



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
اور معزز نے بیان کیا انہوں نے اپنے والد سے
سنا، انہوں نے اس رضی اللہ عنہ سے کہ نبی
کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ ہر نبی نے
کچھ چیزیں مانگیں یا فرمایا کہ ہر نبی کو ایک دعائی
کئی جس چیز کی اس نے دعا کی پھر اسے قبول
کیا یا کیا ان میں سے کوئی دعا قیامت کے دن
اپنی امت کی شفاعت کے لیے محفوظ رکھی
ہوئی ہے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6305)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

Iran Warns It May Abandon US Agreement Over Alleged Violations

Iran has warned it will no longer consider itself bound by the Islamabad Understanding with the United States if Washington continues to violate its commitments. The warning comes amid renewed military exchanges over the Strait of Hormuz, despite ongoing diplomatic efforts and President Donald Trump's indication that talks with Tehran will continue.



Justice Aalia Neelum allows vehicles purchase procedure for judicial officers

Lahore High Court Chief Justice Aalia Neelum has announced formal implementation of the transport monetization policy across the province. With the approval of the High Court Chief Justice, it has been decided that used official vehicles will be provided to judicial officers at fixed concessional prices.

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Operation Shaban

QUETTA: Security personnel remain on high alert as Operation Shaban continues across the mountainous regions of Balochistan.



Operation Shaban: 21 more militants killed in Balochistan

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Security forces killed 21 more militants in three separate operations in Balochistan on Saturday as the ongoing Operation Shaban intensified across the province's mountainous regions, security sources said.

According to security sources, the forces targeted militants linked to Fitna al-Khawarij through coordinated ground and aerial operations.

Helicopters and Pakistan Air Force assets were used to strike militant hideouts in remote and rugged moun-

tainous terrain while ground troops continued search and clearance operations.

Security sources said Operation Shaban is a large-scale joint campaign launched by the Pakistan Army, FC Balochistan and Balochistan Police to dismantle militant networks operating in the province.

The latest operations have raised the number of militants killed since the launch of Operation Shaban to 64, according to security sources.

Overall, 104 militants have been killed in Operation Shaban and other intelligence-based operations conducted since July 5.

DPM/FM Dar underscores importance of Pak-UK bilateral ties



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, underscored the significance of Pakistan-UK bilateral relations.

The DPM/FM directed the High Commissioner-designate to the United Kingdom to redouble efforts to further deepen and broaden the partnership between the two countries across political, economic, and people-to-people domains.

Tipu Usman Chaudhry, High Commissioner-designate of Pakistan to the

United Kingdom, called on the DPM/FM, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The DPM/FM further highlighted that the UK was home to one of the largest, most dynamic, and vibrant Pakistani diasporas in the world.

He emphasized that extending proactive consular services and welfare support to the overseas Pakistani community must remain a top priority for the High Commission.

The DPM/FM also appreciated Usman's valuable contributions as Chief of Protocol at the Ministry and wished him success in his new assignment.

Pakistan asks US, Iran to uphold commitments under Islamabad MoU

Spokesman Report

UNITED NATIONS: Pakistan has expressed its deep concern over the flare-up in violence in Middle East, urging all sides to uphold their respective commitments under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) which remains an enduring foundation for understanding, mutual respect and shared prosperity for the region and beyond.

This was stated by Pakistan's Permanent Representative at UN Security Council Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad



during a briefing on the "Implementation of Security Council Resolution 2231 (2015): Twenty-first report of the Secretary

General" in New York on Friday. Following is the text of ambassador Asim Iftikhar's statement "Mr President, Pakistan

expresses its deep concern at the escalation in tensions in the region which is in no one's interest.

The cycle of violence and instability must end for the good of regional and international peace, security and prosperity. All efforts should be made to restore normalcy and bring the parties back to the negotiations table.

Pakistan calls on all parties to exercise restraint and refrain from any actions that may further undermine regional peace and stability. Evidently, there is no alternative to continued engage-

ment, dialogue and diplomacy to achieve the shared goal of peace and stability in the region.

We reiterate our support for the resolution of all outstanding issues, including the Iran nuclear issue through peaceful means, diplomatic engagement and sustained dialogue. We have always emphasized that diplomacy and dialogue should remain the guiding principles for achieving negotiated settlement of all contentious issues in accordance with the rights, obligations and responsibilities of the parties concerned.

Continued on Page 7

No Wheat Shortage in Pakistan; Govt Vows Action Against Price Hikes and Hoarding

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain chaired the 9th Wheat Board meeting to review wheat production, availability, procurement, and market prices.

Attended by provincial chief and agriculture secretaries, senior officials, and representatives of the Pakistan Flour Mills Association, the Board conducted



a detailed review of the wheat situation. Provincial represent-

atives unanimously informed the meeting that adequate wheat

stocks are available and there is no shortage anywhere in the country.

Rana Tanveer Hussain said wheat production this year is estimated at 1.36 million metric tonnes at the end of the year. The Board agreed that the production target has been achieved and the country has sufficient reserves.

The meeting stressed that provinces should closely monitor the wheat market and ensure effective management.

The Minister reaffirmed that protecting consumers' interests is the government's top priority. He said the federal and provincial governments will take administrative and legal measures to curb hoarding, strengthen oversight, and ensure affordable wheat.

Authorities were directed to continue ensuring coordination, strengthen monitoring, and act promptly against any disruption in supply or unjustified price increases.

Privatisation Commission Appoints Asian Development Bank (ADB) as Financial Adviser

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Privatisation Commission (PC) Board, in its 255th meeting held today under the chairmanship of Mr. Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatisation and Chairman, Privatisation Commission, approved the signing of the Transaction Advi-

sory Services Agreement (TASA) with the Asian Development Bank (ADB) for the outsourcing of operations of Islamabad International Airport (IIAP).

The PC Board reviewed the terms of the negotiated TASA and approved the agreement reached with ADB. The PC Board expressed confidence that ADB, with its expertise

and experience, will be able to successfully complete this important transaction expeditiously while ensuring maximum competition and transparency.

Islamabad International Airport will be outsourced to a qualified private sector operator under a long-term concession framework through a competitive bidding process. The privatisation is expected to enhance operational efficiency, improve passenger experience, and align airport services with international best practices.

Furthermore, the PC Board also granted approval for the appointment of BDO Ebrahim & Company, Chartered Accountants, as external auditors for the audit of three

financial years from 2025-26 to 2027-28, on the recommendation of the Audit Committee of the Board.

The PC Board resolved to continue ensuring transparency, efficiency, and the maintenance of high standards to further strengthen investor confidence in the Government's privatisation programme.

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, and exchanged views on the recent developments in the region.

They expressed deep concern over the escalations despite the signing of the Islamabad MoU between the United States and Iran in June 2026. They agreed that the renewed conflict serves

no one's interest and undermines efforts toward regional peace and stability.

The Saudi Foreign Minister shared the Kingdom's perspective on ongoing diplomatic efforts and emphasized the importance of de-escalation and continued dialogue. DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's call on all parties to exercise maximum restraint and allow mediation efforts the necessary time and space to achieve a peaceful and meaningful outcome. The two leaders agreed to remain in close contact.



AJK Election Commission member inspects ballot paper printing at state-owned facility

 **Spokesman Report.**

ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu kashmir Election Commission member Syed Nazirul Hassan Gilani visited Printing Press of Pakistan at Islamabad, where he inspected the process of printing ballot papers (votes) for general elections. Senior officials of Printing Press of Pakistan received the Members Elec-

tion Commission and gave a detailed briefing regarding the printing of ballot papers. Officials informed that printing of ballot papers of all parties in Jammu and Kashmir has been completed so far, while ballot papers of 33 constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have been printed. Member Election Commission Syed Nazir Hassan Gilani expressed satis-

faction with the printing process and directed that all stages be completed within the stipulated time to ensure the ballot papers are printed according to the election schedule. On this occasion, SSP Security Syed Riaz Bukhari gave a detailed briefing to the Member Election Commission regarding the security arrangements. He said comprehensive security plans

have been compiled to safeguard the ballot papers and deliver them safely to the relevant returning officers and all necessary arrangements are in place. Safe delivery can be ensured at all costs. Members Election Commission directed to ensure transparency, care-fulness and timely completion of ballot papers at all stages of printing, packing, delivery and security.



Amir Muqam condoles death of AJK Council Joint Secretary's son



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engr Amir Muqam, has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of the eldest son of Ali Akbar, Joint Secretary of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council. The minister prayed for the departed soul, asking Allah Almighty to grant him forgiveness, elevate his ranks, and bless him with the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous. He also extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved family, said a statement issued here. He prayed that Allah Almighty grant the deceased His mercy and bestow patience and resilience upon the bereaved family as they cope with this tragic loss.

Auqaf Punjab Accelerates Development at Bibi Pakdamin and Waris Shah Shrines



 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta said providing world-class facilities to devotees at shrines is the department's foremost administrative and spiritual duty. He made the remarks during inspections of the historic shrines of Hazrat Bibi Pakdamin in Lahore and Hazrat Waris Shah in Sheikhupura. At Bibi Pakdamin, accompanied by senior Auqaf and C&W officials, Dr. Bhutta reviewed the Rs496 million ADP 2026-27 project. He directed authorities to accelerate construction and lay the structural slab within the week while maintaining quality. He ordered ample parking for buses, cars and motorcycles based on need assessments. He also examined the expansion of prayer and courtyard areas and the development of pedestrian underpasses for crowd management. Later in Sheikhupura, Dr. Bhutta offered Fateha at the shrine of Hazrat Waris Shah and directed officials to expedite work on paint, CNC jallis, pedestals, and lighting. He inspected the newly established Heritage Gallery-cum-Library, calling it a premier cultural center to preserve manuscripts and arte-facts and promote Waris Shah's message of love and harmony.

Arts Council Karachi Honors Cricket Legend Qamar Ahmed in Tribute Ceremony



 **News Desk**

KARACHI: The Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, in collaboration with the Sports Journalists Association of Sindh (SJAS), held a commemorative event to honor eminent cricket journalist, commentator, author and former first-class cricketer Qamar Ahmed. Attended by former Test cricketers Sadiq Mohammad, Jalaluddin, Moin Khan and Shoaib Mohammad, Arts Council President Mohammad Ahmed Shah, SJAS President Mahmood Riaz, and senior journalists, the event paid tribute to Qamar Ahmed's lifelong contribution to cricket. Special video messages were delivered by Mushtaq Mohammad, Wasim Akram, Rashid Latif and Michael Holding, who praised his extraordinary knowledge and service to the game. Speakers called him an "encyclopedia of cricket" and a global ambassador whose credibility earned him recognition as an international authority. Born in Hyderabad, the left-arm spinner claimed wickets of greats like Hanif, Mushtaq and Sadiq Mohammad. Based largely in the UK, he covered 453 Tests, 742 ODIs and 9 World Cups — an unmatched record. Speakers urged the government to confer a posthumous Presidential Civil Award on him. The ceremony concluded with prayers for his soul.

Attock Administration Vows Zero Tolerance Against Illegal Medicines and Quackery

 **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: A high-level meeting on health matters was held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Aniel Saeed to review measures against illegal medicine sales, quackery, and to ensure drug quality across the district. Attended by Dr. Jawad Elahi, MS DHQ Hospital, Deputy District Health Officers, the District Drug Controller, health officials and representatives of relevant departments, the meeting reviewed illegal medical stores, sale of unregistered medicines, ongoing operations against quacks, and future enforcement strategy. Speaking on the occasion, Aniel Saeed said that under the directions of the Punjab Government and supervision of Deputy Commissioner Dr. Mudassar Ahmad Shah, a zero-tolerance policy would be strictly enforced. He stressed that no leniency would be shown to those endangering public lives and that indiscriminate legal action would be taken against violators. He directed the District Drug Controller and Health Department to conduct regular inspections of medical stores, clinics and health-care facilities, ensure elimination of illegal and expired medicines, and strengthen joint operations against quacks. The meeting reaffirmed that providing citizens with safe, quality and lawful healthcare remains the Punjab Government's top priority.

Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Children sit on life size dinosaur jaw at Dino Valley, in the Federal Capital as many families visited fun parks during summer vacations.

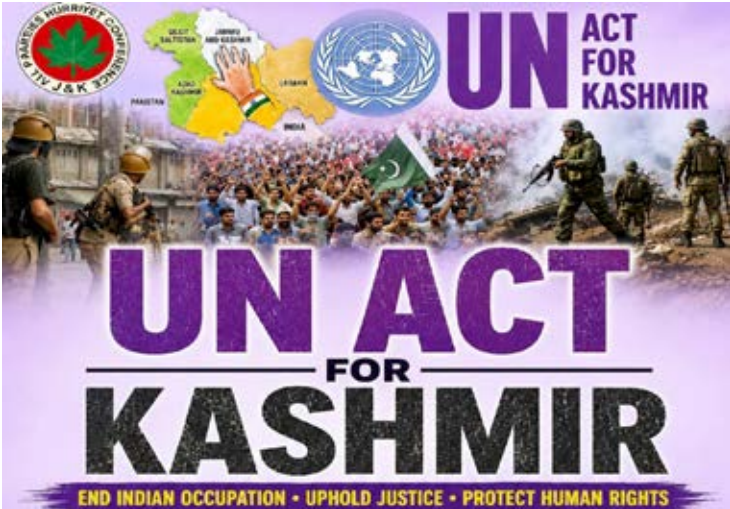


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

JKDFP Expresses Concern Over NIA Chargesheet Against Shabir Ahmad Shah and Other Hurriyat Leaders

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

SIRINAGER: The General Secretary of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP), Dr. Ghulam Rasool, has expressed deep concern over the National Investigation Agency's (NIA) decision to file a chargesheet in a 1996 case against the Party President Shabir Ahmad Shah and several other Hurriyat leaders. Dr. Ghulam Rasool stated that reopening and pursuing nearly three-decade-old cases against the Kashmiri political leadership reinforces the perception that legal processes are being used against those who hold dissenting political views. He said such measures fail



to address the political and historical dimensions of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He noted that Shabir Ahmad Shah has remained in custody for several years and continues to face multiple prosecutions. He further said that the repeated registration or revival of cases after bail or progress in earlier proceedings raises serious concerns regarding due process, the right to a fair trial, and the protection of fundamental human rights. Dr. Ghulam Rasool also expressed regret that the chargesheet includes the names of late Syed Ali Shah Geelani and late Abdul Gani Lone, although the proceedings against them have abated following their passing.

Small Steps, Big Leaps: How Digital Learning Can Empower Our Youth, Especially Women in Punjab, Pakistan

In the heart of Punjab, a quiet yet powerful digital transformation is sweeping across cities like Multan, Bahawalpur and Rawalpindi. From the comfort of their homes, thousands of young people and women are acquiring skills in video editing, graphic design, and freelancing. This is not just about learning; it is about rewriting economic futures. As the World Skills Clock reports, 91% of all young adults in Pakistan lack basic tech skills. In Punjab, for every 100 young men with rudimentary digital skills, only 42 young women have them. This digital gender gap is a challenge, but it is also an opportunity. The good news is that the tools for change are within reach. Government

initiatives are providing a crucial foundation. Platforms like DigiSkills.pk have made certified training accessible, with its alumni generating an estimated Rs. 1 billion in freelance earnings and 33% of its trainees being women. The e-Rozgar Training Program has been a resounding success: in 2023 alone, over 11,000 graduates across Punjab collectively earned Rs. 130 million, with 60% of them being women. Perhaps the most inspiring progress is being made at the grassroots level for

rural women. The Punjab government aims to train 27,000 rural women in IT and digital skills. Through the 'Mein Digital' initiative, the Punjab Skills Development Fund (PSDF) has already distributed 1,000 desktop computers to selected women across the province, equipping them to participate in the digital economy directly from their homes. In South Punjab, short courses in high-demand fields are offered for as little as Rs. 500, opening new income avenues for those with no formal tech-

nical background. One shining example is Tasneem Tariq, a housewife who now edits videos for social media influencers. "I used to feel left out," she said. "Now, I feel empowered". For the youth and women of Punjab, the path to a better socioeconomic status does not require a lottery win. It requires a smartphone, an internet connection, and the willingness to learn. Identify a skill in demand, enroll in a free or low-cost online course and commit to learning consistently. The global labor market is shifting to a "skills-first" model and those who embrace digital learning today will be the ones who thrive tomorrow. The opportunity is here. The only question is: will you take it.



Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Hassan Kathia

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:24 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:21 pm
Isha 9:02 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

ICLC and Hasana Welfare Mark World Population Day 2026 with Awareness Event

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Crescent Lions Club and Hasana Welfare and Development Organization organized an awareness event on World Population Day 2026 to highlight challenges of population growth, health, education, family planning, youth empowerment, and sustainable development.

Hosted by ICLC Founder Secretary Line Sibtain Raza Lodhi, the event featured Syed Naseer Gilani, Chairman Development Finance, as chief guest. He said rapid population growth is a major challenge, especially for developing countries, and called for joint action by government, institutions, media and civil society. He stressed youth empowerment, women's education and health, and responsible family planning.

Speakers including Advocate Tariq Jaral Rajput and senior journalists urged greater awareness. A shield was presented to Hasana Welfare for its social services.

Punjab Plants 40 Million Saplings as CM Maryam Calls for Public Participation in Greener Future

Bureau Report

LAHORE, JULY 11: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed satisfaction over the progress of the province's plantation campaign, announcing that the Punjab Plantation Drive 2025-26 has achieved significant milestones with the planting of 40 million saplings, afforestation of 41,342 acres, and tree plantation along 3,085 avenue miles across the province.

In a post on X, the chief minister said the campaign reflects the collective efforts of the government and the people, adding that Punjab's Green Revolution has reached an unprecedented scale. She noted that barren lands from Dera Ghazi Khan to Bahawalpur are being transformed into forests, describing the initiative as the beginning of a long-term environmental transformation.

Maryam Nawaz highlighted that nearly 50 million trees were planted over 54,986 acres between April 2024 and Spring 2026 under the province's two-year afforestation mission. She

said visible improvements can now be seen across districts including Muzaffargarh, Murree, Chichawatni, Faisalabad, Rahim Yar Khan and Gujranwala.

Sharing details of major plantation sites, she said 1.815 million saplings were planted on 1,500 acres at Ghazi Ghat, Muzaffargarh, while large-scale plantation was also carried out in Rajanpur, Gujrat, Mianwali, Murree, Lal Suhanra and other forest areas.

The chief minister also highlighted the use of modern technology for forest conservation, stating that the Punjab Forest Department is protecting forests through AI-powered drones, satellite imagery, GIS mapping and a modern command-and-control centre to detect illegal logging, encroachments and forest fires.

Calling tree plantation a shared responsibility, Maryam Nawaz urged every citizen to plant at least one tree, describing forests as a national asset and emphasizing that environmental protection is essential for ensuring a greener, healthier and more sustainable Punjab for future generations.



Some livelihood

ISLAMABAD: Despite the disability an old man selling balloons at local market in the Federal Capital to earn some livelihoods for his family.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Safe Cities' "Mera Pyara" Declared Global Champion at WSIS Prizes 2026

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab's digital governance vision under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has achieved international recognition as the Punjab Safe Cities Authority's "Mera Pyara Virtual Center for Child Safety" was declared Global Champion in the E-Government Category at WSIS Prizes 2026 in Geneva, Switzerland.

COO Punjab Safe Cities Authority Captain (Retd.) Mustansar Feroz received the award on behalf of Pakistan at the ITU-organized forum. Two initiatives were recognized: "Mera Pyara" and "Virtual Women Police Station", both lauded among the world's leading digital projects.



"Mera Pyara" is an advanced platform for child protection and for reuniting

missing children, senior citizens and special persons with families using AI and digital data management. According to PSCA, it has processed over 158,000 cases, registered 28,458 FIRs, and successfully reunited more than 80,000 missing children with families.

The spokesperson said "Virtual Women Police Station" also earned global recognition for providing women safe, accessible and immediate police services, removing traditional barriers to justice.

Calling the award a matter of pride for Pakistan, PSCA said the recognition reflects global confidence in Punjab's citizen-centric, technology-driven governance model and its new standards in public safety and service delivery.

CBD Punjab Advances CBD Vertex Project with 80% Finishing Work Completed

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (CBD Punjab) has completed 80% of the finishing work on CBD Vertex, a landmark mixed-use development in the Lahore Prime CBD Quaid District. Spanning 100,000 square feet, the facility comprises two basement levels, a ground floor, and seven upper floors, with parking capacity for approximately 2,500 vehicles.

Major finishing works, including elevation tile installation, parking markings, marble works, and epoxy flooring, are progressing rapidly. CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin said the project reflects the authority's commitment to delivering world-class infrastructure that enhances urban mobility and supports Lahore's economic growth. Nearing completion, CBD Vertex will strengthen the city's commercial ecosystem and reinforce CBD Punjab's vision of developing Pakistan's most modern central business district.



Punjab Accelerates Development in 52 Cities, Prioritizing Monsoon-Ready Infrastructure, Says Minister Azma Bokhari

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari said that development, prosperity, and beautification are progressing simultaneously across Punjab under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, with the pace of development projects now significantly faster than in previous years. She stated that development schemes are being executed at an accelerated pace in 52 cities under the Punjab Development Plan. Special priority is being given to the timely completion of water supply and sewerage projects before the onset of the monsoon season to ensure that citizens do not face inconvenience during heavy rains. Azma Bokhari said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed that no excavated roads or open trenches should remain before the monsoon begins and that all ongoing development projects must be completed within the stipulated timeframe. She added that strict implementation of safety measures is being ensured throughout the execution of these projects to safeguard the public.

She noted that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz is personally monitoring the Punjab Development Plan and Beautification Projects to ensure that all schemes are completed on schedule and in accordance with the highest quality standards. Azma Bokhari highlighted that, under the Beautification Plan, beautiful parks, modern markets, and attractive city entry points have already been developed in Mandi Bahauddin, Sambrial, Chiniot, Rahim Yar Khan, and Okara. Meanwhile, beautification projects have also been completed in Sargodha, Attock, Gujranwala, Rawalpindi, Shakargarh, and Khushab. She reiterated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision is to provide every city in Punjab with modern civic facilities, high-quality infrastructure, and an attractive urban environment comparable to Lahore, ensuring that the benefits of development reach every citizen across the province equally.

NTC launches landmark Solar Infrastructure Deployment Program

ISLAMABAD: National Telecommunication Corporation (NTC) has officially launched the NTC Solar Infrastructure Deployment Program (SIDP), a landmark initiative that marks a significant milestone in the Corporation's commitment to energy efficiency, operational resilience, and environmental sustainability.

The SIDP aims to harness renewable solar energy to power NTC's offices, telecommunications exchanges, data centres, and operational facilities across Pakistan. By transitioning to clean energy, NTC seeks to substantially reduce electricity costs, enhance energy reliability, and support the Government of Pakistan's national renewable energy objectives, said a press release issued here.

To formalize the initiative, an official Contract Signing Ceremony was held in Islamabad between NTC and a consortium comprising Kasib Builders and Developers (Pvt.) Ltd., Zeeruk International (Pvt.) Ltd., and Zeeruk Energy Development (Pvt.) Ltd.

The SIDP will be implemented under the Build-Own-Operate-Transfer (BOOT) framework. Under this model, the Joint Venture will fully finance, design, install, operate, and maintain advanced solar photovoltaic (PV) systems at designated NTC sites. Upon completion of the concession period, ownership of the entire solar infrastructure will be transferred to NTC.

Beyond reducing recurring operational expenditures, the transition to solar energy will significantly lower NTC's carbon footprint while reinforcing the Corporation's commitment to environmentally responsible and sustainable operations.

Public-Private Partnership Drives Restoration of Bahawalpur Bypass and Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Chowk

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Decision to restore Bahawalpur Bypass Chowk under public-private partnership. Restoration work of No. 14 Chungi Khatm-e-Nabuwwat Chowk is also underway. Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan reviewed the construction works. MD Horticulture Agency Multan Syed Waseem Hassan and representatives of private companies briefed Commissioner Multan. Representatives of private companies were also present. On this occasion, Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan said that the squares of the city are being restored



and made beautiful. Construction projects should be completed in a quality and transparent manner. Along with the construction of monuments, landscape work and tree plantation should also be given priority. He further said that construction matters should be completed quickly and within the stipulated time. On this occasion, MD Horticulture Agency Multan Syed Waseem Hassan said that the CM is implementing the green vision of Punjab. The city is being made green and beautiful under public-private partnership. The projects will be completed quickly and in a quality manner. Tree plantation and beautification work is underway in the city.

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Population Growth and Climate Change — Pakistan Must Address Both Together

Pakistan today stands at the intersection of two defining challenges: rapid population growth and escalating climate change. While climate change often dominates public debate through discussions on floods, heatwaves, droughts, and environmental degradation, an equally important factor continues to receive insufficient attention—the country’s rapidly expanding population. Sustainable development cannot be achieved unless these two issues are addressed together through comprehensive and forward-looking policies.

With an estimated population of around 259 million and an annual growth rate of approximately 2.55 percent, Pakistan is among the fastest-growing countries in the region. If current trends continue, the population is projected to surpass 300 million within a few years and approach 400 million by 2050. Such growth will significantly increase pressure on the nation’s already stretched natural resources, infrastructure, and public services.

Every additional million people require more water, food, energy, housing, schools, hospitals, transportation, and employment opportunities. At a time when Pakistan is already facing severe water shortages, shrinking agricultural productivity, and increasing climate-related disasters, unchecked population growth acts as a “climate risk multiplier.” Greater demand for limited resources accelerates deforestation, groundwater depletion, land degradation, biodiversity loss, waste generation, and air pollution, making climate adaptation even more challenging.

The country’s demographic realities also present serious social concerns. Millions of births each year continue to strain healthcare and education systems, while maternal and child health indicators remain alarming. High fertility rates, child malnutrition, and preventable maternal and infant deaths underline the urgent need to improve access to voluntary family planning, reproductive healthcare, and quality maternal services.

Pakistan’s climate vulnerability extends far beyond flood protection projects or tree plantation campaigns. True climate resilience requires investing in people. Girls’ education, women’s empowerment, reproductive healthcare, clean drinking water, sanitation, and sustainable urban planning are all essential components of an effective climate strategy. International experience consistently shows that educated and empowered communities are better equipped to adapt to environmental challenges and manage resources responsibly.

The projected need for thousands of additional schools, millions of new homes, and over 100 million jobs by 2050 demonstrates the enormous development challenge ahead. Without strategic planning, rapid population growth could undermine economic progress, increase unemployment, and place unsustainable pressure on public finances.

Encouragingly, policymakers are increasingly recognizing the need to integrate population management with climate and development planning. However, awareness alone is not enough. Pakistan requires coordinated action involving federal and provincial governments, civil society, development partners, educational institutions, and religious leaders to promote informed decision-making, voluntary family planning, and sustainable resource management.

Pakistan contributes less than one percent of global greenhouse gas emissions, yet remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. This reality makes efficient resource management not merely an environmental concern but a national development imperative.

A resilient Pakistan will be built not only through stronger dams, greener forests, or cleaner energy, but also through healthier families, educated youth, empowered women, and balanced population growth. Integrating population policy with climate action is no longer an option—it is essential for ensuring long-term environmental sustainability, economic stability, and a better quality of life for future generations.

How America Backstabbed Iran at Hormuz - II

When a superpower publicly discusses controlling a distant maritime choke-point, boasts of secretly moving enormous oil volumes through it and subsequently supports a rival transit arrangement during an interim peace understanding, the other party is entitled to question whether it is negotiating with a peace partner or confronting an empire. Iran appears to have reached its own conclusion.

The attacks on commercial vessels were dangerous and, if deliberately directed against civilian shipping, legally indefensible. No political grievance automatically transforms an LNG tanker or crude carrier into a legitimate military target. Iran cannot demand respect for international law while disregarding the protection owed to civilian maritime traffic, and Tehran must answer for any deliberate attacks proven to have been carried out by its forces.

Condemning those attacks, however, does not require intellectual dishonesty about their strategic context. The vessels appear to have become instruments in a much larger confrontation. Iran was not necessarily attacking commercial ships because it regarded Qatar, Saudi Arabia or civilian crews as its principal enemies. Tehran appears to have been sending a brutal message that no alternative Hormuz navigation system could be operationalised by completely bypassing Iranian authority.

The ships were physically on the water, but the strategic message was directed at Washington. The United States responded with overwhelming military force, again attacking Iranian coastal radars, air defences, naval installations and IRGC assets. President Trump then declared the interim understanding effectively dead, reducing the fragile MoU to little more than a diplomatic memory.

Washington now presents this sequence as evidence that Iran cannot be trusted. Tehran, however, can legitimately ask the opposite question: at what stage was the United States trustworthy? Was it trustworthy when Trump claimed that millions of barrels of oil had been quietly moved through Hormuz while negotiations were developing and then publicly boasted about the operation?

Was Washington acting in good faith when Iran agreed to free commercial passage for 60 days and the United States subsequently backed a transit mechanism capable of neutralising Iran’s negotiating leverage? Was it respecting the spirit of an interim peace arrangement when President Trump repeatedly threatened to destroy Iranian bridges, energy supplies and critical infrastructure while negotiations towards a final agreement were still expected to continue?

A Memorandum of Understanding is not merely a collection of isolated sentences waiting to be exploited by clever lawyers. International agreements possess an object and purpose and create an expectation of good faith between the parties.

If Iran committed to opening Hormuz temporarily so that a permanent settlement could be negotiated, Washington could not reasonably expect Tehran to remain indifferent while the United States used the interim period to make Iran’s role in that permanent settlement increasingly irrelevant.

The United States may argue that Article 5 did not explicitly prohibit an alternative route through Omani waters. That is technically convenient but strategically incomplete.

The MoU also did not expressly authorise Washington and Oman to establish a separate American-protected passage capable of circumventing Iran’s approved system. The absence of an explicit prohibition cannot automatically become a licence for strategic sabotage of the agreement’s negotiating purpose.

This is where American power repeatedly collides with the international order Washington claims to lead. The United States invokes international law when demanding restraint from adversaries, yet when American strategic interests are

involved, legal principles are frequently stretched around military realities.

Freedom of navigation becomes American naval supervision, regional security becomes permanent American military presence, deterrence becomes bombing, and negotiation becomes an opportunity to reduce an adversary’s leverage before the final bargain is reached.

Then, when the weaker state reacts, Washington begins the history of the conflict from the moment of reaction. Iran attacked the ships; therefore America bombed Iran. End of story.

Such selective chronology may serve political messaging, but a serious analysis of international affairs cannot erase the actions, threats and strategic manoeuvres that created the conditions for confrontation.

The Hormuz crisis is the consequence of accumulated actions by all parties. Iran must answer for attacks on civilian vessels, but the United States must equally answer for attempting to insert itself as the decisive military power in the management of a waterway where it possesses neither coastline nor territorial sovereignty.

Hormuz belongs geographically to the region, although its safe navigation is undeniably an international concern.

Iran and Oman are the two coastal states and should therefore form the core of a transparent maritime management system. Other Gulf states should participate wherever their legitimate commercial and security interests are involved,

Continued on Page 7



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

From Claims of Change to the Reality of Privileges

The recent increase in the privileges and protections granted to members of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Assembly has once again exposed a reality of Pakistani politics that many people have sensed for years, though some were unwilling to acknowledge it. Time has stripped away every mask and laid the truth bare before the public. Those who once presented themselves as champions of change, accountability, simplicity, and public service have, upon entering the corridors of power, become part of the very political tradition they spent years criticizing. It appears that in this political arena, no one is truly different; once power is attained, principles, slogans, and promises are often replaced by privileges, authority, and personal interests.

Under the recently approved amendment to the KP Assembly Act, members of the assembly and their spouses have been granted lifetime blue passports, exemptions from toll taxes across the country, eight non-prohibited bore firearm licenses, special security arrangements, free accommodation in government rest houses, permission to display MPA plates on their private vehicles, and several other benefits. In addition, assembly members have been given the powers of a Justice of the Peace, while special penalties have been prescribed for certain offenses committed against them. Although these measures are presented as legal and administrative provisions, many citizens view them simply as another package of privileges for the ruling class.

The question is whether, at a time when ordinary Pakistanis are struggling to afford

basic necessities, pay electricity bills, provide education for their children, and cover medical expenses, granting new privileges to public representatives should really be a priority. Is this the change that people were promised? Is this the “New Pakistan” in which rulers and citizens were expected to share the same hardships? The public is increasingly asking these questions, and this is one reason why confidence in political slogans continues to decline.

The reality is that Pakistan’s problem is not merely about individuals; it is about the system itself. This system is like a salt mine. Whoever enters a salt mine, no matter how clean their clothes may be, emerges carrying traces of salt. In the same way, Pakistan’s current political, electoral, and governance structure has evolved into a system that gradually absorbs everyone who becomes part of it. At first, politicians speak of change, revolution, accountability, and reform. Yet once they gain power, they often come to regard the same privileges, powers, and entitlements once the subject of their criticism as their rightful due.

Dr. Muhammad Tahir-ul-Qadri has argued for years that the issue is not one party, one leader, or one government, but the entire system. His observation remains strikingly relevant today: “This system is such that even a diamond turns into coal.” When a system is built upon vested interests, privileges, and the concentration of power, even well-intentioned individuals can gradually become part of the same pattern. This is why every new political movement initially appears as a beacon of hope, only to be viewed a few years later as another component of the old political culture.

If some political supporters continue to

defend every decision solely out of party loyalty or personal devotion rather than acknowledging facts, it raises serious questions about political awareness and judgment. In a democracy, supporting a party or leader does not mean treating every action as beyond criticism. The true democratic spirit lies in accountability, constructive criticism, and the pursuit of reform. Unfortunately, political affiliation in our society often transforms into blind devotion, causing facts and objective analysis to fade into the background.

For the past fifteen years, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has largely remained under the rule of the same political party in various forms. This is a substantial period during which any government has ample opportunity to demonstrate its achievements. If truly revolutionary reforms had been implemented if governance, education, healthcare, employment, and justice had undergone remarkable transformation people might not question these new privileges so strongly. However, when fundamental problems remain unresolved and citizens do not experience meaningful improvements in their daily lives, announcements of additional benefits for politicians can seem like adding insult to injury.

Pakistan’s political history demonstrates that different eras have been marked by different slogans intended to inspire hope among the public. At one time, it was “Bread, Clothing, and Shelter.” At another, it was “Respect the Vote.” At other times, politics revolved around accountability or promises of change. Yet once in power, many parties followed the same path as their predecessors. This recurring pattern has contributed to growing public disappointment and diminishing faith in political rhetoric.

The fundamental question is: what is the solution? Will replacing one party with

Continued on Page 7

Manufactured Hatred: How Islamophobia Has Become State Policy in Modi’s India

Islamophobia in India is no longer confined to isolated acts of prejudice. It has evolved into a political project in which anti-Muslim rhetoric, discriminatory policies and public hostility increasingly reinforce one another. Under Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government, Muslims, the country’s largest religious minority, have been systematically portrayed as demographic threats, infiltrators and obstacles to India’s national identity. This normalization of hate has transformed prejudice into a form of governance.

The consequences are visible across the country. Following the April 2025 Pahalgam attack, Muslims faced a wave of intimidation, social boycotts and physical assaults. Among the victims were Kashmiri Muslim traders, including a shawl vendor who was attacked solely because of his Muslim and Kashmiri identity. Such incidents illustrate how political narratives translate into violence against ordinary citizens.

Independent researchers recorded a 74 percent increase in hate speech targeting minorities between 2023 and 2024, with politicians and religious figures associated with the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party responsible for many of these incidents. During the 2024 election campaign, Modi himself described Muslim migrants as “infiltrators,” language that legitimized suspicion and hostility toward Muslims far beyond electoral politics.

The discrimination extends beyond rhetoric. In 2026, authorities reportedly required mosques and madrasas in Kashmir to submit detailed information about imams, worship-

pers and their families, prompting religious leaders to condemn the measures as discriminatory profiling. Meanwhile, Reuters has documented how rising communal hostility has pushed many Muslims into segregated neighbourhoods, reinforcing social and economic exclusion.

When political leaders repeatedly frame an entire religious community as a security threat, violence becomes predictable rather than exceptional. The growing marginalization of India’s 200 million Muslims is therefore not simply the result of societal intolerance. It reflects a broader political environment in which Islamophobia has been normalized, institutionalized and increasingly embedded within the functioning of the state.

What distinguishes the current moment in India from ordinary social prejudice is the deliberateness of the political architecture behind it. Islamophobia has not merely been tolerated by the BJP government. It has been cultivated as an electoral strategy. Research on India’s 2024 election documented an explosion of coordinated online campaigns characterizing Muslims as outsiders and parasites, campaigns that were not spontaneous expressions of popular feeling but organized operations with clear political beneficiaries. When hate speech becomes a campaign tool, its consequences cannot be separated from those who deploy it.

The UN Special Rapporteurs warned in 2024 that Islamophobia globally had risen to alarming levels, with harassment, intimidation, violence and incitement based on religion

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan, Bosnia Reaffirm Commitment to Peace at Srebrenica Genocide Commemoration



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Bosnia and Herzegovina in Pakistan commemorated the 31st Anniversary of the Srebrenica Genocide with a solemn ceremony and the opening of the exhibition, “The Lives Behind the Fields of Death,” presented by the Srebrenica Memorial Center at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), Islamabad. Geographic Reference

The event was attended by Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik as the Chief Guest. Also present were the Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan, H. E. Atadjan Movlamov, members of the diplomatic community, media representatives, civil society members, and distinguished guests.

Welcoming the participants, Ambassador of Bosnia and

Herzegovina to Pakistan, H. E. Emin Cohodarević, said that relations between Bosnia and Herzegovina and Pakistan have always been cordial and friendly, adding that both countries are now making concerted efforts to transform these ties into meaningful economic cooperation.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Cohodarević said, “We are pleased that you have joined us in commemorating the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the 1995 Genocide in Srebrenica, observed on 11 July.”

He noted that this year marks the 31st anniversary of the Srebrenica genocide, during which more than 8,000 Bosnian Muslim men and boys were systematically murdered in what the United Nations has described as the worst atrocity on European soil since the Second World War. He informed the audience that ten more victims,

whose remains were recently recovered from mass graves, forests, and meadows, would be laid to rest at the Potočari Memorial Center, bringing the total number of identified victims buried there to 6,782.

The ambassador said the genocide was the culmination of years of persecution, ethnic cleansing, concentration camps, mass killings, and systematic violence against Bosniaks that began in 1992. He emphasized that despite attempts by perpetrators to conceal their crimes by relocating victims’ remains to secondary and tertiary mass graves, international investigations and judicial verdicts had established the truth beyond doubt.

He stressed that the genocide in Srebrenica has been firmly documented and legally recognized through the judgments of international and domestic courts, adding that denying



genocide cannot erase historical facts. “Our path is truth and justice, based on facts and court rulings,” he said, urging future generations to continue researching, documenting, and remembering the victims not for revenge, but for justice and human dignity.

Reflecting on global conflicts, Ambassador Cohodarević warned that the promise of “Never Again” has repeatedly been challenged, citing genocides in Rwanda and Srebrenica and expressing concern over the continuing suffering of civilians in conflict zones around the world. He called on the international community to strengthen

the culture of peace, uphold international justice, reject hatred and discrimination, and invest in education to prevent future genocides.

Expressing gratitude to Pakistan, the ambassador recalled the country’s unwavering support during Bosnia and Herzegovina’s most difficult days. He thanked Pakistan for its humanitarian assistance, diplomatic backing at the United Nations, support for Bosnian refugees, the contribution of the Pakistani Battalion during the war, post-war reconstruction assistance, and its continued friendship. He also appreciated Pakistan’s significant role in the adoption of



the United Nations General Assembly Resolution establishing the International Day of Reflection and Commemoration of the Srebrenica Genocide in May 2024, describing it as “a moral, historical and civilizational act” of global significance.

In his address, Chief Guest Barrister Aqeel Malik said the commemoration serves as a solemn reminder of the immense human cost of hatred and intolerance. He expressed solidarity with the survivors and families of the victims and reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to justice, accountability, and the protection of human dignity. Geographic Reference

Barrister Aqeel Malik said the lessons of Srebrenica should strengthen the international community’s resolve to promote peace, mutual respect, coexistence, and the prevention of future atrocities. He also inaugurated the exhibition, “The Lives Behind the Fields of Death,” which portrays the personal stories of victims and survivors, preserving the memory of one of the darkest chapters in modern history.

The ceremony concluded with a call for unity against hatred, discrimination, and genocide denial, as participants renewed their commitment to peace, justice, and ensuring that such tragedies are never repeated.

Sultana Siddiqui Reflects on Vision, Resilience and Nation Building at Quaid-e-Azam House Museum



City Desk

KARACHI: The Quaid-e-Azam House Museum (QAHM) Institute of Nation Building hosted a thought-provoking talk titled “Quaid to Camera: The Media’s Role in Nation Building” at Flagstaff House today. The session featured Sultana Siddiqui, Chair-



person of HUM Network, who shared her personal journey and insights on media, leadership, and national progress.

The event began with a welcome address by Liaquat Merchani, Senior Vice Chairman of QAHM. Ameena Saiyid, Member, Board of Governors, QAHM, introduced the speaker.

Ikram Sehgal, Vice Chairman of QAHM, delivered the concluding remarks.

Addressing a packed audience, Ms. Siddiqui spoke about how she was deeply inspired by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s vision for education and women’s empowerment. Drawing from her decades of



experience in television, she recounted her decision to resign from PTV and establish her own production company — named Moomal after her daughter-in-law — at a time when few women ventured into media entrepreneurship.

She captivated the audience as she described the challenges of

building a television network in a male-dominated industry, and the many voices that discouraged her and advised her to continue with her production company, and not establish a TV channel. Defying the odds, Sultana Siddiqui went on to become the first woman in South Asia to own and lead a television network, a



milestone that has made her a true gamechanger in Pakistani media.

The event was attended by prominent personalities including Khushbakht Shujat, Shahnaz Wazir Ali, Azad Iqbal — grandson of Allama Iqbal, Khurshid Hyder, Nasreen Jalil, Nargis Rahman, Ghazi and Sadeqa

Salahuddin, Mushtaq Chhapra, and other distinguished guests from academia, media, and civil society.

The talk underscored the vital role of media in shaping public discourse, preserving cultural identity, and advancing the Quaid’s vision of a progressive, inclusive Pakistan.

Balochistan: Pakistan’s Geoeconomic Frontier in the Global Critical Minerals Race

Abdul Raouf

For decades, Balochistan has occupied a paradoxical place in Pakistan’s national narrative. Despite constituting nearly 44 percent of the country’s landmass, it has largely been viewed through the lens of security challenges, political instability, and socio-economic deprivation. Yet beneath its rugged mountains and vast deserts lies one of the world’s most promising repositories of strategic minerals. As the global economy shifts towards renewable energy, artificial intelligence (AI), electric mobility, and advanced defence technologies, critical minerals have emerged as the “new oil” of the twenty-first century. In this evolving international political economy, Balochistan is no longer merely Pakistan’s largest province by area; it is rapidly becoming its most valuable geoeconomic asset.

The contemporary international system is witnessing a transition from traditional geopolitics to geoeconomics, where states increasingly pursue strategic objectives through trade, technology, investment, infra-

structure, and control over critical resources. Economic statecraft has become as consequential as military power. The strategic competition between the United States and China illustrates this transformation, with both powers seeking dominance over semiconductor production, resilient supply chains, and access to the critical minerals that underpin electric vehicles, renewable energy systems, and advanced military technologies. As Susan Strange argued, structural economic power increasingly shapes international influence; today, that insight is more relevant than ever.

Against this backdrop, Pakistan, and particularly Balochistan, occupies a uniquely advantageous position. The province hosts vast reserves of copper, gold, chromite, iron ore, lithium prospects, and rare earth elements, much of which lies within the Tethyan Metallogenic Belt, one of the world’s richest mineral formations stretching from Eastern Europe through Türkiye and Iran into Pakistan. What was once regarded simply as geological wealth is now increasingly recognised as geoeconomic capital capable of reshaping Pakistan’s position in global value chains.

The clearest manifestation of this potential is the Reko Diq copper-gold project in Chaghi District. Recognised as one of the world’s largest undeveloped copper-gold deposits, it contains an estimated 13.1 million tonnes of copper and 17.9 million ounces of gold, with an operational life exceeding three decades. The project is expected to generate billions of dollars in export earnings while creating thousands of direct and indirect employment opportunities. More significantly, Reko Diq has evolved from a mining venture into a strategic geoeconomic project attracting international investment and financial support from institutions such as the International Finance Corporation (IFC), the Asian Development Bank (ADB), and export credit agencies from the United States, Canada, and Japan. This broad international engagement reflects the growing strategic importance of critical minerals within emerging global supply chains.

The international political economy increasingly revolves around securing reliable access to such resources. The European Union’s Critical Raw Materials Act, the U. S.-led Minerals Security Partnership, and other critical mineral agreements demonstrate that access to strategic minerals has become central to economic security and diplomatic engagement. According to the International Energy Agency, global demand for critical minerals is expected to rise sharply as countries accelerate the transition to low-carbon technologies. Consequently, resource-rich regions such as Balochistan are assuming unprecedented strategic significance.

However, natural resource abundance alone does not guarantee prosperity. The experience of Nigeria’s oil sector and the Democratic Republic of Congo’s cobalt industry illustrates the dangers of the “resource curse,” where immense mineral wealth coexists with weak institutions, corruption, and underdevelopment. Pakistan must therefore avoid reducing its mineral wealth to a source of raw commodity exports. Instead, it should pursue a long-term strategy centred on domestic value addition through refining facilities, mineral processing industries, metallurgy research, engineering education, and downstream manufacturing. Such an approach would create skilled employment, strengthen

technological capabilities, diversify exports, and maximise the economic benefits of resource extraction.

International experience offers valuable lessons. Chile transformed copper into the backbone of its economy through institutional stability and technological investment. Australia became a trusted supplier of lithium and rare earth elements by combining private investment with transparent regulation, while Indonesia successfully promoted domestic processing by restricting raw nickel exports. These examples demonstrate that sustainable resource governance depends less on geological fortune than on sound institutions, policy continuity, and strategic vision.

Equally important is ensuring that the people of Balochistan become genuine stakeholders in this transformation. Transparent revenue-sharing mechanisms, environmental safeguards, community participation, and sustained investment in education, healthcare, water infrastructure, and vocational training are essential for inclusive development. Responsible governance is not only a moral imperative but also a strategic necessity for

maintaining political stability and investor confidence, particularly as international investors increasingly evaluate projects through Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) standards.

Beyond its mineral wealth, Balochistan’s geography significantly enhances its geoeconomic value. Bordering Iran and Afghanistan while providing direct access to the Arabian Sea through Gwadar Port, the province connects South Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East. Combined with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), this strategic location positions Balochistan as both a logistics hub and a future supplier of critical minerals to global markets. Few developing countries possess such a combination of geological abundance and strategic connectivity.

Henry Farrell and Abraham Newman describe the contemporary global order as one of “weaponized interdependence,” in which states leverage their positions within global economic networks to advance strategic interests. In this environment, control over critical minerals has become an important source of national power. Balochistan, therefore, is no longer

Pakistan’s peripheral frontier but an increasingly central pillar of its geoeconomic future.

Ultimately, the twenty-first century marks a transition from the geopolitics of oil to the geoeconomics of critical minerals. Nations that successfully integrate strategic resources into advanced industrial and technological value chains will enjoy greater economic resilience and geopolitical influence. For Pakistan, Balochistan represents a historic opportunity to redefine its place in the emerging global political economy. If managed with transparency, institutional strength, technological innovation, and inclusive development, the province can become the foundation of Pakistan’s economic renaissance. If mismanaged, it risks becoming another example of unrealised potential. The future of Balochistan and indeed Pakistan’s geoeconomic trajectory will ultimately depend not on the resources beneath its soil, but on the quality of the institutions, policy approaches, and leadership built above it.

The writer is student of BS International Relations at National Defence University, Islamabad

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
182,241.77	181,259.67
Day's High	Day's Low
183,477.57	181,880.54
Index Value	Change
27,028,481,092	+982.10
Percentage	Time
+0.54%	10 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,497.29	+24.84
Percentage	Time
+0.24%	10 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,649.86	+162.45
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	10 Jul, 1:57 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
68,557.73	+813.88
Percentage	Time
+1.20%	10 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

Oil-Producing
Countries
Interested in
Storing Oil in
Pakistan Under
Energy City Project



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar said significant progress is being made on the government's Energy City project, with several oil-producing countries showing interest in storing oil in Pakistan following recent regional tensions.

Addressing the Lahore Chamber of Commerce and Industry (LCCI), he said under the project, private companies will lease government land to establish modern oil storage facilities for duty-free storage and re-export. He noted Pakistan lacks capital for large strategic reserves, but the model will attract investment and allow reserves to be used for domestic needs during crises.

LCCI President Faheem Ur Rehman Saigol stressed Pakistan's untapped blue economy potential and called for port digitalization to cut delays and costs.

The minister said the Ministry of Maritime Affairs has implemented 100+ reforms. KPT's global ranking improved from 99th to 69th and Port Qasim to 56th, with KPT posting record profits of Rs 18.8 billion.

He added PNSC fleet capacity rose 40% with 3 new vessels. Other initiatives include a \$3-4 billion land-based LNG terminal, \$1.4 billion "Sea 2 Steel" ship-building project at Port Qasim, revival of Manora Shipyard, and new terminals.

Fisheries exports reached \$568 million. The LCCI pledged cooperation to make Pakistan a regional maritime hub.

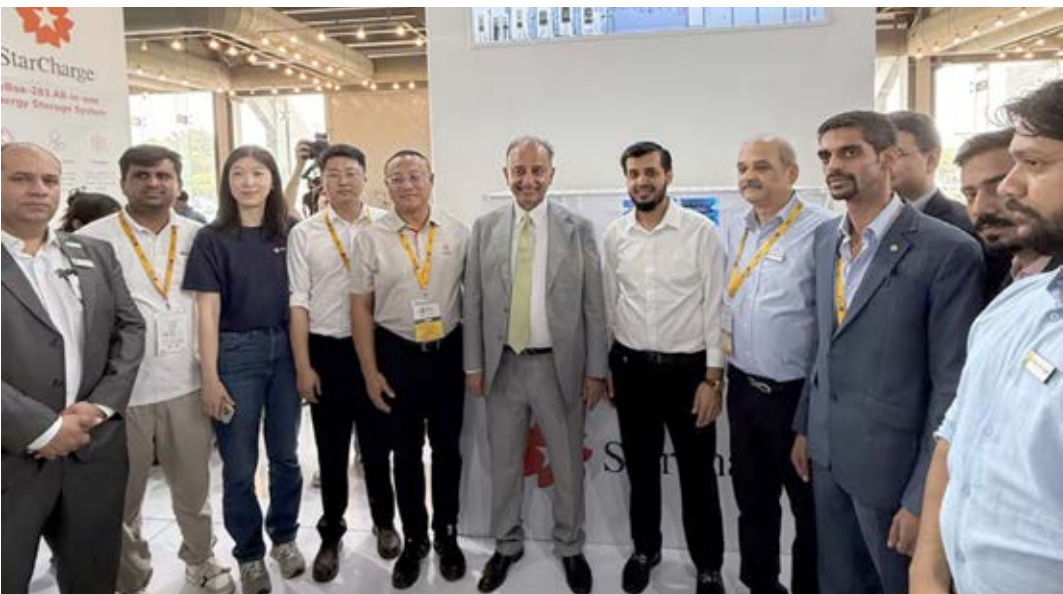
Federal Minister Dr. Musadik Malik
visits StarCharge Booth at Solar &
Storage Expo Pakistan 2026

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik visited the Solar & Storage Expo Pakistan 2026 at the Expo Centre Lahore on the second day of the exhibition.

During his visit, the Minister toured various booths of leading national and international companies participating in the expo, engaging with industry representatives and reviewing the latest advancements in renewable energy, energy storage, and sustainable technology solutions.

As part of the visit, Dr. Musadik Malik visited the StarCharge booth, where he was welcomed by Mr. Omar Malik, Director Pakistan, StarCharge. The StarCharge leadership team provided a comprehensive briefing on the company's innovative energy solutions, advanced EV charging infrastructure, and energy storage technologies designed to support Pakistan's transition towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.



towards a cleaner and more sustainable energy future.

The discussion highlighted the importance of accelerating the adoption of renewable energy technologies and modern charging infrastructure to meet the country's growing energy demands while reducing carbon emissions.

The Minister appreciated the efforts of industry stakeholders participating in the expo and emphasized the critical role of innovation, investment, and public-private collaboration in achieving Pakistan's climate and sustainability goals.

The Solar & Storage Expo Pakistan serves as a key platform for bringing together policymakers, industry leaders, technology providers, and investors to showcase emerging solutions and foster partnerships that contribute to the country's clean energy transition.

Fuel price hike

ISLAMABAD: A motorcyclist ride past the prices board of a fuel station in the Federal Capital. Following the Iran-US war the government raises petrol and high-speed diesel prices by more than Rs13 per litre, these fuel prices significantly influence the country's inflation rate.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Gold prices rise by
Rs1,100 per tola

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The prices of gold witnessed an increase in the local market on Saturday, with 24-karat gold per tola gaining Rs1,100 to settle at Rs433,536, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association.

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Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs943 to Rs371,687, whereas 10 grams of 22-karat gold rose by Rs864 to Rs340,725.

In the international market, the price of gold increased by \$11 to \$4,111 per ounce.

Meanwhile, the price of silver per tola increased by Rs30 to Rs6,462, while the price of 10 grams of silver rose by Rs26 to Rs5,540.

The price of silver in the international market also increased by \$0.30 to \$59.83 per ounce, the association reported.

2nd Sindh Energy
Diversity Conference to
Gather Energy Leaders
in Karachi on July 14

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Policymakers, industry leaders, energy experts and corporate executives will convene in Karachi on July 14 for the 2nd Sindh Energy Diversity Conference to discuss strengthening the province's energy security through indigenous resources, renewables, energy storage, net metering and clean mobility.

Organised by Energy Update, the day-long event will bring together senior representatives from the federal and Sindh governments, development partners and leading energy companies.

The conference will be formally inaugurated by Kaiser Ahmed Shaikh, Federal Minister for Board of Investment, as chief guest. Syed Nasir Hussain Shah, Sindh Minister for Local Government will deliver the keynote, while M. Naeem Qureshi, Chairman of the conference and Managing Editor of Energy Update, will give the welcome address.

"Coal and Indigenous Resources in a Transitioning World" with speakers including Shahab Qamar Ansari, Secretary Sindh Energy Department, and Aamir Iqbal, CEO SECMC - "Renewable Energy & Storage: Scaling the Future" featuring Aslam Soomro, Special Secretary Sindh Energy, and representatives of ITEL, Reon, Inverex and Gul Ahmed Energy.

Post-lunch discussions will focus on net metering, distributed energy and power sector developments, with experts from K-Electric, Petroserv OGDCL and others.

A key panel on "Electric Vehicles and Clean Mobility" will be chaired by Sharjeel Inam Memon, Sindh Senior Minister for Transport.

The conference will conclude with remarks by Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi.

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Digital Assets Should Not Be
Viewed Through a Single Lens, Says
Bilal bin Saqib



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Digital Assets and Chairman PVARA Bilal bin Saqib said on Saturday that digital assets should not be viewed

through a single lens, following talks with renowned Islamic scholar Mufti Muhammad Taqi Usmani on their Shariah status.

The discussion comes after a fatwa issued by Darul Ifta, Jamia Darul Uloom

Karachi on 24 Zilhaj 1447 AH (June 10, 2026), signed by Mufti Usmani and five other scholars, declared purchasing goods with cryptocurrency "impermissible", stating that crypto does not qualify as "wealth" based on current research.

In a post on X, Saqib said both sides are "united on one fundamental objective: protecting Pakistanis from fraud, exploitation, and financial harm."

He told Mufti Usmani that blockchain, digital assets, stablecoins, and tokenised real-world assets represent a broad spectrum of technologies and use cases. "As such, they merit careful technical assessment alongside rigorous Shariah examination, rather than being viewed through a single lens."

Saqib said he looks forward to continued engagement between scholars, regulators, and industry experts so Pakistan's approach is guided by both Islamic principles and a comprehensive understanding of emerging technologies

SECP Enables Digital
KYC Through IBAN-Based
Verification

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has introduced IBAN-based digital verification to enable faster and easier onboarding of customers, allowing investors to access financial services without unnecessary documentation and repeated verification requirements.

To facilitate this digital transformation, the SECP has amended the AML/CFT/CPF Regulations, 2020, allowing Regulated Persons,

including Securities Brokers, Futures Brokers, Insurers, Takaful Operators, NBFCs and Modarabas, to verify customers using their IBAN details for completion of KYC requirements.

The initiative is part of SECP's efforts to leverage technology for modernizing Pakistan's financial ecosystem, promoting digital access, improving ease of doing business, and ensuring secure and reliable customer verification.

The amended framework recognizes digital verification methods as an alternative to traditional processes,

enabling quicker access to regulated financial services while maintaining strong regulatory safeguards.

To strengthen investor protection and minimize the risk of unauthorized financial activity, all future transactions will be restricted to verified bank accounts held in the customer's own name, ensuring greater transparency and traceability across the market.

In line with the initiatives of the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA), the amended regulations also intro-



duce advanced biometric verification options, including facial recognition. Customer accounts linked with NADRA-blocked or impounded CNICs will be subject to immediate blocking under the revised framework.

The amendments further recognize

digital logs as valid records for AML/CFT compliance and data retention purposes, while prescribed forms have also been updated in line with the Companies Regulations, 2024.

The amended AML/CFT/CPF Regulations, 2020 are available on the SECP website.

World Bank President praises Pakistan-made sports products

News Desk

Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States Rizwan Saeed Sheikh met World Bank President Ajay Banga in Washington and presented him the official Trionda football manufactured in Pakistan.

The World Bank President praised the Pakistan-made sports products especially the Trionda football.

On the occasion, the ambassador said the high quality of Trionda and its selection for FIFA 2026 are a unique distinction and source of pride for Pakistan. He said Pakistan is playing a key role in bringing the international community closer to each other through sports.

The ambassador said the trust and cooperation of the international community is very encouraging for Pakistan's sports industry. He said Pakistan's famous city Sialkot is known across the world for manufacturing high quality sports products.

The ambassador acknowledged the significance of long-term partnership between Pakistan and the World Bank



and underscored making ongoing and future projects fruitful through mutual cooperation.

Pakistan cricket test team's WI tour preparations underway

The Pakistan Cricket Test squad's training camp at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium entered its third day as part of preparations for the upcoming tour of the West Indies.

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Test squad's training camp at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium entered its third day as part of preparations for the upcoming tour of the West Indies.

On Saturday, players took part in the second day of a scenario-based match. Prior to the start of play, the coaching staff conducted fielding drills with the squad, said a statement issued here.

During the scenario match, bowlers were being made to bowl spells under different match situations to simulate various conditions.

All players in the squad have also

been given the opportunity to bat in different pairings across both days of the match.

The Pakistan team will have a rest day on Sunday. The Pakistan Test squad would depart from Islamabad for the West Indies on July 13.

During the tour, Pakistan would play a four-day practice match in the West Indies from July 18 to 21.

The two-match ICC World Test Championship series between Pakistan and the West Indies was being scheduled from July 25 to August 10 at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Tarouba and the Queen's Park Oval in Port of Spain.



PCB, Jawad Sports Complex launch J-Text Club Cricket T20 Knockout Tournament

Sports Desk

FAISALABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), in collaboration with Jawad Sports and Cultural Complex,

has launched the J-Text Club Cricket T20 Knockout Tournament to promote grassroots cricket and identify emerging talent in Faisalabad.

Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Jawad

Sports and Cultural Complex Sheikh Jawad Afzal formally inaugurated the tournament while General Manager Mian Nadeem Ashraf Advocate, District Cricket Association President

Ejaz Farooq and officials Naveed Nazir, Mian Kashif Fareed, Adnan Anwar, Muhammad Aslam and Tariq Fareed were also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Sheikh Jawad Afzal said that the tournament was being organized in collaboration with Pakistan Cricket Board to promote cricket in Faisalabad and provide a pathway for talented youngsters to showcase their abilities.

He said that primary objective of the tournament is to provide a competitive platform for talented young cricketers and help identify promising players capable of progressing to higher levels of the game.

The event had been arranged without charging any entry fee from participating clubs, ensuring equal opportunities for players from all backgrounds to compete and demonstrate their cricketing potential, he added.

He said that total 82 registered cricket clubs from Faisalabad district are participating in the knockout competition, making it one of the largest club-level cricket events in the region.

He announced a cash prize of Rs200,000 for the championship-winning team while the runners-up would receive Rs150,000. Similarly, attractive cash awards worth hundreds of thou-

sands of rupees have been allocated for the "Player of the Tournament", "Best Bowler" and other outstanding performers, he added.

He expressed confidence that the tournament would play a significant role in strengthening the district's cricket structure and producing future stars for domestic and national cricket.

The event has also attracted the participation of national cricketers Abdul Samad, Asif Ali and Irfan Niaz, adding further excitement and competitive value to the tournament while offering aspiring players an opportunity to compete alongside experienced professionals.

From Claims of Change to the Reality of Privileges

Continued from Page 4

another solve these problems? The experience of the past seven decades suggests that simply changing faces does not bring meaningful transformation. If the system remains the same, the laws remain the same, accountability mechanisms remain ineffective, and politics continues to be viewed as a means of securing privileges rather than serving the public, then the outcomes are likely to remain unchanged. This is why systemic reform must become a national priority.

Real change will come only when public office is regarded as a responsibility rather than a source of privilege; when accountability is strong, impartial, and effective; when the

law applies equally to everyone; when elections are based on competence and integrity rather than wealth and influence; and when the public interest takes precedence over the interests of the ruling elite. This is the transformation Pakistan truly needs, and it is the path that can lead the nation out of recurring political disillusionment and economic crises.

Today, the choice before the people is not merely between political parties but between competing visions of the system itself. If the nation continues to focus only on personalities and slogans while ignoring the deeper structural issues, the challenges facing the country may become even more severe. The need of the hour is to rise above personality cults and

partisan loyalties and recognize that Pakistan's crisis is fundamentally a crisis of the system, not merely of individuals.

Until this outdated system is reformed, one group will come forward in the name of "Respect the Vote," another in the name of "Bread, Clothing, and Shelter," and another in the name of "Change," yet the public's problems will largely remain the same. Genuine salvation will only become possible when the system is built upon public welfare, accountability, transparency, and justice. That, more than anything else, is Pakistan's greatest national need today.

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Manufactured Hatred: How Islamophobia Has Become State Policy in Modi's India

Continued from Page 4

reaching a scale that demands urgent governmental response. In India, the government is not part of the response. In too many documented instances, it is part of the problem. A state whose prime minister uses the word infiltrators to describe Muslim citizens, whose allied politicians generate the majority of documented hate speech events, and whose security apparatus profiles mosques rather than protecting them, cannot credibly present itself as a neutral arbiter of communal relations.

For Kashmiris, the consequences are layered in a way that is difficult to fully convey. They face military

occupation, mass detention and the systematic suppression of political expression within their homeland. When they leave Kashmir to earn a living, they carry those identities into an India where both their faith and their origin have been made into reasons for violence. The shawl vendor beaten in a northern town is not a separate story from the activist imprisoned in Srinagar. They are two chapters of the same account: the story of a people whose identity has been designated, by deliberate political choice, as a problem to be managed rather than a community to be protected.

India calls itself the world's largest democracy. That description requires

that its 200 million Muslim citizens, and the people of Kashmir in particular, be treated as citizens with rights rather than suspects with identities. The gap between that requirement and the documented reality is no longer a matter of interpretation. It is a matter of record.

Hatred manufactured for political purposes does not stay contained. It spreads, it escalates, and eventually it demands a reckoning from those who built it.

The author is a graduate in International Relations from the International Islamic University, Islamabad and is currently serving as a researcher at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Islamabad.

How America Backstabbed Iran at Hormuz - II

Continued from Page 4

while international maritime institutions can provide technical assistance, monitoring and verification. What cannot be accepted as a permanent arrangement is the transformation of the U. S. Navy into the de facto government of the Strait of Hormuz.

America must therefore de-escalate, and de-escalation must mean more than suspending one round of air strikes. Washington should withdraw its direct armed enforcement role from the management of Hormuz and begin reducing the enormous military footprint through which the Middle East has become a permanent theatre of American power. Iran is not

located off the coast of Florida, nor did it sail an invasion fleet towards California.

If the confrontation returns to full-scale war, America and Israel may destroy more Iranian infrastructure. Much of Iran's military capacity has already suffered heavy attacks, meaning a further escalation could increasingly threaten power systems, oil installations, gas infrastructure, transportation networks and the foundations of civilian economic life. Iran would undoubtedly suffer immense pain.

Iran, however, would not suffer alone. American bases across the Middle East could come under attack, Israel would remain a primary Iranian target, Gulf infrastructure could be endan-

gered and Hormuz could again become nearly impassable. Oil and gas prices could surge, shipping insurance could become prohibitive, supply chains could fracture and inflation could sweep through economies already struggling with debt and poverty.

Millions of people who have never seen Hormuz would pay for the war through higher prices for fuel, electricity, food and transportation. Iran does not claim to be the leader of the global economic order; the United States does. Leadership carries responsibility, and a country claiming guardianship of the international system must consider the global consequences of military actions undertaken thousands of miles from its

own territory.

There remains time for diplomacy, and Pakistan should once again intervene. Islamabad should bring Washington and Tehran back towards negotiations and insist that the Hormuz dispute be separated from the wider military confrontation. Iran must stop attacks on commercial shipping, while the United States must stop bombing Iran and place the alternative Omani-side arrangement before negotiators rather than enforcing it through military power.

Iran and Oman should negotiate a single transparent navigation mechanism with the participation of concerned Gulf states and appropriate international maritime

institutions. There should be no secret routes, no unilateral Iranian coercion, no American-controlled corridor and no military power acting as a toll collector. Above all, no superpower should pretend that aircraft carriers have transformed it into a coastal state.

The United States had an opportunity to make the MoU work. Instead, it appears to have treated Iranian restraint as a strategic opening through which Tehran's last major bargaining asset could be weakened. Iran saw the emerging trap and reacted brutally; America answered with bombs, and once again the world is being told that the fire began only when Iran struck back.

The truth is harder. Wash-

ington did not merely lose Iran's trust at Hormuz. It took an agreement designed to create peace, extracted the strategic benefit it wanted, moved towards bypassing the leverage Iran expected to negotiate and then reached again for overwhelming military force when Tehran refused to accept the emerging reality.

That is not the defence of an international order. It is the conduct of a hegemon increasingly convinced that agreements bind the weak while military power liberates the strong. If the United States genuinely wants peace, it must leave the management of Hormuz principally to the states that actually border it and support a lawful regional naviga-

tion arrangement.

If Washington instead wants control, it should stop pretending that resistance to its domination is unexpected. International law cannot remain a sermon delivered by the powerful to the weak. Either the law binds every state—including the United States—or Hormuz may become the place where the world finally admits that military power, not law, has become the true ruler of the international system.

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

New academies for running, fencing, gymnastics and cycling announced

Sports Desk

LAHORE: A meeting was held under the chairmanship of DG Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi, in which a detailed review of the ongoing training activities in sports academies across the province, the performance of coaches and the capabilities of players was taken.

All sports coaches of Punjab attended the meeting, while Commissioner Inland Revenue Behzad Anwar, Director Admin Abid Shaukat, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed and other relevant officers were also present. Coaches of various sports gave a briefing on the training of players in their respective sports academies, available facilities and arrangements.

DG Sports Muhammad Tariq Qureshi announced that inter-academy competitions will be held among the players of the Chief Minister Punjab Sports Academies in August to assess the capabilities of the players and bring forward talented talent.

He said that a pool of 5,000 talented players is being prepared from all over Punjab to prepare them for national and international level competitions. He said that the National Games, Punjab Games and SAIF Games are to be held next year, in view of which, full preparation of the players is underway.

Muhammad Tariq Qureshi further said that the number of sports in the Chief Minister Punjab Sports Academies is being increased from 19 to 25, while new sports academies of running, fencing, gymnastics and cycling are also being established so that the youth can be provided opportunities to progress in more sports.



Pakistan asks US, Iran ...

Continued from Page 1

The Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding signed last month offers a viable roadmap to address all outstanding issues through diplomatic means. The two parties agreed to address issues through negotiations in order to reach a mutually acceptable settlement. Any interruption in this diplomatic process would complicate the issue further.

Pakistan urges all sides to uphold their respective commitments under the Islamabad MoU which remains an enduring foundation for understanding, mutual respect and shared prosperity for the region and beyond.

Pakistan, along with partners, has been making constructive diplomatic engagement in supporting de-escalation, ceasefire

efforts, and the broader pursuit of stability in the region. We are heartened by the expert level talks held so far and the positive progress made on issues related to the aspects of the Islamabad MoU. We look forward to continued constructive engagement between the parties.

As these sensitive negotiations continue, we should avoid any actions or messaging that may contribute to misunderstandings. All our efforts and energies should be devoted to advancing the implementation of the Islamabad MoU.

Pakistan will continue its efforts to realize the objectives of the Islamabad MoU, achievement of a comprehensive final deal and advancement of peace and security for the benefit of all in the region and beyond."

Wheat Board Metting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, chairs the 9th Wheat Board meeting to review wheat production, availability, procurement, and market prices across the country.



Photo: Online

57 member states to gather in Islamabad for 9th OIC Women’s Conference

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is preparing to host one of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation’s (OIC) most significant ministerial gatherings on women’s issues, as delegates from across the Muslim world arrive in the federal capital for the 9th Ministerial Conference on Women.

The two-day conference will take place on July 12 and 13 at the Jinnah Convention Centre under the theme, Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the OIC Countries: Challenges and Way Forward. Representatives from all 57 OIC member states are expected to participate in discussions aimed at strengthening cooperation and promoting women’s empowerment across the Islamic world.

Pakistan will formally assume the chair of the conference, with Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human



Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar presiding over the proceedings. As chair, Pakistan will lead discussions, facilitate dialogue among member states and work towards building consensus on collective initiatives to strengthen women’s rights, dignity and opportunities throughout the OIC.

Ahead of the conference, visiting

delegations were welcomed at Islamabad International Airport by Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik, Parliamentary Secretary for Human Rights Saba Sadiq, Parliamentary Secretary for Law and Justice Farah Naz Akbar, along with senior officials from the ministries of Human Rights and Foreign Affairs.

Among the senior officials attending are Saudi Arabia’s Family Affairs Council Secretary General Dr Maimoonah Khalil Alkhalil, Egypt’s National Council for Women President Amal Ammar, Bangladesh’s Women and Children Affairs Minister Abu Zafar Md. Zahid Hossain, Iraq’s Vice President for Women and Family Affairs Dr Zainab Al-Mulla Al-Sultani, Libya’s Minister of State for Women’s Affairs Grebe Randa, Yemen’s Minister Dr Ahed Mohammed Jassous, Nigeria’s Women Affairs Minister Imaan Sulaiman-Ibrahim, Somalia’s Minister for Family and Human Rights Development Khadija Makhzoumi, and Mauritania’s Social Affairs Ministry Secretary General Hamoudi Cheikhna Ali.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar welcomed the visiting delegates in a message posted on X, expressing hope that they would have productive discussions and a memorable stay in Islamabad.

BESS Key to Pakistan’s Energy Transition and Grid Stability, Says Minister Leghari

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, JULY 11: Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari said Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) will play a pivotal role in Pakistan’s energy transition by enhancing grid stability, supporting renewable energy integration, and enabling wider adoption of electric vehicles.

Addressing the BESS Conference organized by the Pakistan Solar Association in Lahore, he said the rapid



expansion of rooftop solar has shifted demand patterns, with lower daytime use and higher evening consumption. BESS

can store surplus daytime solar and supply it during peak hours, improving grid flexibility and reducing reli-

ance on costly peaking plants.

Leghari announced the government has declared battery storage a strategic priority and formed a Federal Steering Committee on BESS to formulate a coordinated national policy. He stressed that only IEC-certified battery modules should be imported or manufactured to ensure safety and reliability.

The minister said BESS has immense potential for Gilgit-Baltistan’s isolated grids, Gwadar, remote areas, and the national transmission network.

He added that the Ministry of Industries and Production is developing a BESS Manufacturing Policy to promote local production, technology transfer, and job creation, with the goal of making Pakistan a regional hub for battery manufacturing and innovation.

Calling for collaboration among all stakeholders, Leghari said the future power sector will be shaped by renewables, digitalization, distributed generation, battery storage, and electric mobility.

Sexual harassment at educational institutions is breach of law, human dignity: SC

News Desk

The Supreme Court (SC) on Saturday declared sexual harassment at educational institutions a blatant violation of law, morality and human dignity, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

In a 12-page verdict, authored by Justice Muhammad Ali Mazhar, educational institutions were ordered to introduce a robust system to stop incidents of harassment.

The apex court said that a secure environment should be provided to the female students at these institutions. “Any institution that tolerates sexual harassment deviates from its track,” it said, adding that it was incumbent upon the heads of these institutions to make the envi-



ronment at campuses safe and secure. The SC observed that leniency

in the case of allegations of serious nature could amount to encouraging

the harasser.

The court ordered that an in-house inquiry committee be set up at all educational institutions. “Every female teacher should be given an opportunity to lodge her complaint.”

The SC rejected the appeal filed by a former headmistress of Faisalabad’s Government Special Education Center Shazia Iqbal.

There was an allegation against Shazia that she had allowed a speech therapist Kamran Khan to stay at the center illegally.

As per an inquiry report, Khan was a habitual harasser who would blackmail female teachers. And despite the fact that teachers repeatedly complained to her about the speech therapist’s conduct, Shazia took no action against him.

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PM Shehbaz forms committee for appointment of GB governor

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday constituted a three-member committee, headed by Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar, to oversee political and administrative matters in Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) as well as to speed up the process of appointment of the territory’s governor.

Sources told that other members of the committee were Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Amir Muqam and Rana Sanaullah, who would finalize the name of the candidate for the position of the governor.

Sources further said that the PML-N had hinted at selecting the candidate from GB.

For that, they added, the committee would put forward the names of persons, who could be the possible candidates, to the party’s high command.

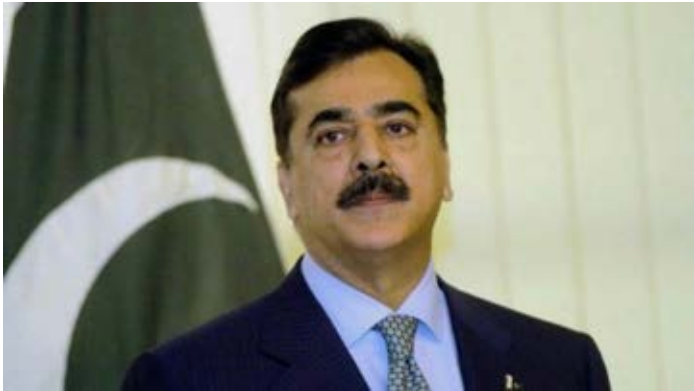
Former prime minister and PML-N President Nawaz Sharif



had directed that a party loyalist be selected as a candidate for the coveted post, sources said, adding that Ameer Muqam had already swung into action and was making contacts with the party leaders in GB.

The committee members would meet soon to finalize the process.

Chairman Senate Gillani Stresses Youth Empowerment on World Population Day



Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani said World Population Day underscores the need to invest in youth and create opportunities for them to realize their potential. Referring to this year’s theme, “Realizing the hopes and aspirations of young people – today and for the future,” he stated that empowering youth is key to Pakistan’s sustainable development and prosperity.

Gillani noted Pakistan’s large youth population is a national asset.

With quality education, healthcare, skills training, and jobs, young people can drive economic growth and social progress.

He warned rapid population growth is straining education, health, employment, and water resources. He urged effective population management, family planning awareness, better maternal and child health, and investment in human capital. He reaffirmed Parliament’s commitment to population stabilization, gender equality, and achieving SDGs.

DPM, Maldives FM discuss regional developments

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Saturday held a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Maldives Dr. Iruthisham Adam and exchanged views on regional and international developments.

DPM/FM congratulated Dr. Adam on the forthcoming 61st anniversary of the Maldives’ Independence.

Foreign Minister Adam appreciated Pakistan’s role in mediating the



Iran-US conflict.

While reaffirming their shared commitment to further strengthening the longstanding bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and the Maldives, the two leaders agreed to remain in close contact.

DPM/FM for further global, regional levels efforts to promote Pakistan’s economy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, emphasised the importance of intensifying efforts at the international and regional levels to promote Pakistan’s economy, including through enhanced compliance with international standards and obligations.

The DPM/FM chaired an Inter-Ministerial meeting to review

Pakistan’s efforts to enhance economic diplomacy, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, the Secretaries of Foreign Affairs and the Cabinet Division, and senior officials from relevant departments.

During the meeting, the DPM/FM reaffirmed government’s commitment to sustainable economic stabilization and instructed all stakeholders to intensify their efforts in this regard.