



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily

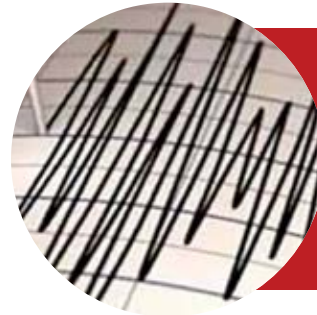


فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ پھر
میرے پاس وہی آئے گا سلسلہ بند ہو گیا۔
ایک دن میں چل رہا تھا کہ میں نے آسمان کی
طرف سے ایک آواز سنی میں نے آسمان کی
طرف نظر اٹھائی تو میں نے پھر اس فرشتہ
کو دیکھا جو میرے پاس غار حرا میں آیا تھا،
وہ آسمان وزمین کے درمیان کرسی پر بیٹھا
ہوا تھا۔
(گنگواری ص 214 نمبر 6214)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



US says it has issued new Iran-related sanctions

The United States imposed new Iran-related sanctions on Friday, targeting several entities, individuals and LPG tankers, the US Treasury Department's website showed. Among the 12 entities designated are five that are based in the Marshall Islands, four in the UAE, and one in China, according to details posted to the department's website. Six vessels were targeted, including four Panama-flagged tankers.



Earthquake jolts Lahore and parts of Punjab

Tremors from an earthquake were felt in Lahore and several other cities across Punjab on Tuesday, causing panic among residents on Friday night. According to initial reports, the earthquake struck suddenly, prompting people to rush out of homes and buildings in fear. The tremors of the earthquake were felt in Sheikhpura, Kasur and Muridkay, Arifwala and other adjoining areas in Punjab.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Zil'Haj 20, Saturday, June 6, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 47

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

ECC Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) at the Finance Division on Friday.



Photo: PID

ECC approves Rs. 24 Billion in Key Funding for National Projects

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The ECC approved a summary submitted by the Cabinet Division for Rs. 7,026.3 million through Technical Supplementary Grant (TSG) for the Sustainable Development

Goals Achievement Programme (SAP). The allocation will facilitate continuity of development projects, prevent cost escalations, and timely achievement of programme objectives.

The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Defence for provision of a TSG amounting to Rs. 10.15 billion for the Hangor Project of Pakistan Navy under the Revised Armed Forces Development Plan (RAFDP)-2030.

The Committee further approved seven summaries submitted by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control. These included Rs. 692.9 million for security arrangements undertaken during the Islamabad Peace Talks, Rs. 241 million for compensation-related expenditures arising from the suicide bomb blast at Imam Bargah Khadijah-tul-Kubra, Taralai, Islamabad, Rs. 528 million for operational require-

ments of the Pakistan Land Ports Authority (PLPA), Rs. 800 million for procurement of Fast Patrol Boats and associated infrastructure for Pakistan Coast Guards, Rs. 1,883.7 million for the "Expansion of Safe City, Islamabad" project, Rs. 150 million for operational requirements of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), and Rs. 413.9 million for security charges relating to the Reko Diq Project. The Committee appre-

ciated the successful conduct of the Islamabad Peace Talks and commended the efforts of all stakeholders involved.

The ECC also considered a summary submitted by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and approved release of Rs. 733 million in favour of Pakistan Television Corporation (PTVC) to meet salary requirements for June 2026.

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Mohsin Naqvi calls for collective action on border security at SCO meeting

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi has underlined the importance of strengthening border security and regional cooperation to combat cross-border crime, saying that collective efforts are essential for building a more peaceful world.

Speaking at a meeting of interior ministers and public security officials of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) in China on Friday, Naqvi said effective border management remained a key element in preventing trans-

national crime and ensuring regional stability.

According to the TV channel report, the interior minister stressed that practical measures were necessary to enhance border security and address emerging challenges faced by countries across the region.

The federal interior minister reassured the globe that Pakistan was fully committed to contributing constructively to international peace and security efforts.

Mohsin Naqvi reaffirmed that Pakistan respects the sovereignty of all nations and remains determined to play a positive role on



the global stage. He added that member states should learn from one another's experiences and work together to address common security concerns.

Describing the SCO as an

important platform for cooperation, he said the organisation provided member countries with an effective mechanism for strengthening border security and promoting coordinated

action against shared threats.

The minister emphasised that collective efforts through the SCO framework were essential for improving regional security and achieving long-term peace and stability.

The Shanghai Cooperation Organisation, established in 2001 by China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, has grown into one of the world's largest regional political, economic and security organisations, covering a vast area of Eurasia and representing a significant proportion of the global population.

AJK govt urges dialogue as Joint Awami Action Committee announces protest on June 9

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has called for a strike and long march on June 9, despite government claims of engaging in dialogue and addressing most of their demands.

Officials state that 35 out of 38 demands have reportedly been met, but the JAAC has maintained a rigid stance, opting for confrontation over constructive engagement.

The government views this as pres-



sure-based politics that disrupts public life and undermines democratic processes,

particularly the upcoming electoral process on June 9. While acknowledging the right to peaceful protest, authorities warn that blocking roads, paralyzing public life, or disturbing law and order will be dealt with strictly under the law.

The AJK government urges citizens to trust voting, dialogue, and constitutional means rather than agitation tactics, emphasizing the need for stability and practical solutions in Azad Kashmir.

Political stakeholders, including opposition parties, reportedly stand united against the JAAC's disruptive politics.

Pakistan opposes chemical weapons use under any circumstances



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has reiterated its firm opposition to the use of chemical weapons by anyone, anywhere and under any circumstances.

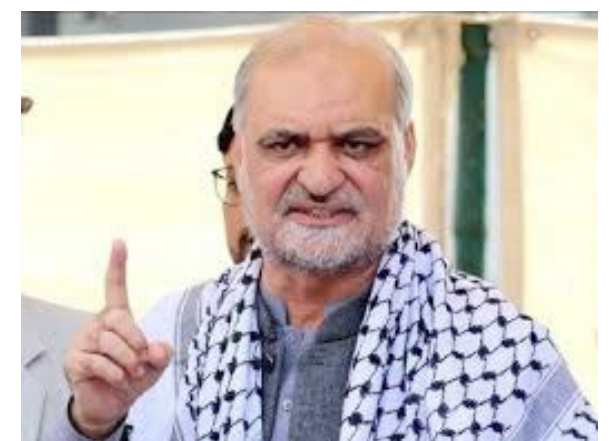
The remarks were made by Pakistan's Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN Usman Jadoon during the UN Security Council briefing on the Middle East.

The ambassador said

Chemical Weapons Convention remains a cornerstone of global disarmament framework. He extended Pakistan's support to all efforts for its universalization as well as its full, effective and non-discriminatory implementation.

Usman Jadoon appreciated the commitment of the Syrian authorities to extend full cooperation with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons.

JI chief urges govt to secure release of 10 Pakistanis held by Somali pirates



News Desk

Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman on Friday urged the government to take immediate steps to secure the safe return of 10 Pakistani citizens who he said have been held hostage by pirates near Somalia for the past 45 days, 24NewsHD reported on Friday.

In a statement posted on social media platform X, the Jamaat-e-Islami chief

expressed concern over the welfare of the captives and called on authorities to treat the matter with urgency.

According to Hafiz Naeem, the families of the hostages are deeply distressed and remain extremely worried about the safety of their loved ones.

He said the government must fully recognize the seriousness of the situation and intensify efforts to ensure the hostages' safe and early return.

Additional security forces to be deployed in AJK ahead of strike call

News Desk

Authorities have decided to deploy additional civil armed forces and police personnel in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) in view of the prevailing law and order situation and a strike call announced by the Kashmir Joint Action Committee.

According to official sources, 1,000 personnel of the Punjab Rangers and 2,000 personnel of the Frontier Constabulary (FC) will be sent to Azad Kashmir to assist local authorities in maintaining law and order.

In addition, 2,000 personnel of Islamabad Police and 1,000 personnel of Sindh Police will also be deployed in the region.

The decision comes ahead

of a strike call issued by the Kashmir Joint Action Committee, prompting authorities to strengthen security arrangements across the territory.

Sources said the additional force will support local law enforcement agencies in ensuring public safety and maintaining order during the protest activities.

Officials have not disclosed the duration of the deployment, but security arrangements are expected to remain in place until the situation stabilises.

The Kashmir Joint Action Committee has announced the strike to press its demands, while authorities have urged citizens to remain peaceful and cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

Rathore chairs AJK Cabinet meeting: Focus on regularization, policy implementation



Bureau Report

The 41st Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet meeting, chaired by Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, addressed several key issues. The cabinet ratified previous decisions and reviewed their implementation. Chief Secretary presented on the agreement with the Jammu and Kashmir Joint Public Action Committee, while the IG Police reported on law and order.

Austerity measures were extended until June 13 due to the Middle East situation. Legislation will be introduced to regularize ad hoc, temporary, and contract employees. 878 Grade-I Beldars were regularized, and District Food Controller posts will be upgraded to Grade-17 from July 1. Amendments to the Schools Education Package were approved, involving post readjustment and institutional upgradation. Powers of the Envi-

ronmental and Appellate Tribunals will transfer to District and Sessions Judges. The Easy Business Act was approved, endorsing the National Small and Medium Enterprise Policy for business growth. The Azad Kashmir Drinking Water Policy 2026, a collaboration with UNICEF and the Federal Ministry of Climate Change, was greenlit. Amendments to the Criminal Law

Act 2024 to combat cybercrime and the Agriculture Pesticides Act were approved. A five-year Agriculture, Livestock, and Irrigation Roadmap (2026-2031) was endorsed. Land was allocated for a funeral site in Bhimber and for the resettlement of Mangla Dam affectees and refugees in Mirpur. The previous amendment regarding the appointment of the AJK Bank President was withdrawn, continuing the existing procedure.

National Day of Italy

KARACHI: Governor Sindh, Nehal Hashmi, Chief Minister of Sindh, Murad Ali Shah and Italian Consul General Fabrizio Bielli stand in respect of national anthems during a reception to celebrate the 80th Anniversary of the Republic of Italy (La Festa della Repubblica Italiana) at local hotel in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

GCWUF makes history with Pakistan's first SIAM student chapter at a Women's University

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: GC Women University Faisalabad has made a significant achievement by establishing Pakistan's first Student Chapter of the Society for Industrial and Applied Mathematics (SIAM) at a women's university.

The chapter has been launched by the Department of Mathematics under the Faculty of Computing & Numerical Sciences to promote research, leadership, and global networking opportunities for female students in STEM.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (T. I.) inaugurated the chapter and appreciated the students for leading this initiative. She encouraged them to remain focused on their goals and actively engage with international profes-



sional communities for academic and career growth. Earlier, Prof. Dr. Saima Akram, Chairperson, Department of Mathematics and Chapter Ambassador, introduced SIAM's global platform and acknowledged the Vice Chancellor's support in bringing this oppor-

tunity to GCWUF. The newly elected student leadership team, headed by Chapter President Haseeba Maqsood, was also introduced. All academic coordinators, heads of teaching and administrative departments, and students of the Faculty of Computing & Numerical

Sciences attended the ceremony. The SIAM Student Chapter will provide students with free membership, access to international research resources, professional networking opportunities, scientific journals, and participation in global conferences and activities.

NED University, NFEH jointly mark World Environment Day

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Experts are warning of an urban ecological emergency in Pakistan's major cities due to rampant development encroaching on green spaces, untreated industrial effluent polluting the sea, widespread tree cutting, and weak environmental law enforcement.

These issues worsen the climate crisis, leading to extreme weather events. A seminar organized by NFEH in collaboration with UNEP and NED University highlighted these concerns on World Environ-

ment Day. The Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI) pledged to support environmental law enforcement and take action against violating industries. KCCI President Rehan Hanif emphasized that environmental compliance is crucial for industries seeking international market access.

Prof. Dr. Noman Ahmed from NED University warned that unchecked commercialization and land-use changes threaten parks and greenbelts, exacerbating the climate crisis and contributing to heatwaves.

He cited the attempted encroachment on Karachi's Hill Park as an example of the growing threat to urban green spaces. The Arabian Sea's deteriorating condition, choked by plastic and industrial waste, was also highlighted, evidenced by images of a plastic-covered seabed near Keamari Port. Sindh Assembly Member Rehan Bandukda criticized coastal high-rise developments without adequate drainage and sewage planning, demanding accountability from environmental authorities.

The Sindh Solid Waste Management Board (SSWMB) is imple-

menting modern technological solutions for waste management. NFEH President Muhammad Naeem Qureshi committed to large-scale tree plantation and urged chambers of commerce to conduct awareness programs and training for industries on environmental compliance.

He called for strict enforcement of environmental laws against illegal tree cutting, pollution, and marine contamination. Speakers also stressed the importance of involving educational institutions in environmental awareness campaigns to foster environmental stewardship among youth.

Governor Kundi visits SSDO Headquarters



ISLAMABAD: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi visited the headquarters of the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) in Islamabad on Friday, on the occasion of the organization's 10th anniversary.

The visit underscored the importance of collaborative efforts in strengthening Pakistan's response to terrorism, terrorist financing, and violent extremism.

During the visit, the Governor commended SSDO's decade-long contribution to advancing research, policy dialogue, and institutional capacity-building in the areas of counter-terrorism (CT), countering the financing of terrorism (CFT), and countering violent extremism (CVE).

"I am really pleased to visit SSDO and speak about the important work being carried out by SSDO in strengthening efforts against terrorism, terrorist financing, and violent extremism in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and across Pakistan," the Governor stated.

He emphasized that terrorism and violent extremism remain complex challenges that extend beyond security concerns, affecting social cohesion, economic development, and public trust in state institutions. He noted that addressing these challenges requires more than a law-enforcement response and must be grounded in informed policy-making, strong institutions, and active community participation.

Highlighting SSDO's role, the Governor appreciated the organization's efforts in supporting CT, CFT, and CVE initiatives through engagement with parliamentarians and key stakeholders. He noted that SSDO's work in enhancing awareness, strengthening policy dialogue, and promoting evidence-based decision-making is helping equip institutions and leaders with the necessary tools to respond to evolving security threats.

He further stressed the importance of coordinated national action, stating that sustainable peace cannot be achieved by any single institution alone. He called for a whole-of-government approach, ensuring effective coordination among federal, provincial, and local authorities through information sharing and joint action.

Equally, he emphasized a whole-of-society approach, encouraging the active participation of civil society organizations, educational institutions, religious scholars, media, youth, women, and local communities in addressing the root causes of extremism and promoting tolerance, inclusion, and resilience. The Governor concluded that collective efforts and sustained collaboration are essential to counter extremist narratives and to build a safer and more prosperous future. "Together, through collaboration, dialogue, and collective action, we can build stronger communities, protect future generations from extremist narratives, and contribute to a safer, more peaceful, and more prosperous Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Pakistan," he remarked.

AJK General Elections Set for July 27, 2026



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice (ret'd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, announced that general elections for 45 direct seats will be held on July 27, 2026. To ensure a clean and transparent process, the Pakistan Army, Rangers, police, and paramilitary forces will be deployed. A ban on appointments, transfers, and new development projects is in effect, with the exception of schemes included in the ADP. The Election Commission has finalized the voter list with the exemplary cooperation of NADRA and the administration. Nomination papers can be submitted from June 9 to June 19, 2026. Scrutiny will occur on June 20, with appeals processed from June 21 to June 29. Candidates can withdraw by June 30, and the final list of candidates and symbols will be published on July 1, 2026. Polling will take place from 8 am to 5 pm on election day.

PML-N Azad Kashmir Leader Welcomes 2026 Polls, Calls for Fair Elections

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Shah Ghulam Qadir, PML-N Azad Kashmir President and Opposition Leader, welcomed the 2026 election schedule, urging the Election Commission for free, fair, and transparent polls. He called on PML-N workers to prepare for campaigning, promoting Nawaz Sharif's development agenda and rallying under the party flag with unity and enthusiasm. Qadir expressed confidence in winning a two-thirds majority based on the party's performance and manifesto, aiming to resume service and development. He stressed the importance of stability, fair elections, and adherence to the electoral code, urging voters to reject divisive elements and choose development, stability, and democratic values.



MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmed Unveils Rs20 Million Development Projects in Kamra



Raza Naqvi

Member National Assembly Sheikh Aftab Ahmed inaugurated Rs20 million development schemes in Kamra Cantt, including sewerage lines and paved streets for Wards 1, 2, and 5. Funded by his special grant and supervised by the Cantonment Board Kamra, these projects aim to improve public welfare. Addressing a PML-N gathering, Ahmed highlighted the federal and Punjab governments' commitment to public welfare under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, emphasizing Pakistan's progress under Nawaz Sharif. He credited PML-N leadership for significant national development, including the motorway network and Pakistan's status as an atomic power, and assured an end to current economic hardships. Other speakers, including Jahangir Khanzada, praised the PML-N government and Ahmed's contributions to the area's development. Ahmed affirmed his dedication to providing urban and rural areas with top-tier facilities.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:15 am
Zohr 12:06 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:15 pm
Isha 8:58 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Population Office Actively Participates in District Council Rally on World Environment Day

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the occasion of World Environment Day, officers and staff of the District Population and Health Welfare Office actively participated in an awareness rally organized by the District Council Toba Tek Singh.

The objective of the rally was to raise public awareness about environmental protection, tree plantation, cleanliness, sanitation and the responsible use of natural resources.

A large number of government officials, employees, social workers and citizens took part in the event.

The participants reaffirmed their commitment to protecting the environment and ensuring a cleaner and healthier future for coming generations.

At the conclusion of the rally, they also pledged to further promote eco-friendly activities and strengthen tree plantation campaigns across the district.

World Environment Day: Maryam Nawaz Champions Green Punjab Initiative

Bureau Report

LAHORE: On World Environment Day, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif urged citizens to plant more trees and protect natural resources, emphasizing the provincial government's commitment to environmental protection and plastic pollution elimination.

She acknowledged the past year's environmental improvements, including reduced fog levels, and commended the team for their efforts in Lahore and across the province.

The Chief Minister directed authorities to pursue legal action against substandard plastic bag usage and to accelerate the completion of Punjab's first Environment Observatory Project.

She highlighted the Earth's beauty and the collective responsibility to protect it, noting that measures to combat pollution and smog are showing positive results.

Punjab has become the region's first province to issue early environmental pollution alerts, utilizing a state-of-the-art Air Quality Forecast System for

province-wide monitoring.

The province's first Environment Wall operates 24/7, providing continuous monitoring for environmental agencies. Legal actions are ongoing against violations like smoke-emitting vehicles, brick kilns, and crop residue burning.

Thirty modern fog guns are actively combating smog, with more being procured for Lahore and other cities. Tree plantation campaigns are proceeding under the 'Green Punjab' and 'Plant for Pakistan' initiatives.

Maryam Nawaz stressed that environmental conservation aligns with religious and moral values, underscoring its necessity for future generations' survival and well-being.

She called for a collective commitment to protecting water resources and environmental assets, encouraging public awareness on nature conservation, pollution control, and climate change mitigation.

Finally, the Chief Minister appealed to the public to cease plastic use and commit to environmental protection.



73rd Anniversary of Ascent of Mount Everest

ISLAMABAD: Group photo of National Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan and Ambassador of Nepal to Pakistan, Rita Dhital with participants of the ceremony to mark 73rd Anniversary of Ascent of Mount Everest at local hotel in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Eshal Shaukat Receives International Women Excellence Award 2026 in Baku

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani humanitarian and climate activist Eshal Shaukat received the International Women Excellence Award 2026 in Baku, Azerbaijan, for her significant contributions to humanitarian service, youth empowerment, children's rights, and community development through her initiative "Pehchaan with Eshal Shaukat," which helps children obtain legal identity documents.

During her trip, Eshal engaged in international



discussions on cooperation and youth development, meeting with Azerbaijani officials and members of the Pakistan-Azerbaijan Chamber of Economic

Cooperation. She also met with her sister, Aneasha Shaukat, a humanitarian and environmental advocate who shared her vision for

combating plastic pollution and promoting youth involvement in climate action.

Eshal dedicated her award to her mentors and supporters, emphasizing that it represents a greater responsibility to continue her work in humanitarian service, children's rights, and climate action.

Both Eshal and Aneasha's achievements highlight the powerful role of youth leadership in driving positive global change. Eshal is currently an ambassador for over 25 organizations, continuing to inspire young people worldwide.

UN Women and PSPA Explore Partnership for Women's Empowerment



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: UN Women Pakistan, led by Deputy Country Representative Fahmida Iqbal, met with Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA) Vice Chairperson Jahan Ara Manzoor Wattoo to explore collaboration on women's empowerment, social protection, girls' education, and reducing socio-economic inequalities. PSPA briefed UN Women on its Zewar-e-Taleem Program, which has improved girls' education and reduced early marriages. PSPA also highlighted initiatives like the Aaghosh Program for maternal health, Khud Mukhtar for economic empowerment, and Nai Zindagi for acid attack survivors. Vice Chairperson Wattoo emphasized the importance of partnerships, noting the establishment of an Inter-Provincial Social Protection Forum and MoUs with ILO and WFP. UN Women appreciated PSPA's efforts and expressed readiness to formalize collaboration through an MoU.

Dr. Ehsan Bhutta Praises Hazrat Usman Ghani's Legacy for Modern Governance



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Auqaf Punjab Secretary Dr. Ehsan Bhutta praised Hazrat Usman Ghani (RA) for his exemplary life, benevolence, and governance at the 'Hazrat Usman Ghani Conference' in Lahore. Bhutta highlighted that the third Caliph's welfare initiatives, like the 'Bir-e-Ruma' endowment, offer vital lessons for modern administration. He affirmed the Auqaf Department's commitment to implementing these values in managing shrines, transforming them into centers for public welfare, education, and empowerment. Director General of Religious Affairs Hafiz Anees-ur-Rehman and Maulana Mukhtar Ahmad Nadeem also spoke, emphasizing Hazrat Usman Ghani's (RA) financial contributions and his legacy as Zun-Noorain, providing a blueprint for social justice, economic empathy, and mutual forbearance in contemporary society. The conference saw strong participation from religious scholars, Auqaf officials, and devotees, all resolving to adopt these timeless Islamic principles.

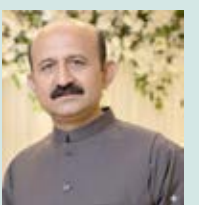
FESCO Kamalia XEN Engineer Syed Fazal Abbas Shah Upgraded to BPS-19

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: WAPDA/FESCO Kamalia's Executive Engineer (Operations), Engineer Syed Fazal Abbas Shah has been upgraded from BPS-18 to BPS-19 and promoted to the position of Additional Superintending Engineer (Operations). This significant professional achievement is being regarded as recognition of his long-standing, outstanding and valuable services to the department.

Engineer Syed Fazal Abbas Shah enjoys a distinguished reputation within WAPDA and FESCO due to his professional competence, integrity, dedication, leadership qualities and excellent administrative skills. Throughout his career, he has rendered remarkable services in ensuring uninterrupted electricity supply, reducing line losses, resolving consumer complaints promptly and promoting discipline and efficiency within the department. His contributions have consistently been appreciated by senior authorities.

Citizens, business leaders and social circles expressed hope that in his new role, Engineer Syed Fazal Abbas Shah will continue to perform his responsibilities with the same enthusiasm and professional excellence, playing a vital role in further improving the power distribution system and providing better services to consumers.



Welfare Work is Blend of Faith, Service & Patriotism: Asif Ali Chaudhry

Anwar Chohan

Prominent social leader Asif Ali Chaudhry has said that welfare activities are a true blend of seeking the pleasure of Allah, serving humanity, and patriotism. A delegation of social personalities led by Asif Ali Chaudhry, including Sheikh Amjad Mahmood, Asim Mushtaq Butt, and

Waqar Qureshi, visited Cleft Hospital. They were received by the Founder and Patron-in-Chief of Cleft Hospital, Dr. Ijaz Bashir. According to the Public Relations Department of Dr. Ijaz Bashir Social Welfare Mission, Dr. Bashir held a detailed meeting with the



delegation and appreciated their commitment to public service.

He said that Asif Ali Chaudhry has carried forward the tradition of public service established by the family of Haji Safdar Ali. On the occasion, Dr. Ijaz Bashir presented an honorary shield to Asif Ali Chaudhry in recognition of his outstanding services for the welfare of deserving patients and society.

Speaking on the occasion, Asif Ali Chaudhry thanked Dr. Bashir and Cleft Hospital management, and pledged to continue working for the relief of humanity. The delegation also visited different wards of the hospital and met patients.

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Congress Clips Trump's War Wings on Iran

The passage of the House War Powers Resolution by a vote of 215-208 on 3rd June may ultimately be remembered as the most consequential political development of the Iran war—not because it immediately ends the conflict, but because it fundamentally alters the balance of power, the psychology of negotiations, and the strategic calculations of every actor involved.

For nearly three months, the United States approached the conflict believing that military pressure, economic sanctions, naval deployments, and the threat of further escalation would compel Iran to make concessions. Instead, the opposite appears to have happened. The war has become increasingly unpopular inside the United States, imposed significant economic costs on American households, generated uncertainty in financial markets, strained relations with allies, and exposed vulnerabilities in America's military posture throughout the Middle East.

Against that backdrop, the House vote represents far more than a symbolic congressional gesture. It is the first clear institutional signal that domestic political support for an open-ended conflict is beginning to fracture.

The resolution, introduced by Representative Gregory Meeks of New York, directs President Donald Trump to remove U.S. armed forces from hostilities against Iran unless Congress formally authorizes military action. Although the measure does not automatically terminate the conflict and faces significant legal and political obstacles before becoming binding law, its political significance is undeniable.

Most importantly, the resolution passed despite opposition from Republican leadership and the White House. Four Republicans—Brian Fitzpatrick, Thomas Massie, Tom Barrett, and Warren Davidson—joined every Democrat in

supporting the measure. This transformed what could have been dismissed as a partisan maneuver into a bipartisan warning that congressional patience with the conflict is wearing thin.

The White House immediately attempted to minimize the vote, calling it meaningless and arguing that it undermines ongoing negotiations with Iran. Republican leaders similarly argued that Congress was weakening the president's hand at a critical diplomatic moment.

Ironically, that argument may contain the strongest evidence that the vote matters. If the resolution truly had no impact, there would be little concern about its effect on negotiations. The very fact that administration officials and congressional allies argue that it weakens American leverage implicitly acknowledges that the vote has changed perceptions of presidential authority and political support.

Before the House vote, Iran had to assume that President Trump retained broad freedom to escalate military operations if negotiations stalled. American aircraft carriers, regional bases, strategic bombers, sanctions, and military alliances all reinforced the credibility of that threat.

After the vote, Tehran sees a different picture. Iran now sees an American president facing congressional resistance, growing public opposition, rising economic pressures, and increasing questions about the sustainability of the war effort.

As a result, Iran's negotiating position has strengthened. Iranian leaders will now conclude that time is increasingly on their side. They may calculate that domestic political pressures inside the United States will continue to grow as fuel prices, inflationary pressures, and economic uncer-

tainty affect American voters.

The House vote reflects that growing reality. Members of Congress must answer to voters. As public skepticism about the conflict increased, lawmakers faced mounting pressure to reassert Congress's constitutional role in decisions of war and peace.

For the Gulf Cooperation Council states, the resolution presents a complicated picture. Gulf governments traditionally viewed American military bases as sources of protection and deterrence.

However, the conflict exposed another reality. During periods of escalation, those same bases became potential targets for retaliation.

Many Gulf states found themselves caught between dependence on American security guarantees and concern that their territories could become battlegrounds in a wider regional confrontation. The House resolution may therefore be interpreted not simply as a limitation on American power but as a possible step toward reducing regional escalation.

For Israel, the implications may be equally significant. Israeli security planning has long relied upon close strategic coordination with Washington. Any indication that Congress is becoming reluctant to support expanded military operations inevitably affects calculations in Jerusalem. While the resolution does not alter America's commitment to Israel, it signals that future military escalations involving Iran may face greater political scrutiny in Washington.

This introduces a new variable into regional decision-making. For Iran, meanwhile, the House vote creates opportunities but also risks. Iran may interpret congressional opposition as evidence that American political divisions are deep-

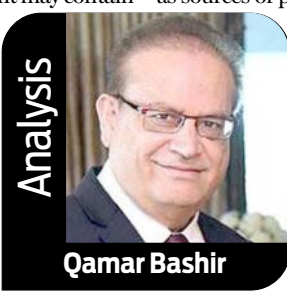
ening. That perception could encourage Tehran to harden its negotiating position. However, overconfidence carries dangers. If Iranian leaders misinterpret congressional restraint as military weakness, they risk provoking reactions that could ultimately strengthen support for a tougher American response.

The most likely outcome is neither immediate peace nor immediate escalation. Instead, the resolution shifts incentives toward negotiation. President Trump now faces a political environment in which continued military escalation becomes more difficult to justify. Congress has signaled opposition. Public support remains uncertain. Economic costs continue accumulating. Allies are increasingly nervous. Markets prefer stability.

Under such circumstances, a negotiated settlement inevitably becomes more attractive than continued confrontation. The true significance of the congressional resolution therefore lies not in its legal force but in its psychological and political impact. It sends a powerful signal that the debate in Washington is shifting, and that shift is being carefully observed far beyond the halls of Congress.

In Tehran, it reinforces the perception that military escalation may no longer enjoy the unquestioned political support it once did. Across the Gulf, it compels governments to reassess risks, security assumptions, and future alignments. In global financial markets, it introduces the possibility that diplomacy may eventually prevail over conflict, influencing calculations about stability, energy flows, and investment.

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



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Arabian Sea Heatwave Spurs Urgent Climate Action for Pakistan

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has warned of an underwater heat emergency in the Arabian Sea and urged urgent climate action to protect coastal communities, fisheries and maritime infrastructure.

In a statement on Climate Day, he emphasized that nature provides countless sustainable solutions to the climate crisis, from ocean depths to mountain peaks. He called for urgent action to protect ecosystems and strengthen environmental resilience worldwide.

The minister said sustained sea-surface temperatures in the northern Arabian Sea have exceeded the 90th percentile across more than 30 percent of the region in recent weeks. Scientists, he added, describe the event as an unprecedented marine heatwave that is already intensifying climate risks along Pakistan's coast and altering forthcoming monsoon behavior. "Warmer waters are a known factor in both cyclone formation and intensification," Junaid Chaudhry said, linking the marine heatwave to a potential rise in tropical cyclone activity in the North Arabian Sea. He warned that increased cyclone frequency and strength would place additional pressure on ports, fishing fleets and coastal infrastructure, and demanded heightened preparedness across government and industry. The minister said climate records show a warming trend since the 1980s and pointed to a westward shift in monsoon moisture that could increase the likelihood of heavier-than-normal rainfall in southern Pakistan, particularly Karachi and Sindh, between mid-August and mid-September.

Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said the planet is sending urgent warning signals through increasingly frequent climate extremes. He pointed to rising heatwaves, prolonged droughts, and devastating floods as clear evidence of a changing global climate system.

"These events highlight the growing vulnerability of communities worldwide and the need for immediate action. We must respond collectively to protect future generations from escalating environmental risks and ensure sustainable development policies," he added.

He said anomalous Arabian Sea warming is projected to enhance moisture transport toward the coastline, raising the probability of intense rainfall events that could overwhelm urban drainage systems and heighten flood risk. Junaid Chaudhry highlighted the vulnerability of the Indus Delta, citing sea level rise, coastal erosion and saltwater intrusion that are damaging agricultural land and freshwater resources. He warned of severe coral bleaching and shifting fish populations that threaten livelihoods and the wider blue economy. Referring to recent United Nations Environment Programme reports, the minister said record greenhouse gas emissions and rapid planetary warming are increasing the frequency, intensity and duration of marine heatwaves worldwide. "The ocean has absorbed a large share of excess atmospheric heat," he said, adding that this buffering role is straining marine ecosystems and the communities that depend on them.



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

Water Scarcity and the Risk of Global Conflict

Water scarcity is emerging as one of the most profound challenges of the 21st century, posing not only an environmental crisis but also a harrowing risk for global conflict. As populations burgeon and climate change accelerates, the availability of fresh water is increasingly precious resource. Water is indispensable for human survival, agriculture, industry and maintaining ecosystems. Its scarcity a multifaceted problem that intersects with economic, political and social issues.

Water is one of the most critical resources for human survival, playing a fundamental role in various domains such as agriculture, industry, and the sustenance of ecosystems. Despite covering approximately 71% of the Earth's surface, the scarcity of freshwater is a pressing global concern. The growing demand for water due to population growth, industrialization, and environmental changes has exacerbated water scarcity, creating a multifaceted challenge that requires a comprehensive and coordinated approach to address.

In the agricultural sector, water is a critical input for food production. Irrigation enhances crop yield and ensures food security, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions where rainfall is insufficient. Agriculture accounts for approximately 70% of global freshwater withdrawals, highlighting its central role

in water usage. Water scarcity challenges agricultural productivity exacerbating food insecurity and malnutrition, particularly in developing countries reliant on agriculture for livelihoods and sustenance.

Water scarcity originates from various factors including natural scarcity, faulty resource management and climatic changes leading to unpredictable availability. The Middle East and North Africa, for example, are some of the most water-scarce regions in the world, where rivers such as the Tigris, Euphrates and the Jordan are points of contention among nations.

The strategic importance of water bodies makes them potential flashpoints for international disputes. Historically, control of water resources has been a trigger for tensions, as seen in conflicts along the Nile River among Egypt, Sudan and Ethiopia. Particularly concerning the construction of dams and the implications on downstream water availability.

Climate change exacerbates these matters by altering precipitation patterns, leading to droughts or floods that further strain water resources. The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has warned of increased variability in water availability, which could heighten competition over access to this essential resource, especially in regions already vulnerable to conflicts. The resulting scarcity can undermine economic opportunities, causing migration and exacerbating ethnic tensions ripe conditions for conflict.

Industrially, water is a key component in manu-

facturing processes, energy production, and as a coolant in numerous operations. The industrial sector relies heavily on water for the production of goods, from electronics and textiles to chemicals and paper. As industries expand to meet global demand, the competition for water resources intensifies, often leading to conflict between sectors and regions. Efficient water management and conservation technologies are thus imperative in ensuring sustainable industrial growth while preserving water resources for future generations.

Moreover, water scarcity plays a critical role in food security, given its reliance on water for agricultural production. The depletion of water resources affects crop yields and food prices, with the potential to destabilize governments. Countries dependent on agriculture face the risk of famine and economic collapse, further inflaming regional tensions. The 2011 Syrian civil war is a pivotal example; prolonged droughts contributed to agricultural failures, mass migrations into urban areas, and ultimately social unrest.

Water scarcity is a complex and multifaceted problem that impacts human survival, agriculture industry, and ecological systems. Given its indispensable nature, water management must be prioritized globally with concerted efforts to implement sustainable policies and practices Collaboration among governments, industries and communities along with technological scarcity ensuring that this critical resource continues to support life and prosperity on Earth.

The writer is Post-Doctorate (Peace Education) at International Islamic University Islamabad

From Soldiers to Students: The Crucial Role of DDR in Post-War Peace

Maryam

When the sounds of war are replaced by silence and peace agreements are made, the real challenge of building peace begins. In many post-war communities, hidden weapons and armed ex-soldiers continue to pose a risk of renewed conflict.

To stop this, peace efforts depend on a process called DDR: Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration. This process is costly and takes a long time, but it is the only method that can effectively turn soldiers into students and regular citizens. Disarmament is the first stage, where fighters hand over their weapons to UN peacekeepers or local teams at set locations. These weapons are then documented, marked, and sometimes destroyed.

The main problem here is gaining trust, as soldiers often fear losing their only source of protection. Demobilization is the next step, where soldiers are officially released from service. They undergo health checks, return their uniforms, and receive financial support to start new lives. Military life

often offers a clear structure and sense of identity, so leaving it suddenly can be confusing. Without proper support, some soldiers may return to violent behaviour.

Reintegration is the final and most extended part of DDR, which helps former fighters adjust to civilian life. DDR programs offer training, education, and basic needs. In certain cases, adults who never had the chance to learn essential skills begin to read and write.

The main objective is to change how society views these individuals, shifting their image from that of "terrorists" to students and respected community members. Countries like Sierra Leone and Colombia have used DDR programs with clear benefits.

Though DDR does not address all issues after war, it greatly reduces crimes, lowers violence, and creates a safer environment for children to grow and learn without weapons around. Real peace is more than just signing a document. It involves removing weapons from homes and helping ex-fighters find meaningful, peaceful reasons to leave their guns behind forever.

The writer is a student of International Relations at the International Islamic University, Islamabad.

Naval Chief urges Global Climate Action on World Environment Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: World Environment Day is observed on 5th of June every year to promote global awareness and inspire collective action for the protection and preservations of our environment. It is a global call to confront the escalating environmental crises under United Nations Environmental Programme. This year's theme, 'A Global Call for Climate Action', serves as a timely reminder that climate change remains one of the most serious challenges confronting humanity today. Rising temperatures, surging sea-levels, melting glaciers, super floods, severe droughts and extreme weather conditions are affecting millions of lives and damaging eco-systems.

The growing impact of climate change demands urgent, coordinated and sustained actions at national, regional and international levels. Environmental protection is no longer solely an ecological concern; it is linked holistically to economic stability, food security, public health and sustainable development. Governments, institutions, industries and communities must therefore, work together to adopt innovative and practical solutions that reduce environmental degradation and promote resilience for future generations.

Pakistan is ranked by various international rating agencies between 5th and 8th most affected country in the world by climate change. It faces serious environmental challenges

including coastal erosion, water scarcity, pollution and increasing frequency of extreme weather events such as mega-floods, severe heatwaves and droughts. In this regard, protection of our national resources and eco-systems has become a national responsibility requiring collective commitment and proactive measures.

Climate change does not affect one country alone; rather it transcends borders and influences regions with the capacity to impact the entire globe. Developed and developing nations therefore, must work together by sharing technology, resources and innovative solutions to mitigate growing environmental risks. International organizations, schools and communities can spread awareness and

inspire people to adopt greener lifestyle.

Pakistan Navy is firmly committed to supporting national efforts aimed at environmental conservation and climate resilience. As guardians of the country's maritime frontiers, Pakistan Navy continues to undertake comprehensive initiatives focused on protecting the marine environment and promoting sustainable environmental practices. Through regular coastal, sea and beach cleaning campaigns, environmental awareness drives and community engagement programs, Pakistan Navy actively contributes towards reducing marine pollution and preserving the ecological balance of Arabian Sea, particularly along our coastal belt.

A major focus of Pakistan Navy's environmental initiatives is the conservation and restoration of mangrove forests along Pakistan's coastline. Mangroves play critical role in protecting coastal communities against erosion and extreme weather, supporting marine biodiversity and absorbing carbon emission that contribute to global warming. In collaboration with government organizations, Pakistan Navy continues to undertake large-scale mangrove plantation drives and coastal conservation projects to strengthen environmental sustainability and climate resilience.

On this important occasion, I urge all citizens, institutions and stakeholders to embrace environmentally responsible practices and contribute towards



safeguarding our planet. Small, yet meaningful actions such as reducing untreated waste disposal into the sea, energy conservation, eliminating plastic pollution and protecting natural habitats can create a significantly positive impact. Together, let us answer this global call with unity and resolve, securing a green, resilient and prosperous Pakistan, for the generations to come.

Top Saudi backed Fitness Brand-TriFit Expands to Islamabad with a New Wellness Facility

News Desk

ISLAMABAD, JU: TriFit, a Saudi backed fitness brand, has expanded its footprint beyond Karachi with the launch of TriFit Plus in Islamabad.

TriFit presently operates six clubs that offer fitness regimes in its world class facilities, and highly qualified trainers, and is planning to open 8 more facilities nationwide. The excellence and standards maintained at the outlets has positively contributed to preventive healthcare, fitness, and personal wellbeing, particularly among Pakistan's urban population.

The exciting launch event was attended by industry leaders, media personalities, fitness enthusiasts, social media influencers, students, and members of the business community. Prominent among the guests were former Judge of the Supreme Court of Pakistan, Justice (R) Athar Minallah; Senator Sarmad Ali, President of the All Pakistan Newspapers Society (APNS); renowned television actress Laila Zuberi; senior journalist and anchorperson Fahd Hussain; and President of the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry,



Usman Shaukat.

Other notable attendees included Maj. Gen. Najam-us-Saqib, Commodore Nasir Mehmood, TriFit Board Members Shafqat Khan and Zafarullah Khan representing Saudi investors,

renowned businessmen Zia Ansari, Jamal Ansari, Amer Hashmi and Nadeem Ansari, as well as Zia-ul-Rasheed, Director General, President House. They were joined by a distinguished gathering of corporate executives, media

professionals, and prominent personalities from various walks of life at the launch of TriFit Islamabad.

Speaking at the occasion, Ahmar Azam, Founder & CEO of TriFit, said the expansion aligns with the company's

vision of building healthier communities and encouraging long-term wellness through structured fitness programs and modern facilities: "Mental wellbeing is one of the top challenges facing young people today.

Free Education Up to 12th Grade: PML-Qayyum's Budget Demands

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PML-Qayyum has urged the federal government to prioritize education in the upcoming budget, warning that anti-education policies will lead to a severe social and economic crisis. Faisal Anwar, the party's spokesperson, vehemently opposed a proposed increase in sales tax on stationery, describing it as a "mass killing of education." He criticized private educational institutions for their arbitrary fee increases, which are unaffordable for many families due to inflation, and demanded a special package for teachers with incentives. PML-Qayyum advocates for a unified basic education system, free education and textbooks up to 12th grade, and immediate regulation of private school fees. The party has warned of further action if the government does not address these educational concerns.

PSCA Launches Intensified Crackdown Against Vehicles Using Fake, Cloned & Tampered Number Plates

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) continues its effective operations against vehicles using fake, cloned, and tampered number plates through advanced AI-based technology. With the support of Safe City's modern surveillance system and Artificial Intelligence-powered cameras, more than 170 suspicious and cloned vehicles were identified and traced during the last month.

According to the PSCA spokesperson, Safe City automated alert system enables timely detection of suspicious, fake, and cloned number plates. As soon as a suspicious or unregistered vehicle number plate appears within the range of Safe City cameras, the system automatically generates an alert. Virtual Patrolling Officers immediately share the relevant information with nearby police units, ensuring prompt legal action.

The spokesperson further stated that Punjab Safe Cities Authority is continuously monitoring blacklisted, crime-linked, and other suspicious vehicles through advanced AI-based surveillance technology. These modern digital monitoring systems assist law enforcement agencies in crime prevention and in tracking the movement of suspicious individuals and vehicles more effectively.

Mashood Khan calls for port charges rationalization, audit exemption for small firms, and auto sector incentives

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority has urged the government to introduce targeted budget measures for small and medium enterprises, warning that without immediate relief on port charges, energy costs, and compliance burden, Pakistan's SME sector will continue to struggle with competitiveness and export growth. Mashood Khan, Director SMEDA, said SMEs form the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contributing significantly to employment, industrial output, and exports. However, he stressed that structural challenges continue to undermine their growth potential. "SMEs are the engine of job creation and industrial development. The upcoming budget must address their core issues to enhance competitiveness, increase exports, and support sustainable economic growth," he said. SMEDA has submitted a comprehensive set of budget proposals focusing on nine key areas: port charges, raw material pricing, export market access, auto parts certification, audit exemption, sales tax on small cars, auto financing limits, financing tenure, and energy costs.1. Rationalization of Wharfage and Port Charges

Mashood Khan highlighted that SMEs face an excessive financial burden due to unrealistic wharfage, terminal handling,

and local shipping line charges on both imports and exports. He said these costs directly reduce the competitiveness of Pakistani products in international markets. "At present, the structure of wharfage and port handling charges varies significantly between Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority, and Gwadar Port. This creates confusion, delays, and cost inefficiencies," he explained. SMEDA has proposed that the government introduce a uniform structure for wharfage and port handling charges across all three ports. A standardized, transparent tariff regime would reduce unpredictability for exporters and importers and bring Pakistan's charges in line with regional competitors. The move, SMEDA argues, is critical for SMEs that operate on thin margins and cannot absorb arbitrary increases in logistics costs.2. Raw Material Pricing and Supply Chain Stability

The Director said many SMEs procure raw materials through local distributors and agents who often create artificial shortages and impose unjustified price increases. This practice substantially increases production costs and weakens export competitiveness. "Unregulated market practices by middlemen lead to price volatility. SMEs cannot plan production when raw material prices fluctuate weekly," Khan noted. SMEDA has recommended

that the government intervene to monitor market practices and ensure fair pricing and uninterrupted supply of industrial raw materials. It suggested strengthening the role of regulatory bodies and establishing a mechanism to check hoarding and artificial price hikes, especially for steel, chemicals, plastics, and packaging materials used by export-oriented SMEs.3. Market Access and Export Consolidation

Access to international markets remains one of the biggest hurdles for small exporters, according to SMEDA. The authority proposed that Pakistan's Commercial Attachés posted in GCC countries, Europe, Australia, and other regions should actively facilitate business linkages for SMEs. Their role should extend beyond traditional diplomacy to include identifying reliable distributors and buyers for Pakistani products. To address high freight costs, SMEDA also proposed export consolidation programs. Under this model, multiple SME products such as kitchenware, washroom accessories, home décor items, engineering goods, and handicrafts can be shipped together in a single Full Container Load. "Many SMEs cannot fill a full container on their own. Consolidation will reduce per-unit logistics cost and make exports viable," Khan said. He added that the government should subsidize or facilitate the establishment of consol-



idation hubs near major ports.4. Support for Auto Parts Export Certification

Pakistan's auto parts sector has strong export potential but faces a major barrier in meeting international certification requirements. SMEDA pointed out that certifications such as IATF 16949 cost approximately Rs. 700,000 per company, while ISO 14001 Environmental Certification costs around Rs. 500,000 per company. "Without these certifications, Pakistani auto parts manufacturers cannot enter global supply chains of major car makers," Mashood Khan said. SMEDA has proposed a dedicated budget allocation to subsidize certification costs for SMEs. A partial or full subsidy would enable more firms to qualify for export orders and integrate into international automotive value chains, boosting foreign exchange earnings.5. Audit Exemption for Small SMEs Compliance burden was iden-

tified as another major challenge. SMEDA proposed that SMEs with annual turnover below Rs. 500 million should be exempted from routine audits by multiple government agencies, including Income Tax, Sales Tax, EOBI, SESSI, Labour, and Environmental departments. "Small entrepreneurs spend more time dealing with auditors than running their businesses. Multiple audits increase costs and discourage documentation," Khan said. The proposal aims to reduce administrative burden and allow entrepreneurs to focus on expansion and employment generation. SMEDA suggested that instead of frequent audits, risk-based scrutiny should be applied only in cases of suspected non-compliance.6. Reduction in Sales Tax on Small Cars

To stimulate demand in the automotive sector and support localization, SMEDA proposed reducing sales tax on vehicles up to 800cc from 18% to 9%. "Small cars are the most affordable option for middle-class families. Lower taxes will increase demand, encourage investment in domestic manufacturing, and create jobs in the auto parts industry," the Director explained. He argued that higher volumes due to lower prices would compensate for reduced tax rates and also help Pakistani manufacturers achieve economies of scale.7. Enhancement of Auto Financing Limits

SMEDA recommended that the State Bank of Pakistan increase the vehicle financing limit from Rs. 3 million to Rs. 8 million. The current cap, it said, restricts consumers from purchasing even mid-range vehicles and limits growth in the sector. "Increasing the financing limit will improve purchasing power and stimulate demand, which in turn supports industrial growth," Khan said. The proposal is aligned with the government's objective of expanding consumer financing and promoting a documented economy.8. Increase in Vehicle Financing Tenure

The authority also proposed extending the maximum vehicle financing tenure from the current limit to seven years. Longer repayment periods would reduce monthly installments and make vehicles more affordable. "Affordability is the key driver for auto sales. A seven-year tenure will bring monthly payments within reach of more families," Mashood Khan noted. He added that this would also support leasing companies and banks by expanding their customer base.9. Reduction in Energy and Logistics Costs

SMEDA stressed that high electricity tariffs, gas prices, and logistics costs continue to erode the competitiveness of Pakistani SMEs. It proposed targeted relief measures for export-oriented SMEs, including subsidized energy tariffs and freight

support. "Energy is the largest component of production cost for many SMEs. Without competitive energy prices, Pakistani products cannot compete with Bangladesh, Vietnam, or India," Khan said. He suggested a differential tariff for export units and direct support to offset logistics expenses, especially for shipments to distant markets. Strategic Importance of SMEs

Concluding, Mashood Khan said the proposed measures would significantly improve the business environment for SMEs, enhance exports, create employment, increase industrial investment, and contribute to sustainable economic growth. "Supporting SMEs is not merely an economic necessity. It is a strategic investment in Pakistan's future competitiveness and prosperity. A strong SME sector means more jobs for youth, higher exports, and a resilient industrial base," he stated. Economists agree that SMEs account for over 90% of all business enterprises in Pakistan and employ nearly 80% of the non-agricultural labor force. However, their contribution to exports remains below potential due to the challenges outlined by SMEDA. Industry stakeholders are now looking to the upcoming federal budget to see how many of these proposals are adopted. If implemented, the measures could mark a shift toward a more SME-friendly policy framework.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
171,175.50	170,190.64
Day's High	Day's Low
171,455.76	170,563.40
Index Value	Change
18,798,498,714	+984.86
Percentage	Time
+0.58%	4 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,360.32	+28.02
Percentage	Time
+0.27%	4 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,524.98	+837.91
Percentage	Time
+1.65%	4 Jun, 2:21 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
67,470.69	-931.45
Percentage	Time
-1.36%	4 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.62	202.55
Bahrain Dinar	733.85	743.95
Canadian Dollar	199.46	206.22
China Yuan	38.00	38.75
Danish Krone	43.37	43.77
Euro	322.05	327.55
Hong Kong Dollar	34.89	35.89
Indian Rupee	2.73	2.98
Japanese Yen	1.7218	1.8209
Kuwaiti Dinar	883.35	893.75
Malaysian Ringgit	67.15	67.85
New Zealand \$	161.58	166.81
Norwegians Krone	27.85	28.15
Omani Riyal	719.15	730.25
Qatari Riyal	74.80	75.75
Saudi Riyal	73.85	74.65
Singapore Dollar	214.96	220.81
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	350.32	356.80
Thai Bhat	8.52	8.67
U.A.E Dirham	75.37	76.37
UK Pound Sterling	372.55	378.25
US Dollar	278.20	279.45

Mian Zahid urges the Government to protect the 80/20 EPZ facility to save USD 1 billion

Mian Zahid Hussain, a prominent business leader, has urged the Pakistani government to protect the existing 80/20 facility for industries in Export Processing Zones (EPZs). He expressed deep concern over commitments made to the IMF to prohibit sales from EPZs to the domestic market and phase out existing zones by 2035.

Hussain warned that such changes would damage investor confidence, disrupt trade, and lead to business closures. Established in 1981, EPZs were designed to attract foreign investment, foster technology transfer, and boost exports.

The EPZ alone contributes approximately USD 1 billion annually to foreign exchange and employs nearly 50,000 workers. Hussain explained that the 20% domestic sales allowed under the current



framework consist of off-grade materials and wastage, which undergo stringent customs procedures and duty payments

before entering the domestic market, ensuring no revenue leakage.

He emphasized that foreign investors in EPZs strengthen foreign exchange reserves by operating in US dollars. The EPZ Ordinance explicitly protects investors from unilateral policy changes once their investments are approved. Hussain cautioned that altering policies now, while Pakistan seeks macroeconomic stability and aims to be investment-friendly, would send a negative signal to investors.

He appealed to the Prime Minister and economic ministries to intervene, support the current EPZ policy, and reassure investors. He also suggested that if the 80/20 facility must be withdrawn due to IMF demands, stakeholders should be provided with the EFS facility to prevent collapse.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, chairing a consultative meeting with representatives of Daraz and Alibaba Group to discuss the e-commerce sector and digital economy at the Ministry of Finance.



Photo: PID

SM Group Chairman Calls for Collective Action on Environment Day, Unveils Green Industrial Initiatives

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Member of the National Export Development Board, and Member of the Board of Investment, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum has emphasized that environmental protection is not the responsibility of a single day or campaign but a collective social and national obligation.

In his special message on World Environment Day, observed globally on June 5, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum said the annual event aims to raise awareness about environmental conservation, the responsible use of natural resources, and the importance of building a sustainable future.

He noted that nature has blessed humanity with invaluable resources, including clean air, fresh water, fertile land, and green forests, stressing that safeguarding these assets is essential for human survival and the well-being of future generations.

Highlighting growing environmental challenges, he said climate change, pollution, deforestation, and the irresponsible exploitation of natural resources have



placed the world under severe pressure. He added that these issues can only be effectively addressed through joint efforts by governments, industries, educational institutions, and the public to promote environmentally responsible lifestyles.

The SM Group chairman said the company is undertaking several practical initiatives to improve environmental sustainability. As part of these efforts, an "Ever Green Project" is being launched across its factories to help reduce pollution and promote environmental protection.

He further revealed that work is underway on a Waste-to-Energy project, aimed at converting industrial waste

into usable energy. In addition, the company is investing billions of rupees in the installation of modern Effluent Treatment Systems (ETS) at its manufacturing facilities. These systems will treat and recycle wastewater, making it suitable for irrigation of plants, trees, and agricultural crops, while also contributing to water conservation.

Referring to this year's World Environment Day theme, "Inspired by Nature, For Climate, For Our Future," Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum said it reflects the reality that development aligned with natural ecosystems is the key to sustainable prosperity and a secure future.

The prominent industrialist urged citizens to plant more trees, avoid the waste of water and energy, adopt cleanliness as a way of life, and actively participate in the protection of natural resources.

"A green, clean, and safe environment is the best gift we can leave for future generations," he said, calling on all stakeholders to renew their commitment to protecting the planet, preserving the environment, and securing a better future through collective action.

KP Food Authority cracks down on fake, substandard beverages

PESHAWAR: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Food Safety and Halal Food Authority (KPFSA&HFA) carried out major enforcement operations in Peshawar and Nowshera, seizing large quantities of fake, substandard and unhygienic food products and imposing fines on violators.

According to a spokesperson for the authority, food safety teams inspected various food businesses in Tehkal, Nasir Bagh Road and Ring Road areas of Peshawar.

During the inspections, officials recovered and destroyed 500 litres of unhygienic and substandard soda water from a production unit.

In a separate action, 500 litres of counterfeit energy drink branded as "Sting" were recovered from a warehouse and taken into custody. Fines were imposed on the businesses involved, while further legal proceedings have been initiated.

Meanwhile, in Nowshera, food safety teams inspected four factories and several other food establishments. Multiple businesses were fined for violating hygiene regulations and dealing in substandard food products.

The spokesperson said that nearly 5,000 kilograms of poor-quality and unsafe food items, including milk, ice

cream, syrups, samosa filling and roll filling, were seized and destroyed during the operations to ensure the availability of safe and quality food for consumers.

Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Food, Dr Muhammad Israr Khan, said that indiscriminate action against those endangering public health would continue across the province.

He reiterated the government's commitment to eliminating the sale and production of substandard and hazardous food products and ensuring the provision of safe, quality and halal food to the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through all available resources.

Engro and Baidu Forge AI Partnership for Regional Advancement



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Engro and Baidu Inc. signed an MoU to advance AI capabilities in the region. They will explore collaboration in AI infrastructure, research, talent development, and industry applications, leveraging Baidu's AI expertise. Engro's Chairman, Hussain Dawood, highlighted technology's role in competitiveness and the collaboration's aim to strengthen AI capabilities for economic growth. Baidu, an AI-first organization, sees its AI applications

gaining traction, validating their commercial potential. The partnership will utilize Baidu's PaddlePaddle framework, focusing on capability development, industrial applications, talent creation, and operational integration through Industrial Research Centres, Intelligent Industry Workshops, Talent & Innovation Training, and Operations and Service Centres. These initiatives aim to enhance skill development, industrial applications, and research to support practical AI adoption and regional progress.

Guard Group Honors Muhammad Ali's Enduring Legacy



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Guard Group of Companies on Friday observed the 10th death anniversary of legendary boxing champion and global humanitarian Muhammad Ali, paying tribute to his remarkable contributions both inside and outside the boxing ring.

Chairman Guard Group Iftikhar Ali Malik said Muhammad Ali was much more than a sporting icon. He inspired millions of people around the world through his courage, faith, humility, and unwavering commitment to justice,

equality, and humanity. His extraordinary achievements in professional boxing, coupled with his principled stand on social and humanitarian issues, made him one of the most respected and influential personalities of the modern era.

He said Guard Group of Companies also recalled with pride the memorable occasion when it had the honour of hosting a grand reception in Muhammad Ali's honour during his visit to Lahore. The event remains a cherished chapter in the company's history and a testament to the deep affection and admiration that the people of Pakistan held for the legendary boxer. He prayed for eternal peace for Muhammad Ali and reaffirmed its commitment to preserving and promoting his inspiring legacy.

Zong 5G Sweeps Pakistan Digital Awards

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong 5G, a leading Pakistani technology enterprise, has received significant national acclaim with two prestigious awards. The company was honored at the Pakistan Digital Awards for its "My Zong App" social media campaign (Meta), recognized for its innovative and customer-centric approach to engaging users. Concurrently, Zong 5G secured a Made in Pakistan Tech Excellence Award for its pioneering Self-Intelligent RAN Optimization Platform. This platform represents Pakistan's first Level 4 autonomous closed-loop network optimization system, developed internally by Zong engineers in just six months. Leveraging advanced AI and automation, the platform proactively addresses



network congestion, reducing resolution times by over 90% and improving downlink throughput by up to 18% during peak hours. These dual achievements underscore Zong 5G's commitment to enhancing customer experience, expanding digital services, and accelerating AI enablement, all contributing to the advancement of a Digital Pakistan through next-generation technologies and localized innovation.

Environmental Protection Key to Sustainable Economic Growth: ICCI President

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has called for greater environmental responsibility and collective action to tackle the growing challenges of climate change, pollution, and environmental degradation.

Talking to visiting delegations of businessmen at

the Chamber House here on Friday on the occasion of World Environment Day he said that a clean and healthy environment is essential for sustainable economic growth, public health, and the well-being of future generations. He noted that environmental issues have become a global concern and require coordinated efforts from governments, businesses, and society at large.

Collective global efforts imperative to tackle environmental challenges: FCCI Acting President

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Acting President Naveed Akram Sheikh has said that environmental protection is not merely a local concern but a global challenge that requires organized, coordinated and collective efforts at all levels to ensure a sustainable future.

Addressing a ceremony organized in connection with World Environment Day at the chamber, he stressed the need for governments, industries, academia and civil society to work together to combat environmental degradation and climate-related threats.

He said that when the Environmental Protection Agency Punjab was initially established, many industrialists viewed environmental regulations as being contrary to their business interests. However, he added that sustained efforts over the years had led to visible improvements in Faisalabad's environmental conditions.

He said that industries previously used hazardous and prohibited fuels including discarded tyres, shoes and rubber products, which significantly contributed to pollution. "Such practices have now largely been eliminated, reflecting growing awareness and compliance within the industrial sector", he added.

Highlighting future challenges, he said that Pakistan is striving to increase exports and reduce imports by 2030. If industries fail to adopt environmentally friendly production methods, international markets may become increasingly reluctant to import Pakistani products due to environmental compliance requirements, he warned.

He emphasized that continuous efforts are needed to make industries greener and more sustainable in line with evolving global trade standards and environmental regulations.

Speaking on the occasion, Convener FCCI Standing Committee Waheed Khaliq Ramay said that the chamber observes World Environment Day every year with a strong sense of responsibility to spread awareness about environmental conservation among all segments of society.

Ethiopia, Pakistan Agree to Forge Strong Parliamentary Bond

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia (FDRE) and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan agreed on Friday to forge a strong parliamentary bond to enhance bilateral cooperation across trade, investment, agriculture, aviation, and culture.

The discussion took place during a meeting in Islamabad between H. E. Dr. Oumer Hussien Oba, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Ethiopia, and H. E. Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, the Honorable Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan.

The two sides reviewed growing bilateral relations across various sectors, explored new avenues for cooperation, and reaffirmed their commitment to taking their ties to new heights.

Ambassador Dr. Oumer reaffirmed the deep-rooted and long-standing bilateral relations between the two nations, highlighting their shared history, culture, and values. Emphasizing Ethiopia's strategic positioning as the seat of the African Union and a vital gateway to the African continent, the Ambassador noted that Pakistan can leverage its relations with Ethiopia to significantly increase its footprint across Africa.

The Senate Chairman expressed his deep appreciation for the rapid economic development, impressive growth, and comprehensive domestic reforms



currently taking place across Ethiopia. To further strengthen people-to-people ties, the Chairman emphasized that cultural exchanges and religious tourism must serve as essential foundations for the bilateral relationship.

Highlighting the agricultural potential of Pakistan, the Senate Chairman stressed the need to exchange knowledge and technical expertise to achieve the shared goals of development and prosperity in the Global South.

Towards the conclusion of their discussion, the two sides also agreed on establishing parliamentary friendship groups and exchanging parliamentary delegations to further strengthen institutional and diplomatic relations.

Multan Police reject allegations of bias in long-running land dispute, Cite Court-Endorsed Neutrality

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Multan Police has categorically rejected allegations of political pressure, favoritism, and unlawful interference in a long-standing land dispute, following claims published in a local newspaper.

According to a police statement, the matter was thoroughly reviewed by the SSP Investigation, who heard both parties and examined the relevant records. The inquiry revealed that a person named Qasim Shah had entered into an agreement in 1976 to sell 200 kanals of land to Abdul Rashid. However, the mutation process remains pending as the matter is currently under adjudication before the courts.

Police further stated that Qasim Shah subsequently entered into another agree-

ment concerning the same land in 1993 with a person identified as Yaseen. That dispute is presently pending before the Supreme Court.

In 2013, Qasim Shah allegedly granted a general power of attorney for the same land to Amir Bakhsh, a matter that remains under consideration by the Lahore High Court. Later, the same property was reportedly transferred to Zafar, the husband of Razia Zafar, who subsequently transferred it to his wife as part of her dower rights (Haq Mehr). Razia Zafar later obtained a decree from the Family Court and, accompanied by a bailiff, visited the site to take possession.

However, police said that Abdul Rashid's party, which has reportedly been in possession of the land since 1976, presented a stay order issued by a compe-

tened court. Upon reviewing the order, the bailiff refrained from taking any possession-related action and left the site after removing pillars erected on an adjacent piece of land.

The police statement alleged that a report was later lodged at the police station claiming restoration of possession, despite no such action having taken place on the day in question. Subsequently, Razia Zafar submitted an application seeking registration of a criminal case against Abdul Rashid's party.

Police said Razia Zafar later filed a petition under Section 22-A seeking registration of a case, but the Sessions Court dismissed the plea. She subsequently approached the High Court, which upheld the police position that no possession operation had been carried out by the bailiff on the relevant date.

The High Court dismissed the petition and advised the petitioner to seek relief through the civil courts.

According to Multan Police, the dispute remains sub judice before various courts, and throughout the proceedings the police have acted strictly in accordance with the law, maintaining neutrality and adherence to merit. The department noted that its stance has also been endorsed by the Lahore High Court.

"Multan Police is committed to enforcing the law and complying with judicial orders without any political or external influence," the statement said.

The police strongly refuted the impression created by the report published in the local newspaper, asserting that allegations of pressure, bias, or illegal intervention are baseless and contrary to the facts established during judicial proceedings.

Shooter Mohsin Nawaz dedicates Tamgha-e-Imtiaz to PLRA Patron Field Marshal Asim Munir

LAHORE: Tamgha-e-Imtiaz recipient shooter Mohsin Nawaz has dedicated the national honor to the Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Long Range Rifle Association (PLRA) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

In an interview here on Friday, the decorated shooter hailed Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for facilitating development of infrastructure and support systems essential for the growth of the sport.

"Field Marshal Asim Munir provided much-needed facilitation for the development of shooting sports facilities," Nawaz said.

"With the official recognition of the Pakistan Sports Board and the government's support, Pakistani shooters now have an internationally recognized structure through which they can compete globally under national flag," he responded.

Nawaz has won 10 individual international medals and represented Pakistan in prestigious competitions across the United Kingdom, the United States and South Africa. Drawing upon more than

two decades of competitive experience, he believes Pakistan possesses immense untapped potential in shooting sports.

To a query, he said the establishment of the PLRA under this broader framework of institutional support has proven to be a significant milestone for the sport. The PLRA successfully secured affiliation with the International Confederation of Full-bore Rifle Associations (ICFRA), giving Pakistan formal representation in long-range rifle shooting at the international level for the first time.

"The sport is progressing under a more structured system, and I can clearly see the difference," he said. "We are still in the early stages of development, but our ambition is to compete with world champions. The world has advanced significantly in this discipline, yet Pakistan has the talent and capability to compete at the highest level. We simply need to continue moving in the right direction."

Globally, long-range precision shooting has evolved into a highly specialised and professional discipline supported by dedicated academies, advanced training facilities and athlete development

programmes. Nawaz believes Pakistan can follow a similar trajectory through sustained institutional investment and long-term planning.

Having trained under the 2023 World Champion, Nawaz stressed the demanding nature of the sport, highlighting the mental strength, concentration and discipline required to succeed. "It requires immense mental resilience, focus and countless hours of dedicated training," he explained. "The potential for shooting sports in Pakistan is enormous. What we need is continued institutional support and confidence in the country's ability to develop excellence in this discipline."

He further underscored the importance of collaboration with established institutions such as the Pakistan Army, whose culture of discipline, professionalism and precision can contribute significantly to producing elite international shooters.

Beyond his own competitive ambitions, Nawaz expressed a strong desire to help nurture the next generation of talent. He said he is committed to sharing the

knowledge and experience he has gained throughout his career with aspiring young shooters across the country.

"I want to pass on what I have learned over the years," he said. "There are many talented young Pakistanis who are passionate about this sport and possess the potential to excel internationally. I want to contribute to building a pathway that helps them achieve their goals through guidance and mentorship."

Reflecting on the significance of receiving the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, Nawaz described the honour not merely as a personal achievement but as a symbol of responsibility and service. "The Tamgha-e-Imtiaz carries a message of responsibility, dedication and giving back to the community," he remarked. "The future of shooting sports in Pakistan is extremely bright, but sustained progress will require the continued support of institutions and stakeholders. The government, the Pakistan Sports Board and Field Marshal Asim Munir have helped nurture this sapling and bring it above the ground. The real question now is how high we can help it grow?"

Women's University Multan Kicks Off Summer Session with Tree Planting Drive

Iram Asim



MULTAN: Ms Anum Zehra Spokeswoman Women's University Multan Said Sumer Session Tree Planting Started in Multan Women's University. In connection with World Environment Day. Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Syeda Shahida Batool Led a Tree Plantation drive at the Mattital Campus of Women University Multan, highlighting the importance of environmental protection and sustainable development.

The ceremony was attended by faculty members, administrative staff, and a large number of students who actively participated in the plantation activity. Prof. Dr. Syeda Shahida Batool emphasized that tree plantation plays a vital role in combating climate change, improving air quality, and ensuring a healthier environment for future generations.

She urged the university community to adopt eco-friendly practices and actively contribute to environmental conservation initiatives. The event reflected the institution's strong commitment under her leadership towards promoting environmental awareness and sustainability on campus.

The ceremony concluded with a collective resolve to continue green initiatives and expand plantation drives in the future.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syeda Shahida Batool Visits Botany Studio at Mattital Campus, Reviews Academic and Research Facilities

Kitchen Gardening Kits Bolster Resilience in Flood-Hit Jalalpur Pirwala



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Reds, in partnership with Diakonie Katastrophenhilfe (DKH), distributed 400 kitchen gardening tool kits to flood-affected households in Jalalpur Pirwala, Multan. The kits, containing seeds, tools, and organic fertilizer, aim to enhance resilience, promote self-sufficiency, and improve nutrition through home-grown produce. The project, aligned with Climate Smart Agriculture, empowers women of all ages with training on sustainable food practices and natural composting. REDS Pakistan collaborated with local committees and government departments to identify vulnerable families and provide skills training, including organic manure preparation and vegetable farming. The initiative seeks to increase food security and potentially provide a source of income for beneficiaries. Officials from the Department of Agriculture Extension and Livestock Department praised the project's welfare efforts and pledged future support. The distribution ceremony was attended by project managers, local officials, and REDS representatives, highlighting the collaborative approach to community development.

Naveed Akram Sheikh assumes charge as acting FCCI President

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) Senior Vice President Naveed Akram Sheikh has assumed the responsibilities of acting president of the chamber following the departure of President FCCI Farooq Yousaf Sheikh on an official foreign visit to Spain.

According to a spokesperson of the chamber, Farooq Yousaf Sheikh left for Spain to attend engagements for strengthening international business relations and promoting trade cooperation.

After taking charge as acting president, Naveed Akram Sheikh reaffirmed his commitment to serving the business community and addressing the issues faced by traders and industrialists through effective representation and continuous engagement with relevant stakeholders.

ECC Approves Rs. 24 Billion in Key Funding for National Projects

Continued from Page 1

The Committee further approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication for provision of Rs. 183.5 million through TSG in favour of the Special Communication Organization (SCO) for installation of telecom sites and telephone towers in District Shigar, Gilgit-Baltistan. The allocation will support improved connectivity and mobile coverage in remote areas.

The ECC also approved a TSG of Rs. 119.9 million submitted by the Ministry of Parliamentar-

ary Affairs to meet employee-related expenditures arising from revised salaries and allowances of Parliamentary Secretaries during FY 2025-26.

The Committee approved two summaries submitted by the Ministry of Housing and Works regarding placement of development funds into the current account of Pakistan Infrastructure Development Company Limited (PIDCL), including Rs. 8,758.9 million relating to the Karachi and Hyderabad Urban Infrastructure Development Packages and Rs. 2,840 million under SAP for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The ECC further considered three summaries submitted by the Finance Division and approved a TSG of Rs. 1.3 billion for the PSDP project titled "Modernization and Up-gradation of Pakistan Mint (Phase-II-A)" and a TSG of Rs. 4.377 billion in favour of the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan to support current expenditure requirements and priority initiatives in the region. The Committee also approved the policy for grant of Budget Honorarium and allowed inclusion of the Ministry of Commerce, Ministry of Law and Justice, and the Office of

Accountant General Pakistan Revenues (AGPR) among eligible organizations in recognition of their contributions to the federal budget formulation process.

The Committee also approved the Budget Estimates of IPO-Pakistan for FY 2025-26 submitted by the Ministry of Commerce, comprising regular expenditure of Rs. 914.7 million and projected revenue receipts of Rs. 918 million.

The ECC further considered a summary submitted by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs regarding operational continuity of Engro Vopak Terminal

Limited (EVTL) and approved it.

The Committee also approved two summaries submitted by the Petroleum Division, including continuation of syndicated running finance facilities for Pakistan State Oil (PSO) with a ceiling of Rs. 100 billion and the revised framework relating to the Deed of Settlement (DoS) with Cnergyco PK Limited under the Pakistan Oil Refining Policy 2023. The revised framework aims to resolve the Late Payment Surcharge (LPS) issue and support refinery upgradation and investment.

In addition to the regular

agenda items, the Committee approved a TSG of Rs. 29.9 million, submitted by the Economic Affairs Division, to meet rental payment obligations for residential accommodation of entitled officers and officials. The ECC also approved a summary submitted by the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control for provision of a TSG amounting to Rs. 30 million for extension and up-gradation of Jamia Masjid at Parliament House, Islamabad.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Investment Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for Petroleum

Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives Mr. Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain (virtually), Federal Minister for Commerce Mr. Jam Kamal Khan (virtually), and Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari (virtually), along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory authorities.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pak Saudi Business Council Prince Mansoor Bin Muhammad Al-Saud along with delegation held meeting with Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday.



Pakistan committed to making environmental protection central to policy priorities: Dar



City Desk

Pakistan prioritizes environmental protection, recognizing a healthy environment as a fundamental right.

To combat climate change, the nation is developing climate-resilient housing, transitioning to clean energy, and promoting sustainable construction.

Despite being highly vulnerable to climate impacts like floods and

droughts, Pakistan shows resilience. Deputy PM Ishaq Dar emphasized the need for sustained international cooperation on climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation, adhering to the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

He praised Azerbaijan for hosting World Environment Day and fostering dialogue on environmental issues.

Govt launches simplified fixed-tax scheme for small shopkeepers

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani government has launched a new Tax Facilitation Scheme designed to simplify tax compliance for approximately 3 to 4 million small shopkeepers with an annual turnover up to Rs200 million.

This initiative aims to broaden the tax base and encourage voluntary registration. Eligible retailers can opt for a simplified fixed-tax regime by submitting a one-page declaration form and paying a 1% tax on their declared annual turnover.

Participants will be exempt from Point of Sale (POS) requirements, routine tax audits, and withholding agent obligations.

Withholding taxes already deducted through utility bills and other sources will be adjustable against their tax



liability, with a minimum deposit of Rs25,000 required when filing. A special compliance identification plate with a QR code will be issued to registered retailers to facilitate verification and prevent unnecessary inspections.

The scheme is optional, allowing shopkeepers to choose between the new fixed-tax regime or the existing normal tax system. Existing filers can join if their turnover hasn't exceeded Rs200 million in the last three years

and they paid at least the same tax as the previous year.

Non-participants who fail to file under the normal tax regime will face escalating penalties. The government emphasized that the goal is to expand the tax net, not just increase rates, to reduce the burden on documented sectors like corporations and salaried individuals.

The scheme was developed in consultation with traders' bodies and addresses their concerns, though street vendors and pushcart operators are excluded.

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) expects this scheme to significantly increase the number of documented businesses, bringing a large segment of small traders, particularly in smaller cities, into the formal tax system.

Six terrorists killed in Panjgur intelligence-based operation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Six terrorists belonging to Fitna-ul-Hindustan were killed during an intelligence-based operation in Panjgur on Friday, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The ISPR said a fierce exchange of fire took place during the operation, resulting in the killing of all six terrorists.

Arms, ammunition, improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and a vehicle were recovered from the militants,

who were allegedly involved in multiple operations in the area.

According to the military's media wing, a clearance operation is continuing in the area, while efforts have been intensified to locate any remaining terrorists.

The ISPR said operations against terrorism would continue with full force as part of efforts to maintain stability.

The statement added that security forces and law enforcement agencies remain committed to eliminating terrorism.

Calls to scrap 12 Kashmir Assembly seats aim to undermine electoral process: Khawaja Asif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif has said that demands to abolish the 12 seats in the Kashmir Assembly reserved for Kashmiri voters residing in Pakistan are tantamount to an attempt to undermine and disrupt the electoral process.

This demand, made ahead of the upcoming elections, is tantamount to sabotaging the electoral process, the defence minister wrote on his social media platform X.

Democratic principles require that those making this demand present it to the public on July 27 and allow the people to decide and shape their own representation.



Only then can it be considered democratic; otherwise, it will be seen as blackmail.

He said in Sialkot city and tehsil,

there is one seat in the Azad Kashmir Assembly and two seats in the Pakistan National Assembly.

The remaining Kashmir Assembly

constituencies are spread across Pakistan. In Sialkot the majority of Kashmiri migrants are from Jammu, he said.

He said in October 1947, these migrants settled in Sialkot city and tehsil after sacrificing over 200,000 lives. Modesty of hundreds of thousands of women was outraged and thousands of daughters were abducted. How can these migrants be deprived of their rightful representation, he questioned?

For decades, these migrants have lived in extreme poverty, deprived of basic necessities of life. They have paid a very high price for freedom. Those seeking to have their opinions recognized should follow democratic means.

President, PM commend security forces for successful operation against terrorists in Panjgur

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday commended the security forces for successfully carrying out an operation against Indian-backed Fitna-ul-Hindustan terrorists in Panjgur, resulting in the killing of six militants.

In separate statements, both leaders said that operations against terrorists under Operation Azm-e-Istehkam would continue until their logical conclusion.

President Zardari reaffirmed the nation's resolve to eliminate terrorism, stating that Fitna-ul-Hindustan and its facilitators would never succeed in undermining Pakistan's peace and

stability.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the security forces for neutralizing the terrorists, who, he said, were plotting to harm the lives and property of innocent and unarmed Pakistani citizens. The prime minister also reiterated the government's commitment to eradicating terrorism from the country and ensuring lasting peace and security.



Pakistan Joins Elite Global Pharmaceutical Harmonization Body as Observer

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Drug Regulatory Authority (DRAP) has been designated an Observer at the International Council for Harmonization of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) Assembly, a significant international regulatory achievement.

Minister Syed Mustafa Kamal hailed this as a pivotal step towards a modern, globally integrated regulatory system.

The ICH, a forum for regulatory authorities and industry, develops harmonised guidelines for medicine quality, safety, and efficacy.



DRAP's observer status will facilitate Pakistan's access to global best practices, enhance its regulatory capacity,

improve transparency, and boost confidence in its pharmaceutical system. This move also supports the

domestic industry in aligning with international standards and expanding its global presence.

The government reiterated its commitment to modernizing public institutions and aligning Pakistan with international regulatory best practices.

Kamal expressed confidence that DRAP will strive for full ICH membership and increased engagement with other international bodies like PIC/S. The Ministry pledges continued support for regulatory excellence, international collaboration, and improved access to safe and effective medicines for Pakistan and its export markets.