



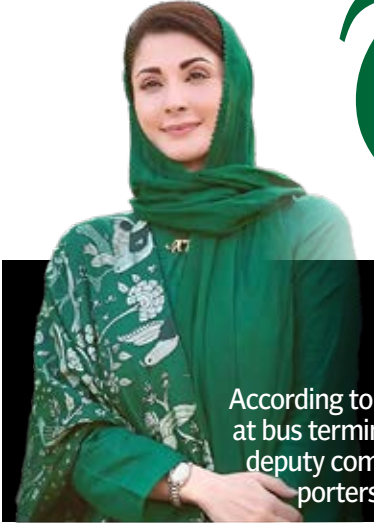
# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے عار و ننگ تعلقا نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا ہم سے ابو زرعہ نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: «مَنْ جَازَبَانِ بِرَيْبِكُمْ هُنَّ رِجَالٌ مِمَّنْ جَازَبَانِ بِرَيْبِكُمْ» (میں) مجھاری ہیں اور اللہ رحمن کے یہاں پسندیدہ ہیں وہ یہ ہیں «سبحان اللہ و بحمده سبحان اللہ العظیم»۔  
(بخاری ص 682)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



## Maryam orders crackdown on overcharging, overloaded buses ahead of Eid

According to an official statement, the chief minister directed authorities to intensify inspections at bus terminals and public transport facilities during the Eid holidays. CM Maryam instructed all deputy commissioners and district police officers to ensure indiscriminate action against transporters involved in overcharging passengers, overloading vehicles or operating unfit buses.



## SSGC, SNGPL announce extended gas supply for Eid days

Sui Southern Gas Company and Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited on Monday announced gas supply schedules for Eid al-Azha 2026, saying revised timings had been introduced to facilitate domestic and commercial consumers during the holiday period.

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## All-Weather friendship

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meeting with Chinese President Xi Jinping in Beijing on Monday.



Photo: PID

# Sharif and Xi vow to elevate 'All-Weather' ties to new strategic era

### Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met with President Xi Jinping in Beijing, marking the 75th anniversary of Pakistan-China diplomatic relations.

Both leaders agreed to enhance their historical partnership, transforming it into a new phase of strategic, practical, and future-oriented cooperation. The meeting, attended by high-level Pakistani officials including

the Army Chief, reaffirmed the "All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership" as central to Pakistan's foreign policy.

Prime Minister Sharif lauded the "iron-clad friendship" and its growing significance in the current global landscape.

He reiterated Pakistan's steadfast support for China on key issues like the One China Principle and acknowledged China's consistent backing for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity,

and economic stability.

Sharif also admired President Xi's leadership in Zhejiang Province and his role in China's rise as a global power. He commended China's support for regional peace, endorsing Xi's four-point proposal, and highlighted their bilateral cooperation as a stabilizing force.

The Pakistani Prime Minister expressed support for Xi's global initiatives, including the Belt and Road Initiative, and reaf-

firmed Pakistan's commitment to a Community with a Shared Future for Humanity.

He pledged to deepen strategic coordination, advance the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) with a focus on high-quality development, and align China's 15th Five-Year Plan with Pakistan's "Uraan Pakistan" initiative.

This aims to boost cooperation in industrialization, connectivity, science and technology, agricul-

ture, clean energy, and digital transformation.

The inclusion of Pakistani astronauts in China's space program was cited as an example of this strengthening cooperation.

President Xi Jinping described the China-Pakistan friendship as "unbreakable," built on mutual understanding and trust. He emphasized that China will always prioritize its relationship with Pakistan, irrespective of international shifts.

## Pakistan & China Forge Deeper Ties, Boosting CPEC and New Tech Frontiers



### Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan and China have agreed to accelerate the implementation of joint projects and enhance their bilateral partnership. During Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing, he and Chinese Premier Li Qiang emphasized close coordination and a results-oriented approach to their cooperation, particularly in the context of the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations.

Both leaders reaffirmed support for core interests. They highlighted the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as a driver of socio-economic development and expressed commitment to its next phase, focusing on industrialization, connectivity, agriculture, science and technology, digital transformation,

clean energy, and socio-economic progress. They also agreed to explore cooperation in emerging sectors like space, AI, and advanced technologies. Pakistan reiterated its commitment to ensuring the security of Chinese nationals and projects.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain, Minister for Information & Broadcasting Ataullah Tarar, Minister for IT Shaza Fatema Khawaja, Minister For Railways Hanif Abbasi, Advisor to Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar SAPM Syed Tariq Fatemi and were also present in the meeting.

## Pakistan collects record Rs2.72 trillion in petroleum levy over two years

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government collected a record Rs2.725 trillion in petroleum levy between April 2024 and March 2026, TV reported on Monday.

According to official data, the amount collected through the petroleum levy exceeded the combined size of Pakistan's two loan programmes with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which total around Rs2.34 trillion.

The government collected more than Rs1.205 trillion in petroleum levy during the first nine months of the current fiscal year, from July 2025 to March 2026.

In fiscal year 2024-25, total



petroleum levy collections stood at Rs1.220 trillion, the data revealed.

The records further showed that petroleum levy collections during the April-June quarter of 2024 amounted to Rs299.63 billion.

The petroleum levy has become a major source of non-tax revenue for the government amid efforts to meet fiscal targets and comply with conditions linked to international financial assistance programmes.

## PM lays wreath at People's Heroes Monument in Tiananmen Square

### Sports Desk

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday laid a wreath at the Monument to the People's Heroes in Tiananmen Square to pay tribute to the fallen heroes of China's revolutionary struggle.

The prime minister, who was accompanied by his delegation members, including federal ministers and senior officials, was received with full ceremonial honours at the historic site.

The national anthems of Pakistan and China were played before the prime minister laid the wreath featuring Pakistan's national flag-themed floral arrangement.

Tiananmen Square, located in the heart of Beijing, holds immense historical and political significance as the site where Chairman Mao Zedong proclaimed the founding of the People's Republic of China on October 1, 1949. The Monument commemorates the revolutionary martyrs who sacrificed their lives for China's independence and liberation.

The prime minister is currently on a four-day official visit to China along with a high-level delegation to meet the country's leadership to further strengthen bilateral cooperation and discuss regional and international issues of mutual interest.

## PM Shehbaz given guard of honour at Great Hall of the People

### Sports Desk

BEIJING: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday was accorded a warm reception and a guard of honour at the Great Hall of the People, where he arrived to meet his Chinese counterpart Li Qiang and hold the delegation-level talks.

As the prime minister arrived at the venue of the formal welcome reception, Chinese Premier Li Qiang welcomed him.

Both the leaders shook hands and introduced their respective delegations to each other.

The national anthems of Pakistan and China were played as both leaders stood at the salute dais.

The smartly turned out contingents of the Chinese armed forces presented a guard of honour, which the prime minister reviewed.

Prime Minister Shehbaz is on an official visit to China from 23 to 26 May 2026. On the first leg



of his visit, he went to Hangzhou, Zhejiang Province, where chaired the Pakistan-China B2B Investment Conference on IT & Telecom, Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS), and Agriculture.

While in Beijing, he will hold meetings with the Chinese leader-

ship, including President Xi Jinping and Premier Li Qiang, besides attending a reception hosted by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries to commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China.

## 177 Pakistanis deported from Libya, repatriated to Pakistan via special flight

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A total of 177 Pakistanis who had illegally entered Libya in an attempt to travel onward to Europe have been released from Benghazi jail and deported back to Pakistan, officials said on Monday.

According to Libyan authorities, the individuals had reached Libya through irregular migration routes while attempting to move towards Europe. The deportees were brought back to Pakistan on a special aircraft.

Sources within the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) said the names of agents involved in human trafficking networks facilitating their travel have been included in the FIAs "Red Book," while further suspects

linked to the smuggling operations are under investigation.

Officials said the deportees include 59 individuals from Lahore, 58 from Gujrat, 26 from Rawalpindi, and 23 from Gujranwala. Ten individuals are reported to be from Sialkot, while one belongs to Islamabad.

Investigators added that the group had travelled through multiple transit routes, including Iran and Saudi Arabia, before reaching Libya.

Upon arrival in Pakistan, all 177 deportees were transferred to the FIAs Anti-Human Trafficking Cell for initial processing. They are expected to be further handed over to relevant FIA zonal offices for detailed investigation and legal proceedings.

# AJK Premier meets PPP leader, discusses unity and elections

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that national unity serves as a strong shield against terrorism and extremism.

The AJK premier said this while speaking to Central Vice President of the Pakistan Peoples Party and former advisor to the government Sardar Amjad Yousaf, who called on him here today.

The entire nation, he said, must unite to eliminate the scourge of terrorism from the country. Referring to the recent terrorist attack in Quetta that led to the killing of dozens of innocent civilians, the prime minister, Rathore, said, "Elements targeting innocent civilians do not deserve any concessions."

Condemning the attack, he said that such cowardly attacks carried out by foreign-funded agents couldn't demoralize the nation. Expressing deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives, they prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs and speedy recovery of the



injured.

During the meeting, both leaders discussed the overall political situation of Azad Kashmir and matters related to the forthcoming general elections in the region. They expressed their determination that the PPP would continue to play its full role in resolving public

issues, democratic stability, and strengthening institutions in Azad Kashmir.

He said that the Pakistan Peoples Party believes in people's power, and with the support of the people, Azad Kashmir will be taken to new heights of development, stability, and pros-

perity.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Amjad Yousaf appreciated the prime minister's untiring efforts to rebuild people's confidence in the political system, saying that his achievements in six months exceeded those of many previous governments.

## NA Speaker congratulates Ghalibaf on re-election as Speaker of Iranian Parliament

ISLAMABAD, MAY 25 (APP): Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has extended heartfelt felicitations to Speaker of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, Muhammad Baqer Ghalibaf, on his re-election as Speaker.



He said that Muhammad Baqer Ghalibaf's re-election is a profound testament to the trust, confidence, and unwavering support reposed in his visionary leadership by the esteemed Members of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran.

Recalling the fruitful and meaningful visit of Mr. Muhammad Baqer Ghalibaf to Pakistan last year, accompanied by a parliamentary delegation, Ayaz Sadiq said that the visit significantly contributed towards strengthening parliamentary diplomacy, deepening people-to-people linkages, and enhancing government-to-government engagements between the two brotherly countries.

Ayaz Sadiq expressed confidence that under Mr. Muhammad Baqer Ghalibaf's stewardship as the Custodian of the Islamic Consultative Assembly of Iran, parliamentary cooperation and institutional exchanges between the Parliaments of Pakistan and Iran would witness further expansion and consolidation.

He extended his best wishes to Muhammad Baqer Ghalibaf for a successful and productive tenure and prayed that his re-election would further strengthen the longstanding bonds of brotherhood, mutual understanding, and cooperation between the peoples and Parliaments of Pakistan and Iran.

Ayaz Sadiq expressed hope that the continuity of parliamentary exchanges would enable parliamentarians of both brotherly nations to benefit from each other's rich experiences, knowledge, and legislative expertise.

## Road Blocks

ISLAMABAD: Traffic police official stop the trucks to block the road during a VIP movement in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Pakistan-China Relations: A Deep Dive into a 75-Year-Old Global Partnership

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-China relations are at their strongest, evolving over 75 years into a resilient global partnership encompassing diplomacy, trade, defense, technology, connectivity, and regional stability. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to China is significant, focusing on enhancing strategic and economic cooperation, celebrating the anniversary, and discussing regional developments, particularly tensions involving Iran, Israel, and the US. Meetings with Chinese leadership aim to boost bilateral cooperation and economic/technological collaboration under CPEC 2.0, which emphasizes digital transformation, AI, industrial partnerships, agriculture, and advanced technologies, moving beyond the infrastructure focus of its initial phase. Collaboration now extends beyond governments to include business-to-business partnerships, tech ventures, startups, and private sector investment. Pakistan remains a key partner in China's Belt and Road Initiative, vital for East, Central, and West Asian connectivity, fostering economic growth and regional peace. Growing defense, aerospace, satellite, digital trade, and innovation cooperation is evident, with Pakistan utilizing China's BeiDou system and aspiring for astronaut participation in Chinese space missions. Both nations champion a rule-based international order, multilateralism, and peaceful dispute resolution, opposing unilateralism and promoting regional cooperation for shared prosperity. The enduring Pakistan-China friendship, described as "higher than mountains, deeper than oceans, sweeter than honey, and stronger than steel," serves as an international model of trust, solidarity, and strategic cooperation.

## AC Kamalia Erum Shahzadi along with COMC Ali Raza visits Wildlife Park

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Erum Shahzadi and Chief Officer Municipal Committee Ali Raza conducted a surprise inspection of Kamalia Wildlife Park during Eid-ul-Azha. They reviewed cleanliness, security, drinking water, seating, beautification, and recreational facilities, issuing necessary instructions to staff. Shahzadi stressed the importance of a clean, safe environment for visitors, particularly families and children, urging special attention to waste disposal, washroom cleanliness, and uninterrupted drinking water supply. She also directed security staff to enhance monitoring and emergency preparedness. Chief Officer Raza informed that a special cleanliness campaign and additional staff deployment were in place, alongside improvements to lighting and seating, for a better visitor experience. Shahzadi concluded by directing continuous monitoring and prompt addressing of public complaints throughout the holidays.

## Sardar Attique Vows to Eradicate Terror Networks

**Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, President of Muslim Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Prime Minister, condemned the Quetta terrorist attack, labeling perpetrators as enemies of humanity.

He stated these cowardly acts aim to destabilize Pakistan but will be thwarted by national unity. Khan emphasized the necessity of eliminating terrorist



networks, including their hideouts, facilitators, and financial backers, for

lasting peace. He lauded the sacrifices of law enforcement and the Pakistan Army, pledging the unwavering support of Azad Kashmir's people and leadership in the war against terrorism. Highlighting their own experience with Indian state terrorism, he expressed solidarity with the Quetta martyrs' families, asserting that Pakistan's stability is crucial for Kashmiri freedom and vowing to counter any threats to the nation's peace until terrorism is eradicated.

## Divided by Borders: The Silent Tragedy of Kashmiri Families across the LoC

There are borders drawn on maps and then there are borders that cut through human lives. In Kashmir, the Line of Control (LoC) is not merely a geopolitical divide between two states; it is a deeply personal rupture that has, for decades, separated families, silenced relationships and turned ordinary lives into stories of longing and loss.

Ever since the partition of British India in 1947 and the first Indo-Pak war, Kashmir has been a bone of contention. The region was divided when the people had been living together for many centuries. Newly established borders, check-points, and military forces divided families. What started as a political dispute turned slowly into a long-term humanitarian crisis involving civilians on both sides of the LoC.

The ceasefire line became the LoC (later the Simla agreement), and had the effect of dividing what were already connected communities into isolated

populations. Communication was hampered, mobility was restricted and villages were divided. During the first days of war, people thought they would return home, but after years and years, they did not and many had to make peace with their separation for good. It has been devastating emotionally. Rare telephone calls, letters or messages carried by travelers have been the means by which families have communicated.

Some parents spend their entire lives waiting to see their children or siblings, yet never get the chance to hold them again. Along the Line of Control, heavy militarization and deep political tensions have turned ordinary human moments into painful impossibilities. Weddings pass without loved ones, reunions remain a dream, and even funerals become scenes of unbearable separation.

The tragedy of Raja Liaquat Ali Khan reflects this reality most heartbreakingly. He was buried in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, while

his family stood on the other side in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan. The distance between them was only about fifteen minutes, yet it became an unbridgeable divide. His family could see the funeral taking place, but they were not allowed to cross, not allowed to offer a final farewell. They watched from afar as he was laid to rest, carrying a pain that words cannot fully express. Later, in an attempt to find some form of closure, they held a second funeral on their side of the border. This was not just a moment of grief, it was a powerful reminder that such suffering is not written by fate, but created by human decisions and enforced boundaries. The Line of Control does not simply divide territory. It divides hearts, memories, and even the dignity of saying goodbye.

This divider ship has been passed down to the younger generations. Many kids in Kashmir are acquainted with the people on the other side of the LoC through stories and photographs. Memories now replace the connection created by daily interaction, which was once vital to cultural relations. This has led to physical distance, emotional and generational disconnection.

There have been some brief periods of diplomatic progress between India and Pakistan. Some families were reunited after decades through cross-LoC bus services and trade schemes. These were a few elements that would give some sense of normalcy and humanity. However, they are a fragile opportunity, and at times of tension, these humanitarian openings have been shut down.

This is one of the core realities of the



Analysis

Zumra Khan

Kashmir dispute that the most affected ones are civilians. The interests of the ordinary man are confined to boundaries that they have not set, whereas the strategic interests of states are served. The LoC for them is not just a ceasefire line but a line of loss, uncertainty and long suffering.

The situation along the LoC is highly militarized, which makes these challenges even more difficult. Ceasefire violations have resulted in the displacement of the border communities, the destruction of homes, interference with education and fear and insecurity for them. Kids in these areas are more used to bunkers and shelling than stability. During the times of calm, the uncertainty of trans-border movement still affects the family.

When South Asia is already grappling with economic problems, climatic stresses and regional turbulence, hostility will only further accentuate the existing divisions. Achieving sustainable peace is more than just about military

force or politics - it's about empathy, dialogue and recognizing the human suffering that is shared. Policies based on strategic competition may fail to take into account the facts of people on the LoC.

The tragedy of separated Kashmiri families reflects the reality that wars don't start and end with borders and diplomacy. They mold everyday lives and have emotional scars. Every political discussion is accompanied by people who want to be united, respected and at peace.

Finally, the issue of peace for parted Kashmiri families is more than just a political agenda; it's a humanitarian demand. If the human face of the Kashmir issue is not tackled seriously and sensitively, its tragedy will be unresolved politically and morally.

The writer is a student of International Relations at NUML University and she is currently working with Kashmir Institute of International Relations.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:22 am
Zohr	12:05 pm
Asr	5:02 pm
Maghrib	7:09 pm
Isha	8:48 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHO	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

**Punjab Safe Cities Authority Achieves Landmark ISO 42001 Certification for AI Governance**

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has earned the ISO/IEC 42001:2023 Artificial Intelligence Management System Certification, a significant global achievement in AI governance. PSCA developed its AI systems in-house, with twelve systems meeting global AI Lifecycle standards. These AI systems, integrated with over 24,000 cameras, were audited by international experts from SGS, who confirmed their compliance with international standards for AI systems, governance, and operations. PSCA's Smart Vision AI, Facial Recognition, ANPR, Intelligent Traffic Management, Crime Analytics, and AI-based Governance Monitoring systems have received international recognition. PSCA is now the sole public sector institution in Pakistan holding both ISO 27001 and ISO 42001 certifications, distinguishing Punjab Police among policing organizations worldwide for AI governance. This accomplishment is a major milestone for Pakistan, Punjab Police, and the advancement of smart policing.

# Dr. Ehsan Bhutta Reviews Preparations for Monumental Religious Event

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: The Punjab Government is committed to providing excellent facilities and robust security for the 784th annual Urs of Hazrat Baba Farid-ud-Din Ganj Shakar. Secretary Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, chaired a meeting reviewing administrative plans, attended by district officials and security agencies.

He thanked Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman for their support in upgrading infrastructure and ensuring smooth arrangements.

District officials assured that emergency plans, medical units, and crowd management protocols are vetted, prioritizing a peaceful and organized environment for pilgrims.

DPO Javed Iqbal Chadhar detailed the security deployment, emphasizing zero tolerance for anti-social elements and meticulous traffic and perimeter security. Dr. Bhutta stressed the Auqaf Department's collaboration with local administration and law enforcement for pilgrim facilitation, mandating medical

camp, clean water, and security measures.

He also inspected routes and safety measures. A newly established Baba Farid (Photographic) Gallery, featuring 16 historical and 7 restoration comparison photos, was officially opened. Officials praised the Auqaf Department for preserving these archives.

The Sajada Nashin of the shrines, Dewaan Ahmed Masood Chishti, met Dr. Bhutta, appreciating the government's development efforts.

He performed a traditional turban-tying ceremony for Dr. Bhutta, who then paid respects at the shrine.

Dr. Bhutta also visited the Shrine of Baba Muhammad Pannah Kameer in Sahiwal, inspected ongoing mosque construction and courtyard expansion, and directed timely completion with high-quality standards by June 30th.

Concluding his tour, Dr. Bhutta inspected expansion projects at the Baba Farid complex. He mandated the use of premium, weather-resistant materials for structural longevity, heat-reflective marble flooring, and authentic restoration of intricate woodwork and mosaics,



ensuring all works maintain uncompromising quality and adhere to timelines for public convenience.

## Eid Dastarkhwan

ISLAMABAD: A view of information banner about three days Eid Dastarkhwan by a volunteers group in Sector F-8 in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Ziauddin University Initiative Aims to Bolster Pandemic Response

**News Desk**

KARACHI: Ziauddin University's Critical Care Research Group (CCRG) launched the PREPP Network at the "Preparedness in Practice - CCP Retreat 2026" in Karachi on May 25, 2026. This national initiative aims to enhance Pakistan's epidemic and pandemic preparedness through collaboration and clinical research.

The PREPP Network will facilitate rapid research during outbreaks by standardizing data collection, sharing, and analysis.

Experts at the retreat, including Prof. Dr. Madiha Hashmi and Dr. Osama Rehman Khalid, stressed the need for coordinated preparedness, integrating research into healthcare, and building trust among collaborators.

They discussed lessons learned from COVID-19 and dengue outbreaks, highlighting



the importance of institutional support, adaptable infrastructure, data sharing, regulatory processes, and investment in research culture.

Key participants empha-

sized breaking down silos and fostering interdisciplinary coordination.

The retreat signifies a crucial step towards a resilient, research-driven health-

care preparedness framework for Pakistan, with leaders from various institutions sharing insights on diagnostics, infectious diseases, and collaborative response systems.

## Eid-ul-Adha Prayer at Faisal Mosque to Be Offered at 6:30 AM

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Eid-ul-Adha prayer at Faisal Mosque will be offered at 6:30 AM. The prayer will be led by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ilyas, Director General, Dawah Academy, International Islamic University Islamabad.

Special prayers will be offered for peace, stability, unity of the Muslim Ummah, and the people of Palestine and Kashmir. Citizens have been requested to reach the mosque on time and cooperate with the administration regarding arrangements.

## Fire Engulfs Faisalabad Clothes Warehouse, No Casualties Reported

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: A fire broke out in a clothes warehouse in Kachehri Bazaar Jan Fatima Center Street No. 4. The fire broke out in the ladies suit warehouse on the second floor due to unknown reasons. Six fire vehicles of Rescue 1122 participated in the fire extinguishing process. The affected area was a room measuring approximately 10x25 feet and contained a stock of clothes. The rescue teams brought the fire under control in time with professional skills. No loss of life or injury was reported in the incident.

## Getz Pharma Hosted the Launch Ceremony of Dr. Nauman Niaz's Book "Myth & Reality"



**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Getz Pharma hosted the launch ceremony of the book, "Myth & Reality: Type II Diabetes & Disease Impact in Pakistan", by Dr. Nauman Niaz at its Astola Facility Auditorium.

The ceremony brought together prominent personalities from medicine, culture, media, and public life for an evening dedicated to awareness, reflection, and dialogue around one of Pakistan's most urgent health challenges.

"Diabetes is not merely a clinical condition; it is a social, emotional, and national challenge," said Dr. Nauman Niaz. "This book is my attempt to separate myth from reality and to encourage Pakistanis to understand the disease before it defines their lives."

Speaking at the event, Khalid Mahmood, Executive Chairman of Getz Pharma, emphasized the organization's commitment to advancing diabetes care while also supporting intellectual, artistic, and cultural initiatives. "At Getz Pharma, we believe healthcare is not limited to medicines alone; it is also about education, access, prevention, and sustained public engagement," said Khalid Mahmood. "Dr. Nauman Niaz's book contributes meaningfully to the national conversation on diabetes, and we are proud to support a platform that combines scientific insight with cultural expression."

# C M Punjab 3-Day Special Screening Camp at Shahbaz Sharif District Hospital

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: On the instructions of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a 3-day special screening camp was organized at Shahbaz Sharif District Headquarters Hospital Multan. Deputy Commissioner Multan Muhammad Noman Siddique, Medical Superintendent Dr. Tanzeel-ur-Rehman MS Shahbaz Sharif District Headquarters Hospital Multan, Additional Medical Superintendent Dr. Muhammad Bakhsh Khalid and Dr. Khuram Afzal, Chairman Department of Human Nutrition Bahauddin Zaka-

ria University Multan inaugurated the three-day camp and also made a detailed tour of Shahbaz Sharif District Headquarters Hospital and reviewed the medical and nutritional facilities provided to the public. On this occasion, Medical Superintendent Dr. Tanzeel-ur-Rehman and Additional Medical Superintendent Dr. Muhammad Bakhsh Khalid while talking to the media said that according to the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the patients coming to Shahbaz Sharif District Headquarters Hospital are being provided with the highest level of health facili-

ties 24 hours a day, while the patients are also being provided with all kinds of free medicines in all departments of the hospital except the emergency ward. He further said that registered diabetes patients are also provided with free insulin every month, while patients are provided with CT Scan, X-ray, Clinical Laboratory Test, Dental Section Facilities as well as Screening for Hepatitis B and C and AIDS Test. MS Dr. Tanzeel-ur-Rehman and AMS Dr. Muhammad Bakhsh Khalid said that 2731 people were screened in the three-day screening camp, of which 48 patients tested positive for hep-



atitis C and 50 Patients Tested Positive for Hepatitis B. while the tests for HIV-AIDS Came Negative. The Screening camp Provided free Nutri-

tional Counseling, body mass index, blood sugar, blood pressure and other nutritional examinations for citizens regarding obesity, diabetes, excess fat

and physical weakness. This initiative is an important step towards promoting a healthy society and nutritional awareness

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# Pakistan Saves Middle East and Iran and Shatters Israel Invincibility

**A**t a moment when the world stood dangerously close to a catastrophic regional war capable of dragging humanity toward economic collapse and even nuclear confrontation, Pakistan accomplished something that few nations in modern history have ever achieved. Through persistence, strategic wisdom, diplomatic resilience, and calculated engagement with opposing powers simultaneously, Pakistan helped prevent the Middle East from falling into total destruction and the world economy from sliding into chaos.

What military alliances, aircraft carriers, sanctions, missile strikes, assassinations, cyber warfare, and diplomatic threats failed to accomplish was ultimately challenged through dialogue, persuasion, trust-building, and geopolitical balance.

Pakistan emerged not as a military conqueror, but as a stabilizing force capable of influencing some of the world's most dangerous rivalries at a critical historical moment.

The war began with overwhelming momentum in favor of the United States and Israel. Under what Washington called "Operation Epic Fury," Iran faced unprecedented military, financial, and geopolitical pressure. Israel's strategic planners believed they were approaching the realization of a long-term objective: permanently weakening Iran, dismantling its missile and drone capability, reducing its regional influence, and

reshaping the Middle East in Israel's favor. At the beginning of the conflict, nearly every major analyst believed Israel would emerge as the biggest strategic winner.

Iran was isolated, Gulf states were anxious, energy markets were panicking, and the Strait of Hormuz — through which nearly one-fifth of the world's energy supplies transit — became the focal point of global fear.

Oil prices surged, shipping insurance costs exploded, inflation intensified worldwide, and stock markets across continents became unstable. Governments feared a global recession deeper than the financial crisis of 2008.

My own analysis during the early phase of the conflict was that everybody was losing, but only Israel was winning.

Yet history often changes because of one unexpected factor — strategic wisdom exercised at the right moment. Pakistan emerged as that factor.

Pakistan understood something many world powers failed to fully appreciate. This conflict was not merely about Iran's nuclear ambitions or Israel's security concerns. It was about the future geopolitical architecture of the Middle East, control of global energy routes, strategic domination, and the possibility of dragging the world toward a wider confrontation involving nuclear-capable states.

The danger was real. The United States possesses enormous nuclear arsenals. Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear capability. Iran was being accused of moving closer to nuclear threshold status. If the war had continued to escalate uncontrollably, the possibility of mutually assured destruction could no longer have been dismissed as theoretical.

Pakistan recognized that danger earlier than many others. In that atmosphere, Pakistan chose diplomacy over silence.

remained central because all parties eventually recognized one reality: Pakistan possessed credibility with opposing camps simultaneously.

Iran trusted Pakistan's intentions. Gulf countries trusted Pakistan's balance. China and Russia trusted Pakistan's strategic judgment. Even Washington eventually realized Pakistan had become indispensable in preventing total escalation.

The emerging 60-day framework agreement reflects that diplomatic achievement. Instead of discussions centered exclusively on dismantling Iran, the negotiations shifted toward reopening the Strait of Hormuz, reducing naval confrontation, ending hostilities across multiple fronts including Lebanon, and establishing timelines for broader future understandings.

This represented a dramatic reversal of battlefield realities.

At the beginning of the war, Iran reportedly faced enormous pressure to surrender key elements of its uranium enrichment capability, missile program, drone infrastructure, and regional strategic influence. Israeli strategic thinking envisioned a transformed Middle East where Iran's long-term deterrence capability would be permanently dismantled.

Discussions even emerged regarding alternative regional energy corridors bypassing the Strait of Hormuz through routes linked to Israeli-controlled infrastructure and the Red Sea. The dream of "Greater Israel" appeared increasingly

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Field Marshal Asim Munir's statement became symbolic of Pakistan's commitment when he reportedly declared with conviction that Pakistan would not allow Iran to fall. At the time, many dismissed the statement as political rhetoric.

Yet Pakistan gradually transformed those words into strategic action. Quietly, carefully, and persistently, Islamabad built trust simultaneously with Tehran, Washington, Beijing, Moscow, Ankara, Riyadh, Doha, and other key capitals, effectively bypassing Israel, reducing it to inconsequential in the mediation process and frustrating all its objectives of starting the war.

Despite repeated attempts by influential Israeli circles and hardline lobbies in Washington to sideline Pakistan from the mediation process, Islamabad

## Punjab Gears Up for Eid-ul-Adha with Enhanced Security and Sanitation

**P**unjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari, along with Punjab Housing Minister Bilal Yasin, addressed a joint press conference at the Directorate General Public Relations, announcing comprehensive administrative, security, and civic arrangements for Eid-ul-Adha.

Azma Bokhari said that all leaves of officers and staff under the Suthra Punjab programme have been cancelled to ensure uninterrupted sanitation operations during the Eid period. She stated that foolproof security arrangements have been finalized for mosques and Imambargahs across the province.

She warned that transporters will not be allowed to overcharge passengers, adding that strict action, including cancellation of route permits and vehicle fitness certificates, will be taken against violators. She further announced a complete ban on fireworks, aerial firing, one-wheeling, and display of weapons on Chaand Raat, with strict enforcement by law enforcement agencies.

The Minister strongly condemned the recent terrorist incident in Balochistan, paid tribute to the martyrs, and expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families. She said operations against Fitna-al-Khawarij are ongoing across the country to counter terrorism.

Azma Bokhari said that 12 million waste bags are being distributed among citizens as part of cleanliness arrangements.

She added that a crackdown has been launched against unfit vehicles as citizens travel for Eid, while amusement park rides will also be required to obtain valid fitness certification.

She further stated that under the directives of the Chief Minister Punjab, preparations for Eid-ul-Adha are in full swing. She said that 160,000 houses are targeted for completion under the provincial housing initiative, with 100,000 houses to be constructed annually. The "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" programme, she noted, is transforming lives across Punjab.

Highlighting regional security concerns, she said Pakistan has exposed hostile proxy networks at the global level and reaffirmed that the sacrifices of over 30 martyrs will not go in vain. She added that all necessary diplomatic and security measures are being taken to safeguard national sovereignty.

Speaking on the occasion, Punjab Housing Minister Bilal Yasin strongly condemned terrorist activities and said that security forces remain fully alert to counter all threats. He stated that intelligence-based operations have been intensified, leading to multiple arrests across Punjab, while the repatriation of 17,000 illegally residing Afghan nationals has been completed.

He said that more than 40,000 security personnel have been deployed for Eid-ul-Adha security, including cattle markets, mosques, and Eid prayer gatherings. Strict action is being taken against overcharging, overloading, and unfit vehicles.

Bilal Yasin added that 21,000 WASA employees will remain on duty during Eid, while field officers' leaves have been cancelled to ensure uninterrupted civic services.

He further stated that the "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" programme has gained international recognition as a successful housing model, with loan approvals for 160,000 families expected by June 2026.



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

## Flawed Judicial Appointments and the Erosion of Fair Trial in Kashmir

**I**n a submission to the UN Human Rights Council, the World Muslim Congress has utilized the Special Rapporteur's report on the Independence of Judges and Lawyers report (A/HRC/62/43) to highlight systemic deficiencies in India's judicial appointment processes. Drawing on the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the Basic Principles on the Independence of the Judiciary, the submission argues that India's opaque appointment system, combined with draconian security laws in Indian

occupied Jammu and Kashmir, has created a justice apparatus where institutional capture and the denial of due process have become routine.

The Special Rapporteur emphasizes that judicial selection must be based on merit, objective criteria, transparency, and insulation from political interference. This requires clear legal frameworks, pre-appointment integrity assessments, reasoned decision-making, and a judiciary that reflects societal diversity.

India's "collegium system"—where judges select their own successors—was intended to prevent executive dominance. However, the World Muslim Congress notes that it operates with limited transparency and no published competency matrices. Without an independent judicial council or civil-society participation, the system contradicts the guidelines of the Venice Commission and the Special Rapporteur. This opacity fosters the perception that selections may be

influenced by political alignment or elite connections, undermining the judiciary's perceived impartiality. These deficiencies are most acute in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, where exceptional laws operate alongside this flawed architecture. The Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act (AFSPA) grants sweeping immunities; the Public Safety Act (PSA) allows indefinite administrative detention; and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) broadens the definition of terrorism to encompass dissent, making bail nearly impossible.

When judges handling these cases are appointed via a system lacking transparency, fair trial rights collapse. The Special Rapporteur warns that provisional or temporary appointments create pathways for undue influence. In Kashmir, short-term postings for judges in politically charged cases are common, leaving officers vulnerable to pressures regarding their renewal or termination. This structural vulnerability directly undermines the impartiality guaranteed by ICCPR Article 14.

The consequences are evident in several high-profile convictions. In 2022, Yasin Malik was sentenced to life imprisonment by a special NIA court in Delhi under the UAPA. Human rights groups argue the court failed to rigorously examine the voluntariness of Malik's plea, given his history of incommunicado custody and alleged coercion. Similarly, veteran separatist Shabbir Ahmad Shah was convicted

based on evidence gathered during years of detention and statements allegedly extracted under duress.

Equally troubling is the case of Asiya Andrabi and her colleagues, sentenced to three consecutive life terms. The prosecution relied heavily on testimonies obtained during prolonged incommunicado detention. The presiding judge dismissed claims of procedural irregularity without providing a sufficiently reasoned order, contravening the Special Rapporteur's emphasis on effective challenge mechanisms.

Beyond these cases, the everyday administration of justice in Kashmir reveals a pattern of obstructed oversight. Bail hearings often become ritualistic, with courts citing the UAPAs broad language to deny relief despite a lack of evidence linking the accused to violence. Trials are frequently moved to distant jurisdictions, such as Delhi or Uttar Pradesh, severing defendants from their families and local counsel. When judges endorse these shortcuts, they confirm the report's warning that flawed appointment systems enable strategic selections that degrade equal justice.

Furthermore, the apex court's review of UAPA cases has rarely provided meaningful remedy, often deferring to special courts despite weak evidence. This deferential posture, coupled with a lack of diversity on the bench—specifically a lack of representation from marginalized regions like Kashmir—entrenches a cycle of mistrust.

Consequently, reform is an imperative under international law. The Special Rapporteur advocates for an independent,

*Continued on Page 7*

## Autonomous Weapons and the Failure of Traditional Arms Control

Mehreen Arif Khan

**R**apid changes in autonomous weapons systems are taking place in modern warfare. The ability of AI-armed weapons to carry out military actions with minimal human intervention is a significant issue for international security and global stability. Due to their lack of intelligence, traditional arms control frameworks are finding it challenging and difficult to regulate the new weapons.

Most treaties currently in place address nuclear weapons, missiles and conventional military equipment, but they do not provide comprehensive coverage for autonomous weapons systems. International law does not yet provide clear guidelines on the development, use and limitations of military technologies based on AI. As a result, advanced nations with technological capabilities can invest heavily in autonomous weapons without substantial global constraints.

Several influential countries have been using artificial intelligence to enhance their military operations and maintain their strategic influence. The use of AI-powered drones, autonomous surveillance systems, robotic combat vehicles and machine-learning technologies is becoming a significant aspect of modern warfare. AI's increasing use has increased competition between nations and triggered a technological arms race. Governments are hesitant to back their competitors in military innovation, which prompts them and their governments to invest heavily in autonomous weapons systems. The situation reflects the realistic perspective of International Relations, where states prioritize power, survival, and national interest in a disorderly global system.

A security problem arises when a country develops advanced military technologies, which makes other competing nations feel threatened and respond by

improving their own defences. Serious ethical and humanitarian concerns are also posed by autonomous weapons. The human experience, morality and battlefield situations cannot be comprehended by machines. AI systems are capable of processing information quickly, but they lack the ability to judge humans or make ethical decisions. Self-sufficient weapons are at risk of making poor decisions during military operations, particularly in complex environments with non-military components.

When self-driving weapons are mistakenly targeting innocent individuals, determining accountability becomes difficult. International humanitarian law may present significant legal doubts due to the possibility of dividing responsibility among programmers, engineers, military commanders, manufacturing companies and governments. The possibility of autonomous weapons reducing the political and human costs of war is also a significant concern. The reduction of direct human involvement in these systems can lead to countries being more receptive to military conflict and less likely to suffer significant military casualties. It may result in an increase in the likelihood of war and potentially undermine international peace.

Without robust international laws, there are hazardous possibilities for misuse, escalation and unbridled military competition. Eventually, however, autonomous technologies will become accessible to non-state actors or terrorist organizations, increasing the global security threats. It is necessary for the global community, particularly the United Nations, to establish modern arms control mechanisms that can manage autonomous weapons effectively. It is imperative to establish international cooperation, legal responsibility, transparency, and meaningful human supervision to prevent the misuse of artificial intelligence in warfare and secure global peace in the future.

*The writer is student of International Relations in International Islamic University, Islamabad.*

# US media credits Field Marshal Asim Munir for key role in Iran-US mediation

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: International recognition has reportedly been given to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for playing a mediatory role aimed at promoting peace in the region, with a US television report claiming his diplomatic engagement helped move Iran-US negotiations closer to a final outcome.

According to the American TV report, Field Marshal Asim Munir's visit to Tehran played a key role in bringing the negotiations toward a decisive stage. The report stated that amid the current Middle East situation, Gulf countries and Lebanon are part of the broader conflict environment, but Pakistan succeeded in helping finalize the draft framework.

The report further said that following Field Marshal Asim Munir's return from Tehran, the proposed draft was forwarded to the Iranian and American



leadership for review.

During the visit, the Pakistani military leadership held meetings with Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and the Speaker of Parliament, where detailed and productive discussions



reportedly took place.

US-Iran mediation gains momentum as Field Marshal Asim Munir concludes key Tehran visit

The US media outlet stated that both the United States and Iran have confidence in Field Marshal Asim Munir,

while the coordination between Pakistan's political and military leadership has remained a key factor in the mediation process.

The report also claimed that US President Donald Trump had previously referred to Asim Munir as "my favorite



field marshal," adding that the Pakistani government and military leadership had earlier played an important role in reducing tensions during Islamabad negotiations.

The American TV report further noted that Pakistan has historically played an important diplomatic role, including facilitating ties between the United States and China in the past.

# ISSI Commemorates Youm-e-Takbeer by highlighting the theme 'Strategic Stability, Emerging Threats and Role of Diplomacy'

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate Youm-e-Takbeer, the Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), hosted an event on the theme Strategic Stability, Emerging Threats and Role of Diplomacy. The meeting was attended by Professor Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal, Vice Chancellor of Quaid-e-Azam University; Dr. Rizwana Abbasi, Professor at the Department of International Relations, NUML; Air Commodore (Retd) Khalid Banuri, Senior Advisor JCCL, Air Headquarters, Islamabad; and Maj. Gen. Ausaf Ali (Retd.), former Director General Policy, Doctrine and Strategy, SPD.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman Board of Governors, ISSI, in his welcome remarks, stated that Pakistan's nuclear capability was shaped by its security imperatives and the need to restore strategic balance in South Asia. He emphasized that Pakistan adopted the nuclear course reluctantly, only after India's nuclear tests created an existential challenge and pushed the region toward overt nuclearization. Pakistan's response, he noted, was guided by legitimate security concerns in the face of an increasingly belligerent and aggressive India. He further observed that the international community now has a better understanding of Pakistan's security compulsions. Despite repeated attempts by India to test Pakistan's deterrence, it has continued to hold. He concluded that Youm-e-Takbeer should therefore be commemorated as an important national occasion.

Earlier, Malik Qasim Mustafa, Director ACDC, stated that May 28 marks a significant day in Pakistan's history, when the country conducted its nuclear tests. He highlighted that deterrence today is facing challenges due to the emergence of EDTs and



other regional and global conflicts. He emphasized the need to modernize the nuclear posture to ensure that deterrence remains credible, effective, and responsive to emerging security challenges.

Dr. Rizwana highlighted that strategic stability in South Asia is becoming increasingly fragile due to India's evolving military posture and the introduction of new technologies. She stated that since the Cold Start Doctrine of 2004, India has focused on developing offensive war-fighting capabilities against Pakistan, including the option of limited conflict and so-called surgical strikes. This has been supported by major military modernization efforts, not only to strengthen India's position against Pakistan but also to expand its role in the wider Asia-Pacific region. She further observed that

India's unilateral actions in Jammu and Kashmir and illegal holding of the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) in abeyance have added to regional instability, while precision weapons, drones, advanced surveillance, AI, and automated decision-making are making the battlefield more complex and increasing the risk of escalation.

While discussing the role of diplomacy, Dr. Zafar Nawaz Jaspal highlighted that diplomatic engagement remains essential for maintaining strategic stability in South Asia. He noted that Pakistan has played a significant diplomatic role in managing regional crises, including efforts linked to the Iran-U.S. ceasefire, but stressed that sustained dialogue between India and Pakistan is even more important for regional peace. He observed that the deadlock in bilateral engagement has

prevented confidence-building measures from maturing and has created a serious gap in arms control and strategic stability. Referring to emerging alignments such as I2U2 and QUAD, he cautioned that these developments cannot be underestimated in Pakistan's security calculations. He further noted that we are witnessing a transformation in India's military doctrine, with a growing focus on escalation dominance. Dr. Jaspal emphasized that diplomacy can create space for restraint and crisis management, but in its absence, Pakistan has to rely on a strong security posture due to the adversarial environment.

The discussion was followed by an interactive question-and-answer session and a group photo.

## Pakistan and Alibaba Ink Landmark Digital Transformation Deal



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Alibaba have forged a significant digital transformation alliance, signing multiple Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) encompassing AI, cloud solutions, digital skills, healthcare technology, e-commerce, SME development, and digital financial services.

The agreements, finalized at Alibaba's headquarters in China and witnessed by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Alibaba Chairman Joe Tsai, involve key Pakistani entities like Ignite, Sky47, and SMEDA, alongside Alibaba Cloud, DAMO Academy, Alibab.com, and Koko Tech. Prime Minister Sharif lauded Alibaba's digital leadership and expressed confidence that the collaboration will empower Pakistan through digital inclusion, youth development, agricultural modernization, and financial sector digitization.

Joe Tsai highlighted the transformative potential of AI and cloud technologies for Pakistan's healthcare, global market access for businesses, and long-term economic growth. Specific initiatives include the development of localized AI and cloud solutions, with a focus on Urdu and regional languages for sectors like education, healthcare, and agriculture, by Ignite and Alibaba Cloud.

This partnership will also deliver AI and cloud skills training to 500,000 individuals nationwide and co-host an AI hackathon for young developers. DAMO Academy and Sky47 will implement AI-driven healthcare solutions, featuring multi-disease screening technology from DAMO Academy, across major Pakistani cities to facilitate early cancer detection. DAMO Academy and Ignite will also enhance embodied intelligence capacity at Pakistani universities through educational programs.

To boost SME exports, Alibab.com and SMEDA will offer AI-powered digital trade training to 10,000 businesses using Alibab.com's Accio Work, and onboard at least 2,000 SMEs onto the platform via a dedicated "Pakistan Pavilion," connecting them with millions of global buyers. In financial services, Koko Tech (a Daraz Group company) and Ignite will introduce and scale a Buy Now, Pay Later (BNPL) solution, operating as a Non-banking Finance Company. Koko Tech plans to invest \$3 million, supporting financial inclusion and innovation-led growth in Pakistan's digital economy.

# Protecting Our Skies This Eid-ul-Azha

Eid-ul-Azha is one of the most sacred and spiritually significant occasions celebrated across Pakistan and the Muslim world. The festival embodies the values of sacrifice, devotion, compassion and unity, bringing families and communities together in an atmosphere of faith and gratitude. As Pakistani citizens fulfill the religious obligation of Qurbani with great enthusiasm and reverence, it is equally important to remember that the spirit of Eid also emphasizes responsibility towards society, public welfare and the environment. Among the major public safety concerns associated with Eid-ul-Azha is the improper disposal of sacrificial animal waste, including offal, blood, hides and carcasses. While often overlooked, this issue creates serious environmental and health hazards and, importantly, poses a significant threat to aviation safety. The accumulation of exposed animal remains in open areas attracts large concentrations of birds such as kites, crows, vultures and stray scavengers. Increased bird activity near populated areas, airfields and flying corridors can create dangerous conditions for aircraft operations, particularly during takeoff and landing phases.

For the Pakistan Air Force, which remains continuously

engaged in safeguarding the aerial frontiers of the country, flight safety remains an uncompromising priority. PAF aircraft conduct operational missions, training sorties and readiness patrols around the clock to ensure the defence and security of Pakistan's airspace. During Eid-ul-Azha, however, the sudden rise in bird populations around urban centres and flying zones substantially increases the risk of Bird Aircraft Strike Hazards, commonly referred to as bird strikes. A bird strike may appear insignificant to the general public, but in aviation operations it is considered one of the most serious flight safety hazards worldwide. Even a small bird colliding with an aircraft travelling at high speed can cause severe structural damage. In many cases, birds are ingested into aircraft engines, potentially resulting in engine malfunction, compressor damage or complete engine failure. Bird strikes can also damage wind-screens, radomes, sensors and other critical systems essential for safe flight operations. The danger becomes even greater when birds move in flocks, especially around low-altitude flight



Izmi Herlani

paths used during takeoff and landing. Modern fighter aircraft operate at extremely high speeds and demand precise operational environments. A single bird strike at a critical phase of flight can endanger not only highly valuable national assets but also the lives of trained aircrew who remain committed to defending the nation under all circumstances. Globally, aviation authorities and Air Forces treat bird hazards with utmost seriousness. Extensive measures are implemented around airbases and airports to control bird activity, maintain environmental cleanliness and minimize attractants that encourage bird congregation. However, during Eid-ul-Azha, the challenge becomes exceptionally complex due to the widespread disposal of sacrificial remains in open spaces, empty plots, roadsides, drains, canals and garbage dumps. In many localities, improper disposal practices unintentionally create feeding grounds for scavenging birds. The situation becomes particularly dangerous when such dumping occurs near airbases, aviation facilities or known flying routes. Birds drawn towards

these sites can remain airborne in large numbers for extended periods, increasing the likelihood of hazardous encounters with aircraft. This is why public cooperation during Eid-ul-Azha is not merely a matter of civic cleanliness; it is directly linked with national safety and operational preparedness. Every citizen has an important role to play in reducing bird hazards and ensuring safer skies for aviation operations across the country.

Citizens are strongly encouraged to follow proper and hygienic disposal methods for sacrificial waste and animal remains. Local administrations and municipal authorities usually establish designated collection points and waste disposal mechanisms during Eid days. These arrangements should be utilized responsibly to prevent the accumulation of exposed waste in residential and open areas. The following precautionary measures can significantly help reduce bird hazards:

Dispose sacrificial remains only at officially designated collection points. Avoid throwing animal waste in streets, rooftops, parks, canals, drains, empty plots or open garbage areas. Place offal and waste material in sealed bags before disposal to minimize exposure. Ensure timely cleaning and

washing of slaughter areas after Qurbani. Where municipal collection services are unavailable, bury animal remains at suitable designated locations. Prevent the dumping of carcasses near airfields, highways and open grounds where birds are likely to gather. Encourage neighbourhoods and local communities to adopt collective cleanliness measures during Eid festivities. Religious teachings also emphasize cleanliness, moderation and consideration for the well-being of others. Maintaining hygiene and preventing public hazards are fully aligned with the spirit of Eid-ul-Azha and reflect responsible citizen-



ship. By ensuring proper disposal of animal waste, citizens not only help preserve the environment and public health but also contribute towards protecting critical national defence capabilities. Pakistan Air Force has consistently maintained the highest standards of operational safety and professionalism in fulfilling its mission. From peacetime vigilance to operational readiness during national contingencies, PAF personnel remain committed to defending the country's skies with unwavering dedication. Supporting flight safety efforts during Eid-ul-Azha is therefore a shared national obligation that requires cooperation between institutions, communities and individual citizens alike.

As the nation celebrates Eid-ul-Azha in a spirit of sacrifice and unity, let us also demonstrate our collective commitment towards civic responsibility and national service. By disposing of sacrificial remains properly and encouraging others to do the same, every Pakistani can contribute towards safeguarding valuable national assets and ensuring the safety of those who tirelessly protect our skies. This Eid, let us honour not only the spirit of sacrifice but also the responsibility that comes with it. Clean surroundings, responsible conduct and public awareness can go a long way in ensuring safer skies for Pakistan and uninterrupted operational readiness for the defenders of the nation's aerial frontiers.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
171,725.29	167,844.24
Day's High	Day's Low
171,920.80	170,161.66
Index Value	Change
26,214,439,476	+3881.05
Percentage	Time
+2.31%	25 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
65,158.19	+1,819.12
Percentage	Time
+2.87%	25 May, 3:45 pm GMT+9

## Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.82	202.68
Bahrain Dinar	729.05	740.75
Canadian Dollar	200.01	205.45
China Yuan	40.05	41.15
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	322.87	328.89
Hong Kong Dollar	34.94	35.94
Indian Rupee	2.50	2.75
Japanese Yen	1.7423	1.8424
Kuwaiti Dinar	876.38	887.25
Malaysian Ringgit	67.00	68.15
New Zealand \$	161.80	168.81
Norwegians Krone	27.75	28.05
Omani Riyal	718.48	729.25
Qatari Riyal	74.04	76.02
Saudi Riyal	73.85	74.75
Singapore Dollar	216.03	220.15
Swedish Korona	30.35	30.65
Swiss Franc	352.78	356.68
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.65
U.A.E Dirham	75.55	76.55
UK Pound Sterling	374.08	379.10
US Dollar	278.80	279.55

# Finance Minister discusses revenue reforms and sectoral competitiveness with PTC delegation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, met with a Pakistan Tobacco Company (PTC) delegation led by Mr. Usman Zahur to discuss the Government's fiscal reform agenda.

The Minister detailed plans for strengthening revenue mobilization, broadening the tax base, improving enforcement, and enhancing transparency through technology. He highlighted ongoing reforms in tax administration focusing on people, processes, and technology to boost compliance and reduce leakages.

The Minister noted that digitized, technology-assisted enforcement, alongside coordinated agency operations, is improving compliance and revenue collection in sectors like sugar, cement, beverages, textiles, and tobacco, addressing illicit economic activity. PTC acknowledged the Government's reform and enforcement efforts, sharing insights on



excise taxation, illicit trade, market dynamics, and export competitiveness within the tobacco sector.

They stressed the need for a stable tax framework to foster formal sector growth. Discussions also covered regulatory and taxation issues,

sectoral competitiveness, market trends, and reducing illicit products through strengthened enforcement, including inter-provincial coordination.

The Finance Minister reaffirmed that revenue mobilization and enforcement are key to fiscal reforms, assuring that sector-specific proposals would align with broader fiscal objectives and economic priorities.

The meeting also explored export potential and investment in the tobacco sector, with PTC highlighting Pakistan's regional manufacturing and export capabilities.

The Minister appreciated PTC's input, emphasizing the Government's commitment to engaging with the formal business sector to support investment, exports, industrial activity, and sustainable economic growth. He concluded by stating the Government's continued pursuit of reforms to improve ease of doing business, strengthen compliance, and foster a transparent, competitive economic environment.

## Budget Proposal

ISLAMABAD: Mian Zahid Hussain, Chairman of the FPCCI Council for Federal Budget Proposals, is presenting FPCCI Budget Proposals to Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries, in Islamabad. He is accompanied by Mr. Tariq Jadoon, VP FPCCI, Mr. Umer Rehan, Malik Sohail Hussain, and other dignitaries.



## UBG Patron-in-Chief S. M. Tanveer Rejects Indicative System Plan



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: S. M. Tanveer, UBG Patron-in-Chief, urged NEPA to reject the Indicative System Plan (ISP) 2025-35, calling it a flawed energy roadmap. Citing Pakistan's excess generation capacity (40,000 MW vs. 28,000 MW peak demand), declining grid demand, and substantial private solar installations, he deemed adding another 26,043 MW incomprehensible and warned it would worsen the energy crisis by increasing debt from \$57 billion in new infrastructure.

Tanveer highlighted that 52.6% of electricity bills

cover capacity charges, and the ISP itself admits new plans would lead to unaffordable tariffs.

He proposed reducing transmission losses (currently 18-20%) to 10% to save over Rs. 570 billion annually without new investment. Tanveer criticized the "PLEXOS" model for preloading "must-run" projects like Diamer Bhasha and Dasu, undermining cost optimization, and pointed to WAPDA's history of massive cost overruns. While acknowledging dams and nuclear energy's importance, he demanded cost controls for them and that government projects be funded via PSDP, not consumers. He advocates for reducing electricity tariffs from Rs. 33.38 per unit to 9 cents, aiming for 6 cents by 2035.

Tanveer urged the Prime Minister and NEPA to revise the ISP with accurate demand growth, transparent costs, and caps on project cost escalations, warning that the current plan risks financial destruction for Pakistan's collapsing industry and uncompetitive exporters.

## Pakistan's Bottled Water Brands: 35 Found Unsafe for Consumption

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has directed PCRWR for quarterly monitoring of bottled/mineral water brands and publicize the results for awareness of public health. For the 1st quarter of year 2026 (January to March), 228 samples of mineral/bottled water brands were collected from 21 major cities. Comparison of test results with the bottled water quality standards of Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) has revealed that 35 brands were unsafe for human consumption due to microbiological or chemical contamination.

Ten brands (Pure Drinking Water, New A2Z Pure Drinking Water, Saiban Pure Drinking Water, Alpha Premium Drinking Water, Aqua Sip Bottled Drinking Water, HR Water Healthy Life, Fresh Smart, Florina Healthy Drinking Water, Drinkly, Aqua Smart) were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of sodium.

Three brands (Qudrat Bottled Drinking Water, Imperial Sip, Lasani Bottled Drinking Water) were found to be unsafe due to presence of higher levels of arsenic.

One brand (Aqua Smart) was found



unsafe due to presence of high level of TDS than the permissible limit, while, One brand (Fresh Smart) was found unsafe due to presence of high level of potassium than the permissible limit.

Twenty five brands (Oss Pure Drinking Water, Naimat Pure Drinking Water, Pure, Aqua Best Pure Drinking Water, Asia Health Drinking Water, New Mehran, Zalmit Pure Natural Water, Aqua 111 Pure Drinking Water, Fresh Smart, Florina Healthy Drinking Water, Miran Drinking

Water, Drinkwell Pure Drinking Water, Al Meer Bottled Drinking Water, Finley, Wah Water, Pura Smart, Aquamin Plus, Bianca, Aqua Smart, Pure Life, Daily Water, Maa Jee, Aab-e-Haram, Oslo, As Purified Water) were found contaminated with bacteria and thus were unsafe for drinking purpose.

General public is encouraged to look at the detailed report to know about the status of water quality of bottled water brands they consume.

## Business Leader Urges Growth Reforms Over Tax Squeeze in Budget 2026-27

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, a prominent business leader, has urged the federal government to prioritize growth-oriented fiscal reforms over aggressive revenue squeezing in the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-2027. He cautioned that the proposed stringent revenue targets, particularly the ambitious Rs15.264 trillion FBR collection goal, place an undue burden on the already overtaxed formal sector. Hussain believes this approach will lead to capital flight and reduced industrial output. He acknowledged the IMF's stabili-



zation mandates but stressed the need to balance them with the survival of the private sector.

Hussain also highlighted the precariousness of budget deficit targets, which are heavily reliant on volatile debt servicing costs, exacerbated by potential high inflation driven by energy prices and geopolitical events. He called for structural reforms such as tax administration digitization, provincial revenue enhancement, SOE restructuring, and reduced non-development spending to foster a more sustainable economic environment and lower the cost of doing business.

## Desert Atlas: Beyond the Dunes of Cholistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The second episode of "The Great Pakistan Adventure," titled "Desert Atlas," delves into the Cholistan desert, showcasing stories of resilience, revival, and survival. Content creator Bilal Hassan (Mystapaki) guides viewers through this rarely explored region, revealing its rich history, culture, and the enduring spirit of its people, shaped by the harsh landscape.

The episode highlights the successful revival of the black buck at Lal Suhanra National Park, demonstrating how community dedication can protect endangered life even in challenging environments. It also features the Cholistan Desert Rally, where professional rally driver Muhammad Marwat and the BYD Shark 6 tackle the demanding terrain, showcasing the vehicle's capabilities.

A particularly emotional segment follows young biker Maha Hussain, who overcomes social expectations and hardship to pursue her passion, and Mystapaki's personal quest to find his father's former school in Bahawalpur.

## Hyderabad Industrial Road in Ruins, Trade Leaders Demand Urgent Repair

Commerce desk

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad SITE Association of Trade and Industry Chairman Zubair Ghangra has expressed his deep concern and anger over the extremely dilapidated condition of the road from Hali Road to Fateh Chowk, its cracks, deep potholes and sewage water accumulating on the roads, saying that this road is considered one of the most important highways of Hyderabad's industrial and commercial system, but it is regrettable to say that today this road is completely in ruins.

## BISP Eyes Digital Wallets for Cashless Payments



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Senator Rubina Khalid and Secretary BISP Amer Ali Ahmad met with the Governor State Bank of Pakistan, Jameel Ahmad, in Karachi. The meeting focused on BISP payments through Digital Wallets in line with the PM's Cashless Economy vision and the implementation of the interoperability mechanism.

Chairperson BISP stated that, under the special directions of the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister's vision for a cashless economy, BISP is advancing towards digitizing beneficiary payments through Digital Wallets. She further informed that the process of free mobile SIMs distribution has been

expedited and awareness campaigns strengthened so that beneficiaries who have not yet received SIMs may collect them from their nearest BISP offices before June 15, 2026.

Highlighting interoperability, Senator Rubina Khalid said the initiative will ensure ease, transparency and empowerment by enabling beneficiaries to withdraw payments from any bank of their choice, thereby enhancing accessibility and financial inclusion.

Governor State Bank Jameel Ahmad assured full cooperation in implementing the interoperability mechanism for the facilitation of BISP beneficiaries.

Director General Cash Transfers BISP Muhammad Idrees Mian also attended the meeting.

# PAF wins 55th National Men's Volleyball C'ship

The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) clinched the title of the 55th National Men's Volleyball Championship 2026, defeating Pakistan Navy 3-1 in a thrilling final held at the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Sports Complex, Wah Cantt.

ISLAMABAD, May 25 (APP): The Pakistan Air Force (PAF) clinched the title of the 55th National Men's Volleyball Championship 2026, defeating Pakistan Navy 3-1 in a thrilling final held at the Pakistan Ordnance Factories Sports Complex, Wah Cantt.

Marking a comeback after 12 years, PAF reclaimed the national crown. Despite losing the first set 16-25, PAF staged a strong comeback to win the next three sets 25-21, 25-21, and 25-18, said a press release.

PAF remained unbeaten throughout the tournament. In the semi-final, the team defeated defending champions Wapda in straight sets.

The championship took place from May 18 to May 23, featuring 16 of the country's top teams.

PAF Captain Chief Technician Fahad Raza was named Player of the Final as well as Player of the Tournament.



Chief Technician Afaq Khan received the award for Best Outside Hitter. The victory underscores the Pakistan Air Force's commitment to high performance, teamwork, and the spirit of competitive sports.

# ICCI Gladiators Lift Tournament Trophy with Unbeaten Performance

ISLAMABAD: A vibrant and highly competitive cricket tournament was organized at the F-9 Cricket Ground in the federal capital by the Sanjrani Group in collaboration with the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI). The tournament brought together ten teams from different organizations and institutions, creating an atmosphere of sportsmanship, unity, and healthy competition.

The ICCI Gladiators emerged as the champions of the Tournament after delivering an exceptional unbeaten performance throughout the event. The team won six consecutive matches and remained undefeated, showcasing remarkable teamwork, discipline, and cricketing excellence.

The grand final was played between ICCI Gladiators and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs team. After winning the toss, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs elected to field first. ICCI Gladiators responded with an explosive batting performance, posting a massive total of 134 runs in just 6 overs. Chasing the challenging target, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs team managed to score 77 runs, while ICCI Gladiators comfortably secured the championship



trophy with an outstanding all-round performance.

President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, attended the event as the chief guest. The tournament also witnessed the participation of distinguished members of the diplomatic community, including H. E. Mr. Abdul Aziz, Ambassador of Lebanon, H. E. Mr. Titus Abu Basutu, Ambassador of Zimbabwe, and Mr. Eduard Prada, Deputy Head of Mission

at the Romanian Embassy. Diplomats from Spain, Türkiye, the Czech Republic, France, Zimbabwe, and several other friendly countries also attended the event, adding an international flavor to the tournament.

Speaking on the occasion, Sardar Tahir Mehmood congratulated the winning team and appreciated the efforts of all participating teams. He stated that sports play a vital role in promoting discipline, teamwork, tolerance, and positive thinking

among youth. He emphasized that such healthy and constructive activities help strengthen social harmony, mutual understanding, and friendship among different communities and institutions.

The visiting ambassadors and diplomats highly appreciated the organization of the tournament and lauded ICCI and the Sanjrani Group for promoting sports diplomacy and people-to-people connections through healthy activities. They noted that sports

serve as a powerful medium for strengthening friendship, cultural understanding, and cooperation among nations. The diplomats also praised the enthusiasm and talent displayed by the participating teams and expressed their desire to see more such international and community engagement activities in the future.

Chairman Sports Committee ICCI Waqas Ilyas Abbasi remarked that sports are the foundation of a healthy society and serve as an effective platform for encouraging youth towards positive and productive activities. He said ICCI would continue to organize such sporting events to promote healthy engagement, unity, and camaraderie within the business community and beyond.

At the conclusion of the tournament, Chief Guest Sardar Tahir Mehmood distributed trophies, shields, and prizes among the winning team and outstanding performers, while the participants and guests highly appreciated the successful organization of the event.

Islamabad: ICCI Gladiators jubilating after clinching the Championship trophy at the hands of Chief Guest Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

# Dowry System in Pakistan: A Tradition Turning Into a Social Burden

Irdum Hammad Siddiqui

Marriage in Pakistan is widely regarded as a sacred relationship founded upon love, trust, and mutual respect. Yet, behind the celebrations and cultural festivities, there exists a deeply rooted social practice that continues to burden thousands of families every year; the dowry system, that has gradually transformed into a social obligation that often results in financial exploitation, emotional suffering, and marital conflict. The dowry system has existed in the subcontinent for decades and remains common in Pakistani society. At the time of marriage, the bride's family is expected to provide furniture, household appliances, clothing, jewelry, cash, and other expensive items to the groom and his family. In many communities, the value of dowry is unfairly linked with the dignity and social status of the bride's family. Consequently, marriages are no longer judged solely on compatibility and character but also on material wealth.

The misuse of dowry also has severe consequences after marriage. Women are frequently subjected to taunts, harassment, and domestic violence if the dowry provided is considered inadequate. In some cases, disputes regarding dowry become the reason for divorce or continued abuse within the household. Such practices reduce women to objects of financial exchange and contradict the values of equality and dignity guaranteed under law and religion alike.

Pakistani Law provides safeguards to these abuses in the form of; Dowry and Bridal Gifts (Restriction) Act 1976 to regulate wedding expenditures and protect families from exploitation. Section 3 of the Act places restrictions on the value of dowry, bridal gifts, and presents exchanged during marriage ceremonies. The purpose of this provision is to discourage unnecessary extravagance and prevent financial pressure on the bride's family.

Furthermore, Section 5 of the same Act prohibits the display of dowry and bridal gifts in public. This provision aims to discourage social competition and the public exhibition of wealth that encourages unrealistic expectations among families.

Muslim Family Laws Ordinance 1961; Section 5 of the Ordinance makes registration of marriage compulsory through a Nikah Registrar. Proper registration creates legal evidence of marriage and helps protect the rights of women in marital disputes, including disputes related to dowry and bridal property. Similarly, Section 10 of the Ordinance recognizes the wife's right to claim maintenance from her husband, reinforcing the principle that a woman's financial security is the responsibility of the husband rather than her parental family through dowry arrangements. Despite the existence of these legal safeguards, many families continue to violate the law openly because extravagant weddings and expensive dowries are still viewed as symbols of prestige and honor. As a result, the effectiveness of legislation is often undermined by social attitudes.

The responsibility to eliminate dowry abuse does not rest upon the government alone. Society must collectively challenge the mindset that measures a woman's worth through material possessions. Parents should prioritize education and independence for their daughters instead of saving for lavish dowries, while young men should openly reject such demands rather than silently benefiting from them. Marriage should represent companionship and mutual respect, not a financial transaction. Unless society abandons the culture of dowry and begins valuing simplicity and equality, countless families will continue to suffer behind the celebrations of marriage. True social progress can only be achieved when marriages are built upon character and understanding rather than wealth and material expectations.

The writer is student of second year LLB

# Flawed Judicial Appointments and the Erosion of Fair Trial in Kashmir

Continued from Page 4

transparent judicial appointments commission consisting of a majority of judges elected by peers, with civil-society participation and published merit criteria. India's collegium system meets none of these prerequisites.

The World Muslim Congress has urged the Special Rapporteur to engage the Indian government to establish such

a commission and conduct a time-bound judicial review of convictions under the UAPA and PSA—including those of Malik, Shah, and Andrabi. A genuine review would require full compliance with due-process guarantees and the reversal of convictions tainted by coerced confessions or denied legal representation.

Additionally, the principles necessitate the repeal or amendment of laws permit-

ting indefinite detention and stripping away fair-trial rights. The PSA, UAPA, and AFSPA must be brought into compliance with India's ICCPR obligations. The normative framework is clear: judicial appointments must be governed by merit and integrity, insulated from politics. In Kashmir, the erosion of this guarantee is not hypothetical; it is reflected in the harsh sentences of those whose dissent has been criminalized by a constrained

judiciary. The Special Rapporteur's report provides the diagnostic tool; the remaining requirement is the political will to implement structural remedies.

Writer is chairman Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and permanent Representative World Muslim Congress (WMC) to United Nations Geneva and can be reached at X: @sultani913

# Pakistan Saves Middle East and Iran and Shatters Israel Invincibility

Continued from Page 4

visible through expanding buffer zones in Gaza, southern Lebanon, Syria, and potentially beyond.

Today, much of that strategic vision lies shattered.

Instead of negotiating surrender, Iran is negotiating from resilience. The focus has shifted away from total dismantlement toward maritime management, phased arrangements, timelines, and future diplomatic understandings.

Iran emerged bloodied but strategically unbroken. Lebanon was spared the scale of destruction inflicted upon Gaza. A wider regional war was paused. Most importantly, the world economy was protected from what could have become the largest energy and financial collapse in modern history.

The economic implications of this diplomatic intervention are staggering.

Had the Strait of Hormuz remained blocked for a prolonged period, global oil prices could have reached catastrophic levels. Energy-importing countries across Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America would have suffered devastating inflationary shocks.

Food prices, electricity costs, transportation expenses, fertilizer production, and industrial manufacturing costs would all have surged simultaneously. Hundreds of millions of vulnerable people — potentially more than a billion globally — could have been pushed below the poverty line.

At the same time, Gulf desalination plants, ports, oil facilities, refineries, shipping infrastructure, and industrial zones worth trillions of dollars stood exposed to destruction. The war was already costing the United States tens of billions of dollars while shaking global financial

confidence.

Pakistan's diplomacy helped prevent that nightmare.

This explains the visible anger and panic among hardline supporters of the war in Washington and Israel. Republican figures such as Lindsey Graham, Ted Cruz, Roger Wicker, Tom Cotton, Mike Pompeo, and John Bolton openly criticized the emerging framework because they believed the war should continue until Iran was strategically crushed.

Lindsey Graham described the arrangement as a "nightmare for Israel." Ted Cruz warned that Iran could emerge stronger. Roger Wicker argued that everything achieved through "Operation Epic Fury" could become meaningless. Mike Pompeo compared the emerging framework to what he considered the failures of the Obama-era nuclear agreement.

Their outrage itself reflects the scale of Pakistan's diplomatic

success.

For decades, Pakistan was often portrayed internationally through the narrow lenses of instability, extremism, economic weakness, or political crisis. Yet this conflict revealed another Pakistan — a nuclear-armed middle power capable of balancing global contradictions and preventing a catastrophic war involving some of the world's most dangerous rivalries.

Pakistan demonstrated that strategic intelligence, diplomatic patience, resilience, and credibility can sometimes achieve what overwhelming military power cannot.

At the same time, Israel's global image has suffered unprecedented damage. The destruction in Gaza, the deaths of thousands of civilians and children, devastation in Lebanon, accusations of ethnic cleansing, and growing criticism from Europe and international insti-

tutions weakened Israel's moral standing globally. Countries that once remained silent increasingly questioned Israeli actions. Public sympathy that once overwhelmingly favored Israel significantly eroded.

The United States also realized that unlimited military escalation carried unbearable economic and political costs. The conflict exposed vulnerabilities in global supply chains, energy security, military overstretch, and domestic political stability.

But Pakistan's accomplishment goes far beyond being merely its greatest diplomatic success. In terms of geopolitical significance and prevention of global destruction, this achievement stands comparable to — and in some respects exceeds — many celebrated diplomatic breakthroughs in modern history. The Camp David Accords prevented another Arab-Israeli war. The Cuban Missile Crisis

diplomacy pulled the United States and Soviet Union back from the brink of nuclear annihilation. The Dayton Accords ended the Bosnian conflict. The historic rapprochement between China and the United States in the 1970s transformed two hostile powers into diplomatic partners and reshaped the global balance of power.

Yet even that historic opening was significantly facilitated through Pakistan's quiet diplomacy, when Islamabad served as the trusted bridge between Beijing and Washington at a time when both countries lacked formal diplomatic relations and viewed one another as ideological enemies. Pakistan quietly helped create one of the most important geopolitical transformations of the twentieth century.

Today, decades later, Pakistan has once again demonstrated a diplomatic capability of historic magnitude.

Unlike superpowers that imposed outcomes through military occupation, coercion, or economic domination, Pakistan achieved influence through trust, strategic balance, credibility, and dialogue. This time, Pakistan helped prevent a conflict involving multiple war fronts, nuclear-capable states, collapsing energy routes, and a possible global economic meltdown.

History often celebrates nations for conquering territories and winning wars. Pakistan may ultimately be remembered for something far greater: helping prevent a regional conflict from evolving into a catastrophe capable of destabilizing the entire international system.

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

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with Ms. Jane Marriott CMG OBE, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, at the Finance Division to discuss bilateral cooperation and Pakistan's reform agenda.



Photo: PID

## Finance Minister, British High Commissioner discuss economic cooperation and reform agenda

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held a meeting today with Ms. Jane Marriott CMG OBE, British High Commissioner to Pakistan, who called on the Minister at the Finance Division. The meeting focused on Pakistan-United Kingdom bilateral cooperation, economic reforms, regional developments, and contin-

ued engagement on matters of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister shared the Government's perspective on the evolving global economic environment and its implications for Pakistan's economy, particularly in the context of regional geopolitical developments and energy market volatility. He outlined the Government's ongoing efforts to maintain macroeconomic stability, manage external

sector pressures, and sustain the momentum of economic reforms aimed at ensuring long-term growth and resilience.

Senator Aurangzeb highlighted improvements in key economic indicators, including stability in the external account, continued strength in remittance inflows, and growing investor confidence. He also briefed the British High Commissioner on measures being

undertaken to broaden the tax base, strengthen revenue mobilization, improve compliance, and enhance transparency through technology-driven reforms and digitalization initiatives.

The British High Commissioner appreciated Pakistan's continued engagement on regional issues and reaffirmed the United Kingdom's support for Pakistan's economic reform efforts and development priorities.

Matters relating to climate resilience, population planning, social sector coordination, and cooperation with international financial institutions were also discussed during the meeting.

The meeting ended with a shared commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-United Kingdom bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation across economic, development, and institutional sectors.

## IHC restrains eviction of One Constitution Avenue apartment owners

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Monday issued a significant order restraining authorities from evicting the sub-lease holder apartment owners of One Constitution Avenue until further notice.

A division bench comprising Justice Muhammad Azam

Khan and Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas heard intra-court appeals filed by former Air Chief Mujahid Anwar Khan, former ICC President Ahsan Mani, former Senate Chairman Wasim Sajjad, and others. The appellants have challenged paragraph 30 of the single bench decision concerning the protection of third-party rights.

Advocates Taimur Aslam and Ali Raza appeared on behalf of the appellants, while Kashif Ali Malik represented the Capital Development Authority (CDA).

During the proceedings, the CDA counsel argued that the appeals were not maintainable. Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas remarked, "We will hear the full case later; today

we are only considering their request for a stay."

The court inquired whether the apartment owners' case had been considered when the matter was before the Supreme Court. The bench also questioned how residents began living in the building without a completion certificate. Justice Muhammad Azam Khan remarked, "Was the

CDA sleeping when there was no completion certificate but residents had already started living there?"

The CDA counsel informed the court that the building had still not received its completion certificate.

The court subsequently ruled that no eviction of apartment owners shall take place until further orders.

## Talal Chaudhry inaugurates Islamabad Ataturk Avenue expansion project

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Monday inaugurated the Islamabad Ataturk Avenue expansion project while representing Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony in the federal capital, Talal Chaudhry said the Ministry of Interior was moving towards a modern, secure and greener Islamabad in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He stated that the width of Ataturk Avenue had been expanded from 24 feet to 52 feet, adding that the project would significantly improve traffic flow in the area.

The minister said the scheme had been completed in accordance with the federal government's infrastructure vision while ensuring that all trees along the route were preserved.

Talal Chaudhry further noted that the Ataturk Avenue project included modern lighting, drainage systems, walkways and enhanced safety arrangements.

He added that environmental protection remained a top priority in all development projects undertaken by the government.

## Will Pakistan face extreme heat in next 24 hours as Met Office issues forecast?

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Meteorological Department has issued a weather forecast for the next 24 hours, predicting hot and dry conditions in most parts of the country.

According to the report, most regions will continue to experience dry weather, while central and southern areas are expected to remain severely hot during the daytime.

It added that today's weather remained dry in most parts of the country. However, in Gilgit-Baltistan, Kashmir, and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, partly cloudy conditions were observed, along with rain accompanied by strong winds and thunderstorms at a few places.



Rainfall was recorded in several areas, including 5 mm in Gupis, 4 mm in Sost, 3 mm in Chilas, 1 mm in Skardu and Bagrote, 9 mm in Muzaffarabad Airport, 8 mm in Muzaffarabad city, 9 mm in Patan, 5 mm in Kalam and Drosh, 3 mm in Mirkhani, and 1 mm in Chakwal.

The report stated that today's highest temperature reached 49°C in Jacobabad, while Dadu, Larkana, and Padidan recorded 48°C.

The department further noted temperatures of 38°C in Islamabad, 47°C in Sibbi, 44°C in Nokundi, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, and Dera Ghazi Khan, 41°C in Lahore, 35°C in Karachi, 40°C in Peshawar, and 42°C in Dera Ismail Khan.

## President Zardari felicitates Jordanian leadership on Independence Day



## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday extended felicitations to King Abdullah II ibn Al Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and the people of Jordan on their Independence Day, annually observed on May 25.

In a message, conveyed on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, the president noted that Pakistan and Jordan enjoyed cordial and long-standing relations, founded on mutual respect, trust and shared values.

He said that both countries maintained a close understanding and

convergence of views on a wide range of regional and international issues.

The president expressed confidence that the fraternal ties would continue to grow even stronger in the years ahead.

President Zardari recalled the Jordanian king's visit to Pakistan in November 2025, emphasising that it provided a valuable impetus to bilateral cooperation and further reinforced the bonds of friendship between the two nations.

He further conveyed his sincere wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Jordan.

## Ishaq Dar to visit New York for UN Security Council debate



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar will visit New York City from May 26 to 28 to participate in a high-level debate at the United Nations Security Council, according to the Foreign Office spokesperson.

The spokesperson said the Security Council debate would focus on global peace and security and the role of the United Nations in addressing international challenges.

The session will be held under the presidency of China for May 2026, with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi set to chair the debate.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said Pakistan had welcomed China's timely initiative and reiterated its support for the multilateral system and the central role of the United Nations in maintaining international peace and security.

During the visit, Ishaq Dar will also attend a meeting of the Global Governance Group of Friends on May 28. The meeting will focus on reforms in global governance and ways to address common international challenges.

Pakistan, the spokesperson added, would continue to play a constructive role in promoting global peace, security and sustainable development.

## 16 killed in bus-van crash on Swat Motorway near Mardan



## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 16 passengers were killed and seven others seriously injured after a passenger van collided with a bus near Ismaila interchange on the Swat Motorway in Mardan, Motorway Police said on Monday.

Sources said the bodies and injured were shifted to Mardan Medical Complex for medico-legal

procedures and treatment.

The deceased and injured passengers belonged to different districts, the sources added.

Motorway Police said rescue teams reached the site immediately after the accident.

According to preliminary investigations, the crash occurred due to the negligence of the driver, who rammed the vehicle into the bus parked along a road from behind.