



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily

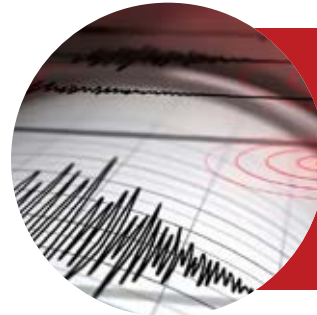


فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم ﷺ نے فرمایا ہے «مفاتیح النعم»
دے دیے گئے ہیں اور جب کے ذریعہ میری مدد کی
گئی ہے اور گوشت رات میں سویا اور اٹھا کر زمین
کے خزانوں کی کنجیاں میرے پاس لائیں گئیں
اور میرے سامنے انہیں رکھ دیا گیا اور میرے سامنے
کہا کہ نبی کریم ﷺ انہیں اپنے تصرف لے
گئے اور تم ان خزانوں کی کنجیوں کو لوٹ پلٹ کر
رہے ہو یا انکا لے رہے ہو یا اسے دے رہے ہو۔
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AJK Assembly to present 2026-27 budget on June 29

AJK Finance Minister Chaudhry Qasim Majeed will present the budget, outlining the government's proposed expenditures, development priorities, and financial allocations for the upcoming fiscal year. Scheduled to begin at 11:00 am, the budget session is expected to include debate by lawmakers on the government's fiscal policies and development plans following the budget presentation.



Earthquake tremors felt across Islamabad, KP and Punjab

Earthquake tremors were felt across Islamabad, Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Saturday evening, sending residents rushing out of their homes reciting prayers. In Punjab, shaking was reported in Lahore, Sheikhupura, Attock, Okara, Phalia, Hassan Abdal, Taxila, Wah Cantt, Bhawal and Nankana Sahib, among other cities.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Passing out parade

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif inspects the parade at the passing out ceremony of 125th Midshipmen and 33rd SSC courses at Pakistan Naval Academy, PNS Rahbar on Saturday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Reaffirms Navy Modernisation, Maritime Security and Regional Peace at Naval Academy Parade

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday reaffirmed the government's resolve to strengthen the Pakistan Navy, safeguard maritime frontiers and promote regional peace, while addressing the passing-out parade of the 125th Midshipmen and 33rd Short Service Commission Course at PNS Rahbar. As chief guest, the prime

minister said the armed forces had demonstrated professionalism and readiness amid evolving security challenges. He credited the Navy with protecting maritime interests, ensuring sea trade flow and maintaining deterrence during recent tensions. He congratulated graduating officers and said the nation expects them to serve with discipline and duty. Welcoming cadets from Türkiye, Bahrain, Bangladesh, Iraq, Sri Lanka and

Djibouti, he said their presence reflects the academy's growing reputation as a centre of military training. Praising the commandant and faculty, Shehbaz said parents' sacrifices were key to the cadets' success. On diplomacy, he said Pakistan has emerged as a responsible, peace-promoting state, citing engagement between regional partners and Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian's visit. He also commended

Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's role in promoting peace. Highlighting maritime security's importance for trade and energy, he said the Navy would be further modernised. He cited "Marka-e-Haq", "Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos" and "Operation Muhafiz-ul-Bahar" as examples of the Navy's deterrence and resilience. The PM warned of internal and external threats, including

proxy activities and terrorism, saying the nation stands with its forces. He reiterated support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, Gaza and Palestine. Governor Sindh, CM Sindh, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Khawaja Asif and Attaullah Tarar attended. The PM presented the Sword of Honour to Midshipman Umer Mukhtar and other awards, reviewed the parade, and witnessed a naval flypast and ship demonstration.

PM Shehbaz Commends Interior Minister, Agencies for Peaceful Ashura

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded the Ministry of Interior, security institutions and law-enforcement agencies for ensuring peaceful Ashura processions and gatherings nationwide. In a PM Office release, he

praised Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his team for "excellent arrangements" and foolproof security. He also commended the Armed Forces, police and other agencies for their dedication. "By the grace of Allah Almighty, all Ashura activities concluded smoothly in an atmosphere of

peace and order," he said. Shehbaz also appreciated provincial governments, GB and AJK administrations, chief ministers and the AJK PM for robust security measures. Naqvi earlier saluted officers for professionalism and courage during Muharram.



Transparent Petroleum Pricing Framework Expected Soon, Says Ali Pervaiz Malik

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Saturday said a transparent petroleum pricing framework is expected soon to ease consumer burden, with a high-level committee formed under the Prime Minister's directives to oversee price determination. Speaking to a local media outlet, Malik

said the Prime Minister's top priority is protecting consumer rights. "A high-level committee has been constituted under his directives to ensure transparency in petroleum pricing and positive developments are expected soon," he added. He said the government is closely monitoring international oil markets and urged the public to review this week's Platts prices for petrol and diesel, noting pricing

decisions are being made on a fair and transparent basis. The minister stressed the government is neither favoring any sector nor imposing undue burden on consumers, and remains committed to passing on any available relief within international obligations. Highlighting performance, he said under PM Shehbaz Sharif, petrol prices have been cut by Rs155 per litre and diesel

by Rs200 per litre so far. He noted Platts benchmarks for petrol and HSD show global fluctuations, but despite war-related uncertainties, fuel supply has remained stable with no shortages. Malik reaffirmed the government's commitment to fair, transparent and responsible petroleum pricing in line with market conditions and the PM's directives.

Eight Fitna al-Khawarij Militants Killed in Kharan and Mastung IBOs

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Security forces eliminated eight terrorists linked to Indian proxy Fitna al-Khawarij in two intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan's Kharan and Mastung districts on June 25 and 26, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Saturday. The IBO was carried out by the paramilitary forces in Kharan after tracking the movement of a group of militants belonging to the Fitna al-Hindustan, the military's media wing said, adding that troops engaged the militants in a timely and effective operation, killing three of them while injuring several others. A separate IBO was carried out in the Mastung area on June 26 on the information regarding "possible presence of a suicide bomber". During the conduct of



the operation, the military's media wing said troops effectively engaged the terrorists' location, and after an intense fire exchange, five terrorists, including a suicide bomber, were successfully neutralised. Meanwhile, President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to security forces for their successful action against Fitna al-Hindustan, describing the killing of militants in the Kharan and Mastung districts as a reflection of their professionalism and determination. He praised the courage, professionalism, and sacrifices of the officers and soldiers involved in the operations.

PM Shehbaz Praises Forces for Eliminating 8 Terrorists in Balochistan

News Desk

KARACHI: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif lauded security forces for successful anti-terror operations against "Fitna al-Hindustan" in Kharan and Mastung, Balochistan. According to the PM Office, eight terrorists linked to the group were eliminated, foiling their plans. Shehbaz said operations

against Fitna al-Hindustan will continue to a logical conclusion, vowing to eradicate all forms of terrorism from Pakistan. He termed security forces' sacrifices "unforgettable" and said the nation stands with its armed forces. He affirmed that Pakistan's enemies will face defeat on every front, reiterating the state's resolve to ensure lasting peace.

DPM/FM reaffirms Pak's commitment to regional peace

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar spoke to Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi last night and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to play its constructive role for achieving the goal of lasting peace and stability in the region and beyond. "FM Araghchi expressed appreciation for Pakistan's continued support in advancing the peace process. He also thanked Pakistan



for facilitating the safe and smooth repatriation of Iranian crew members and fishermen to their homeland," the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Saturday, said in a press release. They also agreed to remain in close contact.

Opposition Warns AJK Tensions Could Hurt Pakistan's Global Image, Urges Dialogue

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Opposition leaders on Saturday urged the government and protesters in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to resolve differences through dialogue, warning that failure to restore peace could deepen divisions and damage Pakistan's international standing. Addressing a joint press

conference, National Assembly Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai, JI Pakistan Ameer Hafiz Naem Ur Rehman, PTI Chairman Gohar Ali Khan, and politician Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said the AJK situation was a concern for all Pakistanis and had been discussed in detail. Achakzai said the Constitution guarantees peaceful

Continued on Page 7

KIIR and WMC Host Geneva Seminar on 'Human Rights and Peace Building' on Kashmir

Spokesman Report

GENEVA: The Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and the World Muslim Congress (WMC) jointly held a high-level seminar titled "Human Rights and Peace Building" on the sidelines of the 62nd session of the UN Human Rights Council.

The seminar brought together diplomats, human rights defenders, civil society representatives and international observers to examine the human rights situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and its implications for sustainable peace.

Speakers said repression and peace-building cannot coexist. They stressed that genuine peace requires an end to militarised governance, full accountability for human rights violations, and respect for the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination.



Participants called for an immediate halt to the use of force against civilians, the release of all political leaders and prisoners held without due process,

and space for dialogue and civil society engagement. They said justice and dignity are prerequisites for any credible peace process.

"Without addressing the root causes of rights violations and recognising the people's right to self-determination, peacebuilding efforts will remain superficial and unsustainable," a joint statement by the organisers said.

The seminar was moderated by KIIR Chairman and WMC Main Representative Altaf Hussain Wani. Speakers included Paras Zaffar, LL.M student at the Geneva Academy; Adv. Parveez Ahmed Shah; Dr. Rajad Sajjad Khan; Rolnard Brone; and Dr. Saira Shah.

It concluded with a call for the international community, including the UN Human Rights Council, to ensure accountability, facilitate inclusive dialogue, and support a rights-based approach to resolving the Kashmir dispute.

Record 1,265 Candidates File Nominations for AJK Elections

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: In connection with the upcoming elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 1265 candidates have filed nomination papers from 45 constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. 1047 candidates from 33 constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while 218 candidates from 12 constituencies of refugees residing in Pakistan have filed nomination papers. The process of scrutiny of nomination papers has been completed. According to the Election Commission spokesperson, 41 nomination papers out of all 45 constituencies have been rejected. The spokesperson said that the process of filing appeals against the rejection of nomination papers is from June 25 to June 28. So far, 12 appeals have been received. The deadline for filing appeals is tomorrow. The hearing of appeals on nomination papers will be held from June 29 to 30, while the hearing of appeals will be completed on July 1 and 2 and the final decision will be issued. Will be given.



Muzaffarabad traders, transporters disassociate from banned joint action committee



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Vice Chairman Central Traders Association Gohar Kashmiri, Raja Abrar Mustafa of Madina Market Traders, and Khawaja Azam Rasool of Transporters Union announced complete detachment from the banned Joint Public Action Committee at a press conference.

Gohar Kashmiri said the traders' movement secured cheaper flour, electricity, reduced taxes, education/health packages and Rs72 billion subsidy. The refugee seats issue is constitutional and should be resolved by the Assembly, not protests. He urged traders to keep shops open and avoid strikes, stressing dialogue and peace.

Raja Abrar Mustafa condemned anti-state slogans in Rawalakot, saying Pakistan supports Kashmiris and chaos only benefits India. He appealed to youth to reject violence.

Dr. Saima Ghiasuddin Becomes First KV Hospital Physician to Attain MRCOG

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Dr. Saima Ghiasuddin has become the first physician in the history of Kulsoom Bai Valika Social Security Hospital to attain the Membership of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (MRCOG), a distinction described by colleagues as a historic achievement for both the institution and women in medicine.



In a scholarly tribute, Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhanvi, General Secretary of the Pakistan Federal Union of Columnists and Creators, said the MRCOG represents more than an academic credential. He termed it "an initiation into the epistemological depths of a discipline where scientific exactitude and compassionate humanism converge."

Dr. Singhanvi wrote that Dr. Saima's success reflects years of intellectual refinement, disciplined endeavour and professional devotion. He said her journey illustrates how determination can overcome material constraints and elevate institutional landscapes, establishing a "radiant constellation" of academic excellence to inspire future generations.

The tribute also highlighted Dr. Saima's clinical ethos, stating that for her, health preservation is inseparable from restoring hope. Patients, he said, encounter both clinical proficiency and humane understanding, qualities that define her enduring legacy.

Acknowledging providential grace, Dr. Singhanvi prayed that she may continue to ascend to greater professional heights while serving with humility, wisdom and compassion.

Ashra-e-Muharram Observed with Devotion at Azakhana Rifaat Hashmi, Islamabad

City Desk

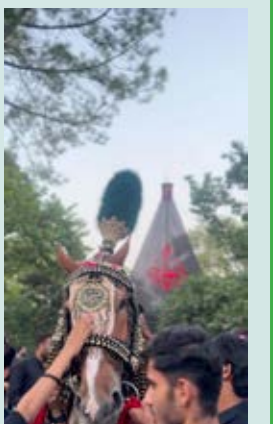
ISLAMABAD: Ashra-e-Muharram Al-Haram gatherings and processions were held with reverence at Azakhana Rifaat Hashmi under the supervision of National Assembly Special Secretary and media anchor Syed Shamoon Hashmi, continuing a tradition of over two decades.

From 1st Muharram to the night of Ashura, renowned scholar Allama Syed Mubashir Zaidi addressed the majalis on "The Scale of Succession and the Characteristics of the Representative of God," citing the Holy Quran, hadiths and sayings of the Infallibles.

As per tradition, the image of Prince Ali Asghar was taken out on Muharram, the Mehndi of Hazrat Qasim on 7th Muharram, and the image of Zul-Jinnah and the Alam of Hazrat Abbas on 8th Muharram. Prominent mourning organizations from the twin cities recited nohas and offered matam. The 8th Muharram majlis was marked by the hoisting of a 45-foot-high Alam. Niyaz-e-Sabil of Hazrat Imam Hussain was distributed to all attendees after each gathering.

Mourners from Rawalpindi and Islamabad attended in large numbers. Dignitaries present included Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, MNAs Abdul Qadir Patel, Agha Rafiullah, Abrar Shah, Mir Ghulam Ali Talpur and Syed Raza Bukhari, along with senators, provincial assembly members, media figures and city notables.

Full security was provided for the gatherings. Organizers and participants thanked the Islamabad administration and police for their cooperation.



Ashoura

KARACHI: Shiite Muslims attend a procession to mark Ashoura, in the Provincial Capital. Muharram, the first month of the Islamic calendar, is a month of mourning in remembrance of the death of Hussein, the grandson of the Prophet Muhammad (SAW), at the Battle of Karbala in present-day Iraq in the 7th century.



Photo: Online

Youm-e-Ashura Observed with Religious Solemnity in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Youm-e-Ashura was observed with religious solemnity in Attock, as in other parts of the country, with several Alam and Zuljannah processions taken out across the district to commemorate the supreme sacrifices of Hazrat Imam Hussain (A.

S) and his companions at Karbala.

The main Alam and Zuljannah procession was taken out from Imam-bargah Hussainia Kamalpur Syedan, Attock, and concluded peacefully at Karbala Haleem Shah at around 4:00 p.m. Several small processions also joined the main procession during its route.



Under the supervision of Sipah-e-Abbas, Namaz-e-Zohrain was offered at Fateh Jang Chowk. Deputy Commissioner Attock Rao Atif Raza, DPO Sardar Mavarhan Khan, Assistant Commissioner Muhammad Arif Qureshi, ADCG Aneel Saeed, SDPO

Illyas Baig, SHO City Sajjad Haider, SHO Cantt Taimoor Ali Zai, CSO Naeem Malik, Chief Officer TMA Sardar Aftab, and other district administration officers remained present and monitored the procession.

Majority Backs Tax on Social Media Influencers, Urges Exemptions for Small Creators: PNP Survey

PNP

ISLAMABAD: A majority of Pakistanis support bringing social media influencers into the tax net, but want a balanced approach that protects small digital creators and supports the digital economy, according to a Press Network of Pakistan (PNP) survey.

The nationwide online survey, "Social Media Influencer Tax in Pakistan," was conducted after the Finance Bill 2026 proposed a 5% withholding tax on influencer income from platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram and TikTok. It received responses from 45% male and 55% female participants across age groups and cities.

While respondents broadly agreed that digital creators should be part of



Pakistan's formal tax system, there was strong demand for fairness, exemptions for small creators, and incentives

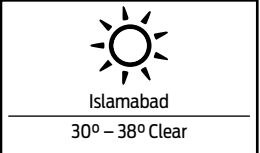
for the growing digital economy.

Participants also flagged concerns for new entrants. The statement that

the tax could discourage youth from pursuing digital content creation averaged 3.34 out of 5, indicating mixed but notable apprehension about its impact on future creators.

YouTube was identified as the platform most likely to be affected, with 53.8% of respondents selecting it. Another 24.6% said all major platforms would be impacted equally. Instagram was cited by 9.2%, TikTok by 6.2%, and Facebook and blogs/websites by 3.1% each. The findings suggest the public views YouTube as the cornerstone of Pakistan's creator economy and expects its creators to face the greatest financial impact.

The PNP survey was compiled and released on June 27, 2026, as the government considers the 5% withholding tax under Finance Bill 2026.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:16 am
Zohr	12:11 pm
Asr	5:11 pm
Maghrib	7:22 pm
Isha	9:06 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

CM Maryam Nawaz lauds Punjab team as Muharram concludes peacefully

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that, by the grace of Allah, Muharram was held peacefully, with dignity and in an organised manner across the province for the second consecutive year.

In a message posted on X, the chief minister expressed gratitude and congratulated the entire Punjab team on the peaceful conduct of Muharram processions and majalis.

She praised provincial ministers, MPAs, district administrations across Punjab, Punjab Police, law enforcement agencies, Rescue 1122, Suthra Punjab teams, the Health Department and the Local Government Department for working tirelessly round the clock to ensure effective arrangements.

CM Punjab said the measures taken to provide relief to mourners during the intense heat were exemplary. She noted that cold water stalls had been set up across the province, rose water was sprinkled along procession routes, and smog

guns were used to spray water, providing significant relief from the scorching weather.

She said Suthra Punjab teams had ensured exemplary cleanliness arrangements along the routes of majalis and processions, setting a new benchmark for sanitation and public service.

The chief minister said the coordination and teamwork displayed by all departments was a matter of pride.

Despite the sweltering heat during the sacred days of Muharram, Punjab Police personnel remained deployed on the streets, she said, adding that the police, including traffic personnel, performed their duties with dedication and ensured complete security for mourners without regard for the harsh weather conditions.

CM Punjab said Ashura passed peacefully and safely due to the professionalism, commitment and day-and-night efforts of police officers and personnel.

She also paid tribute to all officials who prioritised public service in the extreme weather, saying, "You are our pride. Keep up the excellent work."



Back to Road

ISLAMABAD: Passengers boarding on Blue Line Bus as the Islamabad-Rawalpindi Metro Bus, Orange Line, Green Line, Blue Line, and all Electric Vehicle (EV) feeder routes resume after suspension for Ashura, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Awaam Pakistan Accelerates Membership Drive Under Chaudhry Inam Zafar

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Awaam Pakistan held an organizational meeting at its Waris Khan secretariat, chaired by Central Vice President Chaudhry Inam Zafar, to review the membership campaign.

Inam Zafar appreciated workers' efforts to expand membership in Rawalpindi and nationwide, urging them to convey the party's message and enroll more members. He said Awaam Pakistan plans to contest upcoming Cantonment Board elections.

He announced the membership campaign has formally begun in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. Candidate support decisions for AJK polls will follow central leadership consultation. National Council members Sardar Nazir Ahmed Kashmiri, Samina Shoaib, and Mumtaz Bhatti submitted new members' forms at the meeting.

Ibrahim Murad Arrives in Dhaka to Participate in Dr Yunus Social Business Conference

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chairman of the University of Management and Technology (UMT), Ibrahim Hasan Murad, has arrived in Dhaka, Bangladesh, to participate in a series of prestigious international events. During his visit, he will attend the 20th anniversary of Dr. Muhammad Yunus' Nobel Peace Prize, the 50th anniversary of Grameen Bank, and the 16th Social Business Day.

While paying tribute to Nobel Peace Prize laureate Dr. Muhammad Yunus, Ibrahim Hasan Murad commended his outstanding global contributions to the promotion of social business, poverty alleviation and humanitarian service.

During his visit to Bangladesh, Ibrahim Murad is also expected to hold a series of high-level meetings with



government officials, education leaders, diplomats, journalists and representatives of civil society. These discussions will focus on strengthening cooperation in education, social business, innovation, youth empowerment, sustainable development and international collaboration.

The meetings will also explore opportunities to expand global partnerships and joint initiatives aimed at enhancing education, research, innovation and social development through meaningful international cooperation.

Murad expressed confidence that his visit to Bangladesh would further strengthen educational, social and research cooperation between Pakistan and Bangladesh while contributing to broader international efforts aimed at sustainable development and stronger people-to-people ties.

Governor KP condoles with Shoaib Akhtar over brother's demise

ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday visited the residence of former Pakistan fast bowler Shoaib Akhtar to offer condolences over the demise of his elder brother, Shahid Akhtar.



Pakistan Peoples Party Central Secretary Information Nadeem Afzal Chan and Member of the National Assembly Noor Alam Khan accompanied the Governor during the visit.

Governor Kundi expressed profound grief and sorrow over the passing of Shahid Akhtar and conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to Shoaib Akhtar and the bereaved family.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to grant eternal peace to the departed soul, elevate his ranks in Jannat-ul-Firdous, and bless the family with patience and fortitude to bear the irreparable loss.

Ehsaas For Life to Hold 'Drug-Free Pakistan' Seminar in Lahore with Punjab Governor as Chief Guest

City Desk

LAHORE: Ehsaas For Life Punjab Charity Commission, in collaboration with the Punjab Home Department, will organize a seminar in the first week of July on "Role of Business Community and Civil Society for Drug-Free Pakistan".



Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan will be chief guest. LCCI President Faheem Sahib will chair, with the Home Secretary, Punjab Charity Commission CEO, scholars, poets, teachers and doctors as speakers.

Founder Chairman Waseem Hassan Awan said the seminar aims to raise drug awareness. Ehsaas For Life has treated thousands free and will launch an "Organized Drug Free Society" campaign, plus a 50-bed rehab center in Lahore. Achievers will be awarded.

MD WASA Kamran Kahlon Lauds Staff for Services on Youm-e-Ashur

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: WASA Managing Director Kamran Kahlon has commended all WASA officers, engineers and field staff for ensuring sanitation, drainage and civic services during Youm-e-Ashur.

In a message, Kahlon said staff performed duties with dedication, responsibility and professionalism on the sensitive occasion, providing better facilities to citizens and mourners. He expressed appreciation and congratulated the entire team for their sincere efforts.

He expressed confidence that officers and staff would continue serving with the same commitment. Kahlon added that teamwork, discipline and public service commitment drove WASAs success, and every employee will remain active in serving Toba Tek Singh residents.

D-8 Secretary-General Highlights Vital Role of MSMEs on International MSME Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Marking International Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (MSME) Day, the Secretary-General of the Developing-8 (D-8) Organization for Economic Cooperation paid tribute to entrepreneurs for their vital role in driving economic growth, innovation, and employment across the world.

In a message issued on the occasion, the Secretary-General noted that MSMEs account for nearly 90 percent of businesses and 70 percent of global employment, making them the backbone of sustainable economic development and job creation.

Highlighting the significance of the D-8 region, home to approximately 1.28 billion people, he said MSMEs are transforming local communities, strengthening regional value chains, and promoting inclusive economic



growth across member states. The Secretary-General reaffirmed the D-8 Organization's commitment to supporting entrepreneurs through practical cooperation, South-South partnerships, and enhanced collaboration with relevant United Nations agencies. He also referred to the 2015 D-8 SME Cooperation Framework and the establishment of the D-8 SME Centre in Abuja as important milestones in advancing entrepreneurship within the bloc.

To commemorate MSME Day 2026, the D-8 Secretariat is organizing a special webinar focusing on Green MSMEs and Medical Tourism, featuring senior experts from Malaysia. The event aims to explore emerging opportunities in sustainability, innovation, and high-value service sectors.

Concluding his message, the Secretary-General called for collective efforts to build MSMEs that are greener, smarter, more resilient, and globally competitive, emphasizing that strong small businesses are essential for achieving sustainable and inclusive economic prosperity across the D-8 region.

Northumbria University Secures £1.25 Million for Pakistan's First Crop-to-Fuel Plant

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Over the past six years, our team at Northumbria University has been working on Pakistan's energy and environmental challenges, mapping agricultural waste, testing thermochemical conversion, and building partnerships between UK and Pakistani institutions. We have already secured over half a million pounds of research funding in this area since 2021.



We are proud to announce that Northumbria University with its partners, University of Kamalia Official, ERL and PEL has secured a massive funding of £1.25 million from Innovate UK Energy Catalyst Round 11 to build Pakistan's first plant converting crop waste into clean industrial fuel. We were one of only 3 mid-stage projects selected globally out of nearly 300 applications. This not only stamp our capabilities but also highlight the urgent need in Pakistan's energy sector.

Huge congratulations to our team Shahid Rasul, Yasir Nawab, Muhammad Saghir and Muzzamal Hussain for their selfless support and commitment which helped us achieve this milestone.

Let's work together to combat climate change, decarbonisation and energy poverty not only in Pakistan but globally to make our planet sustainable for our future generations.

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

Israel's Assassination Plot Against Asim Munir

Political assassination has remained one of the darkest instruments of international power politics. Throughout modern history, governments and intelligence agencies have been accused of eliminating individuals they regard as threats to their national security beyond their own borders. Whether such operations are justified as self-defense, counterterrorism, or preemptive action, they raise profound legal, moral, and strategic questions that continue to divide the international community.

Among the countries most frequently associated with targeted killings is Israel. Over the decades, numerous operations attributed to Israeli intelligence have targeted leaders, military commanders, scientists, and members of armed organizations across the Middle East and beyond. Israel has often neither confirmed nor denied these operations, while maintaining that it has the right to defend its citizens against imminent threats.

Critics argue that regardless of the intended objective, extrajudicial assassinations violate fundamental principles of international law. Every individual, irrespective of nationality or political affiliation, is entitled to due process. When states assume the authority to investigate, prosecute, convict, and execute individuals without judicial oversight, they bypass the very legal framework that the international community has spent

decades constructing. Such actions inevitably raise questions about sovereignty, accountability, and the rule of law.

The recent allegation made by journalist Pepe Escobar that Israel's intelligence agency allegedly planned to assassinate Pakistan's Field Marshal Asim Munir and members of the Pakistani delegation during their visit to Switzerland has once again reignited this debate. According to Escobar, Pakistan received intelligence regarding an alleged assassination plot and conveyed a stern warning through diplomatic channels.

However, Pakistani authorities have categorically rejected the allegation, describing it as "baseless fiction" and "complete nonsense." They have stated that the visit proceeded normally, that no security concerns were raised by either Swiss or American authorities, and that no such threat existed. Consequently, there is currently no publicly available evidence substantiating the allegation. Yet irrespective of whether this particular claim proves true or false, the controversy has drawn renewed attention to a broader and well-established question: how should the international community respond when states are accused of conducting targeted killings beyond their borders?

The perception that certain countries

possess the capability to eliminate adversaries almost anywhere in the world has contributed to a growing sense of strategic imbalance. Many nations have witnessed the deaths of senior political figures, military commanders, or scientists in attacks widely attributed to foreign intelligence services. In most instances, these incidents have not resulted in direct military retaliation against the alleged perpetrators.

This reality inevitably raises questions about deterrence.

History repeatedly demonstrates that deterrence often depends upon an adversary's belief that aggression will carry unacceptable consequences. Nations possessing credible military capabilities are generally perceived differently from those unable to impose meaningful costs upon an aggressor. Whether one examines nuclear deterrence during the Cold War or conventional military balances today, the principle remains remarkably consistent: strength influences strategic calculations.

Supporters of this view argue that states capable of defending themselves are less likely to become targets of coercion or external aggression. They contend that maintaining strong defensive capabilities—including intelligence, missile defense, and conventional military preparedness—reduces the likelihood

of hostile actions by increasing their potential cost.

The recent military confrontation between India and Pakistan has reinforced, for many Pakistanis, the importance of maintaining credible defensive capabilities. Regardless of differing assessments of the conflict's military outcomes, the episode demonstrated how deterrence continues to shape strategic behavior in South Asia. It also reinforced the belief among many observers that military preparedness remains an essential component of national security.

However, deterrence alone cannot provide a lasting solution.

If every state concludes that its security depends upon possessing the ability to respond with equivalent force, the world risks entering an increasingly dangerous cycle of retaliation. International stability cannot rest solely upon reciprocal threats. It must ultimately be supported by institutions capable of enforcing universally accepted legal standards.

The greatest weakness of the present international order lies not in the absence of legal principles but in their inconsistent application. International law prohibits unlawful killings, violations of sovereignty, and attacks upon protected persons. Yet accountability frequently depends upon political considerations rather than consistent legal enforcement. Powerful states often face little practical consequence when accused of violating these norms, while weaker states remain

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

International Day in Support of Victims of Torture

On the International Day in Support of Victims of Torture, Pakistan stands in solemn solidarity with victims of torture across the world. Today, Pakistan joins the international community in reaffirming its commitment to the eradication of torture in all its forms and manifestations, and to the protection of human dignity, justice, and fundamental human rights.

This day serves as a poignant reminder of the inherent dignity and worth of every human being. Torture, as well as all forms of cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment, is unacceptable in any civilized society. Such abhorrent practices constitute grave violations of human rights and human dignity and stand in clear contravention of international law as well as the enduring principles of Islam. Guided by the Islamic values that uphold the sanctity and dignity of human life, and in line with international obligations, Pakistan reiterates its steadfast resolve against torture and its commitment to further strengthen safeguards for the protection of all individuals. Victims of any kind of societal torture deserve the highest standards of medical, psychological, legal, and social support, while ensuring accountability for perpetrators remains imperative. In pursuit of these objectives, Pakistan continues to strengthen the implementation of relevant laws, advance legal and institutional reforms, and reinforce national mechanisms for protection, oversight, and redress.

Pakistan expresses grave concern over the systematic use of torture as a tool of state oppression by foreign occupying powers. The people of Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) continue to endure state repression, brutal torture, and degrading and inhuman treatment at the hands of occupying authorities. The international community bears a collective responsibility to condemn such crimes and to ensure accountability of the perpetrators.

On this occasion, Pakistan urges global attention towards the plight and suffering of victims of state-sponsored terrorism and repression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). For decades, serious and persistent human rights violations have been committed in the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). Numerous credible international reports have expressed concern over arbitrary detentions, custodial torture, enforced disappearances, collective punishment, restrictions on freedom of expression, and the suppression of political dissent in IIOJK. Reports and concerns raised by international human rights organizations and United Nations human rights mechanisms regarding the grave human rights situation in IIOJK constitute compelling evidence of systematic human rights abuses and torture.

Peace Through Preparedness

As Punjab peacefully concluded the first ten days of Muharram-ul-Haram, the province witnessed an encouraging example of how meticulous planning, administrative preparedness and public cooperation can together preserve religious sanctity while ensuring law and order. The smooth observance of Youme-Ashur did not happen by chance. It was the outcome of coordinated planning by the Punjab government, continuous monitoring by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, tireless efforts by the administration and the police, and the responsible conduct of religious scholars, procession organisers and citizens across the province. <https://youtu.be/hWTA1HOXP5Q?si=qrs3UZan5PKtV1N1>

Muharram is among the most sensitive periods of the Islamic calendar. It commemorates the supreme sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions at Karbala; a timeless symbol of truth, justice, patience and steadfastness in the face of oppression. Every year, hundreds of thousands of mourners participate in processions and Majalis across Punjab, making the responsibility of maintaining peace both a religious obligation and an administrative responsibility. This year, however, Punjab transformed that responsibility into an opportunity to demonstrate effective governance rooted in planning, coordination and public service.

Long before the crescent of Muharram was sighted, the provincial government had begun preparations. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed every line department to adopt a proactive approach. Regular review meetings were held to assess

district-wise arrangements, identify sensitive locations and remove administrative bottlenecks before they could affect the observance of Muharram. The emphasis was clear: no compromise on public safety, uninterrupted civic facilities for mourners and complete harmony among all schools of thought.

The government's strategy relied on seamless coordination rather than isolated departmental efforts. The administration remained actively engaged throughout the first ten days. District administrations maintained continuous liaison with organisers of processions and Majalis, ensuring that any local concern was addressed promptly through consultation. This collaborative approach helped build confidence between the administration and local communities while preventing avoidable disputes.

Punjab Police executed one of the province's most comprehensive security operations. Thousands of policemen remained deployed throughout the first 10 days of the month of Muharram to protect gatherings, procession routes and sensitive locations. Intelligence-led policing, strict monitoring of entry points, rooftop deployments, surveillance through the Punjab Safe Cities Authority's cameras, Elite Force patrols, Dolphin Squad operations and rapid response teams collectively created a robust security framework. Continuous monitoring from central and district control rooms enabled the government to respond immediately to any emerging situation, ensuring that the atmosphere remained peaceful from the first day of Muharram until Ashura concluded.

Technology also played a defining role in strengthening security arrangements. Modern surveillance systems, integrated command centres and digital monitoring enhanced situational awareness across major cities. The PSCA supported district administrations through real-time observation of processions and public gatherings, allowing field administration to coordinate effectively whenever additional resources or intervention became necessary. The integration of technology with conventional policing reflected the province's evolving approach towards public security.

Security, however, represented only one dimension of the government's comprehensive strategy. Equally significant was its commitment to public facilitation. The municipal bodies carried out extensive cleanliness campaigns around Imambargahs and procession routes. Temporary lighting, uninterrupted drinking water, sanitation services and waste removal ensured that mourners could observe religious rituals in a clean and organised environment. Rescue 1122, health departments and emergency medical teams remained on high alert, establishing medical camps and ambulance services at key locations. Traffic management plans minimised inconvenience to commuters while ensuring the uninterrupted movement of religious processions.

Another important factor behind the peaceful observance of Muharram was the government's sustained emphasis on religious harmony. Peace Committees remained actively engaged across districts, promoting dialogue, restraint and mutual respect. Close coordination between the administration and religious leadership strengthened public confidence and reinforced the collective message that Muharram is a time for reflection, sacrifice and unity rather than

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

The CPC at 105: A Century of Courage and Continuity

On July 1, 2026, the Communist Party of China (CPC) commemorates its 105th anniversary. Few political organizations in modern history have traversed such a sweeping arc—from clandestine beginnings on a red boat in Jiaxing to becoming the world's largest political party, stewarding the destiny of 1.4 billion people. The CPC's odyssey is not merely a chronicle of survival; it is a testament to resilience, innovation, and transformation.

Founded in 1921 by a handful of delegates inspired by Marxist ideals, the CPC's first meeting on Nanhui Lake embodied what later came to be known as the "Red Boat Spirit"—courage, pioneering vision, and dedication to national salvation. This spirit, forged in adversity, continues to animate China's modernization drive. The Party's early years were marked by struggle against warlords, imperialist encroachment, and internal division. Yet its leaders remained steadfast, convinced that only a disciplined, people-centred movement could rescue China from humiliation. Chairman Mao Zedong once declared, "The Communist Party of China is the core of leadership of the whole Chinese people. Without this core, the cause of socialism cannot be victorious." His words remain a lodestar for understanding the Party's enduring role in shaping China's destiny.

The CPC's defining achievement was leading the Chinese people to national liberation. Through the War of Resistance against Japan and the subsequent Civil War, the Party mobilized peasants, workers, and intellectuals under a common banner. In 1949, the founding of the People's Republic of China signalled not just the triumph of a revolutionary movement but the rebirth of a nation long shackled by foreign domination. The CPC's legitimacy was rooted in its ability to deliver sovereignty, dignity, and unity.

The reform era launched in 1978 under Deng Xiaoping marked a new chapter. By embracing pragmatism—"seeking truth from facts"—the CPC steered

China from ideological rigidity to economic dynamism. The results are staggering: over 800 million people lifted out of poverty, a feat unparalleled in human history. China emerged as the world's second-largest economy, a hub of manufacturing, trade, and increasingly, innovation. Cities like Jiaxing, once remembered only for revolutionary heritage, now host cutting-edge research institutions, symbolizing the fusion of past and future.

China's transformation is not confined to material prosperity. Under President Xi Jinping, the CPC has positioned itself as a global actor through a quartet of initiatives: the Global Development Initiative, Global Security Initiative, Global Civilization Initiative, and Global Governance Initiative. These frameworks seek to redefine international discourse, offering alternatives to Western paradigms. Simultaneously, China has become a leader in 5G, renewable energy, and artificial intelligence, underscoring the CPC's capacity to harness science and technology for national rejuvenation.

Equally significant is China's emerging role as a peacemaker under CPC stewardship. The rapprochement between Saudi Arabia and Iran, brokered in Beijing, demonstrated China's ability to mediate between regional rivals and foster stability in the Middle East. More recently, China has provided a firm bedrock guiding Iran towards dialogue with the United States, advocating dialogue as the pathway to peace. These diplomatic interventions reflect the CPC's conviction that prosperity and stability are inseparable, and that peace is best secured through cooperation rather than confrontation.

The 105th anniversary is being marked with solemnity and pride. The CPC Central Committee will confer the July 1 Medal, its highest honour, upon exemplary Party members and grassroots organizations. Memorial halls in Shanghai and Jiaxing are

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Qudrat Ullah



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S. M. Hali

Pakistan's Muhammad Abbas Khan Wins Uzbekistan's Prestigious 'Golden Pen' National Award

Spokesman Report

TASHKENT: Resident Editor of Pakistan's Daily Ittehad Media Group, Muhammad Abbas Khan, has been awarded the Second Prize in the "Best Material about Uzbekistan by a Foreign Journalist" category at the 20th International Competition for the "Golden Pen" National Award.

The award was presented during a prestigious ceremony held in Tashkent to mark Press and Mass Media Workers' Day, celebrated annually on June 27. The event recognized outstanding journalists for their contributions to promoting quality journalism and international media cooperation.

Muhammad Abbas Khan, who serves as the permanently accredited correspondent of Daily Ittehad Media Group in Uzbekistan, was honoured for his years of objective, comprehensive, and analytical reporting on

the country's democratic, political, economic, and social reforms. His work has highlighted Uzbekistan's international initiatives, regional cooperation efforts, and sustainable development agenda, while strengthening understanding and friendship between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

A significant milestone in his journalistic career was the publication of his Urdu-language book, "Uzbekistan: The Third Renaissance Concept of the Future," in 2025. The book provides an in-depth analysis of Uzbekistan's reform agenda, emphasizing science, education, innovation, and human capital as the foundation of the country's development. The publication featured a foreword by Pakistan's Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif, and was officially launched in Islamabad and Tashkent at high-profile events attended by senior government officials, diplomats, scholars, media representatives, and public

figures.

Over the years, Khan has authored numerous analytical articles, interviews, and reports covering Uzbekistan's political developments, economic reforms, investment opportunities, trade relations, transport and communication projects, tourism, cultural exchanges, regional security, and sustainable development.

The Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan congratulated Muhammad Abbas Khan on receiving the prestigious Golden Pen National Award, describing it as a well-deserved recognition of his distinguished journalistic services and valuable contribution to promoting objective reporting and stronger information cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The Embassy also wished him continued success in further strengthening the longstanding friendship and mutual understanding between the two countries.



Air University reinforces innovation ecosystem through students' projects exhibition

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Department of Statistics and Data Analytical Sciences (SDAS), Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences (FBAS), Air University Main Campus, organized a vibrant exhibition showcasing innovative projects developed by second-semester students in the fields of Data Science, Statistics, Artificial Intelligence, Cyber Analytics, and Climate Analytics. Dr. Ammara Nawaz Cheema, Head of Department lead the exhibition, reflecting the department's commitment to experiential learning, innovation, and industry-oriented education.

The event was inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Air University, Air Marshal (Retd) Abdul Moed Khan, HI(M), who appreciated the students' innovative ideas and emphasized the growing importance of data-driven technologies in addressing contemporary



societal and industrial challenges. He encouraged students to continue

developing practical solutions that contribute to national development

and technological advancement. Among the distinguished guests

were Director ORIC Air Commodore (Retd) Fawad Zahir, Dean, Faculty of Basic and Applied Sciences, Dr. Muhammad Atif, Dr. M. Afzal, Advisor to the Ministry of Planning, and Dr. Qaiser, Director, National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), along with prominent representatives from academia and industry.

The exhibition featured a wide range of student-led projects demonstrating innovative applications of artificial intelligence, statistical modeling, predictive analytics, cybersecurity, and climate data analysis to solve real-world problems. The projects reflected students' analytical capabilities, technical proficiency, creativity, and their ability to translate classroom knowledge into practical and impactful solutions.

The guests commended the department for cultivating an environment

that encourages critical thinking, interdisciplinary collaboration, and innovation among students. They emphasized that such initiatives are instrumental in preparing graduates capable of addressing complex challenges in the rapidly evolving digital economy.

The exhibition concluded with an interactive session where students received valuable feedback and professional guidance from experts, further enriching their learning experience and encouraging them to refine their ideas for future research, entrepreneurship, and commercialization.

The event reaffirmed Air University's commitment to producing highly skilled graduates equipped with advanced competencies in data analytics, artificial intelligence, and emerging technologies, while fostering a culture of innovation, research excellence, and societal impact.

Pakistan's Role as a Mediator Between United States and Iran

With reports that a ceasefire agreement between the United States and Iran has already been reached in Switzerland, the regional situation has entered a new and delicate phase. Although the immediate threat of direct conflict may have eased, the real challenge now is ensuring that the agreement is respected and turned into lasting peace. In this environment, Pakistan can still play an important diplomatic role by supporting dialogue, encouraging restraint, and helping maintain stability in the region.

Pakistan is uniquely placed to act as a bridge between Washington and Tehran. It shares a long border with Iran, has deep cultural and economic

ties with the region, and also maintains strategic relations with the United States. Because of this position, Pakistan can contribute to confidence-building efforts and help both sides avoid returning to confrontation. If the ceasefire holds, Pakistan's role may shift from crisis mediation to long-term peace facilitation.

For the Pakistani people, this role could bring several benefits. A peaceful relationship between America and Iran would reduce uncertainty in the region and may create a more stable environment for trade, energy cooperation, and investment. Pakistan could gain diplomatic recognition as a responsible country that supports peace rather than conflict. Such recognition can improve Pakistan's international image and

strengthen its voice in regional and global affairs.

One of the most important public concerns is why Pakistan does not buy cheaper petrol from Iran. The answer lies mainly in sanctions and financial restrictions. Even though Iran is geographically close and offers lower-cost fuel, Pakistan must be careful because of the legal and economic risks linked to U.S. sanctions. Buying Iranian oil on a large scale without proper permission could create problems for Pakistan's banking system, foreign trade, and relations with inter-



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Naveed Ahmad Khan

national financial institutions. This is why Pakistan has often taken a cautious approach despite the obvious economic attraction of cheaper energy.

The fact that America has allowed some countries to trade with Iran but not Pakistan has also raised questions. In reality, such permissions are usually limited, conditional, and based on political and strategic considerations. Pakistan's economic dependence on global markets makes it difficult to take risks that could lead to penalties or isolation. Therefore, even when cheaper petrol is available nearby, the broader

cost of violating sanctions can be much higher than the short-term savings.

If the ceasefire agreement in Switzerland leads to a more stable and constructive relationship between America and Iran, Pakistan could benefit in the future. A calmer regional environment may open the door to expanded trade routes, energy projects, and cross-border cooperation. Pakistan could also become an important transit country linking South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. This would improve economic opportunities, create jobs, and support long-term development.

In addition, Pakistan's role as a mediator could strengthen its diplomatic standing. By helping maintain peace after the ceasefire, Pakistan can

show that it is capable of responsible and balanced foreign policy. This may attract foreign investment, improve strategic partnerships, and increase confidence in Pakistan's regional leadership.

Ultimately, the current ceasefire agreement offers Pakistan a chance to support peace while protecting its own interests. If handled wisely, this situation could bring long-term political, economic, and strategic benefits for Pakistan and its people.

The writer is a Editor of Daily The Spokesman, Editor, Daily IMROZE, Founder President: Tourism Association of Pakistan, Convener FPCCI standing committee on Heritage & Hospitality. He can be reached at naveedspokesman@gmail.com

Challenges Faced by China Due to Japan-Philippines EEZ Delimitation Negotiations

The initiation of Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) and continental shelf delimitation negotiations between Japan and the Philippines has emerged as a significant geopolitical development in the Western Pacific. The talks, announced in 2026, have generated strong opposition from China, which considers the negotiations detrimental to its maritime interests. This paper examines the legal, strategic, diplomatic, and security challenges that China faces as a result of the Japan-Philippines EEZ delimitation process. It argues that the negotiations could constrain China's maritime influence, strengthen regional cooperation among U.S. allies and partners, and increase international scrutiny of China's maritime claims. Maritime boundaries play a critical role in determining the rights of coastal states over marine resources, navigation, and security. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), coastal states are entitled to establish an Exclusive Economic Zone extending up to 200 nautical miles from their shores. When EEZs overlap, states are encouraged to negotiate maritime delimitation agreements based on international law. In 2026, Japan and the Philippines announced the launch of formal negotiations to delimit their overlapping

EEZs and continental shelves in waters east of Taiwan. While both countries emphasized that the talks would be conducted in accordance with international law, China strongly condemned the initiative, describing it as illegal and harmful to its maritime interests. The development has introduced new challenges for Beijing in an already complex regional security environment.

Legal Challenges

One of the primary challenges for China is the growing emphasis on international maritime law. Japan and the Philippines have framed their negotiations within the legal framework established by UNCLOS. Such an approach reinforces the principle that maritime disputes should be resolved through peaceful negotiations and internationally recognized legal mechanisms. China's concerns stem from the possibility that a successful delimitation agreement could strengthen legal precedents that contradict Beijing's broader maritime claims. Since the 2016 arbitral ruling in the South China Sea rejected the legal basis of China's "nine-dash line" claims, Beijing has faced persistent criticism regarding its interpretation of maritime rights. Although China rejects the ruling, many countries continue to view it as a significant legal benchmark. The Japan-Philippines negotiations may further reinforce the international

preference for rules-based maritime governance.

Strategic and Security Challenges

The delimitation talks also create strategic challenges for China. The maritime area under discussion lies near important sea lanes and close to Taiwan, a region that Beijing considers highly sensitive. Chinese analysts have expressed concern that closer coordination between Japan and the Philippines could strengthen the so-called "first island chain," a strategic arc extending from Japan through Taiwan and the Philippines. From China's perspective, such cooperation could potentially complicate naval operations and reduce strategic flexibility in the Western Pacific. As Japan and the Philippines enhance maritime coordination, intelligence sharing, and security cooperation, China may encounter greater monitoring of its naval and coast guard activities. Moreover, both Japan and the Philippines maintain strong security relationships with the United States. Consequently, China views the delimitation process not merely as a technical legal exercise but as part of a broader regional alignment aimed



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Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik

at balancing Chinese influence. This perception increases Beijing's strategic concerns and contributes to heightened regional tensions.

Diplomatic Challenges

Another major challenge is the diplomatic impact of the negotiations. China's criticism of the talks has not prevented Japan and the Philippines from moving forward. Instead, the initiative reflects growing cooperation among regional states that share concerns regarding maritime security. The negotiations may encourage other countries to pursue similar agreements based on international law. If successful, the Japan-Philippines model could demonstrate that complex maritime issues can be managed through bilateral negotiation rather than unilateral assertions. Such an outcome would reduce China's ability to shape regional maritime arrangements according to its preferences. Additionally, China's strong opposition risks creating the perception that Beijing is resistant to internationally accepted dispute-resolution mechanisms. This may complicate China's diplomatic efforts to present itself as

a supporter of regional stability and peaceful development.

Economic Challenges

Maritime zones are economically important because they contain fisheries, energy resources, and critical shipping routes. Any delimitation agreement between Japan and the Philippines would provide greater legal certainty regarding resource management and maritime activities. China worries that such arrangements could limit opportunities for future access to resources in disputed or overlapping areas. Although the immediate economic impact may be limited, the long-term implications could be significant if regional states increasingly define and protect their maritime rights through formal agreements. Furthermore, stable maritime boundaries can encourage investment in offshore energy exploration and fisheries management. As neighbouring countries strengthen their maritime governance structures, China may face greater obstacles in advancing economic activities in contested waters.

Challenges Related to Taiwan

The proximity of the delimitation area to Taiwan adds another layer of complexity. Beijing regards Taiwan as part of China and opposes actions that it believes could affect its sovereignty claims. Chinese officials have argued

that waters east of Taiwan involve Chinese maritime interests and should not be determined through bilateral negotiations that exclude Beijing. Consequently, the talks are viewed by China not only through a maritime lens but also through the broader context of cross-strait relations. Any agreement that appears to strengthen strategic coordination among Japan, the Philippines, and their partners near Taiwan is likely to be interpreted as a challenge to China's regional objectives.

Future Implications

The long-term significance of the Japan-Philippines EEZ delimitation process extends beyond the immediate negotiations. The talks reflect broader trends in the Indo-Pacific, including increasing reliance on international law, growing security cooperation among regional states, and efforts to maintain a rules-based maritime order. For China, the challenge lies in balancing its maritime ambitions with the expectations of neighbouring countries and the international community. Continued opposition to such initiatives may deepen regional mistrust, while constructive engagement could provide opportunities for confidence-building and conflict management.

The writer is Research Fellow at Maritime Centre of Excellence

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
179,571.26	177,692.92
Day's High	Day's Low
179,919.27	177,931.32
Index Value	Change
30,503,267,152	+ 1878.34
Percentage	Time
+ 1.06%	24 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,529.89	+68.26
Percentage	Time
+0.65%	25 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,006.32	+157.42
Percentage	Time
+0.30%	25 Jun, 1:22 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
72,366.34	+3,191.38
Percentage	Time
+4.61%	25 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.37	196.95
Bahrain Dinar	737.16	747.75
Canadian Dollar	197.52	201.17
China Yuan	38.10	38.85
Danish Krone	43.35	43.75
Euro	318.55	322.17
Hong Kong Dollar	35.06	36.04
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.05
Japanese Yen	1.7121	1.8104
Kuwaiti Dinar	885.17	895.90
Malaysian Ringgit	67	67.85
New Zealand \$	157.64	161.65
Norwegians Krone	27.97	28.27
Omani Riyal	722.25	732.50
Qatari Riyal	75.04	75.95
Saudi Riyal	74.30	74.95
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	75.90	76.75
UK Pound Sterling	368.52	372.25
US Dollar	279.05	279.30

Bilal Bin Saqib Projects Pakistan as Architect of New Financial System at Zurich's Point Zero Forum

Spokesman Report

ZURICH: Minister of State and Chairman Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) Bilal Bin Saqib addressed the Point Zero Forum 2026 in Zurich, telling global central bankers and regulators that "the rules governing money are being rewritten and Pakistan will help write them."

Speaking on the panel "Unchaining Tokenized Money: Stablecoins, CBDCs, and the Race for Scale," moderated by Central Banking Publications, he said, "Money has become software, and software does not respect borders... That era is ending." He appeared alongside Dr. Mampho Modise, Deputy Governor of the South African Reserve Bank.

Bin Saqib said for markets with mass digital-asset use, the choice is "whether to govern the infrastructure or surrender to others."



He outlined a "Pakistan-first strategy," arguing emerging economies should help shape tokenised finance rules "not simply inherit infrastructure built elsewhere." He

added: "This is already happening, our people are already here. Our job is not to forbid the future but to govern it well."

He participated in invitation-only roundtables with officials from Singapore, Japan, the Philippines, the Gulf and Europe, and with major banks and digital-asset firms, on retaining monetary sovereignty while using dollar-denominated tokenised money.

PVARA noted Pakistan ranks 3rd globally on the 2025 Chainalysis Crypto Adoption Index, driven by a young, mobile-first population, a large freelancer base, over \$38 billion in annual remittances, and stablecoin use as an inflation hedge.

The 5th edition Point Zero Forum, 23-25 June at Kongresshaus Zürich, was co-organised by GFTN and Switzerland's SIF with BIS Innovation Hub, MAS, SNB and FINMA.

Hot summer day

ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in their routine work at local block factory at Bhara Kahu area of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Malik Khuda Bakhsh Urges Govt-Business Consultation in Budget 2026



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Business Forum Sindh President and FPCCI Energy Committee Convener Malik Khuda Bakhsh said sustainable growth requires continuous government-business consultation at every budget stage.

He stated Finance Bill 2026 measures should promote industry, trade and investment, not just raise revenue. Excessive tax pressure on businesses could slow economic growth.

Bakhsh stressed the need for a business-friendly environment, fair tax base expansion, support for productive sectors and restored investor confidence. He urged inclusive consultations with traders and industrialists to create policies that boost both revenue and activity.

He reaffirmed the private sector's role in jobs and exports, but said a transparent, investment-friendly policy framework is essential.

Faisalabad's First IT Hub 'Pixel Park' Hosts Seminar to Boost Tech Economy

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: An important awareness seminar on the promotion of IT and technology was held at Faisalabad's first Special Technology Zone "Pixel Park", which was organized by the Pixel Park administration in collaboration with the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Special Technology Zone Authority.

Prominent figures from the fields of industry, business and technology participated in the seminar and expressed their determination to make Faisalabad a modern IT hub.

On this occasion, Chairman Shah Nawaz Group of Companies Mr. Shah Nawaz Architect, Founder and CEO of Pixel Park Mr. Zeeshan Shah, Representative of Special Technology Zone Authority Mr. Muhammad Azam, President of FITCO Mr. Noman Sarwar and Mr. Shahzeb Aslam of CESAR Zone while speaking highlighted the importance of investment in the technology sector and creating new



employment opportunities for the youth. Mr. Farooq Yousuf Sheikh, President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, attended as the special guest and

termed this initiative as a welcome one and congratulated the Pixel Park administration on the establishment of Faisalabad's first IT Hub.

REAP Seeks DTLT Extension to Sept 30 as Middle East Tensions Hit Rice Exports

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Senior Vice Chairman of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP) Javed Jillani and former Chairman Rafiq Suleman have urged the government to extend the Duty and Taxes Remission for Exports (DLTL) Scheme until September 30, 2026, citing Middle East tensions that disrupted shipments and threatened Pakistan's rice export targets.

Speaking to media, Jillani said the recent regional conflict and uncertainty severely affected exports. Vessels were unavailable for nearly 1.5 months, shipping line operations were limited, and freight charges rose sharply, preventing timely shipments. As a result, export orders were disrupted and several international buyers shifted to alternative suppliers.



Rafiq Suleman warned that non-extension would impact exporters, mills, farmers and the wider agri value chain. Lower exports could depress domestic prices, reduce farmer returns, and discourage cultivation next season. He also highlighted a 30-40% price gap between Indian and Pakistani rice, urging a uniform rebate rate for Basmati and Non-Basmati to ensure competitiveness.

REAP called on the federal government, Ministry of Commerce and Ministry of Finance to extend DTLT, maintain incentives, and adopt export-friendly policies.

ICCI Says Modern Teacher Training Key to Pakistan's Future, Launches 21st Century Skills Workshop

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) President Sardar Tahir Mehmood on Saturday said empowering teachers with modern methodologies is "an investment in Pakistan's future," as educators are the architects of coming generations.

Addressing the concluding session of the Teachers' Training Workshop on "21st Century Teaching Skills," organized by ICCI with SOS Foundation and EduTransform, he said the AI era, digital transformation and global connectivity demand an

education system aligned with global trends.

He noted economic progress and educational excellence go together, adding ICCI has expanded beyond business advocacy to education, youth development, innovation, entrepreneurship, technology and academia-industry collaboration. He cited growing ICCI partnerships with China, Africa and the Middle East, and a focus on skills and the digital economy to build a knowledge-driven Pakistan.

Pakistan's High Commissioner to Rwanda, H. E. Naem Khan, said quality education must be driven by



originality, innovation and communication. He urged teachers to

promote creative thinking and practical learning over rote methods, and

proposed student/faculty exchanges with Rwanda. He also suggested a Public-Private Academic Partnership (PPAP) model to link academia, government and industry for research commercialization.

Dr. Abdus Salam, Convener ICCI Education Committee and CEO SOS Foundation, said the workshop aimed to equip educators for 21st-century classrooms. Dr. Anela Malik, CEO EduTransform, shared strategies on innovative teaching and leadership.

Participants lauded ICCI, SOS Foundation and EduTransform, pledging stronger academia-industry collaboration.

Govt keeps petrol, diesel prices unchanged for another week

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has decided to keep petrol and diesel prices unchanged for the next week, according to a notification issued by the Petroleum Division.

Under the latest pricing decision, the price of petrol will remain at Rs299.50 per litre, while high-speed diesel will continue to be sold at Rs311.47 per litre.

The revised prices came into effect last night.

According to another notification, the government has reduced the price of kerosene oil by Rs6.85 per litre.

The new price of kerosene has been fixed at Rs227.05 per litre, down from the previous rate of Rs233.90 per litre.

The Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) issued the notification confirming the decision.

Gold prices decline by Rs1,000 per tola

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed a decline in the local market on Saturday, with 24 karat gold per tola decreasing by Rs1,000 to settle at Rs431,236, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold fell by Rs730 to Rs369,715, whereas 10 grams of 22 karat gold declined by Rs669 to Rs338,917.

In the international market, the price of gold decreased by \$10 to \$4,088 per ounce.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola decreased by Rs271 to Rs6,393, while the price of 10 grams of silver fell by Rs161 to Rs5,480. The price of silver in the international market also decreased by \$2.71 to \$59.14 per ounce, the association reported.

Pakistan Weightlifting faces sanctions over doping: Interim committee seeks fine recovery, urges to place culprits on ECL

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Interim Committee of the Pakistan Weightlifting Federation (PWLFF) has formally approached the Federal Government, the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA), and the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) to demand the immediate recovery of outstanding fines from suspended athletes and former officials. This recovery is essential to clear an international penalty exceeding 30,000 USD imposed by the International Weightlifting Federation (IWF).

The committee warned that if these dues remain unpaid, Pakistani weightlifters will be barred from competing in the upcoming 20th Asian Games 2026 in Japan as well as the proposed 2027 South Asian Games in Pakistan.

The global governing body placed Pakistan Weightlifting under suspension following systematic violations of anti-doping regulations, a sanc-

tion that will persist until the entire financial liability is cleared. This ongoing deadlock directly threatens the careers and futures of the country's clean athletes.

The financial crisis stems from 2021 when weightlifters Talha Talib and Abu Bakar Ghani were each fined 5,000 USD, an amount that has now ballooned past 30,000 USD due to non-payment. Furthermore, a Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) ruling on April 2, 2026, handed down a lifetime ban to former PWLFF President Hafiz Imran Butt, alongside four-year bans for Irfan Butt and Abu Bakar Ghani.

In an official letter, the Chairman of the PWLFF Interim Committee, Brigadier (R) Zahid Iqbal, severely pointed out the Pakistan Olympic Association, accusing it of backing a "doping mafia" by allowing the banned former president to retain his post. The letter demands that the POA immediately cancel the affiliation of the suspended federation and launch an internal

investigation into why the payment of the international fine was obstructed.

The committee maintains that the POA should either pay the penalty out of its own pocket or ensure it is clawed back from those responsible.

To protect the nation's sporting image, the Interim Committee has recommended that the PSB enlist the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) to place the names of all suspended athletes, including Talha Talib, and implicated former officials on the Exit Control List (ECL) or Passport Control List to prevent them from traveling abroad before clearing the fines.

The committee has also urged authorities to deny any future international sports accreditation to these individuals until the money is recovered. Finally, the letter appealed to the Pakistan Sports Board to contact the IWF to request a temporary reinstatement of the Interim Committee so that the rights of clean Pakistani lifters can be safeguarded.



PFF appoints Adeel Rizki as technical director

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Football Federation is pleased to announce the appointment of Adeel Rizki as its Technical Director effective from July 1, 2026.

Rizki was formerly the head coach of the Pakistan Women's National Team and most recently served as assistant to Nolberto Solano during the Pakistan Men's National Team's triumph at the Diamond Jubilee International Football Tournament in the Maldives, said a press release.

Rizki holds a UEFA A-License and becomes the first technical director of the PFF since 2019.

In his role, Rizki will be in charge of defining and leading the national technical development programmes, and developing long-term strategies for all aspects of the game, from grassroots, to women's football and coach education to youth football, bringing them together in synergy according to the develop-

ment pyramid. He will also advise the PFF Executive Committee on coaching and technical development matters in general.

Rizki's appointment marks another step by PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani to steer Pakistan football into a better direction.

"Technical development is one of the most key areas for a football federation and the technical director plays a huge role in defining and leading the country's development programme," said Mr Gilani. "With Adeel's appointment we can move to the next chapter of developing football in the country and I hope we can take steps towards achieving the desired results."

Rizki, who is also a PFF Congress Member, will be stepping away from that role once he takes over as the Technical Director.

"By the grace of Almighty Allah, I am

deeply honoured to accept the appointment as Technical Director of the Pakistan Football Federation.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to President Mohsen Gilani for his trust and confidence in entrusting me with this responsibility at such an important moment for football in Pakistan."

"Since 2022, I have had the privilege of serving as Head Coach of the women's national team, a journey that has been incredibly meaningful. During this time, I have witnessed encouraging growth, progress, and the continued development of women's football in Pakistan."

Since 2024, I have also had the honour of serving as part of the PFF Congress, contributing to the wider direction and governance of the game.

"With this new appointment as Technical Director, I will be stepping away from those roles to fully dedicate myself to contributing in a broader capacity and

helping shape the long-term future of football in Pakistan."

"Football has the power to inspire, unite communities, and create opportunities for future generations. I firmly believe Pakistan possesses immense potential, and together we have an opportunity to build a modern, sustainable, and high-performing football ecosystem."

"As Technical Director, my focus will be on establishing a clear technical vision across all levels of the game; strengthening coach education, creating player development pathways, enhancing football methodology, and building structures that deliver long-term success for Pakistan."

"Progress requires alignment, collaboration, and a shared commitment across the football community. I look forward to working closely with Federation leadership, clubs, academies, coaches, players, regional stakeholders, and partners to help shape a stronger future for football in Pakistan."



Opposition Warns AJK Tensions Could Hurt Pakistan's Global Image, Urges Dialogue

Continued from Page 1

protest and called for addressing the crisis through engagement. He noted a clear gap between the government and the AJK Joint Action Committee and said efforts should focus on why AJK had reached a critical point. He added that the PM, military leadership and other institutions should acknowledge past mistakes and move forward through reconciliation.

Hafiz Naeem said JI was ready to mediate if both sides agreed, stressing talks must be within the Constitution and laws. He warned that ignoring

peace could make divisions irreparable and said public anger rises when democratic mandates are not respected.

Khokhar said the situation had caused concern nationwide, alleging the political process in AJK was undermined. He criticized the use of 12 reserved refugee seats and remarks by Adviser Rana Sanatullah and Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, saying they inflamed tensions. He cautioned that escalation could weaken Pakistan's diplomatic position on Kashmir and welcomed JI's dialogue initiative.

Peace Through Preparedness

Continued from Page 4

division. Strict enforcement against hate speech, provocative activities and violations of the code of conduct further safeguarded the peaceful environment.

The successful management of Muharram also reflected an important governance philosophy. Rather than responding to crises after they emerged, the Punjab government focused on prevention through prudent planning, institutional coordination and continuous supervision. Every line department worked as part of a unified provincial framework. This whole-of-government approach reduced any operational gaps and ensured the timely delivery of services throughout the first ten days.

The message of Karbala extends far beyond history. It reminds humanity that justice, compassion, integrity and commitment to truth remain the foundations of a peaceful society. These values acquire even greater significance today, when unity, tolerance and mutual respect

are indispensable for national cohesion. The peaceful observance of Ashura across Punjab reflected not only effective administrative arrangements but also the maturity of citizens who demonstrated patience, discipline and respect for one another.

The successful conclusion of Muharram-ul-Haram 2026 stands as a significant administrative achievement for Punjab. It illustrates that visionary leadership, planning, professional policing and active public cooperation can together protect religious freedom while maintaining peace and stability. As the province moves forward, the lessons learned during these ten days reinforce an enduring principle of good governance: when institutions work with foresight, coordination and commitment to public service, even the most demanding responsibilities can be fulfilled with dignity, efficiency and harmony.

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

Youm-e-Ashur observed across Pakistan with solemnity amid tight security

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Rawalpindi

The central procession in Rawalpindi emerged from Colonel Maqbool Imambargah and concluded at the Old Imambargah.

Mourners offered Zuhr and Asr prayers at Fawara Chowk before performing zanjeer matam and qama zani. Langar was also distributed along the route.

More than 8,000 security personnel were deployed for the procession, including over 5,500 for the central march alone.

More than 1,200 traffic police officers and 1,000 volunteers assisted with crowd management. Over 2,000 Safe City and other cameras monitored the route throughout the day.

Quetta

The central procession in Quetta emerged from Shahuda Chowk on Alamdar Road and passed through its traditional routes before concluding back on Alamdar Road. The procession included 35 matami dastaas.

Mourners offered Jumu'ah prayers at Bacha Khan Chowk.

More than 30,000 security personnel were deployed across Balochistan, with over 8,000 in Quetta alone.

Aerial surveillance was conducted alongside CCTV monitoring. Mobile phone services were suspended in Quetta as a precautionary measure.

Eleven districts across Balochistan, including Quetta, were designated as highly sensitive. Shia religious and political organisations expressed satisfaction with the security arrangements.

Peshawar

In Peshawar, 12 processions were taken out on Youm-e-Ashur. The central procession commenced from Imambargah Agha Syed Ali Shah Rizvi and concluded at Imambargah Agha Mustafa Shah. The city had been sealed for three days as a precautionary measure.

Of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's 614 imambargahs, 127 were designated as highly sensitive

and 262 as sensitive.

More than 10,000 police personnel were deployed in Peshawar, supported by Frontier Corps contingents.

A central command and control centre was established at Kohati Chowk, with aerial surveillance carried out throughout the day.

Majalis-e-Sham-e-Ghariban were held after Maghrib prayers across the city.

Youm-e-Ashur processions were also held peacefully in smaller cities across the country, including Toba Tek Singh, Tando Allahyar and other towns.

In Toba Tek Singh, the central procession emerged from the Hussainia Trust Imambargah on Jhang Road and concluded at its destination amid strict security.

In Tando Allahyar, mourning processions passed through their designated routes before concluding at Imambargah Sakhi Moj Darya and Imambargah Haideria.

Police ensured security along all procession routes in both cities.

The CPC at 105: A Century of Courage and Continuity

Continued from Page 4

hosting exhibitions such as Epoch-making Beginnings, retracing the Party's early struggles. Youth engagement is central: young researchers and volunteers are retelling revolutionary stories, ensuring that the CPC's legacy resonates with new generations.

The CPC's strength lies in its ability to adapt without abandoning its founding ideals. Its governance model emphasizes long-term planning, collective leadership, and mass participation, distinguishing it from many political systems worldwide. The Party's legitimacy is reinforced by its capacity to deliver social stability, economic growth, and national pride. For many Chinese citizens, the CPC is not merely a political organization

but the custodian of national destiny.

Yet anniversaries are also moments of introspection. The CPC faces formidable challenges. Environmental degradation and climate change demand that China reconcile industrial expansion with ecological stewardship. As China's influence expands, the CPC must navigate scrutiny over its role in international peace and cooperation. Its initiatives will be judged not only by rhetoric but by tangible contributions to stability. Passing revolutionary ideals to younger citizens is equally vital. In an age of digital distraction and globalized culture, ensuring ideological cohesion remains a delicate task.

The CPC's 105th anniversary is not merely a commemoration of history; it is a reaffirmation of vision.

From the red boat of Jiaying to the skyscrapers of Shanghai, the Party's journey embodies resilience and transformation. As China strides into the next century, the CPC's challenge will be to harmonize its revolutionary heritage with the demands of a rapidly changing world. They decide once observed that "the secret of happiness is freedom, and the secret of freedom is courage." The CPC's saga illustrates that courage—whether in resisting foreign aggression, reforming economic structures, embracing technological frontiers, or mediating peace between nations—remains its defining trait. The world watches as China, under the CPC's stewardship, seeks not only national rejuvenation but a role in shaping global civilization.

Israel's Assassination Plot Against Asim Munir

Continued from Page 4

subject to extensive international scrutiny.

This inconsistency undermines confidence in the international legal system itself.

The world therefore requires stronger mechanisms to investigate allegations of politically motivated assassinations. Independent international investigations should be initiated whenever credible evidence emerges that state actors have participated in extrajudicial killings beyond their borders. If responsibility is established through transparent legal processes, appropriate sanctions and legal consequences should follow irrespective of the country's political influence or military power.

Such accountability should never be selective. The principles governing

sovereignty, due process, and the sanctity of human life must apply equally to allies and adversaries alike. International justice loses credibility when similar actions receive dramatically different responses depending upon who commits them.

The objective should not be to legitimize retaliation through further assassinations. Rather, it should be to strengthen institutions capable of preventing such acts before they occur. Durable peace cannot be achieved by replacing one unlawful killing with another. It can only emerge when international law is consistently enforced and political disputes are resolved through diplomacy rather than covert violence.

Ultimately, the lesson for every nation is twofold. First, countries must maintain sufficient defensive capabilities to safeguard their sovereignty and

protect their citizens against external threats. Second, the international community must develop stronger, more impartial mechanisms to hold accountable any state or organization that engages in unlawful political assassinations.

Power may deter aggression in the short term, but only justice can secure peace in the long term. Unless international institutions become capable of enforcing the law equally against all states, the normalization of political assassination will continue to erode the foundations of global order, encouraging a world governed increasingly by force rather than by law.

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

Muharram procession

RAWALPINDI: Shiite Muslims attend a Muharram procession on the tenth Day of Ashura, at Raja Bazaar in the city.



Photo: Online

Youm-e-Ashur observed across Pakistan with solemnity amid tight security

Naveed Ahmad Khan/ Bureau Reports

ISLAMABAD: Youm-e-Ashur was observed across Islamabad with profound religious devotion and solemnity to commemorate the supreme sacrifice of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) and his companions at Karbala. Mourning processions and majalis were held in various parts of the federal capital, with thousands of mourners participating peacefully. Strict security arrangements were put in place by the

Islamabad administration, police, Rangers, and other law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of participants. Mobile phone services remained partially suspended in sensitive areas, while traffic was diverted along procession routes. Religious scholars emphasized the values of sacrifice, patience, justice, and steadfastness exemplified by Imam Hussain (RA).

Karachi

The central procession in Karachi emerged from Nishtar Park following a majlis-e-aza and concluded

at Hussainia Iraniya imam-bargah in Kharadar.

Mourners recited nohas and performed matam throughout the march.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, along with provincial ministers and senior officials, attended the procession.

MQM leader Farooq Sattar and Sindh Governor Nihal Hashmi also participated. Mourners offered Zuhur and Asr prayers at Tibet Centre, led by Allama Shahansah Hussain Naqvi.

Heavy contingents of

police and Rangers were deployed, with the entire route under continuous surveillance.

Lahore

The central procession in Lahore emerged from Nisar Haveli and concluded at Karbala Gamay Shah, arriving approximately one hour behind schedule.

Sabeels providing milk and water were set up along the route for mourners.

Across Punjab, nearly 100,000 police personnel were deployed to provide security for 2,732 proces-

sions and 2,567 majalis held throughout the province.

The central procession in Lahore emerged from Nisar Haveli and concluded at Karbala Gamay Shah

In Lahore alone, security arrangements covered 45 processions and 231 majalis.

Walk-through gates, metal detectors, plainclothes commandos and snipers were positioned along procession routes. The Safe Cities Authority and district control rooms maintained round-the-clock monitoring.

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Faisalabad Industrial Zone to Drive Investment and Jobs, Rural Healthcare Also Priority: Qaiser Sheikh

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh on Saturday said the Faisalabad Industrial Zone will usher in a new era of investment, industrial growth and employment, while the government is also prioritizing free quality healthcare for rural communities.

Speaking to media during a visit to a free medical camp organized by local notables with Islamia Hospital Chiniot



at Chak 134 Loonay Wala near Chiniot, he said the govern-

ment is pursuing reforms to make Pakistan a secure, busi-

ness-friendly destination with public welfare at its core.

He said economic growth and welfare are linked, with investment, jobs, infrastructure and social initiatives advancing together. The Faisalabad Industrial Zone, he noted, will boost local and foreign investment, create thousands of jobs for youth, and stimulate regional activity.

The Board of Investment is easing doing business by cutting unnecessary approvals and licensing hurdles. Investors in Special Economic

Zones get customs and tax exemptions on imported machinery and income tax relief for up to nine years, he added.

Earlier, local dignitaries including Chairman Muhammad Ali Noor, Chaudhary Hijaz Loona, Chaudhary Zubair Loona, Chaudhary Muhammad Hussain Loona, Allah Ditta, Chaudhry Muhammad Hussain and Barrister Muhammad Mansha warmly welcomed the federal minister and hosted a reception in his honour.

PPP AJK parliamentary board conducts interviews of candidates from Poonch and Mirpur Divisions

Bureau Report

PPP Azad Kashmir's 17-member parliamentary board meets at Zardari House in Islamabad under the chair of Faryal Talpur to conduct interviews of the candidates. The candidates of Poonch and Mirpur Divisions have reached Zardari House. The Parliamentary Board will conduct interviews of candidates from 33 constituencies of Azad Kashmir and 12 constituencies of Muhajireen. Separate timings have been fixed for candidates from Mirpur, Poonch, Muzaffarabad divisions and Muhajireen.

PPP parliamentary board will formulate final recommendations regarding party tickets after the interviews of the candidates and the recommendations of the parliamen-



tary board will be sent to Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for final approval.

After Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's approval, party tickets will be

issued to the candidates for the Azad Kashmir elections 2026.

PPP AJK parliamentary board includes Syed Nayar Hussain Bukhari, Muhammad Humayun Khan, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, and Chaudhry Latif Akbar.

Other members of the board include Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Qamar-uz-Zaman, Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Chaudhry Pervaiz Ashraf, Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mehmood, Nisar Ahmed Khuhro, Sardar Muhammad Umar, Syed Muhammad Ali Shah Bacha, and Chaudhry Riaz.

Today's meeting at Zardari House, Islamabad, was being described as a major development in the election phase of the PPP Azad Kashmir.

UK foreign secretary lauds Pakistan's sustained efforts for regional peace



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday spoke with UK Foreign Secretary Yvette Cooper.

Foreign Secretary Cooper reiterated the UK's appreciation for Pakistan's sustained efforts for peace and

stability in the region, which led to the signing of the Islamabad MoU by the USA and Iran, mediated by Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting dialogue, diplomacy, and constructive engagement between the parties.

Both leaders agreed to remain in close contact.

Pakistan Entering Growth Phase with Improving Economy: Danyal Chaudhry



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said Pakistan is moving toward economic stability and a better future, with coming months expected to ease inflation and meet national targets.

Speaking to a state-run channel, he said the PML-N government averted default risk and restored international confidence. Macro-

economic indicators are improving and investor trust is returning.

He credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir's foreign policy for boosting diplomatic credibility. He cited planned trade expansion with Iran, and a budget focused on textiles, IT, housing, exports and remittances.

Chaudhry expressed confidence that reforms will deliver positive results.

IHC Rules Travel Ban Needs Legal Sanction, Orders Removal from Passport Control List

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Saturday said travel restrictions cannot be imposed on any citizen without authorization by a legal authority and due procedure.

The court declared the placement of petitioner Zain Atiq's name on the Passport Control List (PCL) without proper procedure "illegal" and ordered its removal.

According to the judgment, Atiq's

name was

placed on

the PCL

after his

deportation

from Turkey

in July

2022. At

his request,

the Federal

Investigation

Agency (FIA)

later recom-

ended removal

since his name

had remained

on the list for

two years.

The Passport

Authority, however,

rejected the

FIA's request

due to "non-perusal."

The IHC said a person deported

for being an illegal immigrant cannot remain on the PCL indefinitely without authorization from the concerned authority. It noted there was no record showing any authority had ordered Atiq's name to stay on the list, nor evidence of a conviction in Pakistan or Turkey, or any sub-judice case against him.

"In this situation, there is no justification for not removing the petitioner's name from the list," the court said.



The court cited the Shireen Mazari case, reiterating that travel restrictions on citizens can only be imposed after following proper procedure and with the consent of the relevant authority.