



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے عقل نے ان سے ابن شہاب نے،
انہیں سامنے تیری اور انہیں عبد اللہ بن
عمر رضی اللہ عنہما نے تیری کر سوال اللہ صلی
اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا مسلمان مسلمان کا بھائی
سے داس پر ظلم کرے اور نہ اسے (کسی ظالم
کے) پھر دکرے اور جو شخص اپنے کسی بھائی
کی ضرورت پوری کرنے میں لگاؤ گا اللہ تعالیٰ
اس کی ضرورت اور حاجت پوری کرے گا۔
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President expresses deep sorrow over deadly coal mine explosion in China

President Asif Ali Zardari has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the tragic explosion at a coal mine in Shanxi province of China, which resulted in the loss of many precious lives and injuries to several others. The President conveyed his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, the bereaved families and the people of China over the tragic accident.



Govt cuts petrol price by Rs6, diesel by Rs6.80 per litre
The federal government has reduced petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) prices by Rs6 per litre and Rs6.80 per litre, respectively, for the next week. The cut brings petrol to Rs403.78 per litre and HSD to Rs402.78 per litre, effective from midnight Friday.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Signing ceremony

Hangzhou: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Mr. Wang Hao, Party Secretary of the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee witnessing the signing ceremony of MoU of Establishing Friendship Relationship between Zhejiang & Punjab and Document of Understanding for Establishment of China Pakistan Technology Research Center at Hangzhou Normal University on Saturday.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz, Wang Hao discuss bilateral ties

Spokesman Report

HANGZHOU: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Wang Hao, Party Secretary of the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee in Hangzhou on Saturday and discussed matters related to bilateral cooperation. Wang Hao welcomed the Prime Minister to Zhejiang Province. The Prime Minister appreciated the remarkable development achievements of Zhejiang Province and praised the visionary leadership of President Xi Jinping during his tenure as Party Secretary of the CPC Zhejiang Provincial Committee, particularly the concept that "lucid waters and lush mountains are invaluable assets."

He said Zhejiang's development offered an important example of how ecological conservation, green development and high-quality economic growth could advance in a mutually reinforcing manner. The Prime Minister said Pakistan attached high importance to strengthening cooperation with Zhejiang Province, particularly in the fields of digital economy, e-commerce, information technology, telecommunications, agriculture, renewable energy, advanced manufacturing and skills development. The Prime Minister witnessed the signing of two cooperation documents. The first was a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on the

establishment of a sister-province relationship between Zhejiang Province and Punjab Province. The MoU aims to promote cooperation in trade, investment, agriculture, education, culture, tourism and people-to-people exchanges. The Prime Minister also witnessed the signing of a Document of Understanding between Hangzhou Normal University and the Embassy of Pakistan in Beijing for the establishment of the China-Pakistan Joint

Technology Research Centre at the University. The Centre will promote academic cooperation, applied research, technology exchange and institutional linkages between Pakistan and China. He said that, as Pakistan and China commemorate the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations, the two countries were entering a new phase of practical, people-centric and development-oriented cooperation.

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi are accompanying the prime minister during the visit. During his stay in Hangzhou, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will meet Zhejiang Party Secretary Wang Hao. The prime minister is also scheduled to meet chief executive officers of leading Chinese companies. He will visit the headquarters of Alibaba Group and attend a ceremony for the signing of memoranda of understanding on cooperation.

Pakistan committed to complete polio eradication: Mustafa Kamal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulation and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to completely eradicate polio, saying that coordinated vaccination campaigns and improved campaign quality would soon make the country polio-free. The minister expressed these views during a meeting with Dr Chris Elias, Chairman of the Polio Oversight Board,



in Geneva, where both sides held detailed discussions on polio eradication efforts and ongoing cooperation in Pakistan's health sector, according to a spokesperson for the Ministry of Health. Mustafa Kamal said that health sector reforms were underway under the leadership and vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He also appreciated the support of the international partners for polio eradication initiatives in Pakistan. "Polio eradication is our

national cause," the minister said, reiterating the government's resolve to eliminate the disease from the country. Chris Elias appreciated the recent progress in Pakistan's health sector and praised the integrated strategy being implemented under the leadership of Mustafa Kamal. He assured continued support for vaccine availability and polio eradication efforts in Pakistan. Dr Elias is also expected to visit Pakistan in July this year.

Eight terrorists killed in Bannu operation, policeman martyred

News Desk

BANNU: Eight terrorists were killed during a joint intelligence-based operation conducted by police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Bannu district, while a police constable was martyred and two others sustained injuries in the exchange of fire, sources said on Saturday. According to officials, the operation was carried out in the jurisdiction of Miryan Police Station after security agencies received intelligence regarding the presence of militants in the area. Police and CTD teams surrounded the suspected hideout, triggering a fierce gun battle after the militants opened heavy fire. During the exchange, Police Constable Noorullah embraced martyrdom, while two other



personnel were injured. The wounded officials were shifted to a nearby hospital for medical treatment. Sources said multiple militants were neutralised during the operation, while a search operation in the surrounding area remained underway to trace possible facilitators and apprehend fleeing suspects. Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Zulfiqar Hameed praised the police and CTD teams for the successful operation and announced rewards for the personnel involved. He said security forces would continue operations with full resolve to eliminate terrorism and restore peace in the region.

PM arrives in Hangzhou, China on an official visit



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Saturday, arrived in Hangzhou on the first phase of his four-day official visit to China. Upon his arrival at Xiaoshan International Airport in Hangzhou, the prime minister was received by Vice Governor Zhejiang Province Xu Wenguang, China's Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong and Pakistan's Ambassador to China Khalil Hashmi, the PM Office Media Wing said in a press release. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar,

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi are accompanying the prime minister during the visit. During his stay in Hangzhou, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif will meet Zhejiang Party Secretary Wang Hao. The prime minister is also scheduled to meet chief executive officers of leading Chinese companies. He will visit the headquarters of Alibaba Group and attend a ceremony for the signing of memoranda of understanding on cooperation.

Abbasi lauds KP Police, CTD for successful operation against Khawarij in Bannu

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi on Saturday paid tribute to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) for carrying out a successful operation against Khawarij terrorists in Bannu. In a statement, the minister praised the bravery, professional expertise and timely action of the security personnel that resulted in the killing of eight terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij.

Hanif Abbasi also paid homage to the police official who embraced martyrdom while fighting the terrorists courageously during the operation. He said the sacrifices rendered by the security forces and police in the fight against terrorism were a valuable national asset and a symbol of unwavering commitment to peace and stability. The minister said that the nation would always remember its martyrs with honour and respect for their eternal sacrifices in the war against terrorism.

PTI leaders, Naqvi discuss Imran, Bushra Bibi's medical and access issues

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Crucial matters, including former prime minister Imran Khan, his wife Bushra Bibi and their medical treatment, came under discussion during a recent meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and central leaders of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, and a sister

of Imran Khan, were also present in the meeting held at the residence of PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan in Peshawar, arranged at his request. The meeting also discussed PTI's protest politics and possible negotiations with the government. The sources added that the PTI raised the issue of restrictions on visits to Imran Khan and Bushra Bibi in prison and the provision of necessary medical treatment.

Chief Minister Sohail Afridi voiced concerns over obstacles preventing these meetings with the PTI founder. It was agreed that Barrister Gohar Ali Khan would remain in contact with Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi regarding access to Imran Khan. The meeting agreed that coordination between the two sides would continue on matters related to PTI's protest campaigns, political strategy, and possible negotiations with the government. PTI sources also indicated that Bushra Bibi's release also came under discussion. However, no definitive progress could be made,



they added. When contacted, PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan declined to comment on the meeting or issue an official statement.

Azad Kashmir PM focuses on youth engagement through sports development

City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that practical measures were being taken to promote sports and engage youth in positive activities.

He expressed these views while talking to the media after watching a match of the ongoing Prime Minister Gold Cup Cricket Tournament being played at Narol Cricket Stadium, Muzaffarabad.

Prime Minister Rathore expressed satisfaction over hosting the sports event and termed it as a healthy activity. He said the government wanted stadiums and playgrounds throughout Azad Kashmir to remain lively with sporting activities and healthy competitions for young people.

He said the Prime Minister Gold Cup Tournament had proved to be an excellent initiative in bringing forward young talent, with enthusiastic participation from youth belonging to far-flung areas.

He added that the government was determined to continue and further



expand such initiatives across other parts of the state.

The Prime Minister said that stadium projects in Haveli had already been approved, while work on playgrounds and sports schemes was underway in different parts of Azad

Kashmir.

He said that the youth of Azad Kashmir possessed immense talent but they lacked adequate facilities.

The government, he said, was paying special attention to improving sports infrastructure.

Earlier, after watching a match the prime minister, along with Saghir Chughtai and Ansar Yaqoob, distributed trophies and prizes among the winning and runner-up teams. A motorcycle draw was also held during the ceremony.

AJK PM Rathore condoles with Altaf Ahmed Bhat on demise of his mother



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Prime Minister, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, extended condolences to Hurriyat leader Altaf Ahmed Bhat on the passing of his mother. Rathore prayed for the departed soul and for strength for the family. The meeting, attended by various Kashmiri political and social figures, included discussions on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the recent martyrdom of Burhan Hamza, and the need for preventative measures. Rathore honored the sacrifices of Kashmiris and highlighted the personal tragedy of Bhat being unable to attend his mother's funeral due to the division of Kashmir. He contrasted the peaceful Azad Kashmir with occupied Kashmir, describing the latter as a militarized zone devoid of normalcy, and emphasized that durable peace in South Asia hinges on resolving the Kashmir dispute according to the aspirations of its people. Bhat presented proposals for the freedom movement and diplomatic efforts, and Rathore pledged to convene a meeting with Kashmiri leaders to discuss these further. The attendees also agreed on organizing an all-parties conference to develop a unified strategy on the Kashmir issue.

Commissioner, RPO review Eidul Azha security and monitoring plan at Safe City Office



Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Amir Kareem Khan and Regional Police Officer (RPO) Muhammad Usman Gondal visited the Safe City Office to review security and monitoring arrangements for Eidul Azha across the division.

During the visit, officials were briefed on the special security plan, surveillance strategy, and coordination mechanism among district administration, police, and civic agencies for the Eid holidays.

Commissioner Amir Kareem Khan said that Safe City cameras would monitor the city round the clock during Eid days to ensure public safety and smooth management of civic operations. He directed all departments, including the district administration, police, and Waste Management Company, to maintain complete coordination for effective implementation of the Eid plan.

He stated that providing citizens with a peaceful, secure, and clean environment during Eidul Azha remained the top priority of the administration.

RPO Muhammad Usman Gondal said that a comprehensive security plan had been finalized for Eidul Azha, under which additional police personnel would be deployed at important locations, markets, Eid congregations, and sensitive points.

He further said that modern technology would be utilized to monitor the performance of field teams and address public complaints efficiently. The RPO added that the Safe City system was fully operational for special surveillance of key highways and sensitive areas across the city.

400 fully funded scholarships for female students in Balochistan

Rafiullah Mandokhel

ZHOB: In an initiative aimed at expanding access to higher education for girls in Balochistan, the provincial government has announced 400 fully funded scholarships for female students across the province. In this connection, an awareness session was held at Government Girls' Degree College here in Zhob. The orientation session was organized under the vision of Mir Sarfraz Bugti and Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Durrani, who have pledged to improve educational opportunities for girls in the province.

A large number of students attended the session along with Principal Hameeda and faculty members Muhammad Arif and Muhammad Ayoub. Divisional Director Colleges Mir Jehan Mandokhel and focal person for scholarships Madam Hajra and Madam Hareera briefed students through multimedia presentations on the scholarship programme, eligibility criteria and application procedure.

Divisional Director Colleges Mir Jehan Mandokhel on the occasion said that the scholarship scheme has been initiated with the financial support of the World Bank.

Speakers at the session described the initiative as an important step towards empowering women through education and creating better academic opportunities for talented students from underdeveloped areas of the province.

Hajra said that female students from all districts of Balochistan up to 22 years of age are eligible to apply. Seven students from each district, while another 120 students will be selected on an open merit basis.

Summer break

ISLAMABAD: People buying watermelons from a roadside vendor in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

38-Point charter ignored: Public Action Committee threatens mass protests

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The current political crisis in Azad Kashmir stems from the government's failure to implement written agreements and address a 38-point Charter of Demand.

Leaders of the Joint Public Action Committee (JPAC) allege that the government disregarded negotiations and distorted facts, particularly concerning the contentious issue of 12 assembly seats, which they deem a matter of constitutional, legal, and public rights.

They argue that representation in any assembly is a social contract between the people and the state, and elected representatives are being dictated to by a few individuals.

Pakistani political leaders, who previously assured the implementation of agreements, are now accused of deviating from their promises.



JPAC claims that many representatives in the Azad Kashmir Assembly lack practical ties to the state, with seating established based on a large number of "fake state subjects" created in the name of refugees.

They challenge the government to provide UN resolutions and clauses protecting these seats, noting the administration's inability to offer

clear answers. The exclusion of representation for people migrated from Gilgit-Baltistan and Indian-administered Kashmir is also questioned. Despite JPAC's responsible approach and continuation of negotiations under public pressure, the government's insensitivity has worsened the situation.

The 38-point Charter of Demand,

accepted by the government, remains stalled. The movement's scope extends beyond the 12 seats to encompass state resources, employment, education, refugee policy, and illegal 'local nadar' allotments.

JPAC asserts that increased public awareness favors abolishing the 12 seats and implementing constitutional reforms. If agreements are not honored by May 31, JPAC plans to expand the protest movement, warning of unprecedented public turnout.

They demand a full investigation into 'local poor' allotments since 1947, claiming 99% benefited the wrong people. Promises of empowering local bodies have also gone unfulfilled, with concerns about the expenditure of Rs 60 crore funds.

JPAC reiterates its commitment to peaceful protest, including a peaceful sit-in in Muzaffarabad on June 9, adhering to SOPs.

Sindh Empowers Women with 200 Free Pink Electric Scooter

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A ceremony was held in Hyderabad to distribute 200 free pink electric scooters to female students and working women, a Sindh Government initiative.

Senior Provincial Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon attended as chief guest, emphasizing the program's aim to empower women. He highlighted that

no political affiliation is considered in the distribution and that Sindh is among the few regions offering such facilities.

Memon also mentioned other public welfare projects, including housing, healthcare (like free CyberKnife), autism centers, and the Thar coal project.

He noted the Pink Bus service and the significant increase in women obtaining driving licenses since the Pink Scooty

scheme's launch, reflecting a positive social change. Strict rules apply: scooters are for women only, men found riding them will face legal action, helmets are mandatory, and the scooters cannot be sold for seven years.

The overarching goal is to empower, protect, and enable women to actively participate in society and the economy. Other speakers echoed these senti-

ments, commending the initiative.

At the end of the event, other speakers, including MPA Imdad Pitafi, MPA Saima Agha, former MPA Zahid Bhargari, Deputy Mayor Sagheer Qureshi, and Wasim Rajput, also addressed the gathering and termed this initiative of the Sindh Government an important step towards the socio-economic empowerment of women.





Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:23 am
Zohr 12:05 pm
Asr 5:01 pm
Maghrib 7:07 pm
Isha 8:46 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Court Orders Uninterrupted Water Supply for Farmers

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

TANDO ALLAHY-AR: A court has issued an important ruling in favor of farmers, directing authorities to ensure the supply of water to all growers across the district and submit an implementation report within 15 days.

In its order, the court instructed the immediate restoration and repair of all watercourses of Chakar Branch and also ordered the removal of illegal pipes and machinery from Sarfaraz Wah.

The court further directed that all encroachments and obstructions in water channels be cleared to ensure fair and uninterrupted water distribution to farmers.

For security purposes, the court instructed the SSP to provide complete security during the implementation process, while also directing the Deputy Commissioner to ensure full compliance with the order.

Farmers have termed the ruling a major victory, while district administration has been directed to take immediate steps for implementation.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz approves Rs50,000 fine for dumping sacrificial waste in streets

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has approved a Rs50,000 fine for people found dumping sacrificial waste and animal remains in streets and neighbourhoods during Eidul Azha.

A vigilance squad has also been constituted to prevent and monitor the dumping of animal waste and remains at prohibited places, while a comprehensive public awareness campaign has been ordered to discourage citizens from disposing of waste at unauthorised locations.

The decision was taken during a video-link meeting chaired by the chief minister to review foolproof cleanliness arrangements for Eidul Azha across the province.

The meeting was informed that around 176,000 sanitary workers and over 8,000 temporary staffers would participate in the Eid cleanliness operation across Punjab. Authorities will establish 3,800

primary collection centres, designate 3,100 dumping sites and set up 7,000 dumping points for the disposal of animal remains.

CM Punjab directed officials to ensure special cleaning and monitoring of drains, canals and other public places in every city, besides maintaining cleanliness in private housing societies. She also ordered cleanliness arrangements in railway colonies and cantonment areas, along with special cleaning operations in 2,687 major commercial markets across Punjab.

"On Eidul Azha, all departments will have to work as one government unit for cleanliness arrangements," the chief minister said, adding that outstanding performance would be rewarded while negligence and complaints would invite accountability.

Suthra Punjab teams will also be deployed at 285 cattle markets and 171 sale points across the province. More than 40,000 additional vehicles, including



loader rickshaws, mini dumpers, tractor trolleys and pickup vehicles, will be utilised during the operation.

Control rooms will be set up in the offices of deputy commissioners, managing directors of WASA and municipal corporations, while citizens can register complaints through the Suthra Punjab helpline 1139.

Serean Road Closed

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel closed the road leading towards Serena Hotel in the Federal Capital where the Australia's cricket squad stay, Australia team arrived on Friday ahead of a three-match One Day International (ODI) series against Pakistan beginning on May 30.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Door-to-Door Survey Crucial for Welfare Program



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: PSER Project Director Qamar-uz-Zaman Qaisrani chaired a Multan meeting emphasizing an effective door-to-door survey for welfare programs. He addressed field staff issues, assuring solutions and stressing the survey's importance for the PSER database, crucial for distributing government schemes like solar and bike programs, Kisan and Minority Cards.

Qaisrani urged the team to meet the population target by June 30 for timely data collection, ensuring deserving citizens receive timely facilities. He also met with Commissioner Muhammad Aamir Karim Khan and Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Noman Siddique to discuss the project.

Major Operation by Attock Police: Attempt to Smuggle Inter-Provincial Drugs Foiled

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: According to details, Attock Khurd Police, under the supervision of SHO Inspector Khanzada Shahroze, carried out an effective operation against drug trafficking and foiled a major attempt to smuggle narcotics from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Punjab. During the operation, two inter-provincial drug smugglers, Sajid Khan son of Anjadullah and Mehran Khan son of Marjan, residents of Peshawar, were arrested.

The police team stopped a speeding rickshaw during checking at Search Park Attock Khurd. Upon searching the vehicle, police recovered 10 kilograms and 800 grams of hashish cleverly hidden inside a gas cylinder installed in the rickshaw's storage compartment.

The recovered narcotics were taken into custody, and a case has been registered against the suspects under the Anti-Narcotics Act. Further investigation is underway.

District Police Officer Attock, Sardar Mowar Khan, appreciated the successful operation and praised the police team. He stated that Attock Police is taking strong measures to protect the younger generation from the menace of drugs. He further added that indiscriminate actions against drug dealers and smugglers will continue, and lawbreakers will be dealt with firmly.

Safe Cities Authority Uses Tech to Nab Fraudster Preying on Travelers

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority, through modern Artificial Intelligence technology, successfully traced and facilitated arrest of a fraudster who drugged and robbed a foreign national arriving from Dubai.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, the foreign national arrived in Pakistan from Dubai and reached Lahore's Niazi Bus Terminal to travel to Gojra. At the terminal, a fraudster befriended the victim under the guise of sympathy and assistance. The suspect told the citizen that he had brought "Niaz" from Data Darbar and offered him food. He also assured victim that he was travelling to Gojra and would drop him there on the way.

The spokesperson further stated that after consuming drugged food and sitting in the vehicle, the foreign national lost consciousness. The suspect fled after stealing cash worth millions of rupees, the victim's passport, mobile phone, laptop, gold ornaments, and other valuables.

Upon receiving information about the incident, Safe City's Virtual Patrolling Officer immediately initiated action and traced the suspect's vehicle, route, and movement through AI-based surveillance cameras. The Safe City team provided the suspect's location and key information to the police using advanced technology, leading to immediate arrest of the accused.

The spokesperson added that the victim's passport, cash, mobile phone, laptop, and other valuables were recovered from the suspect's possession.

He underscored that Punjab Safe Cities Authority is playing a vital role in timely identification and arrest of criminals through modern technology.

Citizens have also been advised not to accept food or drinks from strangers during travel and immediately report any suspicious situation or emergency by calling 15.

SKANS Multan Achieves Platinum Status, First in South Punjab

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Chief Executive SKANS School of Accountancy Sajid Hussain has said that crossing a major milestone in the educational history of South Punjab, SKANS School of Accountancy Multan Campus has been granted the highest and most prestigious Platinum Status (Platinum Approved Learning Partner) status by the global body ACCA. With this remarkable achievement, SKANS has become the first and only educational institution in the entire South Punjab to receive this prestigious honor.

He expressed these views while addressing the annual distribution award ceremony through video link yesterday.

Expressing happiness over this historic achievement, senior teachers Kashif Adeel, Arsalan Arif and special guest



Shakir Hussain Shakir said that this honor is a proud moment for students and parents of the entire region.

Now the youth of Multan and its surroundings will not have to go to big cities for

world-class chartered accountancy education, because now the best quality education in the world is available in their own city.

Skills has been at the forefront of the world of finance

education in Pakistan for the last three decades, and this success of the Multan campus will open wonderful doors of employment in the international corporate sector for the youth of the region.

Multan Anti Corruption Force Arrested Corruption King Naib Tehsildar

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The former corruption king patwari who was posted in Multan for a long time and currently appointed Naib Tehsildar Multan Chaudhry Qaiser Nadeem has been arrested by the high-powered team of Anti-Corruption Multan along with a magistrate for accepting a bribe of Rs 100,000.

The bribe amount of Rs 100,000 has been recovered from his possession and a case has been registered against him.

Intelligence agencies had started a secret investigation on the complaint of Zafar Labar, a resident of Basti Labar, for not deciding on the land distribution of his father's inherited land for the past one and a half years.



The accused Naib Tehsildar Chaudhry Qaiser Nadeem had earlier received a bribe of Rs 60,000 from Zafar Labar. When Naib Tehsildar Chaudhry

Qaiser Nadeem was demanding more bribe for deciding to distribute the land. In view of public complaints against Naib Tehsildar Chaudhry Qaiser Nadeem, he is being kept under surveillance after the investigation of intelligence agencies.

While the intelligence agencies are conducting further investigations into the various bank accounts and various properties of Deputy Tehsildar Chaudhry Qaiser Nadeem.

The accused Deputy Tehsildar Chaudhry Qaiser Nadeem used to harass his opponents in various land cases on the orders of PPP MPA Kamran Maral and instead of making official decisions on land issues, he used to go to MPA Kamran Maral's camp.

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Pakistan's Last Push for Peace

For the third time in a single week, Pakistan's military and political leadership entered Tehran carrying not weapons, but messages—messages that may determine whether the Middle East steps back from catastrophe or plunges once again into a devastating regional war. On May 22, 2026, Field Marshal Asim Munir, accompanied by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and senior officials, intensified Islamabad's mediation efforts between the United States and Iran, signaling what many now see as the final and perhaps most serious diplomatic push to preserve the fragile ceasefire that halted the U.S.-Iran war on April 8.

What makes this moment extraordinary is not merely the diplomacy itself, but the dramatic shift in geopolitical reality behind it. Only weeks ago, Washington and Tel Aviv appeared determined to continue military escalation against Iran. Today, the same United States that once spoke the language of "maximum pressure" is desperately searching for an exit strategy. Even U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio acknowledged "slight progress" in negotiations while publicly pinning hopes on Pakistani mediation efforts. Meanwhile, President Donald Trump reportedly delayed planned strikes, reflecting mounting political, economic, and strategic fatigue inside the United States itself.

Pakistan's role has become indispensable because both Tehran and Washington trust Islamabad more than any other intermediary currently available. China supports the effort quietly from the background, Gulf states fear another wave of destruction, and Europe lacks

both leverage and unity. Pakistan alone maintains deep strategic relations with the United States while preserving credible diplomatic and security ties with Iran. That balance has elevated Islamabad from a regional actor into perhaps the single most important mediator in the world's most dangerous crisis.

The atmosphere surrounding the mediation effort has generated cautious optimism across much of the world—especially in oil-importing economies already devastated by soaring energy costs. In Africa, South Asia, and parts of Latin America, inflation has exploded as oil prices surged following the partial closure of the Strait of Hormuz. Fertilizer prices, shipping costs, food supply chains, and industrial production have all suffered severe disruptions. Even in the United States, gasoline prices and inflationary pressures have intensified political pressure on the White House.

The American public increasingly sees the conflict as an unnecessary war that delivered enormous costs but little strategic gain. Billions of dollars were spent, advanced ammunition stockpiles were depleted, global markets were shaken, and yet Iran's political system survived. Instead of regime collapse, Tehran emerged more hardened, more nationalistic, and more determined to leverage its geographic advantages.

That reality has created visible cracks between Washington and Tel Aviv. Reports emerging from diplomatic circles suggest that Israeli Prime

Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been aggressively lobbying the White House to continue military operations against Iran. However, for the first time in years, there appears to be a serious divergence between American and Israeli strategic objectives. Israel still seeks decisive military confrontation, while Washington increasingly seeks controlled de-escalation.

This shift reflects hard battlefield and economic realities. Iran not only survived the war but also demonstrated its ability to disrupt the global economy through strategic control of maritime and digital chokepoints. Tehran's tightening grip over Hormuz has become the central issue overshadowing all negotiations. Iran has introduced toll systems and expanded maritime enforcement mechanisms, effectively transforming the waterway into a geopolitical pressure point. Roughly one-fifth of global oil and major LNG shipments normally pass through the strait, making prolonged disruption economically unbearable for much of the world.

Even more alarming for Western strategists is Iran's influence over critical undersea fiber-optic infrastructure connecting Asia, the Gulf, and Europe. Any large-scale disruption in those networks could paralyze communications, financial transactions, and global digital systems. The war has therefore transformed from a purely military confrontation into a broader contest over economic arteries, energy flows,

and technological infrastructure. Yet amid this dangerous environment, Pakistan continues attempting to bridge the divide. Islamabad reportedly conveyed revised Iranian proposals to Washington while simultaneously narrowing differences over sanctions, nuclear oversight, and maritime security guarantees. Sources close to negotiations indicate that a second round of direct U.S.-Iran talks in Islamabad is increasingly likely.

Pakistan's diplomatic effort is not purely altruistic. A destabilized Iran would severely threaten Pakistan's own security. Militancy along Pakistan's western frontier could intensify, sectarian tensions could rise, and regional proxy wars could spill into already fragile border regions. Islamabad also understands that another prolonged Gulf conflict could devastate Pakistan's economy through energy shortages, inflation, and collapsing regional trade.

But beyond national interests, Pakistan also recognizes the historic opportunity before it. If Islamabad successfully brokers a sustainable agreement between Tehran and Washington, it would fundamentally elevate Pakistan's international standing. A country often viewed through the lens of instability would instead emerge as the architect of one of the most important ceasefires of the modern era.

Meanwhile, the scars of war remain deep and painful. Iranian infrastructure suffered severe damage from American and Israeli strikes. Military facilities, industrial centers, and civilian infrastructure were heavily hit. Iranian leadership figures were assassinated. Civilian

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Analysis
Qamar Bashir



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

China coal mine blast kills 90, more missing

A gas explosion at a coal mine in northern China has killed at least 90 people, state media reported on Saturday, the country's biggest mining disaster in 17 years. A total of 247 workers were underground at the time of the blast, which occurred at 7:29 pm (1129 GMT) on Friday at the Liushenyu coal mine in Shanxi province, according to state news agency Xinhua.

At least 90 people had died and 123 others were sent to hospital for treatment, four of whom were in critical or severe condition, state broadcaster CCTV said.

Of those sent for treatment, 33 had returned home as of 2:00 pm on Saturday, it added.

A total of 755 emergency and medical personnel were dispatched to the site, with rescue efforts still ongoing Saturday afternoon, CCTV added.

Friday's explosion was the worst mining disaster in China since 2009, when 108 people were killed in a mine blast in northeast Heilongjiang province.

Survivor and injured miner Wang Yong told CCTV there was a "puff of smoke" and he smelled sulphur.

He recalled seeing people choked by the smoke before he fainted.

"I lay down for about an hour and woke up by myself. I called the people next to me and got out of the mine together," Wang said, according to CCTV.

Helmeted rescuers were carrying stretchers at the site, with ambulances visible in the background, video by CCTV showed.

President Xi Jinping urged "all-out efforts" to treat the injured and called for thorough investigations into the incident, according to Xinhua.

He "emphasised that all regions and departments must draw lessons from this accident, remain constantly vigilant regarding workplace safety... and resolutely prevent and curb the occurrence of major and catastrophic accidents".

A person "responsible for" the company involved in the explosion has been "placed under control in accordance with the law", Xinhua said.

State media initially reported four deaths and dozens trapped after levels of carbon monoxide — a highly toxic, odourless gas — in the mine were found to have "exceeded limits".

Some of those stuck underground were in "critical condition", that report said.

The death toll then jumped sharply as the morning wore on. Shanxi, one of China's poorer provinces, is the centre of the country's coal-mining.

Mine safety in China has improved in recent decades, but accidents still occur in an industry where safety protocols are often lax and regulations vague.

In 2023, a collapse at an open-pit coal mine in the northern Inner Mongolia region killed 53 people.

China is the world's top consumer of coal and the largest greenhouse gas emitter, despite installing renewable energy capacity at record speed.

AIOU Ex-Officers Gathering: Sharing Social, Professional and Institutional Issues of the Community

In today's rapidly changing professional environment, retired and former employees often possess valuable experience, institutional memory, and leadership skills that remain largely untapped after they leave formal service. Their wisdom can continue to benefit institutions and society if meaningful platforms are created to keep them engaged. In this context, gatherings of former officers serve as important forums for reflection, networking, and addressing common concerns. The recent gathering of former officers of Allama Iqbal Open University highlighted not only social interaction but also serious professional, personal, and institutional issues faced by retired members of the community.

Allama Iqbal Open University has played a historic role in promoting distance education across Pakistan. Over the decades, thousands of officers, teachers, administrators, and researchers dedicated their professional lives to strengthening the institution. After retirement or separation from service, many of these professionals often find themselves disconnected from the institution they once served with loyalty and commitment.

One of the most frequently discussed issues during such gatherings is social isolation after retirement. Many former officers experience a sudden shift from active professional routines to limited social engagement. The daily interaction with colleagues, students, and institutional responsibilities disappears, often creating emotional stress and a sense of loneliness. Gatherings provide emotional support by reconnecting old colleagues and reviving friendships.

Another major concern is financial insecurity. Rising inflation, medical expenses, and delayed pension-related matters often create difficulties for retired employees. Many former officers feel that institutions should establish stronger welfare mechanisms to support retired staff members during difficult times.

A significant issue raised by many former officers is the loss of professional identity after retirement. During service, individuals are recognized by their designation, office, and institutional association. However, after retirement, many feel invisible when visiting government departments, universities, or other professional spaces. They often face situations where they are asked for identification but have no institutional card or formal recognition to present.

This creates discomfort and a sense of detachment from the very institutions they once helped build. Many participants emphasized the need for permanent retired employee cards or honorary institutional identity documents.

Former officers also expressed concerns about limited access to institutional facilities after retirement. In some cases, retired staff members face difficulties in entering offices, libraries, or administrative buildings where they spent years serving. This experience can be emotionally painful. Institutions should adopt respectful policies that continue to recognize former employees as valued members of their professional family.

Another important concern discussed during the gathering was the lack of structured communication between retired officers and university administration. Many former employees feel they are no longer informed about major institutional developments, policy changes, or important events. Creating official alumni-style communication networks, newsletters, or retired officers' associations could help maintain their connection with the institution and allow them to contribute their expertise whenever needed.

Professional concerns remain another key area of discussion. Many former officers remain deeply connected to the future of Allama Iqbal Open University and often provide valuable suggestions regarding governance, academic standards, digital reforms, and administrative efficiency. Their decades of experience can offer practical solutions to ongoing institutional challenges.

With rapid technological changes in higher education, many retired officers also feel the need to stay connected with modern developments. The rise of digital learning systems, artificial intelligence, and automation has transformed educational institutions. Former officers believe that institutions should organize orientation sessions to help retired employees remain informed about technological progress.

These gatherings also create mentorship opportunities. Retired officers can guide young professionals by sharing lessons related to leadership, ethics, discipline, and institutional management. Their practical experiences can help younger employees avoid common administrative mistakes.

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Pakistan's Role as a Peace Mediator Between Iran and the United States

Aliza Ali

The post-Cold War international order has increasingly relied on intermediary states to manage tensions between rival powers and regional adversaries. The long-standing confrontation between the United States and the Islamic Republic of Iran remains one of the most complex geopolitical rivalries, shaped by ideological mistrust, sanctions regimes, proxy conflicts, and nuclear proliferation concerns.

The absence of sustained direct engagement between Washington and Tehran has repeatedly created space for third-party diplomatic facilitation by states capable of maintaining access to both sides. Pakistan's emergence as a potential mediator is strategically significant. As a nuclear-armed state located at the crossroads of South Asia and the Middle East, Pakistan maintains historical, cultural, and geographic proximity to Iran while also sustaining diplomatic and security engagement with the United States.

This dual connectivity provides Islamabad with a rare diplomatic niche. As Kofi Annan noted, "Dialogue is not a sign of weakness; it is a sign of strength," highlighting the importance of communication in preventing escalation. Pakistan's potential role therefore reflects both strategic positioning and the broader need for mediation in a fragmented regional environment. Theoretical Framework: Middle-Power Mediation and Arms Control Pakistan's mediating role can be understood through the lens of middle-power diplomacy, which emphasizes the ability of semi-peripheral states to influence international outcomes through negoti-

ation and facilitation rather than coercive force.

Middle powers often lack dominance but can still shape diplomatic processes by reducing mistrust and enabling structured communication between adversaries. In arms control theory, mediation is viewed as a stabilizing mechanism that reduces uncertainty and prevents escalation. During the Cold War, even hostile powers relied on communication channels, confidence-building measures (CBMs), and verification systems to avoid accidental conflict. These principles remain relevant in the Iranian nuclear issue today, where mistrust and strategic ambiguity dominate relations. Henry Kissinger's observation that "Trust is not essential for negotiation; clarity is" is particularly relevant here.

Pakistan's role is not to resolve ideological differences between the United States and Iran but to facilitate clarity, reduce misinterpretation, and create diplomatic pathways for controlled engagement. Within this framework, Pakistan's mediation intersects with conflict prevention theory, nuclear non-proliferation regimes, regional security complex theory, and coercive diplomacy models. Structural Drivers of Pakistan's Mediating Role Pakistan's potential as a mediator is shaped by several structural factors. Its relationship with Iran is grounded in shared borders, energy cooperation potential, and long-standing cultural and religious linkages.

These ties provide Islamabad with access and credibility in Tehran's strategic thinking. Simultaneously, Pakistan maintains a complex but enduring relationship with the United States. Despite fluctuations in trust, both states have cooperated on counterterrorism, regional stability, and economic engagement. This dual

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Punjab Auqaf Department achieves 92% recovery on leased lands amidst efficiency drive

RAWALPINDI: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, stressed the Punjab Government's commitment to transparent administration and efficient management of Auqaf assets through accountability, professionalism, and effective monitoring. During a review meeting in Rawalpindi, he discussed leased lands, contracts, revenue targets, and departmental performance. Zonal Administrator Rawalpindi Ayaz Lashari and managers presented performance data. In the leased lands sector, 92% of the Rs 3,049,000 target was recovered by June, totaling Rs 2,801,340. This included Rs 1,617,749 in expanded recoveries, Rs 1,050,641 from previous auctions, and Rs 132,950 in May. For auctions and contracts, Rs 19,782,762 was recovered against a target of Rs 32,167,699, achieving 62%. Recoveries comprised Rs 8,084,312 in expanded income, Rs



9,186,150 from prior auctions, and Rs 2,512,300 in May, with Rs 14,897,237

remaining. Dr. Bhutta highlighted the department's role in safeguarding religious endowment properties for public welfare. He commended the 92% recovery in leased lands and urged officers to expedite contract target achievement, adopt modern practices, maintain financial discipline, and meet benchmarks. He also emphasized strengthening monitoring and institutional efficiency for better service delivery and public trust. Later, Dr. Bhutta visited the Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Ghani, offering prayers for Pakistan's peace, prosperity, stability, unity, harmony, and progress.

Later, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta visited the revered Shrine of Hazrat Abdul Ghani, where he offered Fataha and special prayers for the peace, prosperity, and stability of the country. He also prayed for national unity, harmony, and the continued progress and development of Pakistan.

Governor Sindh presents shield to Abid Lashari Tamgha-e-Imtiaz during PBDN Annual Awards 2026



KARACHI: Abid Lashari was honored with a shield of appreciation by Syed Nehal Hashmi during the Annual Awards Ceremony 2026 organized by Pakistan Business Disability Network in Karachi on 19th May 2026.

The ceremony was organized to recognize contributions toward disability inclusion, empowerment, and social development in Pakistan. Mr. Lashari was appreciated for his remarkable services in the disability sector and for receiving the prestigious civil award Tamgha-e-Imtiaz.

Among those present on the occasion were Majid Aziz, Nazir Ali, Muhammad Ubaid, Leena and representatives from partner organizations and civil society.

Governor Sindh appreciated the efforts of Mr. Lashari for promoting the rights, rehabilitation, and inclusion of persons with disabilities across Sindh and Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Lashari thanked PBDN for the honor and reaffirmed his commitment to continue working for an inclusive and accessible society for all.

FIA Balochistan Zone Achieves Major Successes in FERA Cases Against Hawala/Hundi Network

On the special directions of the Director FIA Balochistan Zone Quetta, Muhammad Behram Khan, the FIA, Chaman, has achieved significant progress in its ongoing crackdown against Hawala/Hundi operators and illegal currency exchange networks operating in border areas.

During a series of successful operations conducted in Chaman, multiple cases were registered under Sections 8 & 23 of the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act (FERA) 1947 (Amended 2020), along with relevant provisions of the Foreigners Act 1946. The accused persons involved in illegal Hawala/Hundi business and unlawful foreign exchange activities were arrested and subsequently prosecuted before the Court of the District & Sessions Judge, Chaman.

The cases were professionally investigated and diligently pursued by Investigation Officer Inspector Muhammad Idrees Khan under the supervision of Assistant Director Nadeem Ghafar, resulting in convictions in six separate cases.

As a result of these successful prosecutions: Several accused persons involved in illegal Hawala/Hundi operations were convicted by the competent court.

Foreign nationals involved in unlawful financial activities were deported back to Afghanistan.

Cash amounting to Rs. 1.8 million was confiscated in favour of the State. Various convicts were awarded fines by the court.

Sector coupling reforms, renewable integration proposed to overcome power losses

ISLAMABAD: Energy experts propose sector coupling, smart demand-side management, renewable energy integration, and localized manufacturing to tackle Pakistan's power sector losses, reduce wind energy curtailment, and attract Chinese investment under CPEC.

A policy dialogue highlighted issues like excess generation capacity, declining industrial demand, and renewable energy losses due to transmission bottlenecks and grid mismanagement. Solutions suggested include dynamic electricity tariffs, battery storage, EV charging infrastructure, industrial electrification, and coordinated policymaking to enhance grid stability and lower capacity payment burdens.

Muhammad Umer of SDPI noted Pakistan's low system utilization despite significant installed capacity, with thermal plants underutilized and wind projects curtailed, causing substantial financial losses.

He recommended sector coupling models (power-to-transport, power-to-industry) to absorb surplus electricity, incentivized daytime EV charging, dynamic tariffs, and flexible industrial loads to flatten the demand curve. Simulation models indicate net system benefits from dynamic EV charging tied to wholesale pricing. Sector coupling cells, utility-scale battery storage, and technology transfer under the Power Sector Indigenization Plan were also suggested.

Tanvir Ahmed Mirza of United

Energy urged a shift from conventional power projects to renewables and sector coupling, proposing pilot renewable-powered industrial zones for exports under CPEC Phase-II, with targeted incentives for industries.

He also advocated for EV charging corridors and electric heavy vehicles collaboration with China, and expanded ethanol production from sugarcane.

Irfan Ahmed, a wind power expert, identified weak transmission, shrinking industrial demand, and grid modernization gaps as causes for wind energy curtailment in Sindh, leading to significant compensation payments and investor confidence erosion.

He recommended integrating renewables with underutilized nuclear

plants, provincially integrated energy plans, and local manufacturing of wind components, including concrete towers.

Kamil Maqsood highlighted ongoing projects for transmission bottlenecks and renewable integration, such as battery storage and smart meter deployment.

He emphasized the importance of demand-side management, integrated planning, and private sector participation.

Batteries, transmission systems, smart meters, charging infrastructure, and grid digitization represent key investment opportunities for Chinese investors, requiring improved coordination for effective cross-sectoral energy integration.

Martyrdom Anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq

On the 36 martyrdom anniversary of Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq, it is a visible fact that Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq remains most prominent religious, social, and political personalities in the modern history of Kashmir. Revered by thousands across the Kashmir Valley, he combined religious scholarship with public leadership and emerged as an influential voice for the aspirations and rights of the Kashmiri people. His sermons, speeches, and public gatherings attracted massive crowds, reflecting his deep connection with ordinary people and the trust they placed in his leadership.

Moulvi Farooq was born on 21 December 1944 in Srinagar in an influential Mirwaiz dynasty that traditionally held the title of Mirwaiz of Kashmir. He received his early education at home before studying at Islamia and Oriental College, where he focused on theology, Islam, Arabic language, and literature. From an early age, he displayed qualities of scholarship and leadership that later shaped his influ-

ential public role. In 1968, after Mirwaiz Yusuf Shah, Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq succeeded to the position of Mirwaiz of Kashmir. As the chief preacher of the historic Jamia Masjid Srinagar, he became one of the most respected religious authorities in the Kashmir Valley. His sermons at Jamia Masjid regularly drew thousands of worshippers and listeners who admired his clarity, courage, and commitment to the people.

At the young age of nineteen, Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq emerged as a prominent leader during the agitation surrounding the disappearance of the holy relic, Moi-e-Muqaddas.

From the Hazratbal Shrine. The incident deeply hurt the sentiments of Kashmiris and sparked widespread protests across the Valley. Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq led public demonstrations demanding the recovery and protection of the sacred relic. During this movement, the All Jammu and

Kashmir Awami Action Committee was formed under his leadership, and he became its chairman. The organization soon developed into an important political and social platform representing the aspirations and concerns of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Although primarily a religious leader, Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq gradually expanded his role into socio-political mobilization. He consistently advocated for the rights, dignity, and political aspirations of Kashmiris. He believed that the people of Kashmir possessed the right to self-determination to shape their final

destiny according to their wishes and aspirations. Through peaceful political engagement, he highlighted the sufferings of the Kashmiri people and called for justice and dialogue. Mirwaiz Molvi Farooq's popularity stemmed from his close relationship with the masses. His speeches reso-



nated deeply with people because he understood their hardships and represented their emotions and concerns. He remained committed to preserving Kashmiri identity, culture, and religious values while also promoting education, social reform, and unity among the people.

After the tragic assassination of Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq in 1990, his son, Mirwaiz Muhammad Umar Farooq, inherited the position of Mirwaiz of Kashmir and continued

the legacy of his father. Over the years, Mirwaiz Umar Farooq emerged as one of the most influential contemporary voices on Kashmir. Through national and international engagements, he consistently highlighted the Kashmir issue at various global forums, including meetings linked with the United Nations, interactions with State Department officials, discussions at the UN offices in Geneva, and engagements and statements in the Sessions of the Organ-

isation of Islamic Cooperation and interactions with diplomats across the globe. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has played an important role in keeping alive the Kashmiri freedom movement and advocating the right to self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir and each and every fora of the world. Through sermons, speeches, and peaceful political advocacy, he has continued to emphasize dialogue, justice, and the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute. His leadership has helped preserve the historical significance of the Mirwaiz institution as both a religious authority and a representative voice of the Kashmiri people.

The contributions of Mirwaiz Molvi Muhammad Farooq and the continued leadership of Mirwaiz Dr Umar Farooq remain deeply embedded in the political, religious, and social consciousness of Kashmir. Their legacy continues to inspire generations seeking dignity, justice, legitimate right to self-determination of Kashmiris and peace for the people of the region.

Zafar Bakhtawari Honors Uzbek Scholars, Championing Pakistan-Uzbekistan Cultural Ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of the Pakistan Cultural Forum, renowned literary, cultural, social, and business personality Zafar Bakhtawari hosted a dinner at his residence in honor of distinguished Uzbek scholars and writers Professor Tash Mirza and Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman.

A large number of eminent personalities from literary, academic, diplomatic, cultural, and social circles attended the gathering, including Professor Fateh Muhammad Malik, Professor Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Professor Dr. Najeeba Arif, Professor Qaisra Alvi, Adil Mirza, Farman Ali, Tahir Farooq, Naeem Khan, Shahbaz Chohan, and other distinguished guests.

Addressing the occasion, Zafar Bakhtawari said that he respects and admires every person who, while living in any part of the world, plays a role in promoting Pakistan, Pakistani identity, the

Urdu language, and Pakistani culture and civilization. He described Professor Tash Mirza and Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman as his "heroes" and said that the compilation of an Urdu-Uzbek dictionary consisting of four thousand common words by Tash Mirza is a remarkable scholarly achievement and an excellent means of bringing two civilizations, two societies, and two countries closer together. He also appreciated the services of Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman for the promotion of Urdu at Tashkent University and her Urdu translations of Uzbek short stories.

He further said that his first meeting with Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman took place in 1995 at an event organized by the Pakistan Academy of Letters. Zafar Bakhtawari also expressed his resolve to organize future events highlighting Mughal Emperor Zahir-ud-Din Babur and the great Uzbek national poet Alisher Navoi.

In his remarks, Professor Fateh Muhammad Malik said that he now attends very few functions, but he was extremely pleased to participate in this gathering hosted by Zafar Bakhtawari in honor of his distinguished scholar and friend Tash Mirza. He paid tribute to Zafar Bakhtawari for carrying the banner of literature and culture for a long time.

Professor Dr. Saleem Mazhar, Director General of the National Language Promotion Department, said that the special sitting arranged by the Pakistan Cultural Forum and Zafar Bakhtawari in honor of Tash Mirza and Mukhaya Abdul Rahman is a clear reflection of his love for Pakistan and culture. He remarked that the work which institutions should be doing is being carried out by Zafar Bakhtawari through his personal efforts. He further said that personalities associated with literature and fine arts play a vital role in bringing nations and cultures closer together.

Professor Dr. Najeeba Arif, Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters, said that her first meeting with Professor Tash Mirza was also in 1995, and today, thanks to Zafar Bakhtawari, they were able to meet again. She said that Zafar Bakhtawari's love for Urdu and Pakistan is highly commendable, and that such gatherings would further strengthen closeness, brotherhood, and cultural harmony between the two countries in the future.

On behalf of the Uzbek guests, Professor Mukhaya Abdul Rahman expressed her gratitude and said that she has always taken pride in the fact that her life and scholarly journey have remained closely linked with the Urdu language. She shared that her mother enrolled her in an Urdu school instead of an English school, for which she remains grateful to her late mother. She said that everyone in her home knows and speaks Urdu, and that guests coming from abroad



are always welcomed with one sentence: "We love you."

She paid rich tribute to Professor Tash Mirza for his services to the Urdu language and said that she herself is among

the fortunate students who learned Urdu from him. She also described Zafar Bakhtawari as a personality who has devoted his life to the promotion of Pakistani identity and cultural harmony.

At the conclusion of the event, the participants expressed their commitment to further strengthening the literary and cultural relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
167,844.24	168,514.44
Day's High	Day's Low
169,624.77	167,480.66
Index Value	Change
16,332,208,600	-670.20
Percentage	Time
-0.4%	22 May, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,466.26	+22.79
Percentage	Time
+0.22%	22 May, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
50,579.70	+294.04
Percentage	Time
+0.58%	22 May, 4:45 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
63,339.07	+1,654.93
Percentage	Time
+2.68%	22 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.82	202.68
Bahrain Dinar	731	741.75
Canadian Dollar	200.71	205.65
China Yuan	40.05	41.15
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	322.10	328.10
Hong Kong Dollar	35.03	36.03
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7423	1.8424
Kuwaiti Dinar	878.70	889.25
Malaysian Ringgit	65.25	66.35
New Zealand \$	161.57	164.85
Norwegians Krone	27.75	28.05
Omani Riyal	720.38	731.25
Qatari Riyal	74.24	76.23
Saudi Riyal	73.95	74.80
Singapore Dollar	216.03	220.15
Swedish Korona	30.35	30.65
Swiss Franc	352.78	356.68
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	75.75	76.80
UK Pound Sterling	372.91	378.10
US Dollar	278.90	279.55

Pakistan Expands Agricultural Machinery Cooperation with China through High-Level Engagements in Changzhou

Commerce Desk

CHANGZHOU, CHINA: Pakistan's Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, and SAPM on Industries and Production, Haroon Akhtar Khan, visited agricultural equipment manufacturers and technology firms in Changzhou, China, to boost agricultural mechanization and modern farming.

They met with Changfa Group, discussing enhanced cooperation in farm mechanization, introducing advanced equipment, and potential joint ventures for local assembly to aid Pakistani farmers and improve productivity. Changfa Group presented its modern manufacturing systems and technological advancements, exploring proposals for affordable and efficient machinery for Pakistan and encouraging modern farming techniques.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between Kingsbridge Ventures and Changfa Group to foster cooperation in agricultural machinery production, technical

collaboration, and phased localization in Pakistan, aiming to strengthen farm mechanization and support Pakistan's agricultural growth and food security.

The delegation also explored smart energy technologies with StarCharge Group for agricultural infrastructure, energy-efficient systems, and rural development in Pakistan. Discussions with Changzhou Municipal Government officials focused on agricultural innovation, technology-driven growth, rural industrial development, and investment opportunities, with Chinese leadership sharing insights on modernizing agriculture.

Minister Hussain stressed the importance of modern agricultural machinery for increasing productivity, reducing costs, and ensuring food security, reiterating the government's commitment to international cooperation and investment for agricultural modernization and farmer welfare.

SAPM Khan highlighted Pakistan's focus on creating an investment-friendly environment and fostering technology transfer and



industrial cooperation in agriculture-linked machinery localization, and drive economic sectors. He believes partnerships with Chinese development through innovation and modern companies will enhance local capacity, promote technology.

Press conference

LAHORE: Syeda Ghulam Fatima Gilani from the Bonded Labor Liberation Front (BLLF) addressing a press conference at Lahore Press Club in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan Textile Exports Plummet Amidst Crippling Costs and Taxation



Abdul Majid

Pakistan's textile exports face severe decline due to high production costs, heavy taxation, expensive energy, and liquidity crunches. The Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA) and other industry bodies are demanding immediate government intervention, particularly in the Federal Budget 2026-27.

These views were expressed by Ahmad Afzal Awan, S. Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Hosiery Manufacturers & Exporters Association (PHMA), while addressing a joint press conference held at PHMA House.

The press conference was attended by Farooq Yousaf Sheikh, President Faisal-

abad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI), Arif Ahsan Malik, former Chairman APBUMA, Waheed Khaliq Ramay, Chairman Power Looms Owners Association, Naveed Gulzar, Chairman APTMA, Chaudhry Muhammad Nawaz Cotton Power Looms Association, Chaudhry Salam Ali, Mian Kashif Zia, Javed Aslam, Shaheen Tabassum and other prominent industrialists.

Key demands include reducing industrial electricity tariffs to 9.0 cents per unit (on par with regional competitors) and abolishing Peak Hour Charges. Gas prices should be lowered to \$6 per MMBTU. Industry leaders also called for a single digital portal to streamline dealings with government

departments, reducing the current burden of interacting with ~25 agencies. They highlighted that current tax rates are around 60%, and additional levies are unsustainable. High electricity bills, exacerbated by the burden of idle IPPs, affect both consumers and businesses, necessitating significant price reductions. The Punjab Infrastructure Development Cess on imports and exports is also criticized for increasing costs and reducing export competitiveness. The power loom sector, in particular, is under severe financial pressure and requires an immediate relief package. Furthermore, the government owes approximately Rs. 327 billion in outstanding sales tax, income tax, customs rebates, and duty drawback refunds.

Islamabad Chamber President Calls for One-Window Operation to Boost Investment

Commerce Desk

Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI), stresses that Pakistan's global competitiveness hinges on business-friendly policy reforms and an effective "One-Window Operation."

He highlighted that regulatory hurdles, complex taxation, policy inconsistencies, and bureaucratic delays impede business and investment.

Mehmood urged the

government to adopt long-term, consistent economic policies, simplify tax systems, reduce business costs, digitize procedures, and ensure transparency.

A centralized one-window facility is crucial to streamline approvals and reduce red tape, thereby attracting local and foreign investment.

He emphasized the private sector's vital role in economic development, export growth, and job creation, advocating for its facilitation as a national priority.

K-Electric CEO Vows Crackdown on Power Theft



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: K-Electric CEO Syed Muhammad Taha has pledged to crack down on power theft and accelerate infrastructure upgrades for SITE industries, aiming to improve service delivery and resolve industrialists' long-standing grievances. He outlined technological enhancements to outage management and monitoring systems, alongside modernization of distribution infrastructure, promising a resolution to the Multi-Year Tariff matter by September. KE is collaborating with law enforcement to combat illegal connections and power theft, while prioritizing infrastructure upgrades in

industrial feeders and PMT zones, and improving emergency response times. The CEO acknowledged jurisdictional complexities causing repair delays and highlighted the need to upgrade 11 KVA transmission lines to 33 KVA, with ISPA charges being addressed at the SIFC level. SITE Association of Industry officials welcomed the CEO, emphasizing the industrial area's significant contribution to exports and expressing optimism for improved coordination. Concerns raised included fault detection, operational coordination, complaint resolution, technical faults, cross-subsidy impacts, industrial competitiveness, and timely fault resolution.

Rickshaw Drivers Protest Rising Fuel Prices and Inflation in Lahore



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Milli Rickshaw Union (MRU) held a protest demonstration at Kalma Chowk against rising petroleum prices, inflation and unfair traffic challans.

Hundreds of rickshaw drivers participated in the protest by throwing their vehicle keys on the ground and chanting slogans against the government. Participants carried banners and placards, while several protesters wore garlands made of bread and electricity bills as a symbolic protest against rising living costs.

The protest was attended by General Secretary PMML Lahore Chaudhry Hameed ul Hassan Gujjar, President MRU Punjab Rana Shamshad and Lahore spokesperson Abdul Hanan, along with other leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, Rana Shamshad said continuous inflation and rising fuel prices had made life extremely difficult for rickshaw drivers.

RCCI Pre-Budget Seminar: Finance Minister Vows Tax Relief, Zero Tolerance for Overreach

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: At a pre-budget seminar organized by the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kayani addressed the business community. He assured zero tolerance for high-handedness by tax authorities and hinted at relief for taxpayers and the

salaried class in the upcoming federal budget, slated for the first week of June. Kayani acknowledged the limited fiscal space due to IMF program commitments but highlighted the government's success in achieving economic stability over the past two years, marked by fiscal discipline, improved foreign exchange reserves, and restored confidence from international

financial institutions. He noted the Pakistani rupee's stability despite regional conflicts and the absence of fuel shortages. The minister reiterated the government's focus on boosting exports and strengthening the national economy to reduce reliance on IMF programs. He announced special measures for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), including extending the utilization

period for imported goods by small exporters to 18 months. Kayani affirmed ongoing consultations with the business community and commitment to providing maximum possible relief amidst global economic pressures, with efforts underway to enhance business facilitation. Regarding privatization, Kayani reported rapid progress, with the completion of Pakistan

International Airlines' privatization and ongoing efforts for three power distribution companies. He described privatization as a sustainable solution for sector performance improvement. Additionally, he mentioned the Prime Minister's approval of a housing finance scheme to support the construction sector and stimulate economic activity. RCCI President Usman Shaukat



presented demands including the abolition of the super tax, reduced corporate and sales tax rates, and an increased minimum taxable income threshold for the salaried class, alongside a call to lower the cost of doing

business and implement a long-term industrial policy. Former President Sohail Altaf urged an end to harassment by government departments and officials, stressing the need for better business facilitation.

Uzbekistan National Team Given Grand FIFA World Cup Send-Off

Sports Desk

TASHKENT, UZBEKISTAN: Coca-Cola, together with the Uzbekistan Football Association, held an official send-off ceremony for Uzbekistan's national football team ahead of the 2026 FIFA World Cup. The event brought together tens of thousands of fans, media representatives, partners, and football supporters from across the country.

President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev attended the ceremony and officially opened the event. The head of state personally expressed support for the national team ahead of its participation in the FIFA World Cup, highlighting the special significance of this historic achievement for the country.

"Our footballers can rightfully be called heroes of our time, who have opened a new page in the history of Uzbekistan. They have brought great joy to our people," the president said.

The head of state stressed that there would be no easy matches at the World Cup, where Uzbekistan will face Portugal, Colombia, and DR Congo. At the same time, he noted that the players had already entered the country's history and should now represent the nation with full dedication and without unnecessary pressure.

During the World Cup matches, the team will be supported at stadiums by fan clubs, thousands of supporters, and Uzbek citizens living in the United States.

"Our people believe in you, the President believes in you. Go onto the field with confidence, play from the heart, and *dosroyino* defend the honor of the Motherland," the president said.

Ahead of the ceremony, the players and coaching staff of the national team



met with President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, which became an important and inspiring moment for the squad before the upcoming tournament.

The main event of the evening was a friendly match involving the Uzbekistan national team at Bunyodkor Stadium. The squad was divided into Team A and Team B.

The stadium stands were filled with supporters waving flags, chanting, and applauding the players. For many guests, it was a unique opportunity to see the national team in this lineup ahead of its historic participation in the 2026 FIFA

World Cup. Team B won the match 4-3.

Uzbekistan captain Eldor Shomurodov said the support shown to the national team gives the players additional strength and confidence.

"I think this will become a major motivation for the entire team. All of us feel proud, and the squad has a strong desire to perform *dosroyino* at the World Cup," he said.

Midfielder Abbosbek Fayzullayev noted that the players constantly feel support from both the state and the fans. He added that the team is mentally and physically prepared for the tournament.



Uzbekistan head coach Fabio Cannavaro stressed that participation in the World Cup is a special event.

"The meeting with the President of Uzbekistan gives us additional responsibility and motivation. It is also an extra incentive to represent Uzbekistan *dosroyino* at the World Cup," Cannavaro said.

"We will do everything possible to perform *dosroyino* at the World Cup and give our all on the field. We want all fans to be proud of our team," he added.

Kazumasa Mukae, CEO of Coca-Cola in Uzbekistan, said the company was honored to stand alongside the national team during this historic moment.

"For The Coca-Cola Company, it is a great honor to be with Uzbekistan's national team today during this historic moment. Coca-Cola is a global brand with the heart of every country where it is produced. We are sincerely proud to have become part of this important event — the send-off of Uzbekistan's national football team to the 2026 FIFA World Cup.

"Every victory of Uzbekistan is not only a triumph for the nation, but also a source of pride for the entire Coca-Cola



system worldwide. Today we are not just partners, but also fans wholeheartedly supporting our team. We sincerely wish our players strength, confidence, and great success on the world stage. Forward with pride — Olga, O'zbekiston!" he said.

Before the main part of the event, guests at the stadium took part in interactive zones, themed photo areas, contests, and entertainment activities. Korzinka, a long-standing partner of the Coca-Cola system in Uzbekistan and a partner of the Uzbekistan Football Association, organized special areas where guests could purchase Coca-Cola products and mascots representing the national team symbol "White Wolves."

Performers at the event included DJ Piligrim, Munisa Rizayeva, Shahriyov, Sabina Mustaeva, Gulomjon Yokubov, Jahongir Poziljonov, Ozodbek Nazarbekov, and other popular artists. During the performances, spectators sang along to famous songs, while the stadium stands turned into a united fan zone supporting the national team.

With the support of Coca-Cola, the Collecting Voices project — a nationwide flash mob in support of the national team — was launched across all regions of the

country. During the ceremony, a special video combining the voices of fans from across Uzbekistan was shown on the stadium screens, becoming a symbol of national unity.

The event concluded with Uzbek pop star Sevara Nazarkhan performing "Olga O'zbekiston!" on the field, creating one of the most emotional moments of the evening.

The ceremony became not only a major sporting event, but also a celebration of national pride, uniting fans in support of Uzbekistan's national team. The country's historic qualification for the 2026 FIFA World Cup marked an important milestone for Uzbek football and millions of supporters across the nation.

Coca-Cola and the Uzbekistan Football Association thanked all guests and fans who became part of the memorable evening and wished the national team success at the upcoming World Cup.

The 2026 FIFA World Cup will take place from June 11 to July 19 in the United States, Canada, and Mexico.

Following the draw, Uzbekistan was placed in Group K alongside Portugal, DR Congo, and Colombia.

Ronaldo finally wins Saudi Pro League title with Al-Nassr after dramatic season

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Cristiano Ronaldo has finally lifted the Saudi Pro League trophy with Al-Nassr after the club defeated Damac 4-1 on Thursday to secure the title for the first time since 2019.

Ronaldo scored twice in the match, delivering a decisive performance as Al-Nassr sealed the championship and ended a three-year wait for major domestic success since his arrival from Manchester United in December 2022.

The Portuguese forward has now scored more than 127 goals in all



competitions for the club, with winning the Saudi Pro League title seen as his primary objective when he joined.

Al-Nassr's victory marks the 11th league title in the club's history, while it is the eighth league championship of Ronaldo's career, having previously

won domestic titles in England with Manchester United, Spain with Real Madrid and Italy with Juventus.

Since Ronaldo's arrival, several high-profile players have joined the Saudi Pro League, including Karim Benzema, N'Golo Kanté, Riyad Mahrez, Sadio Mané and Neymar, raising the league's global profile.

However, the Saudi football project has faced scrutiny in recent months, with concerns raised over refereeing decisions and allegations of favoritism towards certain clubs. Ronaldo himself has also criticised aspects of the league environment during the season.

New York City offering \$50 World Cup tickets for residents

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: New York City will offer its residents a chance to snag \$50 tickets to World Cup games in New Jersey this summer, Mayor Zohran Mamdani said on Thursday, with 1,000 affordable tickets up for grabs through a lottery system.

The discounted tickets come with free round-trip bus transportation to the stadium in East Rutherford, New Jersey and will be split across five group-stage and two knockout games, with 150 tickets available per match.

"We are making sure that working people will not be priced out of the game that they helped to create," Mamdani told a press conference in the city's Harlem neighbourhood, quipping that the \$50 price tag was the equivalent



of five coffees in New York City.

Starting on May 25, residents will be able to enter a lottery for a chance to purchase the tickets, which will be non-transferable and distributed to winners at the bus boarding location in an effort to prevent scalping.

Ticket affordability has been a key issue for the tournament being co-hosted by the US, Canada and

Mexico.

According to TicketData, a ticket price tracking platform, the average "get-in" cost for a group-stage match in New York as of Wednesday was \$864. Some resale tickets are listed for thousands of dollars across various platforms, including FIFA's official resale and exchange marketplace.

The best seats for the final on July 19 in New Jersey were put on sale for nearly \$33,000.

FIFA President Gianni Infantino defended high World Cup ticket prices this month.

"This is the moment to make sure that everybody is included, that everybody is lifted up," said New York City Councilman Yusef Salaam.

Winners of the lottery will be able to purchase up to two tickets each.

Pakistan's Last Push for Peace

Continued from Page 4

casualties reportedly included hundreds of innocent children, including students killed during missile strikes that shocked much of the world. Lebanon, Gaza, and parts of the broader Middle East also endured renewed devastation as regional proxy fronts reignited simultaneously.

Israel itself suffered unprecedented pressure from continuous missile, drone, and ballistic attacks that disrupted civilian life and exposed vulnerabilities previously unseen. Lebanese displacement reached catastrophic levels, while Palestinians in Gaza continued facing massive casualties amid ongoing Israeli operations.

Against this backdrop, Trump's recent remarks about war financing triggered fresh controversy. His assertion that Venezuelan resources had effectively covered the cost of military operations fueled accusations that the conflict was

driven by resource exploitation rather than genuine security concerns. Critics argue the war achieved little except global instability, rising inflation, diplomatic isolation, and public anger.

That public anger now shapes American politics. Ordinary Americans increasingly question why taxpayer money was spent on another Middle Eastern conflict while domestic economic pressures intensify at home. The political appetite for endless war has sharply declined. Washington's current search for a face-saving diplomatic exit reflects not only military realities but also electoral calculations.

This is precisely where Pakistan's mediation becomes critical. Islamabad appears to be offering both Tehran and Washington a pathway toward compromise without humiliating either side. Iran can claim strategic resilience and recognition of its regional leverage, while the United States can present diplomacy

as a responsible effort to stabilize global markets and prevent wider catastrophe.

The coming days may therefore prove decisive. If Pakistan succeeds in bringing both parties back to direct negotiations in Islamabad, the world could witness the beginning of a broader regional reset. If talks fail, however, the consequences could be devastating — not only for the Middle East, but for global trade, energy markets, food security, and international stability itself.

For now, one reality has become undeniable: after months of destruction, threats, sanctions, missile strikes, and global economic pain, diplomacy — led unexpectedly by Pakistan — has become the world's last and best hope.

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AIOU Ex-Officers Gathering: Sharing Social, Professional and Institutional Issues of the Community

Continued from Page 4

Another important issue discussed is healthcare support. Many retired officers face increasing medical challenges and believe institutions should negotiate healthcare packages, insurance facilities, or medical partnerships for former employees.

The preservation of institutional history was another major concern. Former officers possess firsthand knowledge of important milestones, policies, and organizational transitions. Their experiences should be documented to preserve the institutional legacy of Allama Iqbal Open University.

Such gatherings also promote social harmony through informal discussions, shared meals, and collective activities. These interactions reduce stress and strengthen long-term friendships.

Participants also proposed the creation of welfare associations, scholarship funds, and emergency support systems for former employees and their families. Such initiatives could provide long-term benefits for the wider community.

In Pakistan, retired professionals are often forgotten despite their lifelong contributions. Institutions must create formal platforms to engage former employees through

advisory councils, seminars, and regular reunions.

In conclusion, the gathering of former officers of Allama Iqbal Open University was not merely a social event; it was a meaningful discussion on identity, dignity, institutional belonging, and future collaboration. Addressing these concerns can strengthen relationships between institutions and their former employees while ensuring that valuable experience continues to benefit society.

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Pakistan's Role as a Peace Mediator Between Iran and the United States

Continued from Page 4

access enables Pakistan to act as a communication bridge between two adversarial powers. Pakistan's own security environment further reinforces its interest in preventing escalation. Regional instability in the Middle East has direct consequences for Pakistan's energy security, internal stability, and western border management.

As Imran Khan once emphasized, "No country can prosper in isolation when its neighborhood is burning." This reflects Pakistan's structural dependence on regional stability, making mediation a strategic necessity rather than a purely diplomatic choice. Mediation Dynamics and Nuclear Arms

Control Implications The most important dimension of Pakistan's mediation lies in its implications for nuclear arms control. The United States-Iran dispute centers on uranium enrichment, breakout capacity, and the possibility of nuclear weaponization. In such a high-risk environment, mediation plays a critical role in reducing misperception and preventing escalation.

One key function of mediation is deescalation of nuclear signaling. By enabling indirect communication, Pakistan can help reduce the risk of misinterpretation during crises involving military movements or sanctions pressure. Even limited communication channels can significantly lower the probability of unintended escalation in nuclear

arized conflicts.

A second dimension is the revival of negotiated frameworks similar to the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). Although the JCPOA has faced major setbacks, it remains the most significant reference point for nuclear diplomacy with Iran. As Barack Obama stated, "The choice is not between diplomacy and war; it is between diplomacy and either war or a flawed agreement." This underscores the importance of diplomatic engagement even in highly constrained environments.

Third, Pakistan can facilitate confidence-building measures such as phased sanctions relief, inspection protocols, and enrichment limitations. These mechanisms are central

to modern arms control practice and are essential for building gradual trust between adversarial states.

Through such facilitation, Pakistan contributes to reducing nuclear risks without directly imposing solutions. Regional Stability and Strategic Spillover Effects Pakistan's mediation efforts also carry broader implications for regional stability. The United States-Iran rivalry is deeply embedded in Middle Eastern geopolitics, particularly due to the strategic importance of maritime routes such as the Strait of Hormuz, through which a large share of global oil trade passes.

A military escalation between the United States and Iran would likely disrupt global

energy markets, intensify proxy conflicts in Iraq, Syria, and Yemen, and increase militarization across the Gulf region.

These consequences would extend beyond the Middle East and directly affect neighboring regions, including Pakistan.

For Pakistan, instability in Iran or the Gulf would create pressures along its western frontier, including refugee flows, security risks, and economic disruptions.

As Ban Ki-moon once noted, "No region can be secure if its neighborhood is unstable." This highlights the interconnected nature of modern security systems, where regional conflicts rapidly produce transnational consequences.

Therefore, Pakistan's media-

tion is not symbolic diplomacy but a practical mechanism for reducing systemic instability in a highly interconnected regional order. Constraints and Limitations Despite its strategic position, Pakistan's mediating capacity faces significant structural constraints.

The most important limitation is the absence of coercive power. Unlike global actors, Pakistan cannot enforce compliance between the United States and Iran, making its role strictly facilitative rather than decisive. Another major constraint is the deep mistrust between Washington and Tehran.

Decades of hostility, sanctions, and ideological confrontation have hardened positions on both sides, limiting the flex-

ibility required for meaningful compromise.

In such conditions, even credible mediation efforts face limited room for maneuver. Pakistan's internal challenges also restrict its diplomatic effectiveness. Economic instability, political volatility, and competing foreign policy priorities reduce its ability to sustain long-term mediation initiatives at the highest strategic level.

Finally, maintaining neutrality remains a persistent challenge. Effective mediation requires sustained credibility with all parties, and even perceived alignment with one side can weaken Pakistan's diplomatic usefulness.

The writer is student of International Relations.

Meeting

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir meets Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian in Tehran.



Photo: AFP

Field Marshal concludes 'productive' Iran visit

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir has concluded a short but significant official visit to Iran, during which he held high-level meetings with the Iranian leadership aimed at advancing regional peace and ongoing mediation efforts, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Saturday.

According to the military's media wing, Field Marshal Munir met Iranian President Dr Masoud Pezeshkian, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni. The meetings focused on regional peace and stability, post-ceasefire developments, de-escalation efforts and ways to accelerate the ongoing negotiation and mediation

process.

The ISPR said the discussions centred on achieving lasting peace in the region and intensifying consultations to help all parties reach a final and mutually acceptable understanding.

Both sides agreed that diplomacy, dialogue and sustained engagement remained the most effective means of resolving current tensions and disputes.

According to the state-

ment, encouraging progress was achieved during critical negotiations held over the past 24 hours, with positive movement reported towards a final settlement.

The ISPR added that all meetings were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere and played an important role in advancing the ongoing mediation process.

The Iranian leadership appreciated Pakistan's sincere and positive role in promoting

regional peace and resolving disputes through dialogue, the statement said.

Iranian officials acknowledged that Pakistan had consistently supported efforts aimed at reducing tensions and encouraging negotiated solutions to regional conflicts.

Field Marshal Munir was warmly received upon arrival in Tehran by Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni along with senior civilian and military officials.

Nine terrorists killed in Quetta operations, four CTD personnel martyred



Bureau Report

QUETTA: At least nine terrorists were killed during a major Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) operation in Quetta's Panjpai and Nohsar areas, while four CTD personnel embraced martyrdom and six others were injured in intense gun battles, officials said on Saturday.

According to a CTD spokesperson, the militants belonged to Fitna al-Khwarij and Fitna al-Hindustan and had infiltrated from Afghanistan before taking shelter in the outskirts of Quetta.

The operation was launched after intelligence reports about the presence of terrorists in the area. Officials said the militants opened heavy fire

as soon as CTD teams moved in, triggering a fierce exchange of gunfire.

Security forces killed nine terrorists during the operation.

However, four CTD personnel were martyred while fighting bravely, and six others sustained injuries.

The funerals were attended by provincial assembly member Zarak Mandokhail, Balochistan govern-

ment spokesperson on the home department Babar Yousafzai, DIG CTD, DIG Quetta Imran Shaukat, Commandant Police Training Centre Dr Farhan Zahid, DIG Special Branch Alauddin Kasi, SSP Operations Asif Khan and other senior officials, along with family members of the martyrs.

Saad Edhi returns home after release from Israeli custody



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saad Edhi, who was part of the Global Sumud Flotilla mission carrying humanitarian aid for Gaza, returned to Pakistan on Saturday after being released from Israeli custody and received a warm welcome at Karachi's Jinnah International Airport.

A large number of supporters, volunteers and citizens gathered at the airport to receive him, including Edhi Foundation Chairman Faisal Edhi and former senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan. Pro-Palestinian slogans were raised during the reception.

Saad Edhi left the airport in the form of a rally as supporters showed flower petals on him.

Speaking to the media, Saad

Edhi said those detained during the mission faced harsh conditions and severe difficulties while in Israeli custody. He said the detainees were repeatedly shifted between different locations for several days and suffered from a serious shortage of food and water.

According to him, the group was taken into custody from international waters and transported through lengthy routes.

He added that despite the presence of diplomatic officials from several countries, meetings with them were not allowed.

Faisal Edhi thanked the media, volunteers and supporters for standing with the mission and said Saad Edhi had undertaken the humanitarian effort to raise his voice for oppressed Palestinians.

NAB launches Online Property Information System to prevent fraud in housing schemes

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has launched an Online Property Information System aimed at preventing fraud in private housing societies across the province.

According to official sources, NAB has sought approved layout plans of housing societies from development authorities throughout the province. In this regard, the bureau has also



written a letter to the housing secretary requesting the provision of approved layout plans and related records.

Under the initiative, the standard operating procedures (SOPs) and layout plans prepared by private housing societies will be linked with the NAB online portal to ensure transparency and protect citizens from fraudulent schemes.

Sources said that development authorities from all districts will provide the

required layout plans to NAB for integration into the system. Once completed, common citizens will be able to access housing layout plans of all districts through the NAB Online Property Information System.

Officials said the move is intended to help the public verify the legal status and approved designs of housing projects before making investments, thereby reducing the risk of property fraud and illegal housing schemes.

Ex-envoy Ayaz Wazir's daughter dies in Islamabad road crash

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Ambassador of Pakistan Ayaz Wazir's daughter, Rayan Wazir, died in a tragic road accident in Islamabad on Saturday.

According to details, her car went out of control due to high speed and climbed onto a sidewalk. The incident took place near the Parade Ground Metro Station in the federal capital.

Reports said Rayan Wazir was using mobile phone when her car rammmed into a footpath due to over-speeding.

Soon after receiving the report, a police team rushed to the spot and

shifted the dead body of Rayan Wazir to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad.

The police said there were looking into the matter and have launched an investigation.

Missing Japanese tourist found dead in Skardu mountains after five-day search

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A Japanese tourist who had been missing for the past five days during a trekking expedition in Skardu was found dead on Saturday after rescuers recovered his body from a deep mountain crevice, officials said.

The 65-year-old tourist from Japan had gone missing while trekking near the famous Masroor Rock in the mountains close to Hussainabad village.

According to rescue officials, search operations had been underway for the past five days after the tourist reportedly lost his way during the trek.

Authorities said the body was spotted in a deep ravine during the search operation, prompting a difficult rescue mission in the rugged mountainous terrain. A four-member team of expert climbers from Sadpara carried out the



recovery operation. After nearly five hours of challenging rescue efforts, the team successfully retrieved the body from the crevice.

Officials said the body was shifted

to a hospital for legal formalities and further procedures.

Rescue authorities said the difficult terrain and dangerous routes complicated the operation, requiring special-



ised climbing and recovery efforts.

Local administration and rescue agencies remained active in the area throughout the operation to ensure the safe transfer of the body.

PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto inaugurates 39-km Shahrah-e-Bhutto corridor in Karachi



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Bilawal Bhutto Zardari inaugurated the Shahrah-e-Bhutto corridor and laid the foundation for the Karachi Port-to-Qayyumabad Corridor Project, aiming to improve connectivity and ease traffic. He praised Karachi as Pakistan's most developed city, welcoming internal migration. He highlighted healthcare expansion and sought to fulfill Benazir

Bhutto's vision through public-private partnerships. Zardari acknowledged economic difficulties due to global conflicts, emphasizing peace's role in economic recovery. He expressed hope for successful peace efforts and highlighted job creation and relief measures. Infrastructure, investment, and defense export initiatives in Sindh were also mentioned, with the Sindh International Financial Centre expected to attract global investors.