



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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Bugti says talks possible within Constitution

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti Tuesday said Pakistan and Balochistan were inseparable and that the provincial government was prepared for dialogue with all sides as long as talks remained within the framework of the Constitution. "The state is above everything, and there can be no compromise on national security," he said.



Operation Shaaban: Security forces kill four more terrorists, total rises to 83

According to security sources, forces are carrying out sustained action against Fitna al-Khawarij, targeting terrorists through coordinated aerial and ground operations in different parts of the province. The operation was launched following the July 7 terrorist attack in the Mangi Dam area, in which 27 police personnel were martyred.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding promotion of cashless economy and digital payments on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

PM commends economic team for major progress in advancing digital payment system

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday lauded his economic team for achieving significant progress in promoting digital payments and advancing Pakistan's transition towards a cashless economy over the past year, saying the shift would enhance transparency, improve financial inclusion, and support sustainable economic growth.

Chairing a meeting on the promotion of a cashless economy and digital payments, the prime minister praised the economic team for increasing the number of active merchants using QR code-based digital payments

by 300 percent within a year.

He also described the rise in mobile banking application users from 95 million to 137 million as a major achievement.

The prime minister directed the authorities to further strengthen awareness campaigns to encourage greater adoption of QR code-based digital payments among merchants. He also called on banks and financial institutions to play a more proactive role in accelerating the country's transition to a cashless economy.

He directed that 100% of overseas remittances should be received through digital channels.

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PM strongly condemns attacks on Saudi Arabia, reaffirms unwavering support for Kingdom's security

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday strongly condemned the attacks on Saudi Arabia, describing them as a blatant violation of the Kingdom's sovereignty and territorial integrity with the potential to further undermine regional peace and stability.

"Pakistan strongly condemns the blatant attacks carried out against the brotherly Kingdom

of Saudi Arabia last night," the prime minister said in a post on X, adding, "Pakistan reaffirms its unwavering support for the Kingdom's security and stands in complete solidarity with the brotherly Kingdom of Saudi Arabia at this critical time."

On its part, Pakistan would continue to support all sincere efforts aimed at promoting peace, stability, security, and mutual understanding across the region, the prime minister added.

Houthis launch missiles at Saudi Arabia after Sanaa Airport strike

Agencies/BBC

SANAA/RIYADH: Yemen's Houthi movement launched ballistic missiles and drones at Abha International Airport in southwestern Saudi Arabia on Monday, claiming the attack was retaliation for air strikes on Sanaa International Airport, which they blamed on Saudi Arabia. The Saudi-led coalition said its air defenses intercepted the missiles and reported no casualties.

The escalation followed strikes on Sanaa airport's runway, reportedly carried out by Yemen's internationally recognized government to prevent an Iranian aircraft from landing. The plane, carrying a Houthi delegation returning from Iran, was diverted to Hudaydah Airport.

Houthi spokesperson Yahya



Saree declared that the strikes had ended the four-year de-escalation period between the

Houthis and Saudi Arabia, warning that further actions would follow. He also cautioned airlines against using Saudi airspace until restrictions on Sanaa airport were lifted.

The conflict, which began in 2014 and intensified with the Saudi-led intervention in 2015, has killed more than 150,000 people and created one of the world's worst humanitarian crises, leaving over 22 million Yemenis in need of humanitarian assistance.

The United Nations expressed deep concern over the renewed hostilities, urging all parties to avoid further escalation and resume negotiations under UN auspices. The United Kingdom condemned the Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia, while Iran denounced the strike on Sanaa airport as a violation of international law.

Khawaja Asif denounces JUI-F Chief's irresponsible statement

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif strongly denounced the statement made by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI-F) Chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, terming it highly irresponsible and an insult to the immense sacrifices of the martyrs.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman is a seasoned politician and a respected religious leader, and that greater responsibility is expected of him in the choice of his words, he wrote on his social media platform, X.

The Defence Minister said linking the sacrifices of soldiers to their salaries is not only unfair but also hurts the sentiments of the martyrs and their families.

He said nobody lays down their life merely for a salary. The sacrifice of life, he said, is driven by ideology, faith, a sense of duty, and deep devotion to the homeland.

Asif said the war against terrorism is ongoing, and personnel of the Armed Forces, along with members of other institutions and civilians, continue to embrace martyrdom.

Bangladesh women, social welfare minister calls on DPM Dar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Women, Children and Social Welfare of Bangladesh Dr. A. Z. M. Zahid Hossain called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

During the meeting, the deputy prime minister welcomed Dr. Hossain to Pakistan for the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women held in Islamabad.

He appreciated Bangladesh's participation in the Conference and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to advancing cooperation on women's empowerment within the OIC framework and beyond.

Recalling his visit to Dhaka last August, DPM Dar also reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral relations and underscored its readiness to expand cooperation across diverse fields of mutual interest.

The two leaders exchanged views on enhancing bilateral cooperation in trade, education, social welfare, and people-to-people contacts.

Govt Committed to Independent, Strong Print Media, Pledges ABC Reforms: Atta Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to an independent, responsible, and strong print media.

In a meeting with a CPNE delegation led by President Kazim Khan, the minister assured that consultations with stakeholders will continue to resolve the newspaper industry's structural and financial challenges.

He agreed on the need for comprehensive reforms to the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC) system to make it more effective and transparent in line with modern requirements.

Tarar pledged priority action on ABC reforms, prompt payment of dues to media houses, and issues related to news agencies. He also promised full cooperation to address legitimate grievances of journalistic bodies.

The CPNE delegation congratulated new PIO Raisa Adil and praised outgoing PIO Mubashir Hassan. Federal Secretary Ashfaq Ahmad Khalil also attended.

Three Rangers Martyred, 12 Injured in Rawalakot Terrorist Attack

Bureau Report.

RAWALAKOT: Three Rangers personnel embraced martyrdom and twelve others sustained injuries in a terrorist attack on a Rangers convoy near the Rawalakot Bus Terminal this morning.

Among the martyrs is Naik Imtiaz Ali, who laid down his life during the attack when armed groups associated with the Action Committee opened fire on the Rangers convoy.

Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a comprehensive



sive operation to apprehend those responsible. Efforts are underway to restore normalcy and ensure the safety and security of the public.

The authorities have reiterated their resolve to bring the perpetrators to justice and stated that the operation against the terrorists will continue until those involved are brought to account.

Minister Pays Tribute to Armed Forces' Sacrifices

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said the Pakistan Armed Forces are a symbol of the nation's dignity, security and survival.

In a statement on X, he said the country's peaceful sleep and freedom are possible because of soldiers deployed on borders, from snow-covered peaks and deserts to the frontlines against terrorism. He added that the history written with the blood of martyrs cannot be erased by political statements or ridicule.

"The value of these great sacrifices made by the Pakistan Armed Forces can never be diminished under any circumstances," he said.

Dr. Tariq Fazal noted that while differences of opinion are a right, respecting defenders and honoring martyrs is a shared responsibility. He said "Pakistan First" guides the nation's sons whenever the homeland calls, and it is their sacrifices that keep the green and white flag flying high. He prayed for the elevation of martyrs' ranks, health for veterans, and lasting peace and security for Pakistan.

AJK officials accuse outlawed group of disrupting peace, assure restoration of normalcy

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Home Secretary Chaudhry Guftar Hussain and Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Qazi Inayat Ali have said that the government is committed to restoring peace and normalcy across the state while ensuring the safety of citizens and educational institutions.

Addressing a joint press conference, the officials alleged that the outlawed Awami Action Committee had disrupted public life for the past 38 days through protests, road blockades, intimidation and anti-state activities. They claimed that the group's actions had affected trade, transportation and the supply of essential commodities, while most parts of the state have now returned to normal.

The Home Secretary said law enforcement agencies had reopened key routes and were conducting clearance operations to restore traffic and ensure uninterrupted supplies. He also referred to recent clashes in Rawalakot,



alleging that armed individuals opened fire on security personnel, prompting a response by law enforcement agencies.

Secretary Education Qazi Inayat Ali expressed concern over reports that students and women were being encouraged to participate in protests.

He said all educational institutions had been directed to keep students away from demonstrations and immediately inform parents of any security concerns. He warned that legal action would be taken against any institution found violating government directives.

The officials reaffirmed that educational institutions and public services across most districts had resumed normal operations, adding that the government would continue efforts to maintain law and order and safeguard the lives and property of the people.

Protest

KARACHI: Doctors stage protest against Dr. Akash Kumar killing at National Institute of Child Health (NICH) in the Provincial Capital. Dr. Akash practicing at the Jinnah Postgraduate Medical Centre (JPMC) was shot dead during a robbery near Clifton's Teen Talwar on Monday.



Photo: Online

AJK Election Commission Reviews Preparations for General Elections 2026

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, chaired a high-level meeting to review the implementation of the Code of Conduct and security arrangements for the General Elections 2026, scheduled for July 27.

The meeting was attended by Senior Member Election Commission Khawaja Muhammad Ahsan, Member Syed Nazeer-ul-Hasan Gilani, Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan,



Commissioner Muzaaffarabad Division, Deputy Commissioners, senior

police officials, and other concerned authorities.

Participants reviewed preparations to ensure the elections are conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and impartial manner. The Election Commission directed Returning Officers and Deputy Commissioners to strictly enforce the Code of Conduct for political parties, candidates, and election agents, with monitoring teams tasked to report any violations for legal action.

The meeting also discussed comprehensive security arrangements at polling stations to ensure a peaceful environment for voters. Detailed plans

for the transportation of polling staff, election materials, ballot boxes, and result bags were finalized to ensure timely delivery and efficient transmission of election results to Returning Officers and the Election Commission's Control Room.

Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal reaffirmed the Election Commission's commitment to holding credible and peaceful elections, directing all relevant institutions to perform their responsibilities effectively and ensure that no shortcomings occur in the electoral process.

Hyderabad Residents Demand Immediate Action as Sewage Overflows Disrupt Daily Life

 **Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad's drainage system has once again come under scrutiny after overflowing sewer lines flooded roads in several areas, including Qasimabad, causing severe inconvenience for residents and commuters.

One of the worst-affected locations is the main entrance to Eidgah Hyderabad, where stagnant sewage water has submerged the road, making movement difficult for pedestrians and motorists. Residents have also reported foul odours and unsanitary conditions, warning of potential public health risks.



Locals blamed the recurring problem on poor maintenance of the

city's drainage infrastructure and delays in cleaning sewer lines. They said the

overflowing sewage has disrupted daily life, damaged road conditions, and increased the risk of waterborne diseases and traffic accidents.

Residents urged Hyderabad Mayor Kashif Shoro and the relevant municipal authorities to take immediate action by clearing the accumulated sewage, restoring the drainage system, and implementing long-term measures to prevent such incidents from recurring.

Citizens stressed that timely maintenance and infrastructure improvements are essential to address the city's persistent drainage problems and ensure a cleaner, healthier, and safer environment for the public.

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 **Bureau Report**

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The authorities have reiterated their resolve to bring the perpetrators to justice and stated that the operation against the terrorists will continue until those involved are brought to account.

Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah stresses strong attachment to the Quran and Sunnah

 **City Desk**



RAWALPINDI: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, said that while Muslims should benefit from artificial intelligence and modern technology, their intellectual, moral and spiritual foundation must remain firmly rooted in the Holy Quran and the Sunnah.

He expressed these views while addressing the monthly Mehfil-e-Zikr wa Dars-e-Quran organized by Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, attended by hundreds of men and women. The event was hosted by Deputy Director Allama Hafiz Sheikh Muhammad Qasim. Allama Shah urged Muslims to make regular recitation, understanding and practice of the Quran a part of daily life, saying true success lies in adherence to divine guidance. He also emphasized that modern technology should be used for religious service, education and the welfare of humanity without compromising Islamic identity and values. Special prayers were offered for the Muslim Ummah, the security of Pakistan and the promotion of education and national development.

Ch Saqib Bandesha Elected Vice President South Punjab of APF

 **Zafar Chishti**



TOBA TEK SINGH: Chaudhry Saqib Bandesha, District President of the Real Estate Ittehad Association (Registered) Toba Tek Singh has been elected Vice President South Punjab of the All Pakistan Federation of Realtors (APF). His election has been warmly welcomed by the real estate community across the district. Office-bearers, members of the Real Estate Ittehad Association (Registered) Toba Tek Singh along with prominent figures from the real estate sector, congratulated Chaudhry Saqib Bandesha on his appointment and extended their best wishes for his new role. Speaking on the occasion, they described him as a dynamic, capable and experienced leader who has consistently worked for the welfare of the real estate sector by highlighting its issues and striving for their effective resolution.

Expressing his gratitude, Chaudhry Saqib Bandesha thanked the central leadership of the All Pakistan Federation of Realtors (APF), the office-bearers and members of the Real Estate Ittehad Association and all his supporters for their trust and confidence. He pledged to fulfill his responsibilities with dedication and to work tirelessly for the protection of the legitimate rights of realtors, the strengthening of the organization and the development of the real estate sector throughout South Punjab and across Pakistan.

Punjab Safe Cities Launches QR Panic Button System for Foreign Nationals

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), in collaboration with the Special Protection Unit (SPU), has launched an advanced QR Panic Button System to enhance the safety and security of foreign nationals living and working across Punjab under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Safe Punjab" initiative.

According to a PSCA spokesperson, QR Panic Buttons will be installed at the residences and workplaces of foreign nationals. By scanning the QR code, users will gain instant access to Emergency Helpline 15, live chat, video calling, and location-sharing services. During an emergency, the system will immediately transmit the user's live location and relevant information to the PSCA Command and Control Centre, enabling a rapid and coordinated response.

The QR Panic Button System has been integrated with the PSCA's Command and Control Centre, allowing police and the Special Protection Unit to assess emergencies instantly and respond without delay.

The spokesperson said the initiative reflects the Punjab government's commitment to strengthening public safety through smart policing, digital security solutions, and artificial intelligence-based technologies. The system is expected to improve emergency response, enhance operational coordination, boost international confidence, and further reinforce Punjab's technology-driven public safety framework.

IHC seeks reply in plea against travel ban on former minister Yar Muhammad Rind

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday sought responses from the Ministry of Interior, the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and the Director General of Immigration and Passports on a petition filed by former federal minister Sardar Yar Muhammad Rind challenging restrictions on his foreign travel.

Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas heard the petition and issued notices to the respondents, directing them to submit their replies.

Counsel for the petitioner argued that Rind was a law-abiding citizen who had previously served as a member of the National Assembly and a federal minister. The lawyer told the court that his client arrived at Islamabad International Airport on May 13, to travel abroad but was stopped by immigration authorities, who informed him that his name had been placed on a travel restriction list.

The petitioner requested the court to direct the authorities to remove his name from the list and allow him to travel abroad.

After issuing notices to the respondents, the court adjourned further proceedings.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:27 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:20 pm
Isha 9:00 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

Religious minister directs to immediately operationalize Quran Recycling Plant

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf, on Tuesday called for the immediate operationalization of the Quran Recycling Plant at the Islamabad Hajj Camp, emphasizing that the facility should be made fully functional at the earliest to ensure the respectful and dignified disposal of Quranic pages.

The minister expressed these views while chairing a meeting to review preparations for the 51st International Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) Conference.

Addressing the meeting, the Federal Minister said that the 51st International Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) Conference would be organized on a grand scale during the upcoming month of Rabi-ul-Awwal.

He said that the Ministry of Religious Affairs had the honour of organizing this important and blessed conference, which would play an important role in enlightening the younger generation about Islamic teachings and Seerat-e-Tayyaba (PBUH).

He said that prominent scholars, religious leaders, delegates, and dignitaries from across Pakistan and various countries would participate in the conference, which would help promote the message of Seerat-un-Nabi (PBUH) at the international level.

CM directs deputy commissioners to identify unsafe drinking water areas, submit reports

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday directed deputy commissioners of all districts to identify areas with unsafe drinking water and submit reports as the provincial government reviewed measures to restore and expand access to clean drinking water across Punjab.

Chairing a special meeting on the rehabilitation of water filtration plants, the chief minister instructed district administrations to identify localities where residents have to travel long distances to obtain safe drinking water. She also ordered an assessment of the drinking water requirements in areas facing acute shortages.

The meeting was informed that bottling plants had been made operational in the worst-affected districts, including Khushab, Dera Ghazi Khan, Bahawalpur and Rahim Yar Khan. Bottled drinking water will

be transported to affected communities through trucks. A digital report on the Khushab bottling plant was presented, stating that it has the capacity to produce 50,000 bottles of water per hour.

Maryam Nawaz sought immediate reports from the deputy commissioners of Khushab, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rahim Yar Khan and Bahawalpur regarding the prevailing drinking water situation in their districts.

The meeting also approved the establishment of four additional bottling plants under the CM Punjab Clean Drinking Water Project. Officials informed the meeting that 2,258 water filtration plants would be constructed across the province, while cluster-based plants equipped with water tanks would also be established to improve the supply of clean drinking water.

In the first phase, 22 cluster-based plants will be set up in Bahawalpur



Division and 10 in Rajanpur.

She directed to immediately address complaints regarding non-functional

and faulty water filtration plants and instructed deputy commissioners to ensure the restoration and oper-

ationalisation of damaged or closed filtration facilities in their respective districts.

Plantation drive

ISLAMABAD: State Minister Climate Change & Environmental Coordination, Shezra Mansab Ali Khan Kharal, Turkish Ambassador to Pakistan, Dr. Irfan Neziroglu and Chairman Capital Development Authority (CDA) Lt. (R) Sohail Ashraf watering the plant during a ceremony of planting 500 saplings at Ankara Park on the occasion of Turkish Democracy and National Unity Day after sapling in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Governor Punjab Inaugurates NADRA Facilitation Centres in Two Attock Union Councils

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Monday inaugurated NADRA Facilitation Centres in the Union Councils of Brahma Bahter and Malal in Attock, enabling residents to access NADRA services locally.

The ceremony was attended by the DG NADRA, local dignitaries, and a large number of citizens who welcomed the new centres.

Addressing the event, the Governor thanked the NADRA Chairman for approving four



centres at his request. He said people of Brahma Bahter and Malal would no longer need to travel to Fateh Jang for CNICs and other NADRA services. He

also thanked Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi for his support.

Saleem Haider expressed hope that full NADRA offices

would soon be available in all tehsils of Attock. He noted the centres would provide convenience to poor and deserving citizens and help bring more federal institutions to the district.

Highlighting development needs, he announced a University of Attock would be established soon for local higher education. He stressed public welfare projects should remain above politics, adding that PPP is committed to public service and that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari would become Prime Minister and set new benchmarks.

CM approves Aitchison-standard schools across Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday approved the establishment of Aitchison-standard boys and girls schools across the province and gave the go-ahead for setting up the first Maryam Nawaz Centre of Academic Leadership for male and female students on Wahdat Road in Lahore.

The approval was granted during a meeting on school education chaired by the chief minister, where a detailed briefing was presented on the proposed centre.

The CM also approved the pilot project for the Maryam Nawaz Centre of Academic Leadership. Officials informed the meeting that the institution would have the capacity to enrol 5,000 boys and 5,000 girls.

According to the briefing, the centre will feature state-of-the-art academic and sports facilities, including a modern sports hall, hockey and cricket stadiums, horse-riding facilities and a swimming pool for students.

HITEC University to hold PhD Dissertation Defence on July 27

News Desk

TAXILA: HITEC University Taxila has announced that Mr. Zain Razzaq, a PhD scholar in the Department of Islamic Studies, will defend his doctoral dissertation on Monday, July 27, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Iqbal Auditorium of the university.

The dissertation is titled "A Critical Analysis of the 20th-Century Islamic Revisionist Response to Capitalism in Pakistan." The research has been supervised by Dr. Rab Nawaz.

The university has invited faculty members, researchers, students, and other interested individuals to attend the open defence. Attendees are requested to be seated by 9:45 a.m. before the proceedings begin.

HITEC University to hold PhD Dissertation Defence on July 23

News Desk

TAXILA: HITEC University Taxila has announced that Ms. Fozia Altaf, a PhD scholar in the Department of Islamic Studies, will defend her doctoral dissertation on Thursday, July 23, 2026, at 10:00 a.m. in the Iqbal Auditorium of the university.

The dissertation, supervised by Dr. Ahmed Hassan, will be presented before the examination committee.

The university has invited faculty members, researchers, students, and all interested individuals to attend the open defence. Attendees are requested to be seated by 9:45 a.m. before the proceedings begin.

ICT admin inspects 4,240 dengue hotspots, 51 arrested for SOP violations

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, Irfan Nawaz Memon on Tuesday chaired a review meeting on dengue prevention and examined surveillance data, hotspot inspections, and enforcement measures across the federal capital. Officials reported that 4,240 hotspots were inspected in urban and rural areas, while 51 people were arrested and three locations sealed for violating dengue-related standard operating procedures (SOPs). The meeting also noted that no dengue patient is currently under treatment in Islamabad hospitals.

The meeting brought together officers from the district administration and the health department to assess the dengue situation in the federal capital and review ongoing prevention efforts.

Officials presented a detailed overview of dengue-related data and compared the situation in Islamabad with other major cities, including Rawalpindi, Lahore, Faisalabad, and Multan. The comparison was aimed at evaluating trends and identifying areas requiring continued monitoring and preventive action.

During the session, participants reviewed indoor and outdoor vector surveillance statistics collected between July 3 and July 13. The data provided an assessment of mosquito breeding activity and highlighted areas where preventive measures were being implemented.

According to the report presented at the meeting, inspection teams visited 2,575 hotspots in urban areas and 1,665 hotspots in rural areas, bringing the total number of inspected locations to 4,240. These inspections were carried out to identify potential breeding sites and ensure compliance with dengue prevention guidelines.

The report further stated that during outdoor surveillance activities, larvae were detected at 944 locations, while 63 locations were reported clear of larvae. Authorities said the findings would help direct future operations and strengthen monitoring in affected areas. The meeting also reviewed enforcement actions taken against violations of dengue SOPs. Officials informed participants that 51 individuals were arrested for failing to comply with preventive measures, while three locations were sealed following violations. The district administration said such actions would continue to ensure adherence to public health regulations.

Court hands life sentence to Farrukh Khokhar in PTI activist murder case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A sessions court in Rawalpindi on Tuesday sentenced three men, including the main accused Farrukh Khokhar, to life imprisonment after convicting them in the 2022 murder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) activist Majid Satti.

Additional District and Sessions Judge Afshan Ijaz Sufi announced the verdict at the Judicial Complex in Rawalpindi after concluding the trial.

The court awarded life imprisonment to Farrukh Khokhar and imposed a fine of Rs1 million after finding him guilty of the murder.

Farrukh Khokhar is reportedly a local leader of the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI).

Another accused, Waseem, was



acquitted after the court extended him the benefit of the doubt.

Security was tightened in and around the Judicial Complex on the occasion, with a heavy police presence deployed to maintain law and order.

Family members of both sides, lawyers and supporters were present in large numbers during the hearing.

Following the announcement of the verdict, the court ordered the immediate arrest of Farrukh Khokhar, who had been out on bail.

Police took him into custody inside the courtroom, handcuffed him and shifted him to the lock-up before later transferring him to Adiala Jail under strict security.

The case relates to the killing of PTI leader and social activist Majid Satti, who was shot dead by motorcycle-riding assailants on Sixth Road in Rawalpindi on August 22, 2022.

A case was subsequently registered at Sadqabad Police Station.

According to the prosecution, police

investigations found that Satti had been opposing an alleged attempt to illegally occupy a plot of land.

Investigators concluded that he was targeted and killed because he had become an obstacle to the alleged land-grabbing attempt.

According to the prosecution, Farrukh Khokhar, the principal convict in the case, was formerly affiliated with the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) before later joining the Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI).

He is the son of Rawalpindi-based political figure Taji Khokhar, who has previously faced allegations related to land-grabbing.

Majid Satti's family and their lawyers have expressed satisfaction with the court's ruling, saying they believed justice had finally been served.

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World Youth Skills Day

Today, Pakistan joins the international community in observing World Youth Skills Day and pays tribute to the talent, determination, and immense potential of our young people.

Our youth are among our nation’s most valuable assets. Through quality education, character building and the acquisition of contemporary knowledge and skills, they are confidently advancing towards a brighter and more prosperous future.

Today, digital innovation, emerging technologies, artificial intelligence, and a rapidly evolving global economy are reshaping the future of Labour and employment sector.

In this changing landscape, internationally competitive skills have become the true foundation of sustainable progress. Technical and vocational education and training, equitable access to opportunities, enhanced productivity, and entrepreneurial innovation are the key drivers of economic prosperity and global competitiveness.

Recognizing the central importance of skills development, the Government has transformed the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) into a modern, dynamic, and future oriented national institution. The Commission is being equipped to deliver internationally benchmarked training, globally recognized certifications, and industry aligned skills that will enable Pakistani youth to compete with confidence, both at home and abroad.

This year, the Government has allocated a substantial budget through the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTC) to strengthen technical skills development, reflecting our unwavering commitment to investing in Pakistan’s human capital. Under this policy, skills development has been established as a fundamental pillar of Pakistan’s economic growth and prosperity.

Another central pillar of the Government’s strategy is not only to expand employment opportunities but also to nurture skilled professionals, entrepreneurs, and a highly competent workforce capable of generating jobs, increasing exports, enhancing national productivity, and contributing meaningfully to sustainable economic development.

The Government is also expanding collaboration and partnerships with industry stakeholders and international institutions under a comprehensive strategy to ensure that Pakistan’s workforce meets global standards and remains competitive in international markets.

Harnessing and nurturing the full potential of our national workforce by ensuring equal opportunities for all men and women, without discrimination of any kind, remains one of the Government’s foremost priorities.

With the effective performance of our training institutions, coordinated strategies at the federal and provincial levels, and the sincere collaboration of the private sector and industry, I am confident that Pakistan’s skilled workforce will emerge as a global symbol of competence, innovation, and excellence.

On this World Youth Skills Day, let us renew our collective resolve to build a future where the talents and abilities of our people are fully realized and transformed into lasting national prosperity.

How Trump Turned Hormuz into a U. S. Cash Machine

President Donald Trump’s declaration that the United States will become the “guardian” of the Strait of Hormuz, reimpose its blockade on Iranian shipping and demand reimbursement equal to 20 percent of eligible cargo value has exposed a striking contradiction at the heart of American policy.

Until recently, Washington insisted that Hormuz was an international waterway through which commercial vessels must enjoy free and unimpeded passage. American officials condemned Iran’s attempts to regulate maritime traffic or collect payments as violations of international law. Now, the United States is proposing an even larger charge while declaring that it controls the strait.

Trump has defended this reversal by arguing that America has protected the waterway for decades without receiving payment. He said Washington was protecting “a very rich portion of the world” and therefore deserved reimbursement. The United States has simultaneously resumed attacks on Iran and restored its blockade of Iranian ports.

This is no minor policy adjustment. It changes the character of the conflict and demolishes Washington’s earlier moral argument.

When Iran sought to impose conditions on ships, Washington presented freedom of navigation as a universal principle. When the United States proposes a 20 percent charge, the same waterway

is suddenly treated as a commercial asset whose protection must generate revenue. A principle cannot remain universal if it changes according to who possesses the stronger navy.

The International Maritime Organization has reaffirmed that passage through the Strait of Hormuz should remain free from tolls and charges and that all ships must enjoy nondiscriminatory and unimpeded transit. The strait is bordered by Iran and Oman, not the United States, which is geographically an external military power.

The struggle over Hormuz must now be examined within a wider pattern involving Venezuela, Greenland and the world’s major energy corridors.

The first component is Venezuela. After the capture and removal of President Nicolás Maduro, the Trump administration said the United States intended to control Venezuelan oil sales and revenues indefinitely. American officials described arrangements under which proceeds from Venezuelan petroleum would be deposited into U.S.-controlled accounts, while sanctions were eased to permit greater Western participation in the country’s oil sector.

Venezuela possesses enormous petroleum reserves. Control over its exports gives Washington influence not merely

over one country’s resources but over a major source of energy in the Western Hemisphere. Oil shipments that might otherwise serve China or other customers can be redirected, regulated or subjected to financial arrangements determined by the United States.

The second component is Greenland. Trump has repeatedly argued that Greenland should come under American control, citing national security, Russian and Chinese activity, minerals and the island’s strategic position.

Greenland’s importance goes beyond

territory. Melting Arctic ice is gradually increasing the strategic relevance of northern shipping routes. These corridors could eventually carry energy, minerals and commercial cargo between Asia, Europe and North America. A dominant

position in Greenland would therefore offer influence over an emerging maritime gateway as well as access to critical resources.

The third and most immediate component is Hormuz, through which a substantial share of the world’s oil and liquefied natural gas normally travels. Before the war, around 130 ships reportedly crossed the strait daily.

Viewed together, Venezuela, Greenland and Hormuz form a strategic triangle: control of an enormous oil-pro-

ducing state in the Western Hemisphere, influence over a future Arctic corridor and command of the principal energy gateway of the Middle East.

This does not require the existence of a publicly released document entitled “Plan for Global Energy Domination.” Great-power strategies are often revealed not by a single declaration but by the consistency of actions, priorities and outcomes.

Therefore, the possession of nuclear fissile material by Iran has never been an issue. Had the nuclear issue remained Washington’s sole or overriding concern, the United States could have preserved this framework, strengthened verification and continued negotiations.

Instead, the diplomatic framework was sacrificed as the confrontation over maritime authority intensified. Washington reimposed the blockade, expanded attacks and announced that it would control the strait and charge vessels for protection.

Therefore the control of Hormuz has been a higher strategic priority than preserving the nuclear agreement. The nuclear issue may have initiated or justified the confrontation, but the struggle now concerns who regulates, protects, restricts and profits from the waterway.

The economic consequences would be enormous. If the 20 percent charge is calculated on cargo value, transporting an \$80 barrel of oil could attract an additional fee of approximately \$16. A tanker

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

PLA at 99: Enduring Legacy, Evolving Mission

On August 1, 2026, the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) commemorates its ninety-ninth anniversary. Born in the crucible of China’s revolutionary struggle, the PLA has evolved from a guerrilla force into one of the world’s largest and most technologically advanced militaries. Its journey reflects not only China’s transformation but also the shifting dynamics of global power. As the PLA approaches its centenary, its legacy and future trajectory merit close examination.

The PLA traces its origins to the Nanchang Uprising of August 1, 1927, when Communist forces under Zhou Enlai, He Long, and Ye Ting launched an armed resistance against the Kuomintang. Though militarily unsuccessful, the uprising marked the birth of the Chinese Red Army, later renamed the PLA. Mao Zedong’s leadership during the Long March and the War of Resistance against Japan cemented the army’s identity as a “people’s force,” rooted in political consciousness and mass mobilization. This revolutionary heritage continues to shape the PLA’s ethos. Unlike many militaries, the PLA is not merely a national defence institution but the armed wing of the Communist Party of China. Its loyalty to the Party remains a defining characteristic, ensuring that military modernization is inseparable from political stability.

The PLA’s transformation mirrors China’s rise. In its early decades, the army relied on manpower and ideological zeal rather than advanced weaponry. During the Korean War, PLA forces demonstrated resilience despite technological inferiority. By the late twentieth century, however, China recognized the need to

modernize. Deng Xiaoping’s reforms emphasized “fewer but better troops,” shifting focus from sheer numbers to quality. The Gulf War of 1991, showcasing U.S. precision warfare, further underscored the PLA’s need to embrace technology. Since then, successive leaders have prioritized modernization, culminating in President Xi Jinping’s ambitious reforms to build a “worldclass military” by midcentury. Today, the PLA fields advanced capabilities in cyber warfare, space operations, hypersonic missiles, and artificial intelligence. Its navy has expanded rapidly, with aircraft carriers and modern submarines projecting power into the South China Sea and beyond. The air force has introduced fifth-generation fighters, while

the Rocket Force commands an array of conventional and nuclear missiles.

At ninety-nine, the PLA’s mission extends beyond territorial defence. It embodies China’s aspiration to safeguard sovereignty, secure economic interests, and contribute to global stability. The PLA remains central to China’s stance on Taiwan, the South China Sea, and border disputes, with modernization aimed at deterring challenges to territorial integrity. With the Belt and Road Initiative spanning continents, the PLA increasingly undertakes missions to secure sea lanes, protect overseas investments, and ensure energy security. China has also become a major contributor to UN peacekeeping operations, with PLA contingents in Africa and Asia demonstrating Beijing’s commitment to multilateral security. Its role in disaster relief, from earthquakes to pandemics, highlights its capacity as a force for public good.

A hallmark of PLA modernization is civil-military integration. China’s technological

advances in artificial intelligence, quantum computing, and aerospace are harnessed for defence applications. Universities, research institutes, and private enterprises collaborate with the PLA to accelerate innovation. This fusion ensures that military modernization is embedded within China’s broader developmental trajectory.

Despite its progress, the PLA faces challenges. Balancing rapid modernization with doctrinal adaptation is complex. Integrating new technologies requires not only hardware but also training, leadership, and strategic clarity. Internationally, the PLA’s expansion has raised concerns. Critics argue that its assertiveness in the South China Sea and Taiwan Strait risks destabilizing regional security. Others caution that civil-military fusion blurs boundaries between civilian innovation and military application, complicating global technology cooperation. Yet, from Beijing’s perspective, PLA modernization is defensive, aimed at safeguarding sovereignty and ensuring that China is never again humiliated by foreign powers.

For Pakistan, the PLA’s anniversary holds symbolic resonance. Sino-Pakistani defence cooperation, rooted in shared strategic interests, has grown steadily. Joint exercises, technology transfers, and collaboration in counterterrorism reflect mutual trust. The PLA’s modernization offers Pakistan lessons in integrating innovation with defence, while reinforcing the strategic partnership that underpins regional stability.

As the PLA approaches its hundredth anniversary in 2027, its trajectory is clear: to become a “worldclass military” capable of safeguarding China’s interests globally. This ambition is not merely about hardware but about doctrine, professionalism, and integration with national development. The centenary will likely be marked by further advances in space, cyber,

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The Architecture of the Mind: A Reading Curriculum for Personal Evolution

In an era characterized by relentless digital noise and fleeting attention spans, the pursuit of personal development often feels like navigating a labyrinth without a map. Yet, the most profound mentors we could ever ask for are waiting patiently on our bookshelves. A well-chosen book does not merely offer advice; it serves as a catalyst, reflecting our untapped potential and challenging the paradigms we have outgrown.

True personality development requires a holistic approach, one that marries universal frameworks of productivity with the nuanced, spiritual grounding of our specific cultural milieu. For those committed to the arduous but rewarding journey of self-mastery, a curated blend of international literature and a robust selection of Pakistani masterpieces offers the ultimate blueprint.

When analyzing international literature on personal development, the focus frequently leans toward behavioral mechanics and interpersonal dynamics. These texts are celebrated because their structural principles transcend geographical boundaries. At the vanguard of behavioral change is James Clear’s Atomic Habits. This essential text masterfully dismantles the myth of sheer willpower by focusing on the compounding power of small, daily actions, teaching us that systems, not fleeting goals, dictate our long-term success.

Complementing this is Stephen R. Covey’s The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People, a staple of personal development that advocates for a paradigm shift anchored in timeless principles like proactivity and empathetic listening.

It brilliantly transitions the reader from a state of dependence to effective interdependence. For a profound shift in psychological perspective, The Courage to Be Disliked by Ichiro Kishimi and Fumitake Koga offers a liberating framework. It challenges readers to shed the burdensome weight of societal expectations and past traumas to achieve true intellectual and emotional freedom.

Building an exceptional mind requires a diverse curriculum. International bestsellers equip us with the tools to navigate the modern world, while our national luminaries ensure we do not lose our soul in the process.

While global authors provide essential structural frameworks for productivity, true holistic growth requires a synthesis with our own cultural and spiritual realities. Pakistani literature speaks directly to the societal pressures, moral dilemmas, and existential inquiries unique to our environment. At the very heart of Pakistani self-reflection is Ashfaq

Ahmed’s masterpiece, Zaviya. Originating from his iconic television talks, it serves as an essential guide for internal clarity. Ahmed challenges modern materialism, teaching us to view life’s problems with a spiritual perspective, emphasizing the power of humility and the transformative nature of gratitude.

Equally profound are the works of Wasif Ali Wasif, specifically Kiran Kiran Suraj and Dil Darya Samundar. These are deep treasures of Sufi wisdom and ethical insight. His aphoristic prose delves into the nature of existence, advocating for inner peace, self-awareness, and

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IS Celebrating His Majesty the Sultan's Birthday

A Day of National Pride in Brunei Darussalam

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Every year on 15 July, the people of Brunei Darussalam come together to celebrate the birthday of His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. This important national holiday is a time for reflection, gratitude, and celebration, honouring a monarch whose leadership has shaped the nation's remarkable journey of peace, prosperity, and stability.

Born on 15 July 1946, His Majesty is the eldest son of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III and Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Damit. In 1961, he was appointed as the Crown Prince, preparing him for a future dedicated to serving the people of Brunei. Following the abdication of his father on 5 October 1967, His Majesty ascended the throne as the 29th Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam. His coronation on



1 August 1968 was a magnificent occasion that reflected the nation's rich heritage, ancient customs, and royal traditions.

His Majesty belongs to one of the world's oldest continuing royal dynasties, with an almost unbroken lineage stretching back to the 14th century. In addition to serving as the Sultan, His Majesty also holds the office of Prime Minister, playing a central role in guiding Brunei's

development and governance.

Throughout his reign, His Majesty has been widely recognised for his commitment to preserving Brunei's cultural and Islamic heritage while promoting national development, economic progress, education, healthcare, and the well-being of the country's citizens.

Under his leadership, Brunei has earned a reputation as a peaceful, stable, and



prosperous nation with a high standard of living and a strong sense of national identity.

Education

The celebration of His Majesty's birthday is marked

by colourful parades, ceremonial events, cultural performances, and gatherings across

the nation. Citizens and residents proudly participate in the festivities, expressing their loyalty and appreciation for the Sultan's dedicated service and leadership. The occasion also provides an opportunity for communities to come together in a spirit of unity, respect, and national pride.

As Brunei Darussalam celebrates this special day each year, the birthday of His Majesty the Sultan serves as a reminder of the enduring values of unity, harmony, and service to the nation. It is a fitting occasion to honour a monarch whose steadfast leadership continues to inspire confidence in Brunei's future and strengthen the bonds that unite its people.

Happy Birthday to His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah. May His Majesty be blessed with good health, happiness, and continued wisdom as he leads Brunei Darussalam toward an even brighter future.

PC Hospitality Wins Two Prestigious PIFRA Awards

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: PC Hospitality has won two prestigious awards at the Pakistan International Food & Restaurant Awards (PIFRA), recognizing the company's excellence in fine dining and boutique luxury hospitality.

The awards were presented to Dumpukht by Pearl-Continental, one of Pakistan's leading Mughal fine-dining brands, and the PC Signature Collection, the company's premium boutique hospitality portfolio.

The recognition comes as PC Hospitality expands the Dumpukht brand following a franchise agreement with GBB. The company plans to extend its presence across major cities in Pakistan before entering the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA).

The award for the PC Signature Collection highlights the growing appeal of its exclusive hospitality offerings, including the historic Cecil Hotel by Pearl-Continental and Rumanza by Pearl-Continental, which



combine heritage, culture, and luxury experiences for discerning travelers.

Speaking on the achievement, PC Hospitality CEO Bastien Blanc said

the awards reflect the team's commitment to excellence and reinforce the company's vision of expanding its premium dining and boutique

hospitality brands. He added that the launch of Arena by Pearl-Continental in the coming weeks will further strengthen the company's



position in Pakistan's luxury hospitality sector.

The double PIFRA recognition further cements PC Hospitality's

reputation as one of Pakistan's leading hospitality groups, with a diverse portfolio of luxury hotels, resorts, restaurants, and franchise brands.

Zong, WWF-Pakistan Launch Initiative to Protect Endangered Indus River Dolphin

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong has partnered with WWF-Pakistan to strengthen conservation efforts for the endangered Indus River Dolphin, supporting rescue operations, ecological monitoring, community engagement, and environmental awareness to protect one of the world's rarest freshwater dolphin species.

The partnership was launched with the inauguration of the Indus Dolphin Rescue and Mobile Awareness Ambulance at the WWF-Pakistan office in Islamabad. The ceremony was attended by Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik, Zong Chairman and CEO Huo Junli, WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan, representatives of the Chinese Embassy, and other dignitaries.

Dr. Musadik Malik described the initiative as a significant step toward protecting Pakistan's natural heritage, while appreciating the support of



Zong, WWF-Pakistan, and the Chinese Embassy in promoting conservation and community development.

Zong Chief Regulatory Officer Kamran Ali said the project reflects the company's commitment to environmental stewardship, inclusive growth, and the longstanding Pakistan-China partnership.

WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan noted that Pakistan's Indus River Dolphin population has grown to around 2,000, calling it a

major conservation success. Since 1992, WWF-Pakistan and its partners have rescued and released over 200 stranded dolphins.

The specialized mobile rescue unit will operate between the Guddu and Sukkur barrages in Sindh, strengthening rescue efforts, monitoring dolphin habitats, engaging more than 1,500 riverine community members, and conducting 50 awareness sessions in remote areas to promote long-term conservation of the endangered species.

ISSI Hosts Roundtable on India's Sea-Based Nuclear Capabilities and Regional Security

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), through its Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC), hosted a high-level roundtable titled "India's Sea-Based Nuclear Capabilities: Implications for Pakistan," bringing together strategic experts, diplomats, military analysts, and academics to discuss the impact of India's expanding maritime nuclear capabilities on regional security.

Chairman ISSI Board of Governors, Ambassador Khalid Mehmood, said India's operational sea-based nuclear deterrent represents a significant shift in South Asia's strategic landscape and requires a reassessment of regional deterrence and diplomatic approaches to preserve peace and stability.

ACDC Director Malik Qasim Mustafa highlighted the need to evaluate Pakistan's doctrinal and technological responses to maintain credible deterrence, while Research Fellow Ms. Ghazala Yasmin Jalil stressed the importance of maritime confidence-building measures (CBMs) to prevent an arms race.



Speakers, including Vice Admiral (Retd.) Dr. Ahmed Saeed, Ambassador (Retd.) Zamir Akram, Air Commodore (Retd.) Khalid Banuri, and Dr. Aqeel Akhtar, discussed challenges posed by India's growing naval nuclear capabilities, including strategic instability, command-and-control risks, crisis escalation, and the need for stronger second-strike capabilities.

Participants emphasized the importance of diplomatic engagement, modern deterrence measures, secure communication mechanisms, and regional confidence-building initiatives to maintain strategic stability and reduce the risk of miscalculation in South Asia. An interactive discussion followed on policy options for preserving regional strategic equilibrium.

The Enduring Relevance of 13 July 1931

History is not only about dates; it is about people, their challenges, their dreams, and the lessons they leave behind. Some dates do not immediately change the course of history, but they change people and the way they perceive their future. For the people of Kashmir, 13 July 1931 is one such date. Whether viewed through the lens of history, politics, or collective memory, this day occupies a significant place in Kashmir's historical narrative.

On 13 July 1931, a large crowd gathered outside the Central Jail in Srinagar, where the trial of Abdul Qadeer, known for his fiery speeches criticizing the Dogra administration, was taking place. As the proceedings continued, tensions between the assembled crowd and the state authorities steadily increased. The situation eventually escalated, and the Dogra State forces opened fire on the protesters. Twenty-two people lost their

lives, while many others were injured. The incident quickly became one of the most defining moments in Kashmir's modern political history.

To understand why this event occurred, it is important to examine the historical context in which it unfolded. During the Dogra rule from 1846 to 1947, sections of the population expressed dissatisfaction over a range of political, economic, and social issues. Concerns regarding civil rights, unequal access to opportunities, heavy taxation, administrative practices, and political representation had gradually created widespread resentment among many communities. The events leading up to July 1931 reflected an increasing level of public dissatisfaction with the existing system of governance.

Historians continue to debate the precise causes, nature, and political significance of the events of 13 July 1931. Different schools of thought interpret the incident in different ways, influenced

by their historical, political, and ideological perspectives. Nevertheless, there is broad agreement that the tragedy marked a turning point in the political awakening of Kashmir. It encouraged greater public participation in political affairs and shaped the trajectory of political movements that emerged in the years that followed.

The twenty-two individuals who lost their lives were participating in a peaceful public protest. Over the decades, 13 July has become a day of remembrance, reflection, and discussion about questions of justice, representation, civil liberties, and the relationship between the state and its citizens. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge that different communities, historians, and political groups interpret the events of that day differently.

These diverse perspectives form part of the broader historical discourse surrounding Kashmir's past.

Why does 13 July continue to matter for today's younger generation? The answer lies in the fact that the past shapes the present. A society that understands its own history is better equipped to reflect upon its future. Learning about history does not require accepting every interpretation without question. Rather, it requires the ability to think critically, examine multiple perspectives, evaluate evidence, and understand the complexities surrounding historical events. Such an approach encourages informed citizenship and strengthens intellectual maturity.

The significance of 13 July also extends beyond the history of Kashmir

itself. The events of that day highlight broader lessons about governance, public participation, and the importance of dialogue over confrontation. They remind us that peaceful civic engagement and responsive institutions are essential for building trust between governments and the people they serve. The story also underscores the importance of preserving historical memory while remaining open to scholarly debate and respectful discussion. History should not be viewed as a fixed narrative but as a continuous process of learning, questioning, and understanding.

Every generation inherits history, but each generation must decide how to engage with it. Remembering the past should never be seen merely as a means of reviving old divisions or deepening tensions. Instead, it should serve as an opportunity to learn from previous experiences and to promote greater understanding. Reflecting on events such as 13

July with empathy, historical accuracy, and intellectual honesty enables societies not only to honour those who experienced them but also to strengthen the values of dialogue, justice, and mutual respect.

Ultimately, the significance of 13 July lies not only in the tragic events that occurred on that day but also in the enduring questions they raise about justice, governance, political participation, collective memory, and the importance of understanding history. Its legacy continues to encourage reflection on how societies remember their past, engage with differing interpretations, and work towards a future built upon knowledge, accountability, and peaceful coexistence.

Aima Afraz is a student of International Relations at the National University Of Modern Languages and is currently serving as a research associate at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR).



Analysis

Aima Afraz

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
173,518.81	179,927.04
Day's High	Day's Low
178,112.04	173,349.41
Index Value	Change
35,613,773,319	−6408.23
Percentage	Time
−3.56%	14 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,529.39	+31.10
Percentage	Time
+0.30%	14 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,447.23	−51.41
Percentage	Time
−0.098%	14 Jul, 1:21 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
67,743.50	+500.77
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	14 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

Export Incentives Must Not Become a Backdoor for Domestic Trade, Says Salim Valimuhammad



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA) has expressed serious reservations over the federal government's decision to allow manufacturers to sell up to 50% of imported raw materials in the local market without value addition, arguing that the measure effectively legitimizes the misuse of export-related industrial concessions.

In a statement, PCDMA Chairman Salim Valimuhammad said that raw materials imported under concessionary tax and duty schemes meant exclusively for export-oriented production should, under no circumstances, be allowed to enter the domestic market.

He said the new provision introduced through the Sales Tax Act in the federal budget, permitting manufacturers to sell up to 50% of imported raw materials without processing, runs contrary to the very objective of export facilitation. Instead of curbing abuse, the policy effectively grants legal cover to the diversion of concessionary imports into the local market, undermining genuine commercial importers that pay the full spectrum of applicable taxes, duties and levies.

"Raw materials imported under export incentive schemes must be used solely for value addition and subsequent exports. Allowing even 50% of such imports to be sold domestically defeats the purpose of these incentives and creates an uneven playing field," Mr. Valimuhammad said.

PTCL confirms Nadeem Khan as Chief Executive Officer

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, JULY 14, 2026: The Board of Directors of Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) today confirmed Nadeem Khan as the company's Chief Executive Officer.

Nadeem Khan's telecommunication career includes over two decades of association with the PTCL and Ufone and prior to that more than 7 years of international assignments with Millicom International Cellular. He joined Ufone as Chief Financial Officer in 2003, a role he held for a decade. He was appointed at PTCL and Ufone in 2017 as Group Chief Financial Officer, going on to oversee the company's financial strategy through a period of major transformation,



including the Telenor Pakistan acquisition. He also sits on the Board of U Microfinance Bank. He is a Chartered Accountant and a member of Institute of Chartered Accountants of Paki-

stan and Institute of Chartered Accountants of England & Wales. He currently serves as a Member of the Accounting Standards Board of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Pakistan.

In this role, Nadeem will lead PTCL's endeavors to expand and modernize its wireline network, with a strong focus on fiberization and the rollout of next-generation digital services across the country and to enhance the company's leadership in the B2B segment. As Pakistan's largest integrated ICT company, PTCL continues to invest in broadband, fiber infrastructure data centers and submarine cables to strengthen its position as the backbone of the country's digital economy.

Nadeem initially took charge of PTCL as Chief Executive Officer for 14 days, effective July 2, 2026. His confirmation today formalizes that appointment, making him the company's permanent Chief Executive Officer.

Visit

Islamabad: High level Portuguese Delegate visited National Disaster Management Authority HQs on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

ICCI Calls for Stronger Pakistan-Saudi Economic Partnership Under Vision 2030

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Acting President of ICCI, Tahir Ayub, urged Pakistan and Saudi Arabia to convert their fraternal ties into a vibrant economic partnership by leveraging opportunities under Saudi Vision 2030. He said enhanced commercial diplomacy, private-sector collaboration and investment can open a new chapter of shared prosperity.

Addressing a session on "KSA Vision 2030 & Saudi-Pakistan Investment Opportunities" at ICCI, Ayub said Vision 2030 creates major opportunities in infrastructure, tourism, logistics, IT, healthcare, renewable energy, mining and financial services. He noted Pakistan offers strategic location, competitive workforce, expanding digital economy and potential in agriculture, mining, IT and manufacturing.

ICCI reaffirmed its role as a bridge to facilitate B2B networking, partner identification, trade exchanges and joint ventures. Al Raee Group Chairman Bilal



Mohammad Zubair said the Group provides end-to-end services for investors in KSA and is committed to helping Pakistani businesses enter the Saudi market. Al Raee Pakistan Country Head Zohra Hotiana said the new Pakistan office will

offer market-entry support, advisory and matchmaking.

ICCI Vice President Irfan Chaudhry thanked the delegation and pledged closer collaboration to promote investment and opportunities for entrepreneurs.

Lucky Investments expands its nationwide presence, opens new branch in Lahore

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Lucky Investments Limited ("Lucky Investments"), one of Pakistan's fastest-growing Shariah compliant Asset Management Companies, has expanded its network to Lahore by inaugurating its first branch in Gulberg, Lahore.

It's a significant milestone in the company's nationwide expansion strategy.

The branch was formally inaugurated by Mohammad Shoaib, CFA, Chief Executive Officer of Lucky Investments Limited, in the presence of senior management, business partners, and distinguished guests.

The new Lahore branch will provide investors with convenient access to Lucky Investments' comprehensive range of mutual funds, voluntary pension funds, investment advisory services, and digital investment solutions. It will also serve as a dedicated customer engagement centre, offering personalized financial guidance and investor education to help individuals and institutions achieve their long-



term financial goals.

Commenting on the occasion, Mohammad Shoaib, CFA, Chief Executive Officer of Lucky Investments Limited, said: "The opening of our first branch in Lahore represents another important milestone in Lucky Investments' growth journey. Lahore is one of Pakistan's leading commercial and financial centres, and this branch brings us closer to our investors by providing personalized service, professional investment advice, and easier access to Shariah-compliant wealth management solutions.

The Gulberg branch forms part of Lucky Investments' broader strategy to strengthen its physical presence across major cities, complementing its digital investment platform and nationwide distribution partnerships to deliver a seamless and accessible investment experience.

FESCO launches RAAST-powered digital bill payment system

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) has introduced a new electricity bill payment facility through the RAAST (Rapid Account-Based Settlement System), enabling consumers to pay their bills instantly, securely and without any additional charges via mobile banking applications.

FESCO spokesman Muhammad Saeed Raza said that this initiative has been launched in line with the Government of Pakistan's cashless economy policy and the directives of Ministry of Energy (Power Division) to encourage digital financial transactions and provide consumers with a faster and more secure payment mechanism.

He said that all FESCO consumers can now use the RAAST payment option available in their respective banks' mobile banking applications to scan the Quick Response (QR) code printed on their electricity bills and complete payments instantly. This facility does not involve any service or convenience charges, making it a cost-effective alternative to conventional payment methods, he added.

He said that payments made through RAAST would be reflected immediately in FESCO's billing system, enabling the company's concerned officers to verify transactions online in real time. The new mechanism is expected to improve transparency, speed up payment processing and enhance customer service, he added.

Pakistan- ASEAN trade ends US\$ 11 billion in 2026, strengthening regional economic ties

ISLAMABAD: Trade between Pakistan and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has exceeded US\$11 billion in 2026, highlighting the steady growth in economic relations between the two sides.

The milestone reflects ASEAN's rising significance as one of Pakistan's leading trading partners and creates new opportunities to deepen collaboration in trade, investment, and regional economic development. According to official figures, Pakistan exported goods worth around US\$3 billion to ASEAN member states

during 2026, while imports from the regional bloc stood at approximately US\$7 billion, resulting in a trade deficit of nearly US\$4 billion.

ASEAN has emerged as one of Pakistan's most significant regional markets, driven by rising demand for textiles, agricultural products, leather goods, seafood, chemicals, and industrial raw materials. Pakistan, in turn, imports machinery, palm oil, electronic equipment, chemicals, and manufactured goods from ASEAN economies, particularly Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam.

Bank Alfalah partners with KMC, IET for urban forestry project in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah has partnered with the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) and Indus Earth Trust (IET) to launch an urban forestry project at Ibn-e-Qasim Park, Clifton, with an initial contribution of PKR 3 million.

The launch ceremony began with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Bank Alfalah and Indus Earth Trust by President and CEO of Bank Alfalah,

Atif Bajwa and Aijaz Ali Abro, CEO of IET.

"Our partnership with KMC and Indus Earth Trust is a collective effort to make a meaningful contribution to Karachi's future," said Atif Bajwa, President and Chief Executive Officer of Bank Alfalah. "Parks are the lungs of every city, and Karachi needs more of them. Together with our partners, we are proud to support initiatives that expand the city's green spaces and contribute to a healthier, more resilient Karachi."

Afia Salam, President, IET, said the project



demonstrates how public-private collaboration can support ecological restoration through native species and community participation.

At the event, Bank Alfalah also unveiled its fourth Annual Sustainability Report, highlighting PKR 24 billion in green financing and PKR 75.2 billion in SME financing.

Senate Chairman Urges Stronger Ties with Overseas Pakistanis to Boost Investment and Economic Growth

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani has called for stronger engagement with the overseas Pakistani business community to boost investment, strengthen economic diplomacy, and accelerate Pakistan's economic growth. Addressing a delegation from the New York Chamber of Small Business Corp. USA, led by Founder President Syed Alamdar Hussain Shah, along with prominent business leaders from the United States, the UAE, Qatar, and Pakistan, Gillani said overseas Pakistanis play a vital role in connecting the country with global markets, technology, innovation, and investment opportunities.

He welcomed the delegation's efforts to build stronger economic partnerships and praised their engagement with lawmakers, government institutions, and the local business community. Gillani also expressed gratitude for receiving a citation on Pakistan's Independence Day, dedicating the honour to Pakistan, its democratic institutions, and overseas



Pakistanis. Highlighting Pakistan's investment potential, he pointed to the country's young population, growing digital economy, strategic location, and natural resources, while noting that govern-

ment reforms and the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) have improved the investment climate. He reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to promoting business-friendly legislation, entrepreneurship, innovation, and job

creation. Gillani urged overseas entrepreneurs to convert goodwill into investment and prosperity, expressing hope for lasting institutional cooperation between the Senate and overseas Pakistani business organizations.

Pakistan crowned best under-16 team of Asia with four medals at Asian Ju-Jitsu C'ship

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan made a historic start to the Asian Ju-Jitsu Championship 2026 by winning two gold and two silver medals on the opening day and securing the prestigious "Best Under-16 Team of Asia" title in Almaty, Kazakhstan.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation, the country's golden moment came in the Under-16 Duo Show System event, where Zunaira Zulfiqar and Sundas Ali delivered a superb performance to clinch the gold medal and become Asian champions. Their triumph was celebrated with the hoisting of Pakistan's national flag and the playing of the national anthem during the medal ceremony.

Pakistan added another impressive result in the same event as Abdul Rehman and Amina Irfan claimed the silver medal, while hosts Kazakhstan settled for bronze.

The outstanding performances also earned Pakistan the coveted "Best Under-16 Team of Asia" award, marking a landmark achievement for the country's Ju-Jitsu programme.

The championship has attracted around 728 athletes from 25 Asian countries competing across different categories.



Chairman of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation hailed the achievement, saying it reflected the federation's long-term planning, the commitment of the coaching staff and the dedication of the athletes. He described winning the Under-16 Asian titles and the Best Under-16 Team of Asia award as a proud moment for the nation.

Secretary General of the Pakistan Ju-Jitsu Federation and team leader Tariq Ali said the team's remarkable start

highlighted the bright future of Pakistan Ju-Jitsu. He expressed confidence that the young athletes would continue their winning momentum in the remaining events of the championship.

National team coach Mahmood-ul-Hassan credited the success to the players' hard work, discipline and teamwork, expressing optimism that they would maintain the same standard in the upcoming competitions and bring more honours to Pakistan.

12 Pakistani youths missing after taking 'dunki' route abroad

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Twelve Pakistani youths have gone missing after attempting to travel abroad illegally through the "dunki" route, leaving their families in distress.

According to affected families, seven of the missing youths belong to Bhaseen village in Lahore, including three cousins, Dilshad, Usama and Waqas.

The families said an agent identified as Aamir took lakhs of rupees from the youths and smuggled them abroad. They said the group contacted their families after reaching Iran, but all communication was cut off afterwards.

The families said a further ransom demand was made from one youth's mobile number. The agent also sent a video of three of the youths, they said.

The families said the video showed the youths in a severely distressed state, with chains around their necks, pleading with their relatives to send money.

They said the agent had already collected Rs1 million per person, but is now demanding an additional \$6,000 for each youth, along with threats of serious consequences if the money is not paid.

The affected families have filed a complaint with the Federal Investigation Agency and appealed to the government for urgent action to secure the safe recovery of the missing youths.

Dr. Rubina Akhtar Strongly Condemns Fazlur Rehman's Remarks on Pakistan Army and Martyrs

Irum Asim



MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf leader and NA-148 candidate Dr. Rubina Akhtar has strongly condemned Maulana Fazlur Rehman's statement regarding the Pakistan Army and its martyrs, calling it "extremely regrettable, irresponsible and condemnable."

Speaking at a free medical camp in Basti Chowkiwala, NA-148, she said linking the sacrifices of martyrs to salaries or tax money was an insult to their great sacrifices. She argued that if financial matters are to be discussed, then ministers' privileges, official residences, blue passports, and billion-rupee corruption should also be raised.

Dr. Rubina said soldiers serve not for salary but to defend the homeland, performing duties in plains, mountains, deserts and seas under extremely tough conditions. Linking their sacrifices to financial interests, she added, hurts the feelings of martyrs' families.

She stressed that while dissent is a democratic right, it must be expressed with decency and responsibility, and avoid giving enemy countries a chance to propagate against Pakistan.

She demanded that Maulana Fazlur Rehman apologize to the families of martyrs and questioned the motives of those criticizing the army today.

France, Spain battle for place in World Cup final

ARLINGTON: France and their deadly attack led by Kylian Mbappe will attempt to reach a third consecutive World Cup final on Tuesday as they take on a Spain team that combines flair with defensive steel.

More than a month after the expanded 48-team tournament kicked off, the first semi-final at the AT&T Stadium in Arlington, Texas, promises to be a mouthwatering spectacle.

France coach Didier Deschamps insisted on Monday that European champions Spain would be favourites, despite his own team's dazzling performances.

"They attack well, they defend well, they don't concede goals. It could be a spectacular match," he said.

France have reached the past two World Cup finals, winning in 2018 in Russia and losing on penalties to Lionel Messi's Argentina four years ago in Qatar in an epic final despite a hat-trick from Mbappe. Many observers feel Spain, who have built momentum during the tournament, have the quality to win a second title — but first they need to stop France's star-studded frontline.

Real Madrid forward Mbappe, 27, has scored eight goals to lead the Golden Boot race alongside Messi.

Mbappe has an impressive supporting cast including Ballon d'Or winner Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise.

AFP learned that France will start pacy winger Bradley Barcola instead of his Paris Saint-Germain teammate Desire Doue on the left side of the attack.

Deschamps has chosen Barcola for his speed in an area of the pitch where he will face Spain star Lamine Yamal.

Defeat to Argentina in the final in Doha four years ago was a bitter experience for France, and the desire for a rematch is strong — if Messi can lead his team past England in their semi-final in Atlanta on Wednesday.

Adding to France's motivation, France coach Didier Deschamps, part of an elite group to have won the World Cup as a player and a coach, is leaving after the tournament following 14 years in charge.

In Yamal, who celebrated his 19th birthday on Monday by buying a jewel-encrusted necklace, Spain have the player who will likely succeed Messi and Mbappe as football's next superstar.

The Barcelona forward has improved steadily and won the player-of-the-match award in the 2-1 quarter-final win against Belgium.

The teenager pointed out that Spain have the upper hand on France, having beaten them 2-1 in the semi-final of Euro 2024 and in a high-scoring Nations League semi-final in 2025 that finished 5-4. His ideal birthday present, he insisted, would be a place in Sunday's World Cup final.

PLA at 99: Enduring Legacy, Evolving Mission

Continued from Page 4

and unmanned systems. The PLA's emphasis on "intelligentized warfare" suggests a future where artificial intelligence and autonomous platforms redefine combat. At the same time, its role in peacekeeping and humanitarian missions will underscore China's desire to project soft power alongside hard capabilities.

The ninety-ninth anniversary of the PLA is not just a commemoration of history but a reflection of China's transformation. From its revolutionary origins to its current global posture, the PLA embodies resilience, adapta-

tion, and ambition. As it marches toward its centenary, the PLA's evolution will continue to shape regional and global security. For observers, the lesson is clear: understanding the PLA is essential to understanding China itself. At ninety-nine, the PLA stands as both guardian of sovereignty and symbol of national rejuvenation — an enduring force navigating the complexities of the twenty-first century.

The writer is a retired Group Captain of PAF. He is a columnist, analyst and TV talk show host, who has authored sixteen books on current affairs, including ten on China

PM commends economic team for major progress in advancing digital payment system

Continued from Page 1

The prime minister appreciated the initiative to shift Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) payments to a digital system, describing it as more transparent, faster, and more convenient for beneficiaries.

During the briefing, it was informed in the meeting that from June 2025 to June 2026, the number of merchants receiving digital payments increased by

300%, reaching 2,003,000 while 99% of NADRA's payments have been digitized, and cash payments have declined from 71% to just 1%.

Similarly, it was informed that all payments to 10 million Benazir Income Support Programme beneficiaries are now being made through digital wallets. The current number of mobile banking app users stands at 137 million.

Between July 2025 and June 2026, a

total of 11.9 billion digital transactions were recorded.

During the past year, 92% of remittances from overseas Pakistanis were received through digital channels.

An independent third-party validation of the cashless economy initiative is currently underway, and the final report, along with recommendations, will be presented in November 2026, the prime minister was informed.

The Pakistan Banks' Association has

assigned targets to its member banks to promote digital payments, including the RAAST instant payment system.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, Attaullah Tarar, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Ali Pervaiz Malik, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, State Bank Governor Jameel Ahmad, the Chairman of NADRA, and senior officials from relevant institutions.

How Trump Turned Hormuz into a U. S. Cash Machine

Continued from Page 4

carrying two million barrels could face more than \$30 million in added costs. Importers, refiners and shipping companies would inevitably pass a significant portion of this burden to consumers.

The result would not be limited to higher gasoline prices. More expensive energy would increase manufacturing, transportation, electricity, fertilizer and food costs. It would intensify inflation, weaken financial markets and place severe pressure on countries dependent on Gulf energy.

China, India, Pakistan, Japan, South Korea, Europe, Southeast Asia and other importing economies would become vulnerable to decisions made by the military power controlling their energy lifeline. Gulf producers themselves could find that their ability to reach customers depended on American permission and American pricing.

This is why the proposed fee represents more

than greed for revenue. It risks transforming military protection into economic domination. A country thousands of kilometres from the Persian Gulf would possess the power to determine who passes, what they pay and under what political conditions their energy can reach world markets.

The danger is that other nations may eventually unite against such concentrated leverage. China, Russia, India, Europe and affected regional powers could accelerate alternative pipelines, Arctic routes, currency systems, naval cooperation and strategic alliances designed to bypass American control.

Trump may regard Hormuz as a source of reimbursement—a "money-minting machine" protected by American power. But international waterways cannot remain instruments of shared commerce if the strongest state converts them into toll plazas.

The world is therefore approaching a dangerous crossroads. Either Hormuz remains an interna-

tional passage governed by law and equal access, or it becomes a precedent under which military superiority determines the ownership of global trade.

If Venezuela's oil, Greenland's strategic position and Hormuz's energy traffic ultimately fall under decisive American control, Washington will not need to fire another bullet to influence much of the world. It will sit astride the routes, revenues and resources on which modern economies depend.

History may record that the war publicly framed around Iran's nuclear capability ultimately became a struggle for control of the world's most valuable energy gateway—and that freedom of navigation was defended only until it became profitable to abandon it.

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

The Architecture of the Mind: A Reading Curriculum for ...

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universal love that acts as a calming anchor for the restless modern mind. For a sharp psychological exploration of character, Bano Qudsia's monumental novel Raja Gidh is essential reading. Its core is a deep psychological thesis on how the concepts of permissible and forbidden affect human nature, demonstrating how moral compromises gradually erode one's personality and sanity.

In the realm of contemporary motivation, works like Apni Talash and Zra Num Ho by Qasim Ali Shah bridge modern self-help with local sensibilities. They guide readers through self-discovery, helping to align professional pursuits with intrinsic aptitudes while fostering cultural resilience. Finally, for the intellectually rigorous, Allama Iqbal's The Reconstruction of Religious Thought in Islam offers a deeply philosophical approach

to self-actualization. His concept of Khudi challenges the reader to view the realization of the self not as a passive state of being, but as a dynamic, continuous process of action and spiritual fortification.

Information devoid of execution, however, is merely intellectual entertainment. The true transformation begins not when you finish the final chapter, but when you close the book and apply its first principle to your life. Choose one volume, read it with deliberate intent, and let the architecture of your mind begin.

The writer is the Director General of the Department of Libraries in Islamabad and a Subject Specialist in Library and Information Sciences, bringing 27 years of professional experience to the promotion of literacy and intellectual growth.

The writer is Director General, Department of Libraries, Islamabad

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Syed Imran Ahmad Shah held a meeting with Minister of Family and Social Services of The Republic Turkiye, Her Excellency Ms. Mahinur Ozdemir Goktas on Tuesday..



Photo: PID

Dar to meet Chinese, Russian, Iranian counterparts at SCO meeting in Bishkek



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is set to visit Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan next week to attend the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting on July 24, diplomatic sources said.

During the visit, Dar is expected to hold separate meetings with the foreign ministers of China, Russia, and Iran on the sidelines. Discussions will likely cover bilateral relations, regional security, economic cooperation, and developments in South and Central Asia.

Indian External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar is also expected to attend. No bilateral meeting between Dar and Jaishankar has

been confirmed.

The foreign ministers will review the agenda and draft documents for the upcoming SCO Council of Heads of State summit, which Kyrgyzstan will host later this year. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to represent Pakistan at the summit. Presidents Vladimir Putin and Xi Jinping are also likely to attend, subject to confirmation.

The summit is expected to end with a joint declaration on security, economic cooperation, connectivity, and shared priorities. Kyrgyzstan currently holds the SCO chairmanship for 2025-26. The SCO includes Pakistan, China, Russia, India, Iran, and five Central Asian states plus Belarus.

Field Marshal Asim Munir awarded Turkish Medal of Honor during official visit

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces is currently on a high level official visit to the Republic of Turkiye, aimed at further enhancing the deep-rooted strategic and defence ties between the two brotherly nations.

Upon his arrival, Field Marshal was extended a warm reception reflecting the historic and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Turkiye.

During the visit, the Field Marshal held a series of high level engagements with the

Turkish political and military leadership. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir called on President H. E. Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Minister of National Defence, Yaşar Güler, to discuss matters of mutual interest and regional security. These high level deliberations underscored the shared vision of both nations to foster a more robust strategic partnership in evolving geopolitical environment.

At the Turkish General Staff (TGS) Headquarters, the Field Marshal was welcomed with a Guard of Honour. He held a detailed meeting with General Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu, Chief of the Turkish General Staff.



The two leaders discussed regional security dynamics and professional matters of mutual concern.

The Field Marshal was bestowed upon Turkish Armed Forces Distinguished

Service Medal by General Selçuk Bayraktaroğlu in recognition of his meritorious services and commitment to bolstering bilateral military cooperation.

The Field Marshal visited

the Turkish Land Forces (TLF) Headquarters, where he was received by General Metin Tokel, Commander of the Turkish Land Forces.

The Field Marshal visited Anıtkabir, the Mausoleum of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, where he laid a floral wreath and paid respects to the founder of modern Turkiye, acknowledging his visionary leadership and the deep-rooted historical bonds between the two nations.

The visit of the Field Marshal signifies the resolve of both nations to further strengthen their multifaceted defence relationship and continue their joint efforts for regional peace and stability.

Hanif Abbasi Asks Fazlur Rehman to Clarify Remarks on Armed Forces, Urges Unity Against Terrorism

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi has urged JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to clarify his recent remarks about Pakistan's armed forces, saying they have deeply hurt the families of martyrs, wounded soldiers, and veterans.

Addressing a press conference, Abbasi paid tribute to officers and soldiers who laid down their lives



fighting terrorism and defending the

country. He said their sacrifices cannot be measured in financial terms, as many left behind grieving parents, widows, and children.

The minister noted that the armed forces, representing all provinces, have given over 12,000 martyrs in the line of duty to ensure national peace and security. He emphasized that soldiers serve with dedication despite constant risks.

Abbasi clarified his comments were not a personal attack, stating

he respects Fazlur Rehman as a religious and political leader. However, he asked the JUI-F chief to clarify or withdraw the remarks if they caused pain to martyrs' families.

Calling for national unity, Abbasi urged political and religious leaders to stand together against terrorism, avoid statements that undermine the morale of security forces, and continue honoring the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces.

Pakistan, Turkiye Agree to Boost Cooperation in Social Protection Sector



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Turkiye have agreed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in social protection, family welfare, and poverty alleviation, and to expedite finalization of an MoU between the relevant ministries.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Protection Syed Imran Ahmad Shah and Turkiye's Minister of Family and Social Services Mahinur Özdemir Göktaş on the sidelines of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women.

Shah highlighted Pakistan's social protection framework, including BISP, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, and Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, in supporting vulnerable groups. He

said Pakistan seeks to benefit from Turkiye's expertise in digital social protection systems, family-centered welfare models, and disability inclusion programs.

He cited ongoing collaboration between Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal and TİKA, including the Ramadan Food Programme and Centralised Kitchen Project, as successful examples.

Göktaş appreciated Pakistan's initiatives, particularly BISP, for supporting families and empowering women economically.

Both ministers agreed to fast-track the MoU to expand cooperation in social welfare, community development, capacity building, staff training, and exchange of best practices. Turkiye's Ambassador İrfan Neziroğlu also attended.

Govt committed to supporting public welfare and healthcare sectors: Mustafa Kamal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, Mustafa Kamal, on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting organizations working for public welfare and the healthcare sector.

"Fully supporting organizations that work for public welfare in the health sector is a priority for the government," he said.

He made these remarks during a meeting with the Chief Executive Officer of the ChildLife Foundation. During meeting the minister was briefed regarding ChildLife Foundation's work in child health, emergency services, and the provision of medical facilities.

Mustafa Kamal appreciated the services rendered by the ChildLife Foundation, describing its contribution to ensure quality and timely medical care for children is commendable.

"We are taking concrete steps to ensure the provision of superior and quality medical facilities to citizens," he added.

Pakistan Seeks Stronger Agricultural and Trade Partnership with Spain

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain met Spanish Ambassador Carlos Aragón Gil de la Serna to discuss expanding bilateral cooperation in agriculture, food security, trade, and multilateral engagement.

Both sides reaffirmed commitment to deepening ties. The Ambassador congratulated Pakistan on full membership of the International Olive Council (IOC), crediting support from Spain's Agriculture Minister. Minister Hussain thanked Spain and highlighted the contribution



of nearly 150,000 Pakistanis in Spain to economic ties, noting Pakistan's favourable trade balance with textiles as a key export.

Hussain emphasized cooperation in modern agricultural tech-

nologies — precision farming, irrigation, olive cultivation, greenhouse farming, mechanization, and water management. He invited Spanish companies for technology transfer, research, and capacity-building to boost productivity, climate resilience, and exports.

To formalize engagement, he proposed a Pakistan-Spain Joint Working Group on Agriculture, which Spain welcomed. The Minister also offered to increase exports of rice, ethanol, potatoes, and maize to Spain.

Both sides pledged to strengthen relations, expand trade, and collaborate in regional and international forums.