



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ایوم کی شہری ریحی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا  
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ہے لیکن اس سے مل نہیں سکتا ہے؟ نبی کریم  
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کے ساتھ اس روایت کی متابعت ابو حامیہ اور  
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## CM Balochistan highlights importance of blood donation on World Blood Donor Day

Sarfraz Bugti emphasized that a single donation of blood can become a message of new life and hope for patients in need. He noted that the availability of safe and voluntary blood is a fundamental requirement of an effective healthcare system, particularly in emergencies such as accidents, surgeries, childbirth, and treatment of various diseases.



## Governor Kundi lauds Red Crescent's free medical services, urges joint efforts to resolve issues

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday praised the Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) for providing free healthcare services in remote areas, saying the organisation had always remained at the forefront of serving people in need.

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## Gaza death toll rises to 72,996

GAZA: The death toll from the ongoing Israeli aggression on the Gaza Strip has risen to 72,996, with 173,246 injuries since October 2023, medical sources announced on Sunday.



Photo: WAFA

## DPM/FM Dar, Turkish FM exchange views on regional situation



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation last night with Foreign Minister of the Republic of Turkey Hakan Fidan and they exchanged views on the evolving regional situation and welcomed the encouraging progress towards an understanding between the United States and Iran. They expressed hope that these positive developments would pave the way for lasting peace and stability in the region, the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Sunday, said in a press release. Both agreed to remain in close contact on further developments.

## Tarar Highlights Budget's Relief Measures Fueled by Economic Reforms



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Attallah Tarar stated in the National Assembly that economic reforms and stabilization have enabled the Federal Budget 2026-27 to provide relief across various sectors. He highlighted tax breaks for the salaried class, with no tax on incomes up to Rs50,000 monthly and a 1% tax for those earning between Rs50,000 and Rs100,000. Tarar credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership for steering Pakistan away from economic default, citing a reduction in inflation to single digits, a decrease in the policy rate, and growth in GDP from -0.2% to 3.7%. Per capita income rose to \$1,901, foreign exchange reserves reached \$17.2 billion, and remittances hit a record \$33.9 billion. IT exports also saw significant growth. The fiscal deficit has been reduced to 0.7%. Tarar detailed reforms at the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), including transparent posting/transfer policies, merit-based tribunals, and technology-based oversight systems, which led to substantial tax recoveries, including Rs60 billion from the sugar industry. The FBR recovered Rs800 billion through enforcement measures, creating fiscal space for relief. A faceless appraisal system for taxpayers is being introduced to curb corruption. Approximately 3.6 million retailers are being brought into the tax net via a fixed-tax mechanism. The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation is supporting FBR digitalization. Agreements with Alibaba are expected to boost investment. The budget offers relief to the housing sector through the 'Apna Ghar' scheme. Exporters benefit from addressed advance tax issues, reduced minimum tax, and the abolition of super tax. Customs duty on agricultural equipment and sales tax on shipping services have been reduced. Taxes on women's hygiene products and contraceptives have been reduced to zero percent. Tarar described the budget as relief-oriented and the beginning of a new economic growth phase, urging political stakeholders to prioritize national interests. He noted Pakistan's increasing international recognition for peace, stability, and economic progress.

## DPM/FM Dar, Egypt FM advocate for regional peace amid positive developments



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of the Arab Republic of Egypt Dr. Badr Abdelatty expressed the hope that the recent positive developments would contribute to lasting peace, security, and stability across the region. The DPM/FM spoke with the Egyptian minister last night. The two leaders discussed the latest regional developments, including progress towards an understanding between the United States and Iran, the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Sunday, said in a press release. Both sides agreed to maintain close contact.

## Water-short Balochistan wants Sindh to release allocated water

QUETTA: The Balochistan government has written a letter to the Sindh government for taking measures to release water allocated to the province under IRSA Agreement. In the letter, it has been pointed out that Balochistan is facing severe water shortage in the Pit Feeder and Kherthar Canals. According to irrigation officials, Sindh is not releasing the water allocated to Balochistan under the IRSA Agreement. Engineer Mudassar Zafar Khosa, Superintendent of Irrigation Nasirabad Circle, wrote a letter to the Sindh government, urging the Sindh government to take steps to immediately provide water to Balochistan.

## Perth family's visit to Pakistan ends in tragedy as girl, 9, killed in police firing

ISLAMABAD: A nine-year-old Australian girl was killed after police opened fire on a vehicle during a robbery incident in Pakistan's eastern Punjab province, authorities and media reports said. The family, who hold Australian citizenship and had travelled from Perth to visit relatives in Chakwal, were sitting in their car outside a relative's house on Wednesday night when two armed robbers on a motorcycle approached and robbed them of cash and jewellery, according to a report by Australian broadcaster Sky News. The family consisted of 39-year-old Adeel Ahmed, his wife Dr Sidra Khan, their 10-year-old son Aftan Ahmed and their nine-year-old daughter Hania Ahmed. A police officer returning from a nearby police station witnessed the robbery and opened fire on the suspects, prompting an exchange of gunfire. The robbers escaped on a motorcycle, the report said. As the incident unfolded, Adeel Ahmed attempted to drive his family away from the scene. Additional police personnel arriving at the location allegedly mistook the moving vehicle for that of the fleeing robbers and opened fire. Hania Ahmed was killed at the scene after being struck by a bullet, while her father and brother sustained serious injuries. Dr Sidra Khan was unharmed. The injured were taken to the hospital and later transferred to Benazir Bhutto Hospital in Rawalpindi. The Punjab Home Department launched an investigation into the incident.

## Jamaat-e-Islami slams "Oppressive System," Blames IMF for Price Hikes

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Amir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman criticized Pakistan's oppressive system and claimed PDM parties prioritize self-interest. He highlighted the IMF's influence on the budget, leading to increased prices for electricity, petrol, and gas, with the petroleum levy becoming a major revenue source. Rehman demanded the abolition of the petroleum levy, suggested limiting government vehicle engine capacities, and alleged massive corruption within the FBR. He questioned the use of collected levies and the budget's measures for the power sector. Rehman argued that the elite class has ruled Pakistan for decades, leading to a Rs85 trillion debt with significant servicing costs borne by the poor and middle class. He called for a movement against capitalism, decried the low education budget, and expressed concern over outsourcing public services. He pointed out the struggles of government and private sector employees, questioning the budget's relief for ordinary citizens and low-income families.

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# AJK Election Commission refutes social media speculation on schedule release

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission spokesperson has issued a clarification regarding some comments and impressions circulating on social media regarding the release of the election schedule, saying that

As per Article (4)22 of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Interim Constitution, 1974, general elections to the Legislative Assembly must be held within sixty (60) days before the end of the constitutional term of the Assembly, while the election results must be declared at least fourteen (14) days before the end of the term of the Assembly. The first session of the current Assembly was held on August 03, 2021. Therefore, it was the constitutional responsibility of the



Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission to take timely and effective steps for the conduct of elections.

Thus, under the Elections Act, 2020, specific times are fixed for various stages of the election process,

in particular, as per Section (3)23, it is a legal requirement to publish the final list of polling stations in the official gazette at least fifteen days before the polling day. Moreover, adequate time is also required for the filing of nomination papers, their scrutiny, hearing of appeals, allotment of election symbols, printing of ballot papers and other legal and administrative steps. The election schedule is prepared keeping in mind these same constitutional and legal requirements. The spokesperson said that

The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir reiterates its resolve to continue to discharge its constitutional and legal responsibilities for the conduct of free, fair, transparent and impartial elections with complete integrity, transparency and impartiality.

## Refugee Seat Elections: AJK Commission Reviews Preparations



**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

RAWALPINDI: A meeting chaired by AJK Election Commission Member Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan Gilani reviewed preparations for 12 refugee seats (6 Jammu, 6 Valley). The goal is fair, transparent elections, addressing concerns with compiled lists and continuous office work. Efforts to increase capacity, maintain contact with Returning Officers, and clarify polling station/voter numbers are underway, including contacting the Election Commission of Pakistan and potentially involving refugees in Pakistan. Training for Returning Officers is scheduled, and their complaints will be addressed. Minutes must be sent to senior officials. Merit-based appointments and necessary equipment like Net, UPS, and photocopyers will be provided. A WhatsApp group facilitates RO coordination, though austerity measures pose challenges. Nomination papers are being issued, but no concessions on vote registration deadlines will be made.

## Rawalakot Police Vehicle Under Fire: Banned Committee Blamed

**City Desk**

RAWALAKOT: In Rawalakot, miscreants of the banned Joint Public Action Committee opened fire on a police armoured vehicle.

According to sources, more than 30 bullets were fired at a police armoured vehicle at an Eidgah in Rawalakot. Bullet marks are also visible on the police armoured vehicle.

Sources said that an audio of the leader of the banned Action Committee had threatened mischief.

## Debt Burden 'Strangling' Human Development in Pakistan: Altaf Shakoore

**News Desk**

KARACHI: Pasban Democratic Party Chairman Altaf Shakoore said Pakistan's rising debt is choking human development, with Rs 8.2 trillion of the Rs 17.6 trillion federal budget for FY2026-27 going to debt servicing. He noted public debt has surged from under Rs 20 trillion a decade ago to over Rs 75 trillion now, consuming revenue that should fund education, health, water, housing and jobs. Nearly 45% of Pakistanis live below the poverty line, while climate risks demand more investment. Shakoore urged shifting from borrowing to revenue growth, tax reforms, curbing waste, and investing in agriculture, IT, minerals and renewables. He cited South Korea and Vietnam as models, stressing sustainable progress needs productivity, not perpetual loans.

## Muslim Conference Parliamentary Board invites applications for general elections 2026

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**



RAWALPINDI: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Parliamentary Board Chairman Sardar Muhammad Irshad Khan has invited applications from party candidates for the general elections to the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly. According to a statement issued by Parliamentary

Board Secretary Sardar Abdul Wajid bin Arif Advocate, applications from candidates will be received at the party secretariat from June 15 to June 24. He said that all the candidates can submit their application within this period by obtaining the application form from the party secretariat along with a fee of Rs. 50,000 which will be in the form of pay order/cheque or cash in the name of the party. Parliamentary Board Chairman Sardar Muhammad Irshad Khan said that applications will be received from all constituencies of Azad Kashmir and refugees. He further said that the Muslim Conference will participate in the general elections with full enthusiasm and devotion.

Sardar Irshad Khan has appealed to the Kashmiri people to make the Muslim Conference, which advocates the ideology of accession to Pakistan in Azad Kashmir, a success with the power of their votes in the general elections.

## Land Dispute Claims Two University Lives; Four Arrested in Shaheed Benazirabad



**Anwar Adil Khanzada**

NAWABSHAH: SSP Sameer Noor Channa took swift action following the double murder of two university students over a land dispute in Shaheed Benazirabad. A special team, led by the DSP and including the SHO and IT team, arrested four main suspects within 72 hours. The accused, identified as Shahnawaz, Khan Bahadur, Ali Nawaz, and Shahbaz Jamali, have confessed to the crime. SSP Channa praised the team's professionalism and vowed to ensure swift justice for the victims' families, who expressed satisfaction with the police's prompt response.

## Masses in problems

ISLAMABAD: Police personnel stand alert at closed Faisal Avenue due to security reasons, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PPP Azad Kashmir Calls for Stability Amidst Worrying Political Climate

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: After the meeting of the core committee of Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir, it was disclosed in the press conference that the current political and law and order situation in Azad Kashmir is worrying. President PPP Ch. Muhammad Yasin said that 12 seats of refugees settled in Pakistan have no value for us.

He said that The federal government should talk about tolerance and forbearance. The situation should be normalized. PPP leadership demands.

We are proud of the Pak Army and Pakistan he said virtually.

President Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said that in the current situation, saving the state and the people and maintaining stability is the top priority he added.



## World Blood Donor Day: Commissioner Visits Sundas Foundation

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: On World Blood Donor Day, Commissioner Faisalabad Munsrat Jabeen reached Sundas Foundation to encourage thalassemia and hemophilia patients.

He checked on the health of the patients, distributed gifts among them and paid tribute to those who donated blood voluntarily to save lives. He said that blood donation is actually life for someone. He also inspected the state-

of-the-art laboratory of Sundas Foundation. In-charge Foundation Kashif Pervez informed the Commissioner about the working of Sundas Foundation, the number of registered patients and the provision of blood donations.

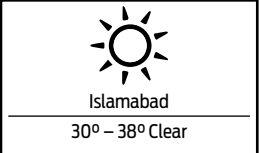
The Commissioner appreciated the selfless humanitarian service of Sundas Foundation and reiterated the commitment of the divisional administration to continue encouraging welfare institutions.

He said that this day highlights the



importance of blood donation and pays tribute to those who donate blood voluntarily. He said that healthy people

and students must donate blood voluntarily, which can be a message of life for someone in need.



**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	3:13 am
Zohr	12:08 pm
Asr	5:08 pm
Maghrib	7:19 pm
Isha	9:03 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7

# Punjab Pioneers Eco-Friendly Future with First 'Liquid Tree' Technology

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Under Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision, another revolutionary breakthrough has been achieved to make Punjab an eco-friendly province, as Pakistan's first EPA-certified "Liquid Tree" is being brought from Faisalabad to Lahore.

She noted that this is the first technology certified by EPA Punjab since 1987 that will absorb CO<sub>2</sub> in the form of an artificial tree, as over 100 species of microalgae were collected from Karachi to Khyber; and carbon sequestration capacity and effectiveness of each type were tested over a period of 7 months.

She was apprised by the relevant authorities that the most effective algae came from Sukkur, Sindh; whose seeds were taken and cultivated at GC University Faisalabad with their collaboration. They said that an AI-based calculator is installed in the system,

which indicates how much CO<sub>2</sub> is being absorbed and how much oxygen is being released at any given time.

She appreciated Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), researchers, and entire team for developing the 'bio-artificial tree' to combat pollution; as the trial phase of 'Liquid Tree' is a proof of creativity, expertise, and passion of Punjab's researchers, bioscientists, and EPA.

Chief Minister Punjab said that in the first phase, liquid trees will be installed in large malls, both indoors and outdoors; and hoped that this technology will prove to be a game-changer for reducing pollution in urban areas.

She underscored that "Liquid Tree" is a modern scientific method of removing carbon dioxide from the environment through a bioreactor by growing algae in water; as this method is the most advanced scientific approach to eliminating carbon dioxide and smog in cities. She flashed



that artificial trees in large plazas and commercial areas will improve environment just like real trees.

## Cleaning

RAWALPINDI: Workers busy in cleaning Nullah Lai with the help of heavy machinery ahead of pre-monsoon rains in the city.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Private schools enroll over 4,000 out-of-school children under CSR in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, through the collective efforts of partner organizations, has referred more than 4,000 Out-of-School Children (OOSC) to private schools across Islamabad under Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) initiatives as part of the 'No Child Left Behind' Campaign.

Private schools enroll over 4,000 out-of-school children under CSR in Islamabad

This significant achievement was highlighted during a progress review meeting chaired by Chairman PEIRA, Dr. Ghulam Ali Mallah, with DG-NCHD Ali Asghar and representatives of JICA, including Bilal Aziz, at PEIRA Headquarters.

Senior officials of PEIRA also attended the meeting, said a press release.

DG-NCHD briefed the meeting that a comprehensive household survey covering nearly 80,000 households in rural Union Councils of Islamabad identified more than 24,000 children aged 5-16 years who were out of school.

These children have been referred to the Federal Directorate of Education (FDE) and PEIRA for enrollment in the nearest accessible educational institutions.

PEIRA has engaged more than 100 private schools, which have demonstrated exemplary commitment by enrolling over 4,000 children free of cost.

## Key Politicians Join Muslim Conference in Rawalpindi

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

RAWALPINDI: President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan met with Assembly candidate from Narowal Rana Sadaqatullah Khan at Mujahid Manzil. He announced his joining the Muslim Conference along with his colleagues.

Candidate for the Sialkot Assembly constituency, Adeeb Anjad Butt, former Chairman Azam Warraich, Chaudhry Mukhtar Ahmed alias Bhola and others also joined the Muslim Conference.

Meanwhile the President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir



Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan is garlanding Sardar Abdullah Tariq Sikandar Advocate, grandson of former premier Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan from Nakyal at the

Rawalpindi Central Secretariat, on joining the Muslim Conference. Secretary General Madam Mehr-un-Nisa, Sardar Abdul Razzaq Khan Advocate, Major

Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Sajid Qureshi Advocate, Raja Muhammad Ilyas Khan, Asim Zahid Abbasi, Sardar Ajmal Nakyalvi and others are also present on the occasion.

## APPNA Invites FPCCI Trade Delegation to USA to Promote Trade, Investment and Healthcare Collaboration

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD (PR): Dr. Babar Rao, President of the Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA), has invited a high-powered trade delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) to visit the United States to explore new avenues of bilateral trade, investment, and healthcare collaboration between Pakistan and the United States.

The invitation was extended to Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, and Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain, Chairman Pakistan-USA Business Council FPCCI, to lead the delegation and engage with leading business, healthcare, and investment stakeholders across the United States.

The announcement was made during a dinner hosted in honor of Dr. Babar Rao by Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain, President Hafizabad



Chamber and Chairman Pakistan-USA Business Council FPCCI, and Barrister Syed Hasnain Kazmi. The event brought together representatives

from the business community, diplomatic circles, and healthcare sector to discuss opportunities for strengthening Pakistan-USA economic rela-

tions.

Mr. David Morrison, Political Economy Officer, attended the event on behalf of Ms. Natalie A. Baker, Chargé d'Affaires, U. S. Embassy Islamabad. Also present were Mr. Tariq Khan Jadoon, Vice President FPCCI; Dr. Arslan Subuctageen, Former Member FBR; Dr. Nadeem Khokhar, a prominent businessman from Virginia, USA; and Mr. Omar Hashmi, Director FPCCI, along with other distinguished guests.

Dr. Babar Rao and Mr. Malik Sohail Hussain stated that the Pakistan-USA Business Council is committed to creating stronger institutional linkages between the private sectors of Pakistan and the United States. He noted that the upcoming delegation would serve as an important step towards enhancing commercial cooperation, attracting investment, and identifying new opportunities for Pakistani businesses in the U. S. market.

## AIOU announces July 1 admissions for multiple programs focused skills and brighter future

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) announced admissions for the Fall 2026 semester in a wide range of academic programs from Matriculation to PhD level. The nationwide admission campaign will officially begin on July 1, 2026 across all four provinces of Pakistan as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and other northern regions.

In line with the vision of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the University is expanding its portfolio of market-driven and job-oriented programs to equip young people with the education and skills required in today's competitive environment.

As part of this initiative, various technical, professional, diploma and certificate programs will also be offered during the semester to help develop a skilled workforce capable of contributing to the country's socio-economic development.

The programs open for admission include Matric General, Matric Science, Matric Dars-e-Nizami, FA General, I. Com, FA Dars-e-Nizami, Associate Degree Programs including BA, B. Com and BBA, Associate Degree in Education, two-year Associate Degree Programs in various disciplines, BS (ODL) and BS (Face-to-Face) programs, 1.5-year, 2.5-year and 4-year B. Ed programs, Postgraduate Diploma programs as well as MS, MPhil, and PhD programs.

Admission forms and prospectuses for all programs will be available on the University's website from July 1, 2026. Students will be able to choose programs according to their academic needs and career aspirations and submit their applications within the stipulated admission period.

## WASA Toba Tek Singh Seeks Citizen Aid for Monsoon Preparedness



**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: WASA Toba Tek Singh Managing Director Chaudhry Kamran Kahlon has requested citizen cooperation during the monsoon season to ensure effective drainage and prevent difficulties from heavy rainfall. WASA's top priorities are protecting lives and property and ensuring timely rainwater drainage. To achieve this, all staff are on high alert, and sewer lines, drains, and storm-water channels are being cleaned at an accelerated pace. Kahlon urged citizens not to dump garbage, plastic bags, or other waste into drains, as this obstructs water flow and causes accumulation. He also advised against excavation, construction, and dumping debris near roads and drainage channels during the rainy season, as these activities impede drainage and increase accident risks. Residents were cautioned to avoid wet electrical appliances, poles, transformers, and fallen power lines, and to report hazardous situations immediately. Citizens are encouraged to stay informed about weather forecasts and follow instructions from meteorological and administrative authorities.

## Attock Deputy Commissioner Oversees Late-Night Project Inspection

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, conducted a late-night inspection of ongoing development and beautification projects. Accompanied by other officials, he reviewed the pace and quality of work, stressing timely completion without compromising standards. Raza highlighted that citizen facilities and city beautification are top priorities and emphasized efficient resource utilization. He also addressed pushcart vendors, directing them to operate from designated areas for smooth city flow and discipline. The administration assured vendors of prioritized issue resolution and support, reiterating its commitment to Attock's development and citizen welfare.

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# Field Marshal: A Realistic Choice for the Nobel Prize

**F**ield Marshal Syed Asim Munir's high-stakes visit to Tehran has emerged as the decisive turning point in bringing long-stalled and highly volatile U. S.-Iran diplomatic talks to a successful conclusion, attracting global attention as a major geopolitical development. By leveraging Pakistan's strategic position and institutional credibility, he succeeded in navigating deep-rooted hostility between Washington and Tehran, helping avert an imminent escalation of hostilities while establishing a framework for a comprehensive and sustainable peace agreement with potentially far-reaching implications for international security. The talks had previously collapsed at least three times, while mediation efforts by the European Union and United Nations failed to break the deadlock. Rather than merely facilitating communication, he introduced compromise formulas not previously considered by either side, overcoming psychological barriers that had prevented meaningful dialogue for nearly two years. Former U. S. intelligence and diplomatic officials reportedly acknowledged that without Pakistan's intervention the region could already have witnessed a devastating confrontation involving multiple countries and non-state actors. Pakistan stood out as the only regional power capable of maintaining sufficient neutrality and leverage to bridge the divide, while Gulf states, Lebanon, and Turkey were constrained by political alignments,

internal divisions, sectarian disputes, or complex strategic relationships. Its nuclear capability, large military, historical ties with Iran, working relationship with the United States, and decades of careful diplomatic balancing enabled Islamabad to maintain open channels with all parties and secure meaningful structural concessions from both sides. The intensive two-week mission in Tehran involved consecutive meetings with Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, and Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, focusing on regional security, protection of shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, and phased de-escalation of economic and military tensions with the United States. Daily negotiations included reviews of regional developments, technical and political consultations with Iranian officials, and secure video conferences with American representatives in Doha, Geneva, and Washington, continuing late into the evenings as verbal understandings were transformed into mutually acceptable written provisions. Iranian leaders reportedly showed unusual flexibility, while the direct participation of both the president and parliament speaker demonstrated seriousness and potential legislative backing for implementation.

Upon completion of the visit, a finalized diplomatic draft was transmitted to Iranian and American authorities for review, containing provisions for a phased and verifiable ceasefire monitored by neutral observers, gradual relaxation of maritime restrictions, structured release of frozen Iranian assets tied to compliance benchmarks, and a roadmap toward nuclear oversight and compliance with the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action through enhanced verification measures. The success of the mediation effort rested on the rare personal trust Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir enjoys with both American and Iranian leaderships, reinforced by years of engagement with senior U. S. security officials and influential Iranian political, military, and religious figures, as well as by the unified coordination between Pakistan's civilian government and military command. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's support, cabinet awareness of the negotiations, and the presentation of a fully integrated state position provided the authority, stability, continuity, and long-term commitment necessary to reassure both Washington and Tehran that Pakistan could reliably support, help implement, and serve as the ultimate guarantor of a future peace agreement. In parallel, U. S. President

Donald Trump publicly praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, reportedly calling him his favorite Field Marshal and highlighting his role in reducing differences between Pakistan's foreign policy position and sensitive back-channel discussions hosted in Islamabad. The endorsement was viewed as a significant signal of Pakistan's growing strategic relevance and an indication that Washington regarded Pakistan as an important partner in Middle East diplomacy. Back-channel talks hosted in Islamabad reportedly gained greater credibility among American officials, with negotiators praising the professionalism of their Pakistani counterparts. The development was also linked to Pakistan's historical role as a diplomatic intermediary, drawing comparisons with its facilitation of secret contacts between the United States and China in the early 1970s, when Pakistan enabled Henry Kissinger's covert trip to Beijing that paved the way for the normalization of U. S.-China relations and reshaped Cold War geopolitics. By once again serving as a trusted intermediary between major powers, Pakistan was seen as reviving a long-standing diplomatic role rooted in its geographic position, regional relationships, and ability to maintain dialogue with opposing sides, while reinforcing its reputation as an important actor in international conflict resolution and global affairs.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Abdul Basit Alvi

# Namal Lake's Drying Forces Flamingoes to Migrate, Highlights Wetland Crisis

**T**he drying of Namal Lake in Mianwali has forced hundreds of migratory flamingoes to relocate to Jhlar Lake in the Soon Valley, exposing the growing threats to Pakistan's wetlands and the urgent need for stronger conservation measures, APP reported on June 9.

Recent footage by WWF-Pakistan and wildlife photographer Umer Bin Khalid showed large flocks of flamingoes gathering at Jhlar Lake after Namal Lake, their traditional seasonal refuge, largely dried up. While birdwatchers welcomed the sight, environmental experts called it a warning sign of ecological distress.

Hammad Naqi Khan, Director General WWF-Pakistan, said Namal Lake has historically supported migratory birds, aquatic life and local communities. "Its shrinking water levels are a stark reminder of the pressures imposed by climate change, water mismanagement and ecosystem degradation," he noted. Pakistan lies on the Central Asian Flyway and hosts millions of migratory birds annually, making wetland protection crucial for regional biodiversity.

Punjab Wildlife and Parks Department has intensified conservation efforts, monitoring migratory birds and managing Ramsar sites. Director General Mudassar Riaz Malik said wetland conservation remains a priority under Punjab's biodiversity strategy, especially in the Salt Range and Soon Valley.

The Punjab government's Namal Lake Restoration and Management Plan 2022-2027 warns the lake is "shrinking at an alarming level". Originally spread over 5.5 sq km, it had shrunk to 2.2 sq km by 2022, losing 57% of its area. The report blames climatic extremes, reduced environmental flows, siltation, and improper channelization of Golar, Trappi, Rikhi and Namal streams. Sediment deposition has reduced storage capacity and disrupted inflows.

The plan proposes catchment rehabilitation, check dams, desiltation, pollution control, plantation, flood management, and public awareness to restore the lake for biodiversity, eco-tourism, and community development. Experts say flamingoes' move to Jhlar Lake proves these risks are real, as migratory birds are the first visible sign of ecosystem stress.

UNEP highlights that wetlands store carbon and aid climate adaptation. Their loss increases vulnerability to droughts, floods, and water shortages. Rab Nawaz of WWF-Pakistan said, "When one wetland disappears, wildlife competes for shrinking habitats elsewhere. Protecting wetlands is essential for birds and people."

Experts now call for integrated watershed management, wetland restoration, better water governance, stricter environmental law enforcement, and greater community participation to safeguard Pakistan's wetlands and migratory species.



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

# Teachers-Oriented Curriculum: Waiting for Change with AI Integration

**E**ducation systems worldwide are undergoing rapid transformation due to technological advancement, changing labor market demands, and evolving learning patterns. Among the most significant developments is the emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), which is reshaping industries, communication, and educational practices. For a developing country like Pakistan, the integration of AI into education presents both an opportunity and a challenge. However, one critical issue remains largely overlooked: curriculum reform for teachers themselves. A teachers-oriented curriculum that prepares educators for AI-driven classrooms is urgently needed.

Traditionally, curriculum development has focused primarily on students while assuming that teachers will naturally adapt to educational changes. In reality, many teachers continue to rely on outdated teaching methods because they have not been adequately trained for modern educational demands. In Pakistan, where many institutions still emphasize rote learning and traditional classroom instruction, this gap has become more visible with the rise of digital technologies.

Artificial Intelligence is transforming how education is delivered. AI-powered tools can personalize learning, assess student performance, automate administrative tasks, and provide instant feedback. Platforms using intelligent tutoring systems help students learn at their own pace, while data analytics identify learning gaps. Yet these tools can only be effective if teachers understand how to integrate them meaningfully into classroom instruction.

This is where a teachers-oriented curriculum becomes essential. Teacher education programs must be redesigned to equip educators with digital literacy, technological confidence, and AI awareness. Pre-service and in-service teacher training should include modules on educational technology, AI ethics, digital classroom management, and personalized learning strategies. Teachers need practical exposure to AI tools rather than theoretical discussions alone.

A teacher-oriented curriculum should also focus on changing pedagogical mindsets. AI cannot replace teachers, but it can redefine their roles. Instead of serving merely as information providers, teachers must become facilitators, mentors, and critical thinkers who guide students in interpreting information responsibly. Human interaction, empathy, and ethical guidance remain qualities that machines cannot replicate.

In Pakistan, many public schools face limited infrastructure, weak internet connectivity, and insufficient digital resources. Rural schools often lack computer labs and trained staff. Without addressing these structural challenges, AI integration may deepen educational inequality. Policymakers must ensure equitable access to technological resources across urban and rural institutions.

Teacher resistance to technological change is another challenge. Some educators fear that AI may replace their jobs or undermine traditional teaching authority. Others feel overwhelmed by rapid technological developments. Continuous professional development programs can help teachers build confidence and understand that AI is a supportive tool rather than a threat. Curriculum reforms should also address

ethical concerns related to AI. Teachers must understand issues such as data privacy, misinformation, algorithmic bias, and responsible digital behavior. Students depend on teachers to help them navigate an increasingly complex digital world. Without proper training, educators may struggle to guide learners responsibly.

Higher education institutions that prepare future teachers must update their academic programs. Universities and teacher training colleges should introduce courses on educational innovation, AI-assisted learning, and digital pedagogy. Partnerships with technology companies and international education organizations can provide valuable expertise and training opportunities.

Assessment systems also need revision. Traditional examination models do not fully reflect the skills needed in AI-driven environments. Teachers should learn alternative assessment methods such as project-based learning, digital portfolios, and competency-based evaluations that encourage creativity and problem-solving.

The integration of AI also offers administrative benefits for teachers. Automated grading systems, attendance tracking, lesson planning tools, and performance analytics can reduce workload and allow teachers to focus more on student engagement. However, successful implementation depends on proper training and institutional support.

Another important dimension is the need to prepare students for careers that may not yet exist. As AI continues to reshape industries, teachers must be trained to cultivate adaptability, innovation, and lifelong learning among students. A forward-looking curriculum should help educators teach coding awareness, digital entrepreneurship, analytical reasoning, and ethical technology usage so learners can remain competitive in future job markets.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

# Why Is the Fourth Pillar of the State Ignored in the Budget? An Analytical Review

**I**n Pakistan, journalism is often referred to as the fourth pillar of the state. However, in the context of Budget 2026-27, a pressing question arises: does this pillar truly receive the attention and financial protection it deserves?

The Budget 2026-27 does not include any major direct financial relief or special subsidy for newspapers or journalists. However, some development funds have been allocated under the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting, aimed at government media institutions, digitalization, and infrastructure improvement. These funds are not intended to address the salaries or day-to-day financial difficulties of newspapers or working journalists. Similarly, no significant relief package has been announced for the print media in terms of newsprint support, tax reductions, or subsidies, which means financial pressure on the sector is likely to persist. Overall, while the budget contains some institutional-level measures for the media sector, it does not provide any clear or direct financial support package for journalists or newspapers.

Within the current financial structure, large and national newspapers do have a steady source of income in the form of government advertising. However, the benefit of this system largely remains confined to institutional owners, while the economic conditions of working journalists, those who actually produce the news show no significant improvement.

The distribution of government advertising has been debated for decades. Major and well-established newspapers, due to their wide circulation and institutional influ-

ence, receive the majority of advertisements. This strengthens their owners and corporate structures, but the system does not translate into financial relief for lower-level journalists, reporters, and field workers. On the other hand, regional and smaller newspapers receive only a very limited share of advertising quotas, pushing them into financial crisis and threatening their institutional survival. As a result, a few powerful media organizations dominate advertising revenues, while a large segment of journalism remains economically insecure.

Furthermore, most working journalists are employed on non-permanent contracts. They receive neither adequate salaries nor basic rights such as social security, insurance, or retirement benefits. While the current government advertising model provides institutional stability, it fails to ensure economic well-being for journalists at the human level. This contradiction exposes a gap between the theoretical recognition of journalism as the "fourth pillar" and its practical reality.

Another major issue in budget formulation is the absence of a comprehensive and transparent database regarding newspaper circulation and the journalists working across different organizations. Due to the lack of reliable data, fair distribution of advertisements is not possible, nor can genuinely deserving journalists be properly identified. This gap is often exploited by large media houses and influential institutions, while regional journalism continues to weaken. Reports from international institutions such as the World Bank (worldbank.org) and the

*Continued on Page 7*

# DPRK Foreign Ministry Denounces US Nuclear War Drills

KCNA

PYONGYANG: A spokesperson for the Foreign Ministry of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea issued the following press statement on Saturday: The U. S. and its satellite countries had such confabs for nuclear war as a "nuclear consultative group" meeting and "extended deterrence dialogue" and repeated their nuclear threat against the DPRK and assertion about someone's "denuclearization".

It is an unreasonable act and fantastic daydream to call for nuclear disarmament of the other belligerent party in meetings intended to set the use of nukes targeting the DPRK and other regional countries as a policy and design a detailed plan for carrying it out.

The DPRK Foreign Ministry resolutely denounces and rejects the U. S.-JapanROK moves for collective nuclear confrontation and the sinister attempt of Western countries to force a sovereign state to violate its constitution in the international arena,

and warns of the consequences to be entailed by their repeated provocations.

The U. S. and its vassal forces' absurd accusation against the DPRK and their collaboration for posing a nuclear threat to it can never affect the irreversible position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state.

The "denuclearization" is an irreversibly finalized agenda. The U. S. is now busy with plot-breeding moves for a war simulating the use of nuclear weapons while massively delivering various kinds of military hardware, including latest air-to-air missiles, to the ROK and Japan.

The reality clearly proves the reason and justness for our state to concentrate its efforts on bolstering up the capacity for self-defence essential to ensuring its security.

The building up of a nuclear shield on the part of the DPRK is a legitimate process for deterring interference and threat from outside, guaranteeing national sovereignty and security and ensuring regional peace and stability.

In coping with the enemy countries' daily-growing nuclear threat, our state is taking military and technical countermeasures involving the possible capabilities and means of every category in an all-round way.

The DPRK is firm and unshakable in its determination to control and counter with nukes, on the principle of ensuring security and defending peace by dint of powerful strength, the nuclear threat by the enemy countries aimed to encroach upon its absolute and inviolable sovereignty and security.

No matter how hard the U. S., Japan and the ROK may tone up their rhetoric, it is impossible to change the present position of the DPRK as a nuclear weapons state.

No one can recover the "denuclearization" permanently disappeared in the current of the times. The expansion of the DPRK's nuclear capacity and its self-defensive capability based on it are irreversible, and this is a strong security guarantee for regional stability and peace.



# Ministry of Foreign Affairs Condemns Demolitions and Forced Displacement in Barta'a

Wafa

The Palestinian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates has strongly condemned the Israeli occupation forces' initiation of large-scale demolition operations targeting homes and commercial structures in the Khour al-Daba'a area of Eastern Barta'a, southwest of Jenin.

The demolitions are part of a systematic Israeli policy aimed at weakening the Palestinian presence in the occupied territory, including East Jerusalem, while advancing annexation and settlement expansion in the occupied West Bank, in blatant violation of international law and relevant UN resolutions.

The targeted homes and structures shelter nearly 100 Palestinians, and their demolition would forcibly displace residents and deprive them of their basic rights, marking yet another instance of forced displacement amid



Israel's ongoing violations against the Palestinian people.

The Ministry further stressed that the repeated targeting of the Khour

al-Daba'a area, including the demolition of eight homes and structures during the past week, exposes the true nature of the occupation and underscores Israel's persistent use of its judicial and administrative apparatus as instruments to provide a false legal veneer for policies of demolition, forced displacement, and land confiscation.

The Ministry called on the international community, the United Nations, and international human rights organizations to take immediate and decisive action to halt these grave violations, ensure international protection for the Palestinian people, hold those responsible accountable, and adopt effective measures to compel Israel, as the occupying power, to abide by international law and relevant UN resolutions, stressing that continued impunity only emboldens further violations against the Palestinian people, their land, and their holy sites.

## Ambassador of Azerbaijan, Greenwich University Chancellor Discuss Academic Cooperation



Zafar Chishti

ISLAMABAD: A delegation from Greenwich University, led by Chancellor Dr. Seema Mughal and accompanied by Director Quality Enhancement Cell (QEC) Dr. Rab Nawaz, met with the Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, His Excellency Khazar Farhadov, in Islamabad to explore avenues for academic collaboration and educational partnership between the two countries.

During the meeting, both sides discussed opportunities to strengthen educational ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan through institutional cooperation and academic exchange programs.

Ambassador Khazar Farhadov assured the delegation of his full support and facilitation in establishing partnerships between Greenwich University and leading universities in Azerbaijan. He emphasized the importance of fostering academic linkages through Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs), joint academic programs, collaborative research initiatives, student and faculty exchange programs, language promotion activities, internships and socio-cultural and educational visits.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Seema Mughal highlighted several areas for future collaboration. She proposed the development of 2+2 academic pathway programs, the introduction of Greenwich University's Pre-University Foundation Program, educational development and capacity-building initiatives and enhanced access to international qualifications. She further identified teacher training, curriculum development, quality assurance and quality enhancement as key areas where educational institutions in Pakistan and Azerbaijan could work together for mutual benefit. The meeting concluded on a positive note with both sides expressing a strong commitment to promoting academic cooperation and strengthening educational partnerships between the two countries.

At the end of the meeting, Dr. Seema Mughal presented a commemorative memento of Greenwich University to Ambassador Khazar Farhadov as a gesture of goodwill and appreciation.

# Safe Cities Authority Gears Up for Muharram with Advanced Digital Security

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab, Abdul Karim, presided over a Command Conference at the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) Headquarters in Lahore. The conference focused on reviewing security arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram, crime prevention strategies, and the overall law and order situation across Punjab. Attended by officers from all 43 operational Smart Safe Cities Centers, the meeting detailed special security measures for religious gatherings, processions, and sensitive areas. The PSCA spokesperson highlighted the implementation of modern digital security initiatives for Muharram, including a QR Panic Button System and enhanced emergency response mechanisms. Geo-tagging, digital mapping, and a QR code-based secu-



rity system have been activated for over 4,500 Imambarahs province-wide to ensure rapid emergency responses and a secure environment. Operation Centers across Punjab will main-

tain a high alert during Muharram, with continuous digital monitoring of religious activities and sensitive locations. Regional and District Managers presented updates on their Smart Safe

Cities initiatives, operational performance, and security challenges. The conference also assessed the effectiveness of Smart Safe Cities operations in crime detection, police response, and technology utilization. IG Punjab Abdul Karim awarded commendation certificates to high-performing officers. He emphasized the Smart Safe Cities network's crucial role in maintaining law and order and improving policing. He urged districts to maximize the use of Safe Cities technology for comprehensive security during Muharram. Muhammad Ahsan Younas, Managing Director of PSCA, stated that the integration of Safe City cameras, data analytics, and intelligent monitoring is bolstering crackdowns on criminals. He added that modern technology and integrated surveillance are enhancing public safety and enabling more effective policing throughout Punjab.

# Punjab's Financial Performance in 2025-26

Quadrat Ullah

The financial year 2025-26 marks a defining period in Punjab's public finance management, reflecting a shift from conventional budgeting toward results-oriented governance, fiscal discipline and accelerated development spending. Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the provincial government pursued efficient budget utilisation, enhanced revenue mobilisation, prudent expenditure management and institutional reforms to strengthen financial governance while expanding public investment at an unprecedented scale.

With a record outlay of Rs5.335 trillion, Punjab presented the largest provincial budget in its history. The budget also signalled a shift in priorities by allocating an unprecedented Rs1.24 trillion to the Annual Development Programme (ADP) — a 47 percent increase over the previous year's Rs842 billion — underscoring the government's commitment to capital formation, infrastructure modernisation and long-term economic growth. The ADP was the centrepiece of

Punjab's fiscal strategy. Official development documents show the Rs1.24 trillion portfolio covered around 2,750 ongoing and new schemes, split into roughly Rs536 billion for ongoing schemes, close to Rs471 billion for new initiatives and a further Rs233 billion in block allocations for special programmes, including the Chief Minister's Local Roads Programme for underserved districts. Transport and road infrastructure overall received over Rs335 billion, reflecting the priority placed on connectivity. The social sectors — education, health and social protection — together accounted for nearly Rs494 billion, about 40 percent of the ADP, with education's development allocation alone close to Rs148.5 billion. Major investments also went to climate resilience, urban development, digital governance and agriculture modernisation.

A notable feature was the focus on budget utilisation and expenditure efficiency, an area where development budgets across jurisdictions often struggle with low absorption and delayed implementation. During FY 2025-26, the Planning and Development

Board stepped up monitoring, with the Provincial Development Working Party convening far more frequently to accelerate scheme approvals. By the Board's mid-year review, releases against ongoing ADP schemes had reached roughly Rs536

billion of the Rs1.24 trillion programme, even as its leadership pressed line departments to translate releases into faster utilisation on the ground. Greater inter-departmental coordination and digitised monitoring helped align allocations with actual spending.

Fiscal management also reflected strong discipline. Despite higher development spending, the government maintained controls in non-development sectors, including a steep, roughly 94 percent cut in domestic borrowing and an 88 percent reduction in Account-II (Food) expenditure compared with the previous year. The province also built an Estimated

Provincial Surplus of around Rs470 billion into its fiscal framework — linked to the Federal Board of Revenue meeting its national collection target under Punjab's understanding with the IMF — supporting broader macroeconomic stabilisation.

Revenue mobilisation remained another key pillar. Of Punjab's projected revenue of about Rs4,890.4 billion, roughly Rs4,062.2 billion was expected through the federal divisible pool under the NFC Award, while the province set its own receipts target at Rs828.2 billion. Rather than new taxes, the government pursued a pro-business, zero-new-tax approach focused on expanding the tax base, improving documentation, and enhancing collection efficiency, including through property valuation reforms — improving revenue buoyancy without raising the burden on households and businesses.

Punjab Revenue Authority was assigned a collection target of Rs340

billion, the Board of Revenue Rs135.5 billion and the Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department Rs70 billion. Digitisation of tax administration, improved enforcement, data-driven audits and taxpayers' facilitation initiatives strengthened revenue administration, contributing to greater transparency and reduced leakage.

FY 2025-26 also saw further consolidation of modern public financial management, with greater emphasis on performance-based budgeting, evidence-driven decision-making and digital financial systems. Institutional reforms extended to local government empowerment, with a Provincial Finance Commission award of Rs764.2 billion transferred to local bodies, alongside dedicated allocations for waste management, municipal services and a Rs70 billion social protection package for impecunious strata — reinforcing the Punjab government's emphasis on treating public funds as a trust to be managed with accountability.

The year also reinforced Punjab's focus on development-led growth, with large-scale investment in education,

health, including new cardiology institutes such as the Nawaz Sharif Institute of Cardiology in Sargodha, infrastructure, housing, transport and social welfare designed to generate multiplier effects across the provincial economy and strengthen human capital.

Overall, FY 2025-26 stands as a significant milestone in Punjab's fiscal evolution: record development spending, a more diversified ADP, stronger financial governance, enhanced revenue administration and renewed fiscal discipline together produced a more resilient, performance-oriented public finance framework. While challenges remain, Punjab's trajectory — guided by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's continued emphasis on transparency, accountability and prudent stewardship — reflects a determined effort to balance development ambitions with sound financial management, laying a stronger foundation for future growth and service delivery.

(The writer is Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at quadratu@gmail.com)



Analysis

Quadrat Ullah

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
172,399.90	169,703.60
Day's High	Day's Low
173,093.45	170,946.54
Index Value	Change
30,730,700,680	+2696.30
Percentage	Time
+1.59%	12 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,471.72	+167.84
Percentage	Time
+167.84	12 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,261.71	+412.96
Percentage	Time
+0.81%	12 Jun, 1:27 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,020.04	+1,802.77
Percentage	Time
+2.81%	12 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.79	198.75
Bahrain Dinar	736.75	747.85
Canadian Dollar	197.57	207.05
China Yuan	38.05	38.80
Danish Krone	43.39	43.79
Euro	322.43	328.45
Hong Kong Dollar	35.01	36.01
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.10
Japanese Yen	1.7114	1.8161
Kuwaiti Dinar	886.85	896.99
Malaysian Ringgit	67.05	67.90
New Zealand \$	160.15	164.88
Norwegians Krone	27.88	28.18
Omani Riyal	722.00	732.32
Qatari Riyal	75.04	76.35
Saudi Riyal	74.20	74.80
Singapore Dollar	214.65	219.64
Swedish Korona	30.27	30.57
Swiss Franc	346.94	351.95
Thai Bhat	8.45	8.65
U.A.E Dirham	75.80	76.80
UK Pound Sterling	373.92	378.90
US Dollar	278.45	279.35

# Seed Policy and Economic Reforms in Focus as Industrial Leader Ch. Zulfqar

**Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Industrial leader and Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Ch. Zulfqar Ali Anjum, has shared his views on Pakistan's Budget 2026-27, highlighting both concerns and positive steps.

He said the government's target of 4 percent economic growth is hopeful but difficult to achieve due to global and regional challenges. He pointed to tensions in the Middle East and possible disruptions in supply chains, which may affect trade and exports.

He stressed that the budget does not include strong or practical measures to expand the tax system. According to him, the plan to tax traders on turnover will not



greatly increase revenue or bring many new taxpayers into the system.

He suggested strict implementation of the Shops and Establishment Act, saying every business should be properly regis-

tered and required to display its registration certificate. This would help build a better database and improve tax collection.

He also mentioned the government's key policy directions, including tariff reforms under the National Tariff Policy 2025-30, improvements in trade procedures, and targeted support for health and important economic sectors. He said these steps may reduce costs and support exports, but their impact on investment and job creation remains uncertain.

However, he warned that Pakistan's economic problems will likely continue due to fast population growth, low spending on education and health, limited job opportunities, and rising poverty levels.

## Waiting for customers

ISLAMABAD: Vendors are selling vegetables in a Sunday weekly bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

# Ukraine-Russia War and Middle East Crisis Reshape Global Economy

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: SAARC chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said Ukraine-Russia war and Middle East crisis in the wake of US-Israel war on Iran has changed the global economic order which is undergoing a structural reset with new strategic plans.

In a statement here today he said the convergence of the Ukraine-Russia war and the Middle East conflict marks the end of the old global energy order. A new system is emerging in which energy security outweighs economic efficiency, geopolitics shapes trade flows, and costs remain structurally higher. He said it is a prolonged and irreversible global economic reset. He said the Ukraine-Russia war first disrupted the global energy order, and the escalating Middle East conflict has now deepened that rupture. Energy markets have become strategic weapons, supply chains are being reshaped, and global trade is increasingly dictated by geopolitics rather than economics.

He said Europe swapped cheap energy for costly security and energy is now no



longer a commodity but emerging as a strategic weapon and globalisation giving way to fragmentation.

He said countries across Asia – including China, India, Japan and South Korea – are scrambling to secure alternative supplies. Europe faces renewed competition for

LNG cargoes, while the United States has strengthened its position as the world's key energy supplier, left behind Saudi Arabia in crude oil exports. Energy flows are now being reorganised along political and strategic lines rather than pure market efficiency.

# Power Loom Association Rejects Budget 2026-27 as "Elite-Focused"

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: An important Meeting of All Pakistan Power Looms Association Multan Zone was held under the chairmanship of Abdul Khal-iq Qandeel Ansari Talking To The Media. He Said To The budget 2026-27 completely rejected in the meeting and this budget was declared as the budget of the elite and the speakers said that nowhere in the entire budget has the policy of reducing the prices of petrol, electricity, gas and

daily necessities been announced and the solarization policy has not been announced, especially the power loom industry, which is the basis of the textile industry, has not been mentioned anywhere. Addressing the meeting Central President Khal-iq Qandeel Ansari said that without the export of value-added textiles the country cannot develop nor can employment increase. At present, special concessions have been given in electricity bills for value-added textiles in all the countries of the

region, but the Ganges is flowing in reverse in Pakistan. The meeting was attended by the central officials Haji Bashir Ahmed Pehlwan Ansari, Chairman. Haji Irshad Ahmed Qadri, Vice Chairman. Haji Saeed Ahmed Saeedi General Secretary. Sanaullah Ansari Vice President. Haji Mubarak Ansari Vice President. Bashir Ahmed Ansari Vice President. Abdul Wahid Rewari Wale Vice President. Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor Ansari Deputy Secretary. Haji Mushtaq Ahmed Ansari Additional Secretary.



Muhammad Yunus Ansari Chairman of the Executive Council, Ashraf Goga Ansari Information Secretary,

Muhammad Haroon Muhammad Usman Bilal Jatt Imran Naeem Faizan Ali and others participated.

# PFC stresses need focusing on building capacity



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Sitara-I-Imtiaz) on Sunday stressed the urgent need for focusing on building capabilities in sectors that significantly raise productivity, exports, and employment.

Chairing here today board of directors meeting he said these include manufacturing, agri-processing, minerals processing, construction, healthcare, artificial intelligence, data sciences, cybersecurity, enterprise technology, digital financial services, telemedicine, and furniture. He said the skilled manpower export sector should be considered a strategic industry in its own right. Internationally certified workers in construction, engineering, healthcare, industrial maintenance, furniture and technical trades can command substantially higher incomes while strengthening remit-

tance inflows. A highly skilled worker is not merely an employee but an export.

He said human capital creates different forms of capital which drives productivity, innovation, investment, competitiveness, and long-term prosperity. Countries do not become wealthy because of geography or natural resources alone, he added. He said any economy needs a base of skilled workers, capable managers, engineers, technicians, researchers, specialists, and innovators to compete within the region and across the globe.

Mian Kashif Ashfaq said equally important is the inclusion of women which constitute half of the total population represents one of its largest untapped economic resources. Countries such as Bangladesh and Malaysia significantly expanded their productive capacity by documenting and increasing women's participation in the workforce, while we have a substantial number of women in our agri fields whose work remains undocumented and unbanked, he concluded.

# HBL Credit Card Lounge Service Suspended at Islamabad Airport



**PPA**

ISLAMABAD: The lounge service for HBL Visa credit cards at Islamabad International Airport has been suspended, leaving cardholders facing inconvenience and embarrassment.

According to staff at the airport lounge, HBL had not paid the lounge operator for a long time, which led to the suspension of the facility for HBL Visa credit cardholders.

The service has been closed for the past two months.

Cardholders said they were suffering humiliation at the last moment as no prior notice had been issued about the suspension.

Affected customers expressed disappointment and surprise that the country's largest bank appeared unconcerned about its reputation, as the issue has persisted for two months without resolution.

# Soybean: Pakistan's Key to Cutting Edible Oil Imports

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food Shahid Imran Sunday said soybeans holds strong potential to reduce Pakistan's edible oil import bill significantly.

Speaking here today at a seminar on "Soybean-A crop of Promise and Constraints" he In addition, Pakistan's poultry sector — the second-largest after textiles — depends heavily on soybean meal as a high-protein source in

feed. He said soybean meal is also widely used in fish and dairy feed. Reflecting this dependence, in FY25, Pakistan imported soybean oil worth \$344 million, along with more than 2m tonnes of raw soybeans primarily for poultry feed.

He said yet despite this apparent potential, the success of soybean cultivation in Pakistan depends not only on agronomic suitability but also on several structural and market-related factors that require careful evaluation, as they ultimately determine its long-term viability.

## Industry-Academia Link Vital for Economic Growth, Says Tax Ombudsman Aide



**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman on Sunday said strengthening the linkage between industry and academia is essential for sustainable economic growth, innovation, and employment generation.

Speaking here today a delegation of elite club headed by Group Captain (Retd) Muhammad Iqbal Jatt from Shorkot district Jhang he said a strong industry-academia connection will not only improve employability and productivity but also foster innovation, competitiveness, and investment. By working together, academia, industry, and government can build a skilled workforce capable of meeting future economic demands and positioning the country for long-term prosperity and global competitiveness, he added.

He said Industrialists should actively contribute to shaping educational outcomes by sharing market insights, identifying future skill requirements, and participating in curriculum development.

At the same time, universities must transform themselves into centres of applied research, innovation, commercialization, and entrepreneurship. Research conducted within academic institutions should focus on solving real-world industrial challenges and creating products, services, and technologies that contribute to economic development, he added.

# 2nd Sohail University National Tennis Championship Concluded

KARACHI: The 2nd Sohail University National Tennis Championship concluded last night at Modern Club Karachi.

The Sohail University a prominent educational institution was the sponsor of this week long championship, Karachi Tennis Association organized this prestigious championship under the auspices of Pakistan Tennis Federation and Sindh Tennis Association 240 entries were received in various categories, Rs.15,40,000 were distributed (in kind) to the winners and Runners up of various national Juniors events.

All out station participants were entitled to economy class railway fare both way.

Prof. Dr. Mohammad Saeed Quraishi (TI), Vice Chancellor Sohail University was the Chief Guest at the Closing ceremony and, Air Commodore (R) Dr. Shahid Baqar, Pro Vice Chancellor and Dr. Sabeeh Jaffere, Registrar, Muhammad Talha and Muhammad Aslam Khan were Guest of Honor.

Other dignitaries who graced the closing ceremony were, AVM Razi Nawab, Aqeel Khan, Ghulam Muhammad, Zafar Hasan,

Muhammad Zia, Aamir Zeeshan, Rafi Dervari, Muhammad Nadeem Bachani, Jamil Khan, Muhammad Asif, Ibad Ali, Erum Bukhari, Perween Akhter, Afshan Shahid, Farha Riaz, Salman Karim Mughal, Zainul abedeen, Sarwar Hussain, Sobia Khan, Mahmood Khan, Urooj Shabbir, Zulfiqar Hussain and many more.

## Final Results:

Juniors under 18 Singles Final

Muhammad Yahya Islamabad beat Rashid Bachani SNGPL 6-1,6-4

Girls under 18 Singles Final

Eschelle Asif beat Rania Bus 6-2,6-4

Mens Singles Final

Raahim Veqar beat Haziq Areejo (Baseline Tennis Academy) 8-6

Ladies Singles Final

Eraj Batool beat Eschelle Asif 6-4 rd

Boys under 14 Singles Final

Rashid Bachani SNGPL beat Muhammad Muaz Shabbaz Lahore, 7-6,6-7,6-3

Girls under 14 Singles Final

Eman Syaybaz Lahore beat Dua Yousuf 4-2,4-2

Boys under 12 Singles Final

Aayan Shahbaz beat Majid Bachani 5-4,4-2



Girls under 12 Singles  
Eman Shahbaz beat Dua Yousuf 4-0,4-1

In other categories following were winners and Runners up

Under 8 singles Ibrahim Zaman, winner, Zayan Nomi Runners up

U 18 Doubles M. Yahya + Rashid Bachani, winners, Ruhab Faisal, + Muhammad Muaz Runners up

Mens Doubles, Mahatir + Ruhab, winners, Farzan, Raahim Veqar Runners up

45 plus Doubles

Rafi Derbari + Muhammad Abdul Saeed, winners

Javed Iqbal + Sher Ahmed Runners Up

Under 14 Doubles, Ayyan + Muaz winners, Meer Bhagat + Arham Shahzad Runners up.

55 plus Doubles  
M. Ilrifat + Javed Iqbal Winners, Razi Nawab + M. A. Saeed Runners Up

Under 10 Singles, Eman winner, Rao Abdul Rehman Runners Up.

Under 6 Singles Zydan Zaman beat Rao Hasan.

## Budget 2026-27 not good or bad, but a planning instrument: Dr Suleri

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Budget 2026-27 is viewed as a planning instrument focused on fiscal discipline, providing relief to documented sectors like IT and salaried individuals, while acknowledging a lack of strategy for the undocumented economy and potential implementation challenges for agricultural income tax.

Relief measures are counterbalanced by petroleum levies and sales taxes. While provincial cooperation is noted, reduced provincial development spending could impact education and health. Transparency in FBR reforms and citizen data privacy are stressed.

The budget prioritizes fiscal stabilization over structural transformation and export-led growth, with the 4% GDP growth target deemed achievable mainly through real estate, offering limited employment. The inflation target of 8.2% is underestimated, likely remaining 11-13% due to high petroleum prices, levies, and energy costs, with interest rates potentially staying around 12-13%.

The Rs15.264 trillion tax revenue goal is feasible, but gains from retailers' tax are uncertain. Suggestions include raising the income tax exemption threshold, supporting construction, reducing the highest income tax slab, eliminating filer/non-filer distinctions, and lessening reliance on inflationary petroleum levies.

The budget is characterized as a stabilization effort influenced by the IMF, focusing on tax compliance and revenue administration. Welcoming the faceless tax system, transparency and financial inclusion are emphasized.



Strengthening climate resilience in agriculture and integrating social protection with disaster management, including enhanced early warning systems and climate-responsive cash transfers via BISP, are crucial.

Poverty is complex due to climate risks, and adaptive social protection models linked to employment and women's economic empowerment are needed, alongside measures to increase female labor force participation.

The budget prioritizes electricity generation over demand-side management and energy efficiency, with limited green subsidies

and significant energy support dedicated to circular debt. Incentives for EVs are noted, but a national framework for green budgeting is required.

The primary budget objective is macroeconomic stability, not rapid growth, necessitating medium-term fiscal planning, stronger internal audit systems, and improved public sector governance. Climate-tagged allocations have sharply reduced despite climate change being a major economic threat, with limited reinvestment of climate-related revenues into climate action.

## SPRIL, KIET Hold Seminar on "Beyond Books"

News Desk

KARACHI: Professor Dr. Khalid Khan stated that AI is sparking a new intellectual and creative revolution, with significant advancements in the last decade. Speaking at a seminar by SPRIL and KIET North Campus, he emphasized the evolving nature of knowledge sources, urging writers to integrate AI and digital platforms for future needs and to transmit intellectual capital to younger generations via social media and AI.

PTV's Amjad Hussain Shah affirmed the enduring importance of books while advocating for the conversion of digital content into book form for future benefit. Rabiya Ali Faridi reiterated SPRIL's commitment, praising KIET North Campus's efforts in promoting library sciences and reading culture. Jawahar Aleem highlighted Library and Information Science's crucial role in knowledge access and promoting research. Other speakers also underscored the significance of reading, research, and modern media. The event concluded with the presentation of shields and a vote of thanks.

## Women University Multan Launches Two-Day International Conference on Violence and Mental Health

Asim Tanveer /Kiran Asim

MULTAN: The Women University Multan has launched a two-day international conference on "Violence and Mental Health: Prevention, Intervention, and Community Action." The event gathers psychologists, researchers, educators, policy-makers, and students globally to address the complex link between violence and mental well-being. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Syeda Shahida Batool highlighted violence as a societal challenge impacting mental health and social stability, while Chief Organizer Dr. Sadia Musharraf emphasized the multi-dimensional nature of violence and its generational psychological effects. The conference aims to foster timely intervention, effective policymaking, and community action. A research project on prevent-

ing intimate partner violence and promoting mental health was also presented. Dr. Batool announced the establishment of a new Center for Mental Health, Community Wellbeing, and Disease at the university, which will offer comprehensive services and research. International experts like Professor Dr. Sherry A. Bauman (University of Arizona) and Professor Dr. Rubina Hanif (National Institute of Psychology) shared insights on violence's mental health impacts and trauma rehabilitation strategies. A panel discussion focused on the roles of mental health, social justice, and gender equality in violence prevention, discussing policy reforms and sustainable development. The conference seeks to create a joint action plan for violence prevention and mental health promotion through international collaboration.

## Teachers-Oriented Curriculum: Waiting for Change with AI Integration

Continued from Page 4

Parents and communities must also be involved in this transition. Many parents remain skeptical about excessive technology use in education. Awareness campaigns can help families understand how AI can improve learning outcomes when used responsibly.

Government policy will determine the success of AI integration in education. National curriculum bodies must revise teacher education frameworks to include technological competencies. Investment in digital infrastructure, affordable internet access, and teacher training programs should be

prioritized.

At the same time, AI integration should not overshadow foundational educational values. Critical thinking, moral education, communication skills, and emotional intelligence remain essential. Technology should enhance education, not replace human connection.

Countries that successfully prepare teachers for technological change will build stronger education systems and more competitive economies. Pakistan has a young population with enormous potential. Equipping teachers with modern skills can help unlock that potential and prepare students

for future careers.

In conclusion, the future of education depends not only on student-centered reforms but also on teacher readiness. A teachers-oriented curriculum with AI integration is no longer optional – it is necessary. Pakistan must act proactively to train educators, modernize curricula, and create equitable technological access. Teachers remain the backbone of education, and empowering them in the age of AI will determine the success of future generations.

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## Why Is the Fourth Pillar of the State Ignored in the Budget? An Analytical Review

Continued from Page 4

International Monetary Fund (imf.org) emphasize that transparent financial systems and accurate data are essential for fairness and efficiency in any sector. The Food and Agriculture Organization (fao.org) also supports the principle that information transparency is crucial not only for economic stability but also for institutional sustainability. These principles apply equally to the media industry.

The media industry, especially newspapers and print journalism, is heavily dependent on imported newsprint, printing materials, fuel, and electricity. When government financial facilitation, such as tax exemptions, subsidies, or reduced import duties is withdrawn

or limited, the overall cost burden on media houses increases significantly. According to global economic principles, when institutions face rising production costs, they often pass these costs on to consumers or advertisers. Institutions such as the World Bank (worldbank.org) and IMF (imf.org) also note that cost shocks in production can spread across sectors and contribute to overall inflation.

In conclusion, while the media is formally recognized as the fourth pillar of the state, it does not receive the structural protection necessary in practice for a strong democratic society. The unfair distribution of government advertising, the marginalization of regional newspapers, and the financial vulnerability

of working journalists all highlight the urgent need for reform. If the federal government truly considers journalism the fourth pillar of the state and wishes to strengthen it, it must first establish a comprehensive database that includes accurate circulation figures, institutional structures, and journalist records. Alongside this, transparent and fair distribution of advertisements, quotas for regional media, and financial and social security systems for working journalists are essential. Otherwise, the "fourth pillar of the state" will remain merely a symbolic concept, benefiting only a few institutional centers, while the real foundation of journalism, the journalists themselves continues to face economic insecurity.

## Field Marshal: A Realistic Choice for the Nobel Prize

Continued from Page 4

In light of these truly remarkable and undeniable peace-building efforts that have effectively neutralized a catastrophic regional war scenario, prominent media voices and international observers are increasingly calling for the Field Marshal to receive the highest global accolades.

Based on the sheer scale of the conflict averted and the immense economic stability preserved for the entire world, the Field Marshal has emerged as a premier nominee for the

Nobel Peace Prize, a recognition that many experts agree he thoroughly deserves.

His tireless shuttle diplomacy has successfully safeguarded millions of innocent lives across the Middle East and secured vital international energy corridors from total disruption. Consequently, international analysts emphasize that the Government of Pakistan should waste no time in formally and officially submitting his nomination to the Norwegian Nobel Committee.

Sending his name forward on an official state level would not

only rightfully honor a momentous act of global statesmanship but would also permanently cement Pakistan's international reputation as a proactive, indispensable champion of global harmony and peaceful coexistence.

To fully argue the case for the Nobel Peace Prize, one must consider the criteria used by the Norwegian Nobel Committee in previous years. The prize has historically been awarded to individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the resolution of interna-

tional conflicts, the reduction of standing armies, or the promotion of peace congresses.

Field Marshal Asim Munir's efforts fit squarely within this tradition, as his mediation has directly prevented a war that could have involved the United States, Iran, Israel, and various Gulf states, with catastrophic humanitarian and economic consequences.

The conflict averted would have likely caused hundreds of thousands of casualties, displaced millions of people, and triggered a global energy crisis that would

have affected every nation on earth.

By stepping in at the eleventh hour and securing a negotiated settlement, the Field Marshal has arguably saved more lives and prevented more suffering than many past Nobel Peace Prize laureates.

Moreover, the personal courage involved in traveling to Tehran during a period of heightened tension should not be underestimated, as the Field Marshal placed himself directly in harm's way to pursue peace.

The nomination process

requires a government to submit a name, along with supporting documentation, to the Nobel Committee by a specific deadline each year. By acting quickly and decisively, the Government of Pakistan can ensure that the Field Marshal's name is considered at the earliest possible opportunity.

Even if the prize is not awarded immediately, the mere act of nomination would draw global attention to Pakistan's peace-building role and would further enhance the Field Marshal's standing as a statesman of international stature.

## Addresses

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Awam Party Shahid Khaqan Abbasi addressing during a Awaam Pakistan budget seminar, at National Press Club, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Abbasi Slams Budget 2026-27: 'Ineffective,' Lacks Fundamental Reforms

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister Shahid Khaqan Abbasi criticized Pakistan's Federal Budget 2026-27, deeming it ineffective in addressing the nation's deep-seated problems. Speaking at an opposition seminar in Islamabad, he emphasized that Pakistan's progress hinges on fundamental reforms, the rule of law, political stability, and transparent elections. Abbasi highlighted the escalating poverty, unemployment, inflation, and debt burden, stating that the current governance system hinders economic advancement.

The seminar, organized by the Awaam Pakistan Party, brought together various political leaders, economists, and civil society members. Participants echoed concerns about the budget's inadequacy and its failure to provide relief to the common citizens.

Miftah Ismail, Secretary General

of Awaam Pakistan, pointed out the lack of strategies to combat inflation and unemployment, and criticized the increased tax burden on the public.

Other speakers, including Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Asad Qaiser, Dr. Zafar Mirza, Salman Akram Raja, Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar, Muzammil Aslam, Taimur Khan Jhagra, Muhammad Zubair, Ajmal Baloch, and Muhammad Ahsan Malik, underscored the pressing need for economic development, improved public services, judicial independence, and tax reforms.

They collectively argued that without a commitment to genuine reforms and good governance, Pakistan will continue to struggle with its economic and social challenges, while the middle and lower classes disproportionately bear the brunt of economic hardship. The seminar concluded with discussions on these critical issues.

## Ministers pay utility bills themselves: Azam Nazeer



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Sunday said that federal ministers pay their own utility bills and that the government is not bearing any such expenses.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly, he clarified that ministers personally pay electricity, gas, and other household utility bills, rejecting the impression that such costs are covered by the government.

He further said that the fuel

allocation for ministers has been reduced as part of austerity measures. "Ministers were earlier entitled to 400 litres of petrol, which has now been reduced to 200 litres," he said.

Tarar added that apart from the revised 200-litre fuel limit, ministers are not availing any additional benefits.

He said that if members of the assembly wish to raise concerns regarding fuel allowances, the matter can be discussed further in the relevant forum.

## India-Israel nexus can exploit situation in AJK, says Bilawal Bhutto

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Expressing concern over the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto said on Sunday that the situation could provide India and Israel an opportunity to unleash propaganda against Pakistan.

He appealed to the protesters in AJK to disperse peacefully and turn themselves into the police in case they had taken law into their own hands.

PPP chairman stressed the need for finding a solution to all issues in a democratic way



and through dialogue. "It is the parliament, not streets, which is the right forum for the resolution of issues," he opined.

Bilawal said that the PPP

had already demanded the withdrawal of schedule for elections in AJK, adding it was issued prematurely.

He said that the PPP would try to form "Truth and Recon-

ciliation Commission' to bring about rapprochement between political parties.

Again turning to the situation in AJK, he said that there could be no compromise on the rule of law.

Earlier, speaking to PPP Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) President Amjad Advocate over telephone, Bilawal Bhutto said that it was only the PPP which would form government in GB.

Congratulating him on the party's victory in the general elections, Bilawal asked him to make an effort to form a government based on reconciliation and consensus in

which other political parties and independents too had representation.

The PPP chairman also directed Amjad to contact all winning candidates so that a government could be formed after consultations.

PPP led the race after its candidates won the elections in 10 constituencies followed by the PML-N which managed to grab six seats, while independent candidates, including two PTI-backed ones, emerged victorious in seven constituencies.

Majlis Wahdat-i-Muslimeen was able to win just one seat, the results showed.

## Punjab police finalise Muharram security plan across province

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Police have finalised a comprehensive security plan to ensure the peaceful observance of Muharram-ul-Haram across the province.

According to Inspector-General of Punjab Police Rao Abdul Karim, more than 124,000 police officers and personnel will be deployed to secure over 47,000 religious gatherings (majalis) and processions during the first 10 days of Muharram.

Continuous monitoring will be carried out through Safe City cameras, while special security



arrangements will be put in place at sensitive locations.

Individuals listed under the Fourth Schedule will also be closely monitored.

The IG Punjab said a ban on pillion riding will be enforced on the 9th and 10th of Muharram, while control rooms in all districts will remain operational 24 hours a day.

He urged religious scholars and community leaders to help ensure peace and harmony during Muharram, adding that any attempt to disturb public order would be foiled through inter-sectarian cooperation and coordinated efforts.

## Pakistan People's Party Seeks Poll Pause in AJK Over Transparency Fears

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan People's Party (PPP) has requested the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission to cancel the schedule for elections on reserved seats, citing concerns about fair and transparent elections in the current climate.

PPP AJK President Chaudhry Yasin emphasized that human lives are more important than the 12 reserved seats and expressed opposition to any agitation or clashes between security forces and the public.

He noted that 37 out of 38 demands from a banned committee have been met and suggested constitutional and legal avenues for resolving issues



regarding refugee seats.

Yasin criticized the timing of the

election schedule, issued just before a protest was called, and highlighted that the PPP had requested a week for negotiations.

He warned that external adversaries, potentially India, could exploit the situation to harm the Kashmir cause.

The PPP believes that dialogue and political harmony are crucial for resolving issues like food and water shortages in AJK.

Sardar Yaqoob Khan, another PPP leader, echoed these sentiments, stating that elections are secondary to saving lives and urging a withdrawal of the election schedule to facilitate talks and reconciliation, prioritizing the protection of the state and avoiding further tension.

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## Saad Rafique hits out at PPP for blaming PML-N on GB govt issue

Bureau Report

LAHORE: PML-N leader Khawaja Saad Rafique criticized the PPP for blaming PML-N regarding the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) government formation. Rafique stated that PML-N leadership contacted PPP leadership, including President Asif Ali Zardari, within 72 hours of the GB elections to offer cooperation and acknowledge PPP as the single largest party.

He cited election results showing PPP winning ten seats and PML-N winning six, with two independents supported by PML-N. Rafique clarified that PML-N's intention was to

prevent horse-trading and political bargaining in GB, thus refuting any justification for PPP's accusations and contemptuous attitude.

He also held the Election Commission responsible for the by-election conduct on June 15, noting that one PML-N seat result is challenged.

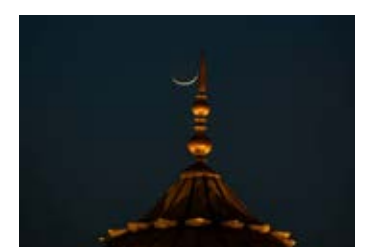
He further pointed out that those who used tactics for Karachi's local government and broke promises to MQM, guaranteed by PML-N, cannot criticize PML-N for forming a government in Lahore. Rafique emphasized that while PML-N respects PPP leadership, this respect must be mutual in political relations.

## Ruet-e-Hilal Committee to meet today for Muharram moon sighting

ISLAMABAD: The Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee will convene on Monday (June 15) to sight the Muharram-ul-Haram 1448 AH moon and determine the beginning of the new Islamic year.

Central Ruet-e-Hilal Committee Chairman Maulana Abdul Khabir Azad will chair the meeting at Iqbal Hall, Badshahi Mosque in Lahore, according to an official announcement.

The Islamabad Zonal Committee meeting will begin after Maghrib prayers in the Kohsar Block.



The decision regarding the sighting of the Muharram-ul-Haram 1448 Hijri moon will be made in light of testimonies received from across the country.