



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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(بخاری ص 6770)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Pakistan urges immediate action on Gaza crisis at UN Security Council

Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the United Nations Asim Iftikhar Ahmed has said that Gaza continues to face a severe humanitarian crisis, with civilians enduring extreme hardships, and urged the Security Council to take immediate action.



Raja Amjad Ali Khan Announces Separation from Joint Awami Action Committee

Expresses Disassociation from Every Voice Against Pakistan Advocate Raja Amjad Ali Khan, who was active as a leader and member of the Joint Awami Action Committee, announced complete disassociation from the organization and all mischievous elements in an important video message while placing a few facts before the nation.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Signing ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Economic Affairs, Muhammad Humair Karim, and Asian Development Bank (ADB) Deputy Country Director, Hussain Haider, sign the USD 700 million Policy-Based Loan for the Insurance Transformation Program on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists strike passenger van in Bannu

Correspondent

BANNU: Seven civilians were martyred and several others injured in twin IED blasts targeting a passenger vehicle in Domel tehsil, security sources confirmed.



According to security officials, the attack occurred in the Panga Musa Khel area of Domel when an improvised explosive device planted by Indian-sponsored Fitna al-Khawarij militants struck a passenger van.

In a second cowardly act, the terrorists also targeted a vehicle carrying the bodies and wounded to Domel Hospital, causing additional casualties, sources said. The dead and injured were shifted to Domel Hospital for treatment.

An investigation into the incident is underway, officials added. Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to track down the perpetrators. The attack is being seen as another attempt by Fitna al-Khawarij to target innocent civilians and soft targets. By striking ordinary citizens and rescue workers, the group has once again proved it is an enemy of humanity, officials stated.

Aurangzeb defends GDP figures, calls for national consensus to sustain economic recovery

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday defended Pakistan's economic data and GDP calculations, rejecting allegations of discrepancies and asserting that all national accounts are prepared according to internationally recognised standards under the United Nations System of National Accounts (SNA 2008). Winding up the debate on the Federal Budget 2026-27 in the National Assembly, he described the budget as balanced, growth-oriented and focused on

economic stability.

The minister said Pakistan's economy was estimated at around \$452 billion in FY2025-26, with GDP growth reaching 3.7 per cent. He highlighted improvements in key economic indicators, including 6.5 per cent growth in Large-Scale Manufacturing, an 11th consecutive monthly current account surplus, record monthly remittances of \$4.25 billion, and projected annual remittances exceeding \$41 billion. He added that IT exports were expected to surpass \$4.5 billion, while freelancers contributed \$1.6 billion in foreign exchange earnings.



Aurangzeb said the government's reforms aimed to broaden the tax base, modernise tax administration through digital systems and artificial intelligence, and provide relief to

salaried individuals, businesses, exporters and the construction sector. He noted that tax reforms had generated \$14 billion in additional revenue over the past two years.

The minister also highlighted support for agriculture through the Rs300 billion Zarkhez programme, affordable housing initiatives, higher salaries, pensions and minimum wages, and tax relief on essential medicines. Stressing the importance of national unity, he urged all political stakeholders to support reforms to ensure sustainable economic recovery, long-term stability and prosperity.

Rana Sanaullah Rejects PM Office Change Rumors, Calls Them Baseless



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah on Saturday dismissed rumors of a change in the prime minister's office as "baseless and misleading." He said those spreading misinformation were trying to create instability through fabricated narratives. Sanaullah affirmed that PM Shehbaz Sharif is steering the country in the right direction and has enhanced Pakistan's global image and respect. He praised the premier's sincerity, hard work and commitment to tackling national challenges, which he said are widely appreciated. Responding to a question, he reiterated the government's openness to dialogue with the opposition, recalling that PML-N leaders faced cases even while in opposition but still believed in democratic process. On regional matters, he said lifting sanctions on Iran would benefit Pakistan's economy and trade. In Gilgit-Baltistan, he said PML-N would play a constructive opposition role while PPP, with the most seats, is consulting others to form a coalition.

Dialogue and Democratic Process Only Solution to AfJK Issues: Amir Muqam



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam Saturday said that the ongoing protests, sit-ins and disruption of normal life in Azad Jammu and Kashmir can only be resolved through dialogue and the democratic process.

Speaking on the situation in AfJK, he said the government had made it clear to the action committee that their demands relate to matters falling within the jurisdiction of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Parliament.

He urged stakeholders to participate in elections and seek a public mandate, adding that elected representatives have the authority to make decisions regarding the future of the people.

"The solution lies in elections and the will of the people. Dialogue remains the only way forward," the minister said.

Qureshi acquitted, 20 PTI leaders, activists awarded 10-year jail each in May 9 case

News Desk

LAHORE: An anti-terrorism court in Lahore has awarded 10-year prison sentence each to PTI leaders Dr Yasmin Rashid, Ijaz Chaudhry, Mian Mehmood Rashid, Umar Sarfraz Cheema and others, while acquitted former foreign minister and party's vice-chairman Shah Mehmood Qureshi in the May 9 violence case regarding torching police vehicles in Mughalpur area, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

Pronouncing the verdict inside Lahore Kot Lakhpat Jail on Saturday, ATC Admin Judge Manzar Ali Gill convicted 20 of the 22 accused.

PTI activists Shah Deen, Khawar Hussain, Ahmad Zahid and Hafiz Syedur Rahman were also awarded 10-year jail each.

The convicted PTI leaders had been charged with plotting to May 9 violence.

During proceedings, the prosecution brought forward 37 witnesses against the accused.

Two of the 22 accused had been declared proclaimed offenders.



Uzbek leadership appreciates Pakistan's efforts as a mediator for global peace



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, received a telephone call from Foreign Minister of Uzbekistan Bakhiyor Saidov who appreciated Pakistan's efforts as a mediator and acknowledged its significant contribution to advancing international peace efforts, as well as promoting regional peace and stability.

During the call, FM Saidov felicitated, on behalf of his President and himself, DPM/FM on the signing of the Islamabad Memorandum of Under-

standing and commended the leadership of Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, DPM/FM and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for the constructive role in facilitating the process, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

Both leaders expressed hope that the progress achieved would be carried forward in the next phase of engagement, contributing to lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region and beyond.

The two leaders agreed to maintain close contact on matters of mutual interest.

President, PM condemn Bannu IED attack

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, strongly condemned the IED explosion in Bannu and expressed deep sorrow over the loss of innocent civilian lives.

The president and the prime minister conveyed their heartfelt grief and extended condolences to the families of those martyred, while praying for the swift recovery of the injured.

The president reaffirmed solidarity with the bereaved families in this difficult time and noted that such incidents were deeply painful for the nation. President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

He issued a clear warning to internal and external handlers of terrorism who were providing safe havens, logistical support and finan-

cial assistance to terrorist networks.

President Zardari said that the terrorist elements sought to undermine Pakistan's diplomatic achievements and efforts to promote peace.

The prime minister prayed for the elevation of the ranks of those martyred in the incident and directed the relevant authorities to provide the best possible medical treatment to the injured and ordered an immediate investigation into the incident. PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

"Terrorism is a heinous conspiracy against humanity and against Pakistan's peace and stability. Such cowardly acts can never weaken the nation's resolve," he added.

The prime minister said the supreme sacrifices of their martyrs were a trust for the entire nation and their blood would never be allowed to go in vain.

Kashmir leaders unite against anti-Pakistan agendas, vow legal action for rebels

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Azad Kashmir Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said the people of Azad Kashmir and the army stand firmly with Pakistan and will not tolerate any anti-Pakistan agenda or rebellion against state institutions.

Addressing a joint press conference at the National Press Club, he urged Kashmiris to remain committed to the ideology of Pakistan. He noted that the people's rights movement initially focused on flour and electricity prices and had support from all parties, but later some elements turned it violent and used it to spread hatred against state institutions.

He said 90% of Kashmiris believe in Pakistan and strongly condemned Khawaja Mehran's statement inciting rebellion among AJK military personnel, calling for strict legal action against such remarks.

PML President and Leader of



Opposition Shah Ghulam Qadir said the movement's initial demands were valid and the government conceded many of them, but some circles shifted it toward bias against Pakistan. He pointed to billions in damage to public and private property and loss of lives, demanding accountability under the law.

PPP leader and AJK Minister for

Kashmir Cause Nabeela Ayub Khan said citizens have the right to raise public issues democratically. She added that Pakistan provides extraordinary facilities in flour, electricity, education and health to AJK, and attempts to mislead people have failed.

Colonel (Retd) Shiraz said elements are systematically turning Kashmiri youth against Pakistan and the army,

which remains the biggest protector of Kashmiris. Speakers stressed that AJK's problems must be solved constitutionally, legally and democratically through elections, and vowed indiscriminate action against hate-mongers while protecting citizens. They affirmed that peace, stability and democratic continuity in AJK will be maintained.

Hard Work

ISLAMABAD: A six year old blind girl Ayesha along with her mother selling prayer beads and other stuff to earn livelihoods at roadside in sector I-8 of Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Bilawal Bhutto Warns of New Kashmir Generation Rising for Rights If Old Governance Continues

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that if Azad Kashmir continues to be governed the same way from 1947 to 2027, a new generation there will rise to fight for its rights. He stressed the need to give Azad Kashmir a new charter and a new program, adding that solutions exist for all its problems. "How long will we run Azad Kashmir on the old formula?" he asked.

Bilawal said PPP would ensure the people of Azad Kashmir have the satisfaction that their decisions will be made by themselves, not by any federal minister or other province. He stated that no compromise was



possible on the representation and voting rights of refugees. To address

reservations that "Kashmir's fate will be decided by Kashmiris," he proposed that refugee seats be proportionally allocated and special seats be reserved for them in the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly, with full voting rights. He suggested temporarily representing Azad Kashmir lawmakers in the National Assembly to raise issues like subsidies, electricity, and a Mirpur airport.

He urged protesters to end agitation, saying eight cases were pending but action should target only those who committed crimes. He proposed a Truth and Reconciliation Forum to address demands without risking lives, and called for political struggle over force.

Hurriyat Leaders Call on UN and OIC to Act on Kashmiri Prisoners' Rights Crisis

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

ISLAMABAD: Senior leaders of All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir branch have urged the United Nations, Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and international human rights organizations to take immediate notice of the alarming condition of the leaders and activists imprisoned in the jails of Kashmir and play an effective role in their release.

Senior leaders of All-Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir branch Mahmood Ahmad Saghar, Zahid Safi and Adil Mushtaq Wani said



in a joint statement from Islamabad Kashmiri political prisoners are being deprived of basic human rights. They are also denied access to proper treat-

ment doctors, quality food and legal aid, which is a flagrant violation of universal human rights principles.

They said that due to non-availability

of medical facilities during the summer season, many Kashmiri prisoners are suffering from various diseases, while the health of the political prisoners is improving. Hurriyat leaders said India has continued to treat Kashmiri prisoners inhumanely and their lives are in grave danger.

Hurriyat leaders urge UN, OIC and international human rights organizations to assess the plight of the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and the condition of Kashmiri prisoners Go to the occupied areas and increase pressure on India to release the Kashmiri prisoners.

Governor Kundi says sectarianism serves enemies of Islam, Pakistan

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday said that those spreading sectarianism were enemies of Islam, Pakistan and the Muslim Ummah, stressing that unity among Muslims was the need of the hour and urging religious scholars and spiritual leaders to play their role in promoting harmony.

Addressing the "Martyrdom of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) and Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) Conference" as chief guest at the Governor House, he said the teachings of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) and Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) remained a beacon of guidance and success for the Muslim Ummah.

Around 80 Students Participate in Admission Test for Web Development and Data Analytics Training Program

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Ms Deeba Shehwar Registrar The Women University Multan Said Women University Multan Successfully Conducted the Pre-Admission Test for the Tier-2 Web Development & Data Analytics Training Program, organized in collaboration with KOICA, Kaarvan Crafts Foundation, and UN Women.

Held in the CS&IT Labs at the Katchery Campus, the test witnessed the participation of around 80 students from various academic departments. The provisional list of candidates and admission questionnaires were generated through a computerized system, ensuring efficiency and transparency.

The test was conducted under the supervision of the Registrar Office, while Mr. Atif Raza, IT Coordinator, oversaw the system operations and technical arrangements. Dr. Khadija Kanwal, Chairperson CS&IT, is serving as the project focal person.

The selected participants will undergo a four-week training program in Web Development and Data Analytics at the Multi-Purpose Center (MPC), Katchery Campus, aimed at strengthening their technical skills and enhancing their career prospects in the digital economy.

Entry of 67 Religious Scholars and Zakireen Banned in Attock District for 90 Days

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, has imposed a 90-day ban on the entry, stay, public speaking, and participation in any gathering by 67 religious scholars and Zakireen (religious speakers) within Attock district in order to maintain law and order and promote sectarian harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram 1448 AH.

According to the official order, the decision has been taken in light of the recommendations of the District Police Officer (DPO) Attock, reports received from the Special Branch, and recommendations presented during the meeting of the District Intelligence and Coordination Committee (DICC).

Under the order, the individuals concerned will not be permitted to enter the territorial limits of Attock district for a period of 90 days commencing from 1st Muharram 1448 AH. They will also be prohibited from addressing or participating in any religious, political, or public gathering during this period.

The list of individuals subject to the restrictions includes Shabbir Ahmad Usmani, Maulana Abdul Qadeer, Maulana Muhammad Tayyab, Maulana Sajid-ur-Rehman, Maulana Abdul Shakoor, Maulana Abdul Majeed Hazrovi, Maulana Khizar Hayat Bhakrovi, Maulana Abu Bakr Chishti, Maulana Muhammad Hanif Qureshi, Allama Aziz-ud-Din Kokab, Maulana Ghufra Sialvi, Molvi Muhi-ud-Din Kazmi, Muhammad Fayyaz, Qari Asad Irfan, Zakir Sajid Ali, Maulana Majeed-ur-Rehman Ludhianvi, Qari Umar Farooq, Ejaz Ahmad Dar, Shakeel Dar, Zaheer Ahmad Muawiya, Babar Hussain Shah, Syed Asghar Ali Bukhari, Hafiz Gulzar Ahmad, Qari Akhtar Hussain, Maulana Ahmad Ludhianvi, Maulana Mufti Umar Haidari, Maulana Manzoor Ahmad Jhangvi, Maulana Muawiya Azam Tariq, Masroor Nawaz, Maulana Shahadat Ali Tahir Jhangvi, Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Jhangvi, Zakir Syed Zargham Abbas, Maulana Ishaq Turabi, Maulana Ibrahim Shah alias Ali Muawiya Shah, Zakir Muhammad Hasnain Shah, Maulana Muhammad Ilyas Ghuman, Maulana Muhammad Tayyab, Maulana Shahid Masood, Maulana Atallah Bandialvi, Maulana Yousaf Rizvi, Zakir Syed Zaigham Abbas, Zakir Syed Abid Hussain Shah, Maulana Manzoor Hussain Naqvi, Zakir Nazar Hussain, Professor Abid Hussain Abidi, Maulana Islam-ud-Din Usmani, Syed Sajjad Haider, Maulana Muhammad Rafiq Jami, Syed Murtaza Rizvi, Maulana Jafar Jatoi, Zakir Muhammad Nawaz, Zakir Zaigham Abbas, Ali Hussain Qummi, Malik Ejaz Hussain, Maulana Ismatullah Khan Multani, Qari Kaleemullah Multani, Hafiz Muhammad Hussain Chinioti, Zakir Ata Hussain Rangar, Allama Syed Nasir Abbas, Maulana Abdul Aziz, Mufti Saeed Ahmad Usmani, Hafiz Ata-ur-Rehman, Aurangzeb Farooqi, Jameel Hussain Jafri, Maulana Zulfikar Haider Naqvi, Allama Shehenshah Naqvi, and Zakir Imran Kazmi.

Attock Bans 35 Clerics, Zakireen from Speeches for 90 Days Ahead of Muharram

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The District Administration of Attock has taken an important step to ensure peace and order, promote sectarian harmony, and safeguard public safety during Muharram-ul-Haram by imposing a 90-day ban on 35 religious scholars and Zakireen (religious speakers) from delivering speeches and sermons within the limits of Attock District.

According to an order issued by Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, the decision was taken in light of reports submitted by the District Police Officer (DPO) Attock, the Special Branch, and recommendations presented during a meeting of the Divisional Intelligence Coordination Committee (DICC). The reports highlighted concerns that speeches by certain individuals could potentially lead to sectarian tensions and disturb public order.

The individuals placed under the ban include Maulana Habibullah, Mufti Inamullah, Maulana Tariq, Shehzad Chishti, Rafiqat Haqqani, Zia Ahmad Noorani, Mudassar Shah, Qari Muhammad Anwar Shakir, Qari Muhammad Riaz, Hafiz Nusrat Khan, Qari Chan Muhammad, Maulana Ubaid-ur-Rehman, Maulana Mehdi Shah Zaman, Ehsan-ul-Haq Jami, Maulana Hussain Ahmad, Syed Amjad Hussain Shah, Jahan Khan, Maulana Ifkhar Ahmad Farooqi, Qari Muhammad Sharif, Mufti Nasir Ali, Qari Muhammad Hayat, Maulana Zakariya Kaleemullah, Qari Mushtaq, Qari Sakhawat Hussain, Waqar Hussain Karbalai, Professor Najam-ul-Hasan, Allama Sajid Ali Naqvi, Saqib, Mureed Imran, Maulana Nasiruddin, Ashfaq Shakir, Qari Ghulam Haider, Maulana Muhammad Asif, Maulana Abdul Rashid, and Amjad Hussain.

Exercising powers under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960, the Deputy Commissioner directed the aforementioned individuals not to deliver any speech, address, or engage in any activity within the district that may hurt the sentiments of any school of thought, promote hatred, or disturb public peace.

According to the order, the ban will come into effect from the 1st of Muharram and will remain in force for a period of 90 days.

The district administration has reiterated its commitment to maintaining peace, religious tolerance, and inter-sect harmony during Muharram-ul-Haram. It further stated that strict legal action will be taken against anyone found violating the law.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:14 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 5:10 pm
Maghrib 7:21 pm
Isha 9:05 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80

CECOS University ranks 2nd Among Private Universities in KP

News Desk

PESHAWAR: CECOS University proudly announces its achievement of securing 2nd position among private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, earning an impressive 91.48 points in the Higher Education Department (HED) KP Universities Ranking after GIKI Swabi.

This prestigious recognition reflects the university's unwavering commitment to academic excellence, innovation, quality education, and institutional development. The achievement is the result of the collective efforts and dedication of CECOS students, faculty, staff, alumni, and stakeholders.

The university leadership congratulated the entire CECOS family on this remarkable milestone, acknowledging their hard work, professionalism, and shared commitment to excellence.

This recognition reaffirms CECOS University's focus on quality education, continuous improvement, and institutional growth, further strengthening its position as one of the leading private universities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

As CECOS University celebrates this proud moment, it remains committed to further enhancing its academic standards, fostering innovation, and continuing its pursuit of excellence in teaching, research, and community engagement.

CM Punjab's governance model distinguished by 100 percent transparency, 100 percent quality

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that transparency and quality remain the defining features of her government's development agenda, highlighting that Rs80 billion has been saved through the e-tendering process under the Punjab Development Programme.

Chairing a video-link review meeting, the chief minister emphasized that public funds are a sacred trust and must be spent responsibly.

She directed authorities to complete all sewerage and drainage projects by June 30 and imposed a province-wide ban on leaving roads or excavation work incomplete.

She also ordered the early installation of protective nets on manholes and

approved involving traders and civil society in the manhole safety campaign.

Officials informed the meeting that geo-tagging of 838,555 manholes had been completed, with over 3,000 already fitted with safety nets.

For the first time, desilting of sewerage systems has been carried out in 41 cities, removing 550 tons of silt and sludge.

The meeting was told that work under the Rs204 billion Punjab Development Programme is progressing rapidly, with significant completion achieved in several districts. Authorities have also completed a 196-kilometre drainage system, cleaned 3,497 kilometres of sewer lines, built 110 underground water storage tanks, and installed 200,000 new manhole covers across Punjab.



Inflation

ISLAMABAD: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI), hold protest demonstration against soaring inflation and heavy taxes on petroleum products at Aabpara Chowk in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PANAH, Lawmakers Demand 40% Tax on Sweetened Beverages to Fight Diabetes Epidemic

Spokesman Report

MURREE, JUN 20: Pakistan faces a mounting NCD epidemic, with 41% of adults overweight/obese and over 35 million diabetics. Without urgent action, diabetes cases may hit 70 million by 2050, experts warn. PANAH held a post-budget session with parliamentarians in Murree to stress the NCD burden and seek support for evidence-based dietary policies. MNAs including Shazia Aslama Soomro, Shahida Rehmani, Ramesh Lal, Sadiq Ali Memon and others attended, along with PANAH General Secretary Sana Ullah Ghuman.

PANAH said ultra-processed foods high in sugar, salt and unhealthy fats drive obesity, diabetes and heart disease. It called fiscal measures like health taxes on unhealthy products proven, global interventions. While



welcoming GST on ultra-processed items in Finance Bill 2026-27, PANAH opposed taxes on healthier foods and urged science-based policy.

MNAs expressed concern over rising NCDs and pledged

support for preventive measures.

They signed a recommendation to the Finance Minister: levy 40% tax on sweetened beverages including packaged/fresh juices, 20% FED on

other ultra-processed products, increase cigarette tax to Rs. 30 per pack, and ban heated tobacco products. The measures aim to cut disease burden, lower healthcare costs, and fund public health.

Dr. Ehsan Bhutta Reviews Lahore Shrine Upgrades, Stresses Timely Completion

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has directed officers to strictly follow project timelines and expedite development works at shrines and religious heritage sites. He said providing better facilities for devotees and preserving Punjab's spiritual heritage remain top priorities of the Punjab Government under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. The CM is closely monitoring shrine projects, while Chief Secretary Zahid Akhtar Zaman is also overseeing pace and quality across the province.

During an evaluative visit to Lahore Auqaf sites, Dr. Bhutta reviewed ADP projects, focusing on Phase-II of the Hazrat Bibi Pakdamani (RA) shrine expansion. He noted the upgrade will improve crowd management, accessibility, security and visitor facilitation for the large daily influx of devotees.

He also inspected works at shrines of Hazrat Shah Kamal Ichra (RA), Hazrat Mian Wadda (RA), Hazrat Abu al-Mualli (RA), Hazrat Hassan Shah Wali (RA) and conservation at Hazrat Shah Chiragh (RA). At Shah Kamal Auqaf colony, he ordered fresh grass and track upgrades for residents. Children thanked Auqaf for renovating the park.

Dr. Bhutta stressed these shrines are centers of faith, tolerance and harmony, and ordered contractors to maintain quality, transparency and timely completion.

Toba Tek Singh Seminar Champions Family Planning for Health and Prosperity

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the Punjab Government's flagship initiative "Behaar Qadam, Nai Soch Kay Sath", a dignified awareness seminar was held at DHQ Hospital Toba Tek Singh by the Punjab Family Planning Programme to promote reproductive health, maternal and child health, family well-being, and household prosperity. Organized with RAYN and RIZ Consulting, the event brought together religious scholars, health officials, medical experts, administrative representatives, and

citizens. Punjab Family Planning Programme Divisional Coordinator Anwaar Ahmed attended as special guest. He said the government is taking practical steps to provide accurate information on reproductive health and family planning while fostering a positive mindset in society. The programme offers a platform for dialogue among the public, experts, and religious leaders to dispel misconceptions and enable informed, responsible decisions. Health and administrative experts held sessions on population growth, family welfare, hygiene, maternal/child care, and economic stability. Speakers stressed that family planning supports maternal/child health, education, economic stability, and social development. Anwaar Ahmed added that with World Bank support, the programme is improving health indicators and family prosperity across Punjab. Participants appreciated the initiative and pledged support for building healthy, balanced, prosperous families.

Top Karachi Court Voids 800-Acre Land Grab, Upholds NAB's Recovery of Trillion-Rupee State Assets

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD, JUN 18: The Honorable Sindh High Court on June 18, 2026 dismissed petitions filed by illegal beneficiaries of land allotments, declared their allotments void ab initio, and upheld cancellations carried out on NAB's initiative.

In one of Karachi's biggest land scams, 800 acres of valuable urban state land worth trillions of rupees were grabbed in the early 1990s through fake "evacuee" claims and forged documents, with the connivance of dishonest officials. The land was quietly transferred to private hands and sold for huge profit, despite parts housing water installations that supply Karachi and other portions reserved for public parks.

Under the guidance of NAB Chairman Lt Gen (R) Nazir Ahmed Butt and Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir, NAB, in coordination with the Sindh Board of Revenue, cancelled the fake entries and restored the land to the state.

The illegal beneficiaries then filed multiple petitions in the Sindh High Court, claiming lack of hearing and bona fide purchaser status. The Court rejected all arguments, ruling that nothing built on an illegal foundation can stand. It declared NAB's action lawful and advised buyers cheated by sellers to seek remedy from them, not the State.

"These are Karachi's water lines and public parks — they belong to the people," a NAB spokesman said, warning that every inch of fraudulently taken state land will be traced and recovered.

RPO Faisalabad Visits Jhuggi Model High School (Dr Abdul Qadeer Campus)

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, visited Jhuggi Model High School (Dr Abdul Qadeer Khan Campus) in Faisalabad, where he was warmly received by Mubashar Hussain Chand, members of the school administration and teaching staff.

Speaking on the occasion, RPO said that quality education was the fundamental right of every child and that there should be no discrimination in ensuring access to this right.



He appreciated the efforts of the Mubashar Chand, school administration, teachers, staff and paid tribute to their commitment towards providing quality education. He also urged teachers and parents to pay special attention to the education and character-building of children.

Praising the students for their academic performance, discipline and eagerness to learn, the RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera encouraged them to work harder, remain consistent in their efforts and focus on their studies. He also expressed his best wishes for their bright future.

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UN leaders call for stronger support for refugees on World Refugee Day

The UN High Commissioner for Refugees, **Barham Salih**, has called on the international community to strengthen support for the nearly 42 million people worldwide who have fled their home countries to escape conflict, violence or persecution.

In a message marking World Refugee Day, the UNHCR chief highlighted the contributions refugees make to their host communities as workers, students, neighbours, artists, athletes, entrepreneurs and leaders.

“Given the opportunity, they rebuild their lives and help strengthen the societies around them,” he said.

UN Secretary-General **Antonio Guterres** also issued a message calling for boosting support for people forced to flee and the communities that have welcomed them.

“As divisions deepen across our world, new and protracted conflicts are compelling millions of women, children and men to seek safety far from home,” he said.

He stressed that “these turbulent times” call for renewed solidarity and robust action to protect refugees.

“Fleeing home to seek safety is one of the hardest choices anyone can make. I know that from personal experience,” said Salih, the UNHCR chief, who as a young man fled repression in Iraq.

The High Commissioner insisted that “while a person may, for a time, be defined as a refugee, becoming a refugee should not define a person’s life.”

He warned that millions of refugees “find themselves trapped in dependency, relying on a dwindling amount of aid for their daily survival.”

Although humanitarian assistance remains indispensable to saving lives during emergencies, too many refugees can spend years, or even decades, in prolonged displacement.

“Being a refugee is meant to be a temporary condition, not a lifelong fate,” he said.

“That is why I have set out an ambitious goal: to cut by half, within ten years, the number of refugees living in protracted displacement and reliant on humanitarian assistance.”

Efforts will focus on low and middle-income countries that host the majority of refugees.

“Achieving this target...would vastly improve the lives of millions of people. It is how we can move from merely managing displacement to resolving it,” he said.

This year’s observation of World Refugee Day also marks the 75th anniversary of the Refugee Convention.

The 1951 treaty, adopted in the aftermath of the Second World War, enshrined that anyone forced to flee war, conflict, or persecution has the right to seek safety and protection.

“We must continue to uphold that promise. Until everyone is safe, none of us are safe,” said Salih.

“This is not merely a statement of solidarity but a call to action. Because the right to seek safety was made for times like these, and it is up to all of us to defend it.”

America and Israel Destroy, China Builds

The world is witnessing two sharply different models of power. One is built on guns, wars, sanctions, blockades, occupations, assassinations, regime-change operations and destruction. The other is built on ports, roads, railways, power plants, industrial zones, trade corridors, reconstruction and development. The first model is represented most visibly by the United States and Israel. The second is increasingly associated with China.

History is full of evidence that the American model of global power has often revolved around war. Some wars may have been unavoidable, especially when great powers were pulled into global conflicts such as World War I and World War II. But many others were wars of choice, launched or prolonged to impose American will, reshape regions, control resources, punish governments, or demonstrate military supremacy. Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, Yemen, Iran and now the wider Middle East are all examples where American power has produced extraordinary destruction, displacement and instability.

The financial and human cost of this approach is staggering. World War II cost the United States more than \$4 trillion in today’s dollars and caused over 405,000 American military deaths, while the global death toll exceeded 70 million. The American Civil War killed between 620,000 and 750,000 Americans. The Vietnam War cost around \$1 trillion and killed more than 58,000 U. S. soldiers, besides millions of Vietnamese. The Korean War cost nearly \$389 billion and killed over 36,000 American troops. The post-9/11 wars alone have cost around \$8 trillion, according to Brown University’s

Costs of War project, while direct violence killed more than 940,000 people and indirect consequences may have caused several million more deaths.

These wars did not merely kill soldiers. They destroyed homes, schools, universities, hospitals, bridges, factories, roads, water systems and entire economies. They triggered mass migrations that reshaped Europe, America and many other host countries, creating new social, cultural, religious and political tensions. The victims were not statistics. They were sons, fathers, mothers, daughters, workers, teachers, doctors, soldiers and civilians whose lives were crushed under the machinery of geopolitics.

Israel has acted as a miniature version of this same model in the Middle East. It has lived in permanent conflict with its neighbors and has repeatedly used overwhelming military force in Gaza, Lebanon, Syria, Iran and beyond. Its doctrine of retaliation is often grossly disproportionate: one rocket, one soldier, or one security incident is used to justify the destruction of entire apartment blocks, neighborhoods and civilian infrastructure. Gaza has been reduced to rubble. Lebanon has been repeatedly bombed. Iran has been targeted through airstrikes, sabotage and assassinations. The West Bank is being swallowed through occupation, settlements and military domination.

Even more dangerous is the growing use of civilian technology for military and assassination purposes. Phones, cameras, digital platforms, satellites, navigation

systems and commercial data can be turned into tools of tracking, targeting and killing. When such technologies are used to assassinate officials, scientists, commanders or political figures across borders, it violates not only sovereignty but also the basic principles of international law and humanitarian conduct.

The recent war involving Iran, Israel and the United States has again exposed this destructive logic. According to the timeline reported by the Center for Preventive Action and several media outlets cited in that record, the conflict included U. S. strikes, Iranian retaliation, Israeli attacks in Lebanon and Iran, disruption in the Strait of Hormuz, damage to infrastructure, and serious questions over implementation of a

U. S.-Iran framework agreement. By mid-June 2026, reports suggested a preliminary agreement that included a sixty-day cessation of hostilities, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, phased sanctions relief, possible release of frozen Iranian assets, and a reported \$300 billion private investment fund for Iran, with more than half already committed.

This is where the contrast becomes most striking. The countries that bombed, sanctioned, blockaded, occupied and destroyed are reluctant to pay for reconstruction. According to reported statements, the United States does not want to spend its own dollars rebuilding Iran, even though its military role contributed directly to the destruction. Instead, Washington wants other

countries and private capital to finance recovery. This is the old imperial pattern: destroy with public military power, then outsource reconstruction to others.

China, by contrast, has stepped forward with a different language. Beijing has expressed sadness over the destruction in Iran and Lebanon and indicated willingness to participate in recovery and reconstruction. Even if the exact financial amount is not yet fully defined, the symbolism is powerful. While others dropped bombs, China offered to rebuild. While others destroyed roads, bridges, power stations and cities, China speaks of reconstruction, livelihood restoration and development.

This is not an isolated gesture. It fits China’s broader global strategy. The Belt and Road Initiative has become one of the largest development and connectivity programs in modern history. Its cumulative global financial engagement has reportedly reached around \$1.399 trillion, including roughly \$837 billion in construction contracts and \$561 billion in non-financial corporate investments. Around 150 countries have joined the BRI through agreements with Beijing. In 2025 alone, BRI engagement reportedly reached \$213.5 billion across hundreds of deals.

The economic impact is immense. Trade between China and BRI partner countries has reached nearly \$19.1 trillion over the decade. BRI countries now account for roughly half of China’s exports and more than half of its imports. The initiative has financed roads, ports, railways, power plants, industrial parks, mining projects, renewable energy, digital networks and manufacturing facilities. In 2025 alone, reported BRI

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

The System of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) and the Modern Age

In Islamic history, Hazrat Umar ibn Al-Khattab (RA), known as Farooq-e-Azam, is remembered as a great statesman, just ruler, and exemplary administrator. His period of caliphate is considered a golden era of stability, justice, administrative reforms, and public welfare in the Islamic state. Today, when the world faces numerous political, economic, and social challenges, the study of the Farooqi system is not only historically significant but also provides an effective and practical model for the modern age. The principles established by Hazrat Umar (RA) remain a guiding light for good governance, the rule of law, and the protection of human rights.

The system of Hazrat Umar (RA) was fundamentally based on the teachings of the Qur’an and Sunnah. He firmly believed that a ruler is a servant of the people, not their master. This concept transformed his government into a people-centered welfare state. Rather than treating power as a means of personal gain or luxury, he regarded it as a trust and fulfilled this responsibility with utmost honesty and dedication. As a result, his administration reflected the practical implementation of equality between the ruler and the citizens.

One of the most remarkable features of the Farooqi system was justice. Hazrat Umar (RA) ensured that everyone was equal before the law. Neither the wealthy received special privileges nor were the poor subjected to injustice. On one occasion, an ordinary citizen filed a complaint against a governor, and Hazrat Umar (RA) listened to the case without bias and delivered justice. This demonstrates that, in his view,

justice was the foundation of the state. In the modern era, when many countries struggle with corruption, nepotism, and class discrimination, this aspect of the Farooqi system remains highly relevant and worthy of emulation.

Hazrat Umar (RA) also made extraordinary contributions in the field of administration. He divided the Islamic state into provinces and districts and appointed responsible officials for each region. The performance of these officials was continuously monitored to ensure the protection of public rights. Whenever complaints were received against governors or administrators, thorough investigations were conducted. This accountability system was so effective that public officials feared engaging in any form of misconduct. Today, transparency and accountability are considered essential elements of good governance, yet Hazrat Umar (RA) implemented these principles over fourteen centuries ago.

In the economic sphere, the Farooqi system also serves as an exemplary model. Hazrat Umar (RA) strengthened and organized the Bayt al-Mal (public treasury), where state revenues were collected and used for public welfare. Zakat, land taxes, and other revenues were systematically gathered and distributed among those in need. The state took responsibility for the care of orphans, widows, persons with disabilities, and the underprivileged. Modern welfare states are similarly based on the principle that governments should ensure the basic needs of their citizens. In this regard, the Farooqi system can be considered an early and successful model of the welfare state.

Human rights were also given significant importance during the rule of Hazrat Umar

(RA). He safeguarded the rights of non-Muslim citizens and guaranteed them religious freedom. All residents of the Islamic state were assured protection of life and property. This approach demonstrates that Islam promotes justice and tolerance. In a time when religious intolerance and racial discrimination continue to create global challenges, the Farooqi system offers a valuable model of interfaith harmony and respect for human dignity.

Another important feature of the Farooqi system was its spirit of public service. Hazrat Umar (RA) would often walk through the streets of Madinah at night to learn about the conditions of the people. On one occasion, he found a woman and her children suffering from hunger. He immediately went to the public treasury, carried food supplies himself, and delivered them to the family. This incident reflects the deep sense of responsibility and compassion that he possessed as a leader. In contrast to many modern leaders who remain distant from the public, Hazrat Umar’s example teaches that true leadership requires understanding and addressing the hardships of ordinary people.

Hazrat Umar (RA) also played a significant role in promoting education and knowledge. He established educational centers in various regions and encouraged the teaching of the Qur’an and Sunnah. Knowledge was regarded as a means of societal development, and scholars were highly respected and supported. Even today, developed nations consider education the foundation of progress. In this respect, the Farooqi system provides valuable guidance for contemporary educational policies.

In matters of defense and foreign affairs, Hazrat Umar’s strategy was equally remarkable. He established an organized military system, fixed salaries for soldiers, and implemented

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U. S. Tariffs on Chinese Goods: Comparative Analysis from Realist and Liberal Perspectives

Nimra Iqbal

The United States imposed tariffs on Chinese goods during President Donald Trump’s administration, marking a significant development in International Political Economy. Starting in 2018, the U. S. levied tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese imports, citing unfair trade practices, intellectual property theft, and a growing trade deficit. China responded by imposing tariffs on American products, starting the U. S.-China trade war. This trade dispute prompted debate in International Political Economy about the relationship between economics and politics. Some scholars viewed the tariffs as a means for the U. S. to maintain power, while others argued they undermined economic interdependence and the benefits of free trade. This article analyzes U. S. tariffs on Chinese goods through both Realist and Liberal perspectives. This article contends that while both Realism and Liberalism offer explanations for U. S. tariff policy toward China, the Realist perspective is more persuasive. The tariffs were primarily motivated by concerns over national power, strategic competition, and economic security rather than international economic cooperation.

For many years, China and the United States maintained close economic ties and mutual trade reliance. However, increasing U. S. concerns about China’s rapid economic growth, industrial policies, technological advancements, and trade surplus heightened tensions. In 2018, the U. S. imposed tariffs on Chinese imports under Section 301 of the Trade Act, citing unfair trade practices and intellectual property violations. China responded by imposing tariffs

on American exports, including agricultural products, automobiles, and industrial goods. This dispute disrupted global supply chains, increased costs for businesses and consumers, and created uncertainty in the international trading system. The trade war evolved beyond an economic dispute, exposing broader geopolitical competition. Realists view international politics as a power struggle among states in an anarchic system. States prioritize survival, security, and self-interest over economic cooperation. Realists argue economic policies often serve strategic objectives. From a Realist perspective, U. S. tariffs on Chinese goods aimed to constrain China’s growing power, not just address economic concerns. As China’s economy expanded, it increased military spending, advanced technology, and extended its global influence. U. S. policymakers saw China’s rise as a potential threat to American dominance.

Realists emphasize relative gains, noting that states are concerned not only with their own economic benefits but also with their rivals’ gains. Even if both countries benefit from free trade, the U. S. may perceive China’s greater gains as a threat. Tariffs, therefore, serve to slow China’s economic growth and protect U. S. strategic interests. Realists also argue that dependence on foreign supply chains increases vulnerability. The U. S. became increasingly concerned about its reliance on foreign manufacturing in technology, information, and critical infrastructure sectors. Tariffs were part of a broader strategy to enhance economic security and reduce strategic dependence. Realism effectively explains why the United States accepted significant economic costs to achieve broader strategic objectives, highlighting the link between economic policy and geopolitical competition.

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President of Uzbekistan highlights priorities for the country's new investment development phase

On June 17, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev took part in and addressed the plenary session of the Fifth Tashkent International Investment Forum.

The event was also attended by the President of the Republic of Albania Bajram Begaj, the Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Mikhail Mishustin, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Azerbaijan Ali Asadov, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Belarus Alexander Turchin, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Kazakhstan Olzhas Bektenov, the Chairman of the Cabinet of Ministers and Head of the Administration of the President of the Kyrgyz Republic Adybek Kasymaliyev, the Prime Minister of the Republic of Tajikistan Kohir Rasulzoda, the President of the New Development Bank Dilma Rousseff, as well as representatives of other multilateral financial institutions, foreign banks, global corporations, major companies, investment funds, and business circles.

The forum, which brought together more than 10,000 delegates and participants from over 100 countries, once again confirmed its growing international authority and the international community's increasing trust in the reforms underway in New Uzbekistan.

In his speech, the President emphasized that Uzbekistan is



open to equal, mutually beneficial partnership with international investors.

It was noted that amid the rapid transformation of the global economic process and intensifying competition, countries that can ensure the protection of entrepreneurs' rights and freedoms, sustainable economic growth, and broad opportunities are increasingly in demand.

In this context, the consistent reforms underway in Uzbekistan are already yielding concrete results. By the end of last year, the country's economy grew by 7.7 percent, and this year gross domestic product is expected to exceed \$180 billion. The volume

of attracted investment reached \$43 billion.

A significant achievement has been the strengthening of macroeconomic stability: the national currency remains stable, and international reserves have surpassed \$70 billion.

Over the past years, more than \$150 billion in foreign investment has been attracted to Uzbekistan's economy, with more than \$123 billion coming in the past five years.

Alongside this, the country continues to strengthen its standing in international rankings, including the Economic Freedom Index, where it entered the category of countries with a

"moderately free economy" for the first time.

This year's forum theme is "Investment Resilience: New Frontiers, New Partnerships". The Head of State emphasized that the sustainable development of the investment environment is essential to achieving the country's long-term goals.

In this context, six key areas were outlined to deepen investment cooperation and build a modern business ecosystem.

The first priority was identified as strengthening the system of legal protections for investors.

The Tashkent International Financial Centre is being established in Uzbekistan and will



become a new institutional platform with a special legal regime.

Participants in the center will receive tax and customs preferences, guarantees of free capital movement, and the ability to settle in any currency. The center's infrastructure will include an independent financial regulator, a digital asset system, and green financing.

Plans also include introducing international arbitration and commercial court mechanisms with participation by foreign judges and international experts, as well as accession to the UN Singapore Convention on Mediation.

The Head of State noted that, as a result of all these measures, investors will gain guaranteed international legal protection directly within Uzbekistan.

A separate section of the speech was devoted to accelerating the development of the capital market and expanding

the range of modern financial instruments.

In recent years, Uzbekistan has issued bonds worth more than \$16 billion in international markets and completed the largest IPO on the London Stock Exchange in five years.

Preparations continue for new companies to enter international capital markets, while a legal framework is also being developed to create alternative investment instruments, including laws governing capital markets and investment funds.

Particular attention is being paid to the development of sovereign Islamic bonds (sukuk), which should become an additional source of investment in the country's economy.

The next strategic area is to attract investment to expand high-value-added chains.

Large-scale initiatives have been initiated to elevate all industrial sectors to a new technolo-

gical standard. In the coming years, the volume of high-tech industrial products is planned to increase by more than 2.5 times.

Special emphasis was placed on developing "driver" industries such as the chemical industry, mechanical engineering and robotics, light industry, construction materials production, electrical engineering, and pharmaceuticals. The total investment potential of these sectors is estimated at tens of billions of dollars.

"We are ready to provide comprehensive support for your initiatives across the new economy sectors", the President stated.

The Leader of Uzbekistan also emphasized the importance of effectively using the country's natural resource base of critical minerals, valued at \$3 trillion, and of developing Metals of the Future technoparks with participation from foreign investors.

Among the priorities, deepening the partnership in green energy and artificial intelligence was identified as well.

The share of renewable energy in the country's energy balance will reach 54 percent in the near future. In parallel, energy storage systems, power grid modernization, and data centers powered by clean energy will be developed.

Special attention was paid to the development of artificial intelligence. As part of the national AI implementation

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Senate Chairman Stresses Skills Over Degrees for Global Job Market Success



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said Pakistan's economic potential the Senate chairman said sectors such as tourism, hospitality, aviation services and information technology offered vast opportunities that skilled manpower, rather than academic degrees alone, was the key driver of success in today's competitive global economy.

Addressing the convocation of the College of Tourism and Hotel Management, Gilani said it was encouraging to see a large number of graduates entering the professional world, stressing that education without practical skills was

insufficient in securing employment. He said even highly qualified individuals could face difficulties without expertise, while those equipped with practical training and professional skills were securing opportunities both nationally and internationally.

Congratulating the graduating students, their parents and faculty, he said the convocation marked the beginning of a new phase in their lives and expressed confidence that the graduates would contribute positively to society.

Highlighting Pakistan's economic potential, the Senate chairman said sectors such as tourism, hospitality, aviation services and information



technology offered vast opportunities.

He said the country's cultural heritage and scenic destinations provided strong prospects for tourism-led growth.

Gilani said nearly 60 percent of Pakistan's population comprised youth, calling it a major asset if effectively trained and equipped with modern skills.

He noted that international demand for skilled Pakistani workers was rising, citing that Italy alone had more than 10,500 job opportunities for trained professionals.

He urged educational institutions to focus on skill development in collaboration with relevant welfare

organizations, including Bait-ul-Mal to enhance employment opportunities at home and abroad.

The Senate chairman also lauded Pakistan's diplomatic efforts on the global stage, saying the country had played a constructive role in promoting peace and easing tensions internationally, which had improved its global image.

Earlier, Ahmed Shafique and Waqas Raza also addressed the convocation, highlighting the institution's role in producing skilled professionals for the tourism and hospitality sectors.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of degrees and awards among graduating students.

Dearest Bibi, Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed

Naheed Khan

The 21st of June returns once again, Yet this year, as every year, it arrives carrying both remembrance and sorrow.

We do not celebrate your birthday today, For the month of Muharram teaches us reflection, sacrifice, and grief. Instead, we bow our heads in prayer and remembrance for a daughter of Pakistan who chose the path of courage over comfort, And sacrifice over silence.

Your assassination was not merely the loss of a leader, It was a wound upon the soul of Pakistan,

A tragedy whose pain continues to echo through the nation. History will never forgive those who silenced your voice.

Even today, the memory remains vivid. The serenity upon your face, The radiance of martyrdom amidst the blood of sacrifice, A sight forever etched in the hearts of those who loved you.

Bibi, You were not only our leader and mentor; You were our affectionate sister, A source of strength, warmth, and hope. The bond we shared was woven with trust, Loyalty, and countless cherished memories.

You became known as Kaneez-e-Karbala, For your devotion to the message of Karbala, And your unwavering reverence for Hazrat Bibi Zainab (AS), Whose courage inspired your own journey.

You stood as hope for the underprivileged, A voice for the voiceless, A cham-

panion of women's rights, A guardian of the youth, A loving mother to every child who sought a better future, And a shield for your workers who found protection in your leadership.

You faced dictatorship with remarkable courage, Resisted oppression with unmatched resilience, And carried the banner of democracy when doing so demanded immense sacrifice. On international forums, you represented a progressive, democratic Pakistan, Earning respect across the world while remaining deeply connected to the people at home.

How fitting that your birthday falls in the month of the tragedy of Karbala, For your life reflected the lesson of the martyrs: That truth demands sacrifice, And that the oppressed deserve a voice, regardless of the cost.

You gave your life striving for a Pakistan where dignity, justice, and opportunity belonged to all, Especially those forgotten by power and privilege.

Today, we do not celebrate; We remember. We pray. We honour.

May Almighty Allah rest your beautiful soul in His infinite mercy, Grant you the highest place in Jannat-ul Firdous, And unite you with the martyrs, and the blessed.

Though years have passed, You remain the Bibi of the people, A living legend in memory, And an enduring light in the hearts of millions.

Rest in eternal peace, dear Bibi. Your legacy lives on.

Marks D-8's 29th Anniversary

D-8 Secretary-General Participates in 51st Commission Session in Ankara

Spokesman Report

E. Ambassador Sohail Mahmood, Secretary-General of the Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8), undertook an official visit to Ankara from 15 to 17 June 2026 to participate in the 51st Session of the D-8 Commission and events commemorating the 29th Anniversary of the Establishment of D-8. The 51st Session of the D-8 Commission, hosted by the Republic of Türkiye under the Chairmanship of the Arab Republic of Egypt, brought together Commission members and senior representatives of all D-8 Member States to review progress achieved since the previous Session and chart the future direction of the Organization. The Commission considered a comprehensive report presented by the Secretary-General on the activities of the Secretariat during the first half of 2026, highlighting significant progress in strengthening international partnerships, expanding sectoral cooperation, enhancing the visibility of the Organization,



and advancing initiatives in trade, energy, tourism, SMEs, agriculture, science and technology, youth, and connectivity. The Commission also reviewed preparations for the 12th D-8 Summit to be held in Jakarta, progress on measures for reform and institutional capacity-building, financial and administrative matters, and implementation of the D-8 Decennial Roadmap 2020-2030. The Commission also welcomed the announcement by Egypt regarding the ratification of the D-8 Preferential

Trade Agreement (PTA) and the Dispute Settlement Mechanism (DSM), a significant development expected to contribute to deeper economic integration and increased intra-D-8 trade. A key highlight of the visit was the reception commemorating the 29th Anniversary of the Establishment of D-8 (15 June), hosted by the Turkish Ministry of Foreign Affairs and attended by Commissioners, Heads of Delegation, diplomats, senior government officials, representatives of international organiza-



tions, academia, business leaders, and members of the diplomatic community. The reception was graciously hosted by Deputy Foreign Minister Ambassador Berris Ekinci. A special message from H. E. Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan was read out on the occasion. D-8 Organization Press Office Mr. Ilham Uludag ilham.uludag@developing8.org Addressing the gathering, Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood paid tribute to the visionary leadership of the late Prime Minister Prof. Dr. Necmettin Erbakan and reflected on the significant evolution of D-8 since its establishment in Istanbul in 1997. He noted that what began as a pioneering initiative among



eight developing countries was now transforming into a dynamic trans-Continental organization representing more than 1.28 billion people and a combined GDP exceeding USD 5.2 trillion. The Secretary-General highlighted the growing strategic relevance of D-8 in an increasingly complex global environment — marked by geopolitical tensions, economic uncertainties, climate crisis, technological disruption, growing inequalities. He emphasized the Organization's expanding role in promoting

South-South cooperation, economic integration, sustainable development, and multilateral engagement. He further underscored recent achievements, including the accession of Azerbaijan as the 9th Member State; the successful convening of the first-ever Meeting of D-8 Ministers of Energy in Baku; the D-8 High-Level Energy and Urban Dialogue held during the World Urban Forum in Baku; and the ongoing efforts to establish the D-8 Energy and Climate Center, D-8 Trans-

port Excellence Center, and D-8 Media Excellence Center in Azerbaijan. He also highlighted the D-8's expanding international engagement with the United Nations system and regional organizations, including FAO, COMSTECH, COMSATS, OTS, and BSEC. The Secretary-General reaffirmed the Secretariat's commitment to working closely with Member States to build a stronger, more dynamic, and future-oriented D-8 capable of delivering tangible benefits to its peoples and contributing meaningfully to global peace, development, and prosperity. On the sidelines of the Commission Session, the Secretary-General held high-level consultations with H. E. Fuat Oktay, Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee of the Grand National Assembly of Türkiye and former Vice President of the Republic of Türkiye. Discussions focused on regional and global developments, preparations for the 12th D-8 Summit, and opportunities for further strengthening economic cooperation among D-8 Member States by building on existing complementarities and creating new

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Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
178,922.75	181,398.21
Day's High	Day's Low
182,185.87	177,836.16
Index Value	Change
41,691,496,206	-2475.46
Percentage	Time
-1.36%	19 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,363.27	-36.43
Percentage	Time
-0.35%	19 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,564.70	+72.15
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	18 Jun, 4:45 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
71,250.06	+196.57
Percentage	Time
+0.28%	19 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.90	196.75
Bahrain Dinar	737.16	747.75
Canadian Dollar	195.71	200.25
China Yuan	38.10	38.85
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	318.12	322.17
Hong Kong Dollar	35.06	36.04
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.05
Japanese Yen	1.7121	1.8104
Kuwaiti Dinar	884.60	894.85
Malaysian Ringgit	67	67.85
New Zealand \$	157.64	161.65
Norwegians Krone	27.97	28.27
Omani Riyal	722	732.25
Qatari Riyal	75.04	75.95
Saudi Riyal	74.25	75
Singapore Dollar	213.90	217.64
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	342.45	346.20
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	75.95	76.75
UK Pound Sterling	371.49	375.25
US Dollar	279.00	279.30

SECP Advances Plans for Pakistan's First Financial Services Dispute Resolution Centre

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has moved closer to launching its first dedicated Financial Services Dispute Resolution Centre (DRC), a proposed independent, not-for-profit institution under SECP oversight to provide faster, affordable and accessible resolution of financial disputes for consumers, investors and institutions.

To advance the initiative, SECP, in collaboration with the U.S. Department of Commerce's Commercial Law Development Program (CLDP) and Singapore's Financial Industry Disputes Resolution Centre (FIDReC), held a stakeholder consultation in Islamabad.

SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu and Commissioners Muzzafar Ahmed Mirza, Imtiaz Haider, Muhammad Ali Farid Khawaja, and Zeeshan Khattak attended.

The consultation brought together representatives from the judiciary, financial regulators and key market institutions including



PSX, PMEX, CDC, NCCPL, MUFAP, Insurance Association of Pakistan and others. SECP Commissioner Muzzafar Ahmed Mirza said a financial system's strength depends on effective dispute resolution, stressing the need for accessible mechanisms to build public confidence.

CLDP shared international reform experiences and pledged support for the centre's framework and capacity. FIDReC officials highlighted Singapore's specialised model as a valuable lesson for Pakistan.

Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu noted that mediation has become the preferred first step globally, and legislative support for mandatory mediation could cut litigation costs, speed recoveries and boost investor confidence.

Federal Secretary for Law Raja Naem Akbar backed the initiative and suggested provincial replication. Former SC judge Justice (R) Mushir Alam and LHC's Justice Jawad Hassan said institutionalised mediation would reduce court backlogs and preserve commercial ties. Participants broadly supported the DRC proposal.

After fuel price Reduction

ISLAMABAD: People walk past the buses at Faizabad Bus Terminal in the Federal Capital. Public transport and freight operators reduce 10% to 15% fare, following the government's slash in diesel and petroleum prices.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Debt Servicing Eats Over Half of Tax Revenue, Threatens Pakistan's Fiscal Health



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Khurram Ijaz, General Secretary of BMPP and former FPCCI Vice President, has warned that debt servicing is consuming more than half of Pakistan's tax revenue, posing serious risks to fiscal stability.

Citing budget documents, he said the government allocated Rs8.054 trillion for mark-up payments in FY2026-27 — Rs6.96 trillion domestic and Rs1.07 trillion foreign — while FBR targets Rs15.26 trillion in tax

collection. "How long can the economy sustain such fragile fiscal conditions?" he asked, urging a shift away from borrowing-led strategies toward strengthening indigenous economic capacity. SBP data shows total government debt rose to Rs81.93 trillion by April 2026, up Rs7 trillion in a year. He noted the government is financing deficits through Treasury Bills and Pakistan Investment Bonds, as banks prefer high-return government securities over productive sector lending.

Ijaz criticized high interest rates, now at 11.5% after earlier easing to 10.5%, saying they push industrialists to park capital in banks instead of manufacturing due to energy costs and regulatory burdens. He urged SBP to cut rates and the government to prioritize export-led growth and industrial expansion over debt-driven financing.

Fertilizer Dealers Warn of Food Security Crisis if New Taxes Aren't Cut

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The All Pakistan Fertilizer Dealers Association (APFDA) has urged the government to withdraw multiple taxes on fertilizer dealers, warning they are eroding thin profit margins and could disrupt fertilizer supply to farmers and threaten food security.

APFDA said the sector is fully documented and GST-registered, playing a vital role in ensuring uninterrupted fertilizer supply. It noted the Finance Act 2026-27 raised minimum turnover tax for dealers, distributors, sub-dealers and wholesalers from 0.25% to 0.50%.

Dealers also face withholding taxes under Sections 236G and 236H, plus banking, financing, transport, warehousing and compliance costs.

With government-notified Maximum Retail Prices capping margins at around 2%, dealers have no flexibility to pass costs to farmers. APFDA warned shrinking margins threaten business



viability and could affect service to farmers nationwide.

The association also opposed Punjab Government's proposed Cess, saying it would further raise costs amid multiple

taxes and compliance burdens. APFDA called for immediate relief through abolition of federal taxes and review of provincial levies to protect agricultural productivity and food security.

UBG Cheers Petrol Price Cut as a Win for Economy and Public Relief

Commerce Desk

KARACHI, JUNE 20, 2026: UBG Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer and President Zubair Tufail have welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's announcement of a significant cut in petroleum product prices, calling it a positive step for the public and business community.

The UBG leaders said the reduction was possible due to falling crude oil prices internationally and easing economic pressures. However, they noted scope for further cuts in line with larger global declines and hoped for additional relief for consumers soon.

SM Tanveer said lower international oil prices will directly benefit Paki-



stan's economy and people. Zubair Tufail: "SM Tanveer

Reduced petrol prices will cut daily transport costs for low- and middle-income groups, while cheaper diesel will lower expenses in freight, public transport, and agriculture.

Zubair Tufail termed the move commendable amid current economic conditions, saying it will ease citizens' financial burden and reduce business operating costs, thereby lowering inflationary pressure and boosting economic activity.

RCCI MedHealth & Beauty Expo 2026 Ends on a High Note

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) concluded the two-day MedHealth & Beauty Expo 2026, marking a milestone for Pakistan's healthcare, pharmaceutical, wellness and beauty sectors.

On the closing day, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, chief guest at the ceremony, praised RCCI for bringing together healthcare professionals, industry leaders, entrepreneurs and innovators.

He said such exhibitions promote knowledge sharing, investment opportunities and growth of the health and wellness sectors. He also appreciated exhibitors' enthusiasm and RCCI's efforts to

support business development and showcase emerging trends.

Distinguished guests included tennis icon Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi, Turkish Ambassador H. E. Irfan Neziroglu and Sri Lanka's High Commissioner Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne. The expo drew leading healthcare professionals, pharmaceutical firms, wellness brands, beauty stakeholders, regulators, diplomats and business leaders who showcased products, services and technologies.

An awareness session on "Future of Cannabis & Hemp Regulation" featured CCRA DG Maj. Gen. (R) Zafarullah Khan, who discussed Pakistan's regulatory framework, industry potential, compliance and investment opportunities. Technical symposiums, seminars and



networking sessions also fostered collaboration and international engagement.

ICCI secures major relief for industrial units as MCI agrees to review property tax notices

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: ICCI has secured relief for industrial units as CDA/MCI agreed to review property tax notices issued to units in Industrial Area I-9 and Industrial Triangle Kahuta Road on a case-to-case basis.

During a meeting at ICCI, CDA/MCI Director Revenue Kashif Niaz, along with Deputy Director Adnan Khan, Assistant Director Azhar Latif and Inspector Zahid Akhtar, assured the business community that fairness, transparency and relief for genuine taxpayers will be ensured. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood chaired the session, attended by ICCI Vice President Muhammad Irfan Chaudhry, Chairman Founder Group Sheikh Tariq Sadiq, Islamabad Industrial Association President Omais Khattak, executive members and many industrialists.

ICCI highlighted concerns over notices with heavy arrears and late payment surcharges despite regular payments by many businesses. Participants urged a consultative approach. Niaz acknowledged the business community's role and agreed to scrutinize notices and withdraw unjustified arrears or disputed demands where warranted.

A committee comprising Omais Khattak and Khalid Chaudhry was formed to liaise with Revenue officials. On Kahuta Road's lack of municipal services, the department agreed to seek stakeholder input before a final decision. Both sides pledged continued coordination to balance business growth and compliance.



From oil shock to debt shock: crises continued for developing nations

Arooj Zafar

The Strait of Hormuz crisis is coming to an end, on paper at least. The United States and Iran have signed a memorandum of understanding to end the fighting and reopen the strait. Oil traders will exhale. Developing economies may not. A ceasefire does not erase the deeper lesson of the past few months: in today's global economy, a maritime choke point can become a debt crisis, an inflation shock, and a political stability problem almost overnight.

The Strait of Hormuz is more than just a strait between Iran and Oman. It is one of the main arteries of the world economy. UN Trade and Development have characterized it as a path that transports roughly 25% of the seaborne oil trade across the world, as well as most of the LNG and fertilizer transport. When traffic slows through such a corridor, the effects are not limited to tankers. It runs through freight rates, insurance

premiums, fertilizer prices, food costs, exchange rates, and public budgets.

The Hormuz crisis is therefore not just a security issue in the Middle East, but also an international political economy issue. The shock rippled through the global system in a now-familiar sequence. First, the rise in energy prices. Then there were higher shipping and risk costs. Then the strain on food and transport. Investors pulled back from fragile markets. Third, weaker currencies meant more expensive imports for countries already struggling with debt.

UNCTAD's trade outlook for 2026 warned of a sharp slowdown in the growth of world merchandise trade, even as developing country currencies and borrowing conditions were already under pressure. Its separate debt assessment, *A World of Debt 2025*, said 3.4 billion people live in countries that spend more on interest payments than on either health or education. That is what the crisis is all about. Oil shocks do not get absorbed just by balance sheets in poorer economies.

They become part of schools, hospital costs, food budgets, and household incomes.

This is where Joseph Stiglitz's warning in *Globalization and Its Discontents* comes into sharp relevance again. Stiglitz did not reject the idea of globalization. His argument was more subtle. Globalization is unfair and politically volatile when powerful financial interests dictate the rules, and poorer countries are expected to bear the adjustment costs. In his later reflections, he again stated that the problem was not globalization itself but the way it was managed.

That imbalance is a textbook case in the Hormuz crisis. The richer states have strategic reserves, stronger currencies, deeper credit markets, and more fiscal space. Developing states are urged to tighten belts, protect price signals, avoid broad subsidies, and keep up with debt repayments. Globalization in theory promised shared efficiency. Its burdens, in practice, remain uneven.

A supply shock in a strategic waterway becomes an inflation

shock for Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Egypt, Kenya, or the Maldives. Higher risk premiums mean a budget cut. More expensive fuel means a weaker currency. More fuel bills become political outrage. In these moments, the invisible hand looks a lot like a hierarchy.

The case of Pakistan is proving it, and of course with a certain irony. It is not a party to the conflict in the Middle East but is extremely vulnerable to regional instability in terms of imported energy costs, remittance flows, shipping expenses, and foreign capital. Pakistan is also the prime mediator of the peace deal between USA and Iran, where diplomacy has not provided any economic insulation. In Reuters' reporting of June 2026, Pakistan's budget was impacted both by the Iran war and the fiscal austerity required for IMF financing, with the formal economy and the middle class being the main victims. Geopolitical conflict thus becomes a national political economy: one can negotiate peace and still raise taxes, utility costs, and petrol prices for citi-

zens.

In its June 2026 Global Economic Prospects report, the World Bank has also cautioned that Middle East tensions will be driving global growth to its lowest since the covid 19 pandemic, owing to higher energy prices, higher inflation, and higher borrowing costs. For countries with high debt-to-GDP ratios, it is no insignificant shift. It cuts the fiscal space exactly when it is required for the government to safeguard its citizens, stabilize prices, and carry out development expenditure.

The lesson is obvious. The "good will" of markets and crisis management by "great powers" is not an option for developing countries. They should have a collective economic security agenda. This would involve larger and better-managed strategic fuel reserves, quicker investments in domestic & renewable energy, regional payment systems, emergency swap lines, and coordinated bargaining at the IMF, World Bank, G77, and UNCTAD. And that will include making energy



security integral to debt sustainability, and not a stand-alone technical concern.

The lesson of the policy for Pakistan is immediate. The nation needs to insulate itself against the volatility of imported fuels, but it also needs to change its ways of negotiating outside the country. Even as a mediator, a state that finds itself in every crisis without reserves, narrow exports, and heavy debt payment obligations can hardly afford to protect its citizens despite its mediation skills. Economic independence is not achieved by sloganeering. It comes from exports, equitable taxation, and energy diversifi-

cation. The case of the Strait of Hormuz has revealed that the problems of globalization are no longer just abstract. They are evident in the difference in capability of states to withstand the same shock. The developed world self-insures, but poorer economies adjust. Until imbalance is addressed; every fuel crisis will turn into a debt crisis as well, and every faraway war will come to the doorstep of the developing world.

The writer is a final-year student of BS International Relations at the National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

President of Uzbekistan highlights priorities for the country's new investment development phase

Continued from Page 5

strategy, large-scale programs are underway to digitize education, public services, and business.

A special zone for AI projects and data centers is being established in Karakalpakstan, featuring unique investment conditions and a preferential tax regime.

Work is ongoing to launch the International Digital Technology Centre of Uzbekistan, which will have a special legal regime.

According to foreign experts, the potential to create added value in this sphere is at least \$10 billion.

"Our main task is to improve the lives of all segments of the population through artificial intelligence and its broad application in education, public services, and business processes", the President noted.

Separate attention was given in the speech to the development of regional transport and logistics connectivity.

Together with its partners, Uzbeki-

stan is implementing major infrastructure projects, including the construction of the strategic China - Kyrgyzstan - Uzbekistan railway, the creation of the Trans-Afghan Corridor, and the development of the Middle Corridor route.

"Thanks to the full implementation of these projects, we will be able to join the network of transport highways linking Asia and Europe", the Head of State noted.

The implementation of large-scale projects in aviation and logistics continues, including the construction of a new international airport in Tashkent, designed to serve 20 million passengers annually.

The sixth priority addressed issues related to the comprehensive unlocking of investment potential in regions and in urbanization.

Amid rapid demographic and economic growth, large-scale housing construction and urban development programs are underway nationwide, including the creation of the new city of New Tashkent and the transforma-

tion of major regional centers into cities with populations exceeding a million.

"By 2040, we plan to double the amount of housing under construction and increase the level of urbanization from the current 51 percent to 65 percent", the President emphasized.

Separate attention is being paid to the development of tourism. The potential of this sector of the economy makes it possible to receive 15-20 million foreign tourists a year, with services worth at least \$15 billion provided.

Issues related to the transformation of the agro-industrial complex and the export of agricultural products, which already amount to \$3.5 billion a year and are projected to reach \$10 billion, were also touched upon. The President emphasized the importance of actively involving regional administrations in working with investors and expanding on-the-ground project cooperation in this area.

Following the speech, support was expressed for the proposal to establish a Regional Alliance of Investment Coun-

cils of Central Asia and Caucasus, which could serve as the basis for creating a common investment space.

Uzbekistan's readiness to develop continuous dialogue with investors within the framework of the Foreign Investors Council under the President was also confirmed.

The Head of State emphasized that investments are viewed not only as an economic resource but also as advanced technologies, modern knowledge and experience, new jobs, and development that keeps pace with the times.

In conclusion, the President noted that Uzbekistan remains open to international investors who come to the country with great confidence and promising ideas.

"I am convinced that the spirit of the Tashkent Investment Forum will become a symbol of our shared success. Uzbekistan's beautiful nature, unique culture, and the hospitality of our noble people will be the best investment in strengthening our friendship", the Head of State concluded.

D-8 Secretary-General Participates in 51st Commission Session in Ankara

Continued from Page 5

synergies. The Secretary-General expressed appreciation for Türkiye's longstanding support for the Organization and its founding vision. The Secretary-General also met with Mr. Abdullah Eren, President of TİKA, to explore new avenues of cooperation in development assistance, capacity-building, digital transformation, e-government, youth and women entrepreneurship, agriculture, education, and health.

It was agreed to pursue the creation of dedicated platform aimed at fostering collaboration among development agencies of Member States and promoting joint development initiatives across the D-8 region. In a separate meeting with Mr. Ahmet Serdar İbrahimioğlu, President of KOSGEB, discussions focused on strengthening cooperation in support of SMEs, entre-

preneurship, innovation, digital transformation, Artificial Intelligence, technology development, and start-up ecosystems. The two sides explored opportunities for capacity-building programmes, cooperation among innovation centers and Technoparks, and possible mechanisms to support SME financing and regional value-chain integration. D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation Press Office Mr. İlham Uludag ilham.uludag@developing8.org

While the 51st Session of the Commission was instrumental in advancing the broader D-8 agenda, the Secretary-General's interactions with Parliamentary Committee Chairman and key senior officials in Ankara contributed to promoting practical cooperation initiatives in development, entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable economic growth across the D-8 region.

America and Israel Destroy, China Builds

Continued from Page 4

activity included \$93.9 billion in energy, \$32.6 billion in mining and metals, and \$28.7 billion in technology and manufacturing.

Pakistan is one of the clearest examples. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, officially launched in 2015, became the flagship project of the BRI. Its first phase was initially valued at \$46 billion and later expanded to about \$62 billion. Around \$33 billion was directed toward energy projects, including coal, solar and transmission infrastructure. About \$11 billion went into transport infrastructure, including road modernization and strategic connectivity. Other funds supported Gwadar, urban transport, industrial development and communications.

The results are visible. Pakistan, once crippled by energy shortages, added thousands of mega-

watts of electricity generation capacity. Projects such as the Port Qasim Coal Power Project, Quaid-e-Azam Solar Power Park, Orange Line Metro Train in Lahore, road networks, Gwadar development and transmission lines changed the country's infrastructure landscape. Around \$25 billion has reportedly already been executed across dozens of completed or operational ventures. CPEC Phase II now aims to move beyond roads and energy into industrialization, agriculture modernization, special economic zones, mining, IT, research, corporate farming, small and medium enterprises and export-led growth.

This is how China projects power: by creating dependencies, yes, but also by creating assets. A road remains after the ceremony ends. A power plant keeps producing electricity. A port creates jobs. A railway connects markets. An industrial zone gives people work. A reconstructed bridge

restores life. Whether one supports or criticizes Chinese policy, its method of influence is fundamentally different from the method of bombs and blockades.

The lesson for the developing world is clear. A country may be destroyed by military might, but a nation cannot be won by destruction. Fear can silence people temporarily, but respect is earned by helping them live, work, trade, travel and prosper. The United States and Israel may win battles through firepower, but China is winning influence through infrastructure, investment and reconstruction. In the end, history will not only remember who fired the missiles. It will also remember who rebuilt the bridges.

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

The System of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) and the Modern Age

Continued from Page 4

effective measures for the protection of state borders. However, warfare was never considered an objective in itself but rather a means of maintaining peace and security. Under his leadership, the Islamic state not only secured its territories but also developed relations with various nations based on justice and fairness. The Farooqi system therefore remains relevant to modern discussions on diplomacy, national security, and global peace.

In the contemporary world, societies face challenges such as economic inequality, polit-

ical corruption, administrative inefficiency, and moral decline. The Farooqi system offers practical solutions to many of these problems. If modern leaders adopt principles such as honesty, accountability, justice, and public service, they can create environments of peace, prosperity, and development. Hazrat Umar (RA) demonstrated that the success of a state does not depend on wealth or power alone; rather, it is rooted in justice, trustworthiness, and the welfare of its people.

In conclusion, the system of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) represents a shining chapter in

Islamic history and serves as a source of guidance for all ages. It was founded upon the principles of justice, equality, accountability, public welfare, human rights, and ethical leadership. By embracing these values, not only Muslim societies but the entire world can move toward better governance and sustainable development. The life and governance of Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA) continue to remind humanity that a just ruler can transform the destiny of a nation, and that a fair and compassionate system can bring peace, stability, and prosperity to society.

U. S. Tariffs on Chinese Goods: Comparative Analysis from Realist and Liberal Perspectives

Continued from Page 4

Realism explains why security concerns may outweigh economic efficiency. Despite the benefits of free trade, U. S. policymakers prioritized technological leadership, industrial strength, and national security. However, Realism often underestimates the significance of economic interdependence and domestic interests. Not all tariff decisions are driven solely by power politics; domestic political pressures, interest groups, and economic factors also shaped U. S. trade policy. Realism may also over-emphasize conflict and overlook opportunities for states to cooperate for mutual benefit.

Liberalism offers a different perspective on international economic relations. Liberals argue that trade provides mutual benefits, promotes peace, and encourages cooperation among states. Economic interdependence reduces the likelihood of conflict, as countries depend on each other for prosperity. From a Liberal perspective, the U. S.-China trade relationship exemplifies mutually beneficial exchange. Both countries gained: American consumers enjoyed lower prices, while Chinese industries gained access to international markets. Liberals argue that tariffs eliminated these benefits by increasing costs for busi-

nesses and consumers. Instead of resolving economic issues, tariffs reduced efficiency and hindered global growth. Many economists noted that American companies and consumers bore much of the cost through higher prices. Liberalism also stresses the importance of international institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO). Liberals contend trade disputes should be resolved through established rules and legal mechanisms, not unilateral tariffs. The U. S. decision to impose tariffs outside standard WTO dispute-settlement procedures raised concerns about undermining rules-based international trade. The liberal approach clearly outlines the

economic costs of the trade war and shows the benefits of cooperation. It highlights the significance of interdependence, global supply chains, and international institutions.

Liberalism also explains why businesses, multinational corporations, and many economists opposed the tariffs. They benefited from open markets and viewed protectionist policies as detrimental to the economy. Despite its strengths, Liberalism struggles to explain why states sometimes forgo economic benefits for strategic objectives. If economic interdependence always led to cooperation, the trade war likely would not have occurred. The theory assumes

economic cooperation naturally fosters stability, yet the U. S.-China case shows that significant interdependence can coexist with strategic rivalry. Each theory explains important aspects of U. S. tariff policy. Liberalism describes the economic effects of tariffs and their disruption of global trade while highlighting the value of cooperation and the costs of protectionism. However, Realism provides a stronger explanation for the policy's rationale. The primary motivation for the American tariffs was not economic efficiency, but the challenge posed by China's rise. Concerns over technology competition, industrial leadership, supply-chain security,

and geopolitical influence were central to the decision.

The trade war formed part of a broader strategic competition, where economic measures were used to achieve political and security objectives. In this context, Realism better explains why policymakers accepted short-term economic losses to pursue long-term strategic goals. The U. S. tariffs on Chinese goods are an important example in International Political Economy. Liberalism highlights the benefits of free trade, economic interdependence, and international institutions, while Realism focuses on power, security, and strategic competition. Both theories offer useful

insights, but Realism provides a stronger explanation for the tariffs because the policy was primarily driven by concerns about China's growing economic and geopolitical influence. This case demonstrates that international economic relations involve more than markets and cooperation. Economic policies are frequently linked to national power and security. As the U. S. and China continue to compete globally, the connection between economic interests and strategic rivalry will remain central to International Political Economy.

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Visiting security measures

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Muhammad Jawad Tariq along with SSP Operations Qazi Ali Raza and Chief Traffic Officer (CTO) SP Kainat Azhar Khan visiting the security measures around Markazi Jamia Masjid o Imambar-gah G/6-2, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan to Host Follow-Up Talks on US-Iran Agreement in Switzerland

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Foreign Office (FO) on Saturday announced that technical-level follow-up talks on the implementation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the United States and Iran will be held in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, on Sunday.

According to the FO, representatives from the United States and Iran, along with mediators from Pakistan and Qatar, will participate in the discussions aimed at advancing commitments made under the agreement. Pakistan will continue its role as a mediator to facilitate dialogue and support the implementation



ator to facilitate dialogue and support the implementation

process.

Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi and Pakistan's Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi are scheduled to travel to Switzerland on Saturday night for the talks. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also expected to visit Switzerland, although sources said his departure will depend on the arrival of US Vice President JD Vance.

Swiss authorities confirmed that diplomats from several countries were already meeting at the Bürgenstock resort near Lucerne to maintain dialogue on the preliminary US-Iran agreement. A diplomatic source described Saturday's meetings

as preparatory in nature after senior-level talks planned for Friday were postponed.

The talks come amid renewed regional tensions following Israeli air strikes in southern Lebanon, despite the recently announced ceasefire linked to the US-Iran agreement. Swiss Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis reaffirmed Switzerland's commitment to supporting mediation efforts after meeting Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani, emphasizing the importance of dialogue, de-escalation and lasting peace through continued international cooperation.

Benazir Bhutto's 73rd Birth Anniversary: Honoring a Pioneering Leader and Democracy Icon

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of the 73rd birth anniversary of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, tribute was paid to her enduring legacy as a courageous leader, champion of democracy and the first woman Prime Minister of Pakistan and the Muslim world. She is remembered for breaking political barriers and inspiring greater participation of women in public life while upholding democratic values, constitutional governance and the people's right to choose their representatives through the ballot box.

The tribute highlights Benazir Bhutto's resilience in the face of imprisonment, exile and persistent threats, noting that she remained steadfast in her commitment to public service and democratic principles. Beyond her political leadership, she fulfilled multiple roles as a daughter, mother, wife and patriot, demonstrating courage, compassion and a strong sense of duty throughout her life.

It also recalls her close engagement with ordinary citizens and her focus on issues affecting everyday life, including education, employment, healthcare and the welfare of vulnerable commu-



nities. Her vision emphasized inclusive development, social justice and greater opportunities for women and young people.

Benazir Bhutto consistently rejected violence as a political tool, advocating dialogue, constitutional processes and

peaceful democratic participation as the only legitimate means of resolving political differences. Her decision to return to Pakistan despite serious security threats reflected her unwavering faith in the country's democratic future.

The tribute concludes by describing her as a symbol of hope who confronted adversity with determination and inspired generations through her sacrifice, leadership and dedication to building a stronger, more democratic and prosperous Pakistan. Her legacy continues to resonate in the nation's collective memory.

Judges with bad repute should be dismissed, not compulsorily retired: SC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that judges whose reputation and credibility are seriously compromised should be dismissed from service rather than granted compulsory retirement, emphasizing that public trust is the foundation of the judiciary.

In a detailed judgment authored by Justice Shahid Waheed, a three-member bench, also comprising Justice Nacem Akhtar Afghan and Justice Muhammad Shafi Siddiqui,



upheld the dismissal of former Addi-

tional District and Sessions Judge Afzal Zahid. The court held that judicial integrity extends beyond the absence of proven corruption and requires judges to maintain exemplary conduct, impeccable character and an untarnished public reputation.

The judgment stated that the judiciary derives its authority from public confidence and moral credibility, warning that retaining judges with damaged reputations undermines judicial ethics and weakens trust in the justice system. It

further observed that granting compulsory retirement and related benefits to such judges could create the impression that judicial accountability is negotiable.

The court also cited Quranic verses, Hadith and Islamic jurisprudence, describing judicial office as a sacred trust requiring honesty, justice and accountability. Setting aside the Service Tribunal's decision, the Supreme Court restored Afzal Zahid's dismissal, ruling that both actual integrity and the public perception of integrity are essential for judicial office.

Ishaq Dar departs for Cairo to attend R-4 foreign ministers' meeting



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar departed for Cairo on Saturday to participate in a meeting of foreign ministers from Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt aimed at discussing key regional and international issues.

According to the Foreign Office, Dar will represent Pakistan at the fourth meeting of the R-4 Group foreign ministers, where participants are expected to exchange views on matters of mutual interest, regional security and global developments.

During his visit, the deputy prime

minister is also scheduled to hold bilateral meetings with his counterparts from the participating countries to discuss ways to strengthen diplomatic and economic cooperation.

Dar is additionally expected to meet Egyptian President Abdel Fattah el-Sisi. Discussions are likely to focus on Pakistan-Egypt relations, regional developments and opportunities for enhancing cooperation in various sectors.

The meeting comes as Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt seek closer coordination on regional security challenges and broader geopolitical issues affecting the Middle East and beyond.

Government Reaffirms Commitment to Democratic Institutions and Parliamentary Supremacy, Says Minister



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the government remains committed to strengthening democratic institutions, parliamentary supremacy and effective governance under the Constitution.

Speaking in the National Assembly during the budget debate, he thanked Speaker Ayaz Sadiq for conducting impartial, lengthy proceedings and noted that both treasury and opposition members were given ample speaking time.

Many opposition suggestions were incorporated in the finance minister's winding-up speech, he added. Criticizing the opposition, Dr. Fazal said its speeches focused on Imran Khan's release, medical treatment and 2024 elections instead of budget

technicalities.

He stressed that financial debates should address policy and economic issues, not political rhetoric. He highlighted government achievements: restoring Parliament's role in judicial appointments with opposition representation, and establishing constitutional benches to separate constitutional cases and improve justice delivery.

He praised the ECP and CEC Sikandar Sultan Raja for impartial conduct. The minister urged constructive opposition engagement, calling Parliament the proper forum for resolving differences. He lauded diplomatic progress, paid tribute to armed forces for 4,000+ martyrs, and cited AJK reforms including cabinet downsizing, compensation, case withdrawals and relief measures.

Minister calls for mechanism to ensure immediate impact of fuel price cuts on essential commodities

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Saturday called for a transparent and efficient mechanism to ensure that reductions in fuel prices are immediately reflected in the prices of essential commodities and daily-use items.

Speaking to the media outside Parliament House, the minister highlighted the importance of technology and the role of local administrations in this regard.

He expressed the confidence

that provincial governments could implement technology-based systems to provide immediate relief to the public by ensuring prompt adjustments in commodity prices.

The minister emphasized that the pricing mechanism should be robust, transparent and free of flaws to ensure consumers receive the full benefit of fuel price reductions as quickly as possible. He added that while improvements had been made, further reforms were needed to strengthen the system and enhance price monitoring.