expressed concern over continued human rights violations by

Indian authorities in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and noted the recent spate of fake encounters at various locations to cover up extrajudicial killings.

In his concluding remarks, the COAS & CDF directed commanders to maintain the highest standards of operational readiness, professionalism, and adaptability, expressing full confidence in the Armed Forces' ability to counter all forms of threats and to ensure the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan.

A Region on the Edge: Escalation, Chokepoints, and Strategic Anxiety

Continued from Page 4

This creates what experts describe as a "strategic trap"—where every available option carries significant political and military risks.

There are also internal pressures within the United States. Public opinion, war fatigue, and political opposition all contribute to a climate where any major military decision faces intense scrutiny. In such an environment, leaders are often forced to seek a carefully calibrated exit strategy—one that allows them to disengage without appearing कमजोर or

defeated.

Iran, on the other hand, appears to be pursuing a strategy that aims to increase pressure without triggering a full-scale war. By supporting proxy actors and maintaining strategic ambiguity, it retains leverage while avoiding direct confrontation. Reports suggest that Iran may prefer a scenario where the United States commits ground troops, thereby escalating the conflict to a level where it can be met with asymmetric resistance.

Such a development would mark a dangerous turning point. Ground warfare in a region like Iran would signif-

icantly increase the scale of destruction, complicate exit strategies, and potentially draw in additional regional and global actors. History has repeatedly shown that once ground forces are deployed, disengagement becomes far more difficult and costly.

At present, the war of words between key actors is intensifying. Rhetoric is becoming sharper, signaling a willingness to escalate if necessary. However, beneath this public posturing lies a deeper reality: all parties are aware of the catastrophic consequences of a full-scale war.

The world now finds itself at a critical

juncture. The stability of key maritime routes, the risk of economic disruption, and the possibility of a broader regional conflict are all converging into a single, dangerous equation. Every decision taken in the coming days will have far-reaching implications—not just for the region, but for global peace and economic stability.

In such a climate, the greatest challenge is not merely military strength, but strategic restraint. The question is no longer who can escalate faster, but who can find a way out before escalation turns into irreversible catastrophe.

PHF constitutes national selection committee, appoints head coaches for all formats



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has constituted a national selection committee and appointed head coaches for senior, junior and under-18 teams with an aim to strengthen the domestic hockey structure and achieve better results at the international level.

According to a PHF press release issued here, Olympian Samiullah Khan, already serving as Chairman of Selectors, will lead the newly-formed national selection committee. The body will operate under his supervision to ensure a transparent and merit-based selection process.

In line with the recommendations of the PHF Professional Development Committee, the selection committee includes Naeem Akhtar, Kashif Jawad, Muhammad Khalid, Atif Bashir and Nasir Ali as members.

The federation has also named head coaches for all three tiers. Olympian Manzoor-ul-Hasan has been appointed head coach of the Pakistan senior hockey team, while Ayaz Mahmood will take charge of the junior team. Qamar Ibrahim has been entrusted with coaching responsibilities for the Pakistan under-18 side.

Under the newly notified rules and procedures, the relevant head coach will be included in the selection process as a member of the committee during team selection. This measure is intended to align player selection with team requirements while upholding merit.

The PHF expressed confidence that these steps would streamline the selection mechanism and play a vital role in enhancing Pakistan's performance in upcoming international competitions.

Sindh Strikers dominate National Talent Hunt Boxing Championship



HYDERABAD: Sindh Strikers delivered an outstanding performance to clinch the top position with seven gold medals at the National Talent Hunt Boxing Championship, while Punjab Thunders finished second and Balochistan Eagles secured third place.

Organised by the Pakistan Boxing Federation in collaboration with the Pakistan Army, the boys' and girls' championship was held at the Hyderabad Club, featuring participation from 210 boxers representing 10 teams from across the country. Competitions were conducted across 21 weight categories, including 13 for boys and eight for girls.

Major General Yahya Suleman Gondal was the chief guest at the closing ceremony and distributed prizes among the winners along with Pakistan Boxing Federation President Col (ret'd) Nasir Tang and Secretary General Maj (ret'd) Irfan Younis. Senior Vice President of the federation and President of Sindh Boxing Association Asghar Baloch, along with other officials and dignitaries, were also present on the occasion.

According to the results, Sindh Strikers secured seven gold, one silver and three bronze medals to top the standings. Punjab Thunders claimed second place with four gold, two silver and five bronze medals. Balochistan Eagles and Balochistan Bulls shared third position with three gold medals each.

Among other teams, KP Tigers won two gold, three silver and one bronze medal, Sindh Stallions secured one gold, five silver and three bronze medals, and Punjab Warriors claimed one gold, two silver and two bronze medals. Islamabad bagged two silver and six bronze medals, KP Lions earned one silver and three bronze medals, while Azad Kashmir secured one bronze medal.

In the junior category, Sindh's Ayesha Khan was declared the best boxer of the championship.

The Man Between Fire and Peace: Asim Munir

Continued from Page 4

very intensity of the current crisis has also created a shared awareness of the catastrophic consequences of failure.

In this volatile environment, Munir's role transcends that of a traditional mediator. He operates as a strategic bridge—linking adversaries, aligning interests, and crafting solutions that acknowledge both the realities of power and the necessity of compromise. His approach combines firmness with adaptability, recognizing that peace is not achieved through idealism alone but through pragmatic, incremental progress.

The Islamabad Accord, therefore, is more than a diplomatic proposal; it is a comprehensive framework that integrates ceasefire, economic stabilization, security guarantees, and long-term conflict resolution. It reflects an understanding that sustainable peace requires addressing both immediate triggers and structural causes of conflict.

As the world watches the unfolding negotiations, the stakes could not be higher. A successful agreement would not only end the current hostilities but also set a precedent for resolving complex, multi-actor conflicts through inclusive diplomacy. Failure, on the other hand, risks plunging the region—and potentially the world—into deeper chaos.

At this critical juncture, Field Marshal Asim Munir stands as a central figure in the effort to avert disaster. His leadership, shaped by experience and defined by resolve, offers a pathway—however narrow—toward peace. Whether that path is taken will depend on the willingness of all parties to move beyond confrontation and embrace the difficult but necessary work of compromise.

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

Virtual session

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holds a virtual session with over 250 global institutional investors, led by Jefferies, to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook and reform progress at Finance Division today



Photo: PID

Finance Minister Courts Global Investors on Economy, Reforms, Opportunities

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a virtual interaction with global institutional investors, led by Jefferies Financial Group (Jefferies), to discuss Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook, reform trajectory, and evolving investment landscape. Strong interest was observed, with over 250 participants representing global institutional investors join-

ing the session.

Welcoming the participants, the Finance Minister appreciated Jefferies' continued engagement with Pakistan and its role in facilitating dialogue with the global investment community. He emphasized that Pakistan remains committed to a reform-oriented economic agenda anchored in macroeconomic stability, fiscal discipline, and structural transformation. The Finance Minister highlighted that Pakistan has

made steady progress under its ongoing program with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), with successful completion of key reviews reflecting adherence to both quantitative and structural benchmarks. He noted that this progress underscores the government's commitment to maintaining fiscal and external discipline while advancing reforms critical for long-term economic sustainability. Providing an overview of recent developments, the

Minister outlined the government's proactive and coordinated response to evolving global and regional challenges. He shared that a whole-of-government approach has been adopted to ensure supply chain continuity, manage energy availability, and maintain market stability. Targeted and digitally delivered subsidies, he noted, have helped protect vulnerable segments while ensuring transparency and fiscal responsibility. The meeting concluded

with a constructive exchange of views on global economic developments and regional dynamics, with both sides reaffirming the importance of continued engagement to support Pakistan's long-term economic objectives and investment outlook.

The meeting was attended by Chairman PVARA (virtual), Commissioner Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), along with senior officials of the Finance Division.

Turkish Military Chief meets Pakistan Navy head to bolster defense ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chief of General Staff of the Turkish Armed Forces, General Levent ERGÜN, visited Naval Headquarters Islamabad and called on Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, the dignity was received by the Chief of the Naval Staff. During the meeting, professional matters of mutual interest, the regional maritime security environment arising from the ongoing Israel-US-Iran conflict and bilateral defence collaboration were discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of further strengthening military cooperation between the two countries, with a particular focus on training and joint military exercises.

Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted Pakistan Navy's



contributions for regional maritime security. General Levent ERGÜN acknowledged Pakistan Navy's efforts

and role in promoting collaborative maritime security.

The visit of the Deputy Chief of General Staff of the

Turkish Armed Forces reflects the deep-rooted strategic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye and their shared

resolve to contribute toward a secure and stable maritime environment.

UK praises Pakistan's role in global peace

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The United Kingdom has appreciated Pakistan's mediation efforts and lauded its role for global peace.

The appreciation came at a meeting between Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott in Islamabad today.

Speaking on the occasion, Jane Marriott said Pakistan effectively handled the petroleum supply situation and played a positive role by effectively managing its relations with the United States and Iran.

In his remarks, the Minister said that Pakistan is committed to promoting peace



and stability through negotiations and

diplomatic engagement. He said Paki-

stan maintained the continuity of supply through timely measures.

Ali Pervaiz Malik friendly countries including Saudi Arabia, Oman, and the United Arab Emirates cooperated in supplying petroleum during the period of uncertainty.

The Minister said that government is providing protection to vulnerable groups through targeted subsidies. He further said that fertilizer prices in Pakistan are one-third of those in neighboring countries.

Both sides also discussed prospects of cooperation for regulatory and institutional strengthening between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

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No energy crisis in country despite oil disruptions: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday said that despite disruptions in oil supply due to regional tensions, no electricity crisis had emerged in the country owing to a significant share of renewable energy in electricity generation.

The prime minister, while chairing a meeting regarding long term energy planning and export strategy during current international situation, directed to expedite work on the Battery Energy Storage System project.

"Solar energy and other renewable energy sources are the future of the power sector," he said and directed to formulate a comprehensive strategy to further expand renewable energy sources at the national level.

He noted that Pakistani exports to Gulf countries were continuing despite recent global tensions and challenges.

The meeting was further told that demand for Pakistani agricultural products in Gulf countries had been steadily increasing.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers Dr. Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Jam Kamal Khan, Dr. Musadik Malik, Ahad Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaulah Tarar, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Sardar Owais Ahmed Leghari, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistants Haroon Akhtar and Tariq Bajwa, Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad, and senior officials from relevant institutions.

DPM/FM Dar, FM Bahrain express concerns over regional developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Bahrain Dr Abdullah bin Rashid Al Zayani, Tuesday, expressed concerns over recent developments in the region.

The DPM/FM held a telephone

call with the Bahrain foreign minister, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The two leaders also discussed ongoing deliberations on current business at the United Nations Security Council and underscored the importance of maintaining peace and stability.

They agreed to remain in touch.

Minister urges investors to avail opportunities for investment in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Tuesday urged the foreign investors to avail golden opportunities for investment in Pakistan.

Pakistan is the best and safe place for foreign investors, he said while talking to a private television channel.

Rich potential is available in

different sectors of this country, he said.

In reply to a question, he said foreign direct investment could help boost economy of Pakistan besides business activities.

To a question, he said there is a need to provide more incentives to the investors to achieve speedy progress in the business and economic sector.

Govt promoting solar energy under sustainable policy framework: Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Climate Change Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal on Tuesday informed the National Assembly that the government is actively promoting solar energy and clean power through a balanced and sustainable policy.

Responding to a calling attention notice, drastic change in net metering policy for solar prosumers and decision to propose 18% tax on solar panels, she said Pakistan has introduced policies to support renewable energy in line with global practices, adding that the government remains committed to expanding clean energy initiatives.

She said the country's updated climate commitments show a clear move towards sustainable energy, including a decision not to set up new power plants based on imported coal.

The minister said Pakistan would instead use its local coal resources while gradually shifting to cleaner energy sources.



She noted that earlier policies, such as net metering, helped promote solar energy and led to increased public interest and wider adoption of solar systems.

She said the revised policy aims to balance benefits for consumers with the overall stability of the energy sector, while also protecting investor confidence.