



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے علی بن عبد اللہ نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم سے سفیان بن عیینہ نے بیان کیا، ان سے زہری نے بیان کیا، ان سے سعید بن مسیب نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا لوگ (گورگی) «کرم» کہتے ہیں، «کرم» تو مومن کا بل ہے۔ (بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6183)

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## Artificial Intelligence foundation of Pakistan's bright future: Governor

Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nehal Hashmi has said that the present era belongs to Artificial Intelligence (AI), and equipping children and young people with modern technology has become an urgent necessity. He said that Pakistan's future is closely linked with modern education, information technology and artificial intelligence.



## SJC dismisses complaint against IHC Judge Muhammad Asif

The Supreme Judicial Council has dismissed a complaint against Justice Muhammad Asif of the Islamabad High Court, ending proceedings over allegations that he used his judicial position to influence a hit-and-run case involving his underage son.

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## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding transformation of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research, on Monday.



Photo: PID

## PM Shehbaz grieved over helicopter crash in KSA causing 14 deaths

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday expressed deep grief over the tragic helicopter crash in Ras Tanura, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, which claimed the precious lives of 14 Saudi nationals.

"On behalf of the people and Government of Pakistan, I extend our heartfelt condolences to the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, the bereaved families, and the brotherly people of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the prime minister wrote on his X timeline.

He reiterated that Pakistan stood in full solidarity with its Saudi brothers and sisters in that hour of grief.

Earlier on Sunday, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign



Minister Senator Ishaq Dar held a telephonic conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud on Sunday to convey condolences.

Prince Faisal bin Farhan thanked DPM Dar and deeply appreciated the brotherly gesture.

The two leaders also held an in-depth discussion on recent developments in the region and expressed deep concern over the evolving situation.

## PM directs early finalization of National Agriculture Policy; formation of apex forum

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Monday, directed the early formulation of a comprehensive National Agriculture Policy in consultation with the provinces.

He also asked for the establishment of an 'Agriculture Apex Forum', which would hold monthly meetings to ensure the effective implementation of the agriculture innovation and growth plan.

The prime minister chaired a high-level review meeting on the transformation of the Ministry of National Food Security and Research and reforms in the agriculture sector, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar and Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant

Haroon Akhtar, PM's Coordinator on Agriculture Ahmad Umair and senior officials.

To improve farmers' access to affordable financing, the prime minister directed the launch of a nationwide awareness campaign for the 'Zarkhez-e Agricultural Loan Programme'.

Emphasizing the importance of agricultural research, the prime minister said the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) should be developed into a real centre for

agricultural innovation and research.

He observed that Pakistan's agriculture sector has the potential to drive sustainable economic growth, adding that improved seed quality, modern farming technologies, and the timely availability of water and fertilizers would significantly enhance per-acre crop yields.

The prime minister also stressed the need to promote value addition in agricultural produce, improve warehousing

facilities and develop modern storage systems.

During the meeting, officials presented proposals aimed at reforming the agriculture sector. The National Agricultural Research Center (NARC) was producing multi-grain flour on a pilot basis, it was added.

The meeting was also informed that consultations were underway on a National Wheat Policy as well as several livestock-related policies.

## Pakistan to Host First International Seminar on Indus Waters Treaty

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar on Monday said Pakistan will host its first international seminar on the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) on Tuesday, bringing global water and legal experts to discuss Pakistan's rights.

Addressing a joint press conference with Climate Minister Dr. Musadik Malik, Tarar said experts had arrived to explain

Pakistan's rights over its rivers, the legal nature of those rights, and the treaty's various dimensions.

He said Pakistan's position has international recognition and endorsement. "The treaty cannot be revoked, terminated unilaterally, or amended by one party alone. It remains in force and is being implemented," he stated.

Tarar noted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has called water Pakistan's "lifeline

and red line," a position also reiterated by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir. He added that India faced embarrassment at international forums over its stance, which was not accepted. "When discussed objectively, experts have acknowledged Pakistan's rights," he said.

On climate, Tarar said Pakistan, contributing <1% of emissions, is among the 10 most vulnerable countries. He said Pakistan managed recent flood



relief without foreign aid, using federal and provincial resources, and remains committed to forest protection and tree plantation.

## Pakistan Frames Indus Waters Treaty as Global Justice Issue, Malik Says

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change Musadik Malik on Monday said Pakistan is taking the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) beyond a bilateral dispute, calling it a global question of justice, fundamental rights, and downstream nations' access to

water. At a joint press conference with Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Malik said Pakistan had raised the issue at the UN, its institutions, and international arbitration forums, where its position was endorsed.

He cited farmer "Iqbal Solangi" near the Sindh-Balochistan

border, whose village was hit by floods in 2010, 2012 and 2022, and also faced drought when land cracked. Malik said while climate change matters, river flows are also controlled by an upstream "tap."

"40-50% of Pakistanis depend on agriculture, which is 20-25% of GDP. Our food security

depends on water. Decisions on river flows should not rest with another country," he said.

Malik warned that if upstream states could stop rivers, it would affect transboundary rivers worldwide. He asked if Spain had ever blocked Portugal's water. The seminar, he said, will focus on justice and rights, and

whether downstream children have a right to water.

He noted international rulings limit run-of-river storage, and stressed Pakistan must expand dams to regulate seasonal flows. He urged political consensus and said Diamer-Bhasha and Dasu dams are being pursued even without full external financing.

## 14 prisoners escape from Kahuta van

City Desk

KAHUTA: Fourteen prisoners escaped from a prison van near Chakiyan Post in Kahuta while being transported to Rawalpindi, prompting a search operation by police.

According to authorities, Kahuta Police launched an immediate operation after the incident and managed to recapture four escaped prisoners, while efforts to locate the remaining fugitives are ongoing.

Officials said the prison van was stopped for checking when one of the prisoners threw chilli powder into the eyes of

police personnel, allowing the inmates to escape.

Police cordoned off the area and established checkpoints at different locations. Senior police officers also reached the scene and are supervising the

search operation. Security has been further tightened in Chakiyan and surrounding areas following the incident, while teams continue efforts to arrest the remaining escaped prisoners.



# AJK Government Presents People-Friendly Budget Despite Financial Constraints: Finance Minister

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Finance Minister Chaudhry Qasim Majeed has said that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Chaudhry

Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has presented a balanced and people-friendly budget despite challenging financial circumstances, with a strong focus on public welfare, education, healthcare, infrastructure, and economic development. Addressing a post-budget press

conference in Muzaffarabad on Monday, the Finance Minister said the government had prioritized relief for the common people by allocating substantial funds for key sectors. He announced an education package of Rs2.979 billion for Elementary and Secondary Education and Rs704.9



million\*\* for colleges. Several Basic Health Units have been upgraded to Rural Health Centres, while a number of Rural Health Centres have been elevated to Tehsil Headquarters Hospitals.

He said Rs1.973 billion has been allocated as grants for state universities, while Rs722 million has been earmarked for the installation and repair of electricity transformers. The government has also introduced Climate and Gender Budget Tagging to ensure environmentally sustainable and gender-responsive public spending. In addition, Rs70.58 million has been allocated for modern urban planning and improved civic facilities.

The Finance Minister further announced Rs518.9 million for the payment of pensions to local government employees, Rs340 million for

the beautification and infrastructure development of Muzaffarabad, and the regularization of 878 BPS-1 forest workers.

To strengthen law and order, the government has approved a comprehensive Martyrs' Package for police personnel and established a Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) with 473 new posts, along with the creation of a Riot Management Police (RMP) comprising 1,340 new positions. Nearly Rs470 million has also been allocated for the procurement of weapons, ammunition, anti-riot equipment, and tear gas.

Highlighting financial sector reforms, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed said all legal, financial, and regulatory requirements have been completed to grant the Bank of Azad Jammu and Kashmir the status of a scheduled bank. He expressed hope that the

bank would attain scheduled status by the first week of August, with its first online branch becoming operational soon. The government has allocated Rs2.9 billion in equity support for the purpose.

The Finance Minister also announced Rs50 million for the AJK Universal Fund to strengthen digital infrastructure and improve connectivity in remote areas. The subsistence allowance for 1989-90 refugees has been increased by Rs2,500 per month, with an additional Rs730.47 million allocated for refugee welfare. Furthermore, Rs30 million has been provided to the Information Department for public awareness campaigns and government communication. He added that the PPP government had also fulfilled its commitment by regularizing ad hoc employees during its tenure.

## Parking closed

ISLAMABAD: One side of parking closed at Faisal Mosque in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PML-N Candidate Meets Former Azad Kashmir Premier for Election Strategy Talks



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: PML-N candidate for constituency Pachyut Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi called on president Muslim Conference and former premier Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan at Mujahid Manzil Rawalpindi and discussed ongoing political situation of Azad Kashmir regarding general elections in Azad Kashmir.

## Educationist Imdad Hussain Acharani Passes Away in Karachi

Kamran Khamiso Khawaja

SUJAWAL: Seasoned educationist, social activist, and community leader Imdad Hussain Acharani died of cardiac arrest in Karachi on Sunday evening, family sources said. He had been unwell for days and suffered the fatal attack on Saturday.

At the time of his death, Acharani was serving as Taluka Education Officer, Primary Education, Taluka Jati, District Sujawal. He previously held key posts in the education departments of Thatta and Sujawal and was a longtime advocate for teachers' rights, serving multiple terms as District President of the Primary Teachers Association.

Born on 5 January 1970 in Village Tarr Ali Pur to educationist Imam Dino Khowaja, he held an MA in Political Science and a B. Ed from the University of Sindh. Grandson of feudal lord Seth Motan Achar Khoja, he remained engaged with local communities. He was active in the Sindh Peoples Culture and Youth Organization and helped organize Benazir Bhutto's 1993 Sujawal visit. He also led the Shia Imami Ismaili Council Shahbunder and student bodies.

As a community leader, he worked with PPP MPA Humaira Alwani, Senator Dr. Karim Ahmed Khowaja, and MNA Syed Ayaz Shah Shirazi on projects including a water plant, Sui Gas, and solar lights.

Hundreds, including MPA Shah Hussain Shah Shirazi, attended his funeral. He was laid to rest in Tarr Khowaja.



## PML-N leaders joined Jamaat-e-Islami with Brigadier Dr. Muhammad Khan

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan PML-N suffered a major political shock in Central Bagh, a key constituency of Azad Kashmir. PML-N central leader Brigadier (R) Dr. Muhammad Khan has joined Jamaat-e-Islami along with his colleagues.

According to information, former Amir and former Assembly Member and former Chairman Public Accounts Committee of Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir Abdul Rasheed Tarabi The candidate candidate has been decided.

On the other hand, senior PML-N leader, former government minister and former Assembly member Raja Muhammad Yassin Khan also expressed his



in the polling field, while the political situation of the party is under discussion.

Brigadier (R) Raja Muhammad Khan, Raja Yaseen, Saeed Inqilabi and others were honored for joining PML-N in Jamaat-e-Islami Khanna.

Deputy Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Liaquat Baloch, Amir Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed, former Amir Abdul Rasheed Tarabi and others welcomed the newly elected workers.

A large number of Jamaat-e-Islami workers also attended the function and welcomed the newly arrived workers.

The central leadership said that it thanked resigned PML-N Majlis Aamla Nisar Ahmad Shaiqi for joining Jamaat-e-Islami-Azad Kashmir.

support to Brigadier (R) Dr. Muhammad Khan and Jamaat-e-Islami.

Following this advance, PML-N candidate Raja Mushtaq Ahmad Manhas is being dealt a huge blow

## Attock Police and Jarvis Technologies Sign Memorandum of Understanding

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police and Jarvis Technologies, Rawalpindi, have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) aimed at promoting the use of modern technology in policing.

According to details, the MoU was signed under the leadership of District Police Officer (DPO) Attock, Sardar Moorahan Khan. The agreement seeks to enhance the use of advanced technology within Attock Police, strengthen security and surveillance systems, and align policing practices with modern-day requirements.

Under the agreement, Jarvis Technologies will provide specialized support to Attock Police in the acquisition and implementation of drone cameras, surveillance systems, smart security solutions, artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications, communication technologies, and other advanced equipment and facilities.

The collaboration will also focus on improving the professional capacity, welfare, and career development of police officers and personnel through joint initiatives and training programs.

Speaking on the occasion, DPO Attock Sardar Moorahan Khan said that the adoption of modern technology would play a vital role in enhancing effective policing and delivering better public services. He added that the partnership would help modernize



Attock Police and enable the department to meet the evolving demands of contemporary law enforcement.

## FP2030 Working Group Reviews Family Planning Progress in Balochistan

Rafiullah Mandokhel

QUETTA: A provincial consultative meeting of the Family Planning 2030 (FP2030) Working Group was held in Quetta to review Pakistan's family planning commitments and strategies to strengthen reproductive health services in Balochistan.

Jointly organized by the Balochistan Population Welfare Department (PWD) and UNFPA, the meeting brought together government officials, health experts, development partners, and implementing agencies. Discussions focused on multi-sectoral collaboration, ongoing initiatives, and challenges to accelerating progress toward FP2030 targets.

Director General PWD Ghulam Mustafa, Deputy Secretary Basit Buzdar, UNFPA Provincial Coordinator Dr. Saadia Atta, and other speakers stressed stronger coordination to improve maternal and child health outcomes.

Officials said family planning commodities have been sent to all districts, with substantial funds allocated in the next fiscal year to expand service delivery.

Presenting a report, UNFPA Focal Person Nasir Khan cited progress, including staff training on the Electronic Client Record (ECR) app and nine master trainers prepared for provincial rollout. He said religious scholars, community mobilizers, and local officers are being engaged to raise awareness at the grassroots.

Dr. Saadia Atta reaffirmed UNFPA's support for the government and PWD to expand quality reproductive health services.

Representatives from Health, MNCH, LHW, PPHI, Rahnuma-FPAP, and RIZ Consulting also attended.



# Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir

NI(M), HJ, HI(M)

Strengthening National Security, Promoting Regional Stability, and Fostering Global Peace

Professor Dr Muhammad Jalal Arif

**F**ield Marshal Syed Asim Munir Ahmed Shah has emerged as one of Pakistan's most prominent military leaders during a period marked by evolving security challenges, regional uncertainties, and growing international engagement. As Chief of the Army Staff, he has led Pakistan's armed forces through complex counterterrorism operations while emphasizing national cohesion, institutional professionalism, strategic preparedness, and regional stability. His leadership has attracted international attention because of Pakistan's role in promoting dialogue, supporting regional peace, and contributing to broader security cooperation.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir Ahmed Shah NI(M) HJ HI(M) is a Pakistani military officer who is currently serving as Pakistan's first Chief of Defence Forces and the 11th Chief of the Army Staff of the Pakistan Army concurrently. Prior to becoming the COAS, he was posted at the GHQ as quartermaster general. This profile presents an overview of his professional career, leadership philosophy, and contributions to Pakistan's national security. It focuses on his military experience, strategic outlook, and commitment to peace while maintaining an objective and balanced perspective suitable for an international readership.

### A Career Built on Professional Excellence

Born in Rawalpindi in 1968, Syed Asim Munir joined the Pakistan Army after graduating from the Officers Training School, Mangla, where he earned the prestigious Sword of Honour as the best-performing cadet of his course. He was commissioned into the Frontier Force Regiment and steadily progressed through a distinguished military career characterized by operational excellence, discipline, and professional competence.

Throughout his service, he held several of Pakistan's most important command and intelligence appointments. These included Director General of Military Intelligence, Director General of the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), and Commander of XXX Corps, Gujranwala. He remains the only Chief of the Army Staff to have headed both Military Intelligence and the ISI before assuming command of the Pakistan Army. This unique combination of intelligence and operational leadership provided him with extensive experience in strategic planning, national security assessment, and military decision-making.

His professional education has included advanced military training in Pakistan and abroad, reflecting the Pakistan Army's longstanding emphasis on continuous professional development and international military cooperation. During his assignment in Saudi Arabia as Military Attaché, he also completed the memorization of the Holy Quran, becoming a Hafiz-e-Quran. This achievement reflects his personal discipline and commitment to faith alongside his military responsibilities.

In November 2022, he assumed command as Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff. In December 2025, he was appointed Pakistan's first Chief of Defence Forces, a newly created position giving him unified command over the Army, Air Force, and Navy. During his tenure, he has consistently emphasized professionalism, operational readiness, institutional integrity, and national unity as essential foundations of an effective military organization.

### Leadership in National Security

Modern military leadership extends well beyond conventional battlefield command. Today's military leaders are expected to integrate strategic planning, technological adaptation, intelligence coordination, crisis management, and cooperation with national institutions to safeguard their countries against diverse security challenges.

Field Marshal Asim Munir's leadership has reflected these evolving responsibilities. His command has focused on strengthening operational preparedness while encouraging greater coordination among military formations and state institutions responsible for national security.

His public addresses have consistently stressed that Pakistan's peace, sovereignty, and territorial integrity require unity among all segments of society. He has emphasized that national security is strengthened through cooperation between public institutions, responsible citizenship, and a collective commitment to peace and stability.

Military analysts widely recognize that successful armed forces depend upon discipline, professionalism, strategic foresight, ethical leadership, and institutional cohesion. These principles have remained central themes throughout his tenure.

### Marka-e-Haq and Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos

Among the most significant episodes of Field Marshal Asim Munir's tenure was the brief but intense conflict with India in May 2025, which Pakistan has officially designated Marka-e-Haq, or the "Battle of Truth." The confrontation began after India launched strikes inside Pakistan on 7 May 2025, which Pakistani authorities said killed civilians. In response, Pakistan's armed forces launched a coordinated operation codenamed Bunyan-um-Marsoos, targeting Indian military installations before a ceasefire took hold on 10 May 2025

following intensive diplomatic efforts, including those of the United States. Pakistan subsequently designated 10 May as Youm-e-Marka-e-Haq, an annual day of national remembrance.

On the first anniversary of the episode in May 2026, Field Marshal Munir, by then serving as Chief of Defence Forces as well as Chief of Army Staff, led commemorations at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. In his address, he described the conflict as a defining moment for the armed forces, credited national unity for the outcome, and reaffirmed that any future aggression against Pakistan would carry serious consequences. He also paid tribute to those who lost their lives during the conflict.

### Counterterrorism and National Stability

Counterterrorism has remained one of the defining priorities of Pakistan's security policy. The country has endured decades of terrorism that have affected civilians, educational institutions, places of worship, public infrastructure, and security personnel.

Under Field Marshal Asim Munir's leadership, Pakistan's armed forces have continued operations designed to protect citizens, strengthen border security, and counter violent extremist organizations. These efforts have sought to enhance public safety while supporting long-term national stability.

He has repeatedly emphasized that defeating terrorism requires a comprehensive national effort involving security institutions, civil administration, educational organizations, religious scholars, community leadership, and the broader public. His speeches have consistently highlighted the importance of unity, resilience, and national resolve in confronting security threats.

Pakistan's armed forces continue to be recognized for maintaining high operational readiness under demanding circumstances. Their experience in counterterrorism, disaster response, border security, and peace support operations has contributed significantly to national resilience.

In one of his addresses, Field Marshal Asim Munir delivered a firm warning to terrorist groups operating in Balochistan, declaring that they were barely fifteen hundred individuals attempting to challenge the armed forces of Pakistan and the state of Pakistan, and that they did not possess the capability to confront or defeat the armed forces. Under his leadership, the Pakistan armed forces launched decisive operations against the perpetrators of the Jaffar Express attack, bringing many of those responsible to justice. The response demonstrated the military's resolve, operational capability, and unwavering commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's sovereignty and protecting its citizens from terrorism.

### A Central Role in the 2026 US-Iran Diplomacy

Field Marshal Munir's international profile rose substantially in 2026 through Pakistan's role in talks between the United States and Iran, held in part at Bürgenstock, Switzerland, alongside Qatari mediators. Pakistani officials, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Munir, took part directly in the quadrilateral discussions, which Pakistan's foreign ministry described as advancing implementation of an earlier Islamabad memorandum of understanding between Washington and Tehran.

US Vice President JD Vance publicly credited Munir's involvement in the process, remarking at Bürgenstock that he had spoken with the Field Marshal more than almost anyone else in the preceding months and praising what he called his statesmanship. Vance's comments, along with similar remarks attributed to President Trump, were widely reported by international outlets including Al Jazeera, the Jerusalem Post, and Reuters. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian also visited Islamabad during this period and thanked Pakistan for its role in bringing the United States and Iran toward negotiation.

Observers have noted that Pakistan's position as a country with working relationships with both Washington and Tehran allowed it to play a structural rather than incidental role in the negotiations. This mediating role added a further dimension to Field Marshal Munir's public profile, extending his international visibility beyond his domestic military responsibilities.

### Advancing Regional Peace and International Engagement

Contemporary security increasingly depends upon dialogue, cooperation, and diplomatic engagement alongside military preparedness. Nations today recognize that sustainable peace often requires constructive communication among regional and international partners.

Pakistan has consistently supported peaceful resolution of disputes through dialogue while contributing to regional stability. During periods of heightened international tension, Pakistan has encouraged diplomatic engagement aimed at reducing conflict and promoting peaceful outcomes.

Field Marshal Asim Munir's leadership has coincided with growing international recognition of Pakistan's constructive engagement on regional security issues. International media, including leading publications such as the Financial Times, The New York Times, Reuters, Bloomberg, and Axios, have reported on Pakistan's diplomatic efforts and its participation in initiatives intended to reduce tensions and



encourage dialogue. Their reporting has focused on Pakistan's role in facilitating communication and supporting peaceful engagement rather than offering editorial endorsements of individual leaders.

This international attention illustrates Pakistan's continuing importance within the broader regional security environment and reflects the country's longstanding relationships with multiple regional and global partners.

Military leadership in the twenty-first century increasingly involves cooperation with diplomatic institutions, humanitarian organizations, and international partners. Strategic dialogue, confidence-building measures, and crisis management have become integral components of comprehensive national security.

### Professional Leadership in a Changing Security Environment

The character of military leadership has evolved significantly in the twenty-first century. Beyond operational excellence, today's senior commanders are expected to demonstrate strategic vision, sound judgment, institutional integrity, adaptability, and the ability to respond effectively to rapidly changing security environments. They are increasingly required to balance military preparedness with constructive engagement in regional and international security dialogues.

Field Marshal Asim Munir's tenure reflects many of these contemporary expectations. Throughout his career, he has emphasized discipline, professionalism, merit, and operational excellence as the cornerstones of military effectiveness. His leadership philosophy underscores the importance of preparedness, innovation, continuous professional development, and adherence to institutional values in meeting both conventional and non-conventional security challenges.

Security experts widely acknowledge that modern armed forces must remain adaptable to emerging threats, including terrorism, cybersecurity risks, hybrid warfare, and humanitarian emergencies. Addressing these challenges requires well-trained personnel, effective intelligence, technological modernization, and close coordination among national institutions. Pakistan's armed forces have continued to strengthen these capabilities while maintaining a high level of operational readiness.

Professional military leadership also requires moral courage, composure under pressure, and an unwavering commitment to national service. These qualities contribute not only to operational success but also to strengthening public confidence in national institutions. Throughout his tenure, Field Marshal Asim Munir has consistently emphasized service to the nation, unity, discipline, and responsibility as guiding principles for the Pakistan Armed Forces.

### Pakistan's Armed Forces in International Context

Pakistan's armed forces are among the world's largest and most experienced military institutions. Over the decades, they have developed a reputation for professionalism, operational capability, and disciplined service under demanding conditions. Their contributions extend beyond national defence to include humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, peace support operations, and international military cooperation.

Pakistan has been one of the leading contributors to United Nations peacekeeping missions, with thousands of Pakistani military personnel serving in Africa, the Balkans, the Middle East, and other regions. Pakistani peacekeepers have earned international recognition for their professionalism, courage, humanitarian service, and commitment to protecting civilian populations in conflict-affected areas.

The Pakistan Army also maintains extensive professional relationships with military institutions around the world through training programmes, defence exchanges, joint exercises, and academic cooperation. These initiatives strengthen professional standards, encourage mutual learning, and contribute to regional and international security cooperation.

The country's military academies and training institutions continue to produce highly qualified officers who receive education in strategy, leadership, technology, and operational planning. Continuous professional development remains a defining characteristic of Pakistan's military tradition, ensuring that its armed forces remain capable of responding effectively to evolving security challenges.

Within this institutional framework, Field Marshal Asim Munir's tenure represents an important period characterized by sustained emphasis on operational readiness, counterterrorism, institutional professionalism, and regional engagement. His leadership has focused on strengthening the armed forces while supporting Pakistan's broader objective of maintaining peace, stability, and national resilience.

### Conclusion

Widely regarded as a visionary military leader with strategic foresight, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir has gained recognition for his professional military leadership and diplomatic engagement. On 20 May 2025, Pakistan's Federal Cabinet elevated him to the rank of Field Marshal, making him only the second officer in the nation's history to receive the distinction after Field Marshal Ayub Khan, who was awarded the rank in 1959. During recent diplomatic engagements, U.S. Vice President JD Vance publicly acknowledged his interactions with Field Marshal Munir, highlighting their frequent discussions and professional rapport.

His military career reflects decades of professional service, strategic leadership, and commitment to Pakistan's national security. From his early distinction as the recipient of the Sword of Honour to his leadership of Pakistan's armed forces, his career has been shaped by operational experience, intelligence expertise, institutional discipline, and an enduring commitment to national service.

In an era marked by complex security challenges, successful military leadership requires not only operational capability but also strategic foresight, effective crisis management, institutional integrity, and support for peaceful regional engagement. These qualities remain essential for strengthening national security while contributing to regional stability.

Pakistan's armed forces continue to play an important role in safeguarding the country's sovereignty, supporting counterterrorism efforts, participating in humanitarian operations, and contributing to international peacekeeping missions. Their professionalism and dedication remain central to Pakistan's national security architecture and its engagement with the international community.

As security challenges continue to evolve, the lasting assessment of Field Marshal Asim Munir's leadership, like that of any senior military commander, will ultimately rest on measurable outcomes, institutional strength, national resilience, and the enduring contribution of the armed forces to peace, stability, and the security of Pakistan. His tenure represents an important chapter in the continuing evolution of Pakistan's military leadership and its commitment to serving the nation with professionalism, discipline, and honour.

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# The Real Reason Trump Crumbled Against Iran

The MOU signed between the USA and Iran has been described by Trump's critics as humiliating. It has been resisted by many politicians in Washington, including voices from both Democratic and Republican circles. It reportedly angered supporters of Israel and those who believed the United States should have pressed forward rather than entered into negotiation. Yet, despite opposition from political allies, media commentators, and regional partners, President Trump moved toward the MOU.

Why? The conventional answer is that the United States feared the closure of the Strait of Hormuz. But that may not have been the prime reason. Disruption of oil supply, the rise in petrol prices, and the inflationary burden on American consumers may have added pressure.

However, the reality was depletion of arms and ammunition. In a Middle East Eye clip quoting American author Brandon Weichert speaking to Tucker Carlson, Weichert claimed that the United States had used roughly 50 percent of its Patriot interceptors, up to 80 percent of its THAAD interceptors, about one-third of its Tomahawk cruise missile supply, and nearly the entire pre-war inventory of new Precision Strike Missiles. He also referred to the major use of JASSM missiles and naval interceptors such as SM-3 and SM-6. These figures must be treated as attributed

claims unless independently confirmed by official data, but if even broadly accurate, they reveal a far

The conventional U. S.-Israeli calculation may have been based on treating Iran as a normal regional power. A normal country may possess missiles, drones, and naval weapons, but usually in limited numbers. Such weapons are preserved for deterrence, symbolic retaliation, and emergency use. A normal country might fire a dramatic opening salvo, but after several days or weeks of war, its missile depots, launchers, command centers, and radar systems would be degraded. Its firing rate would collapse. Its leadership would become cautious because it would fear exhausting its national arsenal. That calculation may have made sense against a conventional state. It did not make sense against Iran.

Iran is not a normal missile country. Iran is a missile-war state. For decades, Iran understood that it could not match the United States or Israel aircraft-for-aircraft, tank-for-tank, or ship-for-ship. It could not build a navy equal to the U. S. Navy. It could not build an air force equal to Israel's or America's. It could not protect every city, base, oil installation, port, and military site with a perfect defensive shield. So Iran chose a different

path. It built missiles, drones, decoys, tunnels, mobile launchers, coastal batteries, mines, fast boats, small submarines, and asymmetric naval systems.

This was the central strategic miscalculation by Washington and Tel Aviv. They calculated Iran as a normal country with missiles. Iran revealed itself as a missile state with a country.

As a brilliant strategic master stroke, Iran did not spend most of its limited resources trying to build an expensive nationwide anti-ballistic missile system. If Iran had tried to build an Israeli-style or American-style interceptor shield over the entire country, it would likely have been financially suicidal and militarily insufficient. Iran is too large, its territory too dispersed, and its targets too numerous.

To defend all of Iran would require enormous numbers of radars, command systems, interceptor batteries, trained crews, spare parts, and replacement missiles. Even then, such a defensive network could be overwhelmed by the combined air and missile power of the United States and Israel. So Iran refused to play America's game. It did not try to build an Iron Dome over Iran. It built a sword aimed at the shield of its enemies.

Instead of spending its limited wealth on defensive interceptors, Iran spent it

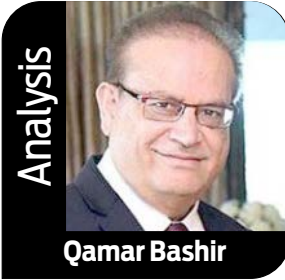
on offensive saturation. This decision changed the cost equation of the war. A Patriot, THAAD, Arrow, SM-3, or SM-6 interceptor can cost millions of dollars and may take months or years to replace. A drone, decoy, loitering munition, or simpler missile can be far cheaper and easier to produce.

Iran did not need every missile or drone to hit its target. It only needed to force Israel and the United States to respond. Every incoming object had to be detected, classified, tracked, and, if dangerous, intercepted. In the fog of war, the defender cannot always know immediately which target is a decoy and which is lethal. Therefore, expensive interceptors are often spent against cheaper threats.

That was the winning cost-exchange. Iran spent a quantity. America and Israel spent treasure. This is why Iran's strategy was not necessarily to defeat the United States in one dramatic battlefield encounter. Its aim was to impose an unbearable burn rate. Ballistic missiles, cruise missiles, drones, decoys, and maritime threats forced the United States and Israel to spend their most sophisticated defensive weapons at a pace that could not be sustained.

The same logic applied at sea. In the Strait of Hormuz, Iran did not need a blue-water navy equal to America's. Geography was its ally. The Strait is narrow, close to Iranian territory, and

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## International Day of Parliamentarism

On the International Day of Parliamentarism, Pakistan joins the international community in reaffirming its commitment to strengthening democratic institutions, constitutional supremacy, parliamentary governance, transparency, accountability, the rule of law, and meaningful public participation in decision-making.

The Constitution of Pakistan guarantees a democratic system of government founded upon the principles of representative governance. In accordance with the spirit of the Constitution, sovereignty belongs to the people, and their elected representatives exercise this authority as a sacred trust for the service, welfare, and prosperity of the nation.

Parliament serves as the principal constitutional forum through which the aspirations and concerns of the people are articulated and translated into legislation. It is the institution where laws are enacted, national issues are deliberated upon, and oversight is exercised to ensure the prudent utilization and protection of public resources.

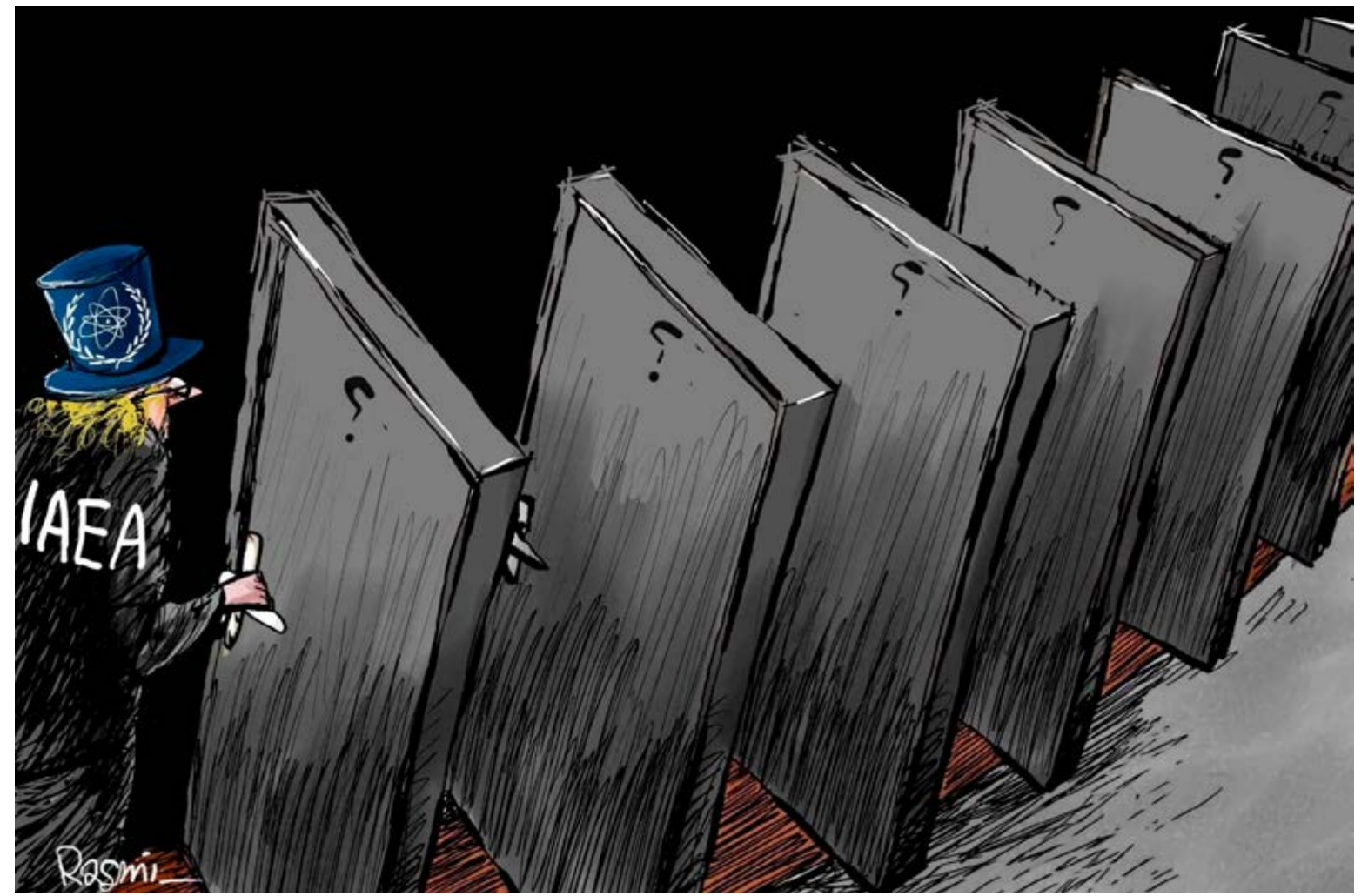
Pakistan's parliamentary democracy has also made significant progress in promoting inclusivity and effective representation. As a truly representative institution, Parliament provides a meaningful voice to women, minorities, smaller provinces, and other historically underrepresented segments of society. Constitutional safeguards have been established to ensure their participation and to protect their legitimate rights and interests. The reserved seats for women and non-Muslim citizens in the National Assembly and Senate stand as a testament to this constitutional commitment.

The Senate, by providing equal representation to the federating units, further strengthens the federal character of Pakistan and contributes to national cohesion and unity.

Transparency, public accessibility, and modern parliamentary practices are essential pillars of democratic governance. Pakistan's Parliament has undertaken important initiatives to enhance openness and citizen engagement by making legislation, parliamentary debates, committee reports, and other official documents readily accessible to the public.

Pakistan's Parliament is also playing an active role in international parliamentary diplomacy. Through its engagement with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, Parliamentary Friendship Groups, and other international forums, Pakistan continues to contribute to the promotion of global peace, dialogue, sustainable development, human rights, gender equality, and international cooperation.

On this International Day of Parliamentarism, let us renew our unwavering commitment to the supremacy of the Constitution, parliamentary democracy, federalism, inclusivity, the rule of law, transparency, accountability, and public welfare. Parliament serves as the vital link between the people and the state, ensuring that governance remains responsive to the aspirations, expectations, and collective well-being of our citizens.



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

## Beyond the Borders, Within the Minds

The history of nations is never merely the story of borders drawn upon maps. Rather, it is a long narrative of the intricate relationship between the human mind, collective consciousness, and political authority, in which every generation leaves behind a new knot for the next to untangle. Pakistan today resembles an ancient fortress whose outer walls command global attention because of its strategic location, nuclear capability, and diplomatic significance, while its inner corridors echo with voices emerging from different directions, continually testing the nation's unity and cohesion. Elections in Gilgit-Baltistan have concluded, governments are taking shape, and the political chessboard is being rearranged with new players. Yet the real question is not the transfer of power but the social temperament that remains suspended between inherited traditions and modern consciousness. Where women's participation is reduced to symbolic representation and education is confined to certificates rather than human dignity, electoral outcomes may offer temporary political stability but cannot produce intellectual resilience. Nations are strengthened not merely by ballots but by the civilizational capital that teaches people to recognize the humanity of one another.

Meanwhile, another political scene unfolds in the Kashmir Valley, where the electoral atmosphere is developing amid its characteristic sensitivities and competing political forces are refining their respective strategies. Within Pakistan itself, the prolonged

delay in local government institutions, fragile urban governance, Karachi's chronic civic challenges, the unequal distribution of water and energy, and persistent political polarization resemble scattered chapters of a novel whose central character has yet to discover its direction. When politics becomes trapped in a perpetual struggle for power, the concerns of ordinary citizens inevitably recede into the background. It is therefore unsurprising

that the younger generation increasingly seeks employment, opportunity, and hope beyond national borders. The remedy lies not merely in political reconciliation but in a renewed national social contract that permanently places education, local empowerment, meaningful participation of women, industrial productivity, and human capital development at the heart of state priorities. No nation can secure an honourable place in the global economy unless its youth are equipped with the tools of knowledge, innovation, research, and professional excellence.

On the global stage, the balance of power is quietly undergoing another transformation. The evolving political landscape of the Middle East, the long-standing tensions between Iran and the United States, the Gulf states' emerging security strategies, and their pursuit of economic self-reliance all suggest that the international order is steadily moving beyond the era of unipolar dominance. In such an environment, overseas Pakistanis have become far more than a source of remittances; they now constitute one of the principal pillars of the national economy, making every develop-

ment concerning their future a matter of national significance. Simultaneously, China's expanding regional diplomacy and its deepening engagement with Afghanistan indicate that the economic and strategic direction of the region may undergo profound changes in the years ahead. Yet no regional initiative can achieve lasting success through highways, economic corridors, or investment alone. Sustainable progress requires internal stability, social harmony, and the impartial rule of law. Where fear, extremism, and gender discrimination continue to flourish, even the largest economic corridor cannot transform intellectual barrenness into fertile ground.

History's greatest lesson remains that the destiny of nations is written less on battlefields than in classrooms, courtrooms, parliaments, and homes. Hatred whether disguised as religious rhetoric, expressed through ethnic prejudice, or clothed in political vengeance ultimately leads to social fragility, intellectual stagnation, and economic decline. Pakistan today stands at a defining crossroads where it must defend not only its territorial frontiers but also the minds of its people. If our politics embraces tolerance, our education nurtures critical thinking, our economy rewards productive capacity, and our state upholds human dignity as its foremost principle, these scattered chapters can be transformed into a coherent national narrative. Otherwise, we may continue to appear as a strong state on the map while the widening cracks within our inner walls remind every new generation that the decisive battle is fought not at the borders but within the human mind and history invariably favours those nations that learn to safeguard wisdom before they rely upon weapons.

## Artificial Intelligence and the future of global Economic competition

Wajiha Nasir

The advent of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is one of the greatest milestones in the modern global economy. In the International Political Economy, the use of AI is now considered a significant economic and political force. It is a term that describes computers that can execute actions that normally depend on human intelligence: learning, problem-solving, decision making and language processing. Healthcare, finance, education, manufacturing, cybersecurity, and defense are a few sectors that integrate AI technologies. AI is reshaping the international economic and political dynamic of states in how they compete, interact and behave towards each other.

Today, not only military strengths and resources determine global competition, but the importance of technological leadership is also becoming a priority. AI innovation is a competitive advantage for countries in terms of productivity, trade, security and influence. Therefore, major powers such as the United States and China are investing significantly in the development of AI to gain economic dominance in the future.

AI plays a key role in contributing to economic development by increasing efficiency and reducing production cost and time. AI allows businesses to automate commands, analyze customer data, save on expenses, enhance customer support, and process vast amounts of information, all the while saving time. According to a report by analysts at PwC, AI could contribute approximately \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030. China alone is expected to gain around \$7 trillion, while North America could gain about \$3.7 trillion from

AI-driven growth.

The United States currently leads in private AI investment. AI investments in the United States surged into more than \$67 billion in private investment in 2024, much more than any other nation, according to the 2025 AI Index Report released by the Stanford University Human-Centered AI Institute (HAI Stanford). In the global landscape, big tech giants like Microsoft, Google, and OpenAI lead the way in AI innovation. For instance, Microsoft has spent over \$13 billion on OpenAI to bolster its presence in generative AI technologies such as ChatGPT.

Meanwhile, China has been rapidly developing its AI sector with support from the state and industrial planning. In 2017, China issued its "Next Generation Artificial Intelligence Development Plan" which made China the world leader in AI by 2030. By 2030, the market of AI in China is projected to reach over \$150 billion. Companies like Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent are making significant investments in AI-driven cloud computing, facial recognition, and digital commerce in China. In China, companies like Baidu, Alibaba, and Tencent have been investing heavily in AI-powered cloud computing, facial recognition, and digital commerce.

The U. S.-CHINA AI rivalry

The United States and China's competition over the AI is intricately tied to their economic and geopolitical struggles. Both countries view leadership in AI as the key to future military and economic supremacy.

The U. S. is ahead in the technology for advanced semiconductors, crucial for AI systems. American firm NVIDIA dominates the AI chip industry, accounting for a 70-80% share, using

*Continued on Page 7*

# Gillani Reaffirms Pakistan's Commitment to Parliamentary Supremacy

**Kiran Asim**

ISLAMABAD: Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani on Monday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to democratic governance, parliamentary supremacy, inclusiveness, and public representation on the International Day of Parliamentarism, observed on 30 June.

In his message, Gillani said the day marks the 1889 founding of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) and recalls parliaments' role in promoting democracy, accountability, transparency, peace, and sustainable development.

He stated that strong parliamentary institutions are indispensable for addressing contemporary chal-



lenges, protecting citizens' rights, ensuring effective governance, and strengthening public trust. "Parliaments are the voice of the people and provide a platform for dialogue, consensus-building, and national progress," he said. Highlighting the Senate's efforts,

he cited work on democratic values, legislative excellence, inter-parliamentary cooperation, and public engagement. He noted parliamentary diplomacy is increasingly vital for international understanding, regional peace, and cooperation.

Gillani underscored the need to enhance participation of women, youth, and marginalized communities, saying inclusive representation is fundamental to a vibrant democracy.

He paid tribute to parliamentarians worldwide working for peace, justice, human dignity, and sustainable development, and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening institutions and upholding the Constitution.

## Gulmina Bilal Concludes Tenure as NAVTTC Chairperson

Abdul Majid

Faisalabad: Gulmina Bilal has announced the formal end of her tenure as Chairperson of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC), following the government's notification of a new appointment. In a statement, she called serving Pakistan's skills and workforce development agenda "one of the greatest privileges" of her career. She thanked the government, colleagues, industry and development partners, training institutions, and all stakeholders who helped strengthen the country's skills ecosystem. "Institutions are built through continuity. I wish the new leadership every success in taking this important national mission forward," she said. Bilal added that this is "not the end of the journey" but the start of a new chapter focused on workforce transformation, skills competitiveness, productivity, and the future of work for Pakistan and the Global South. "Titles change. The mission does not. Thank you to everyone who has been part of this journey."



## FPCCI VP Nasir Khan Seeks Finance Minister's Resignation, Cites Banker-Led Policies

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: FPCCI Vice President Nasir Khan has called for Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb's resignation, saying years of banker appointments have produced policies that protect banks over the private sector.



Speaking at the FPCCI Head Office, Khan said businesses cannot access bank financing while nearly 85% of lending goes to the government. He argued Pakistan needs a professional economist as finance minister to "break the banking cartel."

Khan alleged banking practices are hindering tax-base expansion. He claimed banks open accounts with inadequate due diligence, leaving many outside the tax net. If these individuals were brought in, he said, the government would not need to borrow an additional PKR 4-6 trillion annually.

He criticized the FBR for failing to widen the tax net in 20 years, adding that 99% of FBR cases against the private sector were dismissed by tribunals and courts. Continued baseless cases, he warned, will hurt business.

Khan noted the government pays about PKR 8 trillion in debt interest while borrowing PKR 6 trillion more, with interest projected at PKR 9 trillion next year. Without policy change, he said, a future default risk remains.

He urged legislation mandating banks to lend at least 50% to the private sector and industry.

## Senator Saleem Mandviwalla meets Iraqi leadership as Special Envoy of the President of Pakistan

BAGHDAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla, Chief Whip in the Senate of Pakistan, along with a delegation, met the newly elected leadership of the Republic of Iraq on as the Special Envoy of the Honourable President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari.

During the visit, Senator Mandviwalla delivered the personal messages of the President of Pakistan to Nizar Amedi, President of the Republic of Iraq, and Ali Falih Khadim Al Zaidi, Prime Minister of the Republic of Iraq, according to a statement issued by the Presidency on Monday.

The messages conveyed the President's warm felicitations and best wishes on their election, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening its longstanding fraternal relations with Iraq, and expressed confidence that, under their leadership, Iraq would continue to advance towards greater peace, stability, and prosperity.

On behalf of the President of Pakistan, Senator Mandviwalla extended cordial invitations to the President and the Prime Minister of Iraq to undertake official visits to Pakistan at mutually convenient dates. Both leaders warmly welcomed the invitations and expressed their keen desire to visit Pakistan.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla meets Iraqi leadership as Special Envoy of the President of Pakistan

BAGHDAD: Senator Saleem Mandviwalla met with Ali Falih Haibat Hamad Abbas Al Halbousi, Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives to discuss matters of mutual interest

Senator Mandviwalla also called on Haibat Hamad Abbas Al Halbousi, Speaker of the Iraqi Council of Representatives, and Dr. Mustafa Nizar Juma'a Al Ani, Minister of Trade of the Republic of Iraq.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla meets Iraqi leadership as Special Envoy of the President of Pakistan

He extended cordial invitations to both dignitaries to visit Pakistan at mutually convenient dates. The Speaker and the Minister of Trade warmly welcomed the invitations and likewise expressed their keen desire to visit Pakistan.

The discussions reflected the shared desire of both sides to further strengthen bilateral cooperation across a broad range of areas, including education, health, agricultural, Zaireen management and people to people contacts.

Senator Saleem Mandviwalla meets Iraqi leadership as Special Envoy of the President of Pakistan

# Ibrahim Murad Meets with Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Imran Haider

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chairman of the University of Management and Technology (UMT), Ibrahim Hasan Murad, met with Imran Haider, Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, to discuss bilateral relations, mutual cooperation and matters of shared interest between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on expanding collaboration in education, trade, investment, people-to-people engagement, and other areas of mutual interest. They agreed to further strengthen institutional partnerships and promote closer cooperation to unlock new opportunities for both countries.

They underscored that stronger Pakistan-Bangladesh relations can play a significant role in fostering



regional development, economic prosperity and mutual trust.

Speaking on the occasion, Ibrahim Murad reaffirmed UMT's commitment to promoting meaningful cooperation and long-term partnerships with institutions in Bangladesh. He stated that enhanced collaboration in education, business, investment and public engagement would create new avenues for growth and mutual benefit.

Murad further remarked that continuous dialogue and constructive diplomatic efforts are essential to strengthening the longstanding relationship between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

At the end of the meeting, Ibrahim Hasan Murad presented a souvenir to Pakistan's High Commissioner to Bangladesh, Imran Haider, as a gesture of goodwill and appreciation.

# SPSC Merit Protest Intensifies in Hyderabad, Fresh Exams Demanded

**Qayoom Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: The movement for restoration of merit in the Sindh Public Service Commission (SPSC) intensified as protesters staged a sit-in outside the commission's head office, warning of a march to the Sindh Assembly if demands are not met.

A rally marched from Allama Daudpota Library to the SPSC office against alleged corruption, favoritism, lack of transparency, and violation of merit. Hundreds of students, lawyers, teachers, writers, and civil society members participated.

Leaders alleged the SPSC had become a "People's Party Service Commission," claiming jobs were being sold and youth's prospects crushed.

MRM founder Farman Malghani, Fakhar-ul-Zaman Koharo, Wajahat Hangorjo, Nadir Ali Buriro, and Dr. Tariq Sahito said the protest targets an institution accused of destroying hopes of Sindh's youth.

Following the CCE 2024 results, protesters demanded the results be rejected and fresh exams held. They alleged the results favored children of influential figures and amounted to a "murder of merit." Similar concerns were raised over Engineering Cadre 2024, Lecturer, MTO, ASI, Revenue,



and other tests. Malghani called for an independent forensic audit of recruitments under

former chairman Muhammad Waseem and punishment for those allegedly involved, including Waseem

Rajput and Kalpana Devi. He said the MRM rejects CCE 2024 and Engineering Cadre results.

# ISSI Launches Special Report on 'The U. S.-Iran Confrontation and its Regional Fallout'

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) hosted the launch of its special Report, 'The U. S.-Iran Confrontation and its Regional Fallout.'

Ambassador Maleha Lodhi attended as Chief Guest, joined by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, Board of Governors, ISSI, and Dr. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA.

Pakistan retains the trust of both the U. S. and Iran. She cautioned that regional security cannot rely only on external actors and called for stronger cooperation among Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia. Reflecting on the four-month conflict, she said it showed the limits of military force, arguing that U. S. objectives of regime change or destroying Iran's nuclear infrastructure were not achieved. She added that diplomacy continued despite threats and stressed that rising geopolitical tensions are creating global uncertainty.

Ambassador Mahmood said the Middle East is central to global stability and termed the U. S.-Iran confrontation consequential. He cited the

recent Islamabad MoU between the U. S. and Iran as a diplomatic opening for de-escalation, and reaffirmed Pakistan's stance that disputes must be resolved peacefully through dialogue, sovereignty and the UN Charter. He commended CAMEA's balanced analysis.

Dr. Amina Khan said the U. S.-Iran rivalry is now a defining factor for Middle East security, diplomacy, economics and energy, with spillover effects on maritime trade and global diplomacy.

The launch concluded with an interactive Q&A. Participants included former Foreign Minister Ambassador Inam ul Haq, Mr. Ziad Allahdad, Mr. Shaukat Hameed Khan, and contrib-



uting authors. Diplomats, academics, researchers, students, strategic experts and media attended.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
178,414.79	179,571.26
Day's High	Day's Low
180,272.01	178,331.00
Index Value	Change
32,805,292,603	-1156.47
Percentage	Time
-0.64%	29 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,484.22	-23.80
Percentage	Time
-0.23%	29 Jun, 4:40 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,226.20	+350.09
Percentage	Time
+0.67%	29 Jun, 1:58 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
69,468.11	+107.23
Percentage	Time
+0.15%	29 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

## Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190.25	193.97
Bahrain Dinar	738.60	748.71
Canadian Dollar	197.31	201.05
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	886.34	896.90
Malaysian Ringgit	67.15	68.05
New Zealand \$	155.60	159.65
Norwegians Krone	27.97	28.27
Omani Riyal	723.42	733.50
Qatari Riyal	75.19	77.20
Saudi Riyal	74.35	75.05
Singapore Dollar	213.90	217.64
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	342.11	346.10
Thai Bhat	8.47	8.77
U.A.E Dirham	75.90	76.75
UK Pound Sterling	368.52	372.25
US Dollar	279.00	279.20

## Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves stand \$ 21.48 billion

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood US\$ 21,484.7 million as of June 19, 2026, while reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan decreased to \$ 15,916.4 million due to external debt payments.

The central bank, in its weekly statement on the position of liquid foreign reserves issued here on Monday, informed that Pakistan has received \$ 0.7 billion from the multilateral institution in subsequent days while securing \$ 1.7 billion in refinancing.

"SBP has received GoP inflow of US\$ 0.7 billion from multilateral institutions and about US\$ 1.7 billion as refinancing of GoP commercial loan," it stated, adding that these inflows will be reflected in SBP's FX reserves as of 30-Jun-2026.

"During the week ended on 19-Jun-2026, SBP's FX reserves decreased by US\$ 1,305 million to US\$ 15,916.4 million," SBP reported, attributing the decline in its reserves to repayment of the external debt.

Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves in the previous week ended on June 12, 2026, were \$ 22,741.7 million.

# Pezeshkian Visit Revives Pak-Iran \$10 Billion Trade Roadmap: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President PBIIF & AKIA, has termed Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian's recent visit a key step for confidence-building and implementing the agreed Pak-Iran economic agenda. He credited PM Shehbaz Sharif for regional peace and connectivity, and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for border stability.

Hussain said historical and geographic proximity must now become economic partnership in trade, gas pipeline, energy, border connectivity, and private-sector collaboration. During Pezeshkian's 2025 visit, 12 MoUs were signed and a \$10 billion bilateral trade target was set, up from \$3 billion.



The current visit, after the Iran-US conflict, signals intent to move beyond announce-

ments.

He stressed early finalization of an FTA and immediate steps to remove non-tariff barriers, fix banking/payments, improve customs coordination, align standards, ease visas, and strengthen logistics. Strengthening border markets at Gabd-Rimdan, Mand-Pishin, and other points can boost legal trade and jobs. He welcomed FBR declaring Taftan Railway Station a land customs station to ease rail clearances.

Hussain said barter trade is viable for rice, meat, agriculture, livestock, energy, and raw materials. He urged a permanent working mechanism and Gwadar-Chabahar cooperation, not competition, to realize the \$10 billion target.

## Ethiopian Tourism Promotion Event

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Prime Minister on Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan along with Ambassador of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia to Pakistan, Dr. Oumer Hussein Oba and others cutting the cake during Ethiopian Tourism Promotion Event at local hotel, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Multan Chamber, SMEDA Mark World MSMEs Day, Urge Support for SMEs

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: A ceremony was held at the Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI) with SMEDA to observe World MSMEs Day, attended by industrialists, traders, and business leaders.

MCCI President Mian Bakht-awar Tanveer Sheikh said equal opportunities are vital for economic growth, industrial stability, and jobs. He noted the UN's 2026 theme, "Empowering MSMEs through Innovation and Sustainable Industrial Development," reflects the role of technology and sustainability in future economies.

He said SMEs are the economy's backbone, providing about 90% of jobs, with 50% of global large firms growing from SMEs. Citing Sialkot's leather, surgical,



sports and textile sectors, he added Multan is also gaining recognition for food, ceramics, blue pottery and camel skin. Many firms, including Chaudhry Zulfikar Ali Anjum's, began small. Sheikh cited challenges: capital shortages, limited resources, complex procedures, and a non-business-friendly environment. He urged easier doing business and pro-business policies,

pledging joint MCCI-SMEDA support for SMEs, industry, and exports.

SMEDA Deputy GM Shaheen Tahir said PM Shehbaz Sharif is personally monitoring SMEs. SMEDA has been restructured, with fortnightly reviews. Plans include export training for 1,500 of 3,000 firms and support up to Rs2.5 million under the Vendor Development Program.

## Pakistan Records Strong IPO Momentum as 10 Companies Raise Over Rs. 20 Billion

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) approved ten Initial Public Offerings (IPOs) for listing on the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) during the first half of 2026. Nine companies have already completed their IPOs, raising more than Rs. 20 billion through public offerings, while the book building for LSESPAC-II is scheduled to take place in the coming days.

The strong IPO momentum came despite regional uncertainty and geopolitical tensions, demonstrating the resilience of Pakistan's capital



market and sustained investor confidence.

The robust IPO pipeline also reflects the success of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) reforms to simplify regulations, facilitate capital raising, and encourage more companies to

access the capital market.

The IPOs spanned a diverse range of sectors, including manufacturing, petroleum, dairy, Islamic finance, poultry, real estate, and technology, highlighting the growing depth and breadth of Pakistan's capital market.

Service Long March Tyres Limited raised Rs. 7.77 billion to establish a passenger car tyre manufacturing plant in Nooriabad. Sitara Petroleum raised Rs. 4.83 billion, with its IPO fully subscribed in just eight minutes and attracting demand seven times the shares offered. Ghani Dairies raised Rs. 3.44 billion, becoming Pakistan's first listed corporate dairy farm, while Wahdat Poultry raised nearly

Rs. 1 billion for business expansion.

Pak-Qatar General Takaful, Pakistan's first listed non-life Takaful company, received institutional demand 21 times the shares offered and attracted more than 13,000 retail investors.

SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu reaffirmed the Commission's commitment to further simplify listings and make stock market investing easier and more accessible. He said SECP's objective is to expand investor participation, enable more Pakistanis to share in the country's growth, and strengthen capital markets as a key driver of investment and economic development.

## easypaisa, Servis Shoes Ink Deal for QR Payments in 300 Stores

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa digital bank has signed an MoU with Servis Shoes to roll out QR-based digital payments and Soundbox solutions across 300 stores nationwide.

The partnership aims to make retail transactions faster, secure, and contactless. Under the deal, easypaisa will deploy QR solutions and Soundbox devices in Servis outlets, enabling shoppers to pay instantly by scanning easypaisa Raast QR codes from their phones.

Both companies said the move supports Pakistan's shift to a cashless economy and reduces reliance on cash and cards. The initiative is designed for ease of use and security, while building trust in digital financial services.

Shahzad Khan, Chief Business Officer, easypaisa digital bank, said the collaboration reflects commit-



ment to the Prime Minister's and State Bank's cashless economy agenda and to financial inclusion. "Servis is a household name, and this marks a transformational shift to meet rising demand for contactless payments," he added.

Kashif Aziz Khwaja, CEO of Servis Retail (Pvt.) Ltd., said the deal shows growing merchant confidence in digital solutions and will help drive wider adoption across retail.

With 60+ million registered users, easypaisa is Pakistan's first digital bank to start commercial operations and remains aligned with the SBP's vision of inclusive growth.

## inDrive, MAL Pakistan Partner to Cut Driver Costs with Mobil Discounts



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: inDrive has signed a nationwide partnership with MAL Pakistan, ExxonMobil's lubricants and specialties marketing arm, to provide discounts on Mobil lubricants to inDrive drivers and link them to Mobil's retailer and workshop network.

The collaboration aims to reduce vehicle maintenance costs and boost driver earnings by connecting Mobil's products with inDrive's growing driver base.

The MoU signing was attended by inDrive Pakistan Country Manager Awaiz Saeed, MAL Pakistan CEO Khawar Jamal, JazzCash CEO Murtaza Ali, Chief Guest AMD Maj Gen Syed Anis Akbar (Retd),

and Guest of Honor COO Maj Gen Abid Latif (Retd). "Drivers are on the frontlines of the gig economy. Safeguarding their vehicles is key to their sustainability," said Saeed. "This is a building block to empower drivers and strengthen mobility across Pakistan."

Khawar Jamal said the deal combines Mobil's lubricants with digital solutions to deliver value to drivers, retailers, and consumers.

As part of the rollout, a dedicated AutoSpa facility has opened in Islamabad for specialized maintenance. JazzCash has integrated its digital payments to enable secure, cashless purchases of Mobil products and exclusive offers, removing the need for cash on the road.

ICCI hosts session on preparing Pakistani businesses for merging EU sustainability requirements

**EMBASSY OF ALGERIA**  
ISLAMABAD

## ALGERIAN PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS IN PAKISTAN

The Embassy of Algeria in Islamabad informs the Algerian community residing in Pakistan that the Parliamentary Elections will be held for three days.

**FROM JUNE 30 AND JULY 1-2, 2026**

**AT THE EMBASSY PREMISES**  
House 107, St. 9 Sector E-7, Islamabad

**FROM 8:00 A.M. TO 8:00 P.M.**

**The Embassy urges the Algerian community to participate actively in the elections and cast their votes, fulfilling their national duty.**

**CONSULAR SECTION**  
EMBASSY OF ALGERIA IN ISLAMABAD

# Maryam Nawaz orders stronger 'PERA Ask' portal, people-friendly enforcement

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday directed PERA to strengthen its 'PERA Ask' complaints portal for faster resolution and enhance public outreach, chairing a meeting on PERA's performance, digitalisation, and legal framework.

She ordered digital requisition to be mandatory for all PERA operations, except anti-encroachment and price control, to ensure transparency. Anti-encroachment drives must be preceded by public notice and warning.

"Corruption and abuse of powers will not be tolerated," she said, warning that officials who intimidate the public or misuse authority have no place in PERA. She stressed strict compliance with requisition rules and said investigating officers will no longer be transferred on recommendations.

Briefing the meeting, officials said PERA won 99% of 136 writ petitions and 98% of cases before magistrates and hearing officers. The challan system is being fully digitalised, with records preserved electronically. PERA has



acted on over 62,000 digital requisitions, conducted 1,527,028 inspections, sealed 3,509 shops, retrieved 21,000+ kanals in anti-encroachment drives, and

arrested 1,700 people. The challan completion rate hit 97%. One FIR was registered over a manual challan, 700 disciplinary actions taken,

and 20 employees dismissed. Work has begun on a PERA training academy at Kallar Kahar, with recruitment to complete by June 2027.

# Islamabad Police Expand BYD EV Fleet in Push for Green Mobility

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Mega Motor Company (MMC), BYD's official partner in Pakistan, has delivered an additional fleet of BYD electric vehicles to Islamabad Capital Police and Islamabad Traffic Police, expanding the departments' ongoing fleet electrification programme.

The handover was attended by BYD senior leadership including Vice President Liu Xueliang, Asia-Pacific Deputy GM Ketsu Zhang, BYD Pakistan Country Head Lei Jian, and MMC VP Sales & Strategy Danish Khaliq. Senior police officials present included DG Safe City & DIG Traffic Muhammad Haroon Joya and Chief Traffic Officer Kainat Azhar Khan.



Joya said the move supports the Prime Minister's Green Mobility vision. "Islamabad Police has always led by example. Our long-term vision is to gradually transition the entire fleet to cleaner, sustainable mobility," he said.

Khan said the new EVs will support operational needs while cutting fuel use, lowering costs, and reducing emissions.

Liu Xueliang noted the adoption shows public-sector leadership in future-ready operations. "As Pakistan seeks to reduce imported fuel dependence and protect the environment, EV adoption will be critical. BYD remains committed through technology and investment," he said.

Khaliq added that the collaboration reflects growing confidence in EV technology and operational efficiencies.

# GTEC Delegation Meets Pakistan's Ambassador in Paris to Boost France Trade Ties

PARIS: Mr. Mazhar Hussain Thathal, Chairman & CEO of Global Trade Expo Centre (GTEC) Pakistan, led the 6th Pakistan-France Trade and Business Delegation 2026 to Paris to strengthen bilateral trade, investment, and business cooperation.

The delegation held a high-level meeting at the Embassy of Pakistan with Ambassador Mumtaz Zahra Baloch and Trade Counsellor Salman Ahmed Raja. Discussions focused on expanding economic collaboration and identifying opportunities in agriculture, IT, textiles, and food processing.

Ambassador Baloch appreciated GTEC's efforts to promote Pakistan's business community through inter-

national exhibitions, delegations, and B2B networking in Europe. She reaffirmed the Embassy's support for initiatives that increase exports and deepen commercial ties with France.

The delegation included senior representatives from the Sialkot, Haripur, Rawalpindi, and Islamabad Chambers of Commerce & Industry, along with other trade bodies and enterprises.

Mr. Liaqat Ali Thathal, Director International Trade & Relationship at GTEC, briefed the meeting on Pakistan-France trade potential. He stressed stronger institutional collaboration, business exchanges, and strategic initiatives to drive growth. He said the delegation's goal is to connect



business communities, facilitate partnerships, and create sustainable trade and investment opportunities.

Both sides committed to further

strengthening Pakistan-France economic relations through private-sector engagement and trade promotion.

## Ashura Passes Peacefully in Faisalabad with Tight Security, Traders' Support

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Central President Cloth Board Ittehad Group Pakistan Alhaj Naseer Yousuf Vohra said Ashura passed peacefully, crediting the district administration for the best security arrangements.



He saluted the Pakistan Army, ISI, police and other institutions for excellent Muharram security. He also commended Commissioner Musarrat Jabeen, RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, DC Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir, CPO Tanveer Hussain and the wider administration for their performance.

## AIOU, Iran cultural consulate hold seminar on 'Philosophy of Politics in Islam'

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Majlis-e-Fikr-o-Adab of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), with the Cultural Consulate of Iran, organized a seminar titled "The Philosophy of Politics in Islam" followed by the launch of the book's Urdu translation.

Chaired by Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi, Dean, Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, the event had Majid Meshki, Cultural Counsellor of Iran, as chief guest. Speakers included Khurshid Nadeem, Dr. Muhammad Arif, Dr. Muhammad Hasnain Nadir, and others, with Dr. Tahir Islam Askari moderating.

Speakers said Islamic governance is rooted in justice, trust, Shura, human rights, and public welfare, forming the basis for a balanced society. Prof. Hashmi noted Iran's distinct model on Islamic political philosophy and Pakistan's Constitution as an example of Islamic Ijtihad recognizing Allah's sovereignty. He stressed the need for scholarly dialogue.

## Experts urge integrated economic governance to end Pakistan's crisis cycle

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Experts at an SDPI-FES policy consultation called for an integrated economic governance framework to break Pakistan's cycle of instability, stressing policy coherence, institutional coordination, and long-term reforms for sustainable growth.



Dr. Sajid Amin Javed, SDPI Deputy Executive Director, said Pakistan achieves short-term stabilization every third fiscal cycle but fails to sustain it. "The challenge was not a shortage of policies but lack of continuity, coordination, and coherence," he said. He noted long-term growth averages 4%, below India and Bangladesh, and recent 3.7% GDP growth came with higher poverty, unemployment, and inequality.

Javed cited contradictions like promoting export-led growth while maintaining an overvalued exchange rate. He said growth has been consumption-driven, not job-creating, and provincial NFC incentives limit tax efforts.

FES Country Director Felix Kolbitz said reform requires political courage, strong institutions, and continuity, not just macro-economic indicators. "Growth that excludes women, youth, and marginalized groups is not sustainable," he said.

## SC rules bridal jewellery, gifts belong exclusively to bride

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court has ruled that jewellery and gifts given to a bride at the time of marriage — whether by her parents, relatives, husband or in-laws — vest absolutely in her and cannot be claimed by her husband or his family.

A three-member bench headed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi issued the ruling while hearing a case relating to the recovery of dowry articles. The judgment was authored by Justice Shakeel Ahmad. The court held that ownership of such property is determined not by how it is described, but by the intention behind the transfer and the bride's exclusive entitlement to it.

"Ownership is not determined by nomenclature but by the intention underlying the transfer and the exclusive entitlement of the bride thereto," the judgment stated.

The court further ruled that any unauthorised retention or misappropriation of such property by the husband or his family amounted to unlawful withholding of the wife's proprietary rights. "Consequently, any unauthorised retention, deprivation or misappropriation of such property by the husband or his family amounts to unlawful withholding of the wife's proprietary rights and entitles her to seek recovery through lawful proceedings before the competent Family Court," it stated.

Referring to prevailing social realities, the judgment observed that bridal jewellery and ornaments were not merely ceremonial accessories but often served as a source of financial security and economic autonomy for women entering marriage.

"Such property, irrespective of whether it is described as jehaz, dowry, bridal gifts, or personal belongings, remains the exclusive property of the bride, over which neither the husband nor the in-laws can claim dominion," the court held.

# Artificial Intelligence and the future of global Economic competition

**Continued from Page 4**

its powerful graphics processing units (GPUs) for machine learning and generative AI. The U.S. government restricted exports of cutting-edge semiconductor technology to China in 2022 and 2023 in an effort to slow the Chinese AI industry.

In response, China is investing more at home in semiconductor manufacturing. In 2024 China's government announced a \$47 billion semiconductor investment firm to reduce reliance on foreign technology. The Chinese government also enjoys the enormity of its population and digital economy which produce vast and colossal data that is required for AI systems.

Another area of rivalry is scientific research. Despite all this, China has outpaced the United States in AI research publications, and the United States continues to dominate the crea-

tion of high-impact AI models and new innovations, according to Stanford's AI Index. This illustrates that China is catching up fast with the technology gap.

The competition is also open to military uses. Both countries are creating AI surveillance, autonomous drones and cyber security technologies. The U.S. Department of Defense has ramped up its investment in artificial intelligence projects and applications for the military, and China has leveraged artificial intelligence for various surveillance and facial recognition purposes.

Impact on labor and inequality AI is reshaping the labor market across the globe. Industries like manufacturing, transportation, and customer service are seeing repetitive jobs being replaced by automation. By 2030, mckinsey and company estimates that automation may replace as many as 800 million jobs world-wide, and as

few as 400 million.

Concurrently, AI generates jobs for people with expertise in programming, robotics, and data science. In developing countries, however, there are concerns that many countries use labor-intensive industries that are susceptible to automation, which may pose difficulties for them to develop.

AI holds potential for opportunities and challenges in countries such as Pakistan. The IT industry exports in Pakistan crossed the threshold of \$3 billion in 2024. IT industry exports reached around \$3 billion in Pakistan in 2024. But the lack of technological infrastructure and investment can make it difficult for the country to catch up with the advanced nations in the development of AI.

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# The Real Reason Trump Crumbled Against Iran

**Continued from Page 4**

vulnerable to coastal missiles, mines, drones, fast boats, and unmanned naval systems. Iran could threaten U.S. naval forces without defeating them in a conventional naval battle. It could force the U.S. Navy to spend large numbers of defensive interceptors simply to keep ships, bases, and shipping lanes safe.

This may explain why the reported use of SM-3 and SM-6 naval interceptors is so significant. If large numbers of these weapons were fired, then U.S. ships may have faced far greater threats than officials publicly admitted. That does not mean the Navy failed. It may mean the Navy successfully defended itself. But a successful defense can still reveal strategic vulnerability if it rapidly depletes limited stocks.

That was the moment when the war became larger than Iran. Every THAAD, Patriot, SM-3, or SM-6 interceptor

used against Iran was one less available against a future threat from China, North Korea, or another adversary. The United States may have discovered that its global commitments exceeded its weapons inventory.

This is why the MOU can be interpreted by critics as a form of conditional surrender. If a superpower accepts terms it dislikes because continuing the war would expose its inability to sustain the fight, then the political meaning is unmistakable. It has been compelled by battlefield realities.

In that sense, Iran's strategic masterpiece was not that it built better weapons than America. It built cheaper weapons in larger numbers and forced America to defend with weapons it could not replace quickly. Iran understood that it could not win a defensive technology race against the United States and Israel, but it could win an offensive cost-imposition race. That is why Trump crumbled against

Iran. Not because Washington suddenly trusted Tehran. Not because Israel supported the compromise. Not because the American political class welcomed restraint. But because the United States may have reached the point where continuing the war would have exposed an even greater humiliation: the inability to defend its own assets, its closest regional ally, and its global deterrence posture at the same time.

The MOU was not born from generosity. It was born from necessity. The United States did not simply choose to stop. It was forced to pause, replenish, reassess, and negotiate from a position far weaker than it wanted the world to know.

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.

## AJK Annual Budget

MUZAFFARABAD: AJK Finance Minister Chaudhry Qasim Majeed presenting the budget for the FY 2026-2027 during the budget session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.



# AJK Legislative Assembly approves 2026-27 budget, Finance Bill 2026

### Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly on Monday approved the budget for the financial year 2026-27 and the revised budget for 2025-26.

Following a detailed discus-

sion on the budget, Finance Minister Chaudhry Qasim Majeed presented the Finance Bill 2026 in the house. The Legislative Assembly approved the Finance Bill 2026 by a majority vote.

The assembly also formally approved the estimated budget for the financial year

2026-27 and ratified the revised budget for the financial year 2025-26.

During the budget session, members expressed their views on the funds allocated for various sectors.

With the approval of the budget, the government has paved the way for the imple-

mentation of expenditure and development projects for the new financial year. The approval of the budget and Finance Bill has ratified the government's financial strategy for the new fiscal year.

Finance Minister Qasim Majeed said the approved

budget would help achieve the goals of public welfare, development and economic stability.

Following the approval of the Budget and Finance Bill 2026, the Azad Kashmir government will begin implementing its plan for the new fiscal year.

## Kiyani Meets Business Leaders on Tax Reforms, Export Facilitation

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kiyani on Monday chaired a consultative meeting with business and export sector representatives to discuss tax regime improvements, export facilitation, and a more conducive business environment.

According to a Finance Ministry press release, the meeting reviewed policy and administrative measures to facilitate trade, boost industrial competitiveness, and support export-led growth.

Discussions covered the Drawback of Local Taxes and Levies (DLTL), Technology Upgradation Fund (TUF), and Export Facilitation Scheme (EFS). Participants exchanged views on improving their effectiveness and ensuring timely implementation.



Business leaders shared perspectives on enhancing ease of doing business, operational efficiency, and Pakistan's export competitiveness. The meeting reaffirmed the need for continued public-private dialogue for sustainable growth.

Kiyani reiterated the govern-

ment's commitment to close engagement with the business community and policies promoting investment, industrial development, exports, and growth. He said the Finance Ministry, FBR, and Commerce Ministry would keep working with stakeholders to facilitate trade and strengthen exports.

Attendees included Jawed Bilwani, Syed Ahtisham Mazhar, Zubair Motiwala, Khurram Mukhtar, Aslam Pakhali, Rana Imran and Jamshed Murtaza. Senior officials present were the Commerce Secretary, FBR's Dr. Hamid Ateeq Sarwar, Mohsin of IOCO, and Ashhad Jawwad.

## Ayaz Sadiq Says Strong Parliament Key to Democracy and Development

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday said Parliament is the cornerstone of every democratic state and the true voice of the people's aspirations, marking the International Day of Parliamentarism observed on 30 June.

He said parliamentary supremacy is pivotal for democratic stability, constitutional supremacy, rule of law, and public confidence. "A vibrant, transparent and effective Parliament lays the foundation for sustainable solutions to public issues and drives national development," he stated.

Sadiq said the National Assembly continues to uphold democratic values, strengthen constitutional governance, promote transparent



legislation and ensure effective oversight. Legislation, he added, is

economic prosperity and national cohesion.

He noted efforts to strengthen parliamentary committees to make lawmaking more effective and result-oriented, with emphasis on technology, research, digital systems and capacity-building.

The Speaker stressed Parliament's role goes beyond lawmaking to holding the Executive accountable and representing constituencies. He urged political stakeholders to rise above differences and foster cooperation, tolerance and dialogue.

He also highlighted the National Assembly's active IPU membership and Pakistan's commitment to democracy, human rights, women and youth inclusion, and the SDGs through parliamentary diplomacy.

## 'Symbol of courage': Wife of martyred naval officer joins Pakistan Navy

### Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The wife of a Pakistan Navy officer who embraced martyrdom has turned her grief into courage by joining the Pakistan Navy as an officer.

Alvira Hamza, wife of Lieutenant Commander Hamza Abid, received a commission in the Pakistan Navy after securing the Comman-



dant Gold Medal and joined the Information Technology branch of the force.

Speaking about her journey, Alvira Hamza said her husband's sacrifice inspired her to become part of the Pakistan Navy. She said wearing the same uniform that she once saw her husband wear is a moment of pride for her and her daughter.

She shared that her expe-

rience at the Pakistan Naval Academy was memorable and encouraged young women in Pakistan to consider joining the armed forces, saying that if she could achieve this while raising a daughter, others could also pursue their dreams.

Her induction as a Pakistan Navy officer has been described as a symbol of courage, resilience, and inspiration for women across the country.

## Security forces kill 29 militants in Bajaur intelligence operation



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani security forces killed 29 militants in a major intelligence-based operation along the Pakistan-Afghanistan border, Federal Information Minister Atta Tarar said on Sunday, adding that a senior Jamaat-ul-Ahrar commander was among those killed.

According to Tarar, the operation was conducted on June 28 in Bajaur, where security forces killed

the group's top foreign commander, Khan Froosh alias Zabul, along with three of his associates.

He said the slain militants belonged to Jamaat-ul-Ahrar, which he described as an Indian proxy organisation involved in carrying out attacks in Pakistan.

Tarar said Pakistani security forces also conducted operations across the border in Afghanistan's Paktia, Paktika and Kunar provinces, where 25 more militants were killed.

## Govt to Continue AJK Wheat, Electricity Subsidies, Amir Muqam Says



### Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday pledged to continue wheat and electricity subsidies in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and accelerate development projects ahead of elections on 27 July.

Speaking at a PML-N joining ceremony at the AJK Council, Muqam said the federal government would not leave AJK's people alone and would ensure uninterrupted development. Former AJK minister Azhar Sadiq joined PML-N with thousands of supporters, and was welcomed by Muqam and Chaudhry Tariq Farooq.

The minister confirmed subsidies on wheat and electricity would remain intact, and said constitu-

tional, democratic elections were the only solution to the region's political issues. He urged voters to decide on 27 July.

Muqam credited Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif with a new era of development in AJK, announcing plans for Daanish School-model institutions in every district. He cited the Haryam Bridge, laptop scheme and other projects as "gifts" from the PM.

Reaffirming Pakistan's Kashmir stance, he said the nation stands united and the issue should not be politicized. He praised LoC residents and forces for their resolve during the recent "Battle for Truth."

Tariq Farooq and Barrister Iftikhar Gillani said federal funding for AJK has doubled, expressing confidence in a PML-N election win.

## Pakistan summons Afghan envoy after Karachi Rangers camp attack

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan lodged a strong protest with Afghanistan on Monday after a recent attack on a Rangers camp in Karachi, summoning the Afghan Charge d'Affaires and handing over a formal demarche, the Foreign Office said.

A Foreign Office spokesperson said Pakistan had registered its strongest protest over what it described as strong evidence of the direct involvement of Afghan nationals and networks based in Afghanistan in the attack.

Pakistan had made it clear that no such attack on its territory would be tolerated, the spokesperson said.

The protest followed Saturday night's attack on a Rangers camp in Karachi's Safoora area, where security agencies arrested an injured Afghan national identified as Usman, officials said.

According to officials, Usman told

investigators he had entered Pakistan from Afghanistan's Jalalabad area and that Abdul Hadi, Janan and Umar Farooq had assisted him in carrying out the attack.

Officials said Usman told investigators that Janan threw a bomb at the Rangers camp and that the group had entered Pakistan seven

days before the attack. They were allegedly housed in an under-construction building, while Abdul Hadi brought the weapons from Waziristan.

Three Rangers personnel were martyred in the attack, while three attackers were killed in the ensuing exchange of fire, officials said.