



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ہے
مہنگے گناہوں سے بچو۔ صحابہ نے عرض
کیا: یا رسول اللہ! وہ کیا گناہیں؟ نبی کریم صلی
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President Aliyev highlights Pakistan's role in regional peace

President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev said Pakistan could play the most effective mediating role in any conflict involving the United States and Iran, while crediting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their efforts to support peace and dialogue in the region.



China calls for early restoration of safe navigation in Strait of Hormuz

China called for the early restoration of safe and free navigation through the Strait of Hormuz after Iran said it would review requests for vessel transit through the strategic waterway once the regional security situation stabilizes. Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian made the remarks at a daily news briefing in response to a question about Iran's latest announcement regarding the Strait of Hormuz, following another wave of exchanges of strikes involving the US.

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Condolences

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif visits Lusail Palace in Doha to offer condolences to Amir of Qatar H.E. Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani on the demise of Father Amir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz, Nawaz offer condolences to Qatar's emir over former ruler's death

Spokesman Report

DOHA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid a day-long visit to Doha on Monday to personally convey condolences on behalf of the government and people of Pakistan over the passing of Qatar's Father Emir, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The prime minister was accompanied by former prime minister Nawaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign

Minister Ishaq Dar, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar and other senior officials.

During the visit, PM Shehbaz and the Pakistani delegation called on Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani and expressed their heartfelt condolences on the demise of the Father Emir.

The prime minister paid tribute to Sheikh Hamad's visionary leadership, statesmanship and lasting contributions to Qatar's transformation,



as well as to regional peace,

stability and development.

Recalling the late leader's longstanding ties with Pakistan, PM Shehbaz praised his warmth, kindness and enduring affection for the country, noting his many memorable visits over the years.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering solidarity with the leadership and people of Qatar during their time of grief and prayed that Allah Almighty grant the departed leader the

highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdaus while giving strength to the royal family and the people of Qatar to bear the loss.

Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim thanked PM Shehbaz, Nawaz Sharif, Deputy PM Ishaq Dar and the accompanying delegation for travelling to Doha to offer condolences in person.

He described the gesture as a reflection of the deep-rooted fraternal ties and longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Qatar.

NA Law Committee Defers ADR Amendment Bill Over Authority Concerns

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Law and Justice deferred an amendment bill on alternative dispute resolution after members raised concerns that it would transfer parliamentary authority to the federal government.

Chaired by Chaudhry Mahmood Bashir Virk, the meeting saw strong opposition to provisions giving the executive powers currently held by Parliament.

Alia Kamran opposed the move, asking "Why should we hand over our authority to the government?" She warned

parliamentary scrutiny would be limited once powers were transferred, citing the petroleum levy as an example of weak accountability. Kamran also criticised the government's performance in delivering speedy justice and said members were not being given enough time for a final review of legislation.

Law Ministry Secretary Raja Naeem Akbar defended the bill, saying ADR would only proceed with both parties' consent and was meant to facilitate settlements and reduce pressure on courts.

Nafisa Shah asked for statistics on public benefits from ADR courts, including cases settled,

time taken, and effectiveness. The committee directed the government to submit data on ADR settlements to assess improvements in access to justice.

Following the debate, further consideration of the bill was postponed until the data is provided and members can examine the provisions.

Naqvi Hails Security Forces After Successful 'Operation Shaban' in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid tribute to Pakistan's security forces for what he described as the successful Operation Shaban against militants in Balochistan, praising their professionalism and resolve in ongoing counterterrorism operations.

In a statement, Naqvi commended the Pakistan Army, Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan, and police for their joint operation, which he said resulted in the

killing of five more militants. He also praised the security forces for carrying out effective ground and aerial operations against militant elements.

The interior minister said the campaign against what he referred to as "Fitna al-Hindustan" would continue until the complete elimination of the group's militants from Pakistan.

He said those seeking to undermine peace in Balochistan were being brought to justice and asserted that the entire nation stood firmly alongside the coun-

try's security forces in the fight against terrorism.

Naqvi added that the reported killing of 114 militants in Operation Shaban and other intelligence-based operations so far reflected the high level of preparedness, professionalism, and operational readiness of Pakistan's security forces.

He further said that those responsible for shedding innocent blood in Balochistan deserved no leniency, reiterating the government's commitment to restoring peace and stability in the



province.

DPM meets UNSG candidate Carolyn Birkett, reaffirms Pakistan's support for UN's central role

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Moham-

mad Ishaq Dar on Monday met Candidate for the position of United Nations Secretary-General, Carolyn Rodrigues Birkett and reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the central role of the UN in international affairs.

During the interaction, the deputy prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's longstanding commitment to multilateralism and the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

He underscored the need

to ensure respect for international law and treaties, and to faithfully implement UN Security Council resolutions, especially in the context of the long-



standing Jammu and Kashmir dispute and the situation in Palestine.

The DPM/FM also called for necessary steps to adapt the UN to emerging global challenges, as well as to address the needs of the developing countries.

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir arrived in Turkiye on Monday for a two-day official visit, where he is set to hold high-level meetings with the country's military and political leadership.

According to security sources, the Field Marshal received a warm welcome on his arrival. His meetings will focus on matters of mutual interest, including regional security and bilateral defence cooperation.

State-run Pakistan Television and the Associated Press of Pakistan also confirmed the visit and the scheduled meetings.

The visit comes weeks after General Metin Tokel, commander of the Turkish Land Forces, travelled to Pakistan and held talks with Field Marshal Munir.

According to the Inter-Ser-



vices Public Relations (ISPR), the two sides discussed the evolving regional security environment and explored ways to further strengthen bilateral defence cooperation. During the visit, General Tokel also met Pakistan's naval and air chiefs.

Earlier this month, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif visited Turkiye, where discussions with the Turkish leadership centred on expanding economic, trade and strategic cooperation, underscoring the growing partnership between the two countries.

78 children diagnosed with HIV in Karachi hospital outbreak

Bureau Report

KARACHI: At least 78 children have been diagnosed with HIV following an outbreak at Karachi's Kulsum Bai Valika Hospital, run by the Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution. The outbreak first came to light in October 2025 after six children tested positive.

An inquiry found serious breaches of infection-control protocols in the paediatrics department, including lack of SOPs, poor sterilisation, improper medical waste disposal, shortages of disposable supplies, and weak patient monitoring. Investigators also found evidence of improper handling of single-use syringes.

Presiding over a meeting on Monday, Sindh CM Murad Ali Shah announced a Rs2 billion Endowment Fund for treatment, welfare, rehabilitation and long-term care of the



affected children. He declared zero tolerance for negligence, stating "lives of children are sacred."

37 officers and employees, including doctors, nurses, and administrators, have been suspended with show-cause notices. An ART Centre has been set up at the hospital, HIV protocols introduced across SSSI facilities, and routine HIV screening made mandatory.

Prof Dr Fatima Mir of AKUH has been engaged for specialised care. More than 300 staff were screened, with 2 testing positive. A third-party audit of procurement and infection control is underway.

APHC and Liberation Cell Hold Event to Commemorate Kashmir Martyrs’ Day

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: An event organized by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the Liberation Cell marked Kashmir Martyrs’ Day to pay tribute to the martyrs of 13 July 1931 and reaffirm support for the Kashmiri people’s struggle. Speakers said the 1931 martyrs strengthened the foundations of the freedom movement through their sacrifices, leaving a legacy that continues to inspire generations. They noted the movement has been sustained through decades of determination.

Attendees said the events of 1931 awakened Kashmiris to unite for political, religious, and civil rights, and later conflicts further reinforced their resolve. Emphasis was placed on educating younger generations through seminars, study circles, and responsible



social media use.

Participants stressed that political disputes cannot be resolved by force and called for dialogue, mutual respect, tolerance, and democratic values. Concern was expressed over the human rights situation in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, including alleged demographic changes and detention

of political leaders. The international community, UN, and human rights bodies were urged to ensure Kashmiris can exercise self-determination under UN resolutions.

The gathering was attended by former AJK President Sardar Masood Khan, former APHC Conveners Farooq Rehmani and Mahmood

Ahmad Saghar, Senator Zarqa Suharwardy, Hurriyat leaders, political and social figures, students, and others. The event concluded with a prayer by senior journalist Raja Bashir Usmani for Kashmir martyrs, Pakistan Armed Forces martyrs, and peace. Certificates were distributed to KIIR interns by Sardar Masood Khan.

JKDFP Pays Tribute to 13 July 1931 Martyrs, Reaffirms Commitment to Justice

 **Spokesman Report**

SRINAGAR/MUZAFFARABAD: The Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) paid tribute to the 22 martyrs of 13 July 1931, who were killed by Dogra forces while calling the Azan, calling it a defining chapter in Kashmir’s history.



Spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal said their sacrifice inspired generations to continue the peaceful struggle for justice, religious freedom, and the right to self-determination. He recalled that over 250,000 Muslims were killed in the 1947 Jammu massacres and more than 100,000 Kashmiris have died since 1989, with thousands facing enforced disappearances and detention.

Iqbal condemned restrictions imposed after 5 August 2019, including the abolition of Martyrs’ Day holiday and limits on commemorations, stating that “history cannot be erased through coercion.”

He urged the UN and international human rights bodies to address rights violations, release political prisoners, and facilitate a just resolution in line with Kashmiri aspirations. JKDFP pledged to continue its peaceful democratic struggle.

Jammu and Kashmir Community Int’l pays tribute on Kashmir Martyrs’ Day

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Jammu and Kashmir Community International leaders said that 13 July, Kashmir Martyrs’ Day, remains an unforgettable chapter in the Kashmiri struggle for freedom and self-determination.

In a joint statement, Raja Zareen Khan, Ghulam Nabi But, and Sardar Kamran Azam recalled that on 13 July 1931 outside Srinagar Central Jail, Dogra forces fired on protesters reciting the Azan, martyring 22 young Kashmiris who stepped forward one by one to complete it.

The organization paid tribute to the 1931 martyrs and all others in the freedom movement, saying Kashmiris have offered unmatched sacrifices from Dogra rule to present-day Indian domination.

It called on the UN, international community, and human rights organizations to address ongoing rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir and help secure the right to self-determination per UN resolutions.

The group reaffirmed that Kashmiris worldwide will continue their peaceful, democratic, and legal struggle until that right is achieved.

AJK Muslim Conference Pays Tribute to 13 July 1931 Martyrs

 **Spokesman Report**



RAWALPINDI: Ms. Mehr-un-Nisa, Secretary General of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Deputy Speaker of AJK Legislative Assembly, paid tribute to the martyrs of 13 July 1931, calling it a historic turning point in the Kashmir freedom movement.

Addressing election gatherings in Rawalpindi, she said thousands had gathered outside Srinagar Central Jail where 22 Kashmiris were killed while attempting to complete the Azan after being shot one after another. She termed the incident a defining moment that strengthened Kashmiri resolve.

Ms. Mehr-un-Nisa stated that despite developments after 5 August 2019, including the revocation of Articles 370 and 35A, Kashmiris remain steadfast in pursuing their right to self-determination.

She added that the sacrifices of 13 July continue to inspire new generations and reiterated that the struggle will continue until Kashmiris can exercise self-determination in accordance with UN resolutions.

Flood preparedness exercise

LAHORE: Volunteers of Muslim Rescue Mission take part in flood preparedness mock exercise at River Ravi to assess emergency response capabilities ahead of monsoon season, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

APHC Holds Rally in Muzaffarabad to Mark Kashmir Martyrs’ Day

 **Spokesman Report**

MUZAFFARABAD – BUREAU REPORT: The All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), in collaboration with the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell, organized a rally to commem-

orate Kashmir Martyrs’ Day and pay tribute to the martyrs of 13 July 1931.

The rally was led by Ghulam Muhammad Safi, APHC Convener, Syed Shahid Mohi-ud-Din, Secretary Kashmir Cause, and Shaukat Javed Mir, AJK Government Spokes-

person. Participants marched to the UNMOGIP office and submitted a memorandum urging the UN to uphold commitments under relevant UN resolutions and take note of human rights concerns in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.

Speakers including Parvez Ahmad Shah, Dr. Raja Sajjad Khan, Sardar Sajid Mahmood, and others described the 1931 sacrifices as a defining chapter of the Kashmir movement.

They reiterated support for a peaceful, just resolution per UN Secu-



rity Council resolutions and called on the international community to

promote peace, stability, and human rights in the region.

Mujahid-e-Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan: A Statesman, A Vision, An Enduring Legacy

 **Tanveer-ul-Salam**

Some personalities are not merely recorded in the pages of history—they become history through their character, vision, and lifelong service. Their identity is defined not by the offices they hold but by the principles they uphold throughout their lives. Mujahid-e-Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan was one such transformative leader who dedicated his life to principled politics, public service, and the preservation of human dignity.

10 July 2015 marked the passing of a statesman whose political wisdom, steadfastness, and commitment to principles shaped public life for decades. His demise was not simply the loss of a political leader; it marked the conclusion of an intellectual and moral journey in which politics was viewed as a noble responsibility founded upon service, integrity, and ethical values.

For Mujahid-e-Awwal, politics was never a means of acquiring power; it was a sacred national trust. He believed that the true purpose of leadership was to serve the people, uphold justice, and build a better future. The Kashmir dispute remained the central theme of his political thought, which he approached not through emotion alone but with wisdom, reason, and strategic foresight.

I was fortunate to benefit from his companionship, guidance, and affection. On several occasions, I had the privilege of accompanying him during meetings with prominent national personalities. Those discussions revolved not around personal or partisan interests but around national affairs, public welfare, and the future of the people.

From close observation, I learned that even in the face of disagreement, he consistently preferred dialogue, reason, and tolerance. He firmly believed that enduring solutions to complex problems emerge not from confrontation but from wisdom, patience, and meaningful engagement. This was perhaps the defining feature of his political vision.

One particular incident remains vividly etched in my memory and, I believe, will remain with me forever.

One day, he called me and asked me to meet his eldest son, Sardar Khaliq Ahmed Khan. During that meeting, I was informed of a proposal for which every possible support and guidance was assured. With utmost respect, however, I declined the proposal.

Some time later, Mujahid-e-Awwal himself raised the matter with me. When he asked why I had declined, I respectfully explained my reasons. He remained silent for a few moments and then, with remarkable calmness,



conviction, and dignity, said:

“I am a sinful man, but I wish to stand before Almighty Allah with justice.”

That brief sentence became, for me, the reflection of his entire personality.

At that very moment, I realized that justice, in his eyes, was not merely a political principle. It was a religious, moral, and personal obligation—one that stood above relationships, expediency, and personal interests. It was this unwavering commitment to justice and principle that inspired in me a lasting bond of affection, respect, and goodwill for his family—a bond that the passage of time and changing circumstances have never diminished.

I firmly believe that history seldom

produces individuals of such character. For this reason, I consider it my moral duty to preserve this incident as part of his legacy.

The words of the French philosopher Voltaire have always echoed in my mind:

“A man owes nothing to the living but respect, and nothing to the dead but the truth.”

Guided by this sense of responsibility, I wish to preserve this episode for history. At the same time, my upbringing and values teach me to respect the trust and confidence of his son, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan. Therefore, I am deliberately withholding the complete details today. It is for him to decide whether this histor-

ical trust should remain private or be preserved for future generations.

My only wish is that this remarkable glimpse of Mujahid-e-Awwal’s character should eventually become part of the historical record, for the true inheritance of nations is not buildings, offices, or political power. A nation’s greatest legacy is the character of those who become a source of guidance and inspiration for generations to come.

The recognition of Mujahid-e-Awwal’s political wisdom was not confined to Pakistan and Kashmir alone. I had the honour of meeting and receiving guidance from the late Grand Mufti of Saudi Arabia, Sheikh Abdul Aziz bin Baz. On one occasion, while discussing the situation in Kashmir, he remarked with remarkable foresight:

“The people of Kashmir should fully benefit from the intelligence, wisdom, and vast political experience of Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan.”

Years later, after working closely with Mujahid-e-Awwal and witnessing his statesmanship firsthand, I came to appreciate the depth of that observation.

Another defining aspect of his personality was his devotion to humanitarian service. He quietly assisted those in need, safeguarded people’s dignity, and never sought publicity for his charitable work. Despite occupying the highest public offices, he remained

humble, simple, and deeply compassionate.

Even years after his passing, his true legacy lies not in the positions he held but in the values he embodied. His life demonstrated that the greatness of politics lies in principles rather than power; that leadership derives its strength from integrity; and that dialogue, tolerance, and wisdom provide the only lasting path to resolving differences.

Time will continue to pass, and generations will come and go, but Mujahid-e-Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan will always be remembered as a leader who devoted his life to principles, public service, and national responsibility. For me, his greatest distinction was never the offices he held, but the character I witnessed firsthand—a man who consistently placed principles above expediency, justice above personal interest, and dialogue above confrontation.

May Almighty Allah grant Mujahid-e-Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan eternal peace and the highest place in His mercy, and may He enable us to follow his example of integrity, steadfastness, justice, and selfless service to humanity. Ameen. This version preserves the original meaning while using polished, publication-quality English suitable for newspapers, magazines, or commemorative journals.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:26 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:20 pm
Isha 9:01 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

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

WASA Toba Tek Singh MD Reviews Monsoon Emergency Preparedness



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: WASA Managing Director Chaudhry Kamran Kahlon visited the Monsoon Emergency Camp to inspect staff attendance, machinery, equipment, disposal systems, and overall emergency readiness.

During a briefing on the Monsoon Emergency Plan, duty roster, and availability of dewatering machines, generators, suction machines, and water pumps, he directed officials to keep all machinery fully operational for immediate rainwater drainage.

Kahlon ordered officers and field teams to remain on high alert round the clock during monsoon. He stressed continuous monitoring of disposal stations, special focus on low-lying and vulnerable areas, and zero tolerance for delays or negligence in drainage operations.

He also directed that the WASA Control Room stay fully functional for prompt complaint redressal and instructed staff to maintain coordination for swift response.

The MD said timely relief and rainwater drainage are WASA's top priorities and reaffirmed commitment to use all resources to serve citizens during the monsoon.

CM, Portuguese envoy discuss stronger bilateral ties, investment cooperation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Portuguese Ambassador Paulo Domingues called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday and agreed to further strengthen bilateral relations, with both sides discussing cooperation in trade, agriculture, livestock and other sectors of mutual interest.

During the meeting, the two sides reviewed a proposal to establish a Pakistan-Portugal Business Forum to promote business and investment ties. The chief minister invited Portuguese companies to invest and do business in Punjab and assured the ambassador of expanding cooperation in tourism and other areas of shared interest.

The ambassador appreciated Pakistan's constructive role in the Iran-US negotiations and lauded the provincial government for establishing the country's first public-sector cancer hospital. He also acknowledged Punjab's record achievements in the health sector.

The meeting also featured detailed discussions on declaring Lahore and

Lisbon as twin cities to promote cultural and educational exchanges. Ambassador Domingues praised the cuisine of Lahore and the hospitality of its people and invited the chief minister to visit Portugal.

CM Punjab said there was considerable scope to further expand the long-standing bilateral relations between Pakistan and Portugal.

She observed that Punjab and Portugal had significant potential for cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector, energy, water resources, healthcare and digital innovation.

The chief minister noted that a large number of young Pakistanis admired Portuguese football star Cristiano Ronaldo.

She said promoting Portuguese culture, heritage, language and academic exchanges could further strengthen people-to-people contacts. She added that there was ample room to enhance tourism, cultural exchanges and mutual understanding between the two countries, and that Pakistan and Portugal would advance their enduring relationship through



institutional cooperation.

Ambassador Domingues said he acknowledged Pakistan's diplomatic

role in promoting lasting peace and stability in the Middle East and assured that Portuguese authorities

would provide a favourable environment for Pakistani investors seeking business opportunities in Portugal.

Mango Festival

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch cutting the cake during inaugural of Mango Festival at local hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

S&P Global Pakistan and TiE Islamabad Launch “Project Elevate” to Mentor 600+ Young Professionals

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: S&P Global Pakistan and The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) Islamabad have launched Project Elevate, a three-year mentorship initiative to develop over 600 young Pakistanis.

The program will run in three annual cohorts of 200 participants each, targeting university students, early-career professionals, entrepreneurs, and freelancers.

Participants will receive one-on-one and group mentorship from S&P Global and TiE mentors, corporate readiness training in communication and leadership,



career workshops in financial services, technology, and data analytics, plus networking access to S&P Global and TiE's entrepreneurial community.

Mujeeb Zahur, Managing Director S&P Global Paki-

stan, said the project invests in talent to drive economic value locally and globally.

Atta Rehman, Senior Regional People Advisor, added it will provide skills, visibility, confidence, and a

lasting professional community.

Project Elevate aligns with S&P Global's commitment to building leadership and learning capabilities for Pakistan's workforce.

CM Maryam Nawaz Expresses Grief over Demise of Former Qatari Emir Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Sani

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed grief over the demise of former Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

The chief minister extended her heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved family over the irreparable loss.

AIOU Inks Strategic Partnership with TANG China for Skills and Technology Education



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University and TANG Chinese International Education & Technology (Pvt.) Ltd. have signed a Letter of Intent to strengthen academic collaboration between Pakistan and China. The partnership will focus on joint academic programs, faculty and student exchanges, Chinese language promotion, collaborative research, advanced skills training, and stronger university-industry linkages.

The LOI was signed by AIOU Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood and TANG CEO Mr. Song Jianying.

Speaking at the ceremony, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said young people with modern technology and skills are the strength of the future. He stressed that universities must equip students with quality education and internationally relevant competencies to meet global challenges.

He added that the collaboration would enable innovative, skills-oriented programs aligned with workforce needs and expressed hope for establishing a Chinese Language and Culture Centre at AIOU. The university already runs centers for Turkish, Japanese and Russian languages, and a Chinese center would further strengthen educational and cultural ties between Pakistan and China.

Highlighting bilateral relations, he said the enduring Pakistan-China friendship continues to grow and education is key to passing it on to future generations.

Mr. Song Jianying said AIOU is an ideal partner for technology-driven, skills-based education in Pakistan. He expressed confidence that the collaboration would open new avenues for academic, research and technological cooperation while equipping youth with globally competitive skills.

Dr. Saima Nasir, Director Quality Enhancement Cell, said the LOI reflects AIOU's commitment to expanding international partnerships and will provide valuable academic and research opportunities for students and faculty.

The ceremony was attended by AIOU deans, professors, department heads and principal officers.

NUML Confers Honorary PhD on Muslim World League Secretary General Dr. Al-Issa

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages held its 3rd Special Convocation 2026 to confer an Honorary Doctor of Philosophy degree upon H. E. Dr. Mohammad Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League. The award recognized his outstanding contributions to humanity, global peace, interfaith harmony, moderation, and the promotion of knowledge.

The ceremony was attended by Saudi Ambassador Nawaf Bin Said Al-Malki, Minister of State for Federal Education Dr. Wajihah Qamar, NUML Rector Major General Shahid

Mahmood Kayani HI(M) (Retd), DG NUML Brigadier Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Pro-Rector Dr. Safer Awan, deans, faculty, scholars, students and other distinguished guests.

Receiving the degree, Dr. Al-Issa expressed gratitude to NUML, calling it both an honour and a responsibility. He said he was delighted to visit Pakistan and appreciated its hospitality.

He lauded Pakistan's constructive role in promoting regional and global peace, calling it a source of pride for the Muslim world. He also appreciated Pakistan's leadership, including the Field Marshal and political leadership, for efforts toward peace, stability and unity. He prayed for Pakistan's

continued peace, progress and prosperity.

Rector Major General Shahid Mahmood Kayani said universities preserve civilization's wisdom and cultivate society's conscience. He noted that academic collaboration, language education and intercultural understanding bring nations closer, and that Dr. Al-Issa's presence symbolizes enduring Pakistan-Saudi Arabia bonds and a shared commitment to knowledge, moderation and dialogue.

Dr. Wajihah Qamar commended Dr. Al-Issa's efforts in promoting interfaith harmony, Muslim unity, and global peace and tolerance. She also praised NUML's role in promoting



languages and intercultural understanding, and underscored the longstanding brotherly relations

between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia in advancing regional peace and cooperation.

Dr. Al-Issa recorded remarks in the Visitors' Book, followed by a group photograph.

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Digital Compliance Platform Can Transform Pakistan’s Export Competitiveness

Pakistan’s ambition to expand exports and strengthen its position in global markets depends not only on increasing production but also on meeting the growing compliance and traceability requirements of international buyers. In this context, the proposed National Digital Compliance & Traceability Platform represents a timely and strategic initiative that could significantly improve the country’s business environment while enhancing its global competitiveness.

The platform, being developed through collaboration between the International Labour Organization (ILO), the National Compliance Centre (NCC), the Ministry of Commerce, and key public and private stakeholders, is designed to simplify compliance procedures for businesses through a single digital gateway. At a time when international markets increasingly demand transparency, responsible business practices, and supply chain accountability, such a system is no longer a luxury—it is an economic necessity.

For years, Pakistani businesses, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), have struggled with fragmented regulatory requirements, excessive paperwork, and multiple compliance procedures. These challenges increase operational costs, discourage formalization, and limit access to lucrative international markets. A unified digital platform has the potential to streamline these processes, reduce administrative burdens, and provide enterprises with easier access to reliable compliance information.

Equally important is the growing emphasis on supply chain traceability. Consumers and regulators worldwide are demanding greater transparency regarding the origin of products, labour standards, environmental practices, and ethical sourcing. Pakistan’s exporters, especially those in textiles, agriculture, leather, and manufacturing, must adapt to these evolving expectations if they wish to maintain and expand their market share.

The proposed platform also aligns with Pakistan’s broader economic priorities, including improving enterprise formalization, strengthening responsible business conduct, and supporting sustainable economic growth. Compliance is no longer viewed merely as a regulatory obligation; it has become a competitive advantage that builds trust among international buyers and investors.

Another significant aspect of the initiative is its relevance to Pakistan’s continued access to preferential trade arrangements, particularly under the European Union’s GSP+ framework. As global markets move towards digital product traceability and stricter sustainability standards, Pakistan must modernize its regulatory infrastructure to remain a preferred trading partner.

The consultative approach adopted in developing the platform deserves appreciation. Bringing together government institutions, employers’ organizations, industry representatives, and technical experts ensures that the system will be practical, efficient, and responsive to the needs of businesses. Integrating the platform with existing national digital systems can further improve coordination among regulatory authorities and strengthen evidence-based policymaking.

The success of this initiative, however, will depend on effective implementation. Adequate digital infrastructure, user-friendly technology, institutional coordination, cybersecurity, and continuous capacity-building for businesses will be essential. Small enterprises, particularly those in rural and underserved areas, should receive technical support to ensure they are not left behind in the digital transition.

USA and Israel: From Support to Accountability

The renewed U. S.-Iran conflict has once again entered a dangerous phase. American strikes on Iranian targets have been followed by Iranian retaliation on Sunday 12th July, raising fears that the region may be entering a prolonged cycle of attack and counterattack. Yet while missiles dominate headlines in the Middle East, an equally consequential battle is unfolding inside the United States—one over America’s relationship with Israel and the political costs of that alliance.

One significant development has been the passing of Senator Lindsey Graham, who for years was among Israel’s most outspoken supporters in the U. S. Senate. Graham consistently advocated maximum pressure against Iran, arguing that Tehran’s military capabilities, regional proxies, missile programs, and nuclear ambitions posed an existential threat to Israel and a broader danger to American interests and regional allies. He defended Israel’s military campaigns in Gaza, Lebanon, and elsewhere by drawing historical parallels to Allied actions during World War II, including the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, arguing that overwhelming force can sometimes bring wars to an end.

His death removes one of Israel’s strongest voices in Congress at a time when American policy toward the

Middle East is facing unprecedented scrutiny.

At the same time, a different narrative has emerged from Congressman Ro Khanna following his visit to Israel and the occupied West Bank. Khanna described witnessing the realities of occupation firsthand and recounted an incident in which he said Israeli settlers and Israeli security forces temporarily detained his delegation. He argued that the experience fundamentally changed his understanding of conditions faced by Palestinians and intensified his criticism of Israeli policies in the occupied territories.

Khanna’s remarks resonate strongly with a younger generation of American lawmakers and voters who increasingly view the Israeli-Palestinian conflict through the lens of human rights, equality and international law. Drawing on his own visit to the occupied West Bank, Khanna described what he regarded as an apartheid-like system marked by the arrogance of armed Israeli settlers, the detention of an American delegation, and the willingness of the IDF to side with those settlers rather than protect visiting Americans.

He argued that Israel has enjoyed near-total impunity despite the devastation and alleged genocide in Gaza, and

warned that American politicians who remain silent in the face of such injustice are morally compromised. Khanna therefore called for a fundamental moral repositioning of U. S. policy—a serious reassessment of Washington’s support for Israel and of Israel’s actions across Gaza, the West Bank and the wider Middle East.

Beyond elected officials, prominent commentators have also intensified the debate. In a widely watched interview, Tucker Carlson and his guest argued that U. S. foreign policy has increasingly subordinated American strategic interests to Israeli priorities. They alleged that missile-defense and interceptor systems

originally deployed to protect U. S. bases and Gulf allies were diverted to defend Israel, leaving American installations and partner nations more vulnerable to Iranian retaliation.

The discussion went further, portraying the United States as a power in relative decline—one whose military stockpiles have been significantly depleted, whose capacity to sustain a prolonged conflict is increasingly constrained, and which no longer possesses the capability to undertake a large-scale ground invasion of Iran.

Carlson also questioned whether

Washington was allowing itself to be “led around the nose” by Israel, arguing that American policy had become excessively aligned with Israeli regional objectives rather than guided primarily by U. S. national interests.

Simultaneously, younger Americans—particularly those under 35—are asking increasingly difficult questions about the role of lobbying organizations, campaign financing, and the influence of foreign-policy advocacy groups in shaping American decisions in the Middle East. Critics argue that elected officials often hesitate to criticize Israel because of domestic political pressures, while supporters of the U. S.-Israel relationship respond that the alliance reflects shared democratic values, longstanding security cooperation, and strategic interests rather than undue influence.

Another issue drawing attention is the expanding military cooperation between the United States and Israel. Supporters view deeper integration as essential for regional security, intelligence sharing, missile defense, and technological innovation. Critics, however, worry that increasingly integrated military planning could blur the distinction between American and Israeli strategic priorities, potentially drawing the United States into conflicts that originate from regional disputes rather than direct threats to the American homeland.

Continued on Page 7



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

The Clouds of Authoritarianism

What can be expected when the erstwhile Superpower begins to count its days of influence in the far-off regions of the greater world. And how will the ‘wounded lion’ reassert its dominance in countering the ‘axis of resistance’ in the jungle? From the realist point of view, status quo has never been an option in the zero-sum game. The lust for power will inevitably explode in disaster, and any country coming in will be hit by the storm. An in-depth analysis of the contemporary geopolitical discourse and the fragile world order characterized by frequent hostilities, unrest and autocracies reinforces Hobbes’ ideal state where ‘everyone was at war with every other person’. The US-Israel joint airstrikes on Iran, Russian Invasion of Ukraine, and India’s attacks on Pakistan justifies how great power rivalries disregards the ‘rule-based order, normalizes the exercise of hard power and fuel authoritarianism across the world. While Iran has been widely praised for its well-calculated strategies and better resilience, this article analyzes how US-Israel airstrikes backfired and helped the Iranian regime to normalize dictatorship, facilitate the militarization of politics, and resort to oppressive state apparatus in suppressing political dissent thereby leaving the masses in miserable conditions.

Decades after the imposition of the western world order, America emerged as the single most superpower to act as the policeman while at the same time inhaling the fresh air of the emerging political discourse encompassing ‘the end of history’ and ‘the clash of civilization’. But this short-lived transitional phase ignored the rise of China, the re-emergence of Russia and the development of the resistance front in the global south pledging for a more representative, transparent and equitable alternative order thereby threatening American interests in the region. Meanwhile, subjected to countless US sanctions, economic blockade and diplomatic isolation due to its nuclear

program and proxy networks, Iran was quick to join the ‘axis of upheaval’. However, the despotism of Khamenei accompanied by domestic recession and economic crisis turned the streets of Tehran into wider political protests pushing the regime to use excessive force to restore normalcy.

The regime was at its weakest position in January as the protests intensified with the ruthless state violence but the erroneous American interpretation of the events in Tehran derailed the trajectory of the movement with disastrous consequences. The understanding that the mullah regime in Tehran has lost the goodwill of the masses and that external involvement will further contribute to the collapse of the regime, to be replaced by a more democratic one in the aftermath, backlashed. The US-Israel airstrikes on Iran and the subsequent killing of the mainstream political leadership and the leaders of the Revolutionary Guards not only reversed the progressive movement but provided a much-needed opportunity to the Guards to generate sympathy and legitimize their rule even among those who were previously opposed to it. The funeral gatherings of the late supreme leader reveal how an environment of clamorous dissent and vociferous condemnations of the regime transitioned into tearful tributes and public mourning for Khamenei.

But the euphoria of President Trump and his like-minded for securing a regime change in Tehran, and the mourning tears of the masses will soon give way to a fresh wave of authoritarianism as the new generation of the regime belongs to the ideological cadre of the Iranian Revolutionary Guard. The institution had suffered great damage in the Iraq war and Khamenei had then restored its prestige but he kept a strong check on their activities, concentrated all the decision-making powers in the office of the supreme leader and constitutionally restricted the role of the revolutionary Guards just to prevent external aggression, maintain internal stability, safeguard the ideological foundation of the state and to look after its nuclear program.

With the demise of key political leaders like Khamenei and Ali Larijani, there is hardly anybody left to counter the hegemonic politics of revolutionary guards in Iran which is now stronger than ever. This means that the IRGC will concentrate more power in coercive institutions and military figures and will redirect funding to military spending thereby leaving little space for democratic engagements, human rights and socio-economic development. The rise of the military-aligned leaders like the new supreme leader Mojtaba Khamenei, Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, and Mohammad Bagher Zolghadr reveals that military is going to have a major say in the new administration of the Iran thereby blurring the line between the military and civilian leadership. This more headline and reactionary set up left very little space for progressives to function as witnessed by the statement of President Pezeshkian issued to apologize neighboring states for Iranian attacks on their territories which was immediately rescinded after the criticism of the IRGC.

Had the United States not attacked Iran at the time when the anti-regime protest was touching the sky, the situation in Iran would have very different right now. But history reveals that every reactionary policy of America ranging from diplomatic isolation, economic blackout and sanctions backfired with a chance to the Iranian regime and then to the more hardliner IRGC to consolidate their powerbase while at the same time resort to oppressive means of suppressing dissents thereby normalizing authoritarianism. The regime has now a ‘national security state’ set up against the backdrop of the US-Israel threats thereby necessitating defense spending with maximum reliance on China and Russia. The weaponization of the strait of Hormuz provided much geostrategic leverage, but the domestic compulsions like worsening socio-economic crisis and reliance on oppressive state apparatus to suppress dissent will ultimately bring Iran to the table of negotiation to escape further disaster.

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Artificial Intelligence and the future of global Economic competition

Wajiha Nasir

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

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

AI plays a key role in contributing to economic development by increasing efficiency and reducing production cost and time. AI allows businesses to automate commands, analyze customer data, save on expenses, enhance customer support, and process vast amounts of information, all the while saving time. According to a report by analysts at PwC, AI could

contribute approximately \$15.7 trillion to the global economy by 2030. China alone is expected to gain around \$7 trillion, while North America could gain about \$3.7 trillion from AI-driven growth.

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

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

The U. S-CHINA AI rivalry

The United States and China’s competition over the AI is intricately tied to their economic and geopolitical struggles. Both

Continued on Page 7

Select Technologies Limited (“SELECT”) Successfully Completes Initial Public Offering, Raising PKR 3.02 Billion

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Select Technologies Limited (“SELECT”), a leading Pakistani technology company engaged in the manufacturing and assembly of smartphones and consumer appliances, has successfully completed its Initial Public Offering (“IPO”), receiving a strong response from investors during both the Book Building and General Public Subscription phases.

The IPO raised PKR 3.02 billion, making it one of the most notable equity offerings in Pakistan’s technology sector. The offering comprised 88.9 million ordinary shares, representing 10% of SELECT’s post-issue paid-up capital.

The IPO floor price was set at PKR 28.00 per share. Following healthy demand during the Book Building process, the strike price was discovered at PKR 34.00 per share, representing a 21% premium over the floor price.

The IPO attracted participation from a diverse range of investors, including commercial banks, mutual funds, insurance companies, investment banks, pension and employees’ funds, brokerage houses, high-net-worth individuals, corporate investors,

and retail investors, reflecting broad-based confidence in SELECT’s business fundamentals, growth strategy and long-term prospects.

Mr. Farrukh H. Sabzwari, Managing Director & CEO of PSX, stated: “It is a privilege to welcome Select Technologies Limited to the Pakistan Stock Exchange. This Gong Ceremony marks the first listing of the new fiscal year, and it is a fitting one — a company that is designing and building high-quality tech-based products here in Pakistan.

This listing follows a landmark year for the Exchange. FY2026 delivered 11 IPOs — the third highest in 25 years — raising USD 66 million, while average daily traded value reached an all-time high of USD 205 million (approximately PKR 57 billion) across 537 listed companies. Market capitalization touched a record PKR 21 trillion in January 2026, with the market closing the year at a market cap of PKR 20.20 trillion, equivalent to 16% of GDP. Most encouraging of all is the widening base of participation: the investor base reached an all-time high of 583,052 accounts, with new accounts opened at an average of around 16,000 each month, against

5,290 the previous year.

Mr. Zeeshan Rehman Khattak, Commissioner, Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, stated: “The SECP is committed to making the listing process seamless, as IPOs are a true growth path for companies. We continue to balance regulatory requirements with investor protection, while encouraging forward-looking sectors to access the capital markets.

Commenting on this milestone achievement, Mr. Aslam H. Piracha, Chairman, AirLink Communication Limited, stated: “Today’s gong ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange marks a significant milestone for Select Technologies Limited and the AirLink Group. Our successful listing reflects strong investor confidence in our strategy and capabilities.

Mr. Adnan Aftab, Chief Executive Officer, Select Technologies Limited, stated: “The listing of Select Technologies Limited on PSX is a proud moment for our entire team. It validates our journey as a leading local manufacturer in the consumer technology space.

Mr. Shahid Ali Habib, Chief Executive Officer of Arif Habib Limited,



commented on the successful IPO, stating: “We are pleased to have successfully concluded the IPO of Select Technologies Limited. The strong response from both institutional and retail investors, resulting in a 3.23x oversubscription, reflects the market’s confidence in SELECT’s business model and growth potential.



Mr. Rashid Rauf Bandy, General Manager of Best Western Premier Islamabad, received an award at the 2nd Pakistan International Food & Restaurant Awards 2026. The award was presented by Syed Qamar Raza Shah, Chairman of OPP; Mubarak Zeb, Federal Minister for Tribal Affairs; Farah Naz, Parliamentary Secretary for National Heritage & Culture; and H.E. Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan.

Meezan Bank Partners with LUMS to Advance Islamic Finance Education in Pakistan



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan’s leading Islamic bank and one of the country’s largest banks, has partnered with the Centre for Islamic Finance (CIF) to make high-quality, industry-led Islamic finance education more accessible across Pakistan and beyond. Formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), the collaboration brings together Meezan Bank’s market leadership and LUMS’ academic strength to help develop future-ready talent for the Islamic finance industry.

As the first initiative under this partnership, Meezan Bank and LUMS will jointly develop and launch a specialized online certification program titled “Learning from Leaders of Islamic Finance.” The program will feature a structured curriculum, comprehensive assessments, and certification standards designed to equip participants with practical insights from leading practitioners and experts in the field.

The certification course will be hosted on LUMSx, LUMS’ digital learning platform, enabling broader access to Islamic finance learning through a scalable online format.

The MoU was signed by Mr. Khalid Zaman Khan, Group Head, Human Resources, Learning & Organizational Development, Meezan Bank, and Dr. Tariq M. Jadoon, Provost, LUMS. The ceremony was also attended by Dr. Saad Azmat, Founding Director, Centre for Islamic Finance, SDSB-LUMS; Mr. Jazib Zahir, Director, LUMSx; and senior representatives from Meezan Bank, including Mr. Shayan Ahmed Baig, Head of Shariah Compliance; Mr. Anwar ul Haq, Distribution Head Central; and Ms. Mehar Younus, Head of Learning & Organizational Development.

“Islamic Finance is one of the fastest-growing segments of the global financial industry, creating a strong need for accessible and high-quality learning opportunities,” said Dr. Tariq M. Jadoon. He further mentioned

that “Through this partnership with Meezan Bank, we are bringing together academic excellence and industry expertise to develop future-ready talent and strengthen the knowledge ecosystem supporting the growth of Islamic Finance.”

Mr. Khalid Zaman Khan, Group Head, Human Resources, Learning & Organizational Development, Meezan Bank, said, “The future of Islamic Finance depends on developing professionals who combine technical expertise with a strong understanding of Shariah principles. This collaboration with LUMS reflects our commitment to advancing Islamic Finance education, building industry capability, and making quality learning accessible to a broader audience through a scalable digital platform.”

This collaboration marks an important step in strengthening the link between academia and industry, creating a practical learning pathway for professionals and learners seeking to build expertise in Islamic finance.

Regulatory Reforms in Dairy and Beverage Sector Can Boost Investment, Exports: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) Mian Zahid Hussain has welcomed Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif’s directive to simplify, digitalize and enhance transparency in the regulatory framework governing Pakistan’s dairy and beverage sector, calling it a significant step toward improving the country’s investment climate and export competitiveness.

In a statement on Sunday, Mian Zahid, who also serves as Chairman of the FPCCI Policy Advisory Board and the National Business Group Pakistan (NBG), urged the government to extend similar reforms to other key sectors of the economy, including textiles, pharmaceuticals, engineering, agriculture, food processing, construction, logistics, mining and information technology.

He said excessive licensing requirements, overlapping inspections, repeated documentation and unclear renewal procedures have increased the cost of doing business, discouraged investment and prevented many small enterprises from entering the formal economy. According to him, effective regulation should protect consumers



and the environment while ensuring that compliance remains simple, transparent, predictable and time-bound.

Highlighting the scale of the challenge, he said businesses in the dairy and beverage sector currently require nearly 40 registrations, licences and permits from 25 different government departments, involving 235 documentary requirements, of which 134 are duplicative. He noted that the proposed reforms could reduce documentation requirements to around 83, save businesses more than Rs58.4 billion annually, and cut processing time by approximately 643 days.

Mian Zahid emphasized that digi-

talization alone would not solve the problem. He called for eliminating unnecessary licences, consolidating essential approvals, introducing risk-based inspections, integrating government databases and allowing businesses to submit information only once while tracking approvals online.

He pointed out that Pakistan is the world’s fourth-largest milk producer, producing over 65.7 million tonnes annually, yet only 3 percent of milk undergoes value-added processing, while around 15 percent is lost due to inadequate cold-chain infrastructure and inefficient transportation. Similarly, despite producing 7.2 million tonnes of fruit annually, Pakistan has failed to capitalize on export opportunities because of weak processing, packaging and limited compliance with international standards.

He urged all regulatory authorities to adopt clear economic targets aimed at promoting investment, modern processing, branding, certification, value addition and export growth. He stressed that regulatory institutions should be evaluated on their ability to facilitate business development while maintaining high standards of public health and consumer safety.

Grand opening of the 5th Pakistan Tourism and Hospitality Investment Summit in Birmingham

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry, the fifth Pakistan Tourism and Hospitality Investment Summit and Smart Expo was held in Quaid-e-Azam Grand Hall Room, Montague, Birmingham. Exhibition of Industry Chairman Fahad Barlas inaugurated the formal ceremony. The summit was attended by a large number of Pakistani community, investors, businessmen, diplomatic representatives and people from different walks of life from across the UK.

The ceremony was attended by Lord Mayor of Birmingham Chaudhry Zakerullah, Consul General of Pakistan Fahad Amjad, Dr. Nasir Awan, Lord Lieutenant, President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sardar Tahir Mehmood, Chief organizer of the ceremony and founding chairman of Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry M. Khurshid Barlas and Fahad Barlas welcomed the guests Lord Mayor of Birmingham Chaudhry Zakerullah, addressing the ceremony, urged the overseas Pakistanis to play their role in the development of Pakistan and take advantage of investment opportunities,

which will not only bring economic benefits to them but also strengthen the country’s economy.

Consul General of Pakistan Fahad Amjad said that the fifth Pakistan Tourism and Hospitality Investment Summit and Smart Expo will be an important milestone in Pakistan-UK relations. It is very important to have such conferences between Great Britain and Pakistan. This will help in increasing mutual cooperation between the two countries at the commercial, diplomatic and business level. Khurshid Barlas said to the speakers that our goal is how to bring investment to Pakistan, how to increase exports, how to highlight the position of Pakistan. We need to take steps to introduce Pakistani products globally.

The speakers said that the Government of Pakistan is taking steps to provide favorable investment environment and facilities for Overseas Pakistanis. He said that there are valuable opportunities for overseas Pakistanis in real estate, minerals, IT, tourism and other sectors. At the end of the ceremony, it was expressed that such international forums provide a strong platform for Pakistani investors abroad to play an effective role in the development of the country along with highlighting the positive image of Pakistan around the world. In the end, the Pakistan Association of Exhibition Industry later distributed honorary shields to the personalities who have rendered outstanding services in various fields of life.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
179,927.04	182,241.77
Day's High	Day's Low
181,148.26	179,448.52
Index Value	Change
24,658,829,063	-2314.73
Percentage	Time
-1.27%	13 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,498.29	+1.00
Percentage	Time
+0.0095%	13 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,486.63	-150.38
Percentage	Time
-0.29%	13 Jul, 1:17 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
67,242.73	-1,315.00
Percentage	Time
-1.92%	13 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.33	196.25
Bahrain Dinar	740.56	750.85
Canadian Dollar	197.33	201.45
China Yuan	38	38.75
Danish Krone	42.56	43.25
Euro	319.10	323.20
Hong Kong Dollar	35.22	36.23
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.15
Japanese Yen	1.7114	1.8100
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.48	899.95
Malaysian Ringgit	67.15	67.95
NewZealand \$	159	160.75
Norwegians Krone	27.99	28.29
Omani Riyal	725.35	735.60
Qatari Riyal	75.335	76.40
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.20
Singapore Dollar	214.18	217.95
Swedish Korona	28.25	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.59	348.25
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.80
U.A.E Dirham	76.25	76.80
UK Pound Sterling	374.63	377.15
US Dollar	279.25	279.80

MEPCO Completes
7 High-Tension
Projects Worth
Rs111.7 Million



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: MEPCO has successfully completed 7 high-tension projects under the Energy Loss Reduction Program to strengthen the power transmission system. According to CEO Engineer Gul Muhammad Zahid, the projects cost over Rs111.7 million and included area planning, re-conducting, re-routing and feeder shifting on various 11KV feeders in Bahawalnagar, Dera Ghazi Khan and Vehari Construction Divisions.

Bahawalnagar: Rs12.89 lakh on 11KV Khatan Feeder (Haroonabad Grid), Rs7.21 lakh on 11KV City Fort Abbas Feeder (Fort Abbas Grid), and Rs8.55 lakh on 11KV Bangla Road Feeder (Haroonabad Grid)

Dera Ghazi Khan: Rs8.92 crore on 11KV Jaman Shah and Indus Feeders (Kot Sultan Grid), Rs1.58 crore on re-conducting 11KV Bathi Feeder (Noor Ahmad Wali Grid), and Rs1.998 lakh on area planning of 11KV Talpur Feeder (Choti Grid)

Vehari: Rs1.739 lakh on area planning of 11KV Arshad Ahmad Khan Feeder (Melsey Grid)

Additional Chief Engineer Construction MEPCO Farhan Shabbir Malik said the projects will ensure a more stable and uninterrupted power supply for thousands of consumers connected to 16 feeders. Benefits include reduced technical losses, improved voltage profile, elimination of overloading, and better overall system performance.

EBM and NOWPDP Launch
Pakistan's First Neuro-Inclusive
Discovery Room

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: English Biscuit Manufacturers and NOWPDP inaugurated Pakistan's first Neuro-Inclusive Discovery Room at the Center of Excellence for Disability Inclusion in Korangi, Karachi. Developed with experiential learning expertise from The Dawood Foundation's MagnifiScience Centre, the room is designed for children with autism, ADHD and other developmental conditions.

The space uses interactive play to support cognitive, sensory, motor and social development, adapting science exhibits into therapeutic learning experiences that aid sensory integration, executive functioning, motor skills and social interaction.

According to Pakistan's 2023 Population Census, approximately 3.1% of the population lives with a disability. Opportunities for neuro-inclusive learning remain limited, making the Discovery Room a key step toward more accessible education.

Dr. Zeelaf Munir, MD & CEO of EBM, said:



"For sixty years, EBM has believed that nourishing Pakistan means nourishing all of it... The Discovery Room is a reflection of that belief by bringing together science, play and therapeutic learning to create an environment designed around the strengths of neurodiverse children."

Omair Ahmed, CEO of NOWPDP, said:

"True inclusion is built on sustainable infrastructure. The Discovery Room... stands as a premier example of how corporate commitment can create physical pathways for equity and learning." He thanked EBM for partnering to build an environment that "honors dignity, fosters interactive learning, and ensures chil-

dren of all abilities have an equal space to thrive."

The initiative reflects EBM and NOWPDP's shared commitment to advancing inclusive education and creating learning environments where children with disabilities can learn, participate and thrive.

Oil surge hit sentiment

KARACHI: A broker talks on his cell phone in front of indexes screen at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSE) in the Provincial Capital. PSX falls as Middle East tensions, oil surge hit sentiment.



Photo: Online

Standard Chartered Appoints Adil
Salahuddin as Pakistan CEO

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Standard Chartered Pakistan has announced the appointment of Adil Salahuddin as Chief Executive Officer & Head of Coverage, subject to regulatory and statutory approvals.

Rola Abu Manneh, CEO for UAE, Middle East and Pakistan, said Pakistan remains "one of our longest established franchises" and a key market. She noted the appointment reflects the bank's continued commitment and confidence in Pakistan's long-term potential. "Adil brings a deep understanding of our clients, our business and the markets we serve, combined with a strong track record of leadership across Pakistan and the wider region."

She added that under Adil's leadership, the bank will build on its foundations, deepen client relationships, and support



Pakistan's economic growth as clients navigate evolving trade, investment and capital

flows.

Adil has over 30 years of banking experience, including 25 years with Standard Chartered. He has held senior roles across Markets and Coverage in Pakistan, UAE and Saudi Arabia.

He previously served as Head of Markets in Pakistan for five years, moved to Dubai in April 2021 for a regional Corporate Sales role covering Middle East, Pakistan and Africa, and for the past four months has been working as Head of Coverage in Pakistan.

Standard Chartered has operated in Pakistan since 1863 and remains the country's oldest and largest international bank. It serves clients across Corporate & Institutional Banking and Wealth & Retail Banking, including Islamic banking solutions under the Standard Chartered Saadiq brand.

CCP Clears Lotte Group's
Restructuring Involving Pakistan
Operations

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved a pre-merger application paving the way for an internal restructuring within the South Korean Lotte Group while finding no competition concerns in Pakistan's food and beverage markets.

The transaction involves Japan's Lotte Co., Ltd acquiring shareholding in Singapore-based Lotte Confectionery (S. E. A.) Pte. Ltd. from Lotte Wellfood Co., Ltd. As the target company owns interests in Pakistan's Lotte Kolson and Lotte Akhtar Beverages, the share acquisition required prior clearance from the CCP under the Competition Act, 2010.

Following a Phase-I competition assessment, the Commission concluded that the transaction is purely a change in ownership within the Lotte Group and will not alter market structure or competitive dynamics



in Pakistan.

The Commission noted that the acquiring company does not conduct confectionery or food business in Pakistan. Consequently, the transaction will neither increase market concentration nor create or strengthen a dominant position in any of the relevant product markets.

PCJCCI Calls
Sahiwal Coal Plant
CPEC Success, Urges
More Strategic
Energy Projects



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) has hailed the 1,320 MW Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant as a flagship CPEC project that has strengthened Pakistan's energy security, industrial growth, and economic progress.

President Nazir Hussain said the plant, operated by Huaneng Shandong Ruyi since 2017, has reduced energy shortfalls, improved industrial productivity, and boosted investor confidence. He urged more large-scale, technology-driven projects

under Pakistan-China cooperation to meet rising electricity demand.

Vice President Amir Ali noted the plant's contribution through taxes, local procurement, and thousands of jobs, plus training for Pakistani engineers.

Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar highlighted its supercritical technology and environmental systems like ESP, FGD, and CEMS.

Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said baseload projects like Sahiwal remain vital alongside renewables for grid stability and called it a model for future CPEC collaboration.

ABHI Microfinance
Bank Partners with Saif
Group to Introduce
Earned Wage Access for
Employees



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: ABHI Microfinance Bank has entered into a strategic partnership with Saif Group to introduce its Earned Wage Access (EWA) solution for the Group's workforce. The collaboration marks another step towards advancing workplace financial wellness by enabling employees to access a portion of their earned wages before payday through a secure and innovative digital platform.

The agreement was signed by Ms. Mariam Pervaiz, Chief Commercial Officer, ABHI Microfinance Bank, and Mr. Abid Hussain, Executive Director Finance & Operations, Saif Textile Mills Ltd. The signing ceremony was attended by Mr. Kabeer Naqvi, Entrepreneur in Residence- ABHI, and Mr. Asad Saifullah Khan, CEO, Saif Textile Mills Ltd. and Kohat Textile Mills Ltd., along with senior representatives from

both organizations, reflecting a shared commitment to empowering employees through innovative financial solutions.

Through this collaboration, employees of Saif Group will have real-time access to a portion of their earned salary before their scheduled payday, providing greater financial flexibility while helping them manage planned and unexpected expenses with ease.

Earned Wage Access (EWA) is transforming the way employees access their income by providing a responsible and convenient alternative to traditional borrowing.

This partnership reflects the shared vision of ABHI Microfinance Bank and Saif Group to leverage innovation in addressing the evolving financial needs of employees while fostering a culture of financial empowerment and inclusion

UNFPA: Pakistan’s Population Challenge Now a National Security Issue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan’s population has reached approximately 257.2 million, with nearly one-third aged between 10 and 24 years. Speaking ahead of World Population Day 2026, UNFPA Pakistan Representative Dr. Luay Shabaneh said population growth is no longer just a health or economic issue, but a matter of national security requiring action from political, military, religious and social leadership.

Citing UNFPA’s global report “Lives, Choices and Futures” based on 100,000+ youth in 73 countries including 1,700+ from Pakistan, he said “it is the time for Pakistan to grow rich and prosperous before its population grows old.”

Dr. Shabaneh welcomed PM



Shehbaz Sharif chairing the National Population Council and the inclusion of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, noting this shows population management is now a strategic priority tied to economic resilience, social cohesion and security.

There is also a gap between actual and desired fertility. Women average 1.8 children but prefer 2.5. Men average 2.5 but prefer 3.4. Among 35-39 year olds without children, 65% want to become parents.

He concluded that World Population Day should remind policymakers that Pakistan’s future depends on the quality of choices made today, and reaffirmed UNFPA’s commitment to ensuring every pregnancy is wanted, every childbirth is safe, and every young person can reach their potential.

Senator Sher Ali Urges President to Confer Civil Award on Veteran Ayurvedic Physician Dr. Nasaka

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Chaudhry Abid Sher Ali has formally urged President Asif Ali Zardari to confer one of Pakistan’s highest civil awards on renowned Ayurvedic physician Dr. Nasir Saleem Nasaka in recognition of his more than four decades of distinguished humanitarian and healthcare services.

According to official documents, a recommendation submitted by Senator Sher Ali was received at the



President’s Secretariat, Islamabad, on May 21, 2026, following a letter dated May 20, 2026, in which the senator strongly recommended Dr. Nasaka for a prestigious national honour, including the Hilal-e-Imtiaz or Nishan-e-Imtiaz.

In his letter to the President, Senator Sher Ali highlighted Dr. Nasaka’s lifelong dedication to serving humanity through Ayurvedic medicine. He noted that the veteran physician has spent over 40 years treating thousands of patients across Pakistan, particularly

the poor, underprivileged and those suffering from chronic and terminal illnesses, without charging any consultation fee.

The senator described Dr. Nasaka as a symbol of compassion, selfless service and patriotism, stating that his unwavering commitment to healthcare reflects the highest ideals of public service. He observed that individuals who dedicate their lives to serving humanity without personal gain deserve recognition at the national level.

AlHuda CIBE Successfully Concludes the 5th CIS Islamic Banking & Finance Forum 2026 in Uzbekistan

Spokesman Report

DUBAI, UAE: AlHuda Centre of Islamic Banking and Economics (AlHuda CIBE), UAE, successfully concluded the 5th CIS Islamic Banking & Finance Forum 2026, held on 9 July 2026 at the Hyatt Regency Tashkent, Uzbekistan. The international forum brought together policymakers, regulators, diplomats, central bankers, Islamic financial institutions, Takaful operators, FinTech companies, investors, Shariah scholars, academia and industry leaders from across the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS) region and beyond to discuss the future direction of Islamic finance and its growing role in regional economic development.

The forum was officially inaugurated with a welcome address by Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, CEO of AlHuda CIBE,

who underscored the growing potential of the CIS region as an emerging hub for Islamic finance. He emphasized that enhanced collaboration among governments, regulators, financial institutions, investors, and development partners is vital to developing a resilient Islamic finance ecosystem capable of fostering sustainable economic growth and greater financial inclusion.

The inaugural session was honored by the participation of distinguished diplomatic representatives and senior officials, including Mr. Daniel Rakove, Economic and Commercial Unit Chief, United States Embassy; Mr. Elhadi Tarmant, Economics Affairs Diplomat, Embassy of Algeria; Ms. Diana Maksyutovna Aynetdinova, Counsellor, Embassy of Russia; Mr. Arhan Shah Anuar, Counsellor, Embassy of Malaysia; Mr. Fariz Mammadov, Counsellor,

Embassy of Azerbaijan; Mr. Lee Valeriy Alexandrovich, Head of the Capital Market Ecosystem and Regulatory Innovation Unit, National Agency for Prospective Projects of the Republic of Uzbekistan; and Mr. Zafarjon Mustafayev, Chairman, Leasing Association of Uzbekistan. Their esteemed participation reflected the growing international recognition of Uzbekistan and the wider CIS region as emerging hubs for Islamic finance, ethical investment, and sustainable economic development.

The first technical session examined the development of a robust Islamic finance ecosystem across the CIS region through policy, regulation, education and market innovation. Distinguished speakers including Mr. Azamat Abdullayev, Mr. Hondamir Nausratkhujayev, Mr. Alexey Soluyayev, Mr. Muzaffar Husniddinov, and Ms. Nargiz Shiraliyeva shared

valuable insights on Islamic banking models, AAOIFI standards, regulatory developments and human capital, highlighting the region’s growing commitment to advancing Islamic finance.

A high-level panel discussion on “The Strategic Role of the Islamic Finance and Takaful Industry in Attracting Foreign Investment” brought together prominent industry leaders, including Mr. Maksud Sabirov Abdugafurovich, Ms. Ifedayo Ogunshola, Mr. Nuriddin Lafizov, Mr. Semyon Artamonov, and Mr. Umid Khudayberdiev. The discussion emphasized the role of Islamic finance, Takaful and financial innovation in attracting investment, supporting SMEs, strengthening regional cooperation and promoting sustainable economic growth across the CIS region.

The forum’s innovation session showcased how emerging tech-



nologies are transforming Islamic finance. Mr. Ikeh Titus Adakole, Mr. Alijon Ravshanov, Mr. Sherzod Abdulkasimov, and Mr. Arman Akhanov highlighted the growing role of Islamic FinTech, blockchain, digital compliance and technology-driven financial solutions in expanding financial inclusion and supporting sustainable infrastructure development.

The concluding technical session focused on expanding Islamic finance as a catalyst for sustainable economic development. Presentations by Mr.

Abdulmannan Abdulloh, Ms. Iroda Norova, Ms. Madina Bilalova, Mr. Hayotjon Azimov, Mr. Baxtiyor Shodiyev, and Mr. Shab- yrov Nurlan emphasized ethics, Shariah governance, education financing, institutional development, sustainable funding models and the growing contribution of the Takaful industry to inclusive economic growth.

The success of the forum was made possible through the valued support of its sponsors, supporting partners, and media partners. Mac & Ro Capital

FZC, UAE as the Gold Sponsor, O Gold served as the Technology Sponsor, and Open Space Financial Services Ltd., Nigeria as the Exhibition Sponsor. AlHuda CIBE extends its sincere appreciation to all sponsors, partners, and media collaborators whose continued support contributed significantly to the forum’s success, providing an exceptional platform for knowledge sharing, strategic networking, and the advancement of Islamic banking and finance across the CIS region and beyond.

Artificial Intelligence and the future of global Economic competition

Continued from Page 4

countries view leadership in AI as the key to future military and economic supremacy.

The U. S. is ahead in the technology for advanced semiconductors, crucial for AI systems. American firm NVIDIA dominates the AI chip industry, accounting for a 70–80% share, using its powerful graphics processing units (GPUs) for

machine learning and generative AI. The U. S. government restricted exports of cutting-edge semiconductor technology to China in 2022 and 2023 in an effort to slow the Chinese AI industry.

In response, China is investing more at home in semiconductor manufacturing. In 2024 China’s government announced a \$47 billion semiconductor investment firm to reduce reliance on

foreign technology. The Chinese government also enjoys the enormity of its population and digital economy which produce vast and colossal data that is required for AI systems.

Another area of rivalry is scientific research. Despite all this, China has outpaced the United States in AI research publications, and the United States continues to dominate the creation of high-impact AI models and new innova-

tions, according to Stanford’s AI Index. This illustrates that China is catching up fast with the technology gap.

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

artificial intelligence for various surveillance and facial recognition purposes.

Impact on labor and inequality

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

wide, and as few as 400 million.

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

AI holds potential for opportunities and challenges in countries such as Pakistan. The IT industry

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

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USA and Israel: From Support to Accountability

Continued from Page 4

Many Americans are therefore asking a fundamental question: What direct threat does Iran pose to the United States itself? Successive U. S. administrations have argued that Iran’s support for armed groups, ballistic missile development, and nuclear activities threaten American forces, regional partners, and international stability. Critics counter that the primary confrontation remains between Iran and Israel, with the United

States increasingly assuming the costs of a conflict driven largely by regional dynamics.

Another contentious issue concerns nuclear policy. Iran has long maintained that if it is expected to accept intrusive inspections, limits on uranium enrichment, and international oversight, then similar standards should apply to Israel. Many analysts note that Israel is widely believed to possess nuclear weapons while maintaining a policy of deliberate ambiguity and remaining

outside the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT). Now the world is waking up to the reality that Israeli nukes pose a greater threat to humanity than the combined military of the entire Muslim world.

Now an increasingly vocal group of politicians, military analysts, commentators, and independent media figures argues that the relationship has reached a point where Washington is no longer acting with complete strategic independence. They contend that Amer-

ican foreign policy has become disproportionately oriented toward advancing Israel’s regional objectives, often at the expense of U. S. national interests, the security of American personnel, the economic well-being of its citizens, and the country’s broader global standing.

This creates a profound paradox: the world’s most powerful nation increasingly appears to be shaping its policies around the security priorities of a much smaller regional

ally, thereby eroding perceptions of the evolving American debate over Israel and the Middle East.

History demonstrates that foreign policy ultimately follows domestic political evolution. As American society reexamines its priorities, Washington may eventually recalibrate its approach—not necessarily by abandoning Israel, but by seeking a relationship that balances security cooperation with greater emphasis on diplomacy, accountability, regional stability, and equal

opments in the evolving American debate over Israel and the Middle East.

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application of international norms.

The future of the Middle East may ultimately depend not only on what happens on the battlefield, but also on how the US reassess the principles guiding their alliances in an increasingly complex and polarized world.

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.

LUMS Celebrates Graduating Class of 2026 in Four Convocation Ceremonies



KARACHI: The Lahore University of Management Sciences held four Convocation ceremonies over two days to celebrate the Class of 2026. More than 1,500 graduates from LUMS’ five schools — business, humanities and social sciences, law, science and engineering, and education — received their degrees in the presence of families, faculty, and senior leadership.

Attendees included Pro-Chancellor Abdul Razak Dawood, Rector Shahid Hussain, Vice Chancellor Dr. Ali Cheema, Board of Trustees members, deans, and distinguished faculty.

Congratulating the graduates, VC Dr. Ali Cheema said institutions are judged by the people they send into the world. Marking 40 years of LUMS, he added that a university’s purpose is to help people realise their potential. “As you leave LUMS today, I hope you will carry that purpose forward: by realising your own potential, helping others discover theirs, and expanding opportunities for generations to come.”

Outstanding academic achievement was recognised with valedictorians: Ali Abbas Gilani, BA-LL. B (Hons); Ahmad Ashraf, BS Computer Science; Hiba Humayun, BSc (Hons) Accounting and Finance; and Maheen Mashhood, BA (Hons) History. They reflected on growth, resilience, and gratitude to families and mentors.

Keynote addresses were delivered by: Neha Mankani (BSc 2008), Founder Mama Baby Fund – urged curiosity, empathy, and using education to address societal challenges, Zia Akhter Abbas (MBA 1997), President & CEO The Citizens Foundation – called for humility, courage, and commitment to making a difference, Salima Hashmi, artist and art historian – encouraged creativity, compassion, and open dialogue and Amir Husain, entrepreneur and AI technologist – stressed lifelong learning, adaptability, and optimism

The ceremonies welcomed the Class of 2026 into the global LUMS alumni community as they begin the next chapter of their lives.

9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Yousaf Raza Gillani with participants of 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women with the theme “Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the OIC Countries: Challenges and Way Forward,” at Jinnah Convention Center in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan Assumes Chair of 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, Reaffirms Commitment to Women’s Empowerment

 Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Monday assumed the chairmanship of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women, with Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar reaffirming the country’s commitment to advancing the socio-economic and political empowerment of women across the Muslim world through

cooperation and collective action. Addressing the inaugural session, held under the theme “Socio-Economic and Political Empowerment of Women in the OIC Countries: Challenges and Way Forward,” Tarar said Pakistan accepted the responsibility of leading the conference with humility and a commitment to serve all 57 OIC member states. He emphasized that empowering women is not only a social obligation

but also an economic necessity and a cornerstone of sustainable development. While acknowledging the significant contributions of women in governance, business, science, education and peacebuilding, he noted that millions still face barriers limiting their full participation in society. The minister highlighted Islamic principles of justice, dignity and equality, stressing that women’s rights are deeply rooted in Islamic

teachings. He also underscored the importance of ensuring equal access for women and girls to education, innovation and leadership in the era of artificial intelligence and digital transformation. Highlighting Pakistan’s domestic initiatives, Tarar said the government has introduced legal and institutional reforms, including Gender-Based Violence Courts, women protection authorities, legal aid services, help-

lines and strengthened national commissions. He noted that Pakistani women are making significant contributions in parliament, judiciary, diplomacy, civil services, entrepreneurship, academia and the armed forces. Expressing solidarity with women affected by conflicts in Palestine, Afghanistan and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, he reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment

to protecting their rights and dignity. As chair of the conference, Pakistan pledged to work closely with the OIC General Secretariat and member states to promote practical initiatives, strengthen cooperation and exchange best practices. Tarar urged member countries to convert dialogue into concrete actions that create lasting opportunities for nearly 940 million women, representing almost half of the OIC population.

Kashmiri-American Delegation Meets Ahsan Iqbal; Calls for Dialogue in AJK

 Spokesman Report

NEW YORK: A Kashmiri-American delegation met with Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal to discuss the situation in Azad Jammu & Kashmir. The 90-minute meeting, also attended by Pakistan’s Ambassador to the US Rizwan Saeed Sheikh, focused on the need for meaningful dialogue, reconciliation, and national cohesion. The delegation presented a memorandum to the Minister addressed to PM Shehbaz Sharif titled “An Appeal for Dialogue, Reconciliation, and National Unity in Azad Jammu & Kashmir.” Delegation members included Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, Sardar Zareef Khan, Sardar Sawar Khan, Sardar Taj Khan, Sardar Shoaib Irshad, Aftab



Shah, Imtiaz Kiani, Farooq Qureshi, and others. The memorandum conveyed condolences to families of civilians and

security personnel killed in recent incidents and stressed non-discriminatory medical care for the injured. It welcomed government

initiatives in AJK including electricity and wheat flour subsidies and the restoration of the Health Card Programme, calling them

examples of addressing public concerns through dialogue and responsive governance. The delegation urged the Government of Pakistan, state institutions, the Joint Awami Action Committee, and other stakeholders to start result-oriented dialogue to reduce tensions, restore public confidence, and ensure stability. It noted there is no fundamental contradiction between AJK people and Pakistan’s Armed Forces, and differences should be resolved through patience and peaceful engagement. The memorandum cautioned that prolonged tensions or use of force could cause more loss of life and harm international efforts on Kashmir. It emphasized that national unity, political wisdom, and sincere dialogue are key to addressing current challenges.

Chairman Senate Gillani Urges OIC to Take Practical Steps for Women’s Economic Empowerment

 Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani on Monday called on the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) member states to move beyond declarations and adopt practical, measurable and long-term initiatives to economically empower women, saying their inclusion is essential for sustainable development and reflects the true teachings of Islam. Addressing the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women as chief guest, Gillani welcomed ministers, parliamentarians and delegates from across the Muslim world, emphasizing that Islam granted women rights to education, inheritance, property ownership, economic participation and social dignity more than 1,400 years ago. Referring to the conference theme, “Economic Stability of Women for

Sustainable Development,” he said women’s empowerment is fundamental to building a prosperous future for the Muslim world. He paid tribute to Muslim women for their contributions in education, science, trade, diplomacy, politics and social development, noting that women have played a vital role in the progress of civilizations throughout history. Gillani also paid tribute to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, describing her as the Muslim world’s first female prime minister whose struggle for democracy, women’s rights and equal opportunities continues to inspire women across the globe. Highlighting Pakistan’s initiatives, he said women constitute nearly half of the population of OIC countries and stressed that sustainable development cannot be achieved unless women enjoy equal economic, social and political opportunities

FCC Bars Courts From Halting Work on Nai Gaj Dam, Cites Public Interest

 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) has set aside High Court orders on the Nai Gaj Dam and barred any court from intervening in the project until completion. In a 22-page judgement authored by Chief Justice Aminuddin Khan, the FCC ruled Monday that disputes must be resolved through the mechanism in the construction contract. It said uninterrupted work on the dam is in the wider public interest and delays would harm a key infrastructure project. The court found the High Court had issued directions without considering the applicable law, WAPDA’s legal framework, NAB provisions, and the agreed dispute resolution process. It held that Article 199 jurisdiction cannot be expanded by judicial interpretation. The FCC directed WAPDA to decide contractor complaints within 15 days and, if there’s a breach, to re-tender remaining work legally. Nai Gaj Dam, on the Gaj River in Dadu District, Sindh, will have 4.2 MW capacity when complete.

Bilawal Bhutto to Launch AJK Election Campaign from July 17

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has announced his campaign schedule of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for the upcoming Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections as party has arranged a series of public gatherings planned across the region from July 17 to July 24. Bilawal will begin his campaign on July 17 with a public gathering in LA-01 Dadyal Mirpur Division hosted by Chaudhry Afsar Shahid. On July 19 Bilawal will address a rally in Kotli hosted by PPP AJK President Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen where party candidates Javed Iqbal Budhanvi, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Malik Zafar Iqbal and Chaudhry Waleed Inqalabi will welcome the PPP chairman. On July 21, PPP chairman is sched-



uled to address a public meeting in Muzaffarabad. Meeting will be hosted by acting AJK President Chaudhry Latif Akbar. Candidates from the Muzaffarabad Division including Mian Abdul Waheed, Sardar Javed Ayub, Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Sardar Mukhtar Khan, Chaudhry Ashfaq Zafar, Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai

and Mubashir Munir Awan will also attend. The campaign will conclude in Mirpur rally on July 24 hosted by Chaudhry Yasir Sultan where party candidates Chaudhry Pervez Ashraf, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sohaib Arshad and Khizar Rehman will welcome Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

Election campaign gains momentum across AJK ahead of July 27 general polls

MIRPUR: Election campaigning has intensified across Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as political parties step up outreach efforts ahead of the July 27 general elections. The AJK Election Commission says preparations for polling have entered the final phase, with arrangements in place to ensure the smooth conduct of the vote. According to Election Commission officials, elections will be held for 45 Legislative Assembly seats, including constituencies reserved for Jammu and Kashmir refugees residing in Pakistan. More than 2.8 million registered voters across AJK’s 10 districts are expected to cast their ballots. Mirpur district, one of the region’s key electoral battlegrounds, has 411,138 registered voters across four constituencies, where 597 polling stations will be established. The four Mirpur constituencies

are expected to witness closely fought contests involving candidates from the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) and independents. In LA-1 (Dadyal), LA-2 (Chakswari), LA-3 (Mirpur) and LA-4 (Khari Sharif), prominent political figures, including serving and former ministers, are competing for seats as parties intensify public meetings and voter outreach campaigns. Political analysts expect competitive races across the district, reflecting the importance of Mirpur in the broader electoral landscape. The Election Commission has reiterated its commitment to conducting free, fair and transparent elections, while urging political parties and candidates to adhere to the electoral code of conduct throughout the campaign period.