



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن من نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ مجھ سے میرے والد نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم سے سعید بن ابی سعید نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ میں نے رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے سنا، نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ تم سے کہ اس کی روایت میں فرقی ہو اور اس کی عمر وراثی جائے تو وہ مسلم صحابی کا ہے۔ (صحیح بخاری: حدیث نمبر 5985)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Trump says US will resume attacks if Iran does not restrain Hezbollah allies

President Donald Trump on Sunday posted that the US will resume attacks on Iran unless the Iranians can keep their Hezbollah allies in Lebanon from causing violence. "Iran must immediately stop their highly paid PROXIES in Lebanon from causing trouble," Trump wrote on Truth Social.



Iran dismisses US threats, says armed forces ready for any response

Iran's parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, on Sunday dismissed US threats and said Iranian forces were fully prepared for any response, reacting to comments by US President Donald Trump during ongoing talks between Washington and Tehran in Switzerland. In a statement posted on the social media platform X, Ghalibaf said US officials should be careful in their remarks and that Iran did not attach importance to American threats.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Muharram-ul-Haram 6, Monday, June 22, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman

Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 63

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Pakistan's mediation is being appreciated

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and COAS & CDF Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir meeting with Vice President of the United States J.D. Vance and the US delegation on the sidelines of US-Iran technical level talks as a follow-up of Islamabad MoU being held in Burgenstock, Switzerland, on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Swiss VP Lauds Pakistan's Mediation Role in Iran-US Islamabad MoU Signing



Spokesman Report

BÜRGENSTOCK: Swiss Vice President and Foreign Minister Ignazio Cassis, Vice President and Foreign Minister of Switzerland called on the Prime Minister of Pakistan on the sidelines of the ongoing technical level talks between USA and Iran at Burgenstock, Switzerland.

The Swiss Foreign Minister appreciated the mediation role played by Pakistan that steered the negotiation process leading to the signing of the Islamabad MoU between Iran and United States. He also expressed their willingness to contribute and assist the follow up process. The Prime Minister thanked the Swiss side and affirmed that successful implementation of

Islamabad MoU will lead to regional peace and global economic stability.

On his part the Prime Minister appreciated the sustained Swiss investment in Pakistan and hoped that Swiss companies would further enhance their investments in Pakistan. He also offered Pakistan's assistance of highly skilled IT/cyber security experts to fulfil the growing demand of Switzerland in these sectors. Additionally the two sides discussed the possibility of enhancing cooperation in mutually beneficial sectors of pharmaceuticals, tourism and climate change / disaster risk reduction.

Prime Minister Sharif also extended invitation to the Swiss Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan at mutually convenient dates.

US, Pakistan, and Qatar Leaders Hail Bürgenstock Talks as a 'New Leaf' for Middle East Peace

Spokesman Report

BÜRGENSTOCK: Leaders of Pakistan, the United States and Qatar expressed hope to "turn over a new leaf" in the Middle East as Bürgenstock talks began, aiming to promote global peace, security and economic prosperity.

Speaking to media before technical-level US-Iran talks, part of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, Prime Minister

Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, US Vice President JD Vance and Qatari Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani emphasized that joint diplomatic efforts mark the start of a vital process for a sustainable future and global stability agreement.

Hosted and mediated by Pakistan and Qatar, the talks seek to finalize details of the US-Iran MoU to cease hostilities and build

a durable framework for regional peace. PM Shehbaz hoped US-Iran discussions would yield positive results and a document advancing peace, progress and prosperity worldwide.

Also present were Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and other delegation members. PM Shehbaz called the talks crucial for regional

peace and thanked US President Donald Trump for his visionary leadership that enabled the Switzerland meeting. He lauded Vice President Vance's leadership and praised Qatar's PM and Field Marshal Asim Munir for their consistent efforts, saying participating leaders could create lasting world peace.

"This wonderful, humanistic Bürgenstock" meeting, Shehbaz said, could produce a document

promoting peace, progress and prosperity. Vance credited Pakistan and Field Marshal Munir, saying "we would not be here without the Field Marshal" and noting he spoke with Munir more than anyone over three months. He also praised PM Shehbaz as a "dear friend" with skilled negotiations, and Qatar's PM as an "amazing friend" of the US.

Continued on Page 7

Bilawal pays rich tribute to Benazir Bhutto on 73rd birth anniversary

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has paid rich tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto on her 73rd birth anniversary, describing her as "Chaaron Soboon Ki Zanjeer", the enduring symbol of a united, democratic and progressive Pakistan.

He said that her vision of a strong federation, empowered federating units, constitutional rule, and a society founded on dignity, equality, and opportunity for all continues to guide the PPP.

He added that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's legacy remains a beacon for a Pakistan that is secure in its defence, unwavering in the protection of its people's rights and steadfast in its support for the just struggle of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

The PPP chairman further said in his message that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto was not merely the first elected woman prime minister of the Islamic world, she was also the voice of the voiceless, the strength of the oppressed and the hope of those denied a place in the corridors of power.

R-4 Ministers reiterate cooperation for peaceful, stable and connected region

News Desk

Foreign ministers of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt met in Cairo on Sunday to discuss regional developments and implementation of the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), Pakistan's Foreign Ministry said.

In a post on social media platform X, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said the meeting was held in a "restricted format" and focused on regional developments, the implementation of the Islamabad MoU, and priority areas of cooperation. He said the four countries reaffirmed their commitment to dialogue, diplomacy and regional ownership of shared challenges.

"Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt continue to deepen cooperation for a more peaceful, stable and connected region," Andrabi said. Separately, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar said he participated in the fourth meeting of the Regional Four (R-4) Foreign Ministers in Cairo.

In a statement, Dar said the ministers reviewed progress on the Islamabad MoU, exchanged views on regional and global developments, and reaffirmed their commitment to diplomacy and collective



efforts for peace, stability and prosperity.

He said discussions also focused on strengthening coordination and advancing practical cooperation within the R-4 framework to address shared challenges.

Dar also called on Egyptian President

Abdel Fattah el-Sisi on the sidelines of the meeting, where they discussed bilateral ties and regional cooperation under the R-4 platform, according to the statement.

A joint statement was issued at the conclusion of the meeting, the Foreign Office said.

DPM holds wide ranging talks with FMs in Cairo on regional issues

News Desk

CAIRO: At the invitation of Egypt's Foreign Minister Badr Abdellaty, Pakistan's Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar visited Cairo on 20-21 June 2026. He participated in the R4 ministerial meeting with Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, exchanging views on key regional and international issues. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to dialogue, cooperation and collective action on shared challenges.

DPM/FM Dar, along with FMs of Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, called on President Abdel Fattah El-Sisi. He conveyed greetings from Pakistan's President, Prime Minister and Chief of Defence Forces, and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to strengthen its longstanding, brotherly ties with Egypt. He also welcomed



President El-Sisi's acceptance of the Prime Minister's invitation to visit Pakistan at an early convenient date. On the sidelines, Dar held bilateral talks with FM Abdellaty.

They reviewed Pakistan-Egypt relations, expressed satisfaction over positive cooperation, and agreed to enhance collaboration in trade, investment, education, culture and people-to-people exchanges. Both sides also agreed to re-activate existing bilateral mechanisms.

The ministers reaffirmed commitment to peace, stability and sustainable development, and Dar thanked Egypt for its hospitality.

World media acknowledges Pakistan's mediatory role in US-Iran conflict

News Desk

World media is all praise for Pakistan's mediation, which helped the US and Iran strike a peace deal. According to Bloomberg, Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif played a key role in bringing about a reconciliation between the two countries.

According to the publication, Pakistani leaders kept meeting their Iranian counterparts so that they could be brought to the negotiating table. "This resulted in a round of talks in Islamabad,

and eventually a peace deal between Iran and the US," writes Bloomberg.

The journal states that the US President Donald Trump called Field Marshal Asim Munir his 'favourite'.

It further says that Pakistan's better understanding with both the US and Iran placed it in a position where it could mediate between the two.

On the other hand, former British member of the parliament (MP) Stephen Pound has declared Pakistan's mediation extremely important in the current scenario.

Gilani full support for Murree Expressway tragedy victims' families

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani expressed condolences to families of those killed in the tragic Murree Expressway accident and assured them of all possible financial assistance and cooperation.

According to details, Gilani visited homes of victims in Sutriwat area of Multan and families affected by the van accident on Murree Motorway. He met bereaved families, expressed heartfelt sorrow and said eleven people from Sutriwat neighborhood of Shahr-e-Auliya were killed. Calling it a very sad and heartbreaking incident, he noted that all of Multan, including the families, is mourning. He said the loss of precious human lives cannot be compensated and he shares the grief of families equally.



Speaking on behalf of himself and his sons, Gilani said he directed his son, MNA Ali Qasim Gilani, to immediately reach Rawalpindi after the accident to ensure maximum facilities for the

injured and affected families. Ali Qasim Gilani contacted Commissioner Rawalpindi Aamir Khattak and Deputy Commissioner Murree Zaheer Abbas Shirazi and instructed them to provide full assistance

to victims and their families. Appreciating Punjab government's efforts to send recommendations for victim families, Gilani said the bereaved family will receive all possible cooperation and

financial aid. He prayed Allah grant the deceased high ranks in Paradise and give the families patience. He directed Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan and Multan district administration to provide full humanitarian support and ensure deceased's belongings are handed to heirs quickly. He also appealed to the government to prioritize best treatment facilities for the injured. PPP Punjab Assembly members and relatives of the deceased were present. PPP members of the Punjab Assembly, including Rana Iqbal Siraj, Rana Sajjad, Rizwan Abid Thahim, former MPA Dr. Javed Siddiqui, Naseem Labar, Ali Tahir Lak, Sajid Awan, Aqeel Ansari, and the families of the deceased, including Malik Ashraf Bhatti, Zubair Hussain Bhatti, Bihar Aslam, Saqib Bhatti, and Ashfaq Hussain, were present during the visit.

MC dinner in Karachi unites Kashmiri candidates behind a single candidate



Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference Sindh Circle hosted a dinner in Karachi, with President Rana Aziz-ul-Hassan welcoming special guests Syed Abdul Nafaf Gilani and candidates Chaudhry Saud Mukhtar and Col. Rtd. Ch. Abdul Qadeer. Rana Aziz-ul-Hassan thanked guests from Punjab, stating the event's goals were to unite Kashmiri candidates and highlight the national character of Kashmiris. He emphasized the unprecedented sacrifices of Kashmiri people for Pakistan, citing the construction of Mangala Dam where thousands lost homes and lands. He noted Kashmiris' unwavering loyalty to Pakistan and their priority on national interest during difficulties. Rana Aziz-ul-Hassan quoted Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, stating that Muslim League and Muslim Conference are two branches of the same family. During the event, after mutual consultation, Muslim Conference candidate Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Jamal from LA-34 Jammu-1 constituency withdrew in favor of Chaudhry Saud Mukhtar, with participants expressing full support.

Record 755 Candidates File Nominations for Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: 755 candidates currently submitted their nomination papers with the ECP to participate in the general elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

According to details 264 candidates from Mirpur division, 193 candidates from Muzaffarabad division and 146 candidates from refugees-resident settled in Pakistan have filed their nomination papers with the Election Commission.



Punjab MPA calls for end to restrictions on Imam Hussain mourning gatherings

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab MPA Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari has demanded an immediate end to restrictions and legal cases against organizers of Imam Hussain (A. S.) mourning gatherings, calling Imam Hussain's message one of truth, loyalty, sacrifice, and resistance to oppression.

Speaking to media at his residence, Bukhari praised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's initiative to set up water and refreshment stalls, or "Sabeels," for mourners as commendable. However, he expressed concern over cases being registered under various laws against organizers and founders of long-standing, traditional Majalis-e-Aza across Punjab. He noted that despite the High Court's ruling allowing mourning gatherings within private premises, authorities are still taking action, including arrests in some areas, which he said contradicts judicial orders.

He warned that mourning for Imam Hussain will continue until Judgment Day, and if gatherings in private premises and Imambarghas are forcibly stopped, mourners will observe rituals on streets. He called on the government to withdraw all cases and restrictions related to mourning and ensure citizens' constitutional right to practice their religious beliefs.

Professional Photographers Association, Nikon hosts successful ZR Meet & Greet Walk 2026

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The "Nikon ZR Meet & Greet Walk 2026" was successfully organized for photography professionals and enthusiasts, with Nikon experts, Syed Zubair Qutb, Country Manager Nikon Pakistan, and Master Trainer Ardi Alao joining professional photographers, videographers, media persons and hobbyists.

Muhammad Ahmed, President of Professional Photographers Association Registered Faisalabad, and his cabinet stressed the need for more such workshops to familiarize local and out-of-city photographers with ZR camera technology.

Participants received detailed briefings on modern photography and videography tech, Nikon's latest camera systems, new features, and professional photography aspects. Experts shared experiences, highlighted latest developments, creative approaches and modern techniques. The workshop gave photographers and videographers strong networking opportunities to exchange ideas and learn new skills.

At the conclusion, top-performing and active photographers and cameramen were honored with shields and certificates.

Chairman Tanveer Hussain Zaidi, President Muhammad Ahmed, Patron-in-Chief Muhammad Asif, Information Secretary Abdul Majid and other participants termed the event positive, informative and memorable, saying it played a key role in promoting modern photography and videography in Faisalabad.

Rainy season

ISLAMABAD: Motorists on their way at a road during light rain, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Azad Kashmir Elections: PML-N and Jamiat Ahle Hadith Seal Electoral Alliance for Stability and Development

City Desk.

ISLAMABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Central Jamiat Ahle Hadith and Pakistan Muslim League (PML) held a final meeting in Islamabad to finalize an electoral alliance for the upcoming Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections, following two months of consultations.

The alliance was formed considering the broader ethnic, national, religious, and mass interests of Azad Kashmir. The meeting emphasized the need for coordinated and effective leadership to tackle political, economic, social, and administrative challenges.

Both parties committed to providing basic rights and facilities, promoting merit and transparency,



establishing good governance, creating youth employment, and ensuring sustainable development.

Discussions also focused on promoting Islamic values, implementing Islamization, preserving religious identity, and strengthening Pakistan's ideology and national unity. They pledged continued political,

moral, and diplomatic support to the oppressed people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir and to highlight the Kashmir freedom movement.

The alliance aims to end ideological struggles and strengthen Pakistan-Kashmir ties, countering disruptive elements. Both parties agreed that the primary goal is service to

the people, not power acquisition, focusing on construction, public welfare, law and order, and a stable, welfare state.

The participants expressed hope the alliance will bring political stability and a bright future. Key attendees included PML-N President Shah Ghulam Qadir and Senior Vice President Mushtaq Minhas, along with Jamiat leaders like Maulana Syed Atiqur Rehman Shah, Ali Daniil Shahab Madni, and others.

Though absent, Amir Maulana Muhammad Siddique Siddiqui supported the decision. The leadership is determined to grow the alliance through mutual respect, trust, and consultation, presenting viable alternatives in the elections.

Tahir Naseem Group Wins District Cricket Association Toba Tek Singh Elections

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: The elections of the District Cricket Association (DCA) Toba Tek Singh were successfully held in Faisalabad, where the Tahir Naseem Group secured a clear majority and emerged victorious. According to the election results, Tahir Naseem was elected President, Lala Ejaz

as Secretary and Zeeshan-ul-Haq Shani as Treasurer. The newly elected office-bearers will serve a three-year term and are expected to work for the promotion of cricket in the district, support young talent and improve sports activities and management.

Sources said that out of a total of 17 votes cast, the Tahir Naseem Group secured 11 votes to achieve

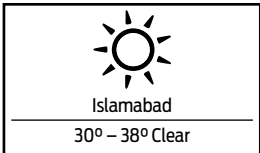
a convincing victory. Following the announcement of the results, celebrations began among cricket circles across the district, while citizens, cricket enthusiasts and various stakeholders extended their congratulations and best wishes to the newly elected leadership. On this occasion, Suhail Ahmed, President of Muhammadiya Cricket Club Toba Tek



Singh, Abdul Salam Sajid, President of Muhammadiya Fighters Cricket Club Toba Tek Singh, and the Patron-

in-Chief of Muhammadiya Cricket Academy, Sports Stadium Jhang Road Toba Tek Singh congratulated

the newly elected office-bearers and expressed their best wishes for their future responsibilities.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings
 Fajr 3:14 am
 Zohr 12:10 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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
 Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Over 15,000 personnel deployed for Muharram security in Islamabad: IGP Rizvi

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi on Sunday said more than 15,000 police officers and personnel had been deployed to secure 177 processions and 929 Majalis being held across the federal capital during Muharram-ul-Haram.

An official told APP that the IGP Rizvi visited Imambargah Asna Ashri, where he reviewed security arrangements, inspected the route of the main procession and met with the Imambargah administration.

IGP Rizvi was briefed on security measures put in place for Muharram processions and Majalis and directed officers to ensure strict implementation of the security plan.

Rizvi said foolproof security arrangements had been made for the central procession and all other religious gatherings being held across Islamabad.

He said 10 field vigilance teams, working under the supervision of senior police officers, had been tasked with monitoring and inspecting security arrangements throughout Muharram-ul-Haram.

The IGP said special checking points had been established in areas where processions and Majalis were being held, while dedicated patrolling units had been deployed across the district. Search operations were also continuing as part of the overall security plan.

Punjab Launches Himmat Card Distribution for Nearly 30,000 Special Children

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the distribution of Himmat Cards among 29,768 eligible special children across Punjab has commenced as part of a major welfare initiative aimed at empowering children with special needs.

In line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Special Education Department has launched a comprehensive programme to promote the welfare, independence and social inclusion of special children.

A Himmat Card distribution ceremony was held at the Maryam Nawaz Centre of Excellence in Okara, where Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Special Education, Sania Ashiq, attended as the chief guest. Accompanied by the Secretary and Director General of Special Education, she formally inaugurated the distribution of the cards.

Addressing the ceremony, Sania

Ashiq said that Himmat Cards would be distributed among 29,768 eligible special children across Punjab, while 96 students of the Maryam Nawaz Centre of Excellence, Okara, received their cards during the inaugural ceremony.

She said that the Punjab government was extending various facilities to special children, including Himmat Cards, assistive devices, nutritious food and therapy services.

The Special Assistant announced that satellite campuses of autism schools would be established in every division of Punjab to enable special children to access assessment and therapy services closer to their homes.

Sania Ashiq described the Himmat Card as a significant welfare initiative of the Chief Minister aimed at promoting the independence, confidence and economic well-being of special children. She said the facilities available at the Centre of Excellence were comparable to the best institutions and reflected the government's commitment to inclusive education and rehabilitation.



Security arrangement

ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy shipping containers arrived for roads block during to Mourning procession in Muharram al Haram month, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Restaurant Association Hails Shehbaz, Munir for Strengthening National Unity and Economy

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: President of the Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets and Bakers Association Pakistan, Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, stated that the government's effective measures to promote peace and stability, safeguard national security, and provide relief to the public are highly commendable.

He praised the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, saying that their efforts to strengthen national unity, economic stability, and public



welfare have enhanced the confidence of the nation.

In a joint statement, President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, Chairman Mumtaz Ahmad, and Patron-in-Chief Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem said that the initiatives taken

for national security, peace, and public welfare deserve appreciation. Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry added that the current leadership has made sincere and effective efforts to protect national interests, strengthen the economy, and

reduce public hardships, with positive results being felt across the country. Mumtaz Ahmad and Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem emphasized that peace and stability are the foundation of progress and prosperity, while public relief measures are benefiting both citizens and the business community. Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry expressed hope that the government and national institutions would continue working with the same commitment for Pakistan's development, economic improvement, and public welfare.

Selection from Across Asia for a Lecture is an Honor for Pakistan, Says Dr. Syed Imran Ali Shah

News Desk

KARACHI: Renowned Pakistani orthopedic surgeon and Medical Director of AO Hospital (Private) Limited, Dr. Syed Imran Ali Shah, has said that his selection by the Bone & Joint Infection Society to deliver a lecture at a medical conference held in Cardiff, United Kingdom, from among specialists across Asia, is a great honor for both himself and Pakistan.

He expressed his sincere gratitude to the conference organizers, Dr. Ridhian Morgan-Jones and Dr. Jenny Ward, for inviting him as a special guest and providing him with the opportunity to address such a prestigious gathering.

Dr. Imran Ali Shah stated that one of the key reasons for his invitation was to share insights into the remarkable achievements of his late father, Dr. Muhammad Ali Shah, a world-renowned orthopedic surgeon and recipient of a Presidential Award, and to discuss the factors behind his professional success.

At the conclusion of the conference, Dr. Ridhian Morgan-Jones and Dr. Jenny Ward thanked Dr. Syed Imran Ali Shah and all distinguished guests and speakers for their valuable contributions to the event.



Awaam Pakistan Party Hails Visionary Leadership of Field Marshal Asim Munir

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Central Vice President of the Awaam Pakistan Party, Chaudhry Inam Zafar, and Additional General Secretary Hafiz Usman Abbasi praised the visionary leadership, professionalism, and unwavering commitment of Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, saying his efforts have significantly strengthened Pakistan's peace, stability, national unity, and defence.

In a joint statement, they said that under his leadership, important steps have been taken to enhance national security, improve law and order, and promote unity. Referring to efforts to reduce tensions between Iran and the United States and encourage dialogue, they stated that his strategic approach to safeguarding Pakistan's national interests has earned recognition at both the national and international levels. They emphasized that a strong, peaceful, and stable Pakistan is essential for progress and prosperity, and expressed confidence that under the leadership of Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, the country will continue to achieve greater peace, stability, and development.



PIEAS improves global ranking, moves up to 560th position in latest QS World University Rankings

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In the latest QS World University Rankings, Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS) staged a remarkable recovery, climbing from the 721-730 band in the previous edition to 560th place globally.

PIEAS is a premier public sector university functioning under the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) and is renowned for its excellence in engineering, applied sciences, and research. It has emerged as the third-highest-ranked university in Pakistan. The achievement reflects the institution's continued commitment to quality education, research, and innovation.

PIEAS's highly qualified faculty, combined with excellent infrastructure, plays a key role in its mission to deliver high-quality education in engineering and applied sciences, meet national and regional needs for highly skilled professionals, and contribute to the welfare of humanity through education, research, and development. The institute has been ranked No. 1 in Engineering & Technology by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan in all three rankings conducted in 2006, 2012, and 2013.

The QS World University Rankings, published annually by Quacquarelli Symonds, is one of the most widely read and trusted global university evaluations. It measures university performance using standardised indicators like academic and employer reputation, research impact, faculty-to-student ratio, and internationalisation.

Reduction in Petroleum Prices is Welcome, but the Public Needs Real Relief

News Desk

KARACHI/QUETTA: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, has welcomed the recent reduction in petroleum prices, stating that in light of global oil prices and the country's economic situation, the decision is a positive development that will provide some relief to the public. However, given the prevailing economic challenges, he said the reduction remains insufficient compared to the hardships faced by ordinary citizens, and the government must take further effective measures.



He stated that over the past several years, repeated increases in petroleum prices have led to higher trans-

portation costs, electricity tariffs, food prices, and the cost of other essential

goods, placing a heavy burden on the common people. Now that petrol and diesel prices have been reduced, the benefits should be passed on to consumers, and there should be a visible decline in the prices of essential commodities across the market.

Syed Aman Shah emphasized that it is the government's responsibility to establish an effective monitoring mechanism to ensure that the benefits of lower petroleum prices reach the public. If fuel has become cheaper, then transport fares, freight charges and the prices of basic necessities should also decrease accordingly. Otherwise, the reduction in petroleum prices will fail to provide meaningful relief to the people.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

Trionda, Trust, and Pakistan's Moment on the World Stage

As the FIFA World Cup 2026 unfolds across the United States, Canada, and Mexico, billions of people are captivated by the world's greatest sporting event. Every goal, every save, every pass, every moment of triumph and heartbreak revolves around a single object: Trionda, the official FIFA World Cup 2026 match ball manufactured in Sialkot, Pakistan.

For Pakistanis, Trionda is much more than a football. It is a symbol of excellence, craftsmanship, innovation, and international recognition. Although Pakistan has never qualified for the final stages of the FIFA World Cup, it has nevertheless become an indispensable participant in the tournament. Every team plays with a football made in Pakistan. Every goal scored in the tournament is scored with a football produced by Pakistani hands.

Yet, as I watch these developments from the United States, I find that Trionda is only one part of a much larger story.

The real story is that Pakistan today finds itself at the center of global attention not merely because of what it manufactures, but because of what it has increasingly come to represent: a country capable of building bridges where others build walls, a country capable of facilitating dialogue when confrontation appears inevitable, and a country whose voice is increasingly being heard in discussions that shape the future of regions far beyond its borders.

The first source of pride is Trionda

itself. The success of Sialkot's football industry demonstrates that Pakistan possesses the talent, ingenuity, and entrepreneurial spirit necessary to compete at the highest levels of international manufacturing.

The second and perhaps more consequential source of pride is Pakistan's growing diplomatic stature. The Middle East recently stood at the edge of a dangerous and potentially devastating confrontation. The conflict involving Iran, Israel, and the United States threatened not only regional stability but also the global economy. Energy supplies, international shipping routes, financial markets, trade flows, and investment confidence all faced uncertainty. The consequences of a prolonged conflict would have extended far beyond the region, affecting billions of people around the world. It was during this critical period that Pakistan emerged as an active diplomatic participant.

What makes Pakistan's diplomatic role particularly noteworthy is not merely the outcome of the negotiations but the degree to which Pakistan was perceived as a trusted facilitator of communication during a period of extraordinary tension.

In international diplomacy, agreements are often delayed, diluted, or derailed by layers of intermediaries, competing bureaucracies, conflicting agendas, and institutional rivalries.

Messages pass through multiple channels, each adding interpretation, hesitation, or distortion. Frequently, noise overwhelms substance and misunderstandings replace clarity.

The diplomatic engagement associated with Pakistan appeared different. The most valuable asset in diplomacy is not military strength, economic power, or political influence. It is trust. Trust cannot be purchased. It cannot be demanded. It must be earned through consistency, discretion, credibility, and reliability over time.

The events surrounding the negotiations suggested that Pakistan had accumulated a remarkable reservoir of such trust. It appeared capable of maintaining communication with multiple stakeholders simultaneously while preserving confidence on all sides. Whether engaging with Washington, Tehran, regional capitals, or major international partners, Pakistan demonstrated a capacity to remain a credible interlocutor at a moment when credible interlocutors were desperately needed.

The resulting Memorandum of Understanding carried significance far beyond the text of the document itself. It symbolized the possibility that dialogue could prevail over escalation and negotiation over confrontation. It also reflected a level of confidence in Pakistan's diplomatic role that would have been difficult

to imagine only a few years ago.

For many Pakistanis, one of the most powerful aspects of the process was the perception that Pakistan's leadership had earned the confidence necessary to engage directly with key decision-makers during a period of historic importance. Whether viewed from Islamabad, Washington, Tehran, Ankara, Beijing, or elsewhere, the broader message was clear: Pakistan was no longer merely observing history; it was participating in it.

The importance of this trust cannot be overstated. Military power creates deterrence. Economic power creates leverage. Diplomatic trust creates opportunity. A nation that can communicate with competing powers, maintain relationships across geopolitical divides, and contribute to reducing tensions acquires a form of influence that cannot be measured merely in economic or military terms. Such influence enhances strategic relevance and elevates international standing.

The third source of pride has been Pakistan's performance at the United Nations. During one of the most sensitive periods in recent international affairs, Pakistan's representatives articulated their positions with clarity, conviction, and professionalism. They defended principles of sovereignty, international law, dialogue, and peaceful dispute resolution while engaging effectively with representatives of major powers.

For overseas Pakistanis, these moments were especially meaningful. Watching Pakistan's voice resonate

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

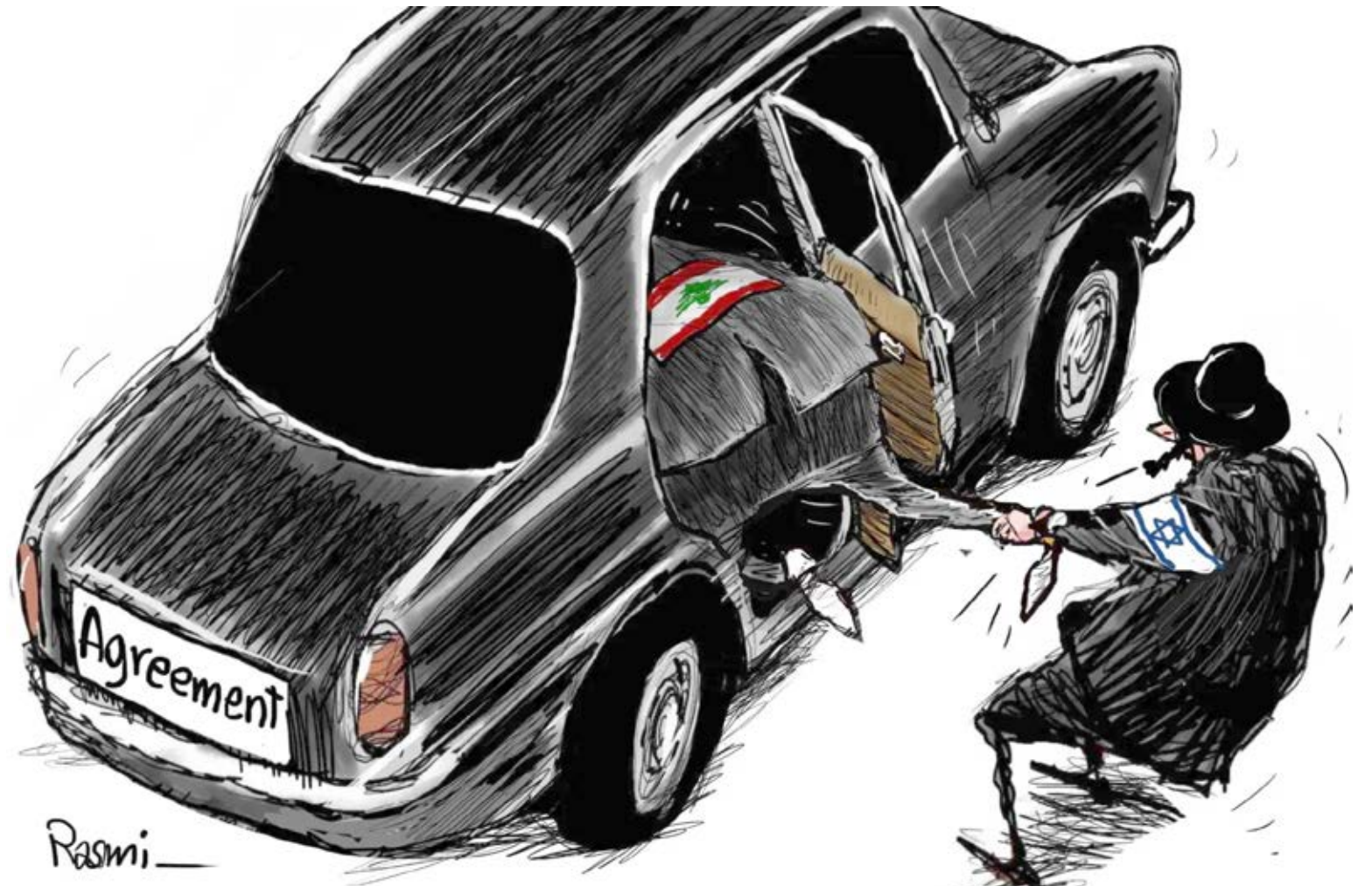
India's water manipulation & Indus Waters Treaty

India has launched what is being called a "water war" against Pakistan through the controversial Chenab-Beas link tunnel project, which allegedly undermines the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty. The \$23.5 billion project in Himachal Pradesh's Lahul-Spiti region plans a 9-kilometre tunnel to divert about 2 million acre-feet of water annually from the Chenab River into the Beas River, with completion set for July 2029. Under the Treaty, Pakistan holds rights over the western rivers—Chenab, Jhelum and Indus. Critics argue India's diversion violates the Treaty's spirit and international law, including the UN Watercourses Convention 1997 and Article 60 of the Vienna Convention 1969. The author urges Pakistan to urgently pursue legal and diplomatic options, including seeking an advisory opinion from the International Court of Justice, to challenge the project and protect its water rights.

The article recalls the Indus Basin Development Project that followed the Treaty. World Bank President Eugene Robert Black spearheaded it, with funding from the US, Germany, World Bank, Canada, UK, Australia, New Zealand and India. The project delivered two major storage dams, six barrages, eight link canals and related infrastructure on time and without corruption. Mangla Dam exemplified institutional capacity, and Tarbela became the world's largest earth-filled dam. After Tarbela, Pakistan's GDP growth averaged over 7%, among Asia's highest. WAPDA House in Lahore is also a legacy of that effort. Mangla was built in six years and Tarbela in eight, using local institutions. By contrast, Pakistan's later projects have stalled: the 969 MW Neelum-Jhelum project has been shut since 2022 due to technical faults and poor materials, and Diamer-Bhasha Dam, inaugurated by President Musharraf in 2006, remains delayed in 2026.

The writer argues that if India diverts Chenab water toward Ravi or Beas, it should be accountable not just to Pakistan but also to the countries that financed the original Treaty projects. The Treaty is an international commitment, not a favor, so India cannot unilaterally suspend it. If Pakistan stays silent, the issue should go to the UN and other international forums. The author also reflects on how opposition to Kalabagh Dam deprived Pakistan of water storage and cheap electricity, worsening energy crises, fuel dependence and flood damage, while external influences and media neglect harmed water/energy priorities.

Pakistan now faces severe water scarcity despite being agricultural. Reservoirs are heavily silted, groundwater is falling fast, and tanker mafias dominate supply. Dams including Tarbela, Mangla, Warsak, Mirani, Hub, Khanpur, Satpara, Rawal, Gomal Zam and Neelum-Jhelum have lost much storage capacity, hurting power, drinking water and industry. Unlike China, Turkey and the US, Pakistan rarely cleans dams comprehensively. Rainwater harvesting remains mostly talk, while cities like Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Peshawar and Quetta waste millions of gallons annually. Small dams are also urgently needed.



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

Inclusive Education: Reaching Every Learner, No Child Left Behind

Education is broadly familiar as a fundamental human right and a powerful tool for social and economic development. However, the true success of an education system lies not merely in enrolling students but in ensuring that every child, regardless of ability, background, gender, language, or socio-economic status, has equal opportunities to learn and thrive. This principle forms the foundation of inclusive education, an approach that seeks to create learning environments where all students feel welcomed, respected, and supported. For Pakistan, where millions of children continue to face barriers to education, inclusive education is not just an educational strategy but a social necessity.

Inclusive education is based on the belief that every child can learn when provided with appropriate opportunities and support. It promotes the integration of children with disabilities, learning difficulties, and diverse backgrounds into mainstream classrooms rather than segregating them into separate institutions. This approach recognizes diversity as a strength rather than a challenge and encourages schools to adapt to the needs of learners instead of expecting learners to adapt to rigid systems.

Pakistan has made significant progress in expanding educational access over the years, yet many children remain excluded from quality learning opportunities. Children with disabilities, those living in remote areas, girls facing cultural restrictions, and learners from disadvantaged communities often encounter obstacles that limit their educational participation. Inclusive education offers a pathway to address these inequalities by ensuring that schools are

designed to accommodate all learners.

One of the greatest advantages of inclusive education is that it promotes social cohesion and mutual respect. When children from different backgrounds learn together, they develop understanding, empathy, and tolerance. Students learn to appreciate diversity and recognize that differences in ability, culture, language, or social status should never become grounds for discrimination. Such experiences contribute to building a more inclusive and harmonious society.

For children with disabilities, inclusive classrooms provide opportunities to interact with peers, participate in social activities, and develop confidence. Research has consistently shown that many students with special educational needs perform better academically and socially when educated alongside their peers in supportive environments. At the same time, non-disabled students benefit by developing compassion, cooperation, and leadership skills.

Teachers play a central role in making inclusive education successful. An inclusive classroom requires educators who understand diverse learning needs and employ flexible teaching strategies. Teachers must adapt lesson plans, use multiple instructional methods, and provide individualized support where necessary. Visual aids, interactive activities, group work, and technology-assisted learning can help ensure that all students participate meaningfully in classroom activities.

Teacher training is therefore critical. Many educators in Pakistan have limited exposure to inclusive teaching practices and may feel unprepared to support learners with diverse

needs. Professional development programs should equip teachers with skills in differentiated instruction, classroom management, and basic understanding of learning disabilities. A well-trained teacher can transform an inclusive classroom into a space where every learner feels valued.

Infrastructure is another important consideration. Many schools lack ramps, accessible washrooms, assistive technologies, and other facilities necessary for students with disabilities. Creating inclusive learning environments requires investment in school infrastructure and learning resources. Accessibility should be viewed not as an additional expense but as an investment in equal opportunity.

Technology offers new possibilities for inclusive education. Digital tools such as screen readers, speech-to-text software, educational applications, and online learning platforms can support students with different learning needs. Technology can also help bridge geographical barriers, enabling children in remote areas to access quality educational resources. Expanding digital inclusion should therefore be an important component of educational planning.

Parents and communities also have a vital role to play. Successful inclusion depends on positive attitudes and collaborative efforts. Families, educators, and community leaders must work together to challenge stereotypes and create supportive environments for all learners. Public awareness campaigns can help reduce stigma associated with disabilities and encourage greater acceptance of diversity within schools and society.

Policy support remains essential for advancing inclusive education in Pakistan. Educational policies should clearly prioritize inclusion and allocate adequate resources for implementation. Curriculum frameworks,

Continued on Page 7

Hingor-Class Submarine Inducted into Pakistan Navy, Boosting Maritime Defense

On April 30, 2026, Pakistan inducted the advanced Hingor-class submarine into its navy during a high-profile ceremony in Sanya, China, highlighting the deep Pakistan-China strategic partnership and attended by President Asif Ali Zardari and senior Chinese officials. The event symbolized a shared achievement and marked a transformative leap in Pakistan's naval capabilities, replacing aging submarines with fourth-generation platforms designed for stealth, endurance, and high-threat operations. These submarines significantly enhance Pakistan's ability to defend its sovereignty and maritime interests, particularly vital economic assets like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor and Gwadar port, protecting them from blockades or aggression. Operating in increasingly contested global sea lanes, especially in the Indian Ocean, the Hingor-class strengthens maritime stability through capabilities such as prolonged submerged operations, intelligence gathering, mine-laying, and precision strikes, while their stealth forces adversaries to commit greater resources to counter them and ensures the protection of key ports and shipping routes critical to Pakistan's economy.

The name "Hingor" carries historical significance, honoring the PNS Hingor's decisive role in the 1971 war when it sank the Indian frigate INS Khukri, marking the first such submarine kill since World War II and elevating Pakistan Navy's global standing. This legacy shapes the doctrine and morale of the new fleet, emphasizing stealth, patience, and precision. Technically, the Hingor-class represents a major advancement, with larger size, greater displacement, and especially the integration of air-independent propulsion, allowing it to remain submerged for weeks without surfacing, drastically improving stealth and endurance compared to traditional diesel-electric submarines. Equipped with advanced sonar systems, towed arrays, and modern optronic masts offering enhanced surveillance with minimal detectability, these submarines integrate into a network-centric combat system for rapid threat assessment and response, making them highly effective in intelligence, surveillance, and combat roles while significantly strengthening Pakistan's maritime defense posture.

In terms of weaponry, the Hingor-class is a veritable arsenal beneath the waves. It features a bank of six or eight 533-millimeter heavy-weight torpedo tubes, capable of firing a potent mix of munitions. The primary anti-ship weapon is expected to be the Pakistani-Chinese Harba-class submarine-launched cruise missile, a derivative or parallel development to the land-attack cruise missiles already in Pakistan's inventory. These missiles can be configured with conventional high-explosive warheads and possess a range reported to be upwards of 450 to 700 kilometers. This equips the Hingor-class with a formidable land-attack capability, allowing it to strike strategic targets deep inside enemy territory from concealed offshore positions, acting as a sea-based second-strike option that complicates an adversary's targeting calculus. For anti-ship warfare, the

Continued on Page 7

Analysis



Dr. T. M. Malik

Analysis



Abdul Basit Alvi

Pakistan's Religious Scholars Pledge Harmony and Peace Ahead of Muharram

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Religious scholars and spiritual leaders from all schools of thought in Pakistan reaffirmed their commitment to the Paigham-e-Pakistan Code of Conduct and pledged full cooperation with the National Paigham-e-Aman Committee to maintain peace during Muharram-ul-Haram. The pledge was made during an Inter-Sect Harmony and Peace Seminar in Gujranwala, organized by the Provincial Paigham-e-Aman Committee Punjab and the Pakistan Ulema Council. The seminar focused on inter-

sect harmony, religious tolerance, and national unity. Speakers led by Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi emphasized that Muharram conveys values of unity, patience, sacrifice, and tolerance. They called on followers of all schools to strengthen national cohesion and brotherhood, and reaffirmed the Islamabad Declaration's guiding principle: "Remain steadfast in your own school of thought, but do not provoke others." Ashrafi urged Kashmiris to end their sit-in and resolve issues through dialogue. He stressed that despite differences, unity on national and reli-

gious matters remains essential, especially against hostile forces spreading sectarian hatred. He noted that state institutions, religious leaders, and the public must remain vigilant, reporting suspicious activities and avoiding the spread of unverified social media content. Muharram commemorates Imam Hussain's (RA) sacrifice against oppression. Ashrafi emphasized that Islam is a religion of peace and tolerance, with no link to terrorism. The seminar commended Pakistan's diplomatic role in the U.S.-Iran peace deal. It concluded with a renewed pledge to cooperate with



armed forces and law enforcement to ensure peaceful Muharram observances and promote interfaith harmony nationwide.

The Strait of Hormuz Crisis: Energy Security in an Era of Regional War

Muhammad Shahid

There's a single chokepoint that keeps the lights on in Karachi, the buses running in Lahore, and the mills spinning in Faisalabad. It's not in Pakistan. It's a 33-kilometre stretch of water between Iran and Oman, and when it closed, Pakistan stopped. Petrol stations ran dry. Grocery bills doubled in a week. Hospitals started rationing diesel for generators. The Strait of Hormuz shut down, and a country of 240 million people discovered just how fast modern life unravels when one shipping lane does. The Strait of Hormuz looks unremarkable on a map. Just 33 kilometres wide, tucked between Iran and Oman at the entrance to the Persian Gulf. But in 2024, roughly 20 million barrels of crude oil, condensate, and refined fuels passed through it every day. That's about a fifth of all the petroleum liquids the world uses. On top of that, Europe gets 12 to 14% of its LNG from Qatar through the same route, plus up to 30% of globally traded fertilizer. All of it squeezed through that one passage.

When the strait effectively shut down on February 28, 2026, the day when US and Israel launched Operation Epic Fury against Iran, the fallout was immediate. Iran hit them back with drones, ballistic missiles, and small attack boats, making the route more risky for commercial ships. Insurance either vanished or it totally became impossibly expensive. Crews refused to sail. Traffic collapsed. What was around 130 ships a day in February dropped to just 6 in March. A 95% fall. The International Energy Agency called it the "greatest global energy security challenge in history" and "the largest supply disruption in the history of the global oil market." Pakistan is right in the middle of this mess, not because it lit the match, but because it built its whole energy system next to a powder keg. About 80% of Pakistan's crude oil imports come through the Strait of Hormuz. And with only 10 to 14 days of reserves, among the lowest anywhere, compared to the IEA's recommended 90-day buffer, there was no cushion when the crisis hit. Fuel and food prices jumped overnight. Lines formed at petrol stations.

The government cut the work week for about four days, shut down the schools, and told people to work from home. Pakistan even asked cricket fans to watch matches at home to save fuel. That small detail says a lot about how bad things got. The numbers are brutal. If oil stays near \$150 a barrel, Pakistan's monthly fuel bill could triple, hitting \$3.5 to \$4.5 billion. That isn't just a budget problem for the finance ministry. It shows up in bus fares, in a sack of flour, in the price of medicine. The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics warned inflation could hit 15 to 17% if the disruption drags on. In a country where so many live hand to mouth, that's devastating. The World Bank points out that food eats up around 43% of household spending in low-income countries. For Pakistan's urban poor, daily wages run out long before the week does. And this isn't just Pakistan's problem. Energy prices are set to jump 24% in 2026, the highest since Russia invaded Ukraine in 2022, according to the World Bank's latest Commodity Markets Outlook. Fertilizer costs have spiked 31%, putting up to 45 million

more people at risk of acute food insecurity worldwide. The World Bank's Chief Economist, Imrith Gill, put it bluntly: "The war is hitting the global economy in cumulative waves: first through higher energy prices, then higher food prices, and finally, higher inflation, which will push up interest rates and make debt even more expensive." Asia took the first and hardest hit, with 84% of crude shipments through the strait in 2024 headed for Asian markets. Pakistan, Bangladesh, and Vietnam are among the worst off. The Philippines declared a national energy emergency. On Wall Street and in Washington, people started talking about \$200 oil. Traders and energy advisers kept saying the world still hadn't grasped how serious this was. This is the 1970s oil shock all over again, only bigger, faster, and tied into everything. In a strange twist, Pakistan ended up playing a key diplomatic role. On June 18, 2026, Pakistan, acting as the main mediator, announced that the US-Iran memorandum meant Tehran would reopen the strait soon. Pakistan helped end a crisis that had almost flattened it. A country with enough pull to broker

peace abroad couldn't even keep its own petrol pumps running. That should rattle every policymaker in Islamabad. Because this crisis didn't just reveal a weak supply chain. It exposed something deeper. A failure of imagination and planning that goes back decades. Pakistan has no shortage of energy potential. The northern mountains could power massive hydro projects. The plains get some of the best sunlight on earth. Since 2021, Pakistan has imported almost 50 gigawatts of solar panels, and an estimated 35GW is already up and running, both on-grid and off-grid. The base for an energy shift is there. What's been missing is urgency, money, and the political will to act before a crisis forces our hand. The fix isn't mysterious. Build strategic oil reserves for at least 60 to 90 days. Go big on solar and hydropower. Cut reliance on imported LNG. Fix public transport to burn less fuel. Find other ways to bring in oil. None of this is radical. Most middle-income countries figured it out years ago. I'm writing this as a student living through it, and it's clear my generation will deal with both the damage and the

choices that come next. The Strait of Hormuz crisis of 2026 proved what energy experts have said for years: if a country can't keep its hospitals, schools, and factories running on its own terms, it isn't really sovereign. It's just renting stability at whatever the market charges. Pakistan didn't start this war. It didn't mine the strait. It didn't launch Operation Epic Fury. But it's paying the price, because years of putting things off left it exposed when the inevitable happened. The waters of the Strait of Hormuz are opening up again. The tankers will move. Prices will come down, eventually. But the vulnerability stays unless Pakistan treats this moment as more than a crisis to survive. It has to be a reason to change. The question isn't whether Pakistan can afford to invest in energy independence. The real question, staring us down from every empty fuel station and every overpriced grocery bag, is whether it can afford not to. *The writer is studying in B.SIR at National Defense University, Islamabad.*



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised a seminar titled, "Water as a Weapon in Modern-day Conflict: From International Treaties to Maritime Chokepoints,"

on 18 June 2026. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Air Marshal Irfan

Ahmad, Director National Security at CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address. Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah, Pakistan Commissioner for Indus Waters, framed South Asian water governance as "hydro-strategy," blending infrastructure,

CASS Lahore Seminar Emphasizes Untapped \$40 Billion Maritime Potential for Pakistan's Growth

law, and political signalling. IWT has provided stability in post-1948 water sharing, while the Indus Basin underpins Pakistan's reliance on dams and barrage systems. He highlighted emerging challenges like data control, flow regulation and "hydro-coercion," where water management can be used as a tool of strategic pressure. He called for coordinated legal, technical, and diplomatic efforts, better storage, and evidence-based policies to achieve sustainable water governance. Vice Admiral Ahmed Saeed described waterways as strategic assets including ports, sea routes, chokepoints, and maritime law. UNCLOS 1982 ensures balance between navigation freedom and

coastal states' rights. He highlighted Pakistan's advantageous position in the Indian Ocean, where around 95% of trade and energy imports move by sea, serving as a bridge with global maritime trade. He emphasised Pakistan's \$40 billion untapped maritime potential, and called for sustained investment, governance, and consistent policies for sustainable growth. Ahmer Bilal Soofi, President RSIL, explained that international law operates through peacetime, armed conflict, and occupation regimes. He described academic and institutional processes shaping doctrines like self-defence under Article 51, including anticipatory interpretations. Under UNCLOS

1982, freedom of navigation, blockades, and accountability for conflict damages were discussed. He referred to India's abrogation of Article 370, developments in IIOJK, and hydrological measures, stating that "Sindoor 2.0" perpetuates a conflict mindset, undermining regional stability. In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President CASS, Lahore, highlighted water's use as a geopolitical instrument. He emphasised Indus Rivers' importance to Pakistan's economy, raising concerns over India's use of water as a weapon of mass destruction, for which it has to face extreme consequences. India's unilateral decision to put the IWT in abeyance is not

accepted by Pakistan, and denies it vehemently. He stated that IWT remains legally binding and cited PCA's ruling upholding Pakistan's position. He observed that Iran used its prerogative according to the UNCLOS to block the Strait of Hormuz as its security was under threat. He concluded that weaponisation of IWT and Strait of Hormuz carry serious economic implications for the region and globe. The event concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted navigation charges, blockade's effects, and India's violations of international law. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative in hosting an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

How Cryptocurrencies and CBDCs Are Redrawing the Architecture of Global Financial Power

Raja Ahmed Javed

The post-1945 international monetary order has been anchored by United States dollar hegemony. Institutionalized through Bretton Woods and reinforced by the dominance of the SWIFT interbank Messaging system. As a result, Washington possesses significant influence over international finance, including the ability to impose economic sanctions and regulate access to the global banking system. This order is now experiencing its most consequential challenge in eight decades—Not from rival state currency, but from two converging technological developments: decentralized Cryptocurrencies and state-backed Central Bank Digital Curren-

cies (CBDCs). Digital monetary instruments are performing a dual and contradictory geopolitical function: on one hand, they are being instrumentalized by sanctioned states—principally Iran, Russia, and North Korea—to circumvent Western financial coercive tools; on the other, they are being mobilized by both the United States (through dollar-pegged stable coins) and China (through the digital yuan and the mBridge Platform) instruments monetary statecraft and systemic competition. The launch of bitcoin (BTC) introduced a revolutionary concept of a decentralized currency working on blockchain technology operating without the central bank control. Since then thousands of crypto Currencies are launched creating new financial ecosystems. Cryptocurrencies challenge the tradi-

tional financial system in several ways. First, they allow peer-to-peer transactions without relying on conventional banking intermediaries. Second, they facilitate the global transaction with fewer restrictions than the traditional method. Third, blockchain technology provides transparent and programmable financial infrastructure. Despite the innovation it faces many limitations and its price volatility reduces usefulness as a stable medium of exchange. Regulatory uncertainty persists across many jurisdictions, and concerns regarding consumer protection, financial crime, and market manipulation remain significant. As Cryptocurrencies gained popularity, central banks began exploring their own digital alternatives. Central Bank Digital Currencies (CBDCs) represents digital forms of sovereign

money issued and backed by the national monetary authorities. Unlike Cryptocurrencies, CBDCs are under the control of the central bank while incorporating digital payment technologies. Their primary objectives include improving payment efficiency, reducing transaction costs, enhancing financial inclusion, and maintaining monetary sovereignty in the digital age. Today, a large number of economies are researching, piloting, or developing CBDCs. According to international estimates, countries representing more than 95 percent of global GDP have explored CBDC initiatives in some form. One of the significant implications of CBDCs is the cross-border transactions. Traditional transaction methods involve multiple correspondence banks, generating delay, costs and operational complexity.

Among the most prominent is Project mBridge, a collaborative platform involving the central banks of China, Hong Kong, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, and Saudi Arabia. Digital Currencies are becoming instruments of geopolitical competition. Global power recognizes that control over payment infrastructure can translate into strategic influence. China's investment in digital currency technology reflects broader efforts to internationalize the renminbi and enhance financial connectivity with trading partners. Meanwhile, Western governments are exploring their own CBDC strategies to ensure they remain influential in future financial networks. The competition is not simply about usage, it's about setting new technical standards, regulatory frame-

work and governance mechanisms for future generations of global finance. Yet the predictions of rapid collapse of dollar dominance remain premature. The strength of reserve Currencies depend upon institutional credibility, financial market depth, legal stability and geopolitical trust-factor that extend far beyond payment technology. The transition to a new global financial system isn't going to be straightforward, with the dollar phasing out and cryptocurrencies or CBDCs taking its place. Rather, the international monetary system seems to be becoming more complex and pluralistic. The technology is not only possible, but cryptocurrencies have proven it, as a means of transferring value across borders and without relying on the physical form of cash. CBDCs are an

attempt by governments to face this new reality by trying to make sovereign money more modern. These innovations are all part of the development of alternative payment networks, the questioning of current financial systems, and the change of the discussion around monetary power. For the foreseeable future, the dollar will probably remain the world's leading currency. Still, with the advent of digital money, there's a more competitive and tech-savvy monetary landscape. In this changing reality, economic power will start to be only part of the equation, as the control of the digital framework on which money flows will be another important determinant of power. *The writer is a student of International Relations at National Defence University*

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

Malaysian Envoy pledges stronger trade relations with Pakistan in Multan Visit

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Malaysian High Commissioner to Pakistan Dato Muhammad Azhar bin Mazlan, with a delegation, visited the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry. He was welcomed by Chamber President Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh, Vice President Muhammad Azhar Baloch, former presidents and Executive Committee members. Delegation members included Muhammad Zul Asri bin Rusadi, Colonel Noorripan bin Usman, Khairul Omari bin Kumaruddin, Wan Ziti Rafina binti Wan Muhammad Zuki and Muhammad Ashraf Fahmi bin Yaqoob.

Addressing the meeting, the High Commissioner said Pakistan-Malaysia relations are rooted in religious, cultural and historical ties, with vast scope for cooperation in trade, investment, education, tourism, halal industry, agriculture and modern technology. He stated Malaysia wants to strengthen bilateral economic ties and will



provide full cooperation. Calling Pakistan a large, emerging economy with young population, agricultural resources and industrial potential, he noted the Pakistan-Malaysia FTA has

benefited both business communities and more gains are possible.

President Sheikh said Malaysia is a key trading partner and South Punjab has strong

potential in agriculture, food processing, textiles, mango/cotton exports, dairy, edible oil and fertilizers. He suggested boosting bilateral trade through agro-industry promotion, palm oil/edible oil investment, food processing units, tech transfer and joint ventures, and highlighted Multan's tourism potential.

Vice President Baloch said the visit reflects strong brotherly ties and will open new opportunities for local businesses. Former President Khawaja Muhammad Hussain proposed a Malaysia-Pakistan trade, education and tourism expo in Multan and establishing an international-standard university with Malaysian cooperation. The meeting was attended by several members of the House and industrialists, including Jahanzeb Dharala, Sheikh Fahim Sattar, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali, Sohail Tufail, Mehr Muhammad Sajid, Haji Ikram, Khwaja Nadeem Shahzad, Aqeel Qureshi, Khwaja Muhammad Farooq, Irfan Baloch, Khwaja Abdul Qadir.

Sunday Bazaar

ISLAMABAD: People are busy in buying fruits in a Sunday weekly bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan's halal meat sector urged to embrace reform for global export growth

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Shahid Imran, convener of the FPCCI regional committee on food, stressed the need for practical reforms in production, cold storage, disease control, breeding, and international certification to boost Pakistan's halal meat exports. He noted the rapid global expansion of the halal food industry, with rising demand in both Muslim and non-Muslim countries. Pakistan, as a major livestock producer, has natural advantages to become a leading exporter.

Modernizing the livestock sector with scientific management could make it a key economic pillar. Province-wise development is crucial, given unique climates and breeds. Punjab, the largest milk producer, has irrigated areas



ideal for dairy farming. Livestock also empowers rural women involved in care and processing. Investment in wool processing, markets, mobile veterinary clinics, and meat export facilities could turn Balochistan into a hub for meat and wool. Balochistan, Sindh, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have strong potential for organic livestock exports due to natural grazing.

Iftikhar Malik Calls US-Iran Pact a Gateway to Regional Stability and Global Investment



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday urged global players to fully support the US-Iran rapprochement and help transform the preliminary

agreement into a comprehensive, enduring peace framework.

He said sustainable peace in the Middle East would benefit the region and strengthen the global economy by ensuring uninterrupted trade and energy flows. The historic understanding, he predicted,

would pave the way for broader cooperation, mutual trust, lasting stability, and new avenues for economic development, investment and international collaboration.

Malik warmly congratulated Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir for their pivotal role in brokering the landmark US-Iran rapprochement, calling it a diplomatic achievement and a significant step toward global peace and stability.

He added that successful mediation demonstrated Pakistan's growing stature as a responsible, credible player in international diplomacy. The US-Tehran agreement, reached after months of intensive talks, will have a positive impact on lasting peace. Regional tensions had threatened international security, trade routes, energy supplies and growth; the breakthrough will reduce geopolitical uncertainties, restore investor confidence and boost regional prosperity.

He further said Pakistan's constructive mediation has enhanced its image as a peace-loving nation committed to dialogue and conflict resolution.

PFC Chief Urges Higher Budget Allocation for Workforce Training Amid Skill Shortage

Commerce Desk



LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council, Mian Kashif Ashfaq (Sitar-i-Imtiaz) Sunday called for allocating greater funds for the development of highly trained skilled workers, as Pakistan is facing an acute shortage of skilled manpower across all industrial sectors.

Talking here today to a delegation led by Faryad Ahmad Raza Arain, President of Pakistan Furniture Importers Association Lahore, cautioned that industries in Pakistan, including furniture manufacturing,

engineering, construction, textiles, and information technology, are experiencing difficulties in finding adequately trained workers on modern scientific lines.

He said the future economic prosperity of the country depends on investing in human capital and technical expertise. He said that countries do not become rich merely because of abundant natural resources; rather, they achieve sustainable growth through a strong base of skilled and productive workers.

Leader of the delegation Faryad Ahmad Raza Arain appreciated the Pakistan Furniture Council's efforts for industrial growth and assured full cooperation in promoting skill-based education and workforce development initiatives across the country.

Envoys Show Keen Interest in RCCI MedHealth & Beauty Expo 2026

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) continued to strengthen Pakistan's international engagement in the healthcare and wellness sectors as the RCCI MedHealth & Beauty Expo 2026 received high-level diplomatic visits from Türkiye and Sri Lanka.

His Excellency Irfan Neziroglu, Ambassador of Türkiye to Pakistan, and Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne,

High Commissioner of Sri Lanka to Pakistan, visited the Expo and were warmly welcomed by RCCI President Usman Shaukat and members of the chamber leadership.

The dignitaries toured the exhibition, visited various stalls, interacted with exhibitors, and appreciated RCCI's efforts in bringing together stakeholders from the healthcare, pharmaceutical, wellness, and beauty industries on an international platform.

Ambassador Irfan Neziroglu praised the Expo for promoting innovation, investment, and cross-border business collaboration, calling it a valuable initiative to further strengthen the longstanding friendship and economic partnership between Pakistan and Türkiye.

High Commissioner Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne commended RCCI for fostering international cooperation, knowledge sharing, and business partnerships, emphasizing the



role of such platforms in advancing healthcare innovation and enhancing bilateral relations.

RCCI President Usman Shaukat said the Expo reflects RCCI's commitment to connecting Pakistan's health-

care sector with global markets and attracting international investment, adding that the diplomats' participation demonstrates growing confidence in Pakistan's healthcare and wellness industries.

Saif Ur Rehman Urges Major Boost in Agricultural Budget to Tackle Food Insecurity



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman, Saif Ur Rehman, urged a significant increase in agricultural budget allocations, emphasizing agriculture's role as Pakistan's economic backbone and a key livelihood source.

Speaking to a delegation of progressive farmers led by retired Group Captain Muhammad Iqbal Jatt, he warned that neglecting the sector could worsen food insecurity amid rapid population growth and climate change.

He advocated for increased funding to help farmers adopt innovative techniques, reduce post-harvest losses, and enhance the competitiveness of agricultural products locally and globally.

Rehman highlighted agriculture's critical contributions to food security, exports, employment, and rural sustainability, while noting ongoing challenges like water scarcity, rising input costs, climate change, outdated practices, and limited technology access.

He called on policymakers to prioritize quality seeds, affordable fertilizers, modern irrigation systems, agricultural research, and farmer training programs.

The delegation leader expressed hope that the upcoming budget would introduce farmer-friendly measures to ensure sustainable growth and long-term food security.

Refugees: Displacement and Shared Responsibility

M Rashid Tabassum

Every year on June 20, the world observes World Refugee Day to recognize the courage and resilience of millions of people who have been forced to leave their homes because of war, conflict, persecution, political instability, and natural disasters. For many refugees, migration is not a choice but a matter of survival. This day reminds us that behind every refugee statistic is a human story of loss, struggle, and hope.

According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the number of forcibly displaced people worldwide had reached nearly 117.8 million by the end of 2025. This includes refugees, asylum seekers, and internally displaced persons. Among them, almost 39 percent are children whose education, safety, and future have been severely affected.

Human migration has existed throughout history, but the scale of displacement today is alarming. Ongoing conflicts in Sudan, Ukraine, Gaza, Syria, and Afghanistan have displaced millions of people. At the same time, climate change is creating new challenges. Floods, droughts, storms, and other natural disasters displaced nearly 45.8 million people during 2024 alone.

The impact of displacement goes far

beyond losing a home. Refugees often lose their jobs, communities, and sense of security. Many face uncertainty, emotional stress, and financial hardship. Children struggle to continue their education, while women, elderly people, and vulnerable groups often face additional difficulties in unfamiliar surroundings.

Islamic teachings emphasize the protection and support of displaced people and those seeking refuge. The migration of the Prophet Muhammad (S. A. W) from Makkah to Madinah and the spirit of brotherhood shown by the Ansar toward the Muhajireen remain powerful examples of kindness, selflessness, and social responsibility. These values continue to provide guidance in dealing with humanitarian crises today.

Pakistan's role in hosting refugees has been widely acknowledged. For more than four decades, Pakistan has provided shelter to millions of Afghan refugees and has remained one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries. Today, more than three million Afghan nationals are living in Pakistan, including approximately 1.35 million registered refugees. Pakistan has also extended support to other displaced communities, including Kashmiris and Rohingya Muslims.

However, hosting large refugee popu-

lations also creates significant challenges. Increased demand for education, healthcare, housing, and employment places pressure on already limited resources. Pakistan faces its own development challenges, including millions of out-of-school children, among whom hundreds of thousands are refugee children. Despite these difficulties, refugees continue to contribute to local economies through their skills, businesses, and labor.

For this reason, supporting refugees should not be the responsibility of host countries alone. International organizations and developed nations must play a greater role in sharing the burden. Financial assistance, development support, and expanded migration pathways are essential to addressing this global challenge.

Ultimately, the best solution is to create conditions that allow refugees to return home voluntarily, safely, and with dignity. Peace, stability, and economic opportunities in their home countries are critical for achieving this goal.

World Refugee Day reminds us that refugees are not merely numbers in reports. They are individuals and families striving for safety, dignity, and a better future. Responding to their needs with compassion and cooperation is not only a humanitarian duty but also a reflection of our shared humanity.

Peshawar players' success in Asian Junior Squash Championship sparks celebrations

PESHAWAR: A wave of joy has swept through squash circles in Peshawar, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and across Pakistan following the remarkable success of two young players from Peshawar in the Asian Junior Squash Championship.

After a long gap, Pakistan has achieved major victories in the Under-15 and Under-17 categories of the Asian Junior Squash Championship.

According to details, in the final of the Under-15 category at the Asian Junior Squash Championship held in China, Pakistan's young player Ahmad Rayan Khalil, who belongs to Peshawar, defeated Malaysia's Vedoran Rotheran by 3-0 to claim the prestigious title of Asian Under-15 Champion.

In the Under-17 category, Pakistan's Nauman Khan defeated India's Shiven Agarwal by 3-0 to secure the valuable honour of becoming the Asian Under-17 Champion. Pakistan won two gold medals in the individual competitions.

Meanwhile, former world champion Qamar Zaman and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Squash Association President Dawood Khan expressed their delight over the outstanding performance of the Peshawar-based players in the Asian Junior Squash Championship.

US, Pakistan, and Qatar Leaders...

Continued from Page 1

Vance described the goal as transforming the Middle East through diplomacy and cooperation, calling the high-level Iran-US meeting "historic" and "turning over a new leaf" to extend an outstretched hand to Iran. He said great progress was made in hours and more was expected. On Lebanon, Vance said President Trump committed to a

full regional ceasefire, with the US having done more to stop conflict there than any government in recent months.

Qatar's PM Sheikh Mohammed also lauded the US Vice President, PM Shehbaz and Field Marshal for initiating the process, calling the meeting historic and significant for regional and global security and the world economy.

US Vice President JD Vance Praises...

Continued from Page 12

Through this historic diplomacy, Pakistan not only averted a major war in the region but also helped keep global energy supply lines intact, shielding the world from a severe economic crisis and catastrophic rise in petroleum prices. Analysts note that without Pakistan's timely mediation, escalating tensions in the Arabian Sea

and Strait of Hormuz could have paralyzed the global trading system.

At a time when the world appeared to be splitting into blocs, Pakistan once again proved itself a neutral, credible and indispensable guarantor of global peace. This historic reconciliation has further elevated Pakistan's strategic stature and diplomatic standing in the international community.

Pakistan's IMF Budget: Fiscal Discipline Without Political Reform

Afeera Zahid

Pakistan's Budget 2026-27 is being described as responsible. Technically, that's not inaccurate. The government is working to control the deficit, hit a tough revenue target, stick to the IMF program, and convince lenders that it won't fall back into old habits that led to past crises. But that's just part of the picture. The bigger issue is that Pakistan is once again focusing on fiscal discipline without making political reforms.

The government has set a high FBR tax target of Rs15.264 trillion in the Annual Budget Statement. This seems like a strong step toward raising more revenue. However, most of the tax burden will likely fall on groups already in the system: salaried workers, formal businesses, importers, manufacturers, and consumers. These groups are easier to tax because they are documented.

Meanwhile, large parts of retail, real estate, agricultural income, and informal wealth are still protected by politics or are hard to tax for administrative reasons.

This is where the budget debate in Pakistan gets difficult. Governments often talk about widening the tax base, but usually just increase the load on those already paying taxes. Salaried workers are taxed before they even get their pay. Formal businesses deal with paperwork, high energy bills, compliance demands, and uncertain policies. Consumers pay indirect taxes on daily purchases. At the same time, powerful groups keep getting exemptions, delays, or lighter enforcement. This isn't true fiscal discipline, it's selective discipline.

The IMF is right to ask for more revenue, spending control, and debt sustainability. No country can keep borrowing, supporting inefficiency, and using deficits as a way out forever. Pakistan needs discipline, a reliable

tax system, and a government that can manage its finances. The IMF says Pakistan has promised a primary surplus of 2 percent of GDP by FY2027. But fiscal discipline loses strength when it isn't applied fairly.

The budget also highlights how limited Pakistan's fiscal space is now. Debt payments are expected to be over Rs8 trillion, and defence gets about Rs3 trillion. Spending on development is much less. These figures show a tough truth: before the government can invest in education, health, industry, climate action, or public welfare, much of the budget is already taken up by old debts and current security costs.

There's no easy solution here. Pakistan does face real security issues and must pay its debts. But this creates a tough squeeze. Development spending gets cut first. Building human capital is less important. Climate resilience is talked about but not funded. Public investment only happens after debt and

defence are covered.

This is why we shouldn't judge Budget 2026-27 only by whether it meets IMF requirements. We should ask if it helps Pakistan build a fairer, more productive, and stable economy. By that measure, the results are less clear. Reuters pointed out that the budget increases defence spending, limits development, and sets a high tax target to stay in the IMF program. That might help Pakistan get through another financial review, but it doesn't fix the deeper problems that keep causing these crises.

Pakistan's repeated IMF cycles are often blamed on external pressure. This argument is partly true, but incomplete. The IMF enters because Pakistan repeatedly fails to correct its own political economy. The country borrows, delays reform, protects influential groups, faces a financing crisis, and then presents adjustment as an external compulsion. This cycle allows

domestic elites to avoid responsibility. The public is told that pain is unavoidable because the IMF demands it, while the real domestic bargains remain untouched.

The real question isn't whether Pakistan should avoid fiscal discipline, it can't. The real question is whether political discipline will match fiscal discipline. Will the government tax wealth where it really is? Will it fix loss-making state companies? Will it stop waste in energy, procurement, and subsidies? Will provinces take real responsibility after getting their share of funds? Will the state stop using the middle class as a constant fallback?

Without these reforms, the budget will produce only temporary compliance. It may keep the IMF programme on track. It may calm markets for a while. It may reduce immediate default fears. But it will not change the structure that makes each budget look like an emergency exercise.

The social contract is already stressed. People are more likely to pay taxes when they see fairness, good services, and accountability. They push back when taxes feel like a penalty for being honest. A salaried worker taxed at the source, a shopkeeper facing random enforcement, or a manufacturer competing with untaxed rivals won't support reforms if powerful groups stay protected.

Pakistan doesn't lack budgets, it lacks real agreements behind them. Budget 2026-27 might meet the requirements for stability, but stability without fairness won't last. Fiscal discipline is needed, but without political reform, it's just survival, not real change. Until powerful groups share the reform burden, every IMF budget will look good on paper but stay weak in reality.

The writer is a student of BSIR from National defense university (NDU), Islamabad, Pakistan

Trionda, Trust, and Pakistan's Moment on the World Stage

Continued from Page 4

within the world's most important diplomatic forum created a sense that the country was participating confidently in debates of global significance.

The interventions of Pakistan's representatives reflected preparation, intellectual rigor, and diplomatic maturity. Rather than reacting emotionally to unfolding events, they advanced their positions in a manner that projected confidence and credibility. Their performance demonstrated that Pakistan possesses diplomats capable of representing the country effectively on the most consequential international stages.

The fourth source of pride has been the performance of Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States. As someone who has spent much of his professional life in communications, public diplomacy, and media management, I watched his appearances with particular interest. He appeared

before major American and international media organizations and faced probing questions from experienced journalists determined to test every aspect of Pakistan's position.

What distinguished his performance was his composure. He neither avoided difficult questions nor allowed himself to become entangled in controversy. Instead, he consistently articulated Pakistan's perspective with clarity, confidence, and discipline. He explained Pakistan's positions, defended its interests, advocated peace and stability, and communicated effectively with influential audiences throughout the world.

His media engagements projected an image of Pakistan that was thoughtful, responsible, and constructive. He demonstrated that it is possible to defend national interests vigorously while maintaining professionalism and diplomatic decorum. Taken together, these developments tell a larger story.

For too long, international narra-

tives about Pakistan have focused almost exclusively on instability, conflict, and crisis. While challenges undoubtedly remain, they do not define the nation. Pakistan is also a country of skilled workers, innovative entrepreneurs, capable diplomats, resilient citizens, and remarkable achievements.

The challenge now is to convert visibility into lasting progress. Diplomatic credibility should translate into stronger partnerships. International recognition should attract greater investment. Enhanced visibility should create new opportunities for trade, technology, commerce, and economic growth.

Most importantly, these achievements should inspire Pakistan's younger generation. The workers of Sialkot, the entrepreneurs who built world-class industries, the diplomats who represented the nation abroad, and the leaders who pursued dialogue rather than confrontation all demonstrate what Pakistan can achieve when

vision, competence, and determination come together.

As billions continue to watch FIFA World Cup 2026, Trionda will remain at the center of every match. Yet beyond football itself lies a larger and more enduring story: the story of a nation that is increasingly finding its voice, earning trust, building influence, and contributing to the world in ways that command attention and respect.

For Pakistanis at home and abroad, that is a source of immense pride. And perhaps it is also a glimpse of the Pakistan of tomorrow—a Pakistan whose greatest contribution to the world is measured not by conflict or controversy, but by excellence, diplomacy, credibility, and constructive engagement.

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.

Inclusive Education: Reaching Every Learner, No Child Left Behind

Continued from Page 4

assessment systems, and teacher education programs must reflect inclusive principles. Collaboration among government agencies, educational institutions, and civil society organizations can strengthen efforts to make education accessible to every child.

Inclusive education is also closely linked to national development. Countries that invest in equitable education benefit from a more skilled, productive, and socially cohesive population. Excluding children from education not only limits individual potential but also weakens economic growth and social progress. By ensuring that every learner has access to quality education, Pakistan can strengthen its human capital and promote sustainable development.

Despite existing challenges, there are encouraging signs of progress. Growing awareness, policy discussions, and advocacy efforts indicate a positive

shift toward more inclusive educational practices. However, meaningful change requires sustained commitment, adequate resources, and a collective belief that every child deserves the opportunity to learn.

In conclusion, inclusive education is about more than placing children in classrooms; it is about creating learning environments where every student feels respected, supported, and empowered. The vision of "No Child Left Behind" can only become a reality when schools embrace diversity and provide equal opportunities for all learners. For Pakistan, investing in inclusive education is an investment in social justice, national development, and a brighter future for generations to come. By reaching every learner, we can build a society where every child has the opportunity to succeed and contribute meaningfully to the nation's progress.

The writer holds a PhD in Media Sciences, Rawalpindi. Email: maliktarig.media@gmail.com

Hingor-Class Submarine Inducted into Pakistan Navy, Boosting Maritime Defense

Continued from Page 4

submarines will likely carry the advanced CM-708UNB submarine-launched anti-ship missile, which features a turbojet engine for high subsonic cruise speed and a sea-skimming terminal flight profile, making it extremely difficult to intercept. For close-range engagements or for dealing with other submarines, the torpedo tubes can launch advanced wake-homing and wire-guided heavy torpedoes, as well as lighter anti-torpedo torpedoes for self-defense. Furthermore, the Hingor-class is almost certainly fitted with a mine-laying capability, allowing it to secretly seed strategic choke points, enemy harbors, or shipping lanes with smart mines that can be activated or deactivated remotely. This would give Paki-

stan the ability to impose a de facto blockade or deny vast areas of the sea to enemy shipping without engaging a single surface vessel, a form of asymmetric warfare that plays directly to the submarine's strengths. The sheer variety and lethality of these weapon systems, combined with the extended submerged endurance granted by AIP, ensure that each Hingor-class submarine is not just a single platform but a mobile, integrated weapon system capable of influencing the outcome of a theater-level conflict.

The induction ceremony itself was not merely a military parade but a high-level diplomatic event that reinforced the bedrock principles of the Pakistan-China all-weather strategic cooperative partnership. The presence of President Asif Ali Zardari, who

has historically been a strong proponent of deep economic and defense ties with China, signaled continuity in foreign policy across different political administrations in Pakistan. His address at the ceremony, as covered by state media, lauded the Chinese government and defense industry for their unwavering support, describing the submarine project as a "cornerstone of regional peace and stability." On the sidelines of the event, high-level meetings were held between President Zardari, Chinese naval commanders, and representatives of the China Shipbuilding Trading Company, which oversaw the construction and technology transfer process. The deal, believed to be worth several billion dollars and encompassing eight subma-

rines in total, with four to be built in China and four, under technology transfer, at the Karachi Shipyard & Engineering Works (KSEW), represents the largest ever defense cooperation project between the two countries. This technology transfer is crucial, as it will not only upgrade the Pakistan Navy's fleet but also revolutionize Pakistan's indigenous shipbuilding and defense manufacturing capabilities. Building submarines is an order of magnitude more complex than building surface ships; it requires expertise in high-strength steel alloys, acoustic signature reduction, precision propulsion systems, and hyperbaric life support. By acquiring this technology, Pakistan is investing in a generation of engineers, technicians, and naval architects who will

form the nucleus of a future domestic submarine-building program. The joint construction at KSEW, which has already modernized its facilities for this purpose, is a testament to the long-term vision of the partnership. Following the ceremony, messages of congratulations poured in from across Pakistan's political and military leadership. Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif, in a nationally televised address, congratulated the entire nation and the Pakistan Navy on this historic achievement, stating that the induction would usher in a new era of maritime security. Similarly, Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, who also serves as the Chief of Army Staff, lauded the navy's foresight and operational preparedness, empha-

sizing that the synergy between the three armed forces, with the navy now equipped with these silent killers, has made Pakistan's defence impregnable. The entire nation, from the bustling streets of Karachi to the serene valleys of Gilgit-Baltistan, felt a palpable sense of pride. Newspapers ran special supplements detailing the submarine's features, television channels broadcast hour-long analyses, and social media was flooded with patriotic fervor, with hashtags like #HingorClass and #PakistanNavyStrong trending for days. This widespread public enthusiasm underscores an important truth: in a country often preoccupied with its land borders with India and Afghanistan, the induction of the Hingor-class has successfully shifted a signif-

icant portion of the national security consciousness toward the blue waters of the Arabian Sea. The people of Pakistan feel, perhaps for the first time since 1971, that their navy is not just a coast guard or a defensive screen, but a true force in being, capable of projecting power, deterring aggression, and protecting the nation's economic future from the silent, unforgiving depths of the ocean. The pride is not just in the steel and weaponry, but in the strategic autonomy and national resolve it represents—a resolve to stand tall, to guard every inch of the motherland, both on land and at sea, and to ensure that the dreams of a prosperous, secure Pakistan remain forever anchored in peace, backed by the unwavering strength of its silent service.

Meeting

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and COAS & CDF Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir meeting with Vice president of the United States J.D. Vance and the US delegation on the sidelines of US-Iran technical level talks as a follow-up of Islamabad MOU being held in Burgenstock, Switzerland, on Sunday.



Photo: PID

US Vice President JD Vance Praises Field Marshal Asim Munir's Visionary Leadership for Middle East Peace Efforts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD, JUN 21: Pakistan's historic mediation between the United States and Iran has drawn widespread international acclaim, with US Vice President JD Vance publicly acknowledging the visionary and prudent leadership of Chief of Army Staff

and Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. During high-level US-Iran talks held at Bürgenstock, Switzerland, Vice President Vance lauded Field Marshal Asim Munir's diplomatic acumen in unusually strong terms. In a meeting with the Pakistani delegation, Vance openly admitted

that progress toward the landmark US-Iran agreement would not have been possible without Pakistan's relentless civil and military efforts. Praising Field Marshal Munir's pivotal role, Vance said he had spoken with him more than anyone else over the past three months. "Without the Field Marshal's

insight and prudent leadership, we could not have reached this critical juncture," Vance remarked. "He is undoubtedly a great military leader, but he has also proven himself to be an outstanding and top-tier diplomat." Pakistan's civil and military leadership is now receiving widespread praise not only from Washington

but from the global community for facilitating dialogue between the US and Iran. The United Nations, European Union, and brotherly Islamic nations in the Middle East have all commended Islamabad's sincere and judicious role in thawing tensions between Washington and Tehran.

Continued on Page 7

NA approves Rs 96.86bn in 18 grant demands, rejects 90 cut motions

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly on Sunday approved 18 demands for grants worth Rs 96.86 billion for fiscal year 2026-27 after rejecting 90 cut motions moved by the opposition. Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb moved the demands, which passed by majority vote.

Key allocations include Rs 709.5 million for the Cabinet, Rs 5.94 billion for the Cabinet Division, Rs 1.79 billion for Emergency Relief and Repatriation, and Rs 1.04 billion for NDMA. The Prime Minister's Office (Internal) got Rs 895.4 million and (Public) Rs 921.2 million. Other approvals: Board of Investment Rs 858.1 million,



Prime Minister's Inspection Commission Rs 199.8 million, Special Technology Zone Authority Rs 952.4 million,

National Anti-Money Laundering Authority Rs 205.2 million, and Cannabis Control Authority Rs 250.2 million.

Major allocations went to Establishment Division Rs 10.17 billion, FPSC Rs 1.47 billion, National School of

Public Policy Rs 3.51 billion, and Civil Services Academy Rs 2.08 billion. The largest single grant was Rs 63.51 billion for the Development Expenditure of the Cabinet Division. Council of Common Interest Secretariat received Rs 117.9 million and SIFC Division Rs 354.3 million.

Parliamentary Affairs Minister Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry defended the budget, saying allocations accounted for inflation and operational needs with no unjustified increases. He cited reforms cutting public service exam processing from 18-20 months to 8-9 months, investment facilitation reforms attracting billions in FDI, and NDMA's improved forecasting that reduced losses during 2025 floods.

Visual Proof Emerges of Anti-Pakistan Militants Enjoying Sanctuary in Kabul

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A photograph showcasing the top tier of the banned Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group lounging at the luxury InterContinental Hotel in Kabul has provided undeniable, concrete proof of Pakistan's longstanding stance that anti-Pakistan militant groups are not only operating from Afghan soil but are enjoying premium, high level sanctuary under the current Afghan Taliban regime.

The photograph, which captures the senior leadership of the militant group, which operates in close coordination with the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) depicts senior Gul Bahadur Group commander and head Abu Sufyan Karavan, Sadr Hayat, Alias Abu Sufyan, alongside key figures Commander Jalali, Commander Rehbar Waziristani, and



Commander Ghazi. Standing casually by the outdoor swimming pool of the prominent five star Kabul hotel, the commanders appear completely unbothered and enjoying a luxurious lifestyle.

For years, Islamabad has repeatedly presented evidence and demanded that the Afghan Taliban regime must take strict action against cross border terror hubs. However, Kabul has consistently denied providing sanctuary to these

elements but this new photographic evidence completely dismantles those denials, laying bare the open luxury and official impunity granted to designated terrorists responsible for major attacks on Pakistani security forces and civilians.

This visual confirmation heavily validates Pakistan's firm diplomatic and security stance, proving that the epicenter of the proxy war plaguing the region remains actively sheltered and comfortably housed right in the heart of the Afghan capital.

The development also comes against the backdrop of successive reports by the United Nations Security Council Monitoring Team, which have highlighted the continued presence of more than 20 terrorist organisations in Afghanistan, with an estimated combined strength of 20,000 to 23,000 terrorists.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

Palestinian Ministry Condemns Israel's Deportation of Greek Trade Union Delegation

Wafa

GAZA: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Expatriates strongly condemns the Israeli occupation authorities' decision to deny entry to a Greek trade union delegation invited by the Palestinian General Federation of Trade Unions to participate in a solidarity visit to Palestine. Members of the delegation were subjected to interrogation, detained for several hours, denied entry, and ultimately deported.

The Ministry considers this arbitrary and unlawful measure a blatant violation of international law and trade union freedoms, as well as a direct attack on international solidarity with the Palestinian people. It reflects ongoing efforts to isolate Palestinians and prevent international delegations from witnessing the realities of occupation and the violations committed against them.

The Ministry calls on the international community, relevant human rights organizations, the International Labour Organization, and global trade union movements to condemn these practices and take effective measures to ensure respect for international law and guarantee access for international delegations to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem.



SC commutes death sentence of child rape convict to life imprisonment



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan commuted the death sentence of a Sheikhupura school sweeper convicted of raping a 10-year-old student to life imprisonment, while maintaining a Rs300,000 fine, six-month additional term, and Rs100,000 compensation to the victim under the Anti-Rape Act.

In a judgment by Justice Salauddin Panhwar, the court noted medical evidence confirmed sexual assault with injury marks, and ruled that the absence of semen in the forensic report did not invalidate the case.

It held that a three-day FIR delay did not warrant benefit of doubt,

and that the school administration's attempt to conceal the incident and treat the victim on premises could not prejudice her rights.

Rejecting the convict's claim of false implication, the court stressed ensuring safety of female students is a constitutional state responsibility. It directed all provincial IGPs and Islamabad Police to increase patrols around educational institutions and respond promptly to harassment complaints.

The court also recommended federal and provincial governments adopt modern medico-legal systems like Sindh Medical Legal Act 2023. In a separate observation, it clarified a woman divorced via khula needs no permission from her ex-husband for a second marriage.

PPP gets IPP support for Chief Minister in Gilgit Baltistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) secured support from Istehkam Pakistan Party (IPP) on Sunday for government formation in Gilgit-Baltistan. PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto nominated Amjad Hussain Advocate for Chief Minister, with IPP backing the move.

PPP Central General Secretary Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, former PM Raja Pervez Ashraf and Qamar Zaman Kaira thanked IPP leadership for cooperation in forming the GB government. Speaking to media outside Parliament with IPP leaders, Raja Pervez Ashraf said PPP's

budget proposals were accepted in the federal budget and the party tried to provide maximum relief to the masses.

He added most PPP reservations were removed, though all reservations are never fully addressed. Ashraf also highlighted Pakistan's historical mediation role, saying it earned global recognition and would be remembered in "golden letters." Referring to US-Iran peace talks, he said Pakistan's positive image would help on key issues like Kashmir and Palestine. He saluted the struggle of Kashmiris in occupied Kashmir, expressing confidence they would achieve freedom.