



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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(کنجھاری حدیث نمبر 6774)

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## PM Shehbaz meets PPP Chairman Bilawal to discuss economy, security, and Middle East diplomacy

According to government sources, Bilawal Bhutto Zardari shared his party's proposals regarding austerity measures and emphasized collaborative solutions to strengthen Pakistan's fiscal policies. The leaders also exchanged views on Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic efforts to help resolve conflicts in the Middle East.



## Sindh governor urges lawyers to avoid unnecessary court relief

Sindh Governor Nihal Hashmi has advised lawyers to refrain from seeking unnecessary relief from courts and to maintain discipline and respect within the legal profession. Speaking to the legal community, Hashmi highlighted that Pakistan's founder Muhammad Ali Jinnah was a lawyer, 1973 Constitution drafter Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto practiced law, and former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif is also a lawyer.

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## Meeting on Petroleum Products

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting on the supply chain of Petroleum Products and Austerity Measures in wake of current regional situation on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

## DPM Dar, Turkiye's FM Hakan Fidan discuss regional situation



### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Tuesday spoke with Turkiye's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan. During the conversation, Hakan Fidan expressed appre-

ciation for hospitality extended during recent visit to Pakistan for the meeting of the four Foreign Ministers in Islamabad. Both reaffirmed the strength of Pakistan-Turkiye bilateral relations and agreed to remain in close contact.

## Naqvi visits NADRA Headquarters, orders action against illegal foreigners

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday visited the headquarters of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and presided over a high-level meeting.

During the briefing, NADRA Chairman Lt. Gen. Muhammad Munir Afzal informed the Minister about the authority's performance, ongoing initiatives, and upcoming projects.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi appreciated NADRA's performance and its effective public service delivery. He directed NADRA to fully assist law enforcement agencies in the repatriation of illegal foreigners.

He also ordered the immediate identification and removal from the national database of individuals who had illegally obtained Pakistani citizenship.

Mohsin Naqvi noted that NADRA's services have signif-



icantly improved over the past two years and instructed the introduction of more modern facilities for public convenience.

He directed that state-of-the-art NADRA offices in major cities should be constructed on NADRA's own land instead of rented buildings, and called for a detailed master plan in this regard.

The Interior Minister assured full coordination with relevant departments and cooperation at the ministerial level.

Director General FIA Dr. Usman Anwar and senior NADRA officials were also present on the occasion.

# PM Sharif reviews petroleum supply chain, orders steps to ensure relief for low-income groups

### Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday chaired a high-level meeting to review the petroleum products supply chain and assess ongoing austerity and conservation measures in view of the evolving regional situation, directing authorities to finalize proposals aimed at providing further relief to low-income segments of society.

The prime minister amid chairing the meeting here, instructed relevant ministries to submit final recommendations after consultation with the provinces to strengthen supply management and ensure continued public relief amid global uncertainties, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Emphasizing strict enforcement, PM Shehbaz Sharif directed authorities to take

tough action against petroleum smuggling and illegal hoarding to maintain market stability and protect consumers. He said the government had already taken significant steps over the past three weeks to support vulnerable groups and would continue its efforts to shield the poor from economic pressures.

The prime minister stated that through reductions in the development budget and implementation of austerity and

savings measures, the federal government had provided relief amounting to Rs129 billion to the public by preventing an increase in petroleum prices. He added that timely government decisions ensured adequate availability of petroleum products to meet domestic requirements.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar,

Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister for Power Division Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization Muhammad Ali, Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Bajwa, and senior officials from relevant departments.

## FM Aurangzeb holds consultation on petroleum prices subsidies

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The high-level consultative meeting was held under the chair of Finance Minister Aurangzeb to hold consultation on petroleum prices between the federation and provinces. Chief Ministers Sindh and Punjab attended the meeting virtually.

During the meeting, it was reviewed that the government should eliminate general subsidy and give targeted subsidy to the poor. The proposal was submitted to provide direct relief to the poor. During the meeting, it was discussed that digital system should be introduced for petroleum subsidy.

There were proposals that government should provide subsidy through cash assistance and database.

During the meeting, there was emphasis on financial stability and transparency besides ensuring accountability in subsidy system. It was agreed that the federal and provincial governments should develop joint strategy to develop framework for targeted subsidies as the government was committed to protecting vulnerable groups.

## Ayaz Sadiq, JUI-F Chief, discuss regional situation, parliamentary matters

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, on Tuesday met President Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F), Maulana Fazlur Rehman, and discussed the current regional situation and matters of mutual interest.

Both leaders emphasised the need to further strengthen the legislative process and enhance the effective role of Parliament.

They also discussed promoting national unity, democratic stability, and political harmony.

Ayaz Sadiq highlighted that consultation and cooperation among political leadership were essential to address the challenges faced by the country.

He further stated that strengthening coordination among political parties was in the national interest.

The Speaker stressed the importance of adopting a unified strategy in the national interest and underscored the need for all parliamentary parties to play an active role in addressing



national issues and fostering unity.

He also noted that Pakistan was playing an active role in the evolving situation in the Middle East.

JUI-F chief appreciated the role of Sardar Ayaz Sadiq as custodian of the House and acknowledged the importance of Parliament in the current regional situation.

He remarked that Parliament's role was of key significance in addressing ongoing challenges.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman also appreciated Pakistan's role in the Israel-Iran conflict and emphasised that, in light of the changing regional dynamics, it was essential to take parliament into confidence for making important decisions.

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# PM Rathore fires up economy: IT, meat processing gain industrial zone access

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Revolutionary steps taken by Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore to promote industrial development and ease of doing business in Azad Kashmir.

The Azad Kashmir government has allowed the IT, poultry (control shed) and meat processing sectors to set up factories in industrial zones, while removing steel, flour mills and rice husking, stone crushers, oil blending units and foam industry from the negative list, after which these sectors will also get tax exemption like other industries.

In this regard, a high-level meeting was held under the chairmanship of Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. The meeting was attended by Advisor on Industries and Commerce Sardar Fahad Yaqoob, President Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce Umar Shalhzad Jaral, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister Zafar Mahmood Khan, Secretary Industries Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Department of Industries and



other concerned officials.

The meeting approved the development of Mirpur Special Economic Zone on the model of Pakistan's Special Economic Zones, under which Mirpur Special Economic Zone will be connected to the National Highway through special road infrastructure

from Lehri, while approval was given to provide a conducive environment by providing all the necessary facilities including special electricity transmission on a priority basis.

Meanwhile, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chamber of Commerce welcomed these steps of the govern-

ment in this regard and said that this is a golden day for the business community of Azad Kashmir.

These steps in Azad Kashmir will not only create convenience for the business community but will also prove to be a milestone for the establishment of new industries and economic development.

## Peoples Party and PTI disappointed the peoples, Maryam Idrees

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD/MIRPUR: PML-N Azad Jammu and Kashmir Women's Section Central Vice President and Member Manifesto Committee Maryam Idrees said that the PML-N will give a surprise in the upcoming elections. Workers should prepare fully. Insha Allah, the PML-N government will be formed. The vision of the party manifesto and leadership should reach the individual.

Maryam Idrees said that elections are coming, workers will become more active in their respective union councils, we will run the election campaign in an organized manner, God willing, by achieving a complete victory in the elections, under the leadership and guidance of Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, we will continue the journey of construction and development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir from where it stopped during the PML-N government.

PML-N Women's Department Central Vice President Maryam Idrees said that all of our efforts will bear fruit and God willing, victory in the upcoming elections will be the destiny of the PML-N. This time, we will not let anyone steal the election, we will guard every vote.



## Pakistan emerges as key de-escalation broker as Middle East conflict widens: Masood Khan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Masood Khan, Former ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has underscored that Pakistan's decision to convene a high-level meeting of foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkey, and Egypt represents a calculated and high-stakes diplomatic initiative aimed at preventing a wider regional catastrophe in the Middle East.

In an op-ed written by him and published in Al Jazeera Arabic, Khan warned that the situation is nearing a broader confrontation, adding that Pakistan is positioning itself not merely as a stakeholder but as a credible and trusted mediator. "This is a collective endeavour," he stated, emphasizing that meaningful progress will depend on coordinated regional support and sustained diplomatic engagement.

Khan highlighted that the Islamabad meeting seeks to advance mediation efforts to halt a devastating conflict that has already inflicted heavy human and economic losses, disrupted global markets, and destabilized key regions. He warned that the ongoing hostilities could become "the most destructive conflict since World War II" if left unchecked.

## Thatta Launches Blood Donation Drive to Aid 600 Thalassemia Patients



Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: The administration of Thatta district has decided to launch a four-day blood donation campaign to facilitate Thalassemia patients across the district. According to sources within the Deputy Commissioner's office, the campaign will begin next Monday and conclude on Thursday. A blood donation camp will be set up at Civil Hospital Thatta where blood will be collected.

Addressing a gathering at Darbar Hall Thatta, Deputy Commissioner Sarmad Baghat stated that around 600 patients in Thatta and Sujawal districts are battling Thalassemia, and the blood donation campaign aims to facilitate them. "Due to the unavailability of blood, the parents of these patients face multiple challenges, including taking their children to Karachi almost every week. Besides, the situation for the patients also becomes critical," he said, adding that it was among his prime responsibilities to assist those in need.

He tasked the District Health Officer, Thatta, to supervise the four-day blood camp and urged local citizens to turn up and donate blood for the noble cause. The meeting was attended by heads of different institutions and members of civil society.

## Demolishing

ISLAMABAD: Old passenger shade in front of PIMS hospital being demolished for construct the new shade for electric buses stop, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Azad Kashmir PM Vows Unwavering Protection for Freedom of Press

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the PPP government would continue to protect the right to freedom of opinion and expression while strengthening democratic values. He made these assertions while speaking to a representative delegation consisting of senior journalists from the Central Press Club Muzaffarabad who called on him here today. He said that free and professional journalism forms the cornerstone of any civilized society. Prime minister Rathore assured the delegation that the protection of journalists' rights would be ensured



at all costs. "Journalists serve as the eyes and ears of society", he said adding that concrete steps were being taken to encourage responsible reporting and

foster better coordination between the government and the media. During the meeting, the delegation highlighted the challenges faced by the media,

while acknowledging the government's efforts to address them. The delegation also paid tribute to the Prime Minister for promoting people-friendly policies, safeguarding press freedom, and taking practical steps for the welfare of the people. They lauded the government's positive role in ensuring institutional stability of the media and providing a conducive and independent working environment. The delegation included President Central Press Club Sohail Mughal, Vice Chairman Press Foundation Sardar Zulfikar Ali, Former President Central Press Club Syed Afaq Hussain Shah, senior journalist Tariq Naqash, senior journalist Javed Hashmi, Special and others.

# Positioning Pakistan at the Forefront of Global Diplomacy Through Sustainable Leadership

Let us begin by addressing our critics—those who may find it difficult to accept our genuine appreciation for the commendable efforts of Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar for their devoted service to Pakistan.

To such detractors, one can simply say: have the courage and integrity to recognize and appreciate the contributions of those who are sincerely and tirelessly engaged in the cause of nation-building.

Over the past year, Pakistan has

ascended to remarkable heights in global diplomacy. The credit for placing the country at the forefront of international diplomacy and geopolitics—through sustained and purposeful leadership—rightly belongs to the deeply committed and conscientious trio: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Today, the world stands at a perilous crossroads, confronted with the threat of unprecedented devastation. The ongoing U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict has pushed the Gulf region in particular—and the wider world in general—to the brink of a catastrophe of unimaginable scale. The economic

repercussions of this escalating crisis are already being severely felt, not only by the less-privileged nations but across the global community.

This intensifying conflict must be brought to an immediate halt. Should it continue unchecked, there is a grave risk of it spiraling into a full-scale global war—potentially triggering a catastrophe far beyond human comprehension.

It is indeed reassuring to note that urgent efforts have been set in motion to peacefully resolve this grave issue

of immense international significance. Even more encouraging is the growing confidence shown by the parties involved in the ongoing conflict—the United States, Iran, and several countries across the Middle East and the Gulf region (with the exception of Israel)—in Pakistan's role as a mediator. Alongside its esteemed partners, Turkey and Egypt, Pakistan has been entrusted with the critical responsibility of facilitating dialogue and working toward a swift resolution.

That Pakistan has been chosen to

help lead this mediation effort, aimed at bringing the warring sides to the negotiating table and resolving a crisis of such global magnitude, is a matter of great pride for the nation.

At this pivotal juncture, it is imperative for the nation to stand united in support of the sincere and tireless efforts of its leadership—Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar—as they undertake the formidable task of helping bring an end to the ongoing U.S.-Israel-Iran conflict.

Amid the ongoing and intense exchange of missile strikes between Iran and Israel, the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Turkey

gathered in Islamabad on March 29, 2026, for two days of comprehensive deliberations aimed at exploring practical pathways to bring the warring sides to the negotiating table and encourage an amicable resolution to the ongoing conflict.

Let us hope and pray that this devastating war, which has cast a dark shadow over the world, comes to a swift end—for the greater good of humanity and the cause of global peace.

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Analysis

M. Fazal Elahi

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**  
Fajr ..... 4:33 am  
Zohr ..... 12:12 pm  
Asr ..... 4:41 pm  
Maghrib ..... 6:27 pm  
Isha ..... 7:52 pm

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

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

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

**DEPARTMENTS**  
CDA ..... 9221334-43  
CDA ..... 9208301-04  
Met Office ..... 9250360-6  
RDA ..... 5555864  
TMA ..... 5770886  
Cantonment Board ..... 9270151-3  
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation ..... 9209224  
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

# NAB Chairman Presents Record-Breaking 2025 Annual Report Heraldng Trillions in Recovery

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman NAB, Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, presented the NAB Annual Report 2025 to the Speaker of the National Assembly. Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq commended NAB for achieving a historic recovery of Rs. 6.213 trillion.

The Speaker remarked that NAB's transformation into a public and business-friendly organization following institutional reforms is highly commendable. The Speaker noted that NAB's total recovery of Rs. 11.524 trillion (approximately \$41 billion USD)

over the last three years is an exemplary achievement.

The Speaker expressed satisfaction over NAB's 72% prosecution success rate. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq highlighted that the recovery of approximately 2.98 million acres of government and forest land by NAB is a historic milestone.

Providing relief to 115,587 affectees of Housing and investment schemes by returning Rs. 180 billion is a major accomplishment, the Speaker added.

The Speaker also lauded NAB's actions in curbing money laundering.

During the meeting, Chairman NAB briefed the



Speaker on various reforms, including the establishment of special facilitation centers for Parliamentarians, the civil bureaucracy, the business community, and Overseas Pakistanis.

The Chairman informed the Speaker that NAB has initiated Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based invest-

igations.

Through the implementation of the NAB E-Office (NEO) system in 2025, a paperless environment has been introduced. Chairman NAB appreciated the constructive role of Parliament and its members in the fight against corruption.

## Independence day of Bangladesh

ISLAMABAD: Rana Tanvir Hussain, Federal Minister for National Food Security, Md Iqbal Hussain Khan, High Commissioner of Bangladesh and other ambassadors cutting the cake on the occasion of 55th Independence day and national day of People's Republic of Bangladesh held at Serena hotel Islamabad.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PSCA's VCCS Reunites Missing Special Child with Parents

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority's Virtual Center for Child Safety (VCCS) has achieved another significant success by safely reuniting a special child, who had been missing for the last two days, with his parents through advanced camera surveillance and intelligent tracking.

According to details, Saim, a special child and resident of Millat Park, Lahore, had been missing for the past two days after losing his way and

being unable to return home. The child's parents contacted the Virtual Center for Child Safety and shared only a blurred image of the child via WhatsApp.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, despite limited information, the child's movement was successfully traced using PSCA's advanced camera surveillance system and digital tracking. The child was spotted on Safe City's surveillance cameras moving from Marghzar Colony towards Secretariat, after which an

immediate alert was issued to the relevant police station and investigation teams. Based on timely information provided by the Safe City "Mera Pyara" team, field police responded promptly, safely recovered the child, and after due verification, handed him over to his parents.

The spokesperson stated that "Mera Pyara" team has so far reunited more than 62,000 children and special individuals with their families. The process of tracing missing persons is being further enhanced through

modern camera surveillance, data analytics, and integrated systems. Citizens are urged to report any missing person by calling Emergency Helpline 15 and pressing 3 to share information.

The spokesperson added that Safe City's "Mera Pyara" team remains active 24/7 to reunite missing individuals with their families. Punjab Safe Cities Authority remains committed to ensuring public safety and providing timely assistance to the citizens through modern technology.

## DC Umar Mela visits exam centers

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: In accordance with the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, strict and effective monitoring of matriculation examinations is ongoing across the district to ensure a transparent and fair examination system.

In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela paid a surprise visit to examination centers. He conducted a detailed inspection of the examination center established at Government Commerce College and thoroughly reviewed the arrangements in place. The Deputy Commissioner directed the examination staff to strictly implement a zero-tolerance policy against cheating, emphasizing that any form of irregularity or negligence will not be tolerated. On the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela stated that no negligence or mismanagement in the examination system would be tolerated and strict action would be taken against those responsible. He further directed the concerned officials to further improve all arrangements during the examinations to provide students with a peaceful and conducive environment.

## 21,000 Pakistanis imprisoned Abroad — Justice Project Pakistan Launches Detained Abroad Registry

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Justice Project Pakistan (JPP), with the support of the High Commission of Canada and in collaboration with the Parliamentarians Commission for Human Rights, launched Detained Abroad, a regional registry documenting the rights and legal protections available to foreign nationals imprisoned across the Indo-Pacific. The platform was unveiled at a launch event held in Islamabad, and was attended by representatives and consular officials from diplomatic missions, government ministries, national human rights institutions, civil society organisations, UN agencies, legal practitioners and media representatives.

The event opened with welcome remarks by H. E. Tariq Ali Khan,

High Commissioner of Canada to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, followed by a presentation introducing Detained Abroad, providing an overview of the registry and its practical use for consular officials, lawyers and civil society organisations responding to detention cases. Remarks were also delivered by MNA Ilyas Chaudhary.

A consultation session followed, bringing together civil society organisations, government officials, and ambassadors—including the Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan—to discuss how improved legal resources and stronger coordination between legal, diplomatic, and civil society actors can reduce the risks faced by foreign nationals in detention. Participants included Secretary Mr. Nadeem Aslam, Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development (MOPHRD); members



of the National Assembly and Senate Committees on Human Rights and Overseas Pakistanis; Senator Zeeshan Khanzada; Director General LAJA; Ms. Una Kelly, First Secretary (Rule of Law), Delegation of the European Union to Pakistan; Mr. Ben Headon, Head of Consular, Embassy of Ireland; and Mr. Zulfiqar Hassan, Embassy of

Ireland. The High Commissioner of Canada to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan stated: "The Government of Canada is pleased to support the development and launch of the registry, the first of its kind, to help safeguard the rights and legal protections of Canadians, Pakistanis, and other nationals detained in the Indo-Pacific."



Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar and Usman Akram Gondal adorned the newly promoted DSPs with ranks during a dignified ceremony held at the CPO Complex.

## Dispute Resolution Councils in Mardan: Noble Vision Fading Due to Neglect and Influence

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Mardan district, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Dispute Resolution Council (DRC) under the police department is gradually declining and losing its original effectiveness and purpose. This deterioration is largely due to the lack of interest and attention from police officials, along with the presence of long-standing influential groups within the administrative structure.

The DRC was originally established as a positive, people-friendly initiative by former Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Nasir Durrani. The core idea behind it was that the Jirga system holds a strong social position in Pashtun society; therefore, by aligning this traditional system with modern requirements, an effective alternative dispute resolution mechanism could be created.

With this objective, the DRC was formed after consultations with religious scholars, the legal community, social figures, and journalists. Initially, the system received strong public support, and within a short time, hundreds of local disputes were resolved amicably. This success was largely due to public trust, local representation, and the provision of simple and swift justice.

In Mardan district, the DRC was launched in 2015, followed by the establishment of councils in tehsils including Takht Bhai, Katlang, Rustam, and Garhi Kapura. In particular, the DRC in Takht Bhai was established in March 2017, with members selected from lawyers, journalists, religious scholars, social figures, and retired government employees.

During its early phase, these councils performed commendably and resolved many complex cases through mutual agreement. However, over time, a noticeable decline in performance has been observed. A major reason is the lack of interest from both authorities and members, which has not only affected performance but also weakened public trust. Furthermore, in some cases, individuals with questionable social standing or those selected through favoritism were included as members, which severely damaged the credibility of the DRC.

In Tehsil Takht Bhai, this issue is particularly evident, where some members have remained in their positions since the council's establishment in 2015, despite the DRC rules of law specifying a two-year term for members.

## Population Control Essential for Sustainable Development, says Ch Naeem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Population Welfare Officer Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem has said that controlling the rapidly growing population has become a pressing need of the time as unchecked population growth not only hinders economic development but also puts immense pressure on health, education and other basic services. In his statement, he highlighted that resources are limited while the population continues to increase, making it increasingly difficult to provide essential facilities to the public. He warned that if the population growth rate is not balanced, the challenges may become more severe in the future. Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem further stated that the Population Welfare Department is taking various steps to raise public awareness, including family planning campaigns, seminars and community-level guidance. He emphasized that for a healthy society, it is important for every family to plan the number of children according to their resources. He also urged religious scholars, teachers, civil society and the media to play their role in this important national cause to promote responsible behavior among the public. He reaffirmed the department's commitment to continuing its awareness efforts in the future.



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# Iran on the Brink of a Ground War

**F**rustration is now visible on all sides of the U. S.-Israel war against Iran. After weeks of bombardment, strategic signaling, and diplomatic theater, the central objectives publicly associated with Washington and Tel Aviv still appear only partially achieved. The Strait of Hormuz remains the decisive choke point, Iranian retaliatory capacity has not been extinguished, and the war has entered its second month with fresh troop deployments rather than a settled outcome. Reuters reported on March 30 that thousands of U. S. Army paratroopers from the 82nd Airborne had arrived in the Middle East, joining Marines and other forces already in theater, while officials acknowledged that these deployments increase capacity for possible incursions into Iranian territory, including operations linked to Kharg Island and Hormuz security.

That is why the current moment is so dangerous. Even if a full-scale invasion still remains unlikely, the line between a "limited mission" and an expanding war is historically thin. The United States may initially contemplate a narrow ground operation: seizure of a strategic island, raids on coastal batteries threatening shipping, or even a special operation linked to Iran's uranium stockpile. Yet history shows that once a great power commits troops and begins receiving body bags in return, its political logic changes. Retaliation produces counter-retaliation. A war presented as surgical starts demanding prestige, vengeance, and escalation. Vietnam, Iraq, and Afghanistan all demonstrated that limited entry rarely guarantees limited exit.

The strategic motives behind such a move are not difficult to understand. Kharg Island is Iran's principal oil export hub. The Strait of Hormuz carries a huge

share of the world's seaborne oil trade. Control of both would give Washington leverage over global energy flows while denying Tehran its most potent geoeconomic weapon.

At the same time, Iran's expanding stockpile of highly enriched uranium remains a central concern. Reuters, citing the IAEA, reported earlier this month that Iran held about 440.9 kilograms of uranium enriched up to 60%, material that in theory could be further enriched for roughly 10 nuclear weapons. That figure alone explains why any U. S. operational planning would include not only maritime control and coercive strikes, but also thoughts of raids tied to nuclear assets.

But Iran is not waiting passively for such a contingency. Its parliament speaker has warned that Tehran sees public talk of negotiations as a cover for secret planning for a land assault, and Iranian leaders have vowed to burn any invading force and punish regional partners. Whether or not every Iranian threat is executable, the central point stands: Iran has prepared for attritional resistance, dispersal, underground storage, missile retaliation, drones, and proxy expansion. That means even a limited U. S. ground assault would not occur in a vacuum. It would likely trigger attacks on American bases, shipping lanes, partner infrastructure, and perhaps multiple secondary fronts beyond Iran itself.

This is why the destruction of civilian infrastructure now being threatened is so morally revealing. If ports, roads, bridges, refineries, and power systems are systematically targeted, the principal victims will not be the bunker-protected leadership or deeply buried military networks.

The true burden will fall upon ordinary Iranians who never built shelters, never planned for prolonged blackout, and never volunteered to become the human cushion of a geopolitical struggle. Iranian missiles have already damaged Israel's Haifa refinery complex and widening regional attacks affecting energy installations and bases. Such escalation shows that the war is moving beyond military targets into the economic bloodstream of entire societies.

The illusion that negotiations will easily stop this spiral is also fading. Pakistan has emerged as the most active intermediary, hosting regional discussions and preparing to facilitate U. S.-Iran talks in the coming days. Yet the diplomatic gap remains profound. Washington has promoted a 15-point framework; Iran has publicly rejected it and insists on sovereignty, security, and an end to attacks. Reuters noted on March 30 that Islamabad is preparing to host these efforts, but there was still no confirmation that any direct, substantive breakthrough had been achieved. In other words, the parties remain boxed inside terms that each side fears would amount to capitulation.

Meanwhile, the battlefield itself is expanding horizontally. Israel has widened pressure in Lebanon, the Houthis are threatening to reopen a Red Sea front, and the Saudi dimension has already become more exposed after Iran-linked strikes wounded U. S. personnel at Prince Sultan Air Base. Once Hormuz and the Red Sea are both destabilized, the consequences no longer belong only to Tehran, Tel Aviv, or Washington. They belong to Europe, Asia, Australia, South

America, and every economy dependent on fuel, shipping insurance, manufacturing inputs, and stable freight routes. Reuters reported that the war's energy shock is already dimming the outlook for many economies, according to the IMF.

If the United States "wins," it may reopen shipping, damage Iran's missile and naval capacity, and perhaps enforce a new nuclear arrangement. But such a win would still leave behind an unstable region, a humiliated but not necessarily pacified society, and a new cycle of insurgent or proxy retaliation. If Iran holds the line and turns even limited ground operations into a grinding trap, the defeat would be historic, not merely military but psychological, undermining U. S.-Israeli coercive credibility across the region. If negotiations somehow succeed, the outcome will not be friendship. It will be an ugly compromise designed to stop the bleeding.

That is why the world stands at a catastrophic juncture. The danger is not only that a ground assault may occur. The greater danger is that once it begins, no one may be able to keep it limited. The war planners may speak the language of optionality, precision, and controlled force. History speaks a different language. It says that powerful states often enter wars believing they can calibrate violence, only to discover that resistance, pride, and fear rapidly seize control. Let us hope that this time the diplomats win before the generals do, because once the ground war begins, peace may become far more expensive than anyone now imagines.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Traditional Chinese medicine emerges as shining "China service" brand on global stage

**A**t Anhui Acupuncture Hospital in Hefei, capital of east China's Anhui Province, Svetlana Strinzha from Russia scanned a QR code and took a photo of her tongue with her phone. Within seconds, an AI-powered tongue diagnosis device generated a comprehensive health report.

"It is really interesting to see such a device that combines AI with traditional Chinese medicine (TCM) diagnosis. It has given me a deeper and clearer understanding of my own health condition," Strinzha said with obvious enthusiasm.

Having strong faith in the effectiveness of TCM treatment, she has visited China on multiple occasions. This time, she dedicated a whole week to an in-depth exploration of TCM, hoping this trip will make her healthier.

AI is paving new paths for the modernization and internationalization of TCM. The AI tongue diagnosis system, as explained by Dong Changwu, the chief TCM expert behind the system at Anhui Acupuncture Hospital, delves deep into the unique characteristics of tongue diagnosis in TCM.

It presents health information in a more intuitive and understandable way. Currently, the system is available in several languages including English, Russian, French, Korean, German and Thai. It has been deployed in more than 10 countries, such as Switzerland, Singapore, Malaysia and Thailand, receiving widespread recognition.

"The AI tongue diagnosis device features high accuracy and easy operation, enabling efficient medical services for more people while saving healthcare resources," said Kiu Caracani, a Swiss TCM practitioner.

Caracani envisions a future where relevant functions are integrated into mobile applications, making it ideal for remote areas, mountainous regions and even war-torn environments with scarce medical resources. Such an innovation could quickly screen health risks and save more lives.

"I have installed the same device at my clinic, and it has provided fast and effective services for local patients in need," he added.

This year, Caracani, Strinzha and other tourists from various countries formed a group to travel to Anhui. They not only received TCM acupuncture treatment and witnessed the transformation brought by AI technology in TCM, but also ventured into the mountainous areas of southern Anhui to experience ecological health and wellness.

"We enjoyed the unique and beautiful scenery of Mount Huangshan while experiencing local TCM diagnosis and treatment," Caracani shared. He noted that China's visa facilitation policies in recent years have provided more international patients with the opportunity to deeply experience TCM diagnosis, treatment and culture in China.



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

## Dhaka and Islamabad: Building Trust Beyond History

**D**haka's new leadership increasingly views Islamabad not as a rival, but as a partner in science, security, and resilience. For decades, Bangladesh and Pakistan were defined by mistrust and historical wounds. Today, under new leadership in Dhaka, the two nations appear to be charting a course toward partnership, solidarity, and shared resilience.

Cricket Diplomacy and Cultural Solidarity  
 The warming of ties has been visible beyond diplomacy. During the recent cricket world cup controversy, when Bangladesh found itself at odds with India and the International Cricket Council, Pakistan stood firmly by Dhaka's side. In South Asia, cricket is more than a sport—it is a cultural battleground. Pakistan's support carried symbolic weight, reinforcing the sense that Islamabad is willing to stand shoulder to shoulder with Dhaka in international forums.

Such gestures often precede deeper political bonds. They create a sense of shared identity and mutual respect, softening historical grievances and paving the way for cooperation in more sensitive domains. The cricket episode, though seemingly minor, was a telling indicator of how far the relationship has evolved.  
**Academic and Institutional Linkages**  
 Equally important are the academic exchanges being revived. Universities in both countries are exploring joint research programs in energy, climate resilience, and public health. These collaborations matter: they build intellectual capital, foster innovation, and create networks of scholars who can sustain bilateral ties beyond the political cycle. For Bangladesh, access to Pakistan's expertise in applied sciences could accelerate industrial modernization. For Pakistan, academic partnerships offer a chance to project itself as a responsible

regional power, committed to peaceful development rather than proliferation.

**Lessons in Austerity**  
 Bangladesh's new government has embraced austerity. In the face of global economic turbulence—rising oil prices, energy shortages, and inflation in food and commodities—the Prime Minister has championed fiscal discipline, reduced government extravagance, and redirected resources toward social welfare. These measures, though painful, have been welcomed by citizens as necessary steps to stabilize the economy and protect the vulnerable.

Pakistan, grappling with its own economic challenges amid regional conflict and soaring costs, could emulate this model. Austerity, when paired with transparency and accountability, can restore public trust and create space for long term reforms. Bangladesh's example demonstrates that even in trying circumstances, governments can choose prudence over populism, discipline over indulgence.  
**Regional Realignment**  
 The implications of this rapprochement extend beyond bilateral ties. For India, long accustomed to exerting influence over Dhaka, the shift is unsettling. The Awami League, historically aligned with New Delhi, sees its political space narrowing as the new government embraces Islamabad. For the wider region, the partnership suggests a realignment of alliances, with Bangladesh and Pakistan potentially coordinating positions on issues ranging from trade to climate change.

This does not mean that old wounds have been erased. The memory of 1971 remains vivid, and reconciliation will require continued dialogue and sensitivity. Yet the willingness of both governments to move forward—to prioritize present needs over past grievances—is itself a remarkable development.



Analysis

S. M. Hali

ment.  
**Literary Resonance**  
 South Asia's poets and philosophers have long envisioned unity beyond borders. Muhammad Iqbal once wrote: "Yunan o Misr o Roma sab mit gaye jahan se / Ab tak magar hai baqi naam o nishan hamara" ("Greece, Egypt, and Rome all vanished from the world, yet our name and mark endure"). His words remind us that civilizations thrive not by clinging to enmity, but by embracing renewal. Rabindranath Tagore urged: "Where the mind is without fear and the head is held high / Into that heaven of freedom, my Father, let my country awake." These lines, drawn from two towering figures of Muslim and Bengali thought, capture the spirit of the moment: a call to transcend fear, embrace freedom, and build enduring partnerships.  
**Conclusion**  
 Bangladesh and Pakistan stand today at the cusp of a new chapter. From adversaries bound by history, they are becoming allies bound by necessity and vision. The solidarity in cricket, the academic exchanges, and the austerity measures—all are threads in a tapestry of cooperation that could reshape South Asia's future. For Pakistan, the lesson is clear: emulate Bangladesh's discipline, embrace partnership, and seize the opportunity to redefine itself as a responsible, trusted ally. For Bangladesh, the challenge is to sustain this momentum, balancing pragmatism with principle.  
 In a region often defined by rivalry, the emerging friendship between Dhaka and Islamabad offers a rare glimpse of hope. It suggests that even in turbulent times, nations can choose reconciliation over rancor, solidarity over suspicion. And in doing so, they may yet awaken into that "heaven of freedom" envisioned by Tagore—a freedom not just for one nation, but for the region as a whole.  
*Writer is Senior Analyst, TV anchor and Columnist. He is also author of many books. He can be reached at sultanm.hali@gmail.com*

## Democracy Needs Minds, Not Just Numbers

**D**emocracy is not a perfect system. Criticising it is easy—and often justified. Yet, as Winston Churchill famously observed, humanity has not devised a better alternative. That, perhaps, is reason enough not just to preserve democracy in form, but to protect it in spirit.

In recent years, parts of the world have begun debating whether the voting age should be lowered to sixteen. On the surface, the idea feels progressive—even inspiring. It speaks of trust, inclusion, and empowerment. It suggests that the youth must be given a voice early, so they may grow into responsible citizens.

However, democracy, especially in fragile states like Pakistan, cannot afford to be guided by sentiment alone. It must be grounded in realism.

As a corporate communicator turned educationist, I engage with young minds every day. I listen to them, guide them, and, at times, worry about them. Their confidence is admirable—but the depth of their understanding often leaves much to be desired. Much of what they perceive as "knowledge" is, in fact, a reflection of the fast-moving, emotionally charged world of social media.

A few days ago, I encountered a moment that was both startling and revealing. One of my students was visibly upset because he was not allowed to bring a gun to the school's farewell party. When I sat him down to counsel him, expecting hesitation or reflection, I instead encountered conviction. His reasoning was unsettlingly firm: "Weapons are the ornament of a believer."

In that moment, I was not just speaking to a student—I was confronting a mindset shaped not by education, but by unchecked narratives.

This is precisely where the debate on voting rights must pause and reflect.

At its core, democracy is not about maximizing numbers; it is about ensuring meaningful participation. A vote cast without awareness is not an act of freedom—it is often an echo of influence. And in today's world, influence is rarely innocent.

The modern voter—particularly the young voter—lives in an ecosystem driven by algorithms, curated content, and constant stimulation. Social media platforms do not simply inform; they shape opinions, reinforce biases, and sometimes distort reality. In such an environment, independent thinking becomes a challenge rather than a norm.

Even in developed democracies, with strong institutions and education systems, misinformation continues to distort public opinion. In Pakistan, where civic education remains limited and critical thinking is not systematically nurtured, the risks are far greater.

Giving voting rights in such a context—without adequate preparation—raises a deeper concern. We are, at times, dealing with minds that are quick to detect the smallest flaw in others, yet remain blind to their own contradictions. Minds that are easily swayed by one-sided arguments, mistaking intensity for truth. In some cases,

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Muhammad Rabnawaz Awan

# District Bar Association delegation meet with Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in Multan

**Kiran Asim**

MULTAN: District Bar Association Delegation Meet With Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani in Multan

On the occasion of meeting the delegation of the Executive Committee of the District Bar Association Multan led by Syeda Bushra Naqvi and General Secretary Malik Saadat Hussain, former Prime Minister and Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani congratulated the newly elected office bearers and especially Syeda Bushra Naqvi on being elected the first woman president. Talking to the delegation, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said that the Pakistan Peoples Party believes in the supremacy of the constitution and law and the party has always made the most sacrifices for the supremacy of the constitution and law and the survival



of democracy.

The District Bar Multan has always played its positive role in highlighting the pleasant relations between the bar and the bench and the deprivations of this region of South Punjab. The Multan District Bar is a historical and

positive bar and believes in dialogue to solve problems. I have always played my role in solving the problems of the Multan Bar and the lawyers of this region and will continue to do so in the future. He demanded funding for the bar on behalf of President Syeda

Bushra Naqvi and General Secretary Malik Saadat Hussain and Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani invited to address lawyers at District Bar Multan.

Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani assured the delegation that he would come to Multan Bar soon and would also try for funding. The delegation included Vice President Chaudhry Muhammad Naem, Joint Secretary Nagina Muzaffar Hiraj, Finance Secretary Rauf Ahmed Khan, Library Secretary Amara Tahir Baloch, Auditor Jahanzeb Sial, PLF leaders Nasheed Arif Gondal, Rana Javed Akhtar, Zawar Qureshi, Ahad Gondal and members of the executive, Muhammad Shan Sahoo, Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Nadeemuddin Qureshi, Adeel Ahmed Khalid, Chaudhry Muhammad Ahsan Bhatti, Muhammad Mudassar Hassan, Malik Munir Ahmed and Assistant Attorney Firdous Jamal

# Pakistan Reaches 25% Solar Power Milestone Driven by Individual Households

**Spokesman Report**

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised a roundtable discussion titled "Pakistan's Energy Security in 2026: Assessing Solar Power Viability and Transition" on 31 March 2026. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Maheera Munir, a Research Assistant at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address.

The speaker, Dr Naveed Arshad, Director Energy Institute LUMS, highlighted that Pakistan is undergoing a silent energy disruption, which has placed Pakistan in a rare club comprising countries producing 25 per cent of their total electricity from solar sources. While all of the countries in this club are small or rich with either the private sector or the government taking the initiative for the installation of solar farms, Paki-



stan's solar boom occurred downside of the meter, at the individual level. Dr Arshad stated that Pakistan's solar revolution is driven by multiple factors including the public's familiarity with alternate sources of electricity, flat rooftops, Pakistan's high solar irradiance, and an attractive net metering policy. He emphasised that Pakistan

can achieve energy security by adopting electrification of energy; however, it requires "out of the box" solutions. In that regard, he underscored the need for every house to become a powerhouse with electrification of all household loads. Additionally, it is important for Pakistan to consider battery value chain, new battery chemistries,

battery deployment, and explore the possibility of mobile mines. Dr Arshad expressed optimism that implemented together, these options can allow Pakistan to become a truly first electrostate of the Global South.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS, Lahore, observed that solar energy is gaining traction in Pakistan due to falling costs and rising interest from households and businesses. He emphasised that solar energy's integration into the wider energy system requires investment in storage, smart grids, and forecasting tools. He further remarked that governance and financing mechanisms will be decisive in sustaining expansion. Today's choices, he argued, will shape Pakistan's energy security and resilience for decades to come.

The event concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted the energy-AI nexus, disposal of solar panels, and economics of energy. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative in hosting an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

# Education Minister Visits NUML to Boost Quality and Global Standards

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Dr. Wajihah Qamar, visited the National University of Modern Languages today, where she was warmly received by Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani HI (M) (Retd), along with Director General, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan.

During the visit, a comprehensive meeting was held between the Minister and the Rector, focusing on enhancing the quality of education in Pakistan and equipping academic institutions with modern facilities to foster an effective learning environment. Both exchanged views on strengthening academic standards, innovation in



teaching methodologies, and aligning education with contemporary global demands.

Rector NUML, Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani, underscored the importance of education

diplomacy and emphasized the need to further strengthen academic collaboration at the international level. He highlighted NUML's vision to position Pakistan as an attractive destination for foreign students by expanding scholarship opportunities, enhancing international outreach, and introducing globally competitive academic programs. He also stressed the significance of integrating language proficiency with professional education to meet emerging market needs and promoting research-driven learning to address global challenges.

The meeting was attended by senior university officials including DG NUML Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Pro-Rector Research & Strategic Initiatives Dr. Safer Awan, along with Deans and Directors.

## World Backup Day: Kaspersky research reveals 84% of users store sensitive data digitally

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: On the World Backup Day, Kaspersky reveals the most popular ways to store important data and gives practical advice on how to keep it safe. Research shows that zoomers and millennials keep nearly everything electronically, while almost one in three respondents over 55 y. o. still prefer good old fashioned paper.

Research conducted by Kaspersky's Market Research center shows 84% respondents claim they store sensitive personal data like ID, financial details, healthcare related info or photo archive in electronic format.

When it comes to digital data storage, 56% say they keep their important records on a computer or the hard drive, 45% use cloud solutions and 20% entrust their data to government digital services.

Each storage method has its own advantages and limitations. Physical media can be lost or suffer damage, external hard drives are not always convenient to use on the go and cloud services, while being accessible, are vulnerable to unauthorized access. To maximize digital data security, Kaspersky experts advise adhering to the following best-practice recommendations:

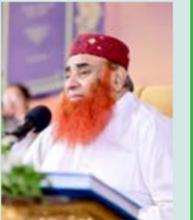
According to Kaspersky's data, 98% of respondents take at least some measures to protect their personal data storages, which is a good sign. However, 36% of respondents use quick-to-remember passwords to safeguard their personal data. Relying solely on simple passwords leaves your digital vaults vulnerable to brute force attacks. That's why experts recommend enabling two factor authentication (2FA) wherever it is available or adopting passkey technology. Passkeys can be stored securely in a password manager and accessed seamlessly from any authorized device.

"We all know backups are important, but most of us never do them because we try to back up everything at once and it gets overwhelming. The smarter approach? Treat backup like any other workflow. Tag your files - critical, important, low priority. Automate real time backups for the critical stuff, schedule weekly or monthly backups for the rest. And for sensitive data like passwords and IDs, use our dedicated solution with a secret vault to keep it secure. When you automate and prioritize, you protect what really matters without getting overloaded," comments Marina Titova, Vice President for Consumer Business in Kaspersky.

## Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Expresses Concern Over Moral Decline, Urges Following the Seerat of Ahl al-Bayt (RA)

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed Pakistan, Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, has expressed deep concern over the rapid decline of moral and social values in contemporary society. He stated that respect for humanity and the sanctity of revered personalities are diminishing, terming this trend highly alarming and emphasizing the need to follow the Seerat of Ahl al-Bayt (RA) for the reform of society.



Addressing a weekly gathering of Zikr and Dars-e-Quran, he highlighted the exemplary lives of Ahl al-Bayt (RA), particularly Hazrat Imam Hasan (RA), Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA), and Hazrat Syeda Zainab (RA), as guiding lights, urging people to adopt patience, steadfastness, justice, and truthfulness. A large number of scholars and religious figures, including Deputy Director Sheikh Muhammad Qasim, were also present on the occasion. He described the incident of Karbala as an eternal benchmark between truth and falsehood and stressed the need for unity, tolerance, and adherence to the teachings of the Quran and Sunnah. He also emphasized transforming mosques into centers of societal reform, promoting religious education for women, and expressing solidarity with oppressed humanity. Earlier, Deputy Director Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim, led Salat-ul-Tasbeeh. At the conclusion, special prayers were offered for Pakistan's stability, unity of the Muslim Ummah, and the success and prosperity of brotherly Islamic countries, particularly Iran.

## Standard Chartered Foundation and Village Capital advance Women in Tech Accelerator into eighth cohort

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Standard Chartered, in partnership with Village Capital and InnoVentures Global, announced today the launch of the eighth cohort of the Women in Tech Pakistan Accelerator, marking eight years of empowering women-led, tech-enabled businesses across the country.

Since its launch in Pakistan, the programme has supported more than 1,300 enterprises, with over 150 women founders graduating and more than 50 ventures securing seed funding.

The 2026 cohort will equip founders with investment readiness training, catalytic funding, and access to world-class networks, helping them strengthen their businesses and position for growth. In Pakistan, the accelerator will be delivered by InnoVentures Global, leveraging its proven expertise in entrepreneur support and ecosystem development.

Rehan Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer & Head of Coverage, Pakistan, Standard Chartered, said: "Our eighth cohort underscores our consistent commitment to empowering women entrepreneurs in Pakistan and reflects the steady growth of the ecosystem over time. While access to funding and networks remains a challenge, expanding opportunities for women-led businesses is essential to building a stronger entrepreneurial landscape."

# Uzbekistan Enters Islamic Finance Era; AlHuda CIBE Steps in to Support

**Commerce Desk**

DUBAI, UAE: Uzbekistan has Taken a Significant Step Toward Strengthening and Diversifying Its Financial Sector by Advancing the Introduction of Islamic Banking and Finance. This Strategic Move is expected to enhance Financial Inclusion, Attract Foreign Investment, Create New Opportunities for Banks, Non-Banking Financial Institutions, Investors, And Entrepreneurs and Provide Shariah-Compliant Financial Solutions to a Broader Segment of the Population.

In line with these developments, AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics (AlHuda CIBE) has announced its readiness to support Uzbek-

istan's emerging Islamic finance industry through a wide range of Specialized Services, including Education and Professional Training, Capacity Building, Shariah Advisory & Consultancy, Research & Development, and Global Industry visits.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, CEO, AlHuda CIBE states that "The introduction of Islamic banking in Uzbekistan is a transformative step that will reshape the country's financial landscape and open new avenues for inclusive and ethical finance. AlHuda CIBE is proud to partner with local stakeholders to contribute its Knowledge, Training, and Advisory Services to build a Strong and Resilient Islamic Finance Ecosystem."

AlHuda CIBE is an interna-

tionally recognized organization with extensive experience in developing Islamic finance ecosystems across Asia, the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. The organization has worked with Central Banks, Commercial Banks, and Government entities to design Regulatory Frameworks, Develop Shariah-Compliant Financial Products, and build local capacity in Islamic Finance.

AlHuda CIBE representatives, along with the members of its CIS regional team, are already actively engaged in promoting and developing Islamic finance across the CIS, with a particular focus on Uzbekistan. The team has been working closely with local stakeholders to generate Islamic Finance Awareness, provide tech-

nical guidance, and support early-stage industry development.

"Our focus is on Bridging Knowledge gaps and building local Capacity to support the Development of a Strong and Resilient Islamic Finance Ecosystem," said by Zaib-un-Nisa CIS Regional Manager-AlHuda CIBE. (March 30th, 2026 Tashkent-Uzbekistan)

Under the new regulatory framework, banks and financial institutions in Uzbekistan are expected to explore Islamic Banking Windows, develop Shariah-Compliant products, and engage with international Islamic financial markets. This transition creates a growing demand for technical expertise, Shariah advisory, professional training, and regulatory capacity building.

AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking & Economics (CIBE)  
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**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
148,743.31	146,842.97	
Day's High	Day's Low	
150,225.63	147,743.67	
Index Value	Change	
19,561,190,809	+1900.34	
Percentage	Time	
+1.29%	31 Mar, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,176.45	+48.49	
Percentage	Time	
+0.48%	31 Mar, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
46,121.50	+905.36	
Percentage	Time	
+2.00%	31 Mar, 1:37 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
51,063.72	-822.13	
Percentage	Time	
-1.58%	31 Mar, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Australian Dollar	195.05	198.10
Australian Dollar	189.60	194.25
Bahrain Dinar	732	743.15
Canadian Dollar	198.38	204.15
China Yuan	36.65	37.6
Danish Krone	43.25	43.65
Euro	321.03	327.53
Hong Kong Dollar	35	36
Indian Rupee	2.05	2.31
Japanese Yen	1.7210	1.8199
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.50	901.35
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.45
New Zealand \$	157.75	164.57
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	719.15	730.55
Qatari Riyal	73.33	74.3
Saudi Riyal	74.30	75.45
Singapore Dollar	213.87	221.83
Swedish Korona	30.20	30.50
Swiss Franc	355	358.85
Thai Bhat	8	8.15
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	370.17	377.47
US Dollar	279.45	280.1

# Unilever Pakistan, FESF partner to expand employment opportunities for Deaf community

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Unilever Pakistan Limited has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Family Educational Services Foundation (FESF) to facilitate greater inclusion of members of Deaf community in the workforce, with a structured programme focused on recruitment, training, and workplace integration.

"At the heart of this partnership is a simple belief—that opportunity should be accessible to all. By working with FESF, we are not only opening doors for the Deaf community, but also shaping our workplaces and sales ecosystem to enable every individual to contribute and succeed," said Munir Hasan, Country Head, Customer Development at Unilever Pakistan.

The programme will also include pre-employment training for selected candidates, covering workplace readiness, communication protocols, and role-specific skills such as sales route familiarity and basic reporting.

Reflecting the same commitment, Richard Geary, Founder & Director, FESF, added, "Through this collaboration, we are enabling greater access to dignified employment for Deaf individuals while supporting organizations in becoming more inclusive and accessible in their practices."

Unilever Pakistan continues to strengthen its commitment to diversity and inclusion by encouraging equitable opportunities across its workforce. The company's ongoing efforts



reflect a broader focus on creating accessible, supportive environments that enable individuals from all backgrounds to contribute and succeed.

## Repairing

ISLAMABAD: IESCO staffers repairing the electric wires, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## DTI Partners with Meezan Bank under 'Meezan Justuju' to Expand Access to Skills Development

Commerce Desk

LAHORE, PAKISTAN: Descon Technical Institute (DTI) and Meezan Bank have entered into a strategic partnership under the Bank's CSR platform "Meezan Justuju" to expand access to vocational and technical training for underserved youth in Pakistan.

As part of this collaboration, Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, will support funded training across selected high-demand trades, enabling greater access to industry-relevant skills for deserving candidates.

The partnership is focused on delivering competency-based, hands-on training programs aligned with market needs. DTI will identify priority trades, enrol eligible candidates, and deliver training leading to certification, while Meezan Bank will provide financial support and facilitate financial inclusion for participants.

"Our focus is to create access to practical skills that lead to real opportunities," said Murtuza Ali, General Manager, DTI. "By



aligning training with industry demand and expanding intake for deserving candidates, this partnership aims to create meaningful impact at scale."

Mr. Zia ul Hassan, Chief Operating Officer- Retail Banking of Meezan Bank,

said, "Through the Meezan Justuju program, we remain committed to supporting structured initiatives that equip individuals with practical skills and strong ethical values, enabling them to transition towards independent and sustainable futures.

## SECP Mandates MUFAP Membership to Strengthen Investor Protection

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has made it mandatory for all investment advisors and distributors of mutual and pension funds to obtain membership of the Mutual Funds Association of Pakistan (MUFAP). The objective is to protect investors by ensuring that all market intermediaries follow a single Code of Conduct and operate under a standardized regulatory framework.

This step aims to reduce mis-selling, improve transparency, and give investors greater confidence that their financial interests are

safeguarded. It will also provide a formal system for handling complaints and resolving disputes.

The requirement applies to Licensed Investment Advisors, Licensed Securities Advisors, and distributors working with Asset Management Companies and Pension Fund Managers. As a Self-Regulatory Organization, MUFAP will facilitate membership and ensure compliance across the industry.

By bringing all advisors and distributors under one platform, the initiative will improve oversight, promote professional standards, and streamline market practices.

## FPCCI Proposes a Joint Business Working Group to Promote B2B Industrial Cooperation under CPEC 2.0

LAHORE (PR): The Consul General of the People's Republic of China, Mr. Sun Yan, visited the FPCCI Lahore Regional Office to discuss strengthening trade relations between Pakistan and China. A high-level consultative meeting was held with Pakistan's business leadership, chaired by Mr. Zaki Aijaz, Regional Chairman and Vice President FPCCI.

Mr. Zaki Aijaz proposed the establishment of a Joint Business Working Group to enhance effective collaboration and invited Chinese companies to relocate industries to Pakistan's Special Economic Zones (SEZs). He highlighted tax incentives, duty-free import of machinery, and GSP+ status as key competitive advan-

tages of Pakistan.

On the occasion of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China both sides emphasized accelerating CPEC 2.0, focusing on industrial development, technology transfer, and business-to-business partnerships.

Consul General Sun Yan described Pakistan and China as "all-weather strategic partners" and stated that CPEC 2.0 is creating new opportunities for the private sector, particularly in industry, agricultural modernization, and innovation. He further noted that China's 15th Five-Year Plan focuses on "new quality productive forces," which will further expand bilateral cooperation.

## Mashreq Global Network Pakistan Launches New Offshore Centers in Karachi and Lahore

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mashreq, a leading international financial institution with a strong regional presence and a growing footprint in Pakistan, has inaugurated new Mashreq Global Network (MGN) Pakistan Offshore Centres in Karachi and Lahore. The expansion

builds on Mashreq's continued investment in Pakistan's talent, technology and digital banking infrastructure. More than USD 40 million has been deployed to date to support MGN Pakistan's growth and capability development.

Speaking at the launch, Mark Edwards, Group Head of Operations,



Mashreq Group, said "The Offshore

Centres in Karachi and Lahore are an important part of Mashreq's distributed operating model. They allow us to tap into Pakistan's expanding digital and financial talent pool, while reinforcing our commitment to operational excellence and innovation across the Group."

Commenting on the development,

Faisal Muqet, Head of Mashreq Global Network Pakistan, said "We aim to strengthen MGN Pakistan as an Offshore Centre built on merit, diversity and performance. We want to create an environment where talent from across Pakistan can excel and play a meaningful role in Mashreq's global operations."

## CCP Imposes Rs265 million aggregate penalty on two cable firms for resale price maintenance

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has imposed a penalty of PKR 75 million on Newage Cables (Pvt.) Ltd. and Rs. 190.22 million on GM Cables & Pipes (Pvt.) Ltd, for engaging in Resale Price Maintenance (RPM) practices in violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010.

The Commission conducted an enquiry upon receiving information, supported by documentary evidence, including policy circulars issued by the respondents. These circulars contained instructions restricting dealers from offering discounts beyond specified limits and prescribed punitive measures, including termination of dealership agreements, for non-compliance.

After its initial probe, the Commission authorized an enquiry under Section 37(1) of the Act. The enquiry concluded that the respondents had prima facie violated Section 4 of the Act by imposing minimum resale price restrictions on their dealers. The enquiry found that Newage's retail discount policy and dealership agreements prohibited dealers from selling products below prescribed discount levels, while GM Cables imposed similar restrictions through its rate control notices and related communications.

On enquiry committee's recommendations, the Commission issued show cause notices to both undertakings for their alleged conduct restricting intra-brand price competition through vertical agreements establishing minimum resale prices. After hearing the parties and conducting a detailed analysis of the evidence, the Commission concluded that both undertakings had engaged in RPM practices constituting a restriction "by object" under Section 4 of the Act.

Taking into account the nature, gravity, and duration of the violations, the Commission observed that Newage Cables demonstrated a cooperative approach during the proceedings, whereas GM Cables continued its infringing conduct even after initiation of the enquiry and attempted to deny documented evidence.

## ISL Pakistan Super League Cricket Championship Edition 11

# Islamabad United V/S Peshawar Zalmi Match Washout: Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi Earned one Point Each

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi earned one point each after their HBL Pakistan Super League 11 fixture was

abandoned without a ball bowled due to a wet outfield following rain at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore on Tuesday.

The result helped Islamabad open their tally and move to sixth in the standings,

while Peshawar climbed to second spot with three points, behind table-toppers Karachi Kings, who have four.

On Wednesday, Multan Sultans will face Hyderabad Kingsmen at the same venue,

with Hyderabad aiming to register their first win of HBL PSL 11, while Multan will look to make it two wins in two matches. The first ball is scheduled to be bowled at 7:00pm PKT.

## Pakistan end 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign with fighting loss



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's 2027 AFC Asian Cup qualifying campaign ended on a losing note after they fell to a fighting 2-1 loss against Myanmar at the Jinnah Stadium on Tuesday.

Nolberto Solano's side showed great determination in an intense first half before they conceded twice in the second period as they finished on two points from six matches in Group 'E'.

Pakistan made a determined start with their first real chance coming midway through the

first half when captain Alamgir Ghazi let fly from outside the box and stung the palms of the goalkeeper Zin Nyi Nyi Aung.

Minutes later, a cross from the left was headed down at the far post by Ali Uzair but Shayek Dost couldn't find the connection to beat Zin.

Pakistan ended the first half in the ascendancy but conceded a minute after the restart when goalkeeper Saqib Hanif was unable to deal with a back pass.

Myanmar got their second on the stroke of the hour when they broke past the offside trap with Than Paing turning in a



low cross from the right.

Pakistan, however, continued to fight and after waves of attacks, pulled a goal back in the 90th minute when the impressive Shayek Dost headed in a pinpoint cross from

Tufail Shinwari. This was the first goal scored by Pakistan since Etzaz Hussain had scored against Afghanistan away from home.

The goal re-energised Pakistan, who were down to 10 men

after Junaid Shah had to go off injured with all five substitutions having been made, but Myanmar held on for a victory that saw them finish second Group 'E', behind Syria, with 12 points.

## Al Karam Sports and Students Sports secure victories in Riazuddin Memorial Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches were decided in the ongoing first Riazuddin Memorial Inter-Club Forty Overs Knockout Cricket Tournament, organized by the Regional Cricket Association Karachi Zone One. At Students Ground, Al Karam Sports registered a commanding 233-run victory over Nazir Hussain Young Fighter Cricket Club. Batting first, Al-Karam Sports scored 346 runs in 37.1 overs. Hammad Mughal played a brilliant innings of 109 runs off just 47 balls, hitting 17 fours and 4 sixes. Aurangzeb Ahmed added 81, Abdullah 71, and Muhammad Waheed 21 runs. Syed Hashir claimed six wickets for 68 runs. In reply, Nazir Hussain

Young Fighter managed only 113 runs in 17.5 overs, with Javed Ahmed scoring 34 and Adil Siddiqui 32.

Faizan Javed took three wickets while Abdullah picked up two. In the second match, Students Sports defeated Al-Noor Gymkhana by 24 runs. Students Sports were bowled out for 180 in 36.2 overs, with Bilal Sharif and Muhammad Jawad contributing 27 runs each.

Adnan Ahmed took three wickets and Ghaus Ibrahim two.

Chasing, Al-Noor Gymkhana were dismissed for 156 in 32 overs. Ghaus Ibrahim scored 63 and Mirza Asad 22. Muhammad Nauman claimed three wickets, while Amir Raza and Muhammad Umar took two each.



## Democracy Needs Minds, Not Just Numbers

Continued from Page 4

a misplaced sense of moral authority turns individuals into self-appointed arbiters of right and wrong, imposing rigid views that make collective life more difficult rather than more just. Even more concerning is the reluctance to acknowledge error—where justification replaces reflection, and accountability becomes either weak or entirely absent.

The question, therefore, is not whether young people deserve a voice. They absolutely do. The real question is whether that voice has been prepared—intellectually and emotionally—to carry the weight of national responsibility.

Democracy is not a ritual performed every few years; it is a responsibility that demands maturity. While age

does not guarantee wisdom, it does provide a threshold of lived experience—an exposure to economic realities, social responsibilities, and the consequences of governance. Lowering that threshold, without strengthening awareness, risks turning democracy into a contest of slogans rather than a forum of reason.

Pakistan's political landscape offers a sobering reality. Political loyalties are often inherited rather than examined. Emotional rhetoric frequently overshadows policy debate.

Electability, not integrity, becomes the measure of success. In such an environment, expanding the voter base without strengthening the voter's capacity for critical thinking may amplify existing distortions rather than correct them.

This is not an argument for exclu-

sion—it is an argument for preparation.

If democracy is to flourish, our focus must shift from increasing participation to improving its quality. Our schools must become spaces where students are taught not just to read and write, but to question, to reflect, and to reason.

Civic education must move beyond textbooks and become a lived experience. Public discourse must prioritise dialogue over division, and substance over spectacle.

Only then will extending voting rights become a meaningful step forward, rather than a premature leap. A vote is not merely a mark on paper; it is a moral and intellectual act. It shapes governments, policies, and the direction of a nation.

To place this responsibility in unpre-

pared hands is not empowerment—it is abdication.

Democracy may be imperfect, but its strength lies in the wisdom of its participants. If we truly wish to protect it—especially in contexts as fragile as our own—we must remember a simple truth:

The future of democracy depends not on how many vote, but on how well they understand the weight of their choice.

*The author is an educator, social awareness advocate, and the voice behind several impactful online campaigns aimed at reviving empathy and moral consciousness among youth. He writes regularly on issues of social decay, educational reform, and the urgent need for character-building in modern societies. He tweets at @ToleranceAdvocate.*

## Punjab to field four teams in U-18 Youth Hockey C'ship

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab will field four hockey teams in the U-18 Youth Hockey Championship which is scheduled to be organised at Islamabad in April under the auspices of Pakistan Sports Board (PSB).

DG Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Tariq Qureshi informed that U-18 hockey trials will be conducted in all divisions of the province to select Punjab's four hockey teams purely on merit. "Punjab Sports Department is taking all essential measures for the promotion of hockey across the province".

He said that the trials of all divisions of Punjab will be conducted at Lahore, Faisalabad and Bahawalpur on Wednesday (today). "All the selection committees have been directed to conduct the trials proceedings on the basis of merit and performance of hockey players".

Qureshi said that the players of Lahore and Gujranwala divisions will appear in the trials at the National Hockey Stadium Pitch-2. "The trials of Faisalabad, Sargodha and Rawalpindi divisions will be organised at Faisalabad while the trials of Bahawalpur, DG Khan, Multan and Sahiwal divisions will be conducted at Bahawalpur".

He further said that after the trials, the training camps of all Punjab teams will be organised at Faisalabad and Bahawalpur where expert coaches will impart top level training to young hockey players.

## Under-18 Hockey Trials Announced: A Golden Opportunity for Young Players from Khanewal

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: The Punjab Sports Department has announced open divisional-level trials for the Under-18 Boys Hockey Team, offering a golden opportunity for young and aspiring players from Khanewal and surrounding regions to showcase their talent.

The trials will be conducted on April 1, 2026, at 9:00 AM at the Dring Hockey Stadium in Bahawalpur. Players from the divisions of Multan, Bahawalpur, Dera Ghazi Khan, Sahiwal, and Khanewal are encouraged to participate and demonstrate their skills.

Players eligible for participation must have been born on or after January 1, 2008. All interested candidates are instructed to bring their original educational documents along with their B-Form at the time of the trials.

The Tehsil Sports Officer of Khanewal stated, "We look forward to the enthusiastic participation of young hockey players from Khanewal. These trials will be conducted purely on merit to promote the national sport and provide a platform for talented players to rise."

## Iran football players in Turkey pose with photos of Middle East war victims



Iran football players and team officials posed with photographs of children killed in the Middle East war before their friendly match against Costa Rica in Turkey on Tuesday.

Every Iran player held a photo during the national anthem before their 5-0 victory near the city of Antalya.

Iran's head coach, Amir Ghalenoei, and the vice-president of the Iranian Football Federation, Mehdi Mohammad Nabi, were among the officials who also held up the photographs.

Iranian officials said some of the children pictured were the victims of an airstrike on a school in the southern Iranian city of Minab on February 28, the first day of the US-Israeli assault, that killed at least 170 people, including students and teachers.

"Iran is undergoing an extremely unjust and brutal aggression. It is therefore a responsibility that falls to our national team to show its solidarity with our people," said Iran's ambassador to Ankara, Mohammad Hassan Habibollah Zadeh, who was present at the match.

## CJP reviews judicial reforms, urges sustained momentum to cut case backlog

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During the session, the federal ombudsman stressed the importance of introducing measurable performance benchmarks, including key performance indicators (KPIs) and disbursement-linked indicators (DLIs), to improve monitoring and accountability. The meeting was informed that work on this front was already underway.

The chief justice was told that over the past three months, 5,383 cases were disposed of against 3,600 new filings, reducing the total pendency to 34,083 cases. He appreciated the higher disposal rate, attributing it to improved case management and effective bench formation, and emphasised the need to maintain this momentum to enhance public confidence in the justice system.

The meeting also reviewed the status of jail petitions and death sentence appeals. It was noted that the number of pending death penalty cases has dropped significantly from 384 in October 2024 to 60. The court decided that all remaining death sentence appeals would be fixed for hearing within the next 30 days, while cases filed up to 2018 would be prioritised to clear the backlog.

Participants were informed that the introduction of a barcoding system for file tracking and case categorization is in progress and expected to be completed within a month. Digitization of records has largely been finalised, while e-payment facilities for certified copies and review petitions were already operational through the Public Facilitation Centre.

The centre has handled over 20,800 service requests in the last three months, reflecting increased reliance on digital services by litigants and lawyers. The chief justice directed that e-payment facilities be extended to all categories of court fees within a week and called for further expansion of online services to improve convenience and transparency.

Issues relating to branch registries also came under discussion, with instructions issued for their early resolution.

Reaffirming the judiciary's commitment to a litigant-focused system, the chief justice said timely and effective adjudication is both a constitutional duty and a moral responsibility. He also acknowledged the cooperation of the legal fraternity in supporting digitization efforts and commended court staff for advancing the reform agenda.

## Progress meeting

ISLAMABAD: The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, chairing the Tenth Interactive Session to Review Progress on Judicial Reforms at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, on Tuesday.



## DPM/FM Dar, FM Wang Yi review bilateral ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister /Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Member of the Political Bureau and Minister of Foreign Affairs of China Wang Yi, Tuesday, reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral relations, exchanged views on regional developments in West Asia, and discussed a wide range of issues of mutual interest.

On the evolving situation in West Asia, both sides underscored their shared commitment to peace, stability, and dialogue, and issued a five-point Initiative aimed at promoting regional peace and stability, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press statement.

Foreign Minister Wang Yi appreciated Pakistan's constructive and consistent diplomatic efforts in this regard.

The meeting was held in an exceptionally warm and



cordial atmosphere, featuring hours of engagement from restricted talks to delegation-level discussions.

"As Pakistan and China commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations this year, both sides reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to further strengthening the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership. Particular emphasis was placed on advancing high-quality development, deepening economic and strategic cooperation, including under CPEC 2.0, and enhancing high-level exchanges and collaboration across all domains," it was added.

The two sides also reaffirmed their close coordination at multilateral fora and agreed to remain in regular and close contact.

The visit once again reflected the enduring warmth, mutual trust, and iron-clad friendship that defined Pakistan-China relations.

## Minister calls for integrated, people-centric disaster management system

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Tuesday stressed the need for a comprehensive, integrated and people-centric approach to disaster management, highlighting the importance of timely response, effective early warning systems and strong coordination among all stakeholders.

Addressing a ceremony here, the minister said that Pakistan, being among the most climate-vulnerable countries, was facing increasing risks from torrential floods, glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs) and extreme weather events, particularly in northern regions.

He underlined that while various initiatives had been undertaken to enhance disaster preparedness, there was a need to further strengthen the effectiveness of early warning systems to ensure timely evacuation of communities at risk.

Dr Malik said that response time in case of sudden disasters such as GLOFs was often limited to 20 to 25 minutes, which required a well-connected and fully functional system linking monitoring infrastructure with district admin-



istration and local communities.

He emphasised that modern technology, including satellite systems, drones and real-time data integration, could play a vital role in improving disaster response mechanisms. "With the advancement in technology, it is now

possible to develop integrated solutions that can help save lives and minimise losses," he added.

The minister highlighted the importance of ensuring that disaster preparedness measures translate into practical benefits for affected populations, particu-

larly vulnerable communities living in high-risk areas.

He also stressed the need for improved zoning regulations and their effective enforcement to prevent construction in flood-prone zones, which could exacerbate damage during natural disasters.

## CJP reviews judicial reforms, urges sustained momentum to cut case backlog

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan, Justice Yahya Afridi on Tuesday chaired the tenth interactive session at the Supreme Court to review progress on judicial reforms, directing officials to accelerate key initiatives aimed at improving efficiency, transparency and public access to justice.

The meeting assessed monthly progress under the Reform Action Plan (RAP), focusing on reducing delays in case disposal, digitizing court processes and strengthening institutional performance.

Among those in attendance were Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch, the Supreme Court registrar, senior officials of

the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan, the Federal Judicial Academy and section heads of the apex court.

Officials briefed the meeting on steps taken to streamline case management, including categorization of cases, digitization of records, integration of IT systems and financial digitization of receipts and expenditures.

Progress on automation measures such as e-courts, QR-coded certified copies and data-driven decision-making tools was also reviewed, along with developments in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) and mediation programmes.

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## Iran welcomes Pakistan's role in promoting regional stability, peace



Agencies'

ISLAMABAD: Iran has praised Pakistan's diplomatic efforts to de-escalate tensions in the region.

Iranian Ambassador Reza Ameri Moghadam said that Iran appreciated Pakistan's role in discouraging US and Israeli aggression against the country.

He added that Pakistan's proactive diplomacy is commendable for

promoting peace and stability in the region.

Ambassador Moghadam further stated that Iran welcomed Pakistan's sincere efforts aimed at restoring peace and sustainable stability in the region.

He highlighted that attempts to revive diplomacy and rebuild global trust by ending unjust and illegal aggression against Iran are highly commendable.

## Election petition against Ataullah Tarar dismissed

City Desk

LAHORE: The Election Tribunal has dismissed a petition challenging the victory of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar from NA-127 in the 2024 general elections.

The petition, filed by Malik Zaheer Abbas Khokhar, who had contested against Federal Minister Ataullah Tarar in NA-127, sought to overturn the election result but was declared false, non-maintainable, and without merit.

The tribunal noted that petitioner Khokhar repeatedly sought adjournments and failed to produce any evidence in support of his claims, undermining the proceedings.

In its ruling, the tribunal dismissed the case as lacking merit and evidence and was not maintainable for



hearing. The decision upholds Tarar's electoral success in the constituency.

Barrister Haris Azmat Advocate appeared on behalf of the federal minister, while Prime Minister's Political Coordinator Syed Tauseef Shah was also present during the hearing.

## Iranian attack sparks fire on Kuwaiti oil tanker at Dubai Port

AFP

An Iranian attack sparked a fire on a Kuwaiti oil tanker at Dubai Port, state media reported on Tuesday, as Tehran continued its campaign in the Gulf in response to US-Israeli strikes.

"The Kuwaiti giant crude oil tanker was subjected to a direct and malicious Iranian attack while in the anchorage area of Dubai Port in the UAE," official news agency KUNA reported, citing Kuwait's state-owned oil company.

There were no injuries, according to the report, and Dubai authorities later said firefighters had extinguished the blaze.

KUNA reported the tanker was fully laden at the time of the attack,



which had caused "material damage to the ship's hull" and "the possibility of an oil spill in the surrounding waters".

Authorities in the United Arab Emirates said there had been no oil spill.

UAE authorities had indicated earlier that the tanker was targeted by a drone in Dubai waters. According to the Dubai government's Media Office, the ship's 24 crew members were safe.

Kuwait's military also said on Tuesday its air defences were responding to "hostile missile and drone attacks", according to an X post.

Maritime intelligence agency Vanguard and ship tracker Marine-Traffic identified the ship as the Al Salmi, a 332-metre long Kuwait-flagged crude tanker.

## Funeral prayers held for Major General Waqar Ahmed Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Funeral prayers for former Deputy Surgeon General of AMC, Major General Waqar Ahmed Khan, who passed away due to natural causes, were offered on Monday.

Major General Waqar concluded his distinguished career as Director General Medical Services at NESCOM, earning recognition for his professionalism and unwavering commitment to the medical corps.

He was known for a life marked by service, dignity, and compassion. He was the son of former DMS Air Major General Aslam Khan, and both father and son served as SMO



Ahsan at PAF Hospital Peshawar. He is survived by his wife, Dr. Samina, sons Ammar Waqar Khan and Azeem Khan, and daughter Nida Waqar Khan.