



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے ایک شخص کو دیکھا کہ قرآنی کلمے کے لیے ایک اونٹنی ہانکے لیے جا رہا ہے۔ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ اس پر سوار ہو کر چلا، انہوں نے کہا کہ یہ تو قرآنی کلمے ہاں ہے۔ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ سوار ہو جا، افسوس «ویک» دوسری یا تیسری مرتبہ یہ فرمایا۔ (کنز الدقائق، حدیث نمبر 6159)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Federal cabinet to approve budget 2026-27 in meeting today

The federal cabinet will meet today under the chairmanship of the prime minister to approve the federal budget for 2026-27, sources said. According to sources, the budget documents will also be presented in the National Assembly on the same day, with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expected to attend the session.



From Pakistan to Kerala? Mahira Khan eyes 'Malayalam' cinema

Pakistani superstar Mahira Khan has once again won hearts with her candid admiration for Malayalam cinema, openly expressing her desire to be part of the thriving film industry known for its compelling storytelling and critically acclaimed content.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Programme on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM directs faster loan approvals, simpler procedures under Apna Ghar Scheme

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has directed authorities to streamline procedures and expedite loan approvals for the Apna Ghar Scheme, aiming to help more citizens achieve homeownership. He highlighted the scheme's

encouraging public response and its potential to stimulate the construction sector and broader economy.

The Prime Minister instructed the Ministry of Housing and the State Bank of Pakistan to simplify application forms and urged banks to speed up loan approvals and disbursements.

He also ordered an intensified nationwide awareness campaign and the establishment of provincial facilitation desks to assist applicants with land ownership documents.

So far, Rs11 billion in loans have been disbursed, with 67,900 applications received, 16,587 approved, and 3,146 beneficiaries receiving

payments. Efforts are underway to further expedite concessional housing finance, and banks are now mandated to process applications within 15 days.

New laws are expected to remove legal hurdles in the housing sector, and a dedicated digital portal is monitoring the scheme's progress.

The meeting was attended by

Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal Cheema, Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, the Governor of the State Bank of Pakistan, presidents and chief executive officers of Pakistani banks, provincial chief secretaries and senior officials from relevant institutions.

Resilient Pakistan posts 3.7% GDP growth amid floods, global shocks: Aurangzeb

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defying global uncertainty, devastating floods and regional tensions, Pakistan's economy rebounded with a robust 3.7 per cent GDP growth in fiscal year 2025-26, showcasing resilience and disciplined economic management, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Thursday.

Unveiling the Economic Survey of Pakistan 2025-26, he said the country stayed firmly

on its path from stabilization to growth despite multiple external shocks, reflecting renewed confidence in the economy.

The minister, accompanied by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kayani and senior officials from the Ministry of Finance and Revenue, highlighted key economic indicators and performance.



"The survey is not just an economic document but a story

of resilience shown over the past year," Aurangzeb said, adding that Pakistan remained steadfast on its journey from stabilization to growth.

He said that the fiscal year began with global trade uncertainty due to tariff-related issues, followed by devastating floods in August and September and later a regional conflict. "These exogenous factors tested Pakistan's resilience, and we responded effectively while maintaining our growth trajectory," he remarked.

Continued on Page 7

Asif calls for respecting Parliament, reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif urged all political parties to respect Parliament and democratic institutions, stating that political disputes should not undermine the legislature.

He recalled that leaders from parties like PPP and PML-N, despite facing imprisonment and hardships, never compromised Parliament's dignity and instead used constitutional forums for redress.

Asif criticized PTI for disrupting parliamentary proceedings over the past two years by linking their participation to their leader's imprisonment, emphasizing



that institutions and the country are paramount over individuals. He asserted that political parties can seek relief for their leaders through legal and political channels but should not obstruct parliamentary business or weaken democratic institutions.

Asif highlighted legislation as Parliament's primary responsibility and called for protests to remain within democratic limits. He noted that many within PTI also desire smooth proceedings, but repeated disruptions have damaged Parliament's credibility.

Regarding the Kashmir issue and the voting rights of Kashmiri refugees, Asif stated that both Pakistanis and Kashmiris have made significant sacrifices. He described Kashmir as a national cause, not just for Kashmiris, and reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment, referencing Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's description of Kashmir as Pakistan's "jugular vein" and emphasizing continued support for generations.

AJK govt reinstates 177 FIRs against JAAC leaders

Bureau Report

The government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) on Thursday, while withdrawing concessions given to the Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), also decided to reinstate 177 FIRs registered against its leaders and workers.

According to the government, as per an agreement it had reached with the JAAC on October 4, 2025, all issues had to be resolved through a committee and that a proper procedure had to be adopted for their resolution. However, recent protests were a breach of that agreement, the government opines.

Turkish Land Forces Commander Meets Field Marshal Asim Munir: Discuss Defense cooperation



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Metin Tokel, Commander of Turkish Land Forces, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

Upon arrival at GHQ, the visiting dignitary was presented a smartly turned out Guard of Honour by a Army contingent.

During the meeting, matters of mutual professional interest, regional security dynamics, and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence cooperation were discussed.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir highlighted the deep-rooted historical, cultural, and strategic ties between the two countries and appreciated the strong defence partnership between the Armed Forces of Pakistan and Türkiye.

The visiting dignitary lauded the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged its contributions towards regional peace and stability. He also expressed his commitment to further enhancing defence cooperation and institutional linkages between the armed forces of the two brotherly nations.

DPM Dar, Turkiye FM Fidan discuss evolving regional situation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephone conversation with Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan, where both the dignitaries discussed the evolving regional situation and underscored the importance of dialogue, and restraint.

During the interaction, both expressed hope for an early understanding among all parties which would contribute to lasting peace and stability



in the region, a DPM's Office news release said.

The two leaders agreed to maintain close coordination on regional and international issues of mutual interest and continue high-level engagements to advance the multifaceted Pakistan-Türkiye partnership.

Tariq calls for constructive opposition, warns against disruption in Parliament

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has urged the opposition to adopt a constructive approach in Parliament, warning that disruptions will face strict action, potentially including bans from the premises and criminal proceedings.

He highlighted that the government is actively working to secure the release of 10 Pakistani nationals detained in Somalia and reiterated that prisoners receive necessary medical facilities.

Chaudhry criticized the opposition for creating scenes and using parliamentary proceedings for social media, emphasizing that Parliament

is not a platform for such activities.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to dialogue and peaceful resolutions, particularly regarding the Kashmir issue, where 12 seats are reserved for refugees, and called on a banned action committee to return to negotiations.

The minister stressed parliamentary supremacy and national priorities. Earlier, MNAs Nawabzada Jamal Raisani and Mir Khan Bugti condemned statements undermining national unity and divisive rhetoric, respectively.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq echoed concerns about alarming statements and emphasized national loyalty.

CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz orders heatwave relief measures across Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has ordered the provision of cold drinking water for the public across the province in view of the ongoing severe heatwave.

She directed the district administration to arrange shaded areas at major squares and intersections in every city and instructed authorities to ensure the availability of cold drinking water, fans and air coolers for passengers at wagon stands, bus terminals and railway stations.

The chief minister also directed that visitors to government offices be provided with cold drinking water and other necessary facilities during the extreme weather conditions.

Appealing to the public, Maryam Nawaz urged citizens to avoid unnecessary travel and outdoor activities during periods of intense heat and hot winds. She emphasised that special care should be taken of women, children and senior citizens during the prevailing heatwave.

She further instructed that cold drinking water, fans and air coolers be provided for students and teachers attending summer camps in schools.



"Preventive measures and caution are the most effective means of coping with extreme heat and high temperatures," the chief minister

said. CM Punjab also directed traffic police not to stop motorcyclists unnecessarily under the scorching

sun. She further instructed officials to avoid stopping motorcycles carrying families or children in direct sunlight unless unavoidable.

Punjab Auqaf Secretary reviews Muharram preparations and development projects

Bureau Report

LAHORE: In line with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz's directives for a peaceful Muharram, Secretary Auqaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, chaired a review meeting in Rawalpindi. He highlighted the "Ulema Visit for Muharram 2026" policy, deploying inter-faith harmony delegations to promote sectarian cohesion and security. Dr. Bhutta also evaluated the status of Auqaf properties, contracts, and revenue targets, emphasizing transparency and modernized financial monitoring. He visited the shrine of Hazrat Baba Shah Suleman Nori, the Jamia Mosque to commend young students, and the Punjab Boys Scouts Summer Camp at Ghora Gali. At the camp, he praised the resilience of mainstream and disabled scouts undergoing specialized training and reviewed a PKR 74 million development scheme for scouts' facilities, ensuring its quality and timely completion.



Dr Nasir Saleem Nasaka Proposes Duty-Free Import of Life-Saving Herbal Medicines

Special Correspondent

KARACHI: Nasir Saleem Nasaka has proposed significant measures for the federal budget, advocating for duty-free import of life-saving herbal medicines to aid low-income patients, mirroring existing duty exemptions for some allopathic drugs. He also suggested waiving outstanding bills for patients who pass away in private hospitals. To address meat affordability, he recommended duty-free import of animals to boost local supply and lower prices. For national benefit, Dr. Nasaka proposed increasing the export price of pink salt due to its global demand and a fixed compensatory rebate rate of 12.5% to enhance exports, alongside a 35% rebate on polyester to support domestic industry and competitiveness. Overall, his proposals prioritize public relief, export growth, healthcare access, and financial easing for citizens.



Hard Work

ISLAMABAD: Laborers busy in digging work at local market in the Federal Capital ahead of federal budget 2026-27 for the financial year 2026-27. The federal government unveiled the Pakistan Economic Survey (PES) for FY2025-26 on Thursday, according to which GDP growth was recorded at 3.7pc in the outgoing fiscal year.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab LG Secretary Reviews Development Projects in Toba Tek Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: The Secretary of Local Government for Punjab, Mian Shakeel Ahmad, recently visited Toba Tek Singh to assess development projects valued at Rs. 20.49 billion. These projects, part of the Punjab Development Program, include extensive sewerage and stormwater drainage system upgrades, street rehabilitation, park improvements, and the construction of wastewater treatment and disposal facilities across Toba Tek Singh, Kamalia, and Gojra. During his tour, the Secretary inspected factories producing materials, ongoing construction sites for water storage tanks, disposal stations, and beautification projects. He was briefed on the progress and financial status of these initiatives, which aim to resolve issues like urban flooding and improve civic amenities. The program is divided into three phases, prioritizing urban flooding solutions and waste management, followed by infrastructure development and public services. The Toba Tek Singh Water Supply Scheme has also been integrated to ensure access to clean drinking water. Secretary Ahmad stressed the importance of timely completion without compromising quality, highlighting the program as a historic effort for urban development and citizen welfare, with long-term benefits expected.



ATNiC calls for higher tobacco taxes and stronger regulation of emerging nicotine products

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Alliance for Tobacco and Nicotine Control (ATNiC) convened experts in Islamabad to address the growing concerns over new tobacco and nicotine products (NTNPs) in Pakistan.

They urged the government to implement higher tobacco taxes and stronger regulations for these emerging products, emphasizing the need to protect youth and improve public health.

Key concerns raised include the

affordability of cigarettes in Pakistan, which has diminished the impact of previous tax increases due to inflation.

Experts proposed a 17.4 percent tax hike on cigarettes in the upcoming budget, projecting an additional PKR 51 billion in government revenue and a reduction in tobacco consumption. The significant economic burden of tobacco use, estimated at PKR 615 billion annually due to healthcare costs and productivity losses, was also highlighted.

A major point of discussion was Pakistan's two-tier cigarette excise tax system, which allows economy brands

to remain cheap, thus encouraging youth and low-income populations to continue using tobacco.

Abolishing this system, along with introducing tax reforms for smokeless tobacco products, could encourage over 271,000 adults to quit smoking, prevent approximately 369,000 young people from starting, and generate tens of billions in additional revenue. Participants also stressed the need for licensing, standardized packaging, and market oversight for smokeless tobacco products.

They highlighted the tobacco indus-

try's use of marketing tactics, including influencer endorsements and sponsorships, to attract young consumers. ATNiC called for a comprehensive regulatory framework for all nicotine products, stronger enforcement against illicit trade and tax evasion, protection of policymaking from industry interference, and expanded public awareness campaigns.

The coalition urged the government to adopt evidence-based policies to safeguard public health, protect future generations, and enhance fiscal stability.

Economic Growth-Oriented Federal Budget Is the Need of the Hour

City Desk

KARACHI/QUETTA: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, stated in a statement regarding the federal budget that, in order to address the country's economic challenges, it is essential to formulate a budget that is not limited to increasing revenues alone but is focused on economic growth, industrial revival, promotion of investment and the creation of new employment opportunities.

He said that Pakistan's economic stability and sustainable development depend on strengthening productive sectors, promoting business activities, and increasing exports. Therefore, these sectors should be given special importance in the federal budget.

He further stated that instead of placing additional burdens on the public and the business sector merely to achieve revenue targets, the government should adopt a strategy aimed at expanding economic activities. When industries operate efficiently, trade expands, exports increase, and new businesses are established, national income will naturally grow, leading to higher government revenues.

SM Group Chairman Praises Responsible Journalism, Pledges Support to Press Club

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Shakeel Anjum, newly elected President of the Multan Press Club and News Bureau Chief, met with Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Chairman of SM Group of Industries.

They discussed industry, trade, employment, the national economy, income tax, responsible journalism, and social development.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar congratulated Shakeel Anjum, emphasizing jour-

nalism's role in society and national development.

He highlighted that responsible journalism builds trust and promotes industrial progress. Anjum's re-election demonstrates the journalist community's confidence in his leadership, integrity, and advocacy for journalists' rights.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar stressed industries as the backbone of economic development, creating thousands of jobs. SM Group of Industries is directly and indirectly linked to thousands of

livelihoods. Industrial growth benefits related sectors like sugar, flour, and transport, contributing to economic stability.

SM Group pays over 12 billion rupees annually in income tax and adheres to all legal and regulatory requirements. He believes that honest performance by industrialists, traders, and the media can lead Pakistan to new economic and social milestones.

Positive journalism fosters hope, while industrial development offers

youth employment and a better future. Chaudhry Zulfiqar pledged SM Group's support for the Multan Press Club and the journalist community.

Shakeel Anjum acknowledged the vital roles of both journalism and industry in national development and appreciated SM Group's support for the media. Both agreed that cooperation among sectors is crucial for positive journalism, industrial growth, employment, and economic stability to build a stronger Pakistan.





Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:14 am
Zohr 12:07 pm
Asr 5:08 pm
Maghrib 7:18 pm
Isha 9:02 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Paddy Cultivation Delayed In Thatta as Growers Lament Acute Water Shortage

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

THATTA: Scarcity of irrigation water has triggered an alarming situation in District Thatta and Sujawal, the districts located along the coastline of the province.

Four main water channels of District Thatta, including Kalri Baghar, Sakro, Jam Wah, and Udero Lal, have turned dry, inducing a dearth of water in more than 40 union councils of District Thatta. According to the claims made by the Irrigation Department of District Thatta, the water scarcity has reached a high of 60 percent, following which the main Kalri Baghar Water Channel has only been receiving 2,800 cusecs of water, which is not sufficient to address the needs of District Thatta.

Muhammad Bux Khaskheli, a local grower, said that the paddy could not bring desired results for the growers during the past few years owing to non-judicious and delayed supply of water.

Another grower, Ali Nawaz Jakhro, said that 30 key water arteries responsible for the supply of water to urban as well as low-lying areas of District Thatta have been running dry, taking things from bad to worse for local growers.

Veteran politician and former MNA of the Pakistan People's Party Dr Abdul Wahid Soomro has accused IRSA and Punjab of depriving Sindh of its due share of water.

Nation Mourns as Prime Minister attends Funeral for Helicopter Crash Martyrs

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Namaz Janaza for

Shuhada, who embraced Shahadat yesterday in tragic MI-17 helicopter crash in Muzaffarabad, was offered



today at Chaklala Garrison, Rawalpindi which was attended by the Honourable Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Minister of Defence, Minister of Information, senior civil and military officials, relatives of the Shuhada, and segments of the society.

Earlier Funeral Services of two shaheed Christian soldiers was offered at Christ Church, Rawalpindi which was also attended by the political and military leadership.

Speaking on the occasion, the Prime Minister remarked that the martyrs' devotion to duty, professionalism, and commitment to safeguarding the motherland will remain a source of

inspiration for future generations. He emphasized that the sacrifices of Pakistan's Armed Forces for peace, security, and national sovereignty can never be forgotten, reaffirming the nation's unwavering support for the families of the martyrs during this difficult time.

Shuhada will be laid to rest in their respective native towns with full military honours.

National Day of Philippines

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain along with Ambassador of the Republic of the Philippines to Pakistan, Dr Emmanuel R Fernandez and others cut the cake during a reception to celebrate 128th Philippines National Day and the 77th Anniversary of Philippines-Pakistan Diplomatic Relations at local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Vehari PPP Celebrates Senate Chairman Yousuf Raza Gillani's Birthday

Asim Tanveer

VEHARI: At the District Secretariat Pakistan Peoples Party Vehari Candidate for MPA PP-234 Chairman Muhammad Nadeem Akhtar Rao along with Senior Vice President Women Wing Multan Division Mrs Taslima Habib Rao cut a cake on the occasion of the Birthday of Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani and a Grand Ceremony was organized.

On this occasion, Rao Nadeem Akhtar said that the services and efforts of former Prime Minister and Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani for the Pakistan Peoples Party are commendable. He paid tribute to Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani and said that he is a sincere, ideological and talented leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

He introduced several



mega projects for the development of Multan Division and South Punjab, including the Vehari Road Multan One-Way Project, the Establishment of various hospitals and Educational institutional Development and the struggle

for the Establishing of a Seraiki Province. He always respected and encouraged the party workers.

He further said that Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani's leadership, political vision and services for the promo-

tion of Democracy are a Beacon of light for the party workers. The participants of the ceremony also offered special prayers for the health longevity and further achievements of Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani.

PM congratulates Pakistan Navy on arrival of PNS/M Hangor

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday congratulated the Pakistan Navy on the arrival of submarine PNS/M Hangor in Pakistan, describing it as a significant achievement for the country's maritime defence.

In a statement, the prime minister said the Hangor Submarine Project was a manifestation of the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and China and reflected the strong strategic cooperation between the two countries in the defence sector.

He said the induction of PNS/M Hangor would significantly enhance the operational capabilities of the Pakistan Navy and play an important role in safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests and naval frontiers.

The prime minister said the Hangor Submarine Project marked an important milestone in Pakistan's journey towards defence self-reliance.

He reiterated that Pakistan remained committed to strengthening its defence capabilities while promoting peace, stability and strategic balance in the region.

Shehbaz Sharif also assured that the government would continue to provide all possible resources to enhance the capabilities of the country's security forces and develop capacities in line with modern requirements.

The prime minister appreciated the professional excellence of the Pakistan Navy, the engineers associated with the project and all technical experts who contributed to the successful arrival of PNS/M Hangor.

ADC General Anil Saeed Chairs Meeting on Disability Rights and Daily Wage Workers

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General Attock, Anil Saeed, chaired an important meeting at the Deputy Commissioner's Office regarding the implementation of the quota reserved for persons with disabilities and matters related to daily-wage employees. Officers from various government departments attended the meeting.

During the meeting, the Additional Deputy Commissioner General was given a detailed briefing on the implementation of the employment quota reserved for persons with disabilities and issues concerning daily-wage workers. On this occasion, Anil Saeed directed all concerned departments to ensure the provision of the legitimate rights of persons with disabilities in accordance with the Government of Punjab's policy and to fully implement the prescribed quota.

He emphasized that any negligence or shortcomings regarding the rights of persons with disabilities in government departments would not be tolerated. He instructed the relevant officers to take all necessary measures to promote the welfare of persons with disabilities and to provide them with equal employment opportunities.

Anil Saeed further stated that the Government of Punjab is taking practical steps to make persons with disabilities an active and productive part of society, and that all departments should fulfill their responsibilities in this regard in the best possible manner.

The meeting also reviewed related matters in detail and discussed the future course of action.

Funeral Prayers Offered in Multan for 11 People Killed in Tragic Traffic Accident Near Murree



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A traffic accident took place near Murree in which 10 lives were lost to Allah. The deceased belonged to Sutri Watt area of Multan. The funeral prayers were led by Allama Syed Muhammad Taqi Naqvi, in which MPA Multan Salman Naeem Sakhawat Hussain Askari Maqdisi, President of Shia Ulema Council District Multan Allama Ghazanfar Ali Haideri, Allama Akhtar Hussain Naseem, Allama Syed Kashif Zahoor Naqvi, Sabir Hussain Mushtaq Hussain Basharat Qureshi, Azhar Baloch, Syed Musa Raza Bukhari, President of National Unity Council General Punjab, Hafiz Muhammad Aslam, Mujahid Hussain Siddiqui, Shahzad Mehdi Saqlain Naqvi, Adnan Guddu, Rana Sajjad, Nafees Ahmed Ansari, Maulana Amjad Khan Sohail Asghar, Syed Anis Haider Naqvi, Javed Akhtar Ansari, Syed Azhar Raza Gilani Sakhawat Hussain Sial, Khawar, Hasnain Bhatta, besides administrative officers, besides President of National Unity Council South Punjab, Hafiz Muhammad Aslam and others participated in this tragedy that made the whole of Multan mourn. Sutri Watt is an area where the poor the people of Multan are always there to serve the people of Multan. Today, this tragedy happened to them, in which elders from all over Multan attended the funerals, and this tolerance will always be remembered.

3.70% GDP Growth is a Step Forward, But Reforms Needed: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President of PBIF and AKIA, reviewed Pakistan's economic performance for FY 2025-26, noting gradual recovery and stability despite floods. The national economy's total volume reached \$452 billion, up from \$405 billion, with a GDP growth rate of 3.70% (up from 3.18%).

To achieve higher growth, innovation in policymaking, investment, exports, and productive sectors is needed. All three major economic sectors contributed to stability. Agriculture grew by 2.89%, with notable increases in wheat, sugarcane, and rice production, alongside livestock growth of 3.75%.



weaker crop performance require attention, emphasizing the need for modern technology, water manage-

ment, and farmer support. The industrial sector saw 3.51% growth, with Large-Scale Manufacturing at 6.11% and significant rises in automobiles (61.66%) and transport equipment (39.93%).

Challenges for industry include high production costs, energy tariffs, financial pressure, and import reliance, necessitating reduced business costs and local value addition. Exports decreased by 5.6% while imports rose by 12%, but workers' remittances increased by 9.2%.

The services sector, the largest economic component, grew by 4.09%, led by Information &

Communication (7.52%) and public services (8.54%). Per capita income rose slightly to \$1901 from \$1812.

Sustained grassroots impact requires strengthened income/employment, reduced inflation, and enhanced social security. Hussain stressed that Pakistan's economy is moving positively but cautiously.

Sustainability hinges on private sector encouragement, export growth, regional competitiveness, agricultural reforms, fiscal discipline, and technology.

Macroeconomic stability measures need continuous effectiveness, transparency, and results. With business community consultation and balanced FBR enforcement, Pakistan can achieve a more stable, productive, and competitive economy.

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USA vs Iran: Back to Square One

Since February 28, President Donald Trump has repeatedly declared that a breakthrough agreement with Iran was imminent. The message was consistent: diplomacy was progressing, a deal was close, and Iran would not acquire nuclear weapons. Yet each time Washington and Tehran appeared near the finish line, a new escalation pulled them back from the edge of agreement to the edge of war. In the eyes of many observers, Israel repeatedly emerged as the decisive spoiler; throwing a spanner into the diplomatic process whenever the United States and Iran seemed close to sealing a deal. What could have become a major diplomatic achievement has instead returned to full-scale confrontation.

The latest crisis has again exposed the contradiction at the heart of American policy. Washington says it wants a deal, but its military posture keeps expanding. It speaks of diplomacy, yet continues to rely on air power, naval deployments, missile strikes, sanctions, and military threats. The result is not peace, not victory, and not a settlement. It is simply a return to square one.

The downing of a U. S. Apache helicopter in the Persian Gulf has now become a symbol of this dangerous drift. The Apache is not just a helicopter; it is an emblem of American military power. Its presence near Iran raises a simple but powerful question: what was an American war machine doing thousands of miles away from the United States, operating so close to Iranian waters and territory? If an Iranian helicopter were hovering near American shores, Washington would never describe it as harmless. Yet when U. S. assets operate near Iran, any Iranian response is immediately labeled aggression.

This is where the language of "self-defense" has been turned upside down.

When Israel attacks Lebanon, Syria, Gaza, or Iran, it is called self-defense. When the United States strikes Iranian assets, it is called self-defense. But when the targeted country responds, its response is called escalation or aggression. This manipulation of language has become one of the most dangerous weapons of modern war. The attacker claims defense; the defender is branded the aggressor.

The collapse of the latest ceasefire is especially painful because considerable diplomatic effort had gone into preventing a wider war. Pakistan, among others, played a quiet but important mediating role in helping bring the parties back from the brink. Those efforts proved that even bitter adversaries can step away from disaster when diplomacy is given space. But now, once again, that work appears to have been wasted by renewed escalation.

This renewed conflict also comes at the worst possible time for the United States. America jointly with Mexico and Canada is hosting the FIFA World Cup 2026, one of the greatest sporting events in human history. This should have been a moment of celebration, unity, culture, football, and global goodwill. Instead of seeing the world united under the banner of sport, audiences are again watching missiles, military briefings, oil shocks, and fears of regional war.

Football represents everything war destroys. In football, nations compete without killing. They struggle without hatred. They fight for victory within rules accepted by all. Winners celebrate; losers congratulate. The entire world comes together under one umbrella. That is the spirit FIFA brings. But the spirit now emerging from Washington and Tel Aviv

is the opposite: domination, escalation, coercion, and destruction.

The deeper issue is that this war is not only about Iran's nuclear program but a part of a broader regional project in which Israel seeks to reshape the Middle East under the cover of permanent insecurity. The controversy in the United Kingdom over Israeli-linked efforts to market or sell property connected to occupied West Bank settlements while war is still raging in the middle east is therefore not a side issue. It fits into a larger pattern. While war dominates the headlines, land consolidation continues quietly. While the world watches missiles and drones, facts on the ground are created brick by brick, road by road, settlement by settlement.

This is why the West Bank real-estate controversy matters. It shows how occupation is converted into commerce, how captured land is repackaged as investment, and how political control is normalized through private transactions.

In this reading, the project of "Greater Israel" is not pursued only through tanks and aircraft. It is also pursued through land sales, demographic engineering, diplomatic pressure, lobbying, and the gradual normalization of illegal occupation. War becomes the smoke screen; real estate becomes the instrument.

Israel is also laying down the trap for Washington. The United States is being pushed to fight a war whose ultimate benefits may not belong to America at all. If Iran is weakened, isolated, or broken, the greatest strategic winner may be Israel. If Iran's resources, geography, and regional influence are neutralized, Israel's dream of uncontested regional supremacy moves closer to reality. America pays the price in

money, lives, global reputation, inflation, oil shocks, and military overstretch, while Israel advances its own long-term project.

This reality creates a profound strategic dilemma. For months, the United States and its allies have relied on the same war machinery: air strikes, naval pressure, missile attacks, sanctions, intelligence operations, and threats. These tools have failed to produce decisive political results. Iran remains intact. If the same tactics failed in the first phase of the war, there is little reason to believe that continuing them for another year will produce a different result.

This is why Washington must recognize the danger before it is trapped. Israel and its hawks in Washington are creating conditions in which America will eventually be told that it has only two choices: put boots on Iranian soil or use nukes.

But those are not America's only choices. The United States can still choose independent judgment. It can separate American national interests from Israeli strategic ambitions. It can refuse to be dragged into a war designed by others and paid for by America.

The lesson is therefore clear: before considering any step that could transform a regional confrontation into a far larger and potentially uncontrollable conflict, American policymakers must carefully ask whether such actions genuinely advance U. S. national interests or merely advance objectives conceived by Israel. The answer to that question may determine not only the future of the current crisis but also the future balance of power across the entire Middle East.

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



World Day Against Child Labour

Today, on World Day Against Child Labour, Pakistan joins the international community in reaffirming its resolve to protect children from exploitation and to ensure that every child can grow up in safety and attend school.

The protection of children is rooted in the Constitution of Pakistan. Article 11 prohibits slavery, forced labour and the employment of children in hazardous work, while Article 25-A guarantees free and compulsory education for all children between the ages of five and sixteen years. These provisions define a clear responsibility for the State to safeguard childhood and support education.

Child labour has direct consequences for a child's life and future. A child engaged in work is often forced to leave school or fall behind in learning. This limits opportunity, weakens skills development and places additional pressure on families already facing hardship. Ensuring that children remain in education is therefore not only a matter of protection, but also of long-term social and economic well-being.

Pakistan continues to take steps at federal and provincial levels to reduce child labour and strengthen child protection efforts. The focus remains on prevention, enforcement of existing laws and support for children who need to return to education and a stable environment.

A society is judged by how it treats its children. Every child in Pakistan must have the opportunity to learn, to grow and to build a secure future.

World Day Against Child Labour is observed annually on June 12 to raise awareness and mobilize global efforts to end the exploitation of children in the workplace. Established by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 2002, the day serves as a focal point for governments, civil society, and millions of people worldwide to advocate for children's rights.

The campaign operates under the core slogan: "Red card to child labour: Fair play for children, decent work for adults". This year's focus builds on the Marrakech Global Framework for Action Against Child Labour, emphasizing that decent work and living wages for adults prevent families from being forced into the desperate choice of sending their children to work.

This action is urgently needed. Despite progress, 138 million children remain in child labour worldwide, including nearly 54 million in hazardous work.

On this World Day Against Child Labour, raise the Red card to child labour. Mobilize, speak out and act to turn the Marrakech commitments into real change for children, families and communities everywhere.



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

Beyond a Deal: A Manifesto for Enduring Stability

Within the labyrinthine architecture of international politics, there exist certain conflicts whose manifestations may be temporarily suspended through diplomatic maneuvering, provisional accommodations, and carefully negotiated agreements, yet whose essential dynamics remain fundamentally unaltered. Such disputes may be rendered dormant for a season, but they cannot be genuinely resolved unless the historical grievances, ideological antagonisms, political contradictions, and strategic calculations that sustain them are comprehensively addressed. The protracted confrontation between the Islamic Republic of Iran and the United States of America belongs unmistakably to this category of multifaceted and deeply entrenched geopolitical rivalries. Its origins do not reside solely in questions of nuclear enrichment, economic sanctions, or regional influence; rather, they are embedded within nearly half a century of accumulated ideological divergence, political estrangement, strategic competition, and mutual insecurity. It is therefore unsurprising that, amid contemporary discussions concerning ceasefires, negotiations, and prospective diplomatic arrangements, Tehran appears less interested in securing yet another transactional accord than in pursuing a more comprehensive settlement capable of addressing the underlying causes of the dispute itself.

From the Iranian perspective, any attempt to reduce the present crisis exclusively to questions of uranium enrichment, international inspection regimes, or nuclear oversight mechanisms

constitutes an incomplete and ultimately superficial reading of reality. Iranian policymakers contend that since the advent of the Islamic Revolution, the country has been subjected to sustained political pressure, economic coercion, diplomatic isolation, and a diverse array of security challenges. In this interpretation, the principal issue has never been the nuclear program in and of itself. Rather, the deeper contention concerns Iran's sovereign foreign policy orientation, its perceived role within the regional order, and the ideological foundations upon which its political identity rests. The nuclear controversy, according to this view, represents merely one visible expression of a much broader and older disagreement.

A more penetrating examination of the historical record reveals that relations between Iran and the Western world entered a prolonged phase of tension and distrust following the revolutionary upheaval of 1979. Tehran's unwavering position regarding the Palestinian question, its enduring refusal to normalize relations with Israel, and its political and moral support for various resistance movements throughout the Middle East collectively contributed to a widening gulf between Iran and many Western governments. Iranian officials maintain that organizations such as Hezbollah, Hamas, and the Houthi movement were not artificially engineered by external actors but emerged organically from specific historical, political, and social circumstances. While Iran acknowledges extending political and moral support to these movements, it rejects the notion that their existence can be reduced merely to instruments of Iranian influence.

With respect to the nuclear issue, Iran has

consistently maintained that its program is intended exclusively for peaceful and civilian purposes, including energy production, medical research, industrial development, and scientific advancement, rather than military applications. In support of this position, Tehran frequently cites the religious decree issued by the Supreme Leader declaring nuclear weapons incompatible with Islamic principles. The Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action concluded in 2015 was widely regarded as evidence that Iran was prepared to accept international monitoring and limitations upon enrichment activities within an agreed framework. Yet the subsequent withdrawal of the United States from that agreement reinforced within Iran a growing conviction that the establishment of durable trust and predictability in relations with Western powers remains an exceptionally difficult undertaking.

Recent military tensions have introduced this longstanding confrontation into a new and consequential phase. Iranian authorities argue that despite intense economic pressure, security threats, military attacks, and diplomatic isolation, the institutional foundations of the state have remained intact and, in certain respects, have become more resilient. Statements emanating from Tehran increasingly suggest an effort to reposition Iran not as a defensive actor reacting to external pressure, but as a self-assured and influential participant seeking to enter future negotiations from a position of greater strategic confidence and leverage.

The American perspective is shaped by a different, though equally complex, set of considerations. For Washington, the prospect of another large-scale conflict in the Middle East has long represented a profoundly consequential strategic decision. The experiences of the past two decades have demonstrated

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Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

Bail Is Not Freedom: Khurram Parvez and the Illusion of Justice in Kashmir

When the Delhi High Court granted bail to Khurram Parvez this week, the news should have signalled the end of a nightmare. Instead, it offered a cruel reminder of how justice functions in Indian and particularly for the people of Indian occupied Kashmir. The 49-year-old human rights defender, imprisoned for nearly five years, will remain behind bars. Despite securing bail in a November 2021 "terror funding" case brought by India's National Investigation Agency (NIA), Parvez is still ensnared in a second, near-identical case lodged in March 2023. His lawyer, Swati Khanna, has expressed hope that a "positive result" in the remaining case could see him walk free within a month or two. But hope is a fragile thing when the state has perfected the art of perpetual imprisonment without conviction.

The choreography is now familiar to every political prisoner in India: when one case weakens, another materializes, ensuring that the prison gates never fully open. It is a technique of legal endurance, exhausting not the prosecution but the prosecuted, draining years from a life while judges parse technicalities with solemn detachment.

Parvez is not a militant. He is an internationally acclaimed human rights defender, a recipient of prestigious human rights awards and young scholars' honours who has spent decades documenting state violence in one of the world's most militarized zones. As a leading voice with the Jammu and Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), his painstaking documentation of

enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, and systemic impunity provided the foundational evidence for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) reports on Jammu and Kashmir in 2018 and 2019. He had mapped mass graves, traced the disappeared, and forced the world to confront what Delhi preferred to dismiss as internal disturbance. His archives were an act of fidelity to the dead and a warning to the powerful that memory could not be bombed into submission. His work gave international legitimacy to the suffering of Kashmiris. For this, he was punished.

The charges against him—terror funding, recruitment of rebels, and mobilizing protesters—were filed under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), India's principal counterterrorism law. The statistics alone expose the law's true purpose. Nationally, the UAPA boasts a conviction rate of merely five percent. In Kashmir, that figure collapses to less than one percent. These are not the numbers of a law used to prosecute genuine threats; they are the metrics of a tool designed to punish through procedure. Under Section 43D(5) of the UAPA, bail is effectively prohibited if the court perceives a prima facie case—a threshold so low that the prosecution's narrative, however flimsy, becomes its own justification for indefinite caging. The law presumes guilt and demands the accused prove innocence from inside a cell, a reversal of democratic justice that should horrify any constitutional order. Parvez has languished in jail for half a decade, yet trials

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Altaf Hussain Wani

PAF Airmen Academy Korangi Creek Graduates 1045 Trainees

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Passing Out Parade of Trainees, Entries No. 2312, 2412 and 2506 was held at PAF Airmen Academy, Korangi Creek. Air Vice Marshal Akhtar Imran Saddozai, Air Officer Commanding, Southern Air Command, Pakistan Air Force, was the Chief Guest of the ceremony. On his arrival, the Chief Guest was received by Air Vice Marshal Muhammad Shahid Afzaal, Air Officer Commanding, PAF Airmen Academy, Korangi Creek. A total of 1045 trainees from PAF, Pakistan Navy and allied countries successfully completed their training.



Addressing the parade, the Chief Guest said that Pakistan Air Force is a highly professional organization that is recognized as a combat-efficient force through its exemplary courage and bravery. As per the vision of Chief of the Air Staff, PAF Airmen Academy Korangi Creek is conducting airmen training to cater for ever-evolving Multi Domain Operations, thereby addressing future challenges. He further said that PAF has always stood firm together with sister services to defend the sovereignty of our country. Due to the hostile neighbourhood on Eastern and Western borders, the

nation looks upon PAF with even greater expectations and I assure the nation that PAF will always stand firm with the same commitment as exhibited during Marka-e-Haq Bunyan-ul-Marsoos. The world has witnessed the first-ever application of full-spectrum Multi Domain Operations by PAF, utilizing elements of space, cyber and electronic warfare along with long-range vectors, unmanned aerial systems and killer drones against the numerically superior adversary. The Chief Guest said that niche and disruptive technologies have changed the landscape of future conflicts. By the

grace of Allah Almighty and the unwavering resolve of the national leadership, Pakistan Air Force has embarked upon the journey of indigenization under the auspices of National Aero Space and Technology Parks.

Chief of the Air Staff Trophy for the Overall Best Performance was awarded to Aircraftman Muhammad Anas Arshad. Asghar Khan Trophy for the Best in Aeronautics was awarded to Aircraftman Muhammad Abu Bakar while Nur Khan Trophy for the Best in Aero Avionics Technology was awarded to Aircraftman Mehmood Hassan. Air Officer Commanding Trophy for



the Best in General Service Training was awarded to Academy Sergeant Aircraftman Muhammad Arsalan, whereas the Best Performance Trophy for the foreign trainee was awarded

to Lance Corporal Ezzeldeen Khaled Al-Deik from Jordan.

Felicitating the graduating trainees and their parents, the Chief Guest wished them a bright future and

success in their professional assignments. He also commended the instructional staff for their sincere endeavours and commitment to the cause of training.

Pakistan Faces Water Crisis: Experts Discuss Climate Security Challenges

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised an event titled, "Water Governance as a Climate Security Challenge in Pakistan," on 10 June 2026. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Amjad Fraz, a Research Assistant at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address.

Dr Fiaz Hussain Shah, Director IEDC, NUST presented water security as an integral part of national security due to its impact on human security.

He underscored the need for building resilience to overcome water insecurity and presented climate change as a threat multiplier. Hydrogeopolitics, in connection with the Indus Waters Treaty and India's water intransigence by holding the Treaty in abeyance, was discussed. Dr Shah also deliberated on Kabul River's manipulation by the Afghans under the Indian influence. Bringing together Pakistan's groundwater, water losses, and internal distribution challenges, Dr Shah contended that Pakistan needs to move beyond reactive management and embrace water security as a whole-of-government challenge.

Mr Naseer Memon, Senior Advisor for Water Governance, SDPI, stressed that Pakistan has entered into water

bankruptcy and attributed its root cause to an exponential rise in population. He discussed water loss in connection with canal seepage, and arable land loss because of waterlogging and salinity, impacting crop production. Mr Memon highlighted the significance of Indus Delta and its mangroves, which act as a natural shield against natural disasters. He also focused on water pollution and the importance of groundwater regulation. The need for population control, cropping practices, managed aquifer recharge, autonomous regulatory bodies, and transparency in water distribution were discussed as way forward.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS, Lahore, stated that water



stress in Pakistan is now a lived reality.

He highlighted Pakistan's increased

reliance on groundwater, national adaptation, and the need to address the provinces' water requirements. Multiple water-related policies and strategies were enumerated, stressing the need to bridge policy intention and implementation. India's unilateral IWT suspension, a treaty followed for many years without hindrance, has created political uncertainties. President CASS accentuated the need for capacity building and strategic statecraft to build resilience in a climate-stressed future.

The event concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted food security, water doctrine, climate diplomacy, and local governance. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative in hosting an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

NTC and Sunshine Energy Technology China Sign MoU to Develop AI and Big Data-Enabled Digital Public Infrastructure in Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) and China's Sunshine Energy Technology have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on developing Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) in Pakistan. The partnership will leverage Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Big Data Analytics capabilities to build scalable, secure, and citizen-centric digital solutions.

The MoU signing ceremony was held at NTC Headquarters, Islamabad. The MoU was signed in the presence of the Honorable Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Managing Director NTC Major General (R) Ali Farhan HI(M), Chief Operating Officer of Sunshine Energy Mr. Yu Shaoming, and Company Director Mr. Peng Fugui, along with NTC's senior management. Geographic Reference

Under the agreement, both organizations will jointly explore frameworks for interoperable digital platforms, data exchange,



and AI-driven public services aimed at improving governance, service delivery, and digital inclusion across the country.

Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted the government's policy on IT and digital transformation. She said the Prime Minister's vision of e-Government is central to transforming public service delivery through technology. She emphasized that collaboration with global technology partners like Sunshine Energy Technology will accelerate

Pakistan's digital public infrastructure goals and support the vision of a knowledge-based economy.

The initiative will support e-Government services through a secure digital services infrastructure with advanced AI, big data analytics, and cloud infrastructure.

The collaboration focuses on building an in-country Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI) that will serve as a secure and scalable e-Government cloud service platform for multiple public sector institutions. The initiative will enable centralized data manage-



ment, secure inter-departmental data sharing, and the deployment of advanced digital infrastructure to support artificial intelligence and big data analytics for improved decision-making and governance efficiency.

The digital infrastructure will be developed according to high international standards, ensuring continuous availability

and fault-tolerant operations. A full-scale government cloud service platform will be developed to support digital transformation across public sector institutions, and it will enable the deployment of AI workloads. In addition to cloud and AI capabilities, it will integrate mobile payment services to support government financial operations.

This strategic collaboration is expected to significantly strengthen Pakistan's digital infrastructure, enhance e-Government service delivery, and accelerate the adoption of advanced technologies such as artificial intelligence and big data analytics in public sector governance. The initiative marks a key step toward building a secure, modern, and data-driven digital

ecosystem for the country.

Senior officials from NTC and representatives of Sunshine Energy Technology China attended the ceremony. Both sides expressed commitment to knowledge sharing, capacity building, and piloting AI and Big Data solutions within Pakistan's public sector.

Photos by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan Shines at Huawei ICT Competition 2025-26 Global Final in Shenzhen, China

Spokesman Report

SHENZHEN, CHINA: Pakistan achieved outstanding success at the Huawei ICT Competition 2025-26 Global Final, held from June 2-5, 2026 in Shenzhen, China. This year's competition was the largest in its history, attracting over 220,000 students and faculty members from more than 2,000 institutions across 100+ countries and regions. A total of 49 countries and over 175 teams competed in the global finals. From Pakistan, around 12,000 students registered for the competition. After multiple rounds of rigorous national and regional examinations, three teams—each comprising three students and one instructor—qualified to represent Paki-

stan at the global stage.

Pakistan celebrated a major achievement as Muhammad Rashid Mukhtar from COMSATS University Islamabad won the Grand Prize in the Huawei ICT Teaching Competition. He was also honored with the prestigious Most Valuable Instructor Award, recognizing his exceptional teaching excellence and contribution to ICT education. In the Practice & Innovation tracks, the Pakistan Computing Track Team secured the Second Prize, awarded by H. E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's Ambassador to China. The team included Nauman Sajjad from Lahore Garrison University, Aadeba Mubarak from the University of Engineering & Technology Taxila, and Hira Khurshid from

COMSATS University Islamabad (Abbottabad Campus), led by Instructor Farman Ullah.

The Pakistan Network Track Team earned the Third Prize, awarded by Syed Sohail Hussain Naqvi. The team consisted of Navera and Inamullah from Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Jamshoro, and Muhammad Nouman Khan from Sindh Agriculture University Tandojam, under the supervision of Instructor Saqib Hussain from Mehran University of Engineering & Technology Jamshoro. The Pakistan Innovation Track Team also secured the Third Prize, awarded by Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Executive Director of HEC. The team included Muhammad Umer Farooq, Malik Uzzam Arif, and Talha Asghar from FAST-NU



Islamabad, led by Instructor Dr. Muhammad Asim.

H. E. Mr. Khalil Hashmi, Pakistan's Ambassador to China, attended the closing ceremony and awarded medals to the winning students. He

commended their dedication and applauded Huawei's continued efforts to empower young talent through global learning opportunities. Prof. Dr. Zia ul Haq, Executive Director of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), also



participated in the ceremony. He praised Huawei for providing a world-class platform that enables Pakistani students to compete internationally and showcase their skills on a global stage.

Ahmed Bilal Masud CEO AI and Cloud Business Huawei Pakistan also expressed his appreciation for the students' achievements, stating that their performance at the global finals reflects the country's growing strength in the ICT sector and the remarkable potential of its youth. He emphasized that such

international platforms not only highlight the talent of Pakistani students but also inspire thousands more to pursue excellence in technology and innovation.

Pakistan's strong performance across the Teaching, Computing, Network, and Innovation tracks reflects the country's growing ICT capabilities and the dedication of its students, instructors, and institutions. These achievements highlight Pakistan's potential to excel in emerging technologies and contribute meaningfully to the global digital landscape.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
169,703.60	169,427.44	
Day's High	Day's Low	
170,138.18	168,682.25	
Index Value	Change	
17,126,691,793	+276.16	
Percentage	Time	
+0.16%	11 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,303.88	+49.07	
Percentage	Time	
+0.48%	11 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
50,151.82	+233.04	
Percentage	Time	
+0.47%	1 Jun, 1:18 pm GMT-4	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
64,217.27	+38.00	
Percentage	Time	
+0.059%	11 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.65	201.22
Bahrain Dinar	736.78	751.86
Canadian Dollar	197.5	207
China Yuan	38.05	38.80
Danish Krone	43.39	43.79
Euro	321.31	327.31
Hong Kong Dollar	35.01	36.01
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.05
Japanese Yen	1.7218	1.8209
Kuwaiti Dinar	885.70	895.99
Malaysian Ringgit	67.18	67.88
New Zealand \$	159.99	164.95
Norwegians Krone	27.88	28.18
Omani Riyal	719.22	730.32
Qatari Riyal	74.90	76.25
Saudi Riyal	74.13	74.75
Singapore Dollar	214.68	219.75
Swedish Korona	30.27	30.57
Swiss Franc	346.03	351.85
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.70
U.A.E Dirham	75.85	76.85
UK Pound Sterling	372.49	378.98
US Dollar	278.5	279.4

SECP Reforms Drive Strong Growth in Capital Markets, Corporate Sector: Economic Survey 2025-26

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Survey 2025-26 highlights the significant impact of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) reform agenda on the nation's capital markets and corporate sector.

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) demonstrated remarkable performance, with the KSE-100 Index surging by 18.4 percent and market capitalization reaching Rs16.5 trillion during July-March FY2025-26.

This growth, outperforming global indices, was fueled by easing inflation, successful IMF reviews, improved external sector indicators, and robust inflows. SECP's key reforms, including the transition to a T+1 settlement cycle, public offering enhancements, digital onboarding, and improved corporate disclosures, were instrumental in deepening the market, boosting transparency, and strengthening investor confidence.

The corporate sector also experienced substantial expansion, with 31,986 new companies incorporated, bringing the total to 294,101.



The information technology, trading, and services sectors led these new registrations, with a combined paid-up capital of Rs67 billion. SECP's initiatives to enhance the ease

of doing business, such as digitizing share ownership and streamlining processes, further contributed to this growth. In the debt market, six debt securities totaling Rs12.45 billion were issued, and the government raised Rs5.1 trillion through the PSX-based debt auction platform.

The non-banking financial sector saw continued expansion, with mutual fund assets under management reaching Rs4.54 trillion and voluntary pension fund assets growing to Rs138 billion. REIT schemes also expanded to 29, valued at Rs173 billion.

Islamic finance maintained strong momentum, with SECP issuing Shariah compliance certificates for 53 corporate Sukuk issues worth Rs229.6 billion. Shariah-compliant securities now represent 64 percent of the total PSX market capitalization.

The survey emphasizes that sustained macroeconomic stability, ongoing reforms, and enhanced investor protection are crucial for the continued broadening and deepening of Pakistan's capital markets and increased participation from businesses and institutional investors.

Price Hike

ISLAMABAD: A man buying pulses at a grocery store in the Federal Capital ahead of federal budget 2026-27 for the financial year 2026-27. The federal government unveiled the Pakistan Economic Survey (PES) for FY2025-26 on Thursday, according to which GDP growth was recorded at 3.7pc in the outgoing fiscal year.



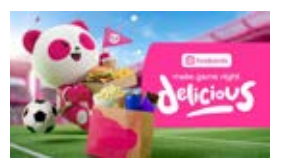
Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

foodpanda launches campaign for Football World Cup 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: As the world prepares for the Football World Cup 2026, foodpanda, Pakistan's leading delivery platform, is thrilled to announce its latest campaign, "Fueling Pakistan's Match Nights." Running throughout the tournament in June and July, this initiative is designed to ensure that football fans across the country enjoy every match with their favorite meals, snacks and essentials delivered right to their doorstep.

To bring the stadium excitement directly to customers, foodpanda has transformed its app interface with Football World Cup 2026 branding across all entry points, creating an immersive experience for users from the moment they



open the app. "The Football World Cup is more than just a football tournament. For many fans across the nation, it's a global event that brings people together," said Muntaqa Peracha, CEO of foodpanda Pakistan. "With 'Fueling Pakistan's Match Nights,' we want to be the ultimate assist for our fans, ensuring they aren't caught off-side during key games to grab a meal or groceries and there are no red-cards on choice and availability. From midnight cravings during late-night matches to exclusive rewards, we are here to make this tournament unforgettable for every football enthusiast in Pakistan."

Manufacturing Sector Confronts an Unprecedented Wave of Cyberattacks in 2026: Kaspersky Report



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Q1 2026, Kaspersky ICS CERT reported that 19.6% of industrial control systems (ICS) globally encountered blocked malicious objects, with malware from 10,052 families impacting automation systems. Attacks varied regionally, with Africa seeing the highest share at 27.4% and Northern Europe the lowest at 9.1%. The manufacturing sector experienced increased attacks in Europe and Asia. Globally, Southern Europe (+19.4%), Russia (+17.1%), Northern Europe (+14.2%), Canada (+13.3%), and Africa (+12.9%) saw a rise in attacked ICS computers quarter-over-quarter.

Biometric systems led in overall blocked malicious objects at 26.4%, often due to internet connectivity and weaker security controls. Southern Europe (35.15%), Africa (29.58%), and Central Asia (28.53%) had the highest percentages for biometric systems. In manufacturing, Southeast Asia (23.21%) led in attacked ICS computers, followed by Africa (21.36%) and South Asia (20.13%). Kaspersky highlights the vulnerability of legacy OT systems and expanding attack surfaces due to supply chain complexity. They recommend regular security assessments, continuous vulnerability management, and dedicated solutions like Kaspersky Industrial Cyber-Security and EDR tools. Strengthening incident response skills through training for both IT and OT personnel is crucial for mitigating threats.

inDrive appoints Abhey Lamba as Global CFO

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: inDrive, a global mobility and delivery platform, today announces the appointment of Abhey Lamba as Chief Financial Officer. He joins inDrive's executive team as the company continues to scale its operations and evolve into a multifunctional Super App.

Lamba will spearhead inDrive's global finance function, overseeing financial planning and reporting, accounting, tax and investor relations, as the company continues to grow its core mobility business and an expanding set of services including delivery, groceries, advertising and financial services for drivers.

"inDrive has built something rare: a profitable, mission-led business operating at meaningful scale across some of the world's most dynamic markets, with fairness wired into how it serves drivers and riders," said Abhey Lamba, commenting on his appointment. "This appointment follows a year of



Abhey Lamba
Chief Financial Officer

significant progress for inDrive both globally and locally in Pakistan. In 2025, the company reported global Gross Bookings of \$6.4 billion, approximately a 30% increase year-over-year, and revenue of \$601.6 million, up 31% year-on-year, while achieving positive

adjusted EBITDA and net income.

In Pakistan, the platform recently recorded its most successful Eid-ul-Fitr season to date with a 50.73% surge in Pakistani intercity rides and 58% growth in deliveries across the same time period.

Karandaaz Pakistan and Better Than Cash Alliance Launch Initiative to Boost Digital Payments for Merchants

Commerce Desk

Karandaaz Pakistan and the Better Than Cash Alliance, supported by the UNDP, are partnering to boost digital merchant payments in Pakistan.

A National Merchant Payments Working Group, under the State Bank of Pakistan, will unite banks, fintechs, and other stakeholders to address challenges in merchant adoption of digital payments, particularly via Raast. The initiative aims to simplify onboarding, overcome operational hurdles, and enhance financial inclusion for women and small merchants.

This multi-stakeholder

platform will facilitate dialogue, develop solutions, and pilot new approaches to promote digital transactions, moving Pakistan towards a cashless economy.

The Better Than Cash Alliance contributes global expertise, while Karandaaz offers domestic insight and networks. Both organizations emphasize that collaborative efforts are crucial to unlock the full potential of Pakistan's digital payment ecosystem, making it more affordable, sustainable, and commercially viable for all participants. The Working Group will focus on consensus-building for payment models, knowledge sharing, and informing future regulations.

Pakistgani HC Pledges Support for Pakistan's Trade Mission in Sri Lanka

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khurshid Barlas, Founder Chairman of the Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, met with Pakistan's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, Major General (Rtd) Dr. Nayyar Naseer, in Colombo. Mahwash Sami, Trade and Capital Attaché, was also present.

Barlas discussed Pakistan's participation in international exhibitions and announced

the upcoming "2nd Made in Pakistan Exhibition and Business Investment Conference" in Colombo from December 23rd to 27th.

The exhibition will feature diverse Pakistani products and industries, aiming to boost trade between Pakistan and Sri Lanka and enhance the international visibility of Pakistani goods. High Commissioner Dr. Naseer commended Barlas' economic initiatives and pledged full support for

the exhibition. He highlighted Sri Lanka's improving investment climate, citing its liberal foreign investment policies, strategic location, and skilled workforce, positioning it as an attractive investment destination in South Asia.

Dr. Naseer stressed the significant potential for increasing bilateral trade and encouraged Sri Lanka to prioritize Pakistani imports. Barlas presented a shield to Dr. Naseer during the meeting.



PM Shehbaz highlights Pakistan's contribution as FIFA World Cup 2026 kicks off

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday extended his best wishes to the host nations and participating teams as the 23rd FIFA World Cup commenced, amid highlighting Pakistan's contribution to the global sporting spectacle through the manufacture of the tournament's official match balls.

In a message posted on his official X account, the prime minister described the opening of the FIFA World Cup as a special

occasion for football fans around the world and a celebration of sport's power to unite people across borders, cultures and nationalities.

"A very special day for football fans around the world as the 23rd FIFA World Cup kicks off today," he wrote.

Shehbaz Sharif conveyed his good wishes to the host countries of United States, Canada and Mexico as well as all participating nations, expressing hope for a successful and memorable tournament.

The prime minister said Pakistan was

proud to be associated with the global football event through its internationally recognized sporting goods industry. He noted that the official match balls, "Trionda," being used during the tournament had been manufactured in Pakistan, showcasing the skill, craftsmanship and expertise of Pakistani workers.

"Pakistan is proud to be part of this global celebration through its renowned sporting goods industry. The official match balls, 'Trionda', being used at this World Cup have been manufactured in Pakistan, reflecting the skill and craftsmanship of our people,"



he stated.

The prime minister said Pakistan's contribution to one of the world's most-watched sporting events underscored the country's standing as a leading producer of high-quality sports goods for international markets.

He expressed the hope that the tournament

would promote friendship, unity and sporting excellence among nations and inspire people around the world through the spirit of competition and mutual respect.

"May this tournament inspire friendship, unity, and sporting excellence across the world," the prime minister said.



AlHuda CIBE Inaugurates Interest-Free Banking & Finance Program — Ethiopia Edition

Spokesman Report

DUBAI, UAE: AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics (AlHuda CIBE – UAE) successfully conducted the Orientation Session of its Professional Development Program on Interest-Free Banking & Finance – Ethiopia Edition on 10th June 2026 at 04:00 PM UAE Time via Zoom. The session marked the formal commencement of a transformative two-month virtual training initiative running through to 10th August 2026, offered entirely free of cost to Ethiopian financial sector professionals.

The orientation drew significant participation from banking professionals, regulators, microfinance practitioners, insurance experts, and industry stakeholders from across Ethiopia, reflecting the country's strong and growing interest in Shariah-compliant and interest-free financial systems.

The orientation session featured two distinguished guest speakers whose insights set a powerful tone for the program ahead:

Mr. Frezer Ayalew Mohammed | Director, Supervision Directorate, National Bank of Ethiopia, speaking under the patronage of the National Bank of Ethiopia, Mr. Frezer brought the perspective of Ethiopia's foremost financial regulator to the session. He highlighted the regulatory strides Ethiopia has made in enabling a conducive environment for interest-free banking and underscored the significance of capacity building for professionals as the country advances its interest-free financial ecosystem. His address reinforced the National Bank of Ethiopia's commitment to supporting the growth of ethical and inclusive finance in the country.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair | Chief Executive Officer, AlHuda CIBE – UAE, welcomed participants and outlined the program's vision, structure, and expected outcomes. He affirmed that Ethiopia represents one of the most promising and dynamic markets for Islamic finance in Africa, backed by a growing regulatory framework, a young professional workforce, and strong public demand for ethical

financial alternatives. He stated:

"Interest-free banking is not only a financial alternative but a complete system that promotes financial inclusion, economic stability, and sustainable development. Through this program, we aim to equip Ethiopian professionals with the tools, knowledge, and global perspective required to build strong, resilient, and forward-looking interest-free financial institutions that serve every segment of society."

The program is conducted under the patronage of the National Bank of Ethiopia and in collaboration with leading industry associations including the Ethiopian Interest Free Finance Professionals Association (EIFFPA), Ethiopian Bankers Association (EBA), Association of Ethiopian Insurers (AEI), Association of Ethiopian Microfinance Institutions (AEMFI), Organization for Participatory Economy and Finance (OPEF), and the Network of Ethiopia's Women in Finance (NEWFin). The program is further supported by media partners African Renaissance Television

(ARTS TV) and Najashi TV, reflecting a unified, sector-wide commitment to advancing ethical and inclusive finance across Ethiopia.

Running from 10th June to 10th August 2026, this free-of-charge virtual program via Zoom is designed for bankers, regulators, insurance practitioners, microfinance professionals, and industry stakeholders. It covers Interest-Free Banking, Takaful, Microfinance, and Shariah-compliant financial operations.

Building on its sustained engagement with Ethiopia financial sector, AlHuda CIBE is proud to announce the 6th Interest-Free Banking and Takaful Forum 2026, scheduled for 22nd July 2026 in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. Held annually in Ethiopia, this flagship forum serves as a premier platform connecting global expertise with Africa's emerging Islamic finance markets. The event brings together regulators, financial institutions, industry practitioners, and policymakers to advance dialogue, share best practices, and accelerate the growth of Shariah-compliant finance across the continent.

Resilient Pakistan posts 3.7% GDP growth amid floods, global shocks: Aurangzeb

Continued from Page 1

Despite these challenges, the country recorded its highest GDP growth in four years. He recalled that the economy had contracted by 0.2 per cent in 2023, followed by growth of 2.6 per cent in 2024 and 3.2 per cent in 2025.

Aurangzeb said Pakistan's economic size reached a historic level of \$126.9 trillion, equivalent to \$452.1 billion, while per capita income increased to \$1,901 from \$1,751 last year.

He said the growth was broad-based, with agriculture expanding by 2.89 per cent despite flood-related losses. The crop sector returned to positive growth while livestock, contributing around 60 per cent to agricultural GDP, continued to perform strongly, he added.

The industrial sector, he said, also showed significant improvement, with large-scale manufacturing growing by 6.1 per cent, the highest in four years. Out of 22 manufacturing sectors, 16

recorded positive growth, including food, textiles, automobiles, petroleum products and electrical equipment.

On the demand side, he pointed to strong consumption trends, including a 10 per cent increase in cement demand, 17 per cent in fertilizer, 31 per cent in automobiles and notable growth in petroleum and mobile phone usage.

The services sector remained a key driver of the economy, growing by 4.9 per cent and contributing nearly 58 per cent to GDP. Information and communication services recorded a remarkable 7.52 per cent growth, reflecting the expanding role of the digital economy.

Highlighting fiscal consolidation, the minister said the fiscal deficit was reduced to 0.7 per cent of GDP from 2.6 per cent last year, while primary surplus improved. Federal Board of Revenue collections increased by 10.1 per cent and markup payments declined by 23 per cent, creating additional fiscal space, he added.

"Despite global slowdown, where growth declined to 3.1 per cent, Pakistan has outperformed expectations," Aurangzeb said, reiterating the government's commitment to sustaining inclusive and broad-based economic growth.

The Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, while highlighting industrial performance, said the industrial sector recorded 3.51 percent growth, driven mainly by a 6.11 percent expansion in Large-Scale Manufacturing (LSM). Manufacturing activities were supported by macroeconomic stability, a stable exchange rate, easing inflationary pressures and improved business confidence.

The finance minister said the services sector, which accounts for over 58 percent of GDP, expanded by 4.09 percent, led by strong growth in information and communication services.

On fiscal performance, Aurangzeb said the fiscal deficit narrowed sharply to 0.7 percent of GDP during July-March

FY2026 from 2.6 percent a year earlier, while the primary surplus improved to 3.2 percent of GDP. Total revenues increased by 10.7 percent to Rs14.8 trillion, supported by growth in both tax and non-tax revenues.

He said inflation remained largely under control during most of the fiscal year, although international oil price increases and supply disruptions resulting from the Middle East crisis exerted pressure in recent months. Average inflation during July-April stood at 6.2 percent.

On the external front, the minister said the current account posted a surplus of \$72 million during July-March FY2026, while workers' remittances increased by 8.2 percent to \$30.3 billion. Foreign exchange reserves rose to \$21.8 billion by the end of March 2026, helping maintain exchange rate stability.

He said the country's capital markets performed strongly, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index gaining 18.4

percent during the period under review, supported by improving macroeconomic indicators, lower inflation and investor confidence.

The minister said Pakistan's information technology sector continued to emerge as a key growth driver. ICT export remittances increased by 19.7 percent to \$3.38 billion, while freelance exports surged by 51 percent to \$856 million. The successful 5G spectrum auction generated around \$510 million and marked a significant step in the country's digital transformation.

Aurangzeb said significant progress was also recorded in social sectors. Literacy improved to 63 percent, school attendance increased to 67 percent and the proportion of out-of-school children declined considerably across the country. Life expectancy rose to 67.8 years, while immunization coverage improved to 73 percent.

He said the government remained committed to strengthening social

protection programmes, promoting inclusive growth, creating employment opportunities and improving living standards. Pro-poor expenditures reached Rs4.66 trillion during the fiscal year, while initiatives under BISP and other welfare programmes continued to support vulnerable segments of society.

Referring to climate challenges, the minister said Pakistan remained among the countries most vulnerable to climate change despite contributing less than one percent to global emissions. The 2025 floods caused damages worth Rs822 billion and affected millions of people, underscoring the need for greater climate resilience and sustainable development.

He said the government would continue structural reforms aimed at maintaining macroeconomic stability, enhancing exports, attracting investment, improving productivity and ensuring sustainable and inclusive economic growth in the years ahead.

Bail Is Not Freedom: Khurram Parvez and the Illusion of Justice in Kashmir

Continued from Page 4

have not commenced in either case. This is not an anomaly. It is the strategy. For political prisoners in India, the process itself becomes the punishment—a bureaucratic violence that consumes years of life without ever requiring the state to prove its allegations.

The global outcry against this persecution has been loud and consistent. UN special procedures, including the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights defenders, have repeatedly demanded Parvez's immediate release, warning that his detention appears to be a direct reprisal for his legitimate advocacy. International rights organizations have uniformly condemned the charges as fabricated, arguing that Parvez's real offence was not terrorism but testimony—bearing witness to abuses that powerful actors wished to keep in the shadows. UN experts have stressed that the use of counterterrorism frameworks to criminalize human rights work violates international human rights law and the fundamental protections owed to defenders. The UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention has previously concluded that such prolonged pre-trial detention without meaningful judicial oversight constitutes arbitrary detention under interna-

tional law. Mary Lawlor, the Special Rapporteur on human rights defenders, has explicitly cited Parvez's case as an example of the shrinking space for activists in IOJK, where anti-terror legislation is weaponized against those who speak for the voiceless. Their interventions highlight an uncomfortable reality: when documentation of abuse is rebranded as "terror funding," the law ceases to be an instrument of justice and becomes an instrument of erasure.

Parvez's imprisonment cannot be separated from the suffocation of Kashmiri civil society at large. The JKCCS office remains sealed, its silence a physical symbol of the space that has been forcibly emptied. A digital siege, layered atop decades of militarized repression, has systematically muted activists, journalists, and lawyers. The communications blackout of 2019, imposed when New Delhi unilaterally revoked the region's limited autonomy, was not merely a severance of phone lines and internet cables; it was a severance of accountability itself. In that darkness, abuses flourished, and those like Parvez who sought to record them became primary targets. Parvez's arrest proved to be "the last nail in the coffin of any meaningful rights activism in Kashmir." In such an environment, a courtroom bail order is not a victory; it is a sleight of hand, distracting from the larger

architecture of suppression.

The case of Khurram Parvez is therefore about far more than one man. It is about whether India can tolerate accountability in Kashmir. The grant of bail in one case while detention continues in another is not justice tempered with caution; it is administrative torture dressed in judicial robes. If the Indian state genuinely believes in the rule of law, it must release Parvez immediately, terminate these baseless proceedings, and unseal the spaces of civil society. The international community, too, must move beyond statements of concern to concrete pressure, recognizing that every day Parvez spends in jail is another day that human rights themselves are held captive. Sanctions on officials responsible for malicious prosecutions, scrutiny of trade partnerships, and consistent diplomatic pressure must replace the polite regret that has thus far characterized the global response. The credibility of international human rights mechanisms depends on their willingness to defend defenders when governments turn against them.

Freedom cannot be dispensed in instalments. Either justice is whole—or it is not justice at all. *The writer is Chairman of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). Can be reached at; X @SULTAN1913*

Beyond a Deal: A Manifesto for Enduring Stability

Continued from Page 4

repeatedly that military interventions within the region often generate outcomes markedly different from those originally anticipated by policymakers. Consequently, recent diplomatic signals and political rhetoric indicate a preference within the United States for de-escalation and negotiated engagement, provided that American interests and personnel in the region are not subjected to direct threat.

At the present juncture, Iran appears to assign particular importance to several core objectives: the removal of economic sanctions, the restoration of access to frozen financial assets, respect for principles of regional sovereignty, and the establishment of a revised framework governing the regional balance of power. Tehran's argument is straight-

forward. If the fundamental sources of contention remain intact, any future agreement will constitute little more than a temporary respite rather than a genuine resolution. Lasting peace, in this conception, requires confidence-building measures, mutual respect, strategic equilibrium, and innovative approaches to collective regional security.

Indeed, the current situation cannot be adequately understood through the conventional binary of war versus diplomacy. Rather, it constitutes a broader test of whether global powers and regional states are prepared to move beyond short-term accommodations and narrowly defined exchanges of interest toward the construction of a comprehensive political and security architecture capable of mitigating the very conditions that generate

recurring conflict. Should the parties ultimately converge upon a framework grounded not merely in calculations of power but also in the equitable management of mutual concerns, security anxieties, and strategic interests, such a development could inaugurate a new chapter not only for Iran and the United States but for the Middle East as a whole.

Should that opportunity be squandered, however, history may once again reaffirm one of its most enduring lessons: agreements can provide temporary calm and limited stability, yet genuine and enduring peace emerges only when the visible manifestations of conflict are traced back to their deeper intellectual, political, and historical foundations, and when those foundations themselves become the object of serious and sustained remedy.

HANGOR Arrives

First Hangor Class Submarine PNS/M HANGOR arrives Karachi on Thursday.



First HANGOR class submarine PNS/M HANGOR Arrives Karachi

City Desk

KARACHI: The first PN HANGOR Class submarine, PNS/M HANGOR, has arrived in Karachi. The submarine was accorded a traditional naval welcome attended by senior naval officers, families of the crew, and Pakistan Navy personnel. Cadets of Pakistan Naval Academy presented a ceremonial salute to the incoming submarine and its crew, accompanied by a fly-past by PN Z9EC helicopters.

Upon arrival, a reception ceremony was held at Pakistan Navy Dock-

yard. Commander Pakistan Fleet, Vice Admiral Abdul Munib, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest. PNS/M HANGOR is equipped with advanced combat systems, modern sensors, Air Independent Propulsion (AIP) technology, and enhanced stealth features, which will augment Pakistan Navy's combat capability.

The arrival of PNS/M HANGOR marks a transformative step towards Pakistan Navy's modernisation and reflects the strong strategic defence cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Minister Tarar Calls for Climate Change to 'Trend Like Viral Content'



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Attaullah Tarar emphasized the urgent need for a cultural shift to prioritize climate change discussions, advocating for them to trend on social media like viral content.

Speaking at the International Conference on Green Journalism, Tarar highlighted climate change as an existential threat, noting that while Pakistan's contribution to emissions is minimal, it faces severe consequences, as evidenced by devastating floods.

He stressed the importance of "climate justice," urging nations with higher emissions to take greater responsibility. Tarar advocated for tailored awareness campaigns in diverse languages and through multiple communication channels, citing UN obligations for educational integration.

He also drew parallels with Islamic teachings on environmental protec-

tion. The minister warned of escalating destruction and health issues from climate impacts like deforestation and extreme weather. Tarar proposed a declaration on climate awareness and a coordinated framework involving ministries and stakeholders.

He criticized the current media landscape where controversial content overshadows vital issues like climate change, calling for a "cultural change" to make climate discussions fashionable and attention-grabbing. To achieve this, he proposed engaging media platforms, allocating dedicated airtime, and integrating climate education from schools to universities.

A focal person will be appointed from his ministry to form a joint working group with conference organizers to strategize awareness campaigns and involve prominent figures. The Ministry of Information and Broadcasting pledged full support for these initiatives.

PAF Chief highlights brotherly relations with Turkiye, vows stronger defense partnership

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: General Matin Tokel, Commander Turkish Land Forces, called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad.

The meeting focused on further strengthening bilateral defence cooperation and fostering collaborative endeavours across multiple domains of mutual interest.

Chief of the Air Staff highlighted the deep-rooted historical, cultural and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye, underpinned by the enduring bonds of Islamic brotherhood, mutual trust and shared strategic interests.

He emphasized that Pakistan greatly values its long-standing defence partnership



with Turkiye and remains committed to further strengthening bilateral relations across key domains of training, defence collaboration and technological cooperation.

The Air Chief also underscored the importance of enhanced military-to-military engagement in light of the evolving regional secu-

rity landscape, stressing the need for continued coordination and close cooperation between the Armed Forces of both brotherly nations.

He also shared insights on PAF's indigenization efforts, including advancements under the National Aerospace Science & Technology Park, and PAF's growing expertise

in unmanned systems, artificial intelligence and next-generation defence technologies.

Commander Turkish Land Forces appreciated the professionalism, operational excellence and modernization drive of Pakistan Air Force under its current leadership. He lauded the visionary and dynamic leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, acknowledging his unwavering commitment to transforming Pakistan Air Force into a modern, capable and self-reliant force.

Commander Turkish Land Forces expressed keen interest in further deepening bilateral engagement and strengthening defence ties, particularly in the areas of training, capacity building

and emerging technological domains. Both sides reaffirmed their resolve to enhance interoperability through joint training initiatives, exchange programs and coordinated engagements, while also agreeing to explore new avenues of cooperation aimed at reinforcing operational preparedness and advancing a resilient long-term strategic partnership.

The meeting between Commander Turkish Land Forces and Chief of the Air Staff underscores the depth and vitality of the enduring military partnership between Pakistan and Turkiye. It serves as a clear testament to the unwavering commitment of both brotherly nations to further consolidate their strategic ties and shared vision for regional peace and stability.

Pakistan Seeks to Streamline Business Regulations for Fisheries and Dairy Sectors

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh led a Cabinet Committee on Regulatory Reforms (CCoRR) meeting to review the 5th Regulatory Reforms Package, aiming to boost Pakistan's ease of doing business. The committee focused on the heavily regulated Fisheries & Aquaculture and Dairy & Beverages sectors.

The fisheries sector faces 55 regulations across 24 depart-

ments, with 22 licenses and 266 documents, many duplicated. Minister Sheikh identified this excessive burden as a barrier to exports.

SAPM Haroon Akhtar Khan and Minister Jam Kamal Khan stressed the need for structural reforms to address overlapping mandates and inefficiencies.

International expert Scott Jacobs recommended adopting one-window operations and simplification. The reforms proposed by the Board of Investment include



eliminating redundancies, simplifying processes, and digitizing approvals, with stakeholders agreeing on the need for these changes.

The committee supported

allowing joint ventures in the Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), subject to conditions like majority Pakistani shareholding and technology transfer, reversing a ban.

Operational challenges in boat registration, fishing permits, and berthing charges were also discussed. Federal and provincial stakeholders will be notified, and committees formed within 30 days for swift implementation. The untapped \$2 billion tuna export market underscores the urgency of reforms.

The Dairy & Beverages sector discussion was postponed. The ultimate goal is to enhance ease of doing business, attract investment, and achieve export-led growth.

Pakistan calls for de-escalation in Middle East

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has expressed deep concern over the deteriorating security situation in the Middle East and urged all parties involved to exercise restraint and pursue diplomatic solutions to regional disputes.

Speaking at the weekly Foreign Office briefing in Islamabad on Thursday, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Pakistan remained committed to dialogue and diplomacy despite the renewed hostilities in the region.

He acknowledged that the current situation in the Middle East had made mediation efforts increasingly difficult but stressed that Pakistan remained hopeful that diplomatic engagement could help reduce tensions. Addressing questions on



Kashmir, the spokesperson rejected recent remarks made by India's Ministry of External Affairs regarding Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He reiterated Pakistan's

longstanding position that Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognised disputed territory. He said Pakistan would continue to extend diplo-

matic, political and moral support to the Kashmiri people. Commenting on a report by the Stockholm International Peace Research Insti-

tute (SIPRI) regarding India's nuclear weapons deployment, Andrabi said Pakistan might differ with aspects of the institute's methodology but not necessarily with its observations.

He stressed that Pakistan did not believe in an arms race but was closely monitoring developments and urged the international community to pay attention to the institute's nuclear posture.

The spokesperson also responded to recent remarks by India's water resources minister, stating that water is a vital necessity for millions of people and that any attempt to restrict Pakistan's water resources could have serious implications for regional peace and security. He reiterated Pakistan's position that any such action would be viewed as a hostile act.

No Leniency for Illegal Wheat Trade and Bogus Seed Companies: Rana Tanveer Hussain



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, chaired the 13th National Wheat Oversight Committee (NWOC) meeting. The committee addressed issues concerning wheat procurement, seed regulation, wheat policy, and production data, with participation from ministry officials, provincial representatives, and stakeholders. A key discussion involved complaints from seed companies regarding seized wheat seed stocks in Punjab.

The Punjab government clarified that action was taken against companies illegally selling wheat in the market disguised as seed stocks. To aid verification, the Federal Seed Certification and Registration Department (FSC&RD) will share seed stock data with Punjab for its portal. Minister Hussain stressed transparency and legality in the seed sector, ordering

strict action against bogus seed companies involved in illegal wheat seed trade and emphasizing zero tolerance for regulatory non-compliance to protect farmers and ensure quality seed availability. The Minister commended provincial efforts and urged close coordination for transparent and efficient procurement completion.

Final wheat production figures for the 2025-26 season were reviewed, with Punjab and Sindh submitting their data, while Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan require more time. Minister Hussain reiterated the government's commitment to food security, farmers' interests, agricultural governance, and efficient wheat systems, underscoring the necessity of federal-provincial coordination for sustainable agricultural growth and food security. The meeting concluded with a collective commitment to enhance wheat management, market stability, and support Pakistan's agricultural development.