



# Ashura Muharam ul Haram security arrangements in South Punjab

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Punjab Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Visits in Multan on the instructions of the Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif

The Cabinet Committee on Law and Order visited Imambargah Hazrat Shah Shams in Multan.

The Punjab government is making exemplary arrangements for Muharam-ul-Haram says Khawaja Salman Rafique. The Punjab Home Department has issued a comprehensive code of conduct for Muharram-ul-Haram

On the instructions of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the Punjab government is organizing processions and langar especially for the mourners. On this occasion,

Ulema of all schools of thought are giving a message of inter-Muslim unity Provincial Health Minister of Punjab Khawaja Salman Rafique further said that

Meetings of peace committees have been held across the province. And Action is taken against those who make hate speeches

Action is being taken against social



media accounts involved in sectarian activities

People of all faiths unite on the occasion of Ashura. On this occasion, Provincial Minister Bilal Yasin said that Police, Civil Defense, Rescue 1122 personnel deployed outside the procession route and Imambargahs to maintain peace are our heroes and

The administration should ensure strict implementation of the rules and regulations issued by the Home Department. On this occasion,

Secretary Home Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi, Additional IG South Punjab Muhammad Kamran Khan, Additional IG CTD Waseem Sial, DIG Special Branch Sajjad Manj, Additional

Secretary Internal Security, Additional Secretary Special Initiatives participated, while

Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan, RPO Usman Gondal, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Noman Siddique and District Police Officer Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar Multan also accompanied the cabinet committee.

## Poonch Peace Jirga appeals to government to withdraw decision to ban Action Committee

City Desk.

RAWALAKOT: According to senior journalist Sardar Riaz Shahid from Rawalakot, the "Poonch Peace Jirga" was formed after a meeting of political, social, lawyers and media representatives in Rawalakot on the current situation in Azad Kashmir. The jirga has requested the government to withdraw the decision to declare the Joint Public Action Committee null and void and the Action Committee to postpone the Muzaffarabad march for a few days so that matters can be resolved through dialogue and understanding.



The jirga, headed by Chairman District Council Poonch Sardar Javed Sharif Advocate, also appealed to all parties to exercise restraint and avoid confrontation. The members of the jirga include Sardar Shazeb Shabbir, President of Sudhan Education, Sardar Shabbir Khan, prominent businessman, Sardar Qayyum Afsar, senior leader of Jamaat-e-Islami Poonch, Sardar Javed Nisar, President of District Bar Poonch, and Sardar Shafqat Zia, President of Ghazi Millat Press Club Rawalakot.

## AJK Election Commission Registers Three New Political Parties, Total Reaches 19

City Desk.

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission has registered three more political parties, Pakistan Ideological Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan Muslim League Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Tehreek-e-Jawaan Pakistan Jammu and Kashmir. Now the number of political parties registered with the Election Commission has reached 19. According to a press release issued by the spokesperson of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission has also registered three more political parties, Pakistan Ideological Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan Muslim League Azad Jammu and Kashmir, upon completion of the documents. Earlier, according to the action plan of the Election Commission, the last date for registration of political parties was set as May 30, 2026, however, later this period was extended till June 10, 2026 in order to provide an opportunity for more political parties to register while fulfilling the legal requirements. According to the press release, all political parties that meet the conditions and legal criteria prescribed under the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections Act, 2020 can submit their applications along with the required documents to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission by June 10, 2026.

## Review meeting regarding Muharram-ul-Haram in DC Office

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza chaired a meeting to review law and order, security, and administrative arrangements for Muharram-ul-Haram. Representatives from various departments attended. Discussions focused on ensuring peaceful religious gatherings and processions, including security, sanitation, power, water, medical facilities, traffic management, and emergency preparedness. The Deputy Commissioner stressed the priority of peace and brotherhood, urging inter-departmental coordination. He directed Assistant Commissioners to oversee arrangements in their areas and ensure prompt issue resolution, emphasizing no negligence in providing basic facilities. A comprehensive security and administrative plan, including special monitoring at sensitive locations and increased police deployment, has been finalized. Foolproof security measures, CCTV surveillance, and strict checks will be implemented. All departments were directed to coordinate and follow Punjab government directives to protect citizens and maintain order.

## Monthly Review Meeting of Municipal Committee Held to Assess Performance and Public Services

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General and Administrator Municipal Committee Attock, Aneel Saeed, chaired the monthly review meeting of the Municipal Committee Attock. Officers from various departments participated in the meeting.

During the session, a detailed review of the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set by the Government of Punjab was conducted, and the performance of different departments was evaluated. A monthly performance report was presented, highlighting the progress of each department, achievement of targets, and the quality of public service delivery.

Addressing the participants, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed directed all departments to further improve their performance to achieve the assigned targets and ensure full compliance with the directives of the Punjab Government.

The meeting also reviewed ongoing measures related to the beautification of the city, sanitation and cleanliness, restoration of green belts, removal of illegal encroachments, and the provision of improved facilities to citizens. Aneel Saeed instructed the concerned officers to make anti-encroachment operations more effective and utilize all available resources to keep the city clean, attractive, and well-organized.

He emphasized that the timely resolution of public issues, improvement of civic amenities, and effective monitoring of development projects are among the top priorities of the Government of Punjab. He urged all officers to perform their duties with integrity and professionalism to ensure the delivery of quality municipal services to the public.

Several important decisions were also taken during the meeting to further enhance the performance of various departments.

## TBH hosts launch of book "Talagang ke Daihaat"

ISLAMABAD: The Black Hole (TBH), a non-profit organization dedicated to promoting knowledge, dialogue, and culture, hosted the launch ceremony of Talagang ke Daihaat, a book authored by researcher and historian Tariq Mahmood Malik, here on Tuesday.

The book offers a rare and valuable account of the villages of Talagang, a region renowned for its rich history and cultural heritage in Punjab, Pakistan. It documents the origins of settlements, migration and settlement patterns, tribal histories, and detailed land revenue (maal guzaari) records of the area.

Serving both as a historical archive and a socio-cultural study, the publication makes a significant contribution to preserving regional heritage, local identity, and collective memory for future generations.

Speaking on the occasion, Tariq Mahmood Malik shared insights into the research process and the importance of documenting local histories.

## Protest

LAHORE: Relatives of rickshaw driver Imtiaz, residents of Bhatta Chowk hold a protest against arrest of their father by Sahiwal police outside Lahore Press Club in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# Election Commission Urges Strict Code of Conduct Enforcement for Fair Azad Kashmir Elections

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission has written a letter to the Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir for the strict implementation of the code of conduct issued by the Election Commission for the free, fair and impartial conduct of the 2026 elections. In the letter written by

the Secretary of the Election Commission, the Chief Secretary has been asked that the code of conduct for the 2026 elections of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly has been formally issued.

All political parties, their candidates, polling agents and the administration should ensure strict implementation of the election-re-



lated laws.

The letter further states that the instructions issued by the Election Commission regarding the elections should be implemented by the government officials and the administration.

The authorities should not make any appointment or change to any post after the issuance of the election schedule so that clean and

transparent elections can be held.

The Chief Secretary of Azad Kashmir should bind all the secretaries, government and heads of attached departments to ensure the implementation of the instructions of the Election Commission in accordance with its spirit. Never use state resources in a way that could potentially influence elections.

# Tech Expo 2026 Ignites Innovation at Women's University Multan

Kiran Asim

Government Women's University Multan's Institute of Computer Science and Information Technology successfully organized Tech Expo 2026 at Jinnah Hall, Katchery Campus.

The expo featured 42 innovative Final Year Projects spanning Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Software Development, Web and Mobile Applications, Embedded Systems, Machine Learning, agriculture, skin disease detection, energy consumption, task management, and other emerging technologies.

The event fostered academic collaboration and knowledge sharing by bringing together students and faculty from Women University Multan and institutions like NCBA&E, NUML, BZU, MNS-UET, and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Agri-



culture. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syeda Shahida Batool was the Chief Guest, joined by Registrar Dr. Deeba

Shahwar, Chairperson Dr. Khadija Kanwal, faculty, and students. Dr. Kanwal emphasized the expo's

goal of showcasing students' technical skills and preparing them for industry demands. Dr. Batool highlighted technology's necessity and expressed confidence in the Institute's role in making the university innovation-driven, encouraging students to pursue continuous learning and skill development for market competitiveness.

Dr. Shahwar praised the institute's efforts in organizing technology-oriented activities to enhance students' professional capabilities. The event, attended by notable academic professionals like Dr. Asim Rajwana, concluded with certificates of appreciation for outstanding projects.

Tech Expo 2026 was recognized as a successful platform for promoting innovation, research, and the advancement of women in science and technology.

Islamabad  
30° - 38° Clear

**SERVICES**

**Namaz Timings**

Fajr ..... 3:14 am  
Zohr ..... 12:07 pm  
Asr ..... 5:07 pm  
Maghrib ..... 7:17 pm  
Isha ..... 9:00 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

# Pakistan, Lebanon agree to expand defence cooperation in GHQ meeting

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Lebanese Armed Forces Commander-in-Chief General Rudolf

Heckel held talks at the General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Tuesday, agreeing to expand defence cooperation between Pakistan and Lebanon, according to the Inter-Services Public



Relations (ISPR). General Heckel was presented with a guard of honour by a contingent of the armed forces upon his arrival at GHQ. The meeting covered matters of mutual interest, regional security, defence cooperation and ways to strengthen bilateral military relations. Both sides emphasised the impor-

portance of enhancing professional ties, training cooperation and institutional-level engagement between the two armed forces. Field Marshal Munir said Pakistan attaches special importance to its long-standing and cordial relations with Lebanon and reaffirmed its commitment to expanding defence collaboration.

General Heckel praised the professionalism and operational capabilities of the Pakistan Armed Forces and acknowledged their role in regional stability and international peacekeeping missions. ISPR said the visit reflects a shared commitment to strengthening military cooperation and deepening ties between the two countries.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Ms. Jane Marriott, called on the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

## Ayaz pays tribute to six FC personnel martyred in Hasan Khel operation



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expressed profound grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of six personnel of the Federal Constabulary (FC) who lost their lives while bravely fighting Khawarij terrorists in Hasan Khel.

Paying tribute to the fallen heroes, the Speaker honored the courage and sacrifice of Naik Amir, Lance Naik Muhammad Yousaf, Lance Naik Muhammad Riaz and Constables Ajmeer, Ahsan and Riaz, who embraced martyrdom in the line of duty while defending the nation.

Ayaz Sadiq extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and said that the entire nation stands with them in their hour of grief.

He said that the sacrifices rendered by the country's brave sons would always be remembered. "The martyrs who laid down their lives for the defense of the homeland and the establishment of peace are the pride of the entire nation," the Speaker said.

He said that the sacrifices made by security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism are invaluable and will never be forgotten.

The Speaker emphasized that elements seeking to undermine Pakistan's peace and progress would never succeed in their malicious designs.

# Prime Coordinator to Prime Minister on Commerce Meets Delegation from National Textile University and KOICA

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Today Mr. Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, held a meeting with Prof Dr Rashid Masood Rector National Textile University (NTU), Faisalabad and his team accompanied by representatives of the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), to discuss ongoing collaboration and future roadmap for joint initiatives.

During the meeting, the NTU delegation, including the Vice Chancellor/Rector, Registrar and Project Coordinator briefed the Advisor on the current status of cooperation with KOICA and shared



progress on ongoing academic and technical initiatives.

The discussion focused on collaboration between

KOICA-supported initiatives and NTU, particularly in strengthening the textile sector through capacity building,

technical and technological support, applied research, and addressing pending issues of NTU.

# New Edition of "Rethinking Education in Pakistan" Launched at AIOU

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: A launching ceremony for the revised edition of the book "Rethinking Education in Pakistan: Perceptions, Practices and Possibilities" was held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) here on Monday. The event was attended by renowned educationist, researcher, author and former Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Dr. Shahid Siddiqui who specially participated in the ceremony.

The event was presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood while a large number of educationists, intellectuals, teachers, researchers, students and individuals from various fields of life attended the ceremony.

Speakers at the occasion highlighted the significance of the book, describing



it as an important academic contribution for understanding Pakistan's education system, policy development, teaching methodologies and future educational needs. They noted that

the work reflects Dr. Shahid Siddiqui's extensive research experience and deep academic insight, offering a critical analysis of the country's education sector along with practical recommen-

dations for reform.

The ceremony also featured addresses by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, JICA Country Advisor in Pakistan Abid Gul, Dean Faculty of Education at Fatima Jinnah Women University Prof. Dr. Malik Ghulam Behlol, Deputy Educational Advisor from the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Dr. Shoaiba Mansoor and Associate Professor Dr. Afshah Huma from AIOU's Faculty of Education.

At the conclusion of the event, a book stall showcasing various publications by Dr. Shahid Siddiqui was set up, offering a 40% discount for students and faculty members. Participants showed keen interest in the books, made purchases, and also obtained autographs from the author.

## Pakistan Post to issue commemorative stamps on Blue Pottery to mark World Handicrafts Day

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Post is issuing a special series of commemorative postage stamps on June 10, 2026, in honor of World Handicrafts Day, to celebrate Blue Pottery, a significant traditional Pakistani craft. This initiative aims to showcase the nation's rich cultural and artistic heritage, particularly its distinctive cobalt-blue hues and intricate floral patterns, originating from Multan. The stamps, designed by Pakistan's youngest stamp designer, Abu Obaidah Ayyaz, meld traditional motifs with contemporary design, appealing to a new audience. The philatelic package includes three stamps, a souvenir sheet, a First Day Cover, an informative leaflet, and special cancellation. This release honors the artisans who have preserved Blue Pottery and demonstrates Pakistan Post's dedication to national heritage preservation through philately. The stamps highlight the creativity and cultural identity embedded in Pakistani handicrafts and the talent of young designers. The special issue and related materials will be available from June 10, 2026, at select post offices and philatelic bureaus, encouraging collectors and the public to participate in celebrating Blue Pottery.

## Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan Announces Support for the Wheel-Jam and Shutter-Down Strike

**News Desk**

KARACHI/QUETTA: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, has announced full support for the indefinite wheel-jam and shutter-down strike across Balochistan beginning on June 11, called by transporters, traders, the business community, and other affected sectors. He stated that the difficulties faced by the people of the province, the business community and transporters are increasing day by day, resulting in widespread concern and frustration.

He said that the transporters and traders of Balochistan have always played a vital role in the national economy. However, it is unfortunate that today the same segments are facing severe challenges due to various issues, unnecessary restrictions, rising operational costs, and administrative difficulties. The government should seriously listen to the concerns of those compelled to protest and immediately accept their legitimate demands.

## Mastercard Cyber Pulse Report reveals how strengthening digital resilience supports economic continuity

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Mastercard's first Cyber Pulse report analyzes the EEMEA cyber threat landscape, combining data from its Cyber Insights platform, RiskRecon assessments, and Recorded Future intelligence. The report highlights significant cyber risks impacting businesses and governments, with data breaches in the Middle East costing an average of \$7.29 million, 64% above the global average. Cybercrime surged in early 2026 due to geopolitical instability, with financially motivated and disruptive attacks comprising 71% of incidents in EEMEA. This underscores the necessity for organizations to prioritize sustained cyber readiness and resilience, a concern now at leadership and board levels. Mastercard emphasizes its commitment to providing partners and customers with the necessary intelligence, tools, and expertise to navigate the complex cyber environment and secure the digital economy.

## Chairperson NCSW Noureen Bano Lehri Condemns Acid Attack on Dr. Mah Noor

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), Ms. Noureen Bano Lehri, has strongly condemned the horrific acid attack on Dr. Mah Noor in Quetta, describing it as a barbaric and cowardly act of violence that has no place in a civilized society.

Expressing deep concern over the incident, Ms. Lehri stated that the attack is not only a grave violation of human dignity and fundamental human rights but also a stark reminder of the threats and violence that women continue to face across the country.

"NCSW stands in complete solidarity with Dr. Mah Noor and her family during this difficult time. We pray for her swift recovery and commend her courage and resilience in the face of such a brutal crime," said Ms. Lehri.

NCSW calls upon the law enforcement agencies and provincial authorities to conduct a swift, transparent, and impartial investigation and ensure that all those responsible are brought to justice without delay.

"This heinous crime must not go unpunished. The perpetrators must be dealt with according to the full force of the law, and the punishment awarded should serve as a strong deterrent and an example for anyone who seeks to commit violence against women," she emphasized.

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# How Ukraine and Iran Rewrote the Rules of War

History is often written by great powers. Yet occasionally, history takes a different course and is rewritten by nations that refuse to surrender. The wars in Ukraine and Iran may ultimately be remembered as such moments. Though different in geography, culture and circumstances, both conflicts delivered the same strategic lesson: overwhelming military strength, economic dominance and technological superiority no longer guaranteed military and political victory.

For decades, the international system operated on an assumption that major powers could ultimately impose their will upon smaller states. The experiences of Ukraine and Iran have challenged that assumption. In doing so, they may have altered not only the nature of warfare but also the future direction of global politics.

Russia entered Ukraine in February 2022 believing that its superior military power, larger population, greater economic resources and vast nuclear arsenal would quickly force Kyiv into submission. Instead, it became one of the most costly military miscalculations of modern times.

Russia possesses approximately 16.4 million square kilometers of territory, making it the largest country in the world. Ukraine covers roughly 579,000 square kilometers. Russia's economy before the conflict exceeded \$2.4 trillion, while Ukraine's economy was only a fraction of that size. Russia enjoyed superiority in military manpower, indus-

trial capacity, missile forces and strategic reserves.

Yet Ukraine refused to collapse. With substantial support from Europe and the United States, combined with extraordinary national determination, Ukraine transformed itself into one of the most innovative military forces in modern history. Ukrainian engineers, military planners and scientists pioneered large-scale drone warfare, integrated battlefield intelligence and precision long-range strikes. They demonstrated that innovation could compensate for numerical inferiority.

As the war evolved, Ukraine carried the battlefield deep into Russian territory. Airfields, logistics centers, energy infrastructure and strategic military facilities once believed beyond reach became vulnerable. Russia discovered that military power alone could not guarantee security. This represented a profound strategic shock. A smaller nation had denied a much larger power the victory it expected.

The second shock came in the Middle East. Unlike Ukraine, Iran did not enjoy broad Western military support. For decades, Iran operated under sanctions, financial restrictions and diplomatic pressure. Its economy remained constrained compared to the overwhelming economic power of the United

States and Israel. America's economy exceeds \$28 trillion annually. Israel possesses one of the world's most technologically advanced military establishments. Iran's economic and military resources are significantly smaller by comparison.

Yet Iran possessed advantages that could not be measured solely in GDP, military spending or advanced weapon systems. It possessed strategic depth, resilience and geography. Iran's ability to absorb pressure while maintaining its military and political cohesion surprised

many observers. Rather than relying on conventional parity, Tehran emphasized missiles, drones, asymmetric warfare and maritime leverage. It demonstrated that a state facing superior conventional military power could nevertheless impose significant costs on stronger adversaries.

Most importantly, Iran highlighted the strategic importance of geography. The Strait of Hormuz, through which approximately one-fifth of global oil consumption and more than one-quarter of seaborne oil trade passes, became a focal point of international concern. Suddenly, a regional conflict was no longer merely a regional conflict. It became a potential threat to the global economy.

History demonstrates that major powers often respond to resistance by

increasing pressure rather than reassessing assumptions. What begins as a regional confrontation can gradually expand geographically and economically. Maritime competition can spread from one strategic corridor to another. Economic warfare can become a global phenomenon affecting billions of people who have no direct connection to the original conflict.

This is perhaps the most important lesson emerging from both Ukraine and Iran.

Modern warfare is no longer fought exclusively with tanks, aircraft and artillery. It is increasingly fought through drones, cyber capabilities, intelligence networks, financial systems, supply chains and strategic chokepoints. Geography itself has become a weapon.

The implications are profound. Middle powers throughout the world are closely observing these developments. They see that drones costing thousands of dollars can threaten systems worth millions. They see that intelligence and innovation can offset numerical disadvantages. They see that geography can provide leverage against stronger opponents. Most importantly, they see that determined resistance can frustrate even the most powerful adversaries.

Yet this lesson contains a dangerous paradox. If asymmetric warfare allows smaller states to resist larger powers, what happens when larger powers become frustrated? The answer may lie in the world's nuclear arsenals.

*Continued on Page 7*



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

## Inaugurates School of Pharmaceutical Sciences

Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Syed Mustafa Kamal, inaugurated the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences at the Health Services Academy (HSA), Islamabad, marking an important milestone in strengthening pharmaceutical education, public health research, and health workforce development in Pakistan.

Addressing the ceremony, Syed Mustafa Kamal stated that Pakistan possesses the talent, institutional capacity, and professional potential required to build a stronger and more resilient health system from within. He emphasized the importance of producing competent doctors, pharmacists, and public health professionals who can serve society with integrity, professionalism, and a strong sense of public responsibility.

The Minister underscored the need to shift the national health focus from treatment to prevention. "Our goal should be to keep people healthy and prevent them from becoming patients," he said. He noted that expanding hospitals alone would not solve Pakistan's health challenges unless equal attention is given to disease prevention, primary healthcare, health promotion, and strengthening the foundations of the health system. He added that a strong essential health system is critical not only for health security but also for Pakistan's economic stability and sustainable development.

Highlighting demographic challenges, Syed Mustafa Kamal observed that Pakistan's rapidly growing population is placing increasing pressure on health services. He stressed the need for a trained, ethical, and prevention-oriented health workforce capable of protecting communities, promoting healthy lifestyles, and reducing the burden of disease before illness occurs.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan stated that pharmaceutical sciences constitute a vital pillar of the healthcare system and that the new School of Pharmaceutical Sciences will further strengthen HSA's academic, research, and policy contributions in pharmacy, public health, regulation, and health systems development.

Registrar Prof. Dr. Tariq Mehmood Ali highlighted the remarkable institutional growth of HSA, noting its transformation from a small training institution into a leading national public health university with thousands of students, multiple academic schools, and strong collaborations with public health institutions, regulatory authorities, and government organizations across Pakistan.

The establishment of the School of Pharmaceutical Sciences represents a significant step forward in advancing pharmacy education, research, innovation, and public health workforce development, contributing to a healthier and more resilient Pakistan. The ceremony was attended by health professionals, faculty members, pharmacists, representatives from academia and the health sector, Dr Akhtar Abbas Khan, Secretary, Pharmacy Council of Pakistan, and other distinguished guests."



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

## Cheap Fashion, Costly Lives: How Global Supply Chains Exploit Women Workers

Amna Ayub

Mr. John from New York feels quite moral and ethical after buying a "Join Life" T-shirt from ZARA, while women in Bangladesh and Pakistan work extra-hours in unsafe environments for underpaid wages. The global fast fashion industry is built on the backs of women in developing countries, where multinational corporations benefit from low wages, weak labor protections, and gender inequality. This reveals the underlying structural injustices embedded within the International Political Economy. Moreover, women are mostly confined to the lower-level jobs, making them more vulnerable and underpaid.

Fast fashion industries search for cheap labor in developing countries. Women are preferred because they are considered docile, easier to control, less unionized and more vulnerable. Globalization has made it easier. Globally, women are paid 24% less than men. According to International Labor Organization (ILO), around 60-80% of the global garment industry workforce consists of women. Most of this employment is informal. Labor is often not protected by labor law and lacks social protection as well. This results in the feminization of labor; that is, the concentration of women in low paid, insecure, and labor-intensive industries.

Companies like ZARA and H&M outsource production to Global South through contractors. They accumulate profits, while developing countries compete to provide cheap labor. Contractors keep half of the contract money to themselves and women in underprivileged regions keep on getting under-paid and over-exploited. Global capitalism externalizes production costs to vulnerable female

workers. Women work in unsafe environments at low wages due to financial desperation. Most of the female labor is home-based and hence, have little legal standing for their rights. This, again, is exploited by global supply chains.

Women are compelled to choose home-based labor because of their dual responsibility of domestic labor and paid work. They must maintain the balance between the two. Contractors exploit this situation, no guarantees, delayed and below average wages, and lack of maternity protection. In home-based labor systems, entire communities are involved in production work. Children, who stay by the side of their mother also take part in the workforce, making the concept of ban on child labor largely symbolic. They are not even provided with health insurance or safety gear. Exposure to harmful chemicals used in fabric dyes causes respiratory disorders, hormonal disruption and reproductive complications.

In India, amongst 72 sectors, four have lowest wages, garments being one of them. As per the national law of India, wages must be raised every 3-5 years, but it has stagnated for over a decade in many states. Moreover, the working conditions are miserable. The workers are often allowed only a 30-minute break and are expected to produce 150-200 pieces per hour. The migrated workforce has it even worse. Due to lack of negotiation power, they have no job security and weak protection. Underage girls are also forced into labor through false age certificates. Almost 42 million home-based workers are outside the formal system, much of which is in apparel production. Women are exploited by capitalist structures, turning homes into sites of economic exploitation.

Conditions are no better in other developing countries as well, especially Bangladesh and Pakistan. In Pakistan, the gender pay gap in garment industry sits between 40% and 60%.

Textile industries in Faisalabad and Karachi recruit their labor from rural Sindh, southern Punjab and other backward regions at low wages and weak regulatory oversight. In Bangladesh, too, the workers are provided with no safety gear and protective measures. Workers are forced into miserable working environments on low wages with no protection against violence, harassment, or any disaster. Rana Plaza Collapse of 2013 shows structural negligence and poor oversight.

While brands use language like 'sustainability', 'women empowerment', and 'ethical sourcing' for better advertising and marketing, labor abuse persists and accountability remains largely absent. This is a structural failure that comes with capitalism. Unpaid and low-paid labor sustains capitalism.

To address the pay gap, working conditions and feminization of fast fashion, government should extend its labor protection to home-based and informal labor, taking strong action against employers that exploit female workers. A minimum wage threshold must be set with strong legal backing. Accountability frameworks shall be strengthened. Labor unions and female workers shall be provided with protection. Consumers should support sustainable fashion but remain mindful of performative sustainability. The feminization of labor must become a central issue in gender justice as it cannot be achieved without economic justice.

Fast fashion might be affordable and convenient, but its cost is paid by millions of women in developing nations who work extra hours to sustain the global economy. Until the international political economy prioritizes human dignity over profit, gendered exploitation will remain woven into the fabric of globalization.

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## Bano Qabil: Transforming Pakistan's Youth Through Skills and Opportunity

Pakistan's greatest strength lies in its youth. With a rapidly growing young population, the country's future depends on its ability to equip the younger generation with modern skills, knowledge, and opportunities. At a time when unemployment and economic challenges continue to affect millions of young Pakistanis, the Bano Qabil Program has emerged as a beacon of hope and empowerment. Launched under the visionary leadership of Engineer Hafiz Naem ur Rahman, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan, Bano Qabil is not merely a training program; it is a movement aimed at transforming the lives of young people through education, technology, and skills development. The initiative seeks to bridge the gap between traditional education and the demands of the modern job market by providing free, high-quality training in Information Technology, freelancing, digital marketing, graphic design, web development, e-commerce, and other emerging fields.

The success of the program speaks for itself. Thousands of young men and women across Pakistan have successfully graduated through Bano Qabil and are now earning respectable incomes, supporting their families, and contributing positively to the national economy. Many graduates have established careers as freelancers, entrepreneurs, and professionals, demonstrating that with the right opportunities, Pakistani youth can compete successfully in the global digital marketplace.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has witnessed an encouraging response to the initiative, particu-

larly in Mardan, where four batches have already graduated successfully. Hundreds of students have acquired market-oriented skills and have embarked on productive professional journeys. The enthusiasm shown by students and parents alike reflects the trust that communities have placed in the program.

A major milestone is now approaching as Mardan prepares to host a Mega Bano Qabil Entry Test on 13 June. Approximately 50,000 students are expected to participate, making

it one of the largest youth-oriented educational events in the region. Engineer Hafiz Naem ur Rahman will grace the occasion as Chief Guest, providing inspiration and motivation to thousands of aspiring young people. For many participants, this event may prove to be a life-changing opportunity, opening doors to personal

growth, professional development, and financial independence. The remarkable success of Bano Qabil in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and particularly in Mardan is also the result of the tireless efforts of dedicated leaders and volunteers. Mr. Khalid Waqas, President Alkhidmat Foundation Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, has been a strong advocate of youth empowerment and skills development, recognizing that investing in human capital is the key to sustainable progress. His leadership has helped expand educational and welfare initiatives that continue to benefit thousands across the province. Likewise, Mr. Ghulam Rasool, Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Mardan, has played a vital role in promoting the vision of Bano Qabil at the grassroots level. Special appreciation is also due to Dr. Arshad



Analysis

Sohail Ahmad Baber

*Continued on Page 7*

**Russia Day**

# A Celebration of Sovereignty and Identity



Analysis

S. M. Hali

Every year on June 12, Russia pauses to commemorate its most significant national holiday: Russia Day. More than a ceremonial date, it is a moment of reflection on the country's journey from Soviet rule to independent statehood. It marks the adoption of the Declaration of State Sovereignty of the Russian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR) in 1990, a pivotal step that laid the foundation for the modern Russian Federation. Over the decades, Russia Day has evolved into a focal point for national pride, cultural expression, and political debate, embodying the resilience and complexity of the Russian identity.

The origins of Russia Day lie in the turbulent twilight of the Soviet Union. On June 12, 1990, the Congress of People's Deputies of the RSFSR passed a declaration asserting Russia's sovereignty within the Soviet frame-

work. While not an outright secession, the declaration emphasized the supremacy of Russian laws over Soviet legislation. This assertion of autonomy foreshadowed the dissolution of the USSR in December 1991, when Russia emerged as its largest successor state. Initially, the holiday was informally referred to as Independence Day, but many Russians felt the term was misleading. The declaration did not signify liberation from foreign rule; rather, it was a reassertion of Russia's constitutional authority. In 2002, the name was officially changed to Russia Day, aligning the celebration with themes of unity and statehood rather than separation.

For Russians, the day is more than a historical marker. It symbolizes national identity and sovereignty, representing the rebirth of Russia as a distinct political entity after decades of Soviet collectivism. It is also a reminder of the country's resilience in navigating the economic upheaval, political reforms, and social transformations of the 1990s. Russia Day underscores three dimensions of identity: political sovereignty, affirming Russia's independence in decisionmaking and its role as a global power; cultural unity, celebrating the diverse ethnic, linguistic, and religious communities that coexist within the federation; and historical conti-



nuity, linking modern Russia to centuries-old traditions of governance, literature, and national pride.

The celebrations themselves are vibrant and varied. In Moscow, the President delivers a national address, often highlighting themes of unity, patriotism, and Russia's place in the world. State awards are presented to distinguished citizens in fields ranging from science and education to arts and humanitarian service. Across the country, cities host concerts, exhibitions, and parades. Public squares are adorned with the tricolour flag, while fireworks illuminate the skies in the evening. Museums and theatres organize special

programs showcasing Russian history and culture. For ordinary citizens, the day is both a public holiday and an opportunity to reflect on their national identity, often spent with family and friends in festive gatherings.

Yet Russia Day is not static; its meaning has evolved over time. For some, it is a straightforward celebration of sovereignty and pride. For others, particularly older generations who lived through the Soviet collapse, it evokes mixed emotions of nostalgia and uncertainty. The economic hardships of the 1990s left lasting scars, and the declaration of sovereignty is sometimes associated with that difficult transition. In recent years,

the government has reframed the holiday as a celebration of unity and strength, emphasizing Russia's achievements in science, defence, and global diplomacy. This narrative seeks to consolidate national identity in the face of external pressures and internal diversity, presenting Russia Day as a symbol of resilience and progress.

Beyond its domestic significance, Russia Day also serves as a platform for projecting national image abroad. Diplomatic missions around the world host receptions, cultural showcases, and exhibitions to highlight Russian heritage. These events reinforce Russia's role as a global actor with a distinct



cultural and political identity. For international observers, Russia Day is a reminder of the country's complex history and its ongoing efforts to balance tradition with modernity. It underscores Russia's determination to assert itself as a sovereign power in a multipolar world, even as debates continue over its political trajectory.

Like many national holidays, Russia Day is not without controversy. Critics argue that the holiday's historical basis—the sovereignty declaration—remains ambiguous in meaning. Was it a step toward democracy, or simply a legal manoeuvre within the Soviet system? Others question whether the day adequately reflects the struggles of ordinary Russians during the post-Soviet transition. Nevertheless, the holiday endures as a unifying

symbol. Its ambiguity allows for multiple interpretations, enabling citizens to project their own values onto the celebration—whether pride in cultural heritage, respect for sovereignty, or hope for a stronger future.

Ultimately, Russia Day is more than a commemoration of a political declaration; it is a living tradition that reflects the complex identity of modern Russia. It bridges past and present, acknowledging the challenges of transition while celebrating the resilience of the Russian people. As fireworks illuminate Red Square and the tricolour flag waves across the federation, Russia Day continues to remind citizens—and the world—that sovereignty, unity, and cultural pride remain at the heart of the Russian national story.

## Education Ministry: More than 21,000 students and educational staff killed since October 7, 2023

Wafa

RAMALLAH: The Palestinian Ministry of Education and Higher Education announced that the number of students and educational staff killed since October 7, 2023, has risen to 21,701 across the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

According to data released by the ministry on Tuesday, the toll includes 20,647 students

and 1,054 teachers and educational staff members killed as a result of ongoing Israeli violations targeting the right to education.

The ministry reported that more than 179 government schools across the Gaza Strip have been completely destroyed, while over 105 schools run by UNRWA have come under shelling and sustained extensive damage and vandalism. It added that more than 63 university buildings have

also been totally destroyed.

In the West Bank, nine universities and colleges have been subjected to repeated raids and vandalism, alongside ongoing attacks on a number of schools and the targeting of students by colonists.

According to data, 128 school students and 39 university students have been killed in the West Bank. In addition, 861 school students and more than

278 university students have been injured, while 421 school students and over 487 university students have been detained.

In the Gaza Strip, more than 19,101 school students and 1,379 university students have been killed, while over 28,419 school students and 3,017 university students have been wounded.

Educational staff have also been heavily affected. In the West Bank, six school staff members



have been killed and 25 others injured, while more than 171 others have been detained.

In the Gaza Strip, 802 school staff members and 246 university staff members have been killed,

while 3,291 school staff members and more than 1,493 university staff members have been injured.

## President Zardari Forwards PANAH's Petition on Ultra-Processed Food Taxes to Ministry of Finance and FBR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan National Heart Association (PANAH) expresses its deep gratitude to the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Mr. Asif Ali Zardari, for taking prompt and decisive action on PANAH's petition calling for the imposition of higher taxes on solid and liquid ultra-processed products (UPPs) in the Federal Budget 2026-27.

The President's Secretariat (Public), Aiwan-e-Sadr, Islamabad, has formally forwarded the petition submitted by Maj. Gen. (Retd) Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Kiani, President of PANAH, to the Secretary, Ministry of Finance, and the Chairman, Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), for necessary action under the law and rules.

Commenting on this significant development, Maj. Gen. (Retd) Dr. Masood Ur Rehman Kiani stated:

"We are deeply encouraged by President Zardari's responsiveness to our public health advocacy.

The forwarding of this petition to the Ministry of Finance and FBR is a meaningful step towards protecting millions of Pakistanis from the devastating health consequences of ultra-processed foods and beverages. We urge the relevant authorities to act swiftly and ensure that the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-27 includes meaningful tax measures on UPPs."



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: At an extraordinary briefing held at the Russian Embassy in Pakistan on Tuesday, Ambassador A. P. Khorev strongly condemned recent attacks in Starobils'k and other regions, describing them as "terrorist acts" carried out by the Kyiv regime. He stated that the tragedy in Starobils'k,

where dozens of students reportedly lost their lives, marked a turning point in Russia's military response.

While outlining Moscow's position on the ongoing conflict, the ambassador made special mention of Pakistan's stance. He commended Islamabad for maintaining what he described as a balanced and sensitive approach

to the Russia-Ukraine situation. "Pakistan understands the sensitivity of the matter and has adopted a constructive, neutral position. Russia values its relations with Pakistan and appreciates this responsible approach," he said.

The envoy further noted that Russia had formally communicated its security warnings to foreign missions, including

## Russia Condemns "Terrorist Acts" in Ukraine, Praises Pakistan's Neutral Stance



Pakistan, regarding the situation in Kyiv. He praised Pakistan for taking these warnings seriously, highlighting that Islamabad's diplomatic conduct reflects

prudence and maturity.

Ambassador Khorev also criticized what he termed the "double standards" of Western governments and international organ-

izations, accusing them of overlooking civilian casualties in Starobils'k while quickly condemning Russia's retaliatory actions. He added that Moscow had invited

foreign journalists, including those from Pakistan, to observe the aftermath of the Starobils'k incident firsthand.

He also emphasized Russia's commitment to ensuring the safety of operations at the Zaporizhzhia Nuclear Power Plant despite repeated drone attacks. He warned that any provocations affecting nuclear safety could have far-reaching consequences not only for the region but for the entire world.

In his concluding remarks, the ambassador reaffirmed Russia's intent to strengthen ties with Pakistan in light of evolving global dynamics.

"Our relations with Pakistan are based on mutual respect and shared understanding. We consider Pakistan a valued partner in the region," he stated.

**Bull & Bears**  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
170,330.56	168,953.70
Day's High	Day's Low
171,022.94	170,250.26
Index Value	Change
17,072,568,937	+1376.86
Percentage	Time
+0.81%	9 Jun, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,227.33	-145.87
Percentage	Time
-1.41%	9 Jun, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
50,407.94	-378.07
Percentage	Time
-0.74%	9 Jun, 1:14 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
65,416.63	+1,392.03
Percentage	Time
+2.17%	9 Jun, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.24	199.65
Bahrain Dinar	735.32	745.90
Canadian Dollar	198.23	203.45
China Yuan	38.05	38.80
Danish Krone	43.39	43.79
Euro	321.06	327.55
Hong Kong Dollar	34.99	35.93
Indian Rupee	2.77	3.03
Japanese Yen	1.7218	1.8209
Kuwaiti Dinar	885.11	896.99
Malaysian Ringgit	67.18	67.88
New Zealand \$	160.95	165.35
Norwegians Krone	27.88	28.18
Omani Riyal	719.22	730.32
Qatari Riyal	74.90	76.25
Saudi Riyal	74.05	74.80
Singapore Dollar	214.68	219.75
Swedish Korona	30.27	30.57
Swiss Franc	350.35	356.85
Thai Bhat	8.53	8.68
U.A.E Dirham	75.70	76.65
UK Pound Sterling	371.81	375.60
US Dollar	278.25	279.40

# Punjab to Purchase One Million Tonnes of Wheat from PASSCO to Stabilise Flour Prices, CM Punjab Approves Plan

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a special video-link meeting on Tuesday to review the wheat and flour situation in the province, during which it was decided to procure one million metric tonnes of wheat from the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO). The chief minister approved the purchase of wheat from PASSCO to ensure stability in wheat and flour prices across the province. Under the plan, wheat will be procured from PASSCO to stabilise flour rates and the wheat market, while flour mills will be provided wheat at Rs3,300 per maund to ensure the

availability of affordable flour and bread for the public.

The meeting also reviewed concerns regarding the alleged restriction on the supply of wheat from Punjab to other provinces, particularly Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Sindh. A detailed report was presented to the participants.

During the briefing, officials informed the meeting that claims regarding restrictions on wheat supply from Punjab to any province were not supported by facts. It was further stated that no complaint had been reported regarding the suspension of wheat supplies to Sindh.

The meeting was told that the process of



wheat stock declaration in Punjab was continuing and that comprehensive data compilation was in progress. Officials said stock data was being collected to assess and fulfil the province's food requirements, adding that the grain size of the current wheat crop was comparatively smaller than usual.

It was decided that after meeting its own food requirements, Punjab would fulfil its responsibility of supplying wheat to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The chief minister directed the relevant authorities to continue monitoring the wheat situation and ensure measures aimed at maintaining market stability and safeguarding consumers' interests.

## Cool off

RAWALPINDI: People drink iced sugarcane juice to cool off as temperature in the city rises high.



Photo: Online

## Reckitt Benckiser Deposits Rs30 Million Penalty Imposed by CCP in Strepsils Deceptive Marketing Case

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has recovered Rs30 million from Reckitt Benckiser Pakistan Limited after the Competition Appellate Tribunal upheld CCP's finding of deceptive marketing. The Tribunal confirmed Reckitt Benckiser misled consumers about its product Strepsils, falsely presenting it as a medicinal sore throat remedy

when it is registered as a food item. The company, found in violation of the Competition Act, 2010, must pay the penalty and implement corrective measures. These include prominently displaying "Non-Medicated" on packaging and advertising the product's status change from medicinal to food. This recovery underscores CCP's commitment to protecting consumers, ensuring truthful product information, and fostering fair competition.

## Small Businesses Face Tax Burden Amid Economic Slowdown

**Commerce Desk**

HYDERABAD: The President Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry Muhammad Saleem Memon, while expressing his reaction to the fixed tax and turnover tax proposals being considered by the federal government in the budget for the upcoming fiscal year 2026-27, has said that documenting the economy, expanding the tax net and simplifying the tax system are the need of the hour, however, the ground

realities of small traders, shopkeepers and low-profit businesses should not be ignored in the formulation and implementation of any new tax policy.

He said that small traders across Pakistan are already facing expensive electricity, gas, rising rents, bank markups, business expenses, weak purchasing power and continuous economic slowdown. In such circumstances, it is not at all appropriate to put additional financial burden on small traders.

## RCCI Delegation Meets DG Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority



**Commerce Desk**

RAWALPINDI: A delegation from the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), led by President Usman Shaukat, met with the Director General of the Cannabis Control and Regulatory Authority (CCRA), Major General (Retd.) Zafarullah Khan, to explore investment and economic

growth in emerging sectors, including cannabis. Discussions centered on promoting investment, regulatory cooperation, and collaborative efforts for Pakistan's economic development. Both sides stressed the need for awareness about the regulatory framework through seminars and workshops. They agreed that strong regulations, private-sector involvement, and investor-friendly poli-

cies are crucial for economic growth, investment, and job creation. RCCI President Shaukat pledged the business community's full support for emerging industries and creating an investor-friendly environment. The meeting concluded with a commitment to ongoing collaboration and stakeholder engagement to foster innovation, investment, and economic diversification in Pakistan.

## UBG Spokesperson Praises Tanveer for Uniting Businesses and Protecting Rights

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Gulzar Feroz, UBG Central Spokesperson, lauded SM Tanveer as the "Field Marshal" of Pakistan's business community. He highlighted Tanveer's exceptional services in uniting businesses, protecting their rights, and tackling challenges, crediting his leadership for revitalizing the sector. Feroz emphasized Tanveer's consistent prioritization of collective interests and effective representation of traders and industrialists before government bodies, leading to the resolution of key issues. He drew a parallel between General Syed Asim Munir's national contributions and Tanveer's role for the business community, asserting that the "Field Marshal" title signifies recognition of his extraordinary dedication and leadership. Feroz stated that Tanveer's guidance has made UBG the nation's strongest business force, fostering unity and inspiring young entrepreneurs through his vision and positive outlook. Tanveer's historic role in safeguarding business rights through federations and chambers is widely acknowledged and appreciated by the entire trading and industrial community of Pakistan.

## PPL advances AI capabilities in upstream oil and gas operations, signs MoU

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) proudly announces signing of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Folio3, a US-headquartered AI technology company with a global delivery footprint, to leverage AI for smarter and more efficient upstream oil and gas operations.



both companies on June 9 at PPL head office

MD & CEO PPL, Mohammad Khalid Rehman, signed the MoU with Adnan Lawai, CEO Folio3, in the presence of Brig. Ajaz Ahmad Khan HI(M), Retd, General Manager Shared Services PPL, and other officials from

Advancing the use of AI, this collaboration will explore opportunities across key operational and business functions, including drilling optimization, exploration, predictive maintenance and enterprise functions. Harnessing Folio3's AI capabilities, the partnership seeks to accelerate the practical adoption of AI and drive innovation across operations.

## Ignite and Mobilink Bank Partner to Establish National Incubation Center Sialkot

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Ignite, under the Ministry of IT and Telecom (MoITT), has partnered with a Mobilink Bank-led consortium, including CyberVision International, to launch the National Incubation Center (NIC) Sialkot.

This initiative aims to foster technology-driven startups and innovation in Sialkot, a key industrial and export hub. Federal Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja highlighted that NIC Sialkot aligns with the Prime Minister's Digital National Pakistan vision, emphasizing government commitment to nurturing entrepreneurship with essential resources.

Sialkot, known for its sports goods, surgical instruments, and leather products, is also growing in e-commerce and digital exports. NIC Sialkot will support up to 25 startups annually with mentorship, business development, investor linkages, market access, and networking.

This expansion of innovation infrastructure beyond major cities

is expected to boost entrepreneurship, technology adoption, employment, and exports nationwide. CEO Ignite, Muhammad Bilal Abbasi, stated that NIC Sialkot is a significant step towards strengthening Pakistan's startup ecosystem, helping entrepreneurs develop scalable businesses and enhancing technology adoption and export competitiveness.

Applications for the first cohort are now open on the NIC Sialkot website. Mobilink Bank President and CEO, Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary, stressed

the need for inclusive economic growth across Pakistan.

He believes innovation should be accessible and rooted in local business contexts, and NIC Sialkot will provide entrepreneurs with mentorship, digital tools, financial solutions, and market access.

NIC Sialkot will prioritize startups focused on Sialkot's industrial strengths, such as sports technologies, healthcare, manufacturing innovation, e-commerce, and export solutions, while also encouraging innovation in



AI, Industry 4.0, advanced manufacturing, smart supply chains, health tech, and digital commerce.

The National Incubation Center initiative, funded by MoITT and Ignite,

operates a network of seven regional centers across Pakistan, collaborating with industry, academia, and global accelerators to foster technological advancement and entrepreneurship.

# The Quetta Train Attack: More Than a Security Incident in Balochistan

Tahira Chaudhry

The recent train attack in Balochistan, which occurred just days before Eid-ul-Adha, highlights the continuing security challenges faced by the province. This attack was directed at Jaffar Express, which was carrying a large number of civilians and security personnel, who were on their way back home to spend the Eid holidays with their families. Beyond the statistics and headlines, the attack left behind families waiting for loved ones who would never return. Among those who lost their lives were Nk Imtiaz from Mansehra, Sep Muhabat Ali from Kashmore, Cfn Nadir Ali (LAD) from Sanghar, and numerous others who were travelling on the Jaffar Express that day. Police sources say at least 30kg of explosives were used in the suicide attack, which shows how well planned it was, and how much harm

it was meant to inflict on the community. The Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) through its Majeed Brigade, took the responsibility for the attack. The group went on to determine the identity of the suicide bomber to be Bilal Shawani. It's clear the attack was carefully orchestrated and planned to create as much publicity and psychological impact as possible.

It is important to consider the consequences for the victims and their families, as well as for the broader organization. It underscores the larger issues that are on-going in Balochistan and important questions regarding security, stability and future of Balochistan are raised. Balochistan is a special geo-strategic region in Pakistan. It is the largest province in terms of area, and has huge economic and geopolitical importance, covering almost 44 per cent of the country's land area. Balochistan is a region of rich natural resources and is also playing a pivotal role in Pakistan's connectivity

efforts and regional trade opportunities, as it is the home of strategically important Gwadar Port. However, in spite of its significance, the province has been exposed to insurgency, violence, and instability.

It is also essential to acknowledge that the Baloch people themselves have been greatly affected by the decades of conflict, insecurity and neglect in Balochistan. Baloch people are overwhelmingly peaceful, respectable and law-abiding people who desire similar things as every family of Pakistan—security, education, employment and a better future for their children. The common people are too often the worst victims of the instability and struggle between violence and poverty. Any discussion about Balochistan should therefore differentiate between militant organizations and the ordinary people of Balochistan who have been suffering for too long and expect peace, growth and development for their province.



Targeting public transport is especially alarming because railroads are more than just a mode of transport, they represent mobility, economic activity, and national connectivity. It instills fear among the people, disrupts their life and erodes people's trust in the state's ability to provide essential infrastructure. The attack is also a reflection of how tactics of the militant organisations in the region are changing with time.

However, it would be unfair to view the situation in Balochistan solely

through a security lens. Security is only one aspect of a wider and more multifaceted challenge for peace and stability. Furthermore, several other opportunities for long-term stability in the province also exist and include the potential for continued economic progress, employment creation, access to education, infrastructure development, and greater political inclusion. All these interrelated issues must be addressed to restore peace in Balochistan. The Quetta attack on Jaffar Express

is a sad reminder that issues of security and development go hand in hand. Enhancing intelligence networks, securing critical infrastructure and enhancing coordination between security institutions are key elements. However, these steps should be coupled with long-term policies to tackle the root causes of the instability in the province and put in place measures that allow the people of Balochistan to enjoy the vast potential of their province. It's time Pakistanis reflected on the message it was trying to send them in a broader context while sympathizing with the victims of this attack. Unfortunately, the people of the province have been suffering enough. They should be safe, respected, given an opportunity, and have a future filled with hope. A stable Balochistan is not only essential for the province itself but also for the prosperity and future of Pakistan.

The writer is an undergrad student at International Relations at NDU, Islamabad.

## Beyond Empire: Explaining the divergent fate of the colonies

Eman Waseem

Empires do not really leave behind the same story everywhere. The United States began as a collection of colonies governed by Great Britain and later turned into the hegemon of the international system. Many highly advanced global economies like Canada, Australia, and New Zealand were once under Britain's domain. Similarly, India, once considered the "jewel in the crown" of the British Empire, transformed its exploited economy into the world's fastest-growing markets and a technology hub. At the same time, there are other countries like Pakistan and several others across Asia and Africa where the post-colonial experience has been marked by economic uncertainty, political instability, and structural change. This contrast raises an inescapable question: if colonialism is the main explanation of underdevelopment, why did its outcomes vary so much across different countries? A common answer to this can be found in the ideas of world-systems theory and dependency theory. The central argument is that the emergence of independence

couldn't erase the effects of colonialism; it set up the base of a global system where some countries sit at the centre of wealth and technology, while others remain stuck supplying raw materials, cheap labor, and external debt. In this sense, underdevelopment is not just about what happens inside a country, but also about the position it occupies in the wider global economic arena. The argument can be convincing if we look at parts of Africa, Latin America, or even South Asia. Even this explanation makes sense, but it leaves out the full context. If global structure alone determines outcomes, then the experience of countries like the United States, China, and India and other post-colonial states would have been the same. They all, in different ways, were shaped by imperial or semi-colonial histories, yet their trajectories today look very different. At the same time, countries such as Pakistan, despite similar colonial legacies, have traveled a significantly harder path towards growth. This variation shows that history impacts development without forcing everyone down an identical path. Countries respond differently to similar starting points. In some cases, states were able to build stronger institutions, maintain political



BEYOND THE EMPIRE



stability, and pursue long-term economic planning. In others, independence was followed by repeated political disruptions, weak governance structures, and limited capacity to transform the economy. Over time, these differences began to matter just as much as colonial history itself, shaping how effectively countries could engage with the global economy. The case of the United States is often the most compelling illustration. It originated under British colonial rule, yet instead of remaining on the periphery of the global economic system, it gradually built its own industrial base and political autonomy. Protection of domestic industries in its early years, the expansion of its internal market, and relatively strong institutional development played a key role in fueling its ascent. It refused to remain locked in

a lower position, successfully shifting its economic path to eventually take center stage globally. India's experience is, however, highly asymmetrical and convoluted. After independence, it inherited many of the structural constraints of colonial rule, including a largely agrarian economy and weak industrial foundations. Over time, different policy approaches were taken into account, from state-led planning in the early decades to major economic liberalisations in 90s. These shifts did generate significant economic growth in certain sectors, particularly services and technology, yet the outcome remains a tangled web. High growth rates have failed to eliminate deep socioeconomic strata, regional polarization, and massive unregulated labor markets. India thus proves that post-colonial growth is attainable, but

instability becomes recurrent, institutions remain weak and inconsistent, and economic policy shifts frequently with changes in regimes rather than long-term planning. Tethered to a crippled industrial sector and an endless reliance on foreign lifelines, these failures permanently choked the nation's rise. These divides suggest that the international system and historical evidence blend with local policy decisions. Hence, imperial subjugation should be theorized as a formative condition rather than a deterministic finality. It shaped economies, institutions, and global hierarchies, but the freeing of countries into a permanent outcome cannot be attributed to it. The contrasting path of the post colonial states show that development is neither a smooth guarantee nor a written destiny. It depends upon whether the state can keep the integrity of institutions intact, maintain policy continuity and turn existing resources into future economic strength. In that sense, the legacy of the empire is real, but it is uneven, and its consequences are still being written, not simply inherited.

The writer is a student of IR at NDU. She can be reached at weman0831@gmail.com

## “Will the dollar stay the dollar? The Political Economy of De-Dollarization in a Multipolar World”

Ayesha Masood

The United States dollar has held a special place in the world economy for over 70 years. It is used as the world's main reserve currency, as the medium of exchange in international trade and as the major currency used in the international financial markets. Oil trading in the Middle East, international loans and foreign exchange reserves, the dollar is an integral part of the global economy. But with recent geopolitical and economic events, there is an important question that needs to be debated: Will the dollar continue to reign supreme in the multipolar world?



De-dollarization has become a topic of conversation recently and is indicative of a shift in the international political economy. Trading in the dollar and pound sterling is under scrutiny as many nations are seeking alternatives to the dollar in trade, finance and investments due to the growing economic power of emerging economies like the BRICS grouping, which comprises Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. But the main question is, is de-dollarisation a real threat

to the dominance of the U. S. dollar or is it just a political slogan that has little economic significance?

To grasp this debate, one should delve into the rise of the dollar to its present supremacy. After World War II, the Bretton Woods Conference created an international monetary system that put the United States as the central player in the world's financial landscape. The American economy turned out to be the world's strongest, and the financial institutions, political stability and well-developed capital markets built trust among the governments and the investors. The dollar eventually

gained favor as the currency of choice for international transactions due to its reliability, liquidity and worldwide acceptance.

But, several factors are making countries more inclined to move away from the dollar these days. The growing implementation of economic sanctions by the United States is one of the causes. Certain aspects of the limitations on Russian financial transactions due to the Russian-Ukrainian conflict have been shown in the freezing of Russian financial assets. The whole development raised a very important question in the minds of many govern-

ments: Should national economies be so strongly tied to a national financial system?

The other factor is the emergence of China as an economic superpower. China, as the world's second largest economy, has actively encouraged the use of the yuan currency on the world stage. Beijing aims to diversify away from the dollar and enhance its economic power by using bilateral trade accords and other methods of payment. Likewise, BRICS countries have been increasingly talking about trading in their own currencies, and developing initiatives to reduce dependence on Western financial institutions.

De-dollarization is therefore not just an economic initiative, but also a political one. In many states, decreasing the use of the dollar is a quest for economic autonomy. It indicates a need to be less exposed to outside pressures and more independent in policy making. From this angle, de-dollarization has been enmeshed in the broader shift from a unipolar world dominated by the Americans to a more multipolar international order.

There are high barriers, however, to a dollar's replacement. The initial obstacle is trust. The global reserve

currency needs to be anchored by stable institutions, clear financial frameworks and trust of the international investors. Despite China's rising economic power, investors are wary of the long-term reliability of China's financial system.

The second one is scale. The dollar enjoys strong network effects. That's why governments, banks, multinational companies, and investors still use the dollar. This is a cycle that is self-supporting and hard to break because of this wide acceptance. Thus, a crucial question has arisen: Can the dollar be replaced by one or more currencies that are realistically able to do so, or will there be several competing currencies in the future?

This is a glimpse into a more complex result. The world might be slowly transitioning towards a multipolar monetary system instead of a sudden break from dollar dominance. Here, the dollar would be the dominant international coin, supplemented by the yuan, the euro and maybe other regional currencies. This is all the more realistic than scenarios predicting a near end to the dollar's supremacy.

The significance of such a move is especially great for developing countries. More currency diversity would

mean a less reliance on a single financial system, and more flexibility in international trade, on the other hand. However, a disjointed monetary system could also result in uncertainty, higher transaction costs, and more difficult economic decision-making. Countries like Pakistan, therefore, need to tread carefully in these changing dynamics without compromising on the opportunities of the economy and its financial stability.

In the end, the discussion on de-dollarization is not just about currencies, it is about power. The international monetary system is the expression of the division of economic and political power in the world. Support for the dollar is likely to remain under pressure as new powers demand greater voice and independence. But, its historic benefits make the dollar a likely staple of international finance for a long time to come.

But are we thrusting into a new era where monetary power is shared, not monopolized? The question whether that is the case or not will define the future of the international political economy in the twenty-first century.

The writer is a student of National Defence University, Islamabad

## How Ukraine and Iran Rewrote the Rules of War

Continued from Page 4

The experiences of Ukraine and Iran are likely to influence strategic thinking across the globe. Some major powers may conclude that conventional military superiority is no longer sufficient to guarantee desired outcomes. Some smaller powers may conclude that international law alone cannot guarantee security. Both conclusions risk producing the same result: increased reliance on nuclear weapons.

For nuclear-armed states, the temptation may arise to rely more heavily upon nuclear deterrence when conventional coercion proves insufficient. For non-nuclear states, the lesson may be that survival ultimately requires acquiring a nuclear capability of their own. Such a trend would be extraordinarily dangerous.

For this reason, the long-term lesson of these conflicts should not be nuclear expansion but renewed nuclear disarmament. A

stable international system cannot permanently rest upon a hierarchy in which some states possess ultimate weapons while others do not. Lasting security requires moving toward a universally applied and verifiable framework that reduces and ultimately eliminates nuclear arsenals.

Equally important is the need to reform international governance. The wars in Ukraine and Iran have revived longstanding debates regarding the structure of the United Nations. Critics argue that the veto power enjoyed by the five permanent members of the Security Council frequently prevents effective collective action and allows geopolitical interests to override broader international consensus.

Many advocates of reform contend that decisions affecting international peace and security should more accurately reflect the collective judgment of the international community. They argue that the authority of the General Assembly should be strengthened

and that mechanisms should be developed to reduce paralysis caused by competing vetoes.

Whether such reforms are politically achievable remains uncertain. Nevertheless, the debate itself reflects growing frustration with a system many view as increasingly disconnected from contemporary realities.

The fundamental challenge facing humanity today is therefore larger than any single war. The challenge is whether the international community can adapt its institutions, strengthen international law, preserve the freedom of global commerce and reduce reliance on military coercion before future crises become even more dangerous.

Ukraine and Iran have demonstrated that technology, geography, innovation and national determination can challenge even the strongest powers. They have shown that military superiority does not automatically translate into political success. They

have revealed the vulnerability of global supply chains, maritime commerce and existing security structures. Above all, they have reminded the world that the pursuit of dominance often produces resistance rather than submission.

The future now presents two possible paths. One path leads toward greater militarization, nuclear proliferation, expanding maritime confrontation and intensified geopolitical rivalry. The other leads toward institutional reform, collective security, strengthened international law and renewed commitment to diplomacy.

The choice between those paths will determine not merely the outcome of future conflicts but the future of international order itself.

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.

## Bano Qabil: Transforming Pakistan's Youth Through Skills and Opportunity

Continued from Page 4

Ahmad, President Alkhidmat Foundation Mardan, whose dedication, organizational abilities, and relentless efforts have been instrumental in the successful implementation of the program in the district. Under his guidance, Bano Qabil has expanded its reach and impact, enabling hundreds of young people to acquire valuable skills and pursue meaningful careers. The Bano Qabil initiative also aligns with the broader vision of Jamaat-e-Islami's "Badal Do Nizam" movement. Real change is not achieved through slogans alone; it requires practical solutions that address the challenges faced by ordinary citizens. By investing in education, skills development, and youth empowerment...

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Bahrain National Guard Commander General Sheikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

## Pakistan, Bahrain agree to enhance defence, security cooperation



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Commander of the Bahrain National Guard General Shaikh Mohammed bin Isa Al Khalifa visited General Headquarters (GHQ) of the Pakistan Armed Forces in Rawalpindi, where he met Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the meeting, both sides agreed to enhance defence and security cooperation between Pakistan and Bahrain. Matters of mutual interest, regional security and defence collab-

oration were discussed.

The two sides also expressed their determination to further strengthen the brotherly relations between Pakistan and Bahrain.

During his visit, the Bahraini commander also met Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and appreciated the Pakistan Navy's role in maintaining regional maritime security. He described the Pakistan Navy as a guarantor of regional maritime stability.

The Commander of the Bahrain National Guard separately met Chief



of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu. During the meeting, he was briefed on the modernization of the Pakistan Air Force and efforts to enhance its defence capabilities.

The discussions also covered drones, artificial intelligence and modern defence technologies. The Bahraini commander expressed confidence in the professional capabilities of Pakistan's armed forces and showed

Bahrain's interest in increasing cooperation with Pakistan in training, modern technology and capacity-building.

He also appreciated Pakistan's efforts for peace and stability in the region.

According to ISPR, the visit is expected to further strengthen defence relations between the two brotherly countries and open up possibilities for new military cooperation between Pakistan and Bahrain.

## Dar urges swift release of Pakistani hostages in call with Somali FM

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Tuesday, spoke with Somalia's Foreign Minister Abdissalam Ali, to discuss ongoing efforts to secure the release of the Pakistani hostages aboard the MT Honour 25.

"Pakistan has been actively engaging with Somali authorities following the

vessel's hijacking off the Somali coast in April," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The DPM / FM conveyed Pakistan's grave concern over the situation and underscored the importance of ensuring the hostages' well-being, their early release, and safe repatriation.

Foreign Minister Abdissalam Ali assured him of his government's continued and sincere efforts to secure



the hostages' release at the earliest opportunity.

Both leaders agreed to maintain close coordination until the matter is resolved.

The two counterparts also

expressed satisfaction with the positive momentum in bilateral relations between Pakistan and Somalia.

The Somali FM also commended Pakistan's constructive mediation and diplomatic efforts in the broader regional context.

## Pakistan-China Friendship Marks 75 Years with Focus on Global Order

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal lauded Chinese President Xi Jinping's Global Governance Initiative as a vital roadmap for global peace and sustainable development amidst global uncertainty.

Speaking at an event commemorating 75 years of Pakistan-China friendship and CPEC, Iqbal emphasized the need for a rules-based international order founded on cooperation, sovereignty, and peaceful coexistence.

The initiative, guided by five principles, aims to steer the world toward stability: equal sovereignty for all nations, strict adherence to international law and agreements, prioritizing multilateralism with a stronger voice for developing nations, people-centered development focusing on welfare, and effective implementation of global governance decisions. Iqbal highlighted real-world examples to illustrate these principles, referencing the Middle East crisis to show existing mechanisms' limitations and



using the Indus Waters Treaty as a warning against undermining established agree-

ments.

He celebrated the enduring Pakistan-China friendship,

now entering a new phase with their first astronaut's participation in a Chinese space mission.

The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), initiated in 2013, has become a significant regional development blueprint. CPEC 2.0, focusing on Growth, Livelihood, Innovation, Green, and Open Corridors, aims for sustainable development, technological advancement, climate resilience, and enhanced connectivity, aligning with Pakistan's national priorities and fostering inclusive growth.

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Russia relations are entering a new phase of pragmatic cooperation, transforming into a trusted partnership across trade, energy, defense, and technology.

This positive trajectory, solidified by multiple high-level meetings between Prime Minister Sharif and President Putin, is underpinned by the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC).

Pakistan aims to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), enhancing regional connectivity and poten-

## Security forces kill 14 terrorists, soldier martyred



## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed 14 India-backed terrorists in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in the Nal area of Basima district, Balochistan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Tuesday.

Acting on intelligence about their presence in the area, security forces moved to intercept the terrorists. The operation foiled a planned attack on nearby police stations and banks,

ISPR said.

A heavy exchange of fire ensued as forces blocked the militants' movement. Fourteen Indian-backed terrorists were killed, and several others were wounded. Four vehicles and explosives used by the group were also destroyed.

Lance Havildar Abbas embraced martyrdom during the operation while fighting with valour, ISPR said.

A search operation is underway in the area to apprehend any remaining terrorists.

## President, PM commend security forces for successful IBO against terrorists in Balochistan

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif lauded security forces for a successful intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Basima district, eliminating 14 terrorists linked to "Fitna al-Hindustan."

The President emphasized the professionalism of state institutions and national resolve against terrorism, while the Prime Minister highlighted the operation's success under the "Azm-e-Istehkam"



vision. Both leaders mourned the martyrdom of Lance Havildar Muhammad Abbas, vowing that the sacrifices of security personnel would not be in vain and reaffirming the government's commitment to eradicating terrorism.

## Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Praises PID's Role in National Narrative and Combating Disinformation



## News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi visited the Press Information Department (PID) in Islamabad and was briefed on its operations. He lauded PID's efforts in disseminating

government policies, promoting the national narrative, and countering disinformation, especially concerning negative narratives against Islam and Pakistan. The Governor specifically commended PID's exemplary response to India's propaganda during Operation Bunyan-un-Marsoos. He welcomed the establishment of a digital cell in Peshawar to enhance strategic communication and digital outreach, emphasizing its importance in the current era for protecting national interests and presenting Pakistan's stance internationally.

## Pakistan-Russia Partnership: A New Era of Pragmatic Cooperation



## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan-Russia relations are entering a new phase of pragmatic cooperation, transforming into a trusted partnership across trade, energy, defense, and technology.

This positive trajectory, solidified by multiple high-level meetings between Prime Minister Sharif and President Putin, is underpinned by the Russia-Pakistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC).

Pakistan aims to join the International North-South Transport Corridor (INSTC), enhancing regional connectivity and poten-

tially linking with Gwadar Port, thus bridging a key part of China's Belt and Road Initiative. Russia has recognized Pakistan's diplomatic role in mitigating conflicts. Both nations are committed to boosting bilateral trade through the Program of Economic Cooperation until 2030 and have eased visa regimes with the recent Readmission Agreement. Pakistan's increased engagement in forums like the Kazan Forum and St. Petersburg International Economic Forum demonstrates this growing institutional connection. These strengthening ties are crucial for broader Eurasian economic integration and regional stability.