



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ابوہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ سے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا جو کوئی اللہ اور آخرت کے دن پر ایمان رکھتا ہو وہ اپنے پیادے کو تکلیف نہ پہنچائے اور جو کوئی اللہ اور آخرت کے دن پر ایمان رکھتا ہو وہ اپنے مہمان کی عزت کرے اور جو کوئی اللہ اور آخرت کے دن پر ایمان رکھتا ہو وہ اپنی بات زبان سے نکلے اور خاموش رہے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6018)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Fly Jinnah starts Lahore-Quetta flight

Fly Jinnah continued to expand its domestic network by introducing new routes as the inaugural flight of the Lahore-Quetta route was started on Wednesday (today). Fly Jinnah was using Airbus A-320 for this purpose. The one-way fare from Lahore to Quetta is fixed at Rs17,999. Fly Jinnah will operate these flights on Wednesday, Friday, and Sunday.



New food scandal: Over 200,000 wheat bags missing from Sindh govt godowns

A major scandal has emerged in Sindh's Food Department after the reported disappearance of more than two hundred thousand wheat bags from government godowns across several districts. According to the 24NewsHD TV channel, the missing wheat stock was reported from storage facilities in districts including Naushahro Feroze, Shaheed Benazirabad, Jacobabad, Kashmirore-Kandhkot and Qambar Shahdadkot.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the development of Small and Medium Enterprise sector on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz, MNA Gilani discuss political, South Punjab matters



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Member of the National Assembly Abdul Qadir Gilani on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here.

In the meeting, they

discussed the political matters as well as the development projects for South Punjab.

The parliamentarian appreciated Pakistan's efforts under Prime Minister Shehbaz's leadership to establish peace in the region.

PM Shehbaz recommends Sitara-e-Shujaat for Kohat Hero who sacrificed life to save civilians

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday paid glowing tribute to martyr Liaquat Ali, whose act of bravery near Kohat saved local residents from a major disaster, and said the entire nation stood united against terrorism. On the recommendation of the prime minister, the president of Pakistan conferred the Sitara-e-Shujaat upon the late Liaquat Ali in recognition of his courage and sacrifice. The award was received by the martyr's mother during a ceremony, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said Shaheed Liaquat Ali had set an example of courage and bravery that would be



remembered for generations.

He said the security forces and the people of Pakistan had rendered thousands of sacrifices in the war against terrorism, adding that the nation could never forget the sacrifices of its martyrs.

The prime minister, on behalf of himself and the entire nation, paid rich tribute to Shaheed Liaquat Ali and expressed solidarity with his family.

PM orders banks to boost loans for Women Entrepreneurs and SMEs

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed commercial banks to facilitate easier loan access for women entrepreneurs and SMEs, and assist them with product exports, emphasizing their role in national economic development and export growth.

Chairing a review meeting on

SME upliftment, the PM was briefed on emergency efforts by SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan and SMEDA to provide easy credit, digital financing, formal economy inclusion, and export market access for SMEs.

He expressed satisfaction with the roadmap developed by SMEDA and the Ministry of Industries, ordering the presentation of an implementation plan

with defined targets.

The PM also mandated that agricultural processing sectors be given SME status and welcomed steps for women's inclusion in SMEs. SMEDA, the Ministry of Industries, and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) reported the implementation of 48 initiatives across eight strategic sectors for phased SME growth over two and four years.

Briefings covered market access via roadshows, increased investment through low-cost loans, value chain strengthening through vendor profiling, and SME database establishment for formal inclusion.

The SBP Governor reported that private sector lending reached Rs 1.1 trillion last fiscal year, with Rs 904 billion already disbursed in the first three quarters

of the current year, marking a 28% increase in SME loans, leading to an upward revision of the SME lending target to Rs 1,500 billion by FY2028.

Measures for export finance include a dedicated window established on the PM's instruction, benefiting 41 new SMEs. The meeting was attended by several federal ministers, state ministers, advisors, and senior officials.

Minister Tarar attributes Pakistan's narrative triumph to unified state response and media accuracy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attallah Tarar asserted that Pakistan achieved victory on the "narrative front" following the Marka-e-Haq and May War by employing national unity, a coordinated state response, responsible media conduct, and timely global dissemination of facts. Speaking at an ISSI seminar, he maintained that war was imposed on Pakistan, which consistently acts as a frontline state against terrorism and a shield for the world. Tarar credited

Pakistan's narrative strength to unified state institutions. He highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer for a fair, independent probe into Pahal-gam, which India avoided, weakening its global standing.

Pakistan countered Indian accusations by inviting journalists to alleged terrorist sites and responded decisively under the UN Charter after India attacked Pakistani civilians. Pakistan actively engaged international media, emphasizing its sacrifices—over 90,000 lives lost and billions in economic damage fighting terrorism. Tarar cited



evidence of Indian involvement in destabilization, including transnational assassinations and the capture of Indian spy Kul-

hushan Yadav. He contrasted the aggressive "war hysteria" of some Indian media with the authentic, verified information provided by

Pakistani media, academia, and social media users, noting seamless information flow between state and private sectors. Pakistani youth, particularly Gen Z, excelled in a "meme war." Tarar concluded Pakistan excelled in narrative, diplomatic, and conventional warfare because it possessed and effectively communicated the truth. He praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's leadership and noted Pakistan targeted military installations while India struck civilians, highlighting the Pakistan Air Force's dominance in aerial engagements.

Pakistan united against terrorism: Khawaja Asif



City Desk

ISLAMABAD, MAY 13 (APP): Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Wednesday said Pakistan is fully united in the fight against terrorism, stressing that the military, federal government, and provincial authorities are aligned on countering militancy.

Responding to a point of order in the National Assembly, he said

that until two to three months ago, there had been limited meaningful cooperation from the KP government with the federation, but added that the situation has now improved due to growing realization. He stressed that the fight against terrorism is a national struggle for Pakistan's survival.

The minister emphasised that Pakistan's armed forces — including the Army, Navy, Air Force, and paramilitary units such

as the Frontier Corps — represent a unified national identity and have made immense sacrifices for the country.

He urged that this national character should be respected and not used for political gain, adding that Parliament should function as a forum for national cohesion.

He reiterated that the sacrifices made by Pakistan's armed forces are national in nature and must not be linked to any province.

Int'l delegation meets Health Minister, focuses on investment, promotion of modern technology in health sector

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: International delegation of Abbott Laboratories met with Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal and discussed bilateral cooperation, investment and promotion of modern technology in the health sector.

According to the Ministry on Wednesday, the delegation praised the initiative of the Ministry of Health to digitize the registration process of medical devices.

Speaking on the occasion, Mustafa Kamal said that in the past, registration of medical equipment ranging from wheelchairs to MRI machines used to take a long time. However, due to recent reforms, the process is now being completed within around 20 days.

The delegation praised the ongoing initiative to eliminate Hepatitis C

The health minister said the government had launched a comprehensive programme to eliminate hepatitis, adding that the pilot phase of the programme, which had remained stalled for the past decade, was launched in Islamabad today.

Pakistan steadily reducing dependence on imported fuel: Awais Leghari

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division), Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, said on Wednesday that Pakistan was steadily reducing its dependence on imported fuel for electricity generation, with the share of indigenous energy sources expected to rise significantly over the next four to five years.

Responding to a calling attention notice regarding drastic changes in the net-metering policy for solar prosumers and the decision to propose an 18 percent tax on solar panels, he said 74 percent of the electricity currently generated in the country was being produced from local sources, while only 26 percent depended on imported coal and gas.

He said the share of locally sourced energy was projected to increase to nearly 96 percent in the coming years, adding that Pakistan's reliance on imported fuel was continuously declining.

The minister said the government had completed a detailed study, initiated several months ago, regarding the conversion of imported coal-based power plants to locally produced Thar coal. He termed the initiative both feasible and economically viable.

Protest

KARACHI: Families of the Pakistani crew members' hostages in Somalia stage a protest for safe return of their loved ones, in the Provincial Capital. Pirates hijacked the oil tanker Honour 25, carrying a multi-national crew, near the Somali coast on April 21.



Photo: Online



Chairman All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan called on AJK Inspector General Police Captain Rtd Liaqat Ali Malik at Muzaffarabaf congratulated him on assuming charge as IGP Azad Jammu & Kashmir.

Azad Kashmir Colleges upgraded to degree level following former PM's initiative



Abdul Majeed Tahir

DHIRKOT: On the proposal of former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, the Government of Azad Kashmir colleges of LA-14 West Bagh Dhirkot—Boys Inter College Rangla, Boys Inter College Chirala, Girls Inter College Arja, Girls Degree College Arja—have been upgraded as Degree colleges level. The government of AJK issued notification in this regard. The people of the constituency expressed happiness over the college upgradation. According to the details, former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan had proposed the upgrade of three colleges of LA-14 West Bagh Dhirkot, the government approved the proposal and the three colleges have been upgraded. The people of the constituency are appreciating the efforts of Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan efforts.

Meanwhile President of Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan is inaugurated the construction of a half kilometer road from Lower Kotli Dhirkot to Diwan and laid the foundation stone of a half kilometer road.

A large number of workers of Muslim Conference were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the elders on this occasion, former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the Muslim Conference has always thought of construction and development.

AJK Medical Colleges Governing Body Approves New Nursing Program, Modern ER Facility

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: An important and high-level meeting of the Governing Body of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Medical Colleges was held, which was chaired by the Prime Minister of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting was attended by Minister for Public Health Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Minister for Finance Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir, Secretary Public Health and other concerned senior officials.



During the meeting, the Principals of the three medical colleges of Azad Kashmir presented various important agendas, which were discussed in detail. On this occasion, Professor Dr. Adnan Meraj presented an important proposal to launch BS Nursing and Midwifery Program with Muzaffarabad Medical College, which was approved and the budget was approved for regular admissions and commencement of classes from the next academic session.

Furthermore, a proposal was also presented by Professor Dr. Adnan Meraj to establish a modern, integrated and international standard Accident and Emergency Department at Abbas Institute of Medical Sciences, Ambur, Muzaffarabad, which was highly appreciated in the meeting. This important project has been formally approved.

Civil Defense Takes Over Security for Multan's Fatima Jinnah Town Phase 2



Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Agreement Signed Between Multan Development Authority and Civil Defense for the Security of Fatima Jinnah Town Phase 2 Journalist Colony

Deputy Commissioner Multan Numan Sadiq said Civil Defense Personnel will be responsible for the security of Fatima Jinnah Town Phase 2. Deputy Commissioner Multan and Controller Civil Defense Muhammad Noman Siddique and Director General MDA Rashid Irshad Hussain were present on the occasion. Additional Director Civil Defense Multan Region Noshaba Mehwish were also present. The period of the agreement is for one year, which is further extendable. According to the agreement, trained personnel of the Civil Defense Department will perform security duties for the security of Fatima Jinnah Town Phase 2. The protection and security of all civil, mechanical and electrical installations in Fatima Jinnah Town Phase 2 will be the responsibility of Civil Defense personnel. Civil Defense personnel will be responsible in case of damage or theft of government installations.

AJK PM Unveils Massive Financial Boost for Universities, Stresses Tech Skills for Youth

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that education is not merely a source of awareness but a guarantee for nations' development, prosperity, and a brighter future. He expressed these views while talking to the Vice Chancellor of the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Vice Chancellor of Bagh Women University here today. The Prime Minister said that the world has rapidly entered the era of technology where equipping younger generation with artificial intelligence, modern scientific knowledge and digital skills has become essential. Artificial intelligence and digital



technology, he added, were the key drivers of future development. He said that adapting youth to emerging technologies remains his government's top priorities. On the occasion, Prime Minister Rathore announced a financial assistance package of Rs1.5 billion for the University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Women University Bagh to help address their financial challenges. Highlighting the

PPP's commitment to education, the Prime Minister said the party has always placed the promotion of education at the center of its policies. He noted that during previous PPP governments, universities and medical colleges were established across Azad Kashmir to provide better opportunities for higher and quality education to the youth. The Prime Minister further said that the govern-

ment has been working to prepare students for future challenges by establishing information technology centers, computer laboratories, and other modern educational facilities. Minister for Higher Education Zafar Iqbal Malik, Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan, and Secretary Higher Education Muhammad Younis Mir were also present on the occasion.

City Cash and Carry Sealed in Faisalabad Over Meat Price Gouging



Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: On the instructions of SDEO Para City Faisalabad Noman Majeed, Enforcement Officer Arsalan Ehsan sealed the branch of City Cash and Carry Store located on Jhang Road, taking action against the sale of meat at high prices. According to the authorities, complaints of overcharging and charging prices above the fixed rates were confirmed during the checking, on which immediate legal action was taken. The administration says that the actions will continue in the future to provide relief to the citizens and ensure price control.

Pakistan Key to De-escalating US-Iran Tensions: Masood Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, has stated that Pakistan continues to play a pivotal and constructive role in efforts aimed at preventing a wider regional conflict between Iran and the United States, while facilitating dialogue and sustaining diplomatic engagement between the two sides.

Speaking during a televised interview on the evolving Middle East crisis, Ambassador Khan observed that despite continuing military tensions and hostile rhetoric, both Tehran and Washington remain engaged in negotiations and still consider diplo-

macy a viable path forward. He cautioned that the situation remains extremely delicate, describing the current environment as one in which "war and negotiations are proceeding simultaneously."

Ambassador Khan noted that Pakistan's diplomatic interventions have so far contributed to three important developments: the establishment of a temporary ceasefire, the initiation of direct negotiations between Iran and the United States, and the continuation of proximity talks aimed at transforming the temporary ceasefire into a more durable arrangement. He stressed that both Tehran and Washington continue to reposit trust in Pakistan's role as a mediator and facilitator.

Hot, dry weather expected across country: PMD

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly hot and dry weather across most parts of the country on Thursday, with very hot conditions expected in Sindh.

However, isolated rain-wind and thunderstorm activity is likely during the afternoon in southern Punjab, northern Balochistan and Kashmir.

According to the forecast, Islamabad and its surrounding areas will remain mainly dry, though partly cloudy conditions may develop during the afternoon.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, hot and dry weather is expected across most districts, while upper parts of the province may experience partly cloudy conditions during the evening and night.

آزاد حکومت ریاست جموں و کشمیر

★★★★★

درخواستیں مطلوب ہیں

محکمہ زراعت شعبہ توسیع میں نارمل میزانیہ کے تحت ڈرائیور کی اسامی کو پُر کرنے کے لیے خواہشمند امیدواروں سے درخواستیں مطلوب ہیں جو مقررہ تاریخ تک دفتر نظامت زراعت توسیع مظفر آباد واقع شوکت لائن گوجرہ میں موصول ہونی چاہئیں۔

نمبر شمار	نام اسامی مع سکیل	حد عمر	تعداد و آسامیاں	جائے تعیناتی	مطلوبہ تعلیمی قابلیت / تجربہ
1	ڈرائیور پی۔سی۔ایم	41-18 سال	1	نظامت زراعت توسیع مظفر آباد	i) Litrate ii) PSV/ Heavy Duty License holder and having 3 years experience of driving

شرائط:

- امیدوار کا پیشنی باشندہ ریاست درجہ اول ہونا لازمی ہے۔
- درخواست مورخہ یکم جون 2026ء تک دفتری اوقات میں موصول ہونا ضروری ہے۔
- مقررہ تاریخ کے بعد موصول ہونے والی یا نامکمل درخواست بائرنور نہیں لائی جائیں گی۔
- درخواست کے ہمراہ پیشنی باشندہ ریاست سرٹیفکیٹ، ڈویسائل، مستقل سکونی سرٹیفکیٹ، شناختی کارڈ اور لائسنس کی مصدقہ عکسی نقول شامل کرنا ہوں گی۔ نامکمل درخواست وصول نہیں کی جائے گی۔ جبکہ بوقت انٹرویو اصل سرٹیفکیٹس و ڈرائیونگ لائسنس کمیٹی کو پیش کرنا لازمی ہوں گے۔
- موصول درخواست دہندگان / امیدواران کا انٹرویو ڈرائیونگ ٹیسٹ مورخہ 04 جون 2026ء بوقت 10:00 بجے دفتر نظامت زراعت توسیع مظفر آباد میں ہوگا جس کے لیے علیحدہ سے کوئی کال لیٹر جاری نہیں کیا جائے گا۔
- ٹیسٹ انٹرویو کے لیے آنے والے امیدواران سفری اخراجات TADA کے حق دار نہ ہوں گے۔

نائب ناظم زراعت (ہیڈ کوارٹرز)
نظامت زراعت توسیع مظفر آباد
(فون نمبر 920717-05822)



Islamabad

30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:33 am
Zohr	12:04 pm
Asr	4:58 pm
Maghrib	7:00 pm
Isha	8:36 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6

Annual Prize Distribution Ceremony Held at DPS

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: An annual prize distribution ceremony was held at Divisional Public School and College Toba Tek Singh, where Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela participated as the chief guest. The ceremony was presided over by Principal Divisional Public School and College Dr. Rao Muhammad Siddique. A large number of teachers, parents, students and people from different walks of life attended the event. During the ceremony, shields, medals and certificates of appreciation were distributed among students who secured prominent positions in annual examinations and various co-curricular activities.

Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela said that the younger generation is a valuable asset of the nation and their proper education and character building is the need of the time. He said that progress is not possible without modern education, technology and skills. He appreciated the quality educational services of Divisional Public School and College and said that the institution is playing an important role in providing education according to modern requirements. Principal Dr. Rao Muhammad Siddique presented the institution's annual performance report and highlighted its academic, co-curricular and administrative achievements. Special prayers were also offered at the end of the ceremony for the peace, prosperity and development of the country and the nation.

Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Unveils Multi-Billion Development Spree, Targets Financial Autonomy for Districts

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif approved multi-billion rupee development projects across the province utilizing local financial resources under the District Development Plan, emphasizing visible progress and strict monitoring. She directed that districts be made financially empowered and autonomous.

She insisted on cordoning off all construction sites properly and demanded commissioners focus on actual fieldwork rather than administrative detachment, stating visible ground work was insufficient. Briefings on local resources and proposed schemes highlighted significant funds available in Sahiwal, Sargodha, and Faisalabad divisions.

In Sahiwal, Rs4 billion is available, with Rs1.12 billion earmarked for 17 mandatory completion projects by September 2026, including 10 major road constructions totaling 18.8 km, pavement leveling mandates, and beautification efforts, such as transforming Chichawatni's main

market into a model bazaar.

Sargodha division approved Rs2.8 billion for development, including road construction, beautification of Bhera, and building an entry point at Sial Morr Motorway Interchange, with all schemes due by September 30.

Projects across Khushab and Bhakkar, like family parks and bus stands, were also sanctioned, emphasizing uniform development standards. Faisalabad division has Rs5.3 billion locally, funding 59 schemes, mainly road upgrades totaling 81 km, with specific directives for end-to-end pavement construction in Faisalabad city.

Multan division approved 28 schemes costing Rs3 billion, focusing on upgrading key city roads into dual carriageways where necessary and renovating infrastructure like bus stands and parks.

Throughout the meeting, the Chief Minister stressed the use of merit, elimination of negligence, and uncompromising quality assurance for all development work.



Calls on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Azerbaijan Mr. Khazar Farhadov Calls on Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Attock Proud of Governor Khan's Billions in Development Funds, Says Local PPP Leader

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan's Public Service and Political Leadership Are a Matter of Pride, Says Malik Riasat District President of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Malik Riasat Ali Sudharyal, said that Sardar Saleem Haider Khan has played a vital role in organizing the Pakistan Peoples Party as a strong and active political force across Punjab. Under his leadership, party workers gained renewed enthusiasm and the party's message reached every household.

While speaking to the media, he stated that the people of Attock and the loyal supporters of the Pakistan Peoples Party take pride in their leader's people-friendly policies, political services, and vision for regional development. He said that the public would never forget the two years of Sardar Saleem Haider Khan's governorship marked by service, progress, and prosperity.

Malik Riasat Ali Sudharyal further said that Sardar Saleem Haider Khan, through his outstanding leadership, public service, and political wisdom, has brought recognition to Attock not only within Pakistan but across the world. He dedicated his life to public service and set a shining example of loyalty to the Pakistan Peoples Party. He never abandoned the people even when he held no position of power.

Journalists meet DG MDA Rashid Irshad and Addl DG MDA Atta-ul-Haq

MULTAN: A delegation of journalists met Director General Multan Development Authority (MDA) Rashid Irshad and Additional DG MDA Atta-ul-Haq to discuss the civic, infrastructure, and security issues of the Journalists Colony located in Fatima Jinnah Town Phase-II, Multan.

During the meeting, the journalists highlighted several long-standing problems including illegal soil theft from residential plots, the need for boundary wall construction, poor condition of roads, sewerage system issues, lack of proper security arrangements, damaged electricity poles, and inadequate waste management in the colony.

The DG MDA assured the delegation that practical steps were being taken to resolve the issues on a priority basis. He informed that funds amounting to Rs. 120 million have been released for the construction of the boundary wall of the Journalists Colony.

He further stated that the installation of CCTV cameras will be initiated soon to strengthen security and monitoring within the colony.

Regarding sanitation, the DG said that MDA has formally written to the Waste Management authority for immediate improvement in cleanliness and solid waste disposal arrangements in the area.

On sewerage issues, he added that WASA has already started rehabilitation work, and around 20 manhole covers have been installed as part of the ongoing improvement process.

For security arrangements, it was informed that funds have been transferred to the district administration for the deployment of additional security guards to ensure 24-hour security in the colony.

Speaker of Balochistan calls on Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of Balochistan Assembly, Captain (R) Abdul Khaliq Khan Achakzai Wednesday calls on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and discussed matters relating to inter-provincial parliamentary relations, the overall situation in the country and law and order in Balochistan.

The meeting focused, in particular, on the promotion of inter-provincial parliamentary cooperation, institutional strengthening and enhanced coordination between the legislatures of the federation and the provinces.

Ayaz Sadiq said that strengthening inter-provincial parliamentary cooperation was essential for institutional stability and improved governance in a democratic system.

He said that greater interaction between legislatures not only facilitated the exchange of parliamentary experiences but also helped promote harmony and mutual trust among the federating units.

Highlighting the geographical and economic importance of Balochistan, the Speaker of the National Assembly said that the province's development and sustainable peace were directly linked to Pakistan's overall progress.

He said that the federal government was taking priority-based measures for the development of Balochistan, including the improvement of infrastructure and the provision of public welfare services.

Ayaz Sadiq said that special focus was being given to education, skills development and employment opportunities for the youth.

He reaffirmed the commitment that institutional cooperation at the federal and provincial levels would be further strengthened. Abdul Khaliq Achakzai appreciated the federal government's efforts for development and peace in the province, saying these initiatives were yielding positive results for the people.

He said that the promotion of inter-provincial parliamentary cooperation was a vital need of the time as it would help improve harmony and policymaking among the provinces.

He expressed the hope that continued liaison between the National Assembly and provincial assemblies would further strengthen the process of development and prosperity in Balochistan.

Candidates Demand Judicial Inquiry into SPSC Exams Citing Merit Violation

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A protest sit-in was staged outside the head office of the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) by affected candidates, lawyers, political and social leaders against the alleged violation of merit and favoritism in the results of the Combined Competitive Examination (CCE) 2024. The leaders of the sit-in demanded judicial inquiries into CCE 2024 as well as all examinations conducted during the tenure of Chairman Wasim Ahmed to ensure transparency in the results. They also called for the immediate withdraw-



al of cases registered against candidates and activists who raised their voices for justice and fairness.

A large number of political and social leaders, lawyers, students, affected CCE 2024 candidates, and citizens

participated in the sit-in held outside the SPSC head office located on Thandi Sarak Road in Hyderabad.

Renowned intellectual Jami Chandio, writer Dr. Ishaque Samejo, Sindh United Party (SUP) leader Roshan Buriro, Sindh Hari Committee President Samar Hyder Jatoi, Sindh Sufi Forum's Badr Channa, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader Afroz Shoro, Qaumi Awami Tehreek (QAT) Hyderabad President Nazeer Buledi, social activist Sindhu Nawaz Ghanghro, lawyers' leaders Shakir Nawaz Shar, Faisal Mughal, Wahab Munshi, Israr Chang, and others addressed the sit-in.

PFC Chairman Mian Kashif Ashfaq meet to Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Chairman of the Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq meet Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan to discuss various matters related to the development of the furniture industry, increase in exports and support for skilled craftsmen.

During the meeting, Mian Kashif Ashfaq said that Pakistan's furniture industry possesses immense potential and with proper government facilities, modern technology



and international marketing support, "Made in Pakistan" furniture can secure a prom-

inent position in the global market. He stated that furniture produced by Pakistani

artisans is admired worldwide for its unique craftsmanship, durability and aesthetic appeal.

He emphasized the need to provide local manufacturers and craftsmen with easy loans, training programs, modern machinery and opportunities to participate in international exhibitions in order to significantly enhance the country's exports.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Furniture Council in promoting local craftsman-

ship and said that the furniture industry can play an important role in strengthening the national economy. He assured full government support for the promotion of local industries, creation of employment opportunities and encouragement of skilled workers.

He further stated that the Punjab government would work closely with the private sector to modernize the furniture industry, promote investment and increase exports to help strengthen Pakistan's economy.

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Iran's Digital Leverage to Black Out the Globe

When President Donald Trump warned that the United States could "destroy the civilization of Iran," few in Washington imagined that Iran would respond not merely with missiles, drones, or naval blockades, but by exposing a terrifying reality to the world: modern civilization does not only run on oil. It runs on data. And much of that data passes through the same narrow waterway that carries the world's energy lifeline — the Strait of Hormuz.

For decades, the Strait of Hormuz was viewed primarily as the world's most critical oil chokepoint connecting the Persian Gulf to the Arabian Sea. Every crisis in the region triggered fears of soaring fuel prices, economic collapse, and shipping paralysis.

But the 2026 Iran-USA-Israel conflict has revealed something even more consequential hidden beneath those waters: the digital nervous system of the modern world.

Beneath the seabed of Hormuz lie at least seven major undersea fiber-optic cable systems, including FALCON, AAE-1, TGN-Gulf, and several Asia-Europe communication routes. These cables carry enormous volumes of global internet traffic, cloud computing operations, banking transactions, military communications, GPS synchronization signals, AI data flows, financial clearing systems, media broadcasts, and commercial operations linking Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and beyond. These are not ordinary cables. They are the arteries of modern civilization.

More than 95 percent of international internet traffic travels through undersea fiber-optic networks. Gulf nations such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, and Bahrain rely heavily on these cables for everything from oil trading and banking to aviation control and national security communications.

India depends on these routes for connectivity to Europe and the Middle East. Global tech giants such as Google, Meta, Amazon, and Microsoft either own, lease, or operate major portions of the world's subsea cable infrastructure. In reality, the modern internet is not floating in the clouds. It lies vulnerable at the bottom of the ocean.

Iran recognizes this vulnerability and is keeping the option open to impose licensing fees, regulations, and even operational control over the fiber-optic cables passing through Hormuz. Tehran has reportedly explored legal mechanisms to treat the underwater infrastructure as part of Iran's sovereign jurisdiction within the strait. While the world initially dismissed these statements as propaganda, the strategic implications are staggering.

The closure or disruption of the Strait of Hormuz already pushed oil prices sharply upward, increasing fuel costs for ordinary Americans and consumers worldwide. Many households experienced thousands of dollars in additional annual expenses due to inflation, rising transportation costs, food prices, and energy shocks. But a disruption of the digital cables beneath Hormuz would unleash a crisis far beyond inflation. It would paralyze civilization itself.

The modern financial system depends on digital communication between banks, stock exchanges, SWIFT systems, trading platforms, and cloud servers. Trillions of dollars in financial transactions pass daily through these networks. A major cable disruption could halt real-time banking operations, freeze financial markets, delay international transfers, and disrupt payment systems globally. The consequences would not stop there.

Commercial aviation relies heavily on digital communication networks for navigation, weather coordination, GPS synchronization, and air traffic management. Shipping industries use constant data exchanges for cargo tracking, maritime safety, navigation routing, and port logistics. Modern agriculture depends on satellite-linked irrigation systems, weather forecasting, fertilizer supply

coordination, commodity exchanges, and precision farming technologies. Hospitals rely on cloud databases and communication systems. Governments rely on encrypted defense communications. Artificial intelligence systems depend on uninterrupted data exchange between global data centers.

If these cables were severely disrupted, much of the modern world could slow to a standstill within hours. Even temporary outages are catastrophically expensive. Studies estimate that major internet disruptions can cost millions of dollars per hour. IT outages alone can cost corporations over \$33,000 per minute. Repairing damaged subsea cables can cost between \$1.5 million and \$8 million depending on the scale of the disruption. But the indirect economic losses are far greater — potentially reaching hundreds of billions or even trillions of dollars if outages persist.

The world received a warning in 2006 when an earthquake damaged nine undersea cables near Taiwan. Connectivity disruptions lasted for weeks across parts of Asia, affecting banking systems, communications, and trade flows. Eleven repair ships required nearly 50 days to fully restore operations. Now imagine a deliberate geopolitical confrontation centered around Hormuz.

Unlike oil tankers, these cables cannot easily be replaced or rerouted overnight. They lie in shallow, vulnerable seabeds where anchors, sabotage operations, or

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

NDMA Convenes Pre-Monsoon Coordination Conference to Strengthen National Preparedness

National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), on the directions of the national and military leadership, convened a Pre-Monsoon Coordination Conference today at the National Emergencies Operation Center (NEOC), NDMA Headquarters, Islamabad. The conference was organized to review national preparedness and coordination mechanisms in light of preliminary Disaster Early Warning (DEW-3) issued by NEOC for the upcoming monsoon season from June to September 2026.

The conference focused on strengthening preparedness and coordinated response measures against potential monsoon related risks, including floods, Glacial Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF), cloud burst, urban flooding, landslides, and other extreme weather events across the country. Representatives from PDMA, Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), rescue services, federal ministries, armed forces, NHA, WAPDA, line departments, District Disaster Management Authorities (DDMAs), humanitarian partners and other stakeholders participated in the session. Participants were briefed that the 2026 southwest monsoon is expected to exhibit strong regional contrasts, with rainfall likely concentrated over northern Pakistan and adjoining upper catchments, while plains and southern regions may experience suppressed rainfall, above-normal temperatures and recurring heat stress. The northern region was identified as the highest compound-risk zone due to the potential overlap of intense rainfall, western disturbances, rising temperatures, accelerated snow and glacier melt, GLOF incidents, landslides and flash flooding.

During his welcome remarks, Chairman NDMA, Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, emphasized the importance of timely dissemination of early warnings and public advisories to ensure communities remain informed and prepared ahead of any emergency situation. He highlighted the need for robust coordination among all stakeholders for proactive preparedness and response measures during the monsoon season. Chairman NDMA stressed the activation and engagement of local NGOs, community volunteers, and civil society organizations at the grassroots level to enhance community-based preparedness and response capacity. He underlined the importance of conducting comprehensive assessments of available resources, rescue equipment, logistics support, and emergency response capabilities across vulnerable areas.

The conference also reviewed contingency planning, evacuation mechanisms, identification of safe locations for relief camps, uninterrupted communication arrangements, and measures to ensure the safety of tourists visiting northern areas during the monsoon season. Participants discussed coordinated strategies for the protection of critical infrastructure, public awareness campaigns, and maintaining smooth inter-agency communication throughout the high-risk period.

NDMA reiterated its commitment to maintaining close coordination with all stakeholders and ensuring effective preparedness and response measures for the protection of communities during the summer and monsoon season across.



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

DG ISPR Reiterates Pakistan's Security Resolve

At a major briefing at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, Director General of Inter-Services Public Relations Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry, joined by senior officials from Pakistan's navy, air force, and strategic commands, marked the first anniversary of Marka-e-Haq, or the Battle for Truth, by emphasizing Pakistan's security resolve, restraint, preparedness, and unity. He described the confrontation with a stronger adversary as a modern multi-domain conflict involving land, air, sea, cyber operations, and cognitive warfare over narratives and public perception. According to Chaudhry, Pakistan faced fake news, manipulated videos, and coordinated social media disinformation campaigns targeting soldiers, civilians, and allies,



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

but the armed forces responded with disciplined, evidence-based communication instead of emotional reactions, frustrating opponents expecting panic. He praised Pakistani personnel for using indigenous systems and innovative tactics despite technological and economic disadvantages, and said Marka-e-Haq symbolizes survival, unity, and strategic wisdom rather than destruction. Addressing the Pahalgam incident in Indian-administered Kashmir, he rejected Indian allegations against Pakistan-based militants as baseless due to the lack of forensic evidence, witness testimony, or intelligence disclosures, criticized India for refusing joint investigations, and compared the situation to the aftermath of the Pulwama attack. He argued that India uses such accusations to divert attention from alleged human rights abuses in Kashmir, economic problems, and social unrest while encouraging nationalism and military spending. Chaudhry also accused Indian agencies of supporting terrorism and false flag operations inside Pakistan through militant groups allegedly operating from Afghan territory, claiming Pakistani intelligence had traced financial links, operatives, and money transfers connected to attacks on Pakistani targets. He stated that India stages cross-border attacks while portraying itself as a victim of terrorism and insisted Pakistan fully understands the threats it faces and will not be deceived by what he called theatrical accusations. Despite these provocations, he repeatedly emphasized that Pakistan exercised restraint as a strategic choice rather than weakness because it values human life and diplomacy, while warning that restraint has limits and the armed forces remain ready to respond to aggression at any time and on any front. He revealed that during recent tensions Pakistan placed air defence systems on high alert, deployed naval ships to key chokepoints, stationed special forces along the eastern border, and kept ballistic missiles on standby without fueling or arming them, signaling that Pakistan is neither helpless nor afraid. He praised military coordination among the army, navy, and air force, highlighted successful real-time joint exercises without communication failures, and commended civilian leadership for supporting the military without political interference, calling this unity Pakistan's greatest strength and reassuring citizens concerned about war through his calm and factual tone.

Chaudhry also reaffirmed Pakistan's position that Kashmir remains an unresolved issue under United Nations resolutions granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir

the right to self-determination, accused India of violating these resolutions for decades and illegally revoking the special status of Indian-administered Kashmir in August 2019, and declared that Pakistan would never abandon the Kashmiri people. He described the Kashmir movement as a political and indigenous struggle rather than terrorism, accused India of suppressing protests through pellet guns, curfews, mass arrests, and detentions without trial, and urged the international community and human rights organizations to investigate conditions in the region. He reiterated that Pakistan seeks a peaceful resolution through dialogue based on UN resolutions, rejected India's claim that Kashmir is an internal matter, warned that unresolved disputes threaten regional peace, and stressed that Pakistan would continue diplomatic, moral, and political support for Kashmir, a stance that strongly resonated with the Pakistani public because of their emotional and religious connection to the issue. Beyond external threats, Chaudhry highlighted national unity and counterterrorism efforts as key pillars of Pakistan's security strategy, praising political parties, civil society, social media campaigns, and even religious minorities for showing solidarity with the armed forces during recent tensions, which he said surprised Pakistan's enemies who expected internal divisions. He also provided updates on counterterrorism operations, claiming attacks inside Pakistan declined significantly after targeted operations against militant infrastructure in Afghanistan. According to Chaudhry, militants had long used Afghan territory as a sanctuary for planning attacks, storing weapons, and crossing into Pakistan to target civilians and security forces, while repeated Pakistani requests for action from the Afghan interim government were

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The Growing Trend of Violence — An Alarm Bell for a Civilized Society

No society in history has ever been entirely free from crime, conflict, or evil. Wherever there is law, there will also be lawlessness, just as shadow exists beside light. The struggle between good and evil is as old as humanity itself and will likely continue for generations to come. Yet one factor distinguishes a civilized society from a fragile and disorderly one: the supremacy of the rule of law.

When a state establishes institutions to protect its citizens, strengthens law enforcement agencies, and takes action against terrorism and crime, the natural expectation is that people will feel safer and society will move toward peace and stability. Unfortunately, however, an alarming trend is rapidly emerging in our society. Increasingly, influential individuals are taking the law into their own hands, violence is erupting over trivial disputes, and mobs are beginning to present brutality as a form of "justice."

Every day, newspapers and social media platforms are flooded with horrifying incidents that reflect the growing normalization of violence. A poor man is tortured over a minor mistake. A life is taken over a dispute involving only a few hundred rupees. Arguments that should end in dialogue escalate into shootings and bloodshed. In many cases, mobs publicly humiliate and assault people with complete disregard for humanity or the law.

The recent incident in Rawalpindi, where two individuals were reportedly killed over a small financial dispute and then dragged behind

a motorcycle, was not merely an act of crime — it was a horrifying symbol of our collective moral decline. Such acts represent more than the murder of human beings; they signify the murder of compassion, tolerance, and civilization itself.

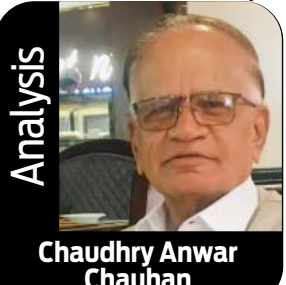
The question that demands urgent attention is: why is violence becoming so common in our society?

One major reason lies in the changing social and media culture. In earlier times, films and dramas often portrayed the villain as a symbol of cruelty and violence, while the hero represented morality, patience, dignity, and restraint. His greatness was measured by the strength of his character rather than the power of his fists or weapons.

Today, however, the definition of heroism has drastically changed. In many films and dramas across Bollywood, Hollywood, and Hollywood, revenge and brutality are glorified. The "hero" is often judged by how many people he can kill, how mercilessly he can retaliate, and how aggressively he can dominate others. Violence is increasingly being packaged as courage, masculinity, and success.

This influence is particularly dangerous for children and young people. At an early age, they are exposed to games, films, and digital content in which violence is portrayed as power and superiority. Gradually, the message enters their minds that "the more violent you are, the stronger you become." As tolerance, patience, and dialogue weaken within society, anger, revenge, and aggression begin to replace them.

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Analysis

Chaudhry Anwar Chauhan

Pakistan, WHO launch Prime Minister's Hepatitis C Programme to reach 1.6 million people in Islamabad Capital Territory

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the World Health Organization (WHO) today launched the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) with the goal of reaching 1.6 million people in the area over the next 6 months, and over 164 million across the country in subsequent phases. The main goal is to eliminate hepatitis C as a public health threat by 2030, as agreed upon by the World Health Assembly.

With 10 million of the almost 50 million estimated cases worldwide, Pakistan has the heaviest burden of hepatitis C globally. Only one in three affected people know that they are living with this disease (globally). It is estimated that, every year, 110,000 people are infected with hepatitis C in Pakistan – primarily, 62% due to unsafe medical injections (including blood transfusions) and 38% due to injection drug use.

With technical support from WHO – and under the leadership of the

Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination – the programme aims to prevent, detect and provide life-saving treatment to those who test positive for hepatitis C.

"Elimination of hepatitis C in Pakistan is not optional. We must do it. Launching this programme in Islamabad is a paradigm shift. Health is a national security issue, and an economic issue," said Federal Health Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal. "With the technical support from the World Health Organization we can and we must use the best science-based practices to eliminate this disease and protect our people and our families from this deadly disease, which is curable and preventable if we all follow good blood and injection safety measures. We know that prevention is better than cure."

Over the next 5 years, the programme could generate savings amounting to 1.3 billion Pakistani rupees (PKR) (US\$ 4.6 million) in treatment costs, and over 2 billion Pakistani rupees (US\$ 7 million) in hospitalization costs, totaling savings

of 3.3 billion Pakistani rupees (close to US\$ 12 million). By 2030, it is estimated that the national return on investment would be US\$8 for every US\$ 1 invested.

The pilot phases conducted in specific provinces have provided critical insights into operational feasibility, challenges, and best practices for nationwide scale-up.

"The Prime Minister's Programme is a major step towards achieving the 2030 global goal of eliminating hepatitis C as a public health threat. The programme could also avert 850,000 deaths and 1.1 million new infections by 2050. WHO will stand with Pakistan and its people to implement this initiative following medical science and adapting to the Pakistani context the best practices and lessons learned from around the world," said WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr Luo Dapeng. "Detecting and treating hepatitis is essential, but prevention is the key to end the disease, including preventing mother-to-child transmission, safe injections and blood transfusions, and harm reduction."



UMT Hosts 4th International Two-Day Conference on Applied Research

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The University of Management and Technology (UMT) organized the 4th International Two-Day Conference on Applied Research under the auspices of the School of Professional Advancement and the Institute of Hospitality Leadership. The conference featured comprehensive discussions on modern technology, action research, digital innovation and various dimensions of interdisciplinary research.

The conference was attended by Vice Chancellor of Beaconhouse National University Dr. Moed Waseem Yusuf as the chief guest. Prominent participants included UMT Rector Dr. Asif Raza, Provost Dr. Tashfeen Azhar, Dean School of Professional Advancement Dr. Atif Hassan and Professor Dr. Rohit Jain, along with a large number of national and international experts, researchers, industry professionals, faculty members, and students.

Addressing the conference, Dr. Moed Yusuf said that technology-driven research will play a pivotal



role in addressing future challenges. He emphasized that it is essential to align the younger generation with Artificial Intelligence and emerging technological advancements so they can effectively compete in the global landscape.

He further stated that interdisciplinary research can provide an effective and sustainable solutions to contemporary challenges, while adapting to rapidly changing global dynamics has become imperative. Dr. Yusuf also

stressed the importance of fostering stronger linkages among Pakistan's educational institutions for national progress.

Speaking on the occasion, UMT Rector Dr. Asif Raza highlighted that

Pakistan's rich cultural heritage can significantly contribute to the growth of the hospitality industry. He said that effective collaboration between education, technology and industry is critical for national advancement, adding

that universities can play a vital role in ensuring economic stability through research and development.

Dr. Asif Raza further remarked that educational institutions must produce capable entrepreneurs across all sectors to ensure sustainable economic growth. He noted that the core objective of the conference was to familiarize young researchers with modern global research trends and prepare them according to the practical demands of the professional world. He reaffirmed UMT's commitment to promoting quality education and advanced research through continuous practical initiatives.

During the conference, research papers were presented on emerging research trends, digital innovation, and future technologies. The speakers emphasized the need to connect modern research with practical applications and adopt a collaborative strategy to address national challenges.

At the end, UMT Rector Dr. Asif Raza presented commemorative souvenirs to Dr. Moed Waseem Yusuf and other distinguished guests.

Environmental Effects of the U.S.–Israel War on Iran



The U.S. – Israel war on Iran, which began on 28 February 2026, manifested a major diplo-economic escalation in the Middle Eastern conflict. The war started with coordinated airstrikes targeting Iranian military, nuclear, and government facilities, followed by Iranian retaliation through missile and drone attacks across the region. The conflict rapidly expanded beyond national borders, disrupting global trade, energy supplies, and environmental stability. While the political and military consequences have received widespread attention, the environmental impacts supported by emerging data and statistics are equally severe

and long-lasting.

One of the most immediate environmental effects has been severe air pollution caused by large-scale bombardment. Airstrikes on industrial zones and fuel depots released hazardous substances such as benzene, heavy metals, and PFAS ("forever chemicals") into the atmosphere. Reports also describe the phenomenon of "black rain" in major cities like Tehran, where polluted particles combined with rainfall, and spreading toxins over urban and rural areas. These pollutants significantly degrade air quality and pose long-term risks, including respiratory diseases and cancer. Given that thousands of strikes occurred in densely populated regions, the environmental burden is extensive.

The war has also caused significant marine pollution and oil-related environmental risks. The Strait of Hormuz through which approximately 20% of the world's oil and gas supply passes was partially blocked during the conflict. Attacks on oil tankers and infrastructure, including fires at oil facilities in the Gulf, increased the likelihood of oil spills. Even a single

major spill in this region can devastate marine ecosystems, killing fish populations, seabirds, and coral reefs. Additionally, disruptions in oil transport forced countries to reroute supplies, increasing shipping distances and emissions, further harming the environment.

Another major impact is land degradation and ecosystem destruction. Continuous missile strikes and explosions have damaged agricultural lands and natural habitats across Iran. The war has resulted in over 6,000 deaths in Iran alone and tens of thousands of injuries, with total casualties exceeding 60,000 killed and 44,000 injured across the region. Such large-scale destruction directly affects land use: farmland becomes contaminated with chemicals and unexploded ordnance, making it unsafe for cultivation. In arid regions already facing desertification, this damage accelerates soil erosion and reduces agricultural productivity, threatening food security.

The targeting of energy infrastructure has also intensified global environmental consequences. Oil prices surged dramatically during the conflict,



reaching between \$ U.S 104 and \$ U.S 126 per barrel, reflecting supply disruptions. As a result, many countries turned to alternative fossil fuels such as coal to compensate for shortages. This shift increases greenhouse gas emissions, undermining international climate goals. Furthermore, military operations themselves are highly carbon-intensive; the U.S. alone spent approximately \$ U.S 25 billion within the first two months of the war, indicating the scale of fuel consumption and emissions associated with military activity.

The war also raises concerns about radiological and chemical contamination, particularly due to strikes on

nuclear-related sites. Although intelligence reports suggest limited damage to Iran's nuclear program, concerns remain over the fate of approximately 440 kilograms of 60% enriched uranium, which could pose environmental risks if released. Even minor leakage from nuclear facilities can contaminate soil and water for decades, affecting ecosystems and human health across borders.

Water systems have also been heavily impacted. Bombing of infrastructure can destroy pipelines, treatment plants, and reservoirs, leading to water shortages and contamination. In Iran, where water scarcity is already a critical issue, such damage intensifies environmental stress. Additionally, population displacement increases pressure on limited water resources, as millions of people may rely on already strained supplies.

Finally, the broader environmental consequences extend globally due to disruptions in trade and energy systems. The Strait of Hormuz normally handles about 25% of the world's seaborne oil trade and 20% of liquefied natural gas shipments,

making it one of the most critical energy chokepoints in the world. Its partial closure has forced global supply chain adjustments, increasing emissions from longer transportation routes and alternative energy production methods. Moreover, ongoing naval and aerial military operations contribute significantly to carbon emissions, compounding climate change challenges.

In conclusion, the U.S.–Israel war on Iran in February 2026 has caused profound environmental damage, supported by measurable data and statistics. From toxic air pollution and marine oil risks to land degradation and global energy disruptions, the environmental consequences are both immediate and long-term. These impacts highlight the urgent need for environmental protection measures during armed conflicts and reinforce the importance of international cooperation in mitigating ecological damage in war zones.

Author: Rabail Zareen (Assistant Editor, The Environment Monitor), Co-Author: Dr. Hassan Yaser Malik (Maritime Centre of Excellence)

Vision 2027 plans put the Margalla ecosystem at risk

Hania Imran

ISLAMABAD: On January 6, 2026, the Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Federal Secretary Interior Muhammad Khurram Agha, Chief Commissioner Islamabad Muhammad Ali Randhawa, and IG Islamabad Police Ali Nasir Rizvi, on an official visit to Shanghai, were briefed on its model of integrated urban and technological development. The Interior Minister also examined the state-of-the-art stadium in Shanghai as part of the city's modern urban landscape.

During the visit, Mohsin Naqvi used Shanghai as a prime example of swift urban develop-

ment. He claimed that Islamabad would follow a similar pattern, continuing and inspired by Shanghai as well as Manhattan's skyline. "...and will take immediate steps to benefit from Shanghai's rapid growth experience," Naqvi remarked.

Since then, the Interior Minister has promised to double the number of development projects in Islamabad compared to 2025. Under the "Vision 2027", a two-year development initiative for Islamabad launched by the Interior Ministry, Islamabad will witness rapid changes and be transformed into a vibrant and modern capital. The aims include digitalisation, green initiatives, and moving Islamabad away

from being the "quiet" administrative capital. Vision 2027 includes flyovers and underpasses, such as the "Iqbal Chowk Flyover" with record completion times.

On April 21, 2026, the Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced a plan to build a 1,000-acre park in the foothills of the Margalla Hills. He went further to announce the building of five-star hotels and a zero-tax policy to attract investors, including a seven-star hotel in D12 and a new city behind the Prime Minister's House near the Margalla Hills.

Further, he has also introduced plans to build an "Olympic Village" in Islamabad with a Rs.

12 billion international cricket stadium spanning 175 acres near Sector D12.

However, experts such as Dr. Imran Saqib Khalid, who holds a PhD in Environmental and Natural Resources Policy, claim that this development is not beneficial to Islamabad, specifically to the Margalla Hills. "I am astounded by the apathy that prevails in the halls of power when it comes to the protection of our ecology and natural environment. Margalla Hills National Park is a protected area. We should be thinking of expanding it, not encroaching on it in any way, shape, or form."

The Margalla Hills National Park (MHNP) spans over 17,000

hectares and is linked to the identity of Islamabad. According to the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board (IWMB) it holds 600 plant species, 250 bird varieties, 38 mammals and 27 reptiles. It is also home to elusive leopards, gray gorals, and endangered Himalayan Pangolins. It is a treasure trove of ecology and animal species.

Civil Society and Youth Activists have criticised this rapid urban development of Islamabad, claiming that this is not the development that future generations require. Mustafa Tariq Wynne, founder of Climatistan, which works to create climate awareness in Islamabad, argued, "Most activists aren't opposing

development for the sake of it. Their concern is that Islamabad's natural landscape is extremely fragile, and once you open up a protected zone to commercial activity, it becomes very hard to stop the next wave of pressure."

He says that, "So their position is essentially: development is fine, but not at the cost of the city's only natural buffer and biodiversity zone."

Islamabad's students also do not agree with the current trajectory of the city. Faizan Khattak, a student activist focused on urban planning, says, "Islamabad's identity is its greenery, and protecting what remains of Islamabad's forests and greenbelts should be our top priority. Islamabad

doesn't need urbanisation that comes at the cost of its mature trees, wildlife, and displacement of its local and migrant communities." He also claims that the negative results of these development projects and tree-cutting have resulted in worsening air quality in the city. The Capital Development Authority and the Interior Ministry were contacted for their perspective, but did not respond. Islamabad's future has many eyes on it, that of businessmen, the government, civil society, and the citizens who hold the current green Islamabad close to their hearts. What the future holds remains to be seen.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
167,451.13	168,916.22
Day's High	Day's Low
169,687.29	167,329.34
Index Value	Change
13,408,564,268	-1465.09
Percentage	Time
-0.87%	13 May, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,325.35	+60.03
Percentage	Time
+0.58%	13 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,613.69	-146.87
Percentage	Time
-0.30%	13 May, 1:38 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
63,272.11	+529.54
Percentage	Time
+0.84%	13 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	199.95	207.35
Bahrain Dinar	731	741.50
Canadian Dollar	202.35	208.35
China Yuan	40	41.05
Danish Krone	43.30	43.70
Euro	326.60	330.70
Hong Kong Dollar	35.01	36.01
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7580	1.8590
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.60	889.47
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.35
New Zealand \$	164.06	167.75
Norwegians Krone	27.65	27.95
Omani Riyal	721.50	732.59
Qatari Riyal	74.61	75.55
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.05
Singapore Dollar	217.81	222.95
Swedish Korona	30.30	30.60
Swiss Franc	355.92	360.65
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.70
U.A.E Dirham	75.85	76.65
UK Pound Sterling	376.85	380.44
US Dollar	279.05	279.75

FPCCI and Beijing TDD E-Commerce Landmark MoU to Boost China-Pakistan Trade by \$100 Million

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Beijing TDD E-Commerce Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of IBI Group.

This strategic partnership targets a substantial annual business value of USD 100 million through coordinated trade and investment activities.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Tariq Khan Jadoon, Vice President of FPCCI, on behalf of Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of FPCCI & Ms. Liu Junzhai, Director and Senior Vice President of IBI, Founder and CEO of TDD, and Chairwoman of YDD, LLLD, NEDD, and CNAUTO.

The signing ceremony was held in the presence of honorable Deputy Prime Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Mr. Qaisar Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for IT & Telecommunications, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Advisor to the Prime Minister on Industry



and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar, H. E. Khalil Hashmi, Ambassador of Pakistan to China.

At the Occasion Mr. Karim Aziz Malik Incharge FPCCI Capital Office, Chairman, Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain Chairman Coordi-

nation Capital Office, Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman, Policy Advisory Board, Mr. Shukat Usman President Rawalpindi Chamber, Mr. Sohail Altaf Group Leader RCCI, Ms. Samina Fazil President Islamabad Woman Chamber, Shahid Ghafoor Paracha, Presi-

dent of Markazi Anjuman Tajran Punjab and Rawalpindi, Sardar Saqib Naseem, President Rawalpindi Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industries, Dost Ali Jan, Senior Vice President, Asif Javed, Vice President RCSTSI and other prominent members of FPCCI.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holding a meeting today With Mr. S. Paul Kapur, Assistant Secretary, Bureau of South and Central Asian Affairs, United States, at the Finance Division. Mr. Kapur was accompanied by U.S. Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Engro Terminals Highlight Critical Role in Pakistan's Energy Security, Trade and Industrial Growth

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Engro Vopak Terminal Limited (EVTL) and Engro Elengy Terminal Limited (EETL) hosted an industry-wide event in Karachi, bringing together key stakeholders from Pakistan's terminals and maritime ecosystem to recognize the role of critical terminal infrastructure in supporting national economic progress, energy security and everyday life across the country.

The event was attended by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Chairman Port Qasim Authority (PQA), Rear Admiral (R) Syed Moazzam Ilyas, along with other stakeholders and colleagues from across Engro.

Speaking at the event, the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs said, "Pakistan's maritime progress is built on a strong partnership between the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, PQA, and Engro working as one ecosystem. The talent and capability within our country is immense - and evident in the seamless operations we see every day. Scaling such investments is vital for long-term national growth, instead of diverting capital into external markets. Pakistan is our home, and it continues to



offer real opportunity." Syed Ammar Shah, CEO of Engro's terminals, said, "We see ourselves as enablers of national progress - with every vessel handled, every cargo delivered, and every safe operation completed, we support businesses, keep industries running, and make everyday life possible across Pakistan."

EETL contributes approximately 15% of Pakistan's daily gas requirements and has enabled around USD 5 billion in savings through more efficient power generation. EVTL, meanwhile, serves almost 50% of

imported gas demand, helping ensure that energy continues to move from port to pipeline to people.

The event underscored that Engro's terminals are not only strategic infrastructure assets, but also key enablers of industrial productivity, energy reliability and economic continuity. From supporting power generation and industrial production to enabling household energy supply and agricultural inputs, Engro's terminal operations remain closely linked with everyday life across Pakistan.

Mobilink Bank launches BiBi app; Advances women's digital inclusion and social impact



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank launched the "Bibi App," a breast cancer awareness mobile application developed by Aangan, an incubatee from the bank's Women Inspirational Network (WIN) Incubator. This initiative marks Mobilink Bank's first dedicated health-tech focus on breast cancer awareness and women's health education, aiming to improve access to reliable, localized health information for Pakistani women aged 18-55, especially in underserved communities. Given that 1 in 9 women in Pakistan is at risk of breast cancer, often facing delayed diagnosis due to stigma and limited awareness, the app

provides crucial information on early detection and prevention in both Urdu and English, vetted by Shifa International Hospital. The launch event gathered stakeholders to support women's health awareness. This effort aligns with Mobilink Bank's broader commitment to advancing women's empowerment beyond finance through inclusive digital innovation. CEO Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary stated the app uses digital power to break health barriers, ensuring vital knowledge reaches women meaningfully. The WIN Incubator continues to foster women-led innovation, having graduated 31 startups, further solidifying the bank's role in the entrepreneurial ecosystem.

RCCI Inks MoU with China's IBI Group to Promote Industrial Cooperation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with China's IBI Group during the IBI Pakistan Digital Economy HQ Official Launch Ceremony held in Islamabad. The MoU was signed by RCCI President Usman Shaukat, who also exchanged the MoU documents with representatives of IBI Group. RCCI Group Leader Sohail Altaf witnessed the signing ceremony.

The agreement aims to strengthen strategic cooperation in industrial digitalization, e-commerce, smart manufacturing, logistics support, and industrial development by leveraging IBI Group's expertise and creating new opportunities for



joint ventures between RCCI Industrial Estate Rawat and IBI Group.

The prestigious ceremony brought together senior government officials, diplomats, business leaders, and international stakeholders, including Deputy Prime Minister of Pakistan Senator Ishaq Dar, SAPM on Industries & Production Haroon Akhtar Khan, Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Sheikh, Minister of State for IT & Telecom Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, ambassadors of Pakistan and China, FPCCI leadership, and representatives from leading Pakistani and Chinese enterprises.

Every factory closure destroys hundreds of livelihoods

Zubair Ghangra

HYDERABAD: Chairman Hyderabad SITE Association of Trade and Industry Zubair Ghangra has stated regarding the revival of industries in the federal and provincial budget 2026-27 that the basic infrastructure situation in the industrial areas of Sindh, especially Hyderabad, is extremely worrying. Dilapidated roads,



drainage problems, water shortage, poor transport system and security issues are affecting industrial activities. He demanded that a special industrial development package, infrastructure grants, export facilitation office and separate feeder lines for industries be established for Hyderabad, while new industrial zones should also be created for small industries.

He added that heavy import duties on raw materials and industrial machinery have increased the cost of production abnormally, therefore, customs duty on industrial machinery should be reduced and duty on raw materials that are not available locally should be abolished.

Business Community Demands Consultation on Difficult New Income Tax Return Structure

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, a prominent business leader in Karachi holding several key positions including President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and Chairman of the National Business Group Pakistan, has voiced significant concern regarding the complexity of the newly released draft income tax return forms

for Tax Year 2026. Issued recently by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) via SRO 835(I)/2026 for individuals, SMEs, AOPs, and companies, Hussain argues that while digital transformation is necessary, the forms are overly "cumbersome and complex." He fears this complexity will disproportionately burden SMEs and individual filers who lack dedicated tax departments, thereby increasing compliance costs.

Hussain noted the forms now demand detailed summaries of economic transactions, aligning with structural FBR reforms indicating pre-populated data. However, he stressed that a user-friendly filing system is crucial for achieving revenue targets, especially since FBR collection for July-April FY26 reached Rs 10.2 trillion (a 10% rise) but still missed the target by Rs 684 billion. He specifically requested the FBR simpli-

fy requirements related to employer registration numbers and property income declarations. Furthermore, he deemed the seven-day period allotted for stakeholder feedback insufficient for reviewing such substantial changes. The former Provincial Minister for IT also inferred that the early release of the forms implies a strict adherence to the July 1 to September 30 filing window for individuals and AOPs. If the forms

remain overly technical, Hussain warned that the objective of broadening the tax net, a necessity for international fiscal programs, could be jeopardized. He urged the FBR Chairman to consult the business community to refine the draft, ensuring it facilitates compliance rather than fostering confusion and litigation. Hussain affirmed the business community's support for digital transition, provided it uses simplified,



automated solutions that foster trust between taxpayers and the tax collector, rather than imposing complex documentation requirements.

Graceful Grammar School hosts Battle of Truth Sepaktakraw Championship

Karachi Clinched Title

KARACHI: The Battle of Truth Sepaktakraw Championship was held at The Graceful Grammar Higher Secondary School. The event was organized with the cooperation of the Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation. Teams from Karachi, Hyderabad, Thailand A, Thailand B, Malaysia A, Malaysia B, Indonesia, and Burma participated. Students made up the teams. In the final, Karachi defeated Hyderabad 15-17, 15-12, 15-13 to win the championship trophy.

District Sports Officer Hyderabad Maryam Kerrio and Mufti Furqan of Jamia Binoria distributed trophies and certificates to players. Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation

Secretary Naushad Ahmed Khan said the sport is gaining popularity in Pakistan. He said Muhammad Khalid, Urooj Naz, and Sarwat organized a Sepaktakraw workshop and coaching course in Quetta last week. He congratulated Karachi Sepaktakraw Association Secretary Muhammad Saleem and the executive director of The Graceful



Grammar School for hosting the championship. Mufti Furqan of Jamia Binoria said he was glad students from different countries participated. He announced efforts to promote the sport within the madrasa. DSO Hyderabad Maryam Kerrio said a national

Sepaktakraw championship would be Organized in Hyderabad in August or October. Sindh Sepaktakraw Association Chairman Dr. Muhammad Arif Hafeez, Hyderabad Sepaktakraw Association President Din Muhammad Kerrio, and Jamia Binoria's Junaid

Azeem also spoke at the ceremony. Special awards were presented to Sarfaraz Rahman, Balaj Khan, and Jamia Binoria player Abdul Rahman for outstanding performances. Organizing Secretary Muhammad Saleem thanked all teams for participating.

Rawalpindi U17 win National U17 Cup 2025-26

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Rawalpindi U17 on the back of seven wickets in the match from Mohammad Alyan beat Abbottabad U17 by 125 runs in the final of the National U17 Cup at the Iqbal Stadium in Faisalabad.

Rawalpindi, who had conceded a 97-run first-innings lead against Abbottabad staged a remarkable comeback to win the competition as well as the prize money of PKR 1 million. Chasing 229 to win, Abbottabad were dismissed for 103 in 39.5 overs and had to settle for the runners-up prize money of PKR 0.5 million. Right-arm leg-spinner Alyan, who had taken three wickets in the first innings, managed to claim four wickets in the second innings while conceding 17 runs. He returned match figures of seven for 42 and was declared player of the match. He was well supported by fellow leg-spinner Azan Ahmed, who took three wickets in the second innings. Earlier, resuming their second innings at the overnight score of 307 for eight, Rawalpindi were bundled out for 325 in 81.1 overs on the third and final day of the event. Sudais Ahmed and Mohammad Saim bagged three



wickets each for Abbottabad. Abbottabad's Mohammad Saim for his all-round performance in the tournament, which included 46 wickets and 136 runs was named Player of the Tournament and Best Bowler of the Tournament. Rawalpindi's Mohammad Yousuf was declared Best Batter of the Tournament after scoring 652 runs in eight outings, which included two centuries.

Scores in brief:

Rawalpindi U17 beat Abbottabad U17 by 125 runs at Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad

Rawalpindi U17 133 all out, 42 overs (Mohammad Asad Abdullah 22, Malik Khizar 22; Ammar Khan 4-38, Mohammad Saim 3-39, Nafees Akhtar 2-14) and 325 all out, 81.1 overs (Suleman Khan 65, Sher Wali Khan 60, Azan Ahmed 47; Sudais Ahmad 3-46, Mohammad Saim 3-67)

Abbottabad U17 230 all out, 61.2 overs (Mohammad Abuzar 61, Hammad Khan 57; Mohammad Alyan 3-25, Amir Khan 2-26, Suleman Khan 2-30) and 103 all out, 39.5 overs (Arsalan Hassan 32; Mohammad Alyan

4-17, Azan Ahmed 3-28)

Player of the match – Mohammad Alyan (Rawalpindi U17)

Player of the tournament – Mohammad Saim (Abbottabad U17) (46 wickets, 136 runs)

Best batter of the tournament – Mohammad Yousuf (Rawalpindi U17) (652 runs, eight matches, 2x100s)

Best bowler of the tournament – Mohammad Saim (Abbottabad U17) (46 wickets, eight matches)

Best wicket-keeper of the tournament – Malik Khizar (Rawalpindi U17)

DG ISPR Reiterates Pakistan's Security Resolve

Continued from Page 4

often ignored or denied. Pakistan then launched what he described as precise border operations against militant hide-outs rather than invasions, destroying command centers and killing or capturing high-value targets, leading to nearly a sixty percent decline in attacks inside Pakistan. He presented comparative data and noted that intelligence sharing with Afghanistan had improved somewhat but remained insufficient, emphasizing that peace in Afghanistan and Pakistan are interconnected because instability in one harms the other. While expressing hope for greater cooperation, he also warned that Pakistan reserves the right to self-defense and will continue responding if militants keep using Afghan soil, regardless of Kabul's approval.

Finally, Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry stressed that Pakistan's armed forces remain fully committed to defending

the country's sovereignty with indigenous military capabilities and public support. He highlighted several home-grown defense projects. He mentioned the improved version of the Al-Khalid tank, now equipped with advanced night vision and active protection systems. He mentioned the indigenously developed drones used for surveillance and precision strikes. He mentioned the naval corvettes built in Karachi with local technology. He also mentioned progress on the modern air defence system, which combines Chinese, Turkish, and Pakistani components. He said these indigenous capabilities reduce dependence on foreign suppliers. They also allow Pakistan to customize weapons for specific threats. He added that the armed forces are also investing in artificial intelligence and space surveillance. A new cyber command has been established. Its job is to protect critical infrastruc-

ture, including power grids, dams, and financial networks. He said Pakistan is not seeking an arms race. But it will not allow any enemy to gain a technological advantage. Public support, he said, is just as important as weapons. He thanked the nation for its prayers, donations, and moral backing. He said that a soldier fights with a rifle, but he also fights with the knowledge that his people stand behind him. That knowledge gives him courage. That knowledge makes him unstoppable. He concluded the press briefing by restating the military's pledge: to defend every inch of Pakistani soil, to protect every Pakistani citizen, and to uphold the Constitution. He then took a few questions from journalists. He answered each one with patience and precision. He did not evade difficult questions. He did not exaggerate successes. He simply told the truth as the military sees it. The whole nation has

appreciated this presser. From urban professionals in Karachi to farmers in Punjab, from students in Peshawar to elders in Gilgit, the response was overwhelmingly positive. Social media was flooded with clips from the briefing. Journalists wrote editorials praising the transparency and tone. Even former diplomats and retired generals expressed approval. The nation appreciates the commitment of Pakistan's armed forces to defend the beloved country. That appreciation is not blind loyalty. It is earned through decades of sacrifice, professionalism, and love for the nation. And as Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry walked out of the press room, he carried with him not just a file of notes, but the confidence of 240 million people. That is the true strength of Pakistan. That is the resolve that no enemy can break. And that is the message that will be remembered long after the briefings end and the cameras turn off.

Iran's Digital Leverage to Black Out the Globe

Continued from Page 4

military activity can sever them. Even a few coordinated disruptions could force global internet traffic into severe congestion, creating massive latency, communication failures, and digital blackouts. This is why Iran's leverage now extends beyond missiles and naval power.

For the first time in modern history, a regional power has demonstrated the ability to influence both the world's energy bloodstream and its digital nervous system simultaneously. Iran's strategic posture has evolved dramatically during this conflict. Initially, Tehran refused discussions on nuclear limitations, missile restrictions, or reopening Hormuz until hostilities ceased permanently and reparations for infrastructure damage, assassinated leadership figures, and civilian casualties were addressed. Iran's leadership appears convinced that the closure of Hormuz — and the fear surrounding it — forced the world to recognize the limits of American and Israeli power projection.

Now Tehran possesses another negotiating card: the digital cables. The implications for the

United States are profound. American military power depends heavily on global communication networks. Command-and-control systems, intelligence sharing, satellite synchronization, drone operations, logistics coordination, and cloud-based defense infrastructure all rely on resilient international data routes. If Iran can influence, disrupt, or regulate these networks near Hormuz, it creates a new layer of strategic vulnerability for Washington.

Even more alarming for Western policymakers is that disruption can occur through hybrid warfare methods. A cable cut caused by "accidental" anchor dragging or proxy sabotage creates plausible deniability while still inflicting enormous damage. Such attacks are harder to deter than conventional missile strikes.

This is why President Trump's upcoming visit to China carries extraordinary significance. Beyond discussions about trade, tariffs, and geopolitics, one of the most urgent priorities will likely involve restoring stability to the Strait of Hormuz and ensuring the uninterrupted flow of both energy and digital communications.

The reality now confronting the world is sobering. Oil was once considered the single

jugular vein of modern civilization. But the 2026 conflict has exposed a second jugular vein hidden beneath the oceans: the global fiberoptic communication network. Together, these two systems power the modern world. And today, Iran sits astride both.

Whether Tehran ultimately uses this leverage for negotiation, deterrence, or economic pressure remains uncertain. What is certain is that the world has entered a new era where wars are no longer fought only with bombs, tanks, and missiles. They are fought through shipping lanes, data cables, cloud infrastructure, financial networks, and communication systems that sustain every aspect of modern life.

If these systems collapse simultaneously, humanity would not simply face recession or inflation. Large parts of civilization could be pushed temporarily into digital darkness — a modern form of the Stone Age in the age of artificial intelligence.

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.

The Growing Trend of Violence — An Alarm Bell for a Civilized Society

Continued from Page 4

Certainly, the media alone cannot be blamed for society's problems. Violence has complex social, economic, and psychological roots. However, it cannot be denied that constant exposure to brutality affects human sensitivity. Cruelty begins to appear normal, anger starts to feel empowering, and society slowly sinks into the swamp of intolerance.

At this stage, law enforcement agencies alone cannot resolve the crisis. Strict action against mob violence, vigilantism, and those who challenge the writ of the state is absolutely necessary. But alongside legal measures, an intellectual and moral struggle is equally important.

Parents must teach their children the values of patience, decency, compassion, and respect for human life. Educational institutions should

focus not only on producing degree holders but also on nurturing responsible and ethical citizens. The media, too, must recognize that there is a very fine line between entertainment and the glorification of violence — and crossing that line can have devastating consequences for society.

Civilized societies are not built merely with roads, buildings, and laws. They are built through human behavior, moral values, and collective responsibility. Until tolerance, humanity, and respect for others become our shared social values, all claims of progress and development will remain incomplete.

The rising tide of violence is not just a law-and-order issue; it is an alarm bell for the entire nation. If society fails to respond today with wisdom, justice, and humanity, tomorrow the cost may be far greater than we can imagine.

Punjab to build playfields in 1,000 schools

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: In a major development, Punjab Sports Department and Education Department decided to collaborate for the promotion of sports at school level.

In this regard, Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar and Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat chaired a meeting at the Punjab Stadium on Wednesday in which several significant decisions were made for the promotion of sports culture at school level.

It was decided in the meeting that sports fields will be constructed in 1,000 schools of province. Besides this monthly scholarships will also be awarded to 1,000 talented children from inter-school competitions.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Fazlur Rehman, Secretary Higher Education, DG Sports Punjab Tariq Qureshi, DG Education and other officers concerned attended the meeting.

Addressing the meeting, Punjab Minister for Sports Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that around 2.5 million children from Punjab will participate in different stages of inter-school competitions. "Small sports courts will be constructed where bigger grounds are not available".

He announced that sports grounds will be developed at the union council level for the first time in Punjab province. "The school grounds will also be open to the general public during evening hours".

In his address, Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat said that teaching interns will be appointed in 1,000 schools for the promotion of sports among students community. "Equal sports facilities will be provided to women and girls. Besides this, the indoor sports facilities will also be ensured for female athletes".

Pakistan's First Floodlit Super Sports Track Opens in Karachi

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Sherwani Sports Global, in collaboration with DHA City, has completed Pakistan's first floodlit Veloce Super Sports Track. The track enables autocross and, for the first time in the country, drag racing competitions during the day and at night. The Veloce track spans more than two kilometers. It has been equipped with over 100 light towers carrying 300 high-power LED lights, along with four high-mast towers. This makes it Pakistan's first floodlit super sports track where autocross events can be held at night. Sherwani Group Chairman Shujaat Sherwani called the project a milestone for motorsports in Pakistan. He praised DHA City for its support. He said many motor sports enthusiasts in Karachi cannot participate in daytime events due to work commitments. He said the floodlights will boost the sport's growth by introducing night racing. He said DHA City has allocated space for up to 100,000 spectators. Facilities include a food court, accommodation, service areas, and parking for vehicles from across Pakistan. Sherwani Sports Global Director of Operations Saadat Sherwani said the chairman's priority is to modernize motorsports in Pakistan. A 400-meter drag racing strip has been built, allowing side-by-side races where cars can exceed 250 km/h. A 2.5-kilo meter service line around the track is equipped with fire brigades, ambulances, and first-aid facilities. Saadat Sherwani said a timing system certified by Sindh Motorsports has been installed at the finishing line. The track is open to the public with four formats: autocross, side-by-side drag racing, drifting, and buggy/ATV off-road racing, including remote control vehicles. Driver Nadir Magso, present at the launch, said the floodlit track would allow motorsports to continue during Karachi's hot summer months. He said the facility brings innovation to the sport. To mark the first anniversary of Battle of Truth — Operation Bunyan-un-Marsos, a sports flag march was held at the Veloce track. DHA City Administrator Brig. Muhammad Kashif Naeem and Sherwani Group Chairman Shujaat Sherwani led the march. Young drivers participated with their vehicles.

BingX Names World Champion Enzo Fernández as Global Ambassador Ahead of 2026 FIFA World Cup

Sports Desk

PAKISTAN: BingX, a leading cryptocurrency exchange and Web3-AI company, today named two-time football world champion Enzo Fernández as its Global Ambassador. The partnership builds on BingX's global sports partnership strategy following its recent partnership with Scuderia Ferrari HP and renewal with Chelsea FC, arriving at a pivotal moment ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup, positioning BingX to engage billions of fans worldwide on football's greatest stage.

As one of the most exciting talents of his generation, Fernández, who plays for Chelsea FC, and represents the Argentina national team, embodies ambition, precision, and resilience. Through this collaboration, BingX aims to connect the precision and performance of elite sport and digital finance, inspiring a new generation of users to take control of their future. The partnership will unfold through global campaigns, digital experiences, and fan-focused initiatives throughout the 2026 World Cup period and beyond.

This announcement marks a significant milestone in BingX's global expansion and evolution of its brand identity as a premium, globally recognized platform.



Independence day of Azerbaijan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani along with Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov and Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan cutting the cake during a reception on the occasion of Independence Day of Republic of Azerbaijan at local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan-China Partnership Pivots to Digital Silk Road with IBI Headquarters Launch

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar launched the IBI Pakistan Digital Economy Headquarters in Islamabad, symbolizing an evolution in the Pakistan-China partnership toward "intelligent infrastructure" and a "digital Silk Road."

This launch marks a transition from physical cooperation, like CPEC infrastructure, to digital collaboration involving AI, ICT, and digital connectivity, aligning with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision for Pakistan to become a regional digital innovation hub under CPEC



2.0.

Dar highlighted positive economic indicators, including falling inflation and rising GDP, reaffirming

the goal for Pakistan to join the top 20 global economies, leveraging its large, youthful population's IT potential. He welcomed Beijing United

Information Technology (IBI), noting its platform serves millions of Chinese enterprises across 100 industrial sectors, signaling international confidence in Pakistan's economy.

Dar also mentioned that 30% of the \$10 billion in MOUs signed during recent trips to China are already being finalized, and announced the Prime Minister's upcoming official visit to China (May 23-26) which will include a B2B business forum. Ambassador to Beijing, Khalid Hashmi, explained that while Amazon and Alibaba dominate consumer e-commerce, IBI is the equivalent giant for industrial goods and is a Fortune 500 company

listed on the Shanghai Stock Exchange.

Hashmi emphasized that the IBI launch offers Pakistani SMEs a significant gateway to the vast Chinese market across various sectors (agriculture, aquaculture, industry) and a route to the global market through China.

The launch represents the convergence of the Pakistan-China friendship and the growth of the digital economy, translating high-level directives into concrete results through synchronized digital industrial cooperation. IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja and SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan also spoke at the ceremony.

IMF acknowledges Pakistan's economic stability amid challenges

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund (IMF) here on Wednesday acknowledged the positive progress made by Pakistan in maintaining macroeconomic stability despite a challenging global and regional environment.

The appreciation was made by the visiting IMF Mission, led by Mission Chief Ms. Iva Petrova during a meeting with Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb and his team.

The Mission appreciated the government's continued commitment to prudent economic management and reform implementation. It



emphasized the importance of sustaining reform momentum, maintaining fiscal discipline, and advancing structural reforms to support durable and inclusive economic growth.

Discussions during the meeting also focused on the

broader macroeconomic framework, the government's reform agenda, and priorities for the upcoming budget.

The Mission reaffirmed its commitment to continued engagement and constructive cooperation with Paki-

stan in support of the country's economic reform programme and long-term economic resilience.

Earlier, minister Aurangzeb briefed the visiting IMF mission on Pakistan's macroeconomic outlook, fiscal

strategy, reform priorities, and the government's ongoing efforts to ensure sustainable economic stability and long-term growth.

The discussions focused on Pakistan's macroeconomic stabilization efforts, preparations for the upcoming federal budget, and the broader reform agenda aimed at strengthening fiscal and external sustainability while fostering sustainable economic growth.

Both sides exchanged views on maintaining reform momentum, preserving macroeconomic stability, and advancing structural reforms to promote investment, productivity, and export-led growth within a balanced and forward-looking policy framework.

Shocking details emerge about 'Cocaine Queen' Anmol

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Shocking details have emerged about alleged drug trafficker Anmol, also known as Pinky, after her recent arrest.

According to authorities, Anmol's drug network spanned multiple cities, including Karachi, while she was based in Lahore.

Sources said Pinky ran her cocaine network from Lahore, while the Lahore police remained unaware of her activities until an intelligence agency tracked her down.

The agency reportedly apprehended Pinky a few days ago in the Nawab Town area of Lahore.



Using WhatsApp activity and locator tools, authorities traced her movements and subsequently handed her over to Karachi police due to her status as a wanted criminal in multiple narcotics

cases there. The sources said that Pinky contracted a second marriage in Lahore, where her spouse had rented a house in her name. It was from this residence that she allegedly manufactured narcotics. Drugs worth millions of rupees were recovered during the raid to arrest her. The case has roots dating back to 2022, when Pinky's brother, Riaz Baloch, was arrested by Lahore's Kot

Lakhpat police while transporting narcotics in a vehicle.

During the incident, Pinky reportedly fled the scene at high speed.

During interrogation, Riaz Baloch identified the fleeing woman as his sister, Anmol aka Pinky.

The police subsequently registered a case under Sub-Inspector Amjad Raza and sent Riaz to jail.

Pinky's name is also mentioned in FIR No. 73, alongside her brother, but despite being on record for more than four years, Lahore police had not declared her a proclaimed offender.

In Lahore, she was widely known as 'Pinky Karachi Wali,' highlighting her Karachi connections and operations.

Commerce minister assures unwavering support to Chinese investors



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday assured full support to Chinese investors and highlighted Pakistan's export and manufacturing potential.

The Commerce Minister held a meeting with a Chinese business delegation led by Mr. Huwang, Chairman of Challenges Fashion and Ms. Karen Chen, CEO of Challenge Apparel, to discuss investment in export-oriented manufacturing, industrial facilitation, tariff rationalization, and broader Pakistan-China economic cooperation.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on the growing potential for Chinese investment in Pakistan, in the textiles, apparel and

other sectors, said a release issued here.

The delegation briefed the Minister on the progress of their ongoing industrial project in Pakistan, sharing plans for significant expansion in manufacturing capacity, employment generation, and export growth.

Mr. Huwang informed the Minister that the company is establishing a major manufacturing facility in Pakistan under international production standards, with the first phase expected to be completed later this year.

He shared that the long-term expansion plan envisions one of the largest industrial operations of its kind, with the potential to create up to 20,000 employment opportunities and generate annual exports of approximately \$400-500 million.

Cambridge cancels AS-Level maths paper in Pakistan after leak on social media

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Thousands of students across Pakistan faced uncertainty after Cambridge International announced the cancellation of an AS-Level Mathematics examination following a paper leak on social media.

Cambridge confirmed that AS-Level Mathematics Paper 32 (Code 9709), scheduled for May 15 across Pakistan, had been postponed after the paper was leaked before the examination.

Country Director Uzma Yousuf said the nature of the leak was "unprecedented" and accused certain elements of deliberately putting students' futures at risk.

Cambridge said the decision to

cancel the paper was taken after consultation with stakeholders in Pakistan to ensure the integrity and transparency of the examination system.

The examination body said a new date for the paper would be announced by May 22, along with further details regarding additional security measures and precautionary steps.

Uzma Yousuf said authorities were pursuing multiple legal avenues to ensure strict action against those responsible for the leak.

Cambridge also clarified that the postponement would not affect the release of AS and A-Level results, which will be announced on the previously scheduled date of August 11.

IHC seeks CDA's response in One Constitution Avenue case

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued a written order for hearing the intra-court appeal filed by the apartment owners of One Constitution Avenue against the decision of a single bench dated April 30, 2026.

According to the written order, the court has issued notices to the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and sought its response. The court also issued a notice for a short date on the miscellaneous application seeking an injunction.

The two-page order was issued by Justice Muhammad Azam Khan and Justice Inam Amin Minhas. The appellants challenged only paragraph number 30 of the earlier judgement.

According to the counsel for the

appellants, the Supreme Court had directed authorities to devise a fair procedure to safeguard the interests of third parties. The petitioners argued that despite acknowledgment of employment, allotment and investment, the CDA initiated actions without adopting a legal procedure.

The counsel contended that the CDA's actions were in violation of Articles 4, 23 and 24 of the Constitution. The lawyer also informed the court that disciplinary action against the affected residents had been restrained under the Cabinet Division's notification dated May 1, 2026.

The apartment owners had filed the intra-court appeal against the earlier decision of the single bench, after which the Islamabad High Court issued notices to the CDA and sought its response.

PM directs to provide all possible facilities to Hajj pilgrims at airport

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf on Wednesday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and briefed him on the arrangements for ongoing Hajj operation.

"Intending Hajj pilgrims are the guests of Allah Almighty. There should be no negligence whatsoever in their service and facilities by the Pakistani Hajj Mission in Saudi



Arabia," the prime minister directed. He also instructed that all possible facilities be provided to the intending Hajj pilgrims at the airport.