



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد اللہ بن یوسف نے بیان کیا کہ انہوں نے کہا ہم کو امام مالک نے خبر دی، انہیں عبد اللہ بن یونس نے اور ان سے عبد اللہ بن عمر رضی اللہ عنہما نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا جب تمہیں یہودی سلام کریں اور ان میں سے کوئی «اسم» علیک «وعلیک» (اور تمہیں بھی) کہہ دیا کرو۔ (بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6257)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



PM strongly condemns terrorist incident in Kech, Balochistan

Prime Minister prayed for the lady constable who was martyred in the incident and for grant of patience and perseverance for the martyr's family. He issued instructions for immediate medical assistance to the injured. He said the sacrifices of the martyrs in the war against terrorism will not go in vain, adding,



Ruet-e-Hilal Committee confirms sighting of Zul-Hijjah moon

The moon of Zul-Hijjah 1447 AH was sighted in Pakistan, after which Eid-ul-Azha will be celebrated across the country on Wednesday, May 27. The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee met in Karachi to sight the moon, chaired by Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad at the Met Office. Members of the central and zonal committees, along with officials from the Meteorological Department and SUPARCO, attended.

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Cattle market in Karachi

KARACHI: Vendors display sacrificial animals for customers at a cattle market, set up for the upcoming Eid al-Adha, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz Sharif receives telephone call from the Prime Minister of Qatar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received a telephone call, this evening, from His Excellency Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani, Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs of the State of Qatar.

During their warm and cordial conversation, the two leaders exchanged views on the evolving regional and international situation.

The Prime Minister thanked the leadership of Qatar for its strong endorsement and support of Pakistan-led peace efforts aimed at de-escalation and promoting regional peace and stability.

The Prime Minister expressed his deep appreciation for Qatar's constructive role in regional diplomacy and for building a consensus in



support of ongoing mediation efforts. Both leaders agreed on the need for continued close coordination and dialogue among all stakeholders to address common challenges.

While conveying his warm greetings and best wishes to His Highness Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, Amir of the State of Qatar, the Prime Minister stated that he was looking forward to welcoming His Highness the Amir to Pakistan on an official visit very soon.

The two sides agreed to maintain regular high-level contacts to follow up on the outcomes of the conversation.

ISPR condemns Indian army chief's remarks as 'provocative, irresponsible'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has strongly condemned a recent statement by the Indian Army Chief, describing it as provocative, irresponsible, and a threat to peace in the region.

In a statement, the ISPR spokesperson said that the threat against Pakistan reflects "mental bankruptcy and war hysteria."

The statement added that the Hindutva ideology has repeatedly pushed South Asia toward wars

and crises, and emphasised that Pakistan is a key global player and a responsible nuclear power.

The ISPR noted that in a recent interview, the Indian army chief said that Pakistan should decide if it desired to be part of geography and history.

The spokesperson called this remark "not only non-serious but reflective of a jingoistic and myopic mindset."

According to the ISPR, Pakistan is an indelible part of South Asia's history and geography, and has been a responsible nuclear



ISPR building

The ISPR warned that threatening a sovereign nuclear state is neither a strategic signal nor a diplomatic tactic, but rather a sign of mental instability, war hysteria, and irresponsible behaviour.

It added that India was fully aware that any such geographic obliteration would be mutual and comprehensive and potentially impact the entire region.

The statement also pointed out India's support for terrorism in the region, creating instability, conducting cross-border operations, practising transnational

assassinations and running global disinformation campaigns.

The ISPR said India's aggressive rhetoric reflects its frustration over its inability to harm Pakistan and a sense of humiliation it suffered during Marka-e-Haq.

The ISPR concluded by urging India to recognise Pakistan's significance and adopt a path of peaceful coexistence in the region.

Otherwise, it warned, any act of aggression could have consequences that extend beyond geographic borders and prove intolerable for India.

Mohsin Naqvi meets Iranian President in Tehran for high-level talks

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi met Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian on Sunday in Tehran, where the two sides discussed bilateral relations and regional developments, Iranian media reported.

The meeting at the Presidential Palace lasted around 90 minutes and was also attended by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi.

According to Iranian media and the Pakistani embassy in Tehran, discussions focused on bilateral cooperation, regional peace efforts and the possibility of resuming dialogue to ease tensions in the region.

Momeni received Naqvi at the airport on arrival and praised Pakistan's efforts, including those of Chief of



Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, in supporting mediation efforts in regional disputes.

Naqvi also met Iranian Parliament Speaker Mohammad Baqer Qalibaf, where matters of mutual interest and bilateral cooperation were discussed. The Pakistani interior ministry said both sides reiterated their commitment to strengthening long-standing ties and continuing cooperation on peace, security and regional stability.

Security concerns prompt Balochistan to enforce Section 144 across province

News Desk

QUETTA: In view of security concerns in Balochistan, the government has imposed Section 144 for 30 days, banning pillion riding and gatherings of more than four people.

According to an official notification, the Balochistan government has imposed Section 144 across the province.

For 30 days, there will be a ban on displaying weapons, pillion riding, vehicles with tinted windows, unregistered motorcycles, gatherings of five or more people, processions and sit-ins. There will also be a ban on covering the face in public places.

According to the notification, legal action will be taken against violators.

Fazlur Rehman says peace essential for investment and economic stability



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Jamiat Ulama-e-Islam-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has said the business community is living under fear because of worsening insecurity and instability in the country.

He was speaking at a luncheon hosted by prominent businessman Arif Habib and members of the business community in Karachi, where participants discussed Pakistan's economic challenges, investment climate, and law and order situation.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman said peace was essential for attracting investment, adding that a stable security environment would help strengthen Pakistan's economy.

The JUI-F chief stressed that Pakistan should rely more on local resources instead of depending on the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and urged the government to place greater trust in the country's traders and industrialists.

"If confidence is given to local businessmen, we can even pay off the country's debt," he said.

Tariq Fazal invites PTI to return to parliamentary bodies for positive role

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Sunday invited the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf to return to parliament and play a positive role, while appreciating their constructive contributions to the budget-making process before resigning from the parliamentary standing committees.

The minister, talking to the media, said that the opposition members remained were very positive in the previous budget-related sessions and examined all budget matters with great scrutiny.

He said that the government also entertained the input of the opposition in the budget with great seriousness and in a positive manner, particularly appreciating the positive work by young parliamentarians like Osama Mela and Mubeen Arif in the parliamentary committees.

He said that the PTI members had actually internal differences over the appointment of chairmen of some committees with main contention over Public Accounts Committee Chairman Junaid Akbar Khan.

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Azad Kashmir PM revives long-stalled Soan Manjhari-Tarakhel Highway Project

Bureau Report

RAWALAKOT: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on Sunday laid the foundation stone of Soan Manjhari-Tarakhel Highway project, which has been revived on the special directives of the PM after remaining stalled for years.

The 12.75-kilometre highway project has been approved at an estimated cost of Rs906.840 million and is scheduled to be completed within three years. Funds for the project will be allocated in the current Annual Development Programme (ADP).

Addressing the ceremony, Prime Minister Rathore said the government was committed to completing ongoing development projects and addressing public issues despite limited time and resources.

The Soan Manjhari-Tarakhel Highway, he said, will provide a shorter and easier route to Islamabad and Rawalpindi for residents of Hajira, Abbaspur and Haveli Kahuta.

"The project will improve transportation facilities, promote tourism and boost commercial activities in the region", he added.

The improved road network, he said, would also help reduce travel time and transportation costs while creating new



business and employment opportunities for local residents.

It may be recalled here that the project was initially launched in 2002 but later stalled due to various reasons. Its revival has been widely welcomed

by the local population and business community.

The ceremony was attended by former President and Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Yaqoob Khan, former Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer

Ilyas Khan, government adviser Sardar Ahmed Sagheer Khan, Sardar Fahad Yaqoob Khan, Member Kashmir Council Sardar Adnan Sayab Khalid, former minister Sardar Abid Hussain Abid and others.

AJK PPP Leader Warns Indian Army Chief's Statement Risks New Regional War

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: President of Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that the statement of the Indian Army Chief is tantamount to starting a new war in the region. After the humiliating defeat in the battle for justice, India is facing disgrace all over the world and in such circumstances, any kind of adventure on the part of India, no matter how small, will be repulsed. He said that Pakistan has now taken the form of a big tyrant who has saved the world from a major disaster by getting the US to sign a ceasefire with Iran. He said that the Indian Army Chief should stop daydreaming. He welcomed India, which has separatist movements going on in 21 provinces, in place of other countries' geography. He said that if India takes any adventure, its geography will not change, but rather there will be no country called India left in the world.



DFP concerned over shifting of Shah to Kotbalwal jail amid rapidly declining health conditions

Abdul Majeed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has expressed serious concern over shifting of its party president Shabir Ahmed Shah to Kotbalwal jail amid rapidly declining health conditions, describing it as the worst form of political victimisation.

In a statement issued here today, DFP spokesman Advocate Arshad Iqbal, while strongly criticising the recent move by Indian authorities, said that Shah, who has been suffering from multiple health complications, was being subjected to political persecution and denied fundamental rights, including access to bail and adequate medical treatment.

The spokesman said that despite his deteriorating health condition, Shah continued to be kept in harsh and inhuman conditions without proper food and necessary healthcare facilities.

Referring to international human rights laws and conventions that guarantee special protections for political prisoners, he said that depriving Shah of basic medical and legal rights amounted to a grave violation of human dignity and humanitarian principles.

The DFP spokesman also expressed concern over what he termed the Indian authorities' disregard for their own legal and judicial institutions. He noted that despite court rulings favouring Shabir Ahmad Shah and directing his immediate release, the authorities had failed to implement the orders.

The DFP spokesman urged the international human rights organizations to play their much needed role to help secure early release of Shah and other Kashmiri prisoners languishing in Indian jails.



Truck art

ISLAMABAD: An artist busy paint of truck art on the model of camel on main gate of PNCA, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AJK PM Vows Two-Year Economic Overhaul, Citing Father's Legacy

Bureau Report

HAVELI: The Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that serving the people and fulfilling the unfinished mission of his late father was the main reason behind his entry into politics.

While addressing a condolence reference held in memory of late retired Sadar Muallim Abdul Rashid Awan at Union Council Bhedi Kaiyan, the AJK premier said that putting Azad Kashmir on the path of economic stability and development remains his government's top priority.

The Prime Minister said that if given an opportunity, his government would



transform Azad Kashmir into one of the strongest economies in the region within the next two years.

He added that development of neglected and far-flung areas has been a priority for the present government.

The prime minister emphasised that politics should be based on public service, continuity and mutual respect rather than coercion or confrontation.

He vowed to work for restoring a peaceful and positive political atmos-

phere in the state.

Paying tribute to the late Abdul Rashid Awan, the Prime Minister said that his religious, educational and social services would always be remembered.

On the occasion, Allama Imtiaz Ahmed Siddiqui, Malik Mukhtar Awan Advocate, Gulzar Rathore, Malik Mustafa Awan and others also spoke and highlighted the services and contributions of the deceased.

Meanwhile, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore inaugurated Nayabat at Union Council Bhedi, fulfilling a long-standing demand of the people of the area.

Umama Hassan Excellent Performance in Sports Leadership

Iram Asim

MULTAN: Ms Anum Zehra Women Spokesperson Said The Women University Multan continues to celebrate the remarkable achievements of its talented students as Umama Hassan, a fourth-semester BS Chemistry student, has brought pride to the university through her outstanding performance in sports, leadership, and theatre at both institutional and national levels.

Umama Hassan has demonstrated exceptional leadership qualities, artistic talent, and sporting excellence. From earning recognition in netball competitions to winning prestigious awards in national theatre festivals, her journey reflects dedication, creativity, and versatility.

She has won multiple medals in netball and gained recognition for her remarkable athletic performance. Alongside her academic pursuits, she is actively serving in several leadership roles, including Media and Information Minister of JKP Parliament, President of JKP Chapter Multan, Theatre Head at TLAC, and Head of Event Management at the Student Executive Council. She has also served as President of the Women Dramatic Society, President of the GYM Club, and Event Coordinator of WUMDDS.

Umama Hassan is widely recognized as a passionate theatre artist, writer, director, and production lead. Her exceptional acting skills have earned her national acclaim, including First Position in the Monologue Competition at UCP Takra 2026, Best Participant and Speaker Award at a workshop organized by UET Lahore, and the Best Female Actor Award at the CFLI Theatre Festival "Voices of Inclusion."



Senate Chairman Gillani: Youth are Nation's Bright Future, Education is Key to Sustainable Development

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani, speaking as the chief guest at the University of Lahore's graduation ceremony, emphasized that youth are the nation's bright future, with modern, research-based education guaranteeing sustainable development. He confirmed the Senate's commitment to providing youth with opportunities

for dignified progress through education, innovation, and skill development. Congratulating the graduates, he noted the day marked the culmination of hard work, acknowledging the sacrifices of families and the dedication of faculty. Gillani praised the University of Lahore for achieving prominence by introducing world-class education and focusing on future-oriented fields. He stressed that the rapidly changing world, driven

by technologies like AI and machine learning, necessitates that nations thrive on knowledge and human intelligence. Recalling his tenure as Prime Minister, he highlighted policies aimed at regional institutional development, increased teacher stipends, and establishing a knowledge-based economy, including the 2009 National Science and Technology Policy that promoted technology parks and industry linkages. He also

mentioned initiatives like the Prime Minister's Entrepreneurship Challenge and funding increases for universities, especially in underdeveloped areas. Furthermore, as Chairperson COMSATS, he focused on developing the IT institute into a multi-campus system, all founded on the belief that an educated youth is Pakistan's greatest asset. Gillani assured that, as Chairman Senate, he maintains this vision for



furthering education, innovation, and youth opportunity.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of medals and

certificates by the Chairman Senate



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:29 am
Zohr 12:04 pm
Asr 4:59 pm
Maghrib 7:03 pm
Isha 8:40 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Deep Dive into Hyderabad Education Corruption Probe Demands Key Personnel Testimony

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Anti-Corruption Establishment Hyderabad Division is investigating alleged irregularities, misuse of authority, fake pension cases, illegal promotions, and bribery within the Education Department and District Accounts Office Hyderabad. An official letter directed Taluka Education Officer (Female) Qasimabad Ms. Rafia, the Accounts Officer of the District Accounts Office Hyderabad, and other staff to appear before investigators on May 21, 2026, with relevant documents. Sought records include service records, pension cases, arrears payments, promotion matters, the personal file of teacher Sanam Dahrij, certificates, arrears bills, lists of retired staff, family pension cases, and DPC records for employee Bilal Gun's promotion. Investigations are proceeding under Inspector and Inquiry Officer Agha Hussain, based on complaints under the Sindh Anti-Corruption Rules 1993, with further legal action contingent on record scrutiny. These revelations have reportedly caused concern.

CM Maryam Nawaz receives grand diplomatic welcome in Baku, meets Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev

Spokesman Report

BAKU: Continuing the longstanding friendship between President PML(N) Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Heydar Aliyev, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif received a grand diplomatic welcome in Baku, where she led a high-level delegation in an important meeting with President of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz conveyed greetings from former prime minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to President Ilham Aliyev. The Azerbaijani president thanked her for the message and requested that his greetings also be conveyed to the Pakistani premier and Nawaz Sharif.

President Ilham Aliyev recalled the cordial relations between national leader Heydar Aliyev and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

CM Maryam Nawaz thanked President Aliyev for inviting her to participate in the 13th session of the United Nations World

Urban Forum and praised the arrangements made for the global event.

The meeting also acknowledged Pakistan's responsible and mediatory role in efforts for restoration of peace following recent Iran-US tensions. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his team were appreciated for their continuous diplomatic efforts and measures aimed at ensuring regional stability.

Both sides also discussed matters relating to centres established in Pakistan on the pattern of Azerbaijan's "ASAN Khidmet" model.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz said important global issues relating to urban planning would be discussed in Baku. She remarked that Azerbaijan's capital was a beautiful blend of culture and modern urban planning, adding that the city's beauty had left a deep impression on her.

President Ilham Aliyev said relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan were progressing rapidly under the trilateral framework involving Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Pakistan.



Visit

ISLAMABAD: Member National Assembly Zahra Wadood Fatemi visiting a stall during Pop Revolution, color, culture and creativity exhibition at Pakistan National Council of the arts, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Zardari Bestows Sitara-i-Imtiaz on Arshad Wali Muhammad for National Contributions



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari conferred the Sitara-i-Imtiaz upon Arshad Wali Muhammad for his significant contributions to national progress, economic growth, and enhancing Pakistan's global image. Gerry's Group expressed great pride, noting Muhammad's visionary leadership and dedication across various sectors earned national acclaim. A spokesperson highlighted his professional services distinguished him in the business community while strengthening Pakistan's international reputation.

Leaders Odyssey School and College announces bold tech initiative

Bureau Report

QUETTA, Leaders Odyssey School and College (LOSC) has unveiled a groundbreaking plan to integrate advanced technologies into its academic framework, aiming to transform education across Balochistan. The initiative, announced by Chief Executive Officer Zahid Jan Mandokhail, will introduce specialized programs in Artificial Intelligence (AI), the STEAM concept (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Mathematics), and robotics technology, all supported by an eco-friendly system designed to also minimize environmental impact. Mandokhail emphasized that the project is driven by the urgent need to equip Pakistan's youth who make up nearly 65 percent of the country's population with modern technological skills. Citing a World Bank report predicting that 47 to 50 percent of jobs could disappear within the next 4 to 5 years due to automation, he warned of potential increases in unemployment, crime, and social unrest if proactive measures are not taken. We cannot rely on the government alone to provide jobs for everyone. Our vision is to empower students to become job providers, not job seekers," Mandokhail said. He added that discussions are underway with government officials to strengthen initiatives aimed at reducing unemployment in the province.

Zahid Mandokhail revealed that the initiative will debut with a pilot project in Quetta, introducing full-scale digital infrastructure to classrooms. The AI-powered STEAM program is designed to foster critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication among students.

True Living Means Sharing Others' Pain, Responsibility and Serving Humanity, Asma Butt

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Chief Executive Dolphin Communication and Deputy Chairperson of Pakistan Horticultural Society Islamabad, Ms. Asma Ismail Butt, said that real life is lived by those who share the suffering of others, uphold responsibility, and dedicate themselves to welfare and support for people in need, rather than merely passing through life.

In Rawalpindi, Ms. Asma Ismail Butt, along with Dr. Nusrat, Asma Malik, Kaleem Khan, Sheikh Saqib, Nomi, Jamal Shah, Malik Najeeb, Jahangir Ali and other members of the artist community,



visited the Langar Khana operating under former MNA and Sitara-e-Hilal Intiaz Khan Zamarud Khan to review its welfare activities. The delegation appreciated the arrangements, food distribu-

tion to deserving people, and management efforts, noting that such institutions provide hope and support to underprivileged segments of society.

They stressed that collective efforts are essential to strengthen such welfare initiatives. Ms. Asma Ismail Butt said these institutions are a source of hope and urged continued social support for such causes. Khan Zamarud Khan appreciated the effort of Asma Butt for society and said that serving humanity is his life mission and said that Langar Khana is not just a welfare project but a continuous effort to restore dignity, hope, and respect for the underprivileged.

Hamdard Foundation Pakistan Organizes One-Day Medical Camp in Firdous Colony, Gulbahar

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Hamdard Foundation Pakistan organized a one-day free medical camp on Saturday, May 16, 2026, near Lal Masjid in Firdous Colony, Gulbahar. The camp remained operational without interruption from 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM. The camp was inaugurated by Assistant Commissioner Nazimabad, Osama Bin Ashraf. Prominent social personalities of the area including Haji Abdul Bari, Ghulam Ahmad Khan, and Dilawar Abbas were also present on the occasion. Camp Coordinator Aftreen Ejaz warmly welcomed the guests.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Assistant Commissioner Nazimabad Osama Bin Ashraf said

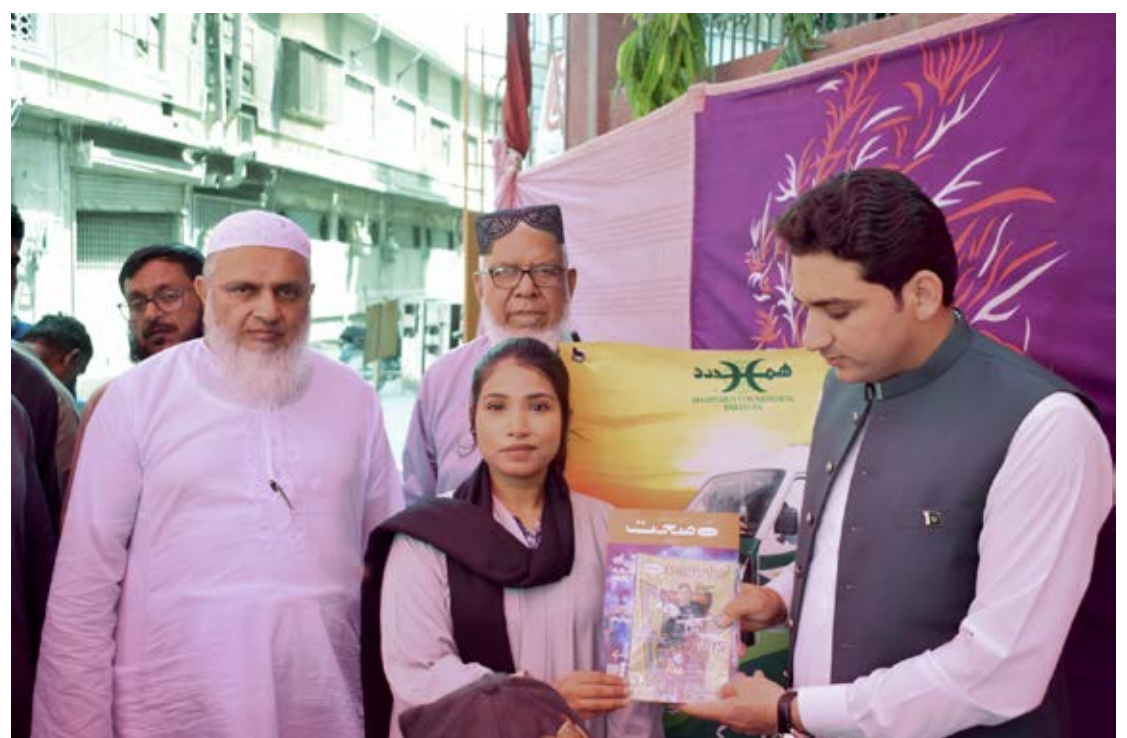
that Hamdard Foundation has always played a leading role not only in education, training, and moral development but also in public welfare initiatives. He stated that these services are a practical reflection of the love and dedication of the founder of the institution, Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said, for the country and its people, and that his daughter, Ms. Sadia Rashid, is successfully carrying forward this mission.

Director of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, Syed Muhammad Arsalan, stated that like every year, medical camps are being established across the country this year as well to protect citizens from extreme heat and heatstroke. In the first phase, camps have been set up in Karachi, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Lahore, and Peshawar, where approx-

imately 200 to 300 patients are being provided medical facilities daily at each camp.

He further said that free medicines are being provided to citizens at these camps, along with awareness regarding precautionary measures during the hot weather and prevention of heatstroke. In addition, Rosh Afza and other cold beverages were also arranged free of cost for visitors, passersby, and pedestrians coming to the camp.

According to Syed Muhammad Arsalan, special instructions have been issued to the Hamdard Foundation Pakistan team to continue this initiative regularly during June, July, and other extremely hot months so that timely medical assistance and awareness can be provided to citizens.



He added that, under the directions of Ms. Sadia Rashid, the organization

of these medical camps is being made more effective and systematic to ensure

that the public does not face any inconvenience.

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Trump in Beijing: A Visit of Powerlessness

President Donald Trump's May 2026 visit to Beijing was expected to reset global geopolitics, calm financial markets, pressure China on Iran, secure trade breakthroughs, and perhaps establish a new strategic understanding between the world's two largest powers. Instead, the visit exposed something far more consequential: a visible shift in global leverage from Washington to Beijing. What was projected as a high-stakes diplomatic triumph increasingly appeared to many observers as a journey of strategic desperation, where the United States arrived seeking concessions while China calmly projected patience, confidence, and restraint.

The visit came at perhaps the worst possible moment for Washington. The United States entered Beijing politically exhausted, militarily stretched, economically pressured, and diplomatically weakened after months of confrontation surrounding Iran, the Strait of Hormuz crisis, sanctions battles, and growing instability in global energy markets. China understood this reality fully. Beijing knew that America's military-industrial supremacy, once considered untouchable, had suffered reputational damage after Iran managed to withstand the combined pressure of the United States and Israel without surrendering its strategic posture. The longer the war dragged on, the more global markets, oil routes, and supply chains trembled.

Trump arrived in Beijing hoping to secure Chinese cooperation on several critical fronts. Washington wanted China to pressure Iran into reopening the Strait of Hormuz completely and stabilizing energy shipments. The United States

also sought Chinese compliance with sanctions and shipping restrictions targeting vessels accused of supporting Iran. Another major American objective was to reduce Chinese economic engagement with Venezuela, whose oil exports had increasingly escaped U.S. pressure mechanisms. Simultaneously, Washington expected movement on agricultural purchases, aircraft deals, tariff relief, and broader trade normalization.

Yet despite all the ceremonial grandeur, lunches, tours, dinners, and carefully choreographed hospitality, China committed to virtually nothing concrete on the core geopolitical disputes.

The most sensitive issue of all remained Taiwan. Chinese President Xi Jinping reportedly warned Trump in direct terms that mishandling Taiwan could push both countries toward confrontation or even open conflict. Trump, unusually cautious throughout the visit, avoided public comments about Taiwan while in Beijing. Only after boarding Air Force One did he hint that he may reconsider arms sales to Taipei after hearing Xi's objections.

That hesitation alone sent shockwaves through strategic circles. Taiwan represents the center of China's national reunification doctrine under the "One China" policy. Beijing views Taiwan not as a separate sovereign state, but as a breakaway province destined eventually to return to the mainland—much like Hong Kong returned after decades of British control. China's leadership believes time is now increasingly on its

side. Hong Kong's reintegration demonstrated Beijing's long-term strategic patience, and Chinese policymakers appear convinced that Taiwan's eventual absorption into the broader Chinese system is historically inevitable.

Trump's reluctance to firmly reaffirm military backing for Taiwan revealed how complicated the balance of power has become. America once projected overwhelming confidence in East Asia. Today, Washington appears increasingly cautious about opening another major confrontation 9,500 miles away while already struggling to manage crises in the Middle East.

Equally important was China's silence on the Iran war. Trump publicly claimed that Xi agreed a nuclear-armed Iran would be dangerous and even offered help in ending the conflict. Yet Beijing itself avoided confirming any such alignment. China maintained its carefully balanced diplomatic position, emphasizing only that all parties' concerns should be considered.

That distinction mattered enormously. China has no interest in openly endorsing an American-led strategy that weakened one of Beijing's critical energy and geopolitical partners. Iran remains central to China's Belt and Road ambitions, regional connectivity plans, and long-term energy security. Beijing also deeply resented American efforts to interfere with Chinese shipping, oil imports, and maritime operations linked to Iran. The Chinese leadership clearly signaled that while it favors stability, it will not become an enforcement arm of U.S.

pressure campaigns. Meanwhile, the economic dimension of the trip produced more headlines than substance. Trump spoke enthusiastically about potential aircraft purchases, suggesting China could buy between 200 and eventually 750 Boeing planes. There were also discussions involving General Electric engines, agricultural products, investment boards, and reciprocal tariff reductions.

But the markets were not impressed. Global investors had expected major breakthroughs—perhaps a concrete trade accord, sanctions relief, maritime understandings, or joint statements stabilizing geopolitical tensions. Instead, what emerged was vague language, future possibilities, and broad diplomatic formulations without enforceable commitments.

Financial markets reacted negatively because traders recognized the gap between optics and outcomes. The world economy today is deeply fragile. Oil prices remain volatile. Shipping insurance costs are elevated. Supply chains are unstable. Fertilizer markets, aviation industries, and industrial production continue facing enormous uncertainty tied to Middle Eastern instability. Investors were hoping for decisive clarity. What they received instead was strategic ambiguity.

The contrast in diplomatic posture between Trump and Xi was also striking. Trump showered Xi with praise throughout the visit, repeatedly describing him as a "great leader," a "friend," and someone with whom America could build a "fantastic future." Xi, by contrast, remained disciplined and restrained. He offered polite gestures,

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan confers civil awards on Chinese nationals for contributions to bilateral ties

The Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing on Friday hosted a special investiture ceremony to confer Pakistan Civil Awards on five Chinese nationals in recognition of their outstanding contributions to Pakistan and to the development of China-Pakistan relations.

Pakistan's Ambassador to China, Khalil Hashmi, represented the President of Pakistan in presenting the honors to the recipients, each of whom has made distinguished contributions in their respective fields in support of Pakistan.

Wang Yongge, Chairman and Party Secretary of China Zhongyuan Engineering Corporation, was awarded the Hilal-i-Quaid-i-Azam. Since 1996, he has played a key role in advancing China-Pakistan cooperation on the peaceful use of nuclear energy, an important pillar of the longstanding friendship between the two countries.

Mr. Xu Zhaodong, Director of the China-Pakistan Belt and Road Joint Laboratory for Smart Disaster Prevention at Southeast University, received the Sitara-e-Imtiaz. A renowned expert in structural vibration control, earthquake engineering, and multi-hazard smart disaster prevention, Xu has successfully implemented Pakistan's first seismic isolating project using viscous-elastic damping technology, driving the development of disaster prevention and mitigation in Pakistan.

Mr. Cui Peng, Chief Scientist and founder of the China-Pakistan Earth Science Research Center under the Chinese Academy of Sciences, was conferred the Sitara-e-Imtiaz. Professor Cui has built a platform for bilateral cooperation in earth sciences, and organized training workshops for young Pakistani scientists in natural disaster mitigation, climate change, and remote sensing applications. Mr. Cui Jun, President of China Economic Net, was honored with the Sitara-i-Quaid-i-Azam. He has played an instrumental role in strengthening bilateral ties through extensive coverage of Pakistan, the CPEC, and the evolving partnership between the two countries.

Mr. Qian Feng, director of Research Department and senior research fellow at the National Strategy Institute at Tsinghua University, was awarded the Tamgha-e-Quaid-i-Azam. Through his extensive research and commentary on China-Pakistan relations, he has contributed to deeper mutual understanding between the two peoples. CEN reported.

Pakista civil awards are among the country's highest honors, bestowed on individuals for service to the nation and for promoting Pakistan's relations with other countries. The ceremony highlighted the deep-rooted friendship between China and Pakistan, often described as an "Iron Brotherhood", and celebrated the enduring contributions of the award recipients to the bilateral partnership.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awcat)

Everything Can Be Achieved by Being Dear to Everyone

A few days ago, I read a newspaper article that felt deeply disconnected from the reality I see every day because it dismissed Pakistan's rise and treated all of our progress as an illusion despite the global praise Pakistan is receiving after its remarkable success in Marka-e-Huq against India. Marka-e-Huq was not just a military encounter but a display of strategy, courage, national unity, discipline, precision, restraint, and careful planning under immense pressure against a much larger neighbor with a far stronger economy and military budget, making the achievement even more worthy of celebration. Military experts around the world, along with Donald Trump and many countries, appreciated our country, our army, our Prime Minister, and our



Abdul Basit Alvi

Field Marshal, yet some people within Pakistan continue to reject this praise and recognition, seeing darkness where others see hope and dismissing every achievement as a hidden failure. Their reaction does not seem based on facts or evidence but on personal bitterness and an unwillingness to accept success achieved by anyone other than themselves, especially when the real heroes are our soldiers and leaders. At the same time, Pakistan's selection as a mediator between the United States and Iran reflects immense international trust because both countries, despite their long history of mistrust and conflict, agreed to let Pakistan stand between them after decades of Pakistan maintaining balanced relations with both Washington and Tehran. India now seems to have moved into the background while Pakistan has emerged at the forefront of international affairs despite years of attempts to isolate us through lobbying

and propaganda. Pakistan is mediating major international conflicts while India deals with political unrest, economic slowdown, and social tensions, and today's Pakistan appears stronger in defense, diplomacy, economy, and internal security than ever before. After Marka-e-Huq, the world started giving greater importance to Pakistan because our actions changed regional perceptions of power, while Saudi Arabia signed a defense agreement with Pakistan and interest in JF Thunder aircraft increased because of our growing military strength and successful demonstrations. Defense has become Pakistan's brand and is expected to generate billions of dollars, strengthen the rupee, reduce dependence on foreign loans, create high-tech jobs, and increase political influence, while Pakistan is also trying to reduce tensions between the United States and Iran by promoting dialogue, peace, and cooperation. If Pakistan succeeds, our ports will become busier, trade routes safer, investment stronger, energy costs lower, and our international standing even higher, making Pakistan an indispensable regional power. Pakistan's rise and friendly relations with everyone will attract investment, prosperity, security, and respect, whereas isolation will only lead to sanctions, trade barriers, hostility, fewer opportunities, and further destruction, as history has shown repeatedly. Countries respected by many receive loans, investments, technology transfers, and political support, while isolated nations face more enemies and greater difficulties in every aspect of national life. Pakistan has chosen the path of friendship, yet the author of the newspaper article seems to prefer isolation without explaining how it would benefit ordinary Paki-

stanis. The law and order situation in Pakistan today is also far better than in previous decades, supported by reduced terrorism in KPK and Balochistan because of stricter Afghanistan-related policies, border fencing, intelligence sharing, military operations, and efforts to cut terrorist funding and supply lines. Thousands of innocent lives have been saved, highways have become safer, businesses now operate in previously militant-controlled areas, and children can attend schools once threatened by extremists. Present-day Pakistan is far better than the era associated with political leaders admired by the article's author, who left behind corruption, economic mismanagement, inflation, low growth, and worsening security conditions. Some intellectuals and political supporters celebrate only when their own side succeeds and react with jealousy whenever Pakistan or its leadership receives international praise. I keep asking what alternative exists to maintaining good relations with all nations because hostility and isolation would only bring sanctions, poverty, bloodshed, suffering, and more difficulties for future generations. By maintaining friendly relations globally, Pakistan has already gained respect from powerful nations, defense agreements, opportunities to expand its defense industry, and trust as a mediator between major powers, while hostility and unpleasantness would achieve nothing except more problems and more enemies for our children and grandchildren.

The modern world demands relevance, cooperation, and positive relations with all nations, as these are the true keys to success in the twenty-first century. No country, no matter how large or powerful, can succeed by hiding in a corner and refusing to talk to anyone. No country can become prosperous by making enemies of everyone and burning bridges with

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan Railways: Steering Towards Revival and Global Standards

Pakistan Railways, a cornerstone of the nation's infrastructure, is undergoing a remarkable transformation. Over the past approximately 18 months, the government has introduced multiple reforms aimed at restoring and enhancing this vital institution. The positive impacts are increasingly visible, not only in facilitating daily inter-city travel for thousands of passengers but also in bolstering national trade, industry, and economic growth.



Syed Ejazul Hassan Shah

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif maintains a hands-on approach, regularly receiving briefings from Railway Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on improvements, overall performance, and ongoing reforms. This sustained interest from the Prime Minister in the railway sector is both significant and encouraging. Minister Abbasi, advancing the Prime Minister's vision, is actively engaging provincial governments to strengthen inter-provincial connectivity, a highly motivating step for the railway's development. Efforts are also underway to position Pakistan Railways as a commercially viable communication system aligned with international standards—an urgent necessity in today's global landscape. The Minister has publicly stated that the Prime Minister assigned the task of digitizing the railways, with work progressing in collaboration with the Frontier Works Organization (FWO), which is playing a key role.

Thanks to better strategy and collective teamwork, Pakistan Railways has seen not only a rise in revenue but also improvements in service quality. While the organization has not yet

achieved full self-sufficiency, the reduction in losses and progress toward financial stability represent an encouraging shift. Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has noted that by the end of the current financial year 2025-26, Pakistan Railways is positioned to cross the historic milestone of generating 100 billion in revenue for the first time. This gradual increase in revenue is enabling the railways to stand on its own feet. In parallel, privatization and Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models have been adopted, with the operation of certain trains handed over to the private sector. This has led to better service standards, enhanced efficiency, and a competitive environment. If transparency and effective oversight are maintained, this could prove to be a sustainable model for the future.

Technological integration forms a crucial part of these reforms. Initiatives such as online ticketing, installation of CCTV cameras, and digital monitoring systems have been introduced to modernize operations. These measures have brought greater transparency to administrative functions and boosted passenger confidence—an essential element for the success of any public institution.

On the security front, effective steps have been taken: improved training for Railway Police, stricter checking systems at stations, and deployment of modern surveillance equipment. The goal is to ensure safe travel for passengers and minimize potential risks.

Practical actions have also begun to upgrade railway tracks. Legislation has been enacted

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IS A story of perseverance & public service

'The Relentless Dreamer' receives acclaim at book launch

By Naveed Ahmed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Daily The Spokesman, in collaboration with Burj ul Zaki Motel, hosted a distinguished and graceful book launching ceremony for 'The Relentless Dreamer', the latest literary work by A. A. Saroqi, son of Dr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey. The book is not merely a biography of Dr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey; rather, it is the story of every individual who dreams of achieving something meaningful in life despite hardships and limitations.

The ceremony was chaired and presided over by Prof. Dr. Ghulam Raza Bhatti, former Vice Chancellor of Shaikh Ayaz University. In his presidential address, Dr. Bhatti lauded the author's remarkable contribution to literature, describing 'The Relentless Dreamer' as "a testament to resilience, creativity, and the indom-

itable spirit of human aspiration." He praised Dr. Sirohey not only for his literary achievement but also for bringing honor to his alma mater. "Our alumnus has shown that dreams, when pursued with courage, can inspire generations," he remarked.

Among the distinguished speakers were Rafiq Buriro, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication; Waseem Mughal, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan; and Saifullah Sirohey, Advocate, Supreme Court of Pakistan. The speakers highlighted the achievements of Mr. Saroqi and commended his contributions to public service, education, and literature.

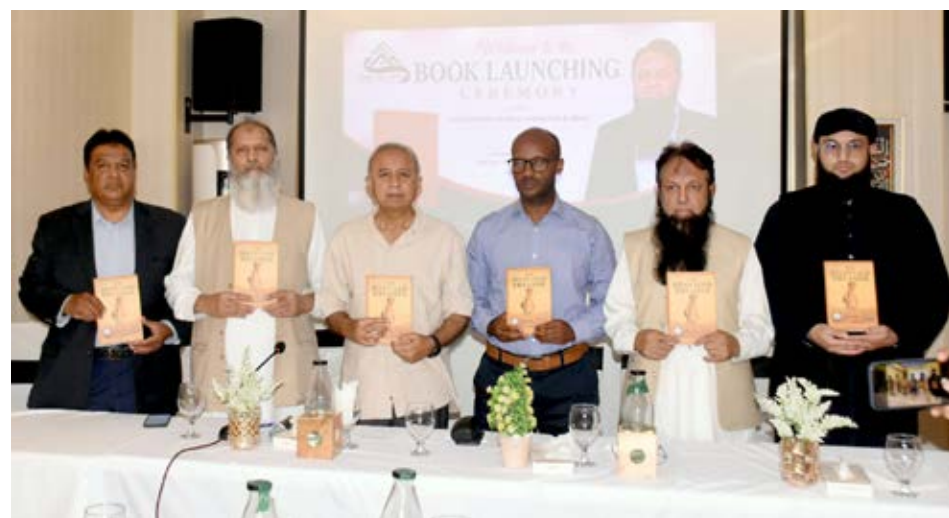
Speakers noted that 'The Relentless Dreamer', chronicling the life and career of Dr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey, offers



readers an honest and inspiring account of perseverance, education, and public service. In the book, Dr. Sirohey recounts his path from a modest village background to becoming a CSP officer, detailing the challenges of limited resources, academic struggles, and the discipline required to succeed in Pakistan's civil service. The work presents his journey as a powerful case study for young Pakistanis who often believe that systemic and economic barriers define their future.

A special segment of the ceremony focused on the extraordinary life journey of Dr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey. Born and raised in humble circumstances in Village

Amir Bux Saroqi, Dr. Sirohey began his life with limited means but limitless determination. Through unwavering dedication, academic excellence, and relentless hard work, he rose to the pinnacle of professional success. After joining Pakistan's civil service and serving in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, he represented Pakistan with distinction in several countries around the world. Over the years, he successfully served as Head of Mission and Ambassador, earning respect for his diplomatic capabilities and commitment to advancing Pakistan's interests internationally. His remarkable journey from a small village to the global diplomatic



arena stands as a source of inspiration for aspiring youth across the country.

Addressing the audience, Dr. Sirohey reflected on the struggles and defining moments of his life that shaped the narrative of 'The Relentless Dreamer'. He emphasized that the book is both a deeply personal account and a universal message of hope, perseverance, and the pursuit of knowledge. His words resonated strongly with the audience, underlining the transformative power of literature in capturing the human experience and inspiring future generations.

The event was attended by a large number of students, academics, writers, civil servants, and members of civil society, making it a vibrant gathering of literary and intellectual minds. The proceedings were gracefully conducted by Naveed Ahmed Khan, Editor of Daily The Spokesman, whose eloquence and professional hosting added charm and dignity to the ceremony.

In his concluding remarks, Almas Ayoub Sabir, Chairman, AIMS Education System School and Chairman Board of Governors, University of Southern Punjab, stated that Dr. Ahmed Ali Sirohey's journey truly represents the power of determination and self-belief. He remarked that Dr. Sirohey's success was not merely about becoming a CSS officer, but about proving that a



student from a remote village, with limited resources and no shortcuts, can compete and excel at the highest level of Pakistan's civil service through discipline, consistency, and hard work. He further said that Dr. Sirohey's story removes excuses and gives hope to the younger generation by showing that geography, background, and setbacks are not final verdicts in life. "What matters," he said, "is the daily choice to study, to persist after failure, and to keep service to the country above personal comfort." He described 'The Relentless Dreamer' as more than an autobiography, calling it "a roadmap and a challenge to the new generation: if he could do it, so can you."

During the ceremony, it was also announced the "Pakistan Education Portal" would soon be introduced to make educa-

tional guidance accessible to students and aspirants across the world. The portal aims to provide comprehensive information regarding Pakistani universities, academic opportunities, scholarships, and admissions, while also encouraging international students to pursue higher education in Pakistan.

The Defence Attaché of Rwanda to Pakistan Lieutenant Colonel Shyaka Kajugiro Ismail was also join the event and presented the memorable shield to Dr. Ahmad Ali Saroqi.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, the hosts arranged a lavish High-Tea for the distinguished guests, speakers, students, and attendees, providing an opportunity for intellectual interaction, networking, and celebration in a warm and elegant atmosphere.

Photos: Sultan Bashir



SM Group Chairman Outlines Roadmap for National Competitiveness: Integrating Intelligent Industry and Advanced Workforce

By Zain Khan Mulgani

MULTAN: Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Chairman of Pakistan's SM Group of Industries, attended the Interpack 2026 exhibition in Düsseldorf, Germany, a major global platform for the packaging and processing industry. Upon his return, Anjum stressed the necessity of aligning Pakistan's industrial and academic sectors with emerging global trends to enhance competitiveness. He identified three core pillars defining the industry's future. First, "Smart Manufacturing" represents a global shift toward intelligent systems driven by AI, automation, and digital



control technologies. Anjum noted that modern factories are evolving into decision-making entities. He urged Pakistani universities and technical institutes to prioritize hands-on training in machine architecture, programming, and automation to meet inter-

national standards, moving beyond purely theoretical education. Second, there is a significant global emphasis on "Sustainable and Advanced Packaging Materials". Success in global markets now requires eco-friendly, recyclable packaging solutions that reduce environmental impact. Anjum insisted that Pakistan's industry must abandon conventional raw materials for modern, sustainable options to boost export competitiveness. Third, "Future Skills and Workforce Readiness" are paramount. The industry now demands proficiency in AI, robotics, automation, and interdisciplinary thinking. Anjum warned that tradi-



tional education systems are inadequate. He called for closer collaboration between universities, industry, and technical institutes to ensure research translates into production and graduates possess practical, job-ready skills in areas like servo motors and automated control systems. Anjum concluded that Interpack 2026 signaled that future economic leadership will belong to nations that successfully integrate intelligent, AI-driven industries, advanced materials, and highly skilled human capital. Interpack 2026, held May 7-13, showcased cutting-edge machinery and sustainable technologies for the food, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics sectors.

Pakistani President Honors British-Pakistani Mogul Raja Raza with Tamgha-i-Imtiaz

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: British-Pakistani businessman and philanthropist Raja Suleman Raza was awarded Pakistan's prestigious Tamgha-i-Imtiaz by President Asif Ali Zardari for strengthening Pakistan-UK ties through business, philanthropy, and community work.

This award makes Raza one of the few British-Pakistani figures to receive major honors from both the British Crown and the Pakistani state. Raza is the founder and CEO of Spice Village, president of Grand Sapphire Hotels,

and co-founder of the "One Million Meals" initiative.

This organization gained prominence during the COVID-19 pandemic for providing hot meals to NHS frontline workers across the UK and subsequently received the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service in 2022, the highest national honor for UK voluntary groups.

Raza previously received an MBE from Queen Elizabeth II for services to business and philanthropy. His recent civil award from Pakistan completes a rare trifecta of honors from both

nations.

Raza stated the award belongs to Pakistan, which raised him, and Britain, which provided opportunity. He views food and hospitality as forms of diplomacy and service as patriotism, citing his work with One Million Meals, hosting the first Pakistani Iftar at 10 Downing Street, and supporting the Pakistan High Commission at events like the Royal Military Academy Sandhurst as acts of bridge-building between the two countries.

He dedicated the Tamgha-i-Imtiaz to the volunteers, frontline workers,

and families connected to One Million Meals. Beyond humanitarian efforts, Raza has built a significant hospitality empire over two decades with Spice Village and Grand Sapphire Hotels. His philanthropy extends to raising millions for Pakistani charities and supporting youth education through the Spice Village Uplift program and the British Asian Trust, where he is a founding member shaping King Charles III's philanthropic priorities in South Asia.

Raza is recognized for his cultural and diplomatic bridging, including



facilitating trade discussions through events like the Pakistan Mango Festival. The Tamgha-i-Imtiaz formally

recognizes his sustained work in reinforcing the friendship between the two nations.

The Missing Names in National Awards

The government recently conferred national awards upon officials recognized for distinguished services in various fields. Honouring citizens at the state level is, without doubt, a commendable tradition. Such recognition encourages excellence, inspires service, and strengthens the bond between a nation and those who contribute to its progress.

Yet, as happens almost every year, the announcement of these awards sparked both praise and criticism. While some celebrated the recipients, many questioned whether the process truly reflects merit.

This raises fundamental questions: Who selects the nominees? What criteria determine such honours? And why do many officials whose contributions transform lives on the ground remain invisible to the state's recognition system?

If these awards are genuinely meant to acknowledge extraordinary public service, why are some of society's most

impactful figures consistently overlooked?

One such example lies in Multan, where a long-ignored humanitarian tragedy unfolded for years at Nishtar Hospital. Across the world, unclaimed bodies are used for medical education and research, but the sanctity of the human body remains central to such practice. In Multan, however, unclaimed bodies were allegedly left exposed on the hospital rooftop after use, in advanced states of decay, scavenged by birds under the open sky.

The images were disturbing and degrading. Local print and electronic media highlighted the issue repeatedly. Public outrage grew, and the matter became an embarrassment beyond local boundaries. Yet, authorities remained indifferent.

In that institutional silence, former Adviser to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Chaudhry Tariq Zaman Gujjar, took a decisive stand. He raised the issue at the highest levels of government and

ensured that the indignity ended. Today, unclaimed bodies in Multan are buried with proper respect and religious rites — a change many credit directly to his intervention.

The question remains: if compassion for the voiceless and the restoration of human dignity do not qualify for national recognition, what does?

Another striking omission concerns the law-and-order transformation in South Punjab's notorious riverine belt, known as the Kacha area. Since the Zia era, this region had effectively become a parallel state — a sanctuary for armed gangs, kidnapers, and criminal networks. Successive governments launched operations, but none managed to dismantle the entrenched criminal infrastructure.

Kidnappings for ransom, highway

robberies, and murders had become a grim norm.

That changed under the current administration when the responsibility for restoring state writ was entrusted to Additional IG South Punjab Rao Kamran Khan. Working with his team, particularly DPO Rahim Yar Khan Irfan Samoo, a strategy was implemented that achieved what previous generations of law enforcement had failed to accomplish. Approximately 96 per cent of the Kacha area was cleared of bandits. Hundreds of armed criminals surrendered. Those resisting the state were neutralized. Vast territories once ruled by fear were reclaimed.

This was not merely a successful police operation it was the restoration of state sovereignty in a region long abandoned to lawlessness. The achievement was

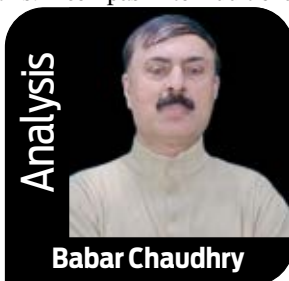
publicly acknowledged by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz during an official ceremony.

The failure lies not only in the nomination process but also with the region's political leadership. It is the responsibility of elected representatives and influential figures to ensure such names reach the relevant award committees. Yet, South Punjab's political elite largely remained silent, allowing genuine service to go unrecognized.

That silence reflects a deeper flaw in the system: honours often appear to circulate within closed recommendation networks rather than emerging from transparent evaluation of public service. The credibility of national awards depends entirely on public trust. That trust survives only when citizens believe recognition is based on measurable contribution, not political proximity. Police Officers like Chaudhry Tariq Zaman Gujjar, Rao Kamran Khan, and Irfan Samoo may not require medals to validate their service. Their real honour

lies in the respect of those whose lives they changed and in the peace they helped restore. But the state owes itself a better standard. If a nation cannot recognize those who defend human dignity and reclaim peace from chaos, then the awards risk becoming ceremonial symbols rather than markers of national gratitude. "A country truly stands tall only when it knows how to honour its real heroes."

To restore credibility in the national awards system, the government should introduce greater transparency, merit-based evaluation, and institutional accountability in the nomination and selection process. An independent and diverse awards commission should be formed, comprising representatives from academia, judiciary, media, and civil society, to ensure impartial scrutiny of nominations. The process should be opened to credible recommendations from professional bodies and public institutions, supported by verifiable evidence of service and impact.



Babar Chaudhry

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
165,596.07	166,498.83
Day's High	Day's Low
166,924.48	165,291.53
Index Value	Change
12,645,893,676	-902.76
Percentage	Time
-0.54%	15 May, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,195.37	-177.56
Percentage	Time
-1.77%	15 May, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,609.87	-453.59
Percentage	Time
-0.91%	15 May, 3:22 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
61,409.29	-1,244.76
Percentage	Time
-1.99%	15 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.36	202.25
Bahrain Dinar	731.47	742.75
Canadian Dollar	201.53	205.46
China Yuan	40	41.05
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	324.32	328.95
Hong Kong Dollar	35.06	36.03
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7423	1.8424
Kuwaiti Dinar	879.28	889.06
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.20
New Zealand \$	162.10	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.70	28
Omani Riyal	722.05	732.85
Qatari Riyal	74.65	75.55
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.35
Singapore Dollar	216.55	220.95
Swedish Korona	30.35	30.65
Swiss Franc	352.69	357.68
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.70
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	76.85
UK Pound Sterling	372.17	377.30
US Dollar	279.05	279.70

Iftikhar Malik urges national strategy to combat soaring import energy costs

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday cautioned that the ongoing global fuel price shock, which has already triggered economic upheaval across many Asian economies, will also affect Pakistan disproportionately due to its heavy dependence on imported

energy resources.

In a statement here today he said recently Prime Minister highlighted the scale of the damage that oil import bill had nearly tripled which is the \$1.45bn month on month expansion in the total import bill. He said rising fuel prices are creating serious challenges for industrial growth, exports and small businesses already struggling with high operational costs.



He further cautioned that if timely corrective measures were not adopted, the economic burden could further widen the trade deficit and slow down economic recovery efforts. He stressed the need for an urgent national strategy aimed at reducing dependence on imported fuel by promoting renewable energy projects, encouraging investment in solar and wind power and improving energy efficiency in industrial and domestic sectors. He also called for accelerating exploration of indigenous oil, gas and coal reserves to strengthen the country's energy security.

Iftikhar Ali Malik, veteran business leader urged policymakers to provide maximum relief

to industries, exporters and low income groups to cushion the impact of rising energy costs. He said regional economic cooperation among South Asian countries could also help stabilize markets and promote sustainable economic growth in the region. Pakistan's fragile economy is highly vulnerable to fluctuations in international oil and gas prices as the country imports a major portion of its energy requirements. Sharp increase in global fuel prices directly pushes up transportation costs, electricity tariffs and industrial production expenses, ultimately resulting in higher inflation and reduced purchasing power of the poor strata of the society, he concluded.

King of fruits

ISLAMABAD: A vendor arranging mango attraction for customers at a Sunday weekly bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SME Sector Holds Key to Industrial Revolution, Needs Easier Bank Loans

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator of Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said small and medium enterprises (SMEs) have the full potential to bring an industrial revolution in the country if they are provided hassle-free loans on easy terms and conditions by commercial banks on a priority basis.

Talking to a delegation of small traders here today he said SMEs play a vital role in economic development, employment generation and poverty reduction. He said the SME sector can significantly contribute to increasing exports and strengthening the national economy if adequate financial support is ensured. He regretted that despite clear

instructions by the Prime Minister many SMEs, including women entrepreneurs, are facing serious difficulties in obtaining business loans from commercial banks. He alleged that unnecessary documentation, lengthy procedures and strict conditions are discouraging small business owners from seeking financial assistance. He said no effective action is being taken against banks creating hurdles in the loan disbursement process, which is affecting the growth of the SME sector. He urged the authorities concerned to ensure transparency, simplify loan procedures and facilitate entrepreneurs so that SMEs can fully contribute towards industrialization, economic stability and sustainable growth in the country.

Food Industry Leader Calls for Urgent Human Capital Investment for Economic Growth

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food, Shahid Imran Sunday stressed the urgent need for building human capital in line with international standards to ensure sustainable economic growth and enhance Pakistan's competitiveness in global markets.

Talking to traders delegation here today he further said improving workforce capacity would not only increase industrial productivity but also create employment opportunities for millions of young people. He added that Pakistan must align its vocational and technical education system with global standards to strengthen exports, attract foreign investment and ensure



long-term economic stability. He said

developed nations have achieved remarkable economic progress by focusing on human resource development, innovation and technology adoption. He urged both public and private sectors to work jointly for introducing internationally recognized training programs, research initiatives and skill development centers particularly for food and agro-based industries.

He said Pakistan possesses immense potential in agriculture and food processing sectors, but lack of skilled manpower and modern training facilities remains a major hurdle in achieving export-oriented growth. Investment in education, technical training and professional development is essential for preparing youth to meet rapidly changing demands of international markets, he concluded.

SECP Reports 21% Growth in New Company Registrations, Surge in Foreign Investment

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's SECP reported strong growth (Feb-Apr 2026) in company registrations (10,511 new, 21% rise) due to reforms. April saw a record 4,082 incorporations. Foreign investment increased significantly, with 220 companies registered by investors from 22+ countries, reporting Rs882M paid-up capital (218% jump). Key sectors

included trading and IT, with Chinese investors active. Compliance filings also surged 61% (61,960 returns) following enforcement and a UBO campaign. The SECP promoted digitization by mandating physical share replacement with book-entry form and partnered with banks for easier account opening. Future plans include establishing Business Facilitation Centres and further automation using AI for registration.

Regional Powers Must Forge Own Security Architecture, Says Furniture Council CEO

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Tamgha-I-Imtiaz) Sunday said sovereign states must make their own decisions and construct a mutually beneficial security architecture. Chairing here today a board of directors meeting, he said in this regard, Iran, the gulf states, Türkiye and the wider Arab and Muslim fraternity of nations including Pakistan, must come together to manage their own affairs and resolve internal disputes amongst themselves in an amicable manner. Pakistan has played an admirable role in trying to bring the US



and Iran to the peace table while the Saudis and Iranians have also maintained channels of communication throughout the war. These processes must be taken forward. He was of the view that depending on outsiders

for security is not applicable as multibillion-dollar American security umbrella could not protect them from the barrage of Iranian missiles. He said Zionist state thrives on the dictum of divide and rule and hopes to devour even more Muslim and Arab land which he added must not be allowed to create more regional chops. He said changes may be in store after the war winds up as it will diminish role of the US and Israel in the region and pointed out that states such as Iran, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye would further deepen their partnership. He said indeed, the war has illustrated the limits of American power, and points to an empire in decline.

Govt reveals Rs837.16 billion PSDP 2025-26, allocation after 10-month expenditure analysis

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has officially released the Ministry and Division-wise summary of the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2025-26, announcing a massive federal development allocation of Rs837.16 billion aimed at accelerating infrastructure growth, improving public services, and strengthening the national economy.

According to official figures issued on Sunday, the total authorized amount stands at Rs833.34 billion, while development expenditures recorded between July and April have already reached approximately Rs469.85 billion.

The PSDP 2025-26 places significant emphasis on water resources, highways, education, energy infrastructure,

and regional development initiatives. According to data, Water Resources among top Priorities and the Water Resources Division, emerged as one of the leading sectors in the federal development portfolio, receiving an allocation of Rs106.64 billion.

Expenditures during the July-April period stood at Rs66.91 billion. Officials say the investment is intended to support water security projects, irrigation modernization, dams, and long-term climate resilience initiatives.

According to data, Provinces and Special areas receive largest allocation and secured the highest ministry-level allocation under the PSDP with Rs201.28 billion, while expenditures reached Rs117.60 billion.

Punjab CM Maryam Launches Historic Push for AI and Modern Education via Nawaz Sharif School of Eminence



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is initiating significant steps to modernize education, focusing on contemporary fields like Artificial Intelligence within Punjab through the Nawaz Sharif School of Eminence project. Regional Director Syed Naveed Abbas highlighted this at an awareness seminar in Attock, emphasizing the CM's personal oversight of this initiative. The school aims to offer education meeting global standards, featuring excellent infrastructure across four planned campuses: Attock, Fateh Jang, Pindigheb, and Shakargarh. The seminar informed parents about the Attock campus and its modern, technology-oriented teaching methods, designed to elevate the public education system, particularly benefiting students in rural areas. Director General Cantab Publisher Dr. Naem Khalid stressed the need to update the outdated system, noting the School of Eminence incorporates all modern educational standards. Attendees learned the institution will feature smart classrooms, advanced labs (science and STEM), digital learning, English communication training, dedicated sports areas, activity-based learning, and personality development programs. Speakers believe the school will revolutionize education in Attock, aligning with Maryam Nawaz's vision for a model school in every tehsil that emphasizes high standards, discipline, technology, and quality teaching, aiming to foster leadership and modern skills in students for a brighter future.

Pakistan Women's Cricket Squad announced for Ireland tri-Series and ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Fatima Sana will lead Pakistan women's team in the tri-series in Ireland and the upcoming ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026 in England and Wales, the PCB announced today. The Women's National Selection Committee has named a 15-member squad for both tournaments.

Pakistan will feature in a tri-series in Ireland, where hosts Ireland and West Indies are the other two participating teams. The tri-series will be played in Dublin from 28 May to 4 June, with Pakistan set to play four matches in the event. The tournament will help Pakistan and the other two sides gear up for the 12-team ICC Women's T20

World Cup, schedule to take place from 12 June to 5 July.

Among the 15 players selected, Eyma Fatima, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Saira Jabeen and Tasmia Rubab will feature in the ICC Women's T20 World Cup for the first time. 24-year-old Fatima, who will feature in her third ICC Women's T20 World Cup, will captain the side for the second successive T20 World Cup after having led the team in the previous edition held in the UAE in 2024.

Pakistan recently enjoyed a successful T20I series against Zimbabwe in Karachi, where the hosts secured a convincing 3-0 clean sweep. The series provided players with an opportunity to showcase their skills and prepare for the upcoming tournaments.

Ahead of the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in England and Wales, Pakistan women's team will play two warm-up fixtures against Sri Lanka on Saturday, 6 June and Scotland on Tuesday, 9 June. Both matches will take place in Derby.

Pakistan will begin their campaign against arch-rivals India on 14 June at Edgbaston in Birmingham. They will take on South Africa in their second fixture on 17 June at the same venue. Pakistan will then travel to Southampton to face Bangladesh at the Hampshire Bowl on 20 June. Their fourth fixture will be against Australia at Headingley in Leeds on 23 June, while their final group-stage match will be against Netherlands at the Bristol County Ground in Bristol on 27

June. The top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals, scheduled for 30 June and 2 July, respectively. The final will be staged at Lord's Cricket Ground in London on 5 July.

15-Member Squad

Fatima Sana (captain), Aliya Riaz, Ayesha Zafar, Diana Baig, Eyma Fatima, Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Muneeba Ali Siddiqui (wk), Nashra Sundhu, Natalia Parvaiz, Rameen Shamim, Sadia Iqbal, Saira Jabeen, Tasmia Rubab and Tuba Hassan

Reserves Players

Amber Kainat, Momina Riasat, Sadaf Shamas, Sidra Amin, Syeda Aroob Shah and Umm-e-Hani

Player Support Personnel

Ayesha Ashhar (manager), Wahab Riaz (mentor/head

coach), Abdur Rehman (spin bowling coach), Umaid Asif (fast bowling coach), Abdul Majeed (fielding coach), Imran Farhat (batting coach), Muhammad Arslan (media manager for tri-series only), Raza Kitchlew (media manager for World Cup), Waleed Ahmed (analyst), Moeen (strength and conditioning coach), Alveena Awan (team doctor), Tehreem Sumbal (physiotherapist) and Kiran Shahzadi (masseuse)

Pakistan fixtures in ICC Women's T20 World Cup 2026
14 June v India, Birmingham
17 June v South Africa, Birmingham
20 June v Bangladesh, Southampton
23 June v Australia, Headingley
27 June v Netherlands, Bristol



Anti-corruption team TT Singh arrests patwari red-handed in Kamalia receiving Rs 30,000 bribe

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the special directions of Director General Anti-Corruption Establishment Punjab Sohail Ahmad Chattha and under the orders of Director Anti-Corruption Faisalabad Region Kanwar Khalid Mehmood, the Anti-Corruption Establishment Toba Tek Singh carried out a major operation in Kamalia and arrested a patwari red-handed while receiving a bribe. According to details, a team of the Anti-Corruption Establishment Toba Tek Singh conducted the raid under the supervision of Civil Judge Marina Javed following secret planning. During the operation, accused Patwari Waseem Sajjad was caught on the spot while receiving a bribe of Rs30,000 from a citizen. The anti-corruption team also took the bribe money into custody and completed all legal formalities at the scene. Sources said that a citizen had lodged a complaint with anti-corruption authorities alleging that the patwari was demanding a bribe in exchange for official work. Acting promptly on the complaint, the authorities planned a trap raid. The



operation was carried out transparently in the presence of Civil Judge Marina Javed to ensure that all evidence was secured in accordance with legal requirements.

Circle Officer Anti-Corruption Establishment Toba Tek Singh Hafiz Muhammad Saeed Farooq talking to the media, said that the department is strictly following a zero-tolerance policy against corruption across the province. He stated that no government official would

be allowed to misuse authority or indulge in bribery, adding that public complaints are being addressed on merit and with transparency on a priority basis.

He further said that such operations against corruption would continue in the future to ensure transparency in government institutions and restore public confidence. A case has been registered against the accused and further investigation is underway.

Like the provinces, the lockdown should be ended in the federal government.
Sarfraz Mughal

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government of the time decided to impose a lockdown in the national interest without consulting the businessmen, which was accepted by the business community for the sake of the national interest. Sarfraz Mughal, former of the Traders Welfare Association Supermarket, expressed these views and said that the government needs to understand the problems of traders seriously and to solve them. On this occasion, Sarfaraz Mughal thanked Federation of Pakistan President Atif Ikram, Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Sardar Tahir, central business leaders Ajmal Baloch, Kashif Chaudhry and Islamabad Chamber of Small Traders President Sheikh Tayyib for the fundamental rights of traders. Raised a comprehensive voice on various forums.

RPO Faisalabad attends prize distribution ceremony in Chinot, encourages students

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Sohail Akhtar Sukhera attended the prize distribution ceremony held at Khatm-e-Nabuwat Institute of Management Sciences, Chinot as the special guest. The ceremony was attended by teachers, administration, students and distinguished guests of the institution.

In his address, RPO Faisalabad urged the students to make critical thinking, analytical skills and open debate an integral part of their personality along with education. He said that success in today's era is possible not only by obtaining a degree but also by the ability to ask questions, understand and find better solutions.

Appreciating the services of the educational institution, he said that Khatm-e-Nabuwat Institute of Management Sciences is not only providing quality education but also playing an important role in character building of the students. He also appreciated the efforts of the institution's administration which is providing better training to the students with a combination of religious and secular education.

RPO Faisalabad also distributed prizes among the students who showed outstanding performance and encouraged them. He advised the students to make hard work, honesty and positive thinking their motto so that they can play an effective role in the development of the country and nation in the future.

At the end of the ceremony, the administration of the institution thanked the special guest and called his arrival an honor.

Everything Can Be Achieved by Being Dear to Everyone

Continued from Page 4

all potential partners. Success in this era belongs to those who build bridges, who make friends, who cooperate on shared challenges, and who find common ground even with former rivals. We, especially writers and intellectuals, need to behave as responsible and mature citizens instead of spreading hopelessness and frustration within society. Writers have a powerful voice, and they can choose to use that voice for construction or for destruction. Those who choose destruction are not helping Pakistan in any meaningful way. They are hurting Pakistan, and they will be judged harshly by history when the full story of this era is written. We must move beyond thinking only about "Me" and start thinking about "Us" as a nation with a shared destiny and shared challenges. The country is bigger than any one person, any one party, any one family, or any one disappointment. When we put the nation first, we all win together.

When we put ourselves first, we all lose together.

The reality is what the whole world is witnessing and acknowledging every single day through diplomatic statements, defense agreements, trade deals, and words of praise from world leaders. Pakistan is rising and shining, and no amount of negative newspaper articles, no amount of bitter commentary, and no amount of personal disappointment can change that factual reality. The outcomes of Pakistan's rise, its friendly relations with everyone, and its growing relevance in global affairs will ultimately bring progress, prosperity, and positive opportunities for the entire country and all Pakistanis, from the richest businessman to the poorest farmer. Every child born today in Pakistan will inherit a stronger, more respected, and more prosperous nation than the one I was born into decades ago. That is something to celebrate with joy and gratitude. That is something to build upon with hard work

and determination. That is something to protect from those who would tear it down out of envy or bitterness. Let the disappointed author write whatever he wishes from his corner of frustration. Let the small group and the failed political gurus complain as much as they like about the success of others. The rest of us will continue to support a Pakistan that is dear to everyone, because we have seen with our own eyes and experienced in our own lives that this approach works. We have seen the praise from world leaders. We have seen the defense agreements with trusted allies. We have seen the reduction in terrorism and violence. We have seen the rising international stature of our nation. And we know, with complete confidence and without any doubt, that being dear to everyone has brought us this far and will take us even further into a future of peace, dignity, security, and prosperity for all Pakistanis, now and for generations to come.

Trump in Beijing: A Visit of ...

Continued from Page 4

symbolic hospitality, and carefully measured compliments, but avoided emotional reciprocity.

This imbalance itself became symbolic. To many analysts, it reflected a reversal of psychological positioning between the two powers. America appeared eager for accommodation; China appeared comfortable waiting. Trump openly admired Xi and praised China's hospitality, while Beijing calmly held its ground on virtually every critical issue—from Taiwan to Iran, sanctions, shipping, and strategic competition.

Even more significantly, China now understands America's vulnerabilities far better than before. Beijing witnessed how quickly American stockpiles of precision-guided weapons were consumed during the Iran conflict. It saw how difficult and expensive prolonged modern warfare had become. It also saw that despite enormous military expenditures, Washington failed to decisively bend Iran to its will or secure uncontested dominance over the Strait of Hormuz.

This realization changes strategic calculations permanently. For decades, American power rested not only on military capability but on the perception of overwhelming inevitability. That aura has weakened. China now increasingly believes that economic resilience, technological advancement, industrial capacity, and strategic patience can gradually outlast American pressure.

The tariff war itself reinforced this conclusion. Wash-

ington expected tariffs to severely damage China's economy. Instead, many American farmers suffered as China reduced agricultural imports and diversified suppliers. Soybean producers, meat exporters, and farming communities across the United States felt the consequences sharply. Beijing endured the tariffs while maintaining industrial production and export competitiveness.

By the end of the visit, Trump appeared to be requesting renewed Chinese purchases more than dictating terms. The broader geopolitical message of the Beijing summit was therefore unmistakable: the global order is shifting from bipolar dominance toward strategic multipolarity, with China increasingly acting not as a challenger seeking acceptance, but as a confident superpower shaping the rules of engagement.

The visit achieved little in concrete terms. There was no major Taiwan understanding, no Iran breakthrough, no Hormuz settlement, no sanctions resolution, and no transformational trade agreement. Yet paradoxically, the trip may still prove historic—not because of what was signed, but because of what it revealed.

It revealed an America struggling to preserve leverage it once took for granted, and a China increasingly convinced that history is moving in its direction.

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

Pakistan Railways: Steering Towards Revival and Global Standards

Continued from Page 4

to improve access to tracks, ensuring people across all provinces benefit from the rail network. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) worth over 400 billion has been signed between Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Railway Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi for various projects. With Punjab government support, a new double-track on the Lahore-Rawalpindi route will enable high-speed trains to complete the journey in just 2 hours and 20 minutes. In Sindh, a new 105-kilometer railway track for transporting coal is being laid with provincial cooperation and is scheduled for completion by December 25, 2026.

The ambitious ML-1 upgrade project involves constructing a new 480-kilometer track from Karachi to Rohri, designed for operations at 160 km/h, along with complete infrastructure modernization, upgraded signaling, telecom systems, increased line capacity, and institutional strengthening. Supported by the Asian Development Bank at a cost exceeding \$2 billion, work on this project is set to begin in September and will be completed within two and a half years. Additionally, out of the 900-kilometer Nokundi-Rohri track, 400 kilometers of new track and 500 kilometers of existing track will be upgraded. The Nokundi-Taftan track is also being upgraded. A common public question

persists: why does the railway continue to incur losses despite generating substantial revenue? The reality is that Pakistan Railways is among the few institutions that generate their own income to offset operational costs. It must cover pensions for over 100,000 pensioners, salaries for 56,000 serving employees, growing government allowances, and fuel expenses. The government recognizes the strategic importance of this public institution and provides subsidies. In April, on the Prime Minister's directives, the government absorbed an additional 6 billion burden until June 30 to offset rising fuel prices, relieving both the railways and passengers from extra costs amid current economic conditions.

A significant milestone under the Advance Infrastructure Network Project is the establishment of a Digital Central Control Room at Railway Headquarters in Lahore. This state-of-the-art facility will play a pivotal role in making the railway system more secure, efficient, and fully integrated by continuously monitoring train movements, freight operations, security, and logistics. Similar digital control centers will be established at all divisional offices, linked directly to the central hub.

To enhance passenger comfort, the headquarters reservation office has been upgraded with 15 organized ticket counters, an information desk, air-conditioned environment, pneumatic token

system, free Wi-Fi, and self-ticketing machines. The aim is to streamline ticketing and provide quality facilities to the public.

Further passenger-focused upgrades include the fully upgraded rake for Awam Express in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to be operational by May 30 following the Sukkur Express upgrade in Sindh. Allama Iqbal Express will also run upgraded by June 30. The Peoples Train will launch on August 14 for the people of Quetta, with all trains planned to be upgraded by December 31, delivering standardized travel facilities. Credit goes to Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi for transforming station conditions with modern amenities and simultaneously upgrading

passenger trains to make journeys more comfortable.

Special attention is being paid to strengthening the freight sector to better serve the business community. The marketing department is being digitized to increase income from goods transport and provide effective facilities to industry. Work is also progressing on automobile vehicle transportation via rail, which will start soon.

For the people of Sindh, after the successful upgrade of Karachi Cantt Railway Station, Rohri Railway Station—a key junction—is being further developed with Sindh government collaboration. The project, already underway, will see 40% of costs borne by Sindh and 60% by Paki-

stan Railways. Its completion will fulfill a long-standing public dream of a modern facility.

Overall, the reforms introduced in Pakistan Railways over the past 18 months reflect a positive and constructive change. If pursued with continuity, transparency, and effective strategy, these initiatives can transform the railways into a stable, profitable institution capable of delivering safe, comfortable, and high-quality travel services to the people of Pakistan. This ongoing journey toward modernization deserves international attention as a model of public sector revival in a developing economy.

The writer is Public Relations Officer Pakistan Railways Headquarters Lahore

World Urban Forum

BAKU: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Musadik Malik addressing World Urban Forum on Sunday.



Photo: APP

Pakistan tells World Urban Forum climate crisis has become 'a crisis of justice' for the poor

Commerce Desk

BAKU: Federal Minister Musadik Malik addressed the World Urban Forum in Baku, Azerbaijan, framing climate change in Pakistan as a "crisis of justice" disproportionately impacting urban poor and vulnerable communities.

He detailed a dire situation characterized by urban inequality, climate vulnerability, and poor housing,

noting that floods, heatwaves, and failing infrastructure are deepening poverty for millions.

Malik recounted a flood victim's destroyed home symbolizing how disasters erase generations of effort, trapping families in cycles of poverty.

The minister stressed that the housing crisis in developing nations demands a justice-based approach, not

charity. Pakistan's growing urban population, nearly half its 240 million people, faces severe climate shocks.

Approximately 55 million live in slums with inadequate housing and crumbling civic infrastructure, where families often share crowded spaces lacking essential services. Climate change exacerbates this, as seen in Karachi's 2024 heatwave where temperatures hit 47°C.

Data showed the poor, not the affluent with air conditioning, died disproportionately during this heatwave. Malik also cited recent devastating floods, which caused around 6,000 deaths, nearly 20,000 injuries/disabilities, and displaced 40 million people, leading to massive educational losses.

While acknowledging national efforts, he criticized the perception of affordable

housing as merely welfare rather than a fundamental right.

He urged a shift: "We should not build housing for investors; we should build housing for the people." He concluded by challenging global leaders to ensure commitments like the "Baku Call for Action" prioritize climate-resilient, inclusive development and truly address housing for everyone.

Five terrorists killed in intelligence-based operations in Bannu

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bannu Police claimed a major success in operations against militants after five terrorists were killed during intelligence-based operations carried out within 24 hours following the Chowki Fateh Khel incident.

According to police officials, the operations were launched on the special instructions of Inspector General of Police Zulfiqar Hameed and Regional Police Officer Sajjad Khan.

Police said one of the militants killed during the operation was Hayatullah, described as the nephew of the alleged mastermind



behind the Chowki Fateh Khel attack. Authorities claimed the slain suspect was

an expert in manufacturing improvised explosive devices and had allegedly planted

the bomb in a rickshaw that destroyed the security post. Officials stated that

IED-making materials, ball bearings, prima cards and ammunition were recovered from the hideout of the slain militant. Police also described Hayatullah as a notorious target killer wanted in several serious incidents.

According to security officials, two other militants identified as Asad Yar and Naimatullah, who were involved in the attack on the security post, were also killed during the operations. Authorities added that an important militant commander named Mansoor was among those killed under what police described as an effective operational strategy.

CM Maryam Nawaz highlights role of telecom, technology in driving digital transformation

News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday said that telecommunications and technology had become effective and powerful tools of the modern era, adding that telecommunication was no longer merely a means of communication but a pathway to new heights.

In her message on World Telecommunication Day, the chief minister said the Punjab government was committed to building a "Digital Punjab" and opening avenues for an educational revolution.

She said that 5G digital telecommunication would prove to be a harbinger of revolution in Punjab and across Pakistan, adding that innovation in telecommunication technology was essential to benefit from artificial



intelligence (AI).

CM Maryam Nawaz said that

e-governance and e-business had been successfully implemented in Punjab through telecommunication technologies. "Every student has a laptop in hand and we are connecting them with the world through innovation in telecommunications," she added.

She further stated that regular training programmes were being conducted to connect the youth with global IT and telecommunication markets.

The chief minister said the establishment of Nawaz Sharif IT City would bring revolutionary improvements to the communication system.

She added that the government aimed to make telecommunications not only a source of convenience but also a driver of transformation, transparency and development.

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President Zardari felicitates Norwegian leadership on Constitution Day



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has extended felicitations to King Harald V, the Government and the people of the Kingdom of Norway on the occasion of Constitution Day.

In a message conveyed on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, the President noted that the relations between Pakistan and Norway continue to flourish with

each passing day.

He expressed confidence that the cordial ties between the two nations, further strengthened by the presence of a vibrant Pakistani community in Norway, will continue to grow for the mutual benefit of both friendly countries.

The President further conveyed his sincere wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of the Kingdom of Norway.

Religious affairs minister reviews Hajj arrangements in Saudi Arabia

News Desk

Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf visited the Pakistan Hajj Mission office in Azizia, Saudi Arabia, to review Hajj arrangements for Pakistani pilgrims, where senior officials briefed him on operational preparations and facilities being provided to pilgrims.

Director General of Hajj Abdul Wahab Soomro and other senior officers welcomed the minister and presented a detailed briefing regarding accommodation, transport, food and grievance redressal arrangements for pilgrims.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Yousuf said he had reached Saudi Arabia on the instructions of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to review Hajj arrangements and ensure maximum facilities for pilgrims. He said that according to the prime minister's vision, every possible



measure should be taken for the convenience and comfort of Hajj pilgrims.

The minister praised the arrangements made by the Saudi government, calling them exemplary and commendable. He stressed that no effort should be spared in serving Hajj pilgrims and directed officials to ensure that there were no shortcomings in the grievance redressal system.

Religious Affairs Secretary Abrar Ahmed Mirza said the planning phase of Hajj arrangements was being coordinated to ensure smooth operations during the pilgrimage season.

Bilawal House spokesperson calls Indian Army Chief's statement provocative

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Bilawal House spokesperson Surendra Valasai termed the Indian Army Chief's statement as provocative and irresponsible and said that India should first focus on its internal chaos and growing hatred, reported the 24NewsHD TV channel on Sunday.

In a statement, he said that dreams of changing the geography and history of the region are now outdated, while any aggression against Pakistan will

be responded to with full and decisive force.

He said Pakistan is a sovereign nuclear power and has the full capability to defend its borders, while the Pakistani nation and forces are united and ready to confront any kind of aggression.

Pakistan believes in peace, stability and regional cooperation; however, any adventure against Pakistan will be responded to with national unity and full force.

Sharjeel Memon announces Karachi infrastructure push

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon said Bhutto Highway would be opened to the public on May 23 as the provincial government pushes ahead with major infrastructure projects aimed at easing traffic congestion in Karachi.

Speaking to the media after inspecting the Red Line Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) project in Karachi, Memon said the biggest issue on University Road was mixed traffic, while the BRT project had entered

its second phase.

He said a new road was also being constructed from Karachi Port to Jam Sadiq in Korangi to improve connectivity and traffic flow in the city.

"Karachi is the busiest city in Pakistan and traffic problems are being resolved," He said, adding that modern facilities were being provided to residents and that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) was addressing public issues on a priority basis.

Memon said the government's current focus was on providing relief to the people rather than on elections.