



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
خداوند رحمتی اللہ عنہ نے فرمایا کہ نبی کریم
صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے دجال کے بارے میں
فرمایا کہ اس کے ساتھ پانی اور آگ ہو گی اور
اس کی آگ ٹھنڈی پانی ہو گی اور پانی آگ ہو
گا۔ ابو مسعود رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ
میں نے بھی یہ حدیث رسول اللہ صلی اللہ
علیہ وسلم سے سنی ہے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 7130)

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(Pvt) Limited

Pakistan, Xizang eye closer cooperation in climate action, mountain ecology

Pakistan's Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Masood Malik, met with Xu Zhitao, Vice Chairman of Xizang Autonomous Region, on the sidelines of the 5th China-Xizang Trans-Himalaya Forum for International Cooperation, with both sides agreeing to expand collaboration in environmental protection and sustainable development.



World Cup offers opportunity to rethink future of global climate governance

When the final whistle blew at the 2026 FIFA World Cup, history had already been made in more ways than one. The tournament expanded to 48 teams, featured 104 matches across 16 cities in three countries, and became the largest FIFA World Cup ever held. Yet another record has drawn growing international attention: its carbon footprint.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni is meeting with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at GHQ; during the meeting, both sides discussed regional security and bilateral security cooperation.



Photo: ISPR

Iranian interior minister meets Field Marshal, praises Pakistan's peace efforts

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni on Tuesday met Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters (GHQ), where the two sides discussed regional security, bilateral security cooperation and effective border management amid rising tensions in the region.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the meeting focused on matters of mutual interest, regional and bilateral security,

and measures to strengthen border management between the two neighbouring countries.

Momeni praised Pakistan's constructive diplomatic role in easing regional tensions and promoting peace, particularly its efforts to encourage dialogue amid the ongoing tensions between Iran and the United States.

The two sides also reaffirmed their commitment to maintaining close coordination and strengthening cooperative mechanisms aimed at promoting regional security, stability and shared prosperity, the military's media wing said.

Pakistan will continue role as sincere mediator: PM

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday, during a call by Interior Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran Eskandar Momeni, emphasised that Pakistan would continue to play its role as an honest and sincere mediator and facilitator, and reiterated the country's strong commitment to regional peace and stability.

The Interior Minister of the Islamic Republic of Iran, who is on an official visit to Pakistan, called on the prime minister here at the Prime Minister House, a PM Office's news release said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the Iranian Interior Minister and his delegation to Pakistan. While recalling his visit to Tehran earlier this month to attend the funeral ceremony of the late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei, the Prime Minister



conveyed his respectful regards and good wishes for the Supreme Leader, Sayyid Mojtaba Hosseini Khamenei and President Dr

Masoud Pezeshkian.

Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni thanked the Prime Minister for the warm welcome

accorded to him and his delegation in Islamabad. He conveyed greetings and best wishes of the Iranian leadership. He stated

that he was leading a delegation of senior government officials to enhance bilateral ties.

The Iranian Minister expressed deep appreciation for the prime minister, Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their untiring mediation efforts that led to the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. He also expressed gratitude for the Prime Minister's visit to Tehran to attend the funeral ceremony of late Supreme Leader Ayatollah Sayyid Ali Khamenei.

Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Sen. Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, Minister for Information Attaulah Tarar, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and other senior government officials were also present.

Health, Planning ministries agree to prepare 'National Population Stabilization Plan 2026-2036'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level meeting was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Planning and the Federal Minister for Health, where they agreed to prepare the National Population Stabilization Plan 2026-2036.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Health, the DG Population, a Member of the Population Ministry of Planning, and other relevant authorities.

During the meeting, the draft of National Population Stabilization Plan 2026-2036 was reviewed in detail.

In detail, it was decided that the final draft of the plan would be prepared jointly by the Ministry of Planning and the Ministry of Health. The final draft will be sent to all provinces for approval and consultation Agreed in the meeting. After which it will be presented before the National Population Council for consideration.

The meeting also highlighted that

close cooperation and coordination between the federal and provincial governments is crucial to ensure effective implementation of the plan

Both federal ministers reiterated their commitment to effectively address the population challenge facing the country.

The meeting concluded with shared resolve to work together to stabilize population, and a coordinated national strategy is essential to achieve the goals of sustainable population stability and socio-economic development.

Constitutional Court refuses to halt inquiry against former NAB DG Saleem Shahzad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has rejected a request by former National Accountability Bureau (NAB) director general Saleem Shahzad to suspend an inquiry initiated against him over his alleged illegal appointment and promotion, reported 24NewsHD TV channel Tuesday.

A two-member bench headed by Justice Hassan Azhar Rizvi heard Shahzad's appeal against a show-cause notice and the subsequent inquiry proceedings.

During the hearing, the court declined to grant interim relief and allowed the inquiry to continue.

The bench issued notices to the federal government and directed it to submit a response within three weeks.

Shahzad had challenged the show-cause notice and inquiry proceedings, contending that action against him was unlawful.

The notice was issued over allegations concerning his appointment and subsequent promotion in NAB.

He had earlier approached the High Court, which dismissed his petition. Shahzad then filed an appeal before the Federal Constitutional Court challenging the High Court's decision.

The case will be taken up again after the government submits its response.

PM reaffirms federal government's support for Gilgit Baltistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed the federal government's commitment to working closely with the newly elected government of Gilgit-Baltistan for the welfare and development of the area and its people.

During a meeting with Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan Amjad Hussain at the PM House, the prime minister congratulated Amjad Hussain on assuming the office of Chief Minister of Gilgit-Baltistan.



The prime minister said that the federal government was undertaking development initiatives in Gilgit-Baltistan across renewable energy, tourism, infrastructure,

health, education, and other sectors.

He noted that the federal government's flagship initiatives included a 100 MW solar power project and the establishment of Daanish Schools in the region.

He further said that the federal government was planning to establish a Pakistan Asaan Khidmat Centre in Gilgit to facilitate the people of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, and Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema were also present at the meeting.

Iranian Interior Minister visits Pakistan Monument, pays tribute to martyrs



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Iranian Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni visited the Pakistan Monument on Tuesday during his official visit to Islamabad, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

He was accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry.

Upon arrival, a smart

contingent of the Federal Constabulary presented a guard of honour to the minister.

During the visit, Iranian Interior Minister Momeni laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs Monument and offered Fataha in honour of Pakistan's heroes.

He paid tribute to the martyrs, acknowledging their sacrifices for the country's sovereignty.

AJK General Elections 2026

Presiding Officers receive comprehensive election training in Kotli

Bureau Report

KOTLI: As part of preparations for the Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2026, a comprehensive training session was held at the University of Kotli for Presiding Officers and assistant election staff assigned to the Khoi Ratta and Fatehpur Thakiala constituencies. The programme aimed to equip election officials with the legal, administrative and procedural knowledge required to conduct free, fair and transparent elections.

District Returning Officer Muhammad Idrees Bhatti attended as chief guest, while Returning Officers Muhammad Waseem and Naeem Ahmed hosted the session. Member Monitoring Cell of the Election Commission and Senior District Judge Chaudhry Muhammad Aftab also participated.

Officials received practical training on voter identification, ballot issuance, polling procedures, election records,



vote counting, result preparation and the Election Commission's code of conduct through multimedia presentations and demonstrations.

Addressing participants, Muhammad Idrees Bhatti urged election staff to perform their duties with honesty, impartiality and profession-

alism, emphasizing that the election process is a national trust. He assured participants that comprehensive security arrangements had been made to ensure peaceful polling.

Senior District Judge Chaudhry Muhammad Aftab highlighted common legal and administrative

mistakes to avoid during polling, while Returning Officers instructed staff to strictly follow election rules, ensure respect for all voters, maintain coordination throughout polling and safeguard ballot boxes. Election Commission guidebooks were distributed at the conclusion of the session.

Preparation of monsoon

LAHORE: Tailors swing raincoats at their shop as demand high during monsoon season in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Nawaz Sharif, Maryam Nawaz address supporters as thousands attend election campaign gathering

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (PML-N AJK) held a major public rally at Upper Adda College Ground in Muzaffarabad, drawing thousands of supporters despite persistent heavy rainfall. The gathering was attended by former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, federal ministers, senior PML-N AJK leaders, and candidates contesting the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections.

Supporters from across Muzaffarabad Division arrived in large



convoys led by party candidates and local leaders, with the venue reaching full capacity before the arrival of the party leadership. Women, youth, senior citizens and families participated in significant numbers, reflecting strong

grassroots mobilization. Speakers highlighted the development projects undertaken during previous PML-N governments, particularly in infrastructure, education, healthcare and public services,

while reaffirming the party's commitment to the socio-economic progress of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and advocacy for the Kashmir issue.

Extensive security and traffic management arrangements were implemented to facilitate the event, while PML-N Youth Wing members and volunteers coordinated logistics and convoy management. During the rally, some journalists raised concerns over access restrictions imposed by security personnel assigned to the Punjab Chief Minister. Party supporters described the gathering as a strong display of public support and momentum ahead of the upcoming AJK elections.

OPF Chairman Meets Nawaz Sharif in Muzaffarabad

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman of the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), Syed Qamar Raza, called on President of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, in Muzaffarabad today.

During the meeting, the two leaders held a detailed discussion on the prevailing political and administrative situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). They exchanged views on the challenges confronting the region and deliberated on possible measures aimed at

promoting stability, safeguarding public interests, and facilitating a constructive resolution of the ongoing crisis.

The discussion also focused on proposals for addressing the current situation through dialogue, institutional coordination, and constitutional means, with particular emphasis on maintaining peace, strengthening democratic processes, and ensuring sustainable development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting reaffirmed the importance of consultation and collaborative efforts among all stake-



holders to promote political stability, good governance, and the welfare

of the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

HESCO Daur accused of Illegal Load Shedding Despite "Zero Load Shedding" Orders

Bureau Report

NAWABSHAH: Citizens are facing renewed power cuts in Daur city despite CEO HESCO Faizullah Dahri's earlier announcement of a "zero load shedding" feeder and an agreement signed with the Chairman Town Committee Daur.



According to reports, after a brief period of uninterrupted supply, corrupt officials of HESCO Sub-Division Daur allegedly resumed 3 to 4 hours of daily load shedding. Sources claim linemen are involved in electricity theft, using stolen power at home and selling illegal connections for Rs25,000-Rs30,000 per month in the city, and Rs5,000-Rs10,000 in other areas. Load shedding is reportedly being used to hide excess theft units.

After public complaints, the Town Committee Chairman intervened and supply was restored, but outages have restarted.

Public circles have urged CEO HESCO Faizullah Dahri to take strict action against the corrupt HESCO Daur officials and ensure the zero-load-shedding order is implemented.

Niazi: Hold AĴK Elections on Same Day, Don't Use Region as "Testing Ground"

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: PTI AJK President and former PM Sardar Abdul Qayyum Niazi has urged that Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections must be held simultaneously across the territory, warning that AJK should not be used as a political or administrative testing ground.



Expressing concern over the AJK Election Commission's decision to hold phased polling, Niazi said AJK is an internationally recognized disputed territory under UN resolutions. Given its constitutional significance, security situation, and tensions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, elections must be free, fair, transparent, and conducted with national unity.

He argued that if polling cannot be held in one division due to law and order, the same standard should apply territory-wide. Holding assembly elections in phases, he said, violates principles of equality and risks political division.

Citing protests and public discontent, Niazi said the current environment is not conducive to credible polls. He called on the AJK and federal governments to engage the Joint Public Action Committee and address public grievances peacefully before setting a single election date.

Reaffirming PTI AJK's boycott, he said the party will not participate until Rawalakot sit-in demands are resolved. PTI AJK is also reviewing legal options to protect constitutional and electoral rights.

Disrespect for martyrs will never be tolerated, says Syed Riaz Hussain Shah

Bureau Report



RAWALPINDI: Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, said Islam grants martyrs the highest status, making any insult or disrespect towards them unacceptable.

Addressing the weekly Mehfil-e-Zikr and Dars-e-Quran, hosted by Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim and attended by religious scholars, he said the sacrifices of Karbala symbolize standing for truth and justice. Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah said love for the homeland is part of faith and the teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him), stressing that neither the disrespect of martyrs nor the dishonour of Pakistan would be tolerated. He described the sacrifices of those who gave their lives defending the country as a source of national pride. Syed Riaz Hussain Shah urged the government to address poverty, inflation and public hardships, saying true leadership is reflected in justice, public service and relief for the people. He concluded with prayers for Pakistan's peace, stability and prosperity, and for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks.

AĴK Election Commission announces three-phase poll schedule for 2026 Assembly Elections



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has announced a revised three-phase schedule for the 2026 General Elections to the AJK Legislative Assembly. Addressing a press conference, Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said polling in Mirpur Division will be held on 27 July 2026. Muzaffarabad Division will vote on 2 August 2026, the same day as polling for 12 refugee constituencies based in Pakistan. Poonch Division polling is set for 10 August 2026. The CEC said the phased schedule was finalized after consultations with all political parties to ensure free, fair, transparent and peaceful elections, and to allow orderly deployment of security forces. He confirmed that international observers and journalists will be allowed to monitor the process. Results will be shared with polling agents by Presiding Officers after voting. The CEC noted that 25,000 employees voted peacefully in the previous day's polling.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:33 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:10 pm
Maghrib 7:16 pm
Isha 8:55 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police
Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Illegal Hyderabad Factory Accused of Making Cooking Oil From Chicken Waste

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: An alleged case of substandard cooking oil being produced from chicken waste has surfaced in the city's Site Area.

According to investigations, an illegal factory is reportedly run by a person named Imran Qureshi, where both cooking oil and poultry feed are made from chicken waste. Videos and other evidence of the facility have been recorded.

Local residents have complained of foul smell, pollution, and disease caused by the waste. Sources claim the hazardous oil is being supplied to Hyderabad, Karachi, and other cities.

The incident has raised questions over the district administration's performance. Citizens have demanded the factory be sealed immediately to protect public health.

Assistant Director Food Authority Hyderabad, Fida Khoso, said the factory was sealed a few days ago on

Punjab Fully Prepared for Monsoon as Govt Completes Comprehensive Pre-Season Measures: Azma Bokhari

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that, under the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Government completed all necessary arrangements well before the onset of the monsoon season to ensure that citizens face no inconvenience during heavy rains. She said the government has undertaken historic measures across the province to modernize the urban drainage system and enhance its capacity.

Azma Bokhari stated that WASA has now been established in all districts of Punjab. In the first phase, 272 pieces of modern machinery across 12 different categories have been provided to WASA operations in 15 districts. She added that, in the next phase, 694 additional machines will be supplied across the

province, significantly strengthening the drainage infrastructure. According to her, this is the largest WASA development programme in Punjab's history, aimed at ensuring efficient and timely municipal services for the public.

Azma Bokhari said the underground water storage project will not only improve rainwater management but will also play a significant role in enhancing groundwater recharge and strengthening long-term water conservation. She emphasized that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is not merely addressing present-day challenges but is laying the foundation for Punjab's water storage system for the next 50 years.

She further stated that the Punjab Government is giving the highest priority to transparency and quality in all development projects, adding that no compromise will be made on construction standards. She reaffirmed the



government's commitment to providing the people of Punjab with safe, sustainable, and modern urban infrastructure.

Awesome weather

ISLAMABAD: A view of dark clouds hovering over the sky of Federal Capital. Monsoon rains brought much-needed relief from the prevailing hot and humid weather in city.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Rotary Club of Lyallpur 2026-27 Board of Directors First Meeting

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The first meeting of Rotary Club of Lyallpur 2026-27 was presided over by Junaid Mahmood Baig. On this occasion, he reiterated his resolve that this year, in consultation with the members of the Board of Directors, full participation will be taken in the service of humanity. Especially, excellent work will be seen in the field of education.

The Rotary Club of Lyallpur has not only taken care of the rights of citizens along with its members but has also provided excellent support to deserving people and children.

The meeting was attended by President Rotary Club of Lyallpur Junaid Mahmood Baig, Secretary Syed Muhammad Sharjeel, Treasurer Habib-ur-Rehman Gul, Engineer Babar Shahzad, Rana Sikandar Azam, Haji Gulzar Ahmed, Ismail Suhrawardy, Mian Tanveer, Shabbir Ahmed, Ali Murtaza, Mirza Zahid and Aslam Zahid. Finally, prayers were



offered for the Armed Forces of Pakistan, the country of Pakistan, the business, health and safety of the members, and the deceased.

DC Attock Reviews Monsoon Preparedness in Hazro, Orders Full Alert

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassar Ahmad Shah, along with Assistant Commissioner Hazro Dr. Imran Rafiq, visited Hazro Tehsil to inspect monsoon arrangements. MD WASA Aqeel Ahmad and Assistant Commissioner Attock Arif Qureshi also accompanied him.



The DC reviewed storm water drains, drainage systems, and water disposal arrangements across Hazro city. He checked drain cleaning, rainwater flow, and departmental readiness at multiple locations. He directed all relevant agencies to remain fully alert during the monsoon season and perform duties with utmost diligence.

Dr. Shah ordered continuous monitoring of low-lying areas, uninterrupted operation of drainage systems, immediate removal of drain obstructions, and completion of all precautionary measures to handle emergencies from heavy rainfall. Field officers were told to stay in their areas and respond immediately to complaints.

Citing Punjab government directives, he said protecting lives and property is the district administration's top priority. He stressed inter-departmental coordination and instructed Rescue 1122 to keep staff and equipment ready. Expressing satisfaction with current arrangements, he called for sustained monitoring of vulnerable points and timely, coordinated emergency response.

NUTECH Holds Seminar on "AI and the Future Job Market"

Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Technology (NUTECH) organized a seminar on "Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Its Impact on the Future Job Market", attended by over 487 principals and faculty members from public and private institutions across Pakistan. AI's Role in Education and Industry Discussed

The event provided a platform for education leaders to examine AI's transformative role in learning, industry practices, and future employment. Speakers addressed emerging AI trends and strategies to prepare students and institutions for the digital era. Dr. Benish Fida, HoD/Assistant Professor (AI) at NUTECH, highlighted AI's rapid growth across sectors. She stressed faculty development, curriculum upgrades, digital readiness, and ethical AI adoption. She urged institutions to build critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy in students. Prof. Dr. Awais Yasin (TI), Professor of Computer Engineering, presented NUTECH's Magic QC initiative, showing how AI is improving industrial quality control through intelligent inspection and efficiency. He also discussed AI's broader impact on productivity and technology. Focus on Skills and Collaboration

The seminar ended with a Q&A on AI adoption, careers, and curriculum reform. Rector NUTECH concluded by emphasizing responsible AI use and equipping current and future generations with relevant skills.

DC Reviews WASA Monsoon Preparedness in Toba Tek Singh

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Commissioner Ms. Maham Asif Malik, along with MD WASA Chaudhry Kamran Kahlon, inspected the Water and Sanitation Agency's monsoon arrangements to ensure timely rainwater drainage and uninterrupted services. During the visit, the DC reviewed the WASA Complaint Cell, Emergency Camp, disposal and pumping stations, and other low-lying areas. The MD briefed her on the monsoon emergency plan, field team deployment, heavy machinery, generators, and contingency measures. Ms. Malik checked the complaint system and called citizens directly to verify response times. Residents expressed satisfaction with WASA's prompt action. She praised the WASA team and ordered 24/7 operation of the Complaint Cell, with immediate drainage in sensitive areas. The DC warned that negligence in public complaints will not be tolerated and stressed public service as top priority. MD WASA assured that all teams and machinery are on 24/7 alert with continuous monitoring of vulnerable points.

AIOU Showcases Student Innovation at ComputeX 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized the third edition of its Open House and Innovation Showcase, ComputeX 2026, providing students with a platform to present innovative projects in emerging technologies.

The exhibition featured projects in artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, cybersecurity, data science, software development, web and mobile applications, highlighting students' technical expertise and research capabilities in addressing real-world challenges.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood inaugurated the event in the presence of university deans, faculty members, researchers, academicians, industry representatives, and technology professionals. While visiting the exhibition stalls, he



praised the students' creativity and urged relevant departments to refine the projects, align them with industry needs, and facilitate their commercialization to transform innovative ideas into practical, market-ready solutions.

Addressing the gathering, Prof. Dr.

Nasir Mahmood reaffirmed AIOU's commitment to promoting research, innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry-academia collaboration. He said Pakistan's youth possess immense creative potential and, with proper guidance and mentorship, can become future scientists,

software developers, entrepreneurs, and technology leaders capable of competing globally.

The Vice Chancellor emphasized that the university would continue organizing such academic and technological events to strengthen innovation-driven learning and prepare students for the challenges of the rapidly evolving digital world.

Besides the innovation showcase, ComputeX 2026 also featured programming contests, computing knowledge quizzes, digital poster design competitions, and e-gaming events, with enthusiastic participation from students.

Participants and visitors appreciated the quality and diversity of the projects, describing the event as an important initiative for promoting research, technological innovation, and stronger collaboration between academia and the technology industry.

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A More Inclusive Judiciary: Pakistan’s Opportunity to Transform Access to Justice

The meeting between Chief Justice of Pakistan Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi and Mr. Mohammad Naciri, Chief of Staff of UN Women, represents more than a routine diplomatic engagement. It highlights an important shift in Pakistan’s judicial priorities—one that seeks to make justice more inclusive, accessible, and responsive to the needs of all citizens, particularly women and other vulnerable groups.

For decades, one of the greatest challenges facing Pakistan’s justice system has not merely been the delivery of judgments but ensuring that ordinary citizens can confidently approach the courts. Women, in particular, often face financial, cultural, procedural, and social barriers that discourage them from pursuing legal remedies. Fear of social stigma, lack of legal awareness, and inadequate institutional support have prevented many from exercising rights guaranteed under the Constitution.

The Supreme Court’s Gender-Responsive Justice Initiative (GRJI) 2026–27 is therefore a timely and commendable step. The establishment of Women Facilitation Centres within the judicial system promises to provide integrated services under one roof, making courts less intimidating and more accessible. Such centres can offer guidance, information, and support to women navigating legal proceedings, reducing unnecessary obstacles and improving confidence in the justice system.

Equally significant is the judiciary’s emphasis on modernization through technology. Chief Justice Yahya Afridi’s vision of a citizen-centric, transparent, and technology-enabled judicial system reflects the evolving demands of modern governance. Efficient digital case management, online services, and transparent court processes have the potential to reduce delays, improve accountability, and strengthen public trust in judicial institutions.

The discussion on the responsible use of artificial intelligence (AI) in case management deserves particular attention. If implemented carefully, AI can help streamline administrative functions, reduce case backlogs, and improve resource allocation. However, technology should complement—not replace—judicial independence and human decision-making. AI systems must remain transparent, accountable, and free from bias, especially in matters involving vulnerable communities. UN Women’s offer of technical assistance in developing gender-responsive AI is therefore both timely and valuable.

The partnership between the Supreme Court and UN Women also reflects the growing importance of international cooperation in judicial reform. By drawing upon global expertise while respecting Pakistan’s constitutional framework, such collaboration can help strengthen institutional capacity and align judicial practices with internationally recognized standards of equality and fairness.

Ultimately, judicial reform should not be measured solely by the number of new initiatives launched, but by their impact on the lives of ordinary people. A justice system that is accessible, efficient, and sensitive to the needs of women strengthens not only the rule of law but also public confidence in democratic institutions.

The Supreme Court’s ongoing reforms represent a meaningful opportunity to reshape Pakistan’s justice system. Sustained commitment, adequate resources, and continuous evaluation will be essential to ensure these initiatives deliver lasting results. If successfully implemented, they can become an enduring foundation for a more inclusive, equitable, and people-centred judiciary that serves every citizen without discrimination.

IS When News Becomes a Commodity*

Global Markets, Trump’s Politics, and the Price of Information

The world is already grappling with political tensions, economic uncertainty, and volatile financial markets. The growing tensions between the United States and Iran have once again raised alarm bells for the global economy. Rising oil prices have triggered fresh concerns about inflation, while stock markets around the world remain under pressure and uncertainty. In such circumstances, investors keep a close watch on every piece of information that could change market trends within moments.

But amid all this, another question has emerged—one that goes beyond financial markets and directly concerns ethics, transparency, and public interest. The question is: If the social media posts of an important political figure, particularly a sitting U.S. president, are made available to certain businesses, investors, or traders a few moments before they reach the general public, does this comply with the principle of equal opportunity in financial markets?

According to reports, Donald Trump’s media company and social media platform, Truth Social, has introduced a service through which certain business and financial users can receive President Trump’s social media posts before they become available to ordinary users. Subscribers will have to pay a fee to access this service. On the surface, it may appear to be simply another commercial service, but its potential implications are far more significant. In financial markets, even a single minute

can sometimes be extremely valuable. An important piece of news, a policy statement, or an indication of a government decision can trigger immediate changes in stock markets, currencies, and commodity prices. If an investor receives such information a few minutes before the general public, that brief window of time can be used to make financial decisions and potentially secure a significant advantage.

This is precisely where the fundamental question arises. If access to timely information begins to be distributed according to one’s ability to pay, can equal opportunity in financial markets truly be maintained? If an ordinary citizen learns only after a development only after the market has already reacted to it, while a select group receives the same information in advance and makes decisions accordingly, then the competition is clearly no longer on an equal footing.

If we look at this issue from a Pakistani perspective, imagine that the government is about to announce a major increase or decrease in petroleum prices, but a select group of individuals is informed of the decision ten minutes before the official announcement. Those individuals could use that information to protect their financial interests or make profitable transactions in the relevant sectors, while ordinary citizens would only learn about the decision after it had been publicly announced. Clearly, such a situation would raise serious questions about transparency and equal opportunity.

The same principle applies to global financial markets. The fundamental purpose of financial regulations around the world is to ensure that no individual or institution gains an unfair advantage by acting on information that is not available to others. That is why trading based on privileged or non-public information—commonly referred to as insider trading—is subject to strict laws in most countries.

While determining whether a president’s social media post legally constitutes insider information is a separate matter, the ethical question remains. Every significant statement by the U.S. president can have an impact on global politics and the economy. If access to such statements is turned into a commercial privilege, it inevitably raises the question of whether public office and private business interests should be allowed to become so closely intertwined.

This issue is not limited to Donald Trump or the United States. It represents a broader question of principle for the entire world. If the practice of selling political information as a commercial product becomes normalized today, powerful political figures and business interests in other countries may also be encouraged to follow the same path tomorrow.

News is fundamentally a public right. In democratic societies, the free and equal dissemination of information is considered a cornerstone of transparency. If news itself becomes a commodity that can be purchased in advance by those who can afford it, then people with greater wealth and power will gain yet another means of accumulating even more wealth and influence.

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Xi’s BRI, CPEC and the Enduring Pakistan-China Bond

President Xi Jinping’s development vision extends beyond China’s national transformation to a broader framework of international connectivity, cooperation and shared prosperity. This vision took institutional shape in 2013 with the launch of the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), one of the largest international development and economic-cooperation programmes of the modern era.

In Xi Jinping’s Belt and Road Initiative seeks to address one of the greatest impediments confronting developing countries: inadequate infrastructure. Weak transportation networks, unreliable energy supplies, high logistics costs and limited digital connectivity have historically constrained investment, trade and industrialization across Asia, Africa, Europe and Latin America. By improving physical, commercial, financial and digital connectivity, the BRI aims to help participating countries expand trade, attract investment, create employment and accelerate modernization.

The financial scale of the initiative demonstrates the breadth of President Xi’s vision. The cumulative Chinese engagement in BRI countries between 2013 and 2025 reached approximately \$1.399 trillion. This consisted of around \$837 billion in construction contracts and \$561 billion in non-financial investments.

The year 2025 alone recorded approx-

imately \$213.5 billion in Chinese BRI engagement, including \$128.4 billion in construction contracts and \$85.2 billion in investments. Energy-related engagement reached about \$93.9 billion, while metals and mining accounted for approximately \$32.6 billion and technology and manufacturing reached nearly \$28.7 billion.

The BRI now encompasses 150 participating countries and has expanded into the Digital Silk Road, Green Silk Road and Health Silk Road, together with cooperation in renewable energy, science, innovation, education and sustainable development.

For Pakistan, President Xi’s global vision found its most consequential expression in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), widely regarded as a flagship project of the BRI. CPEC is also one of the six principal economic corridors envisioned under the initiative. Although commonly described as a network linking Kashgar in China’s Xinjiang region with Gwadar on Pakistan’s Arabian Sea coast, it is considerably broader. It covers transportation, energy, Gwadar Port, industrial cooperation, Special Economic Zones, agriculture, mining, digital connectivity, science, education, healthcare and socioeconomic

development.

CPEC was initially announced in 2015 with projects worth approximately \$46 billion, while its projected portfolio was subsequently reported to have expanded to around \$62 billion. According to Pakistan’s official CPEC Secretariat, approximately 43 projects worth about \$25 billion have been completed, while nearly 9,000 megawatts of electricity-generation capacity have been added under the corridor.

Major connectivity projects included the Havelian-Thakot section of the Karakoram Highway, the Multan-Sukkur Motorway, the Lahore Orange Line Metro Train and the cross-border optical-fibre cable connecting Khunjerab with Rawalpindi. These projects improved national connectivity, reduced travel times, facilitated freight movement and strengthened Pakistan’s communications infrastructure.

Energy projects became the financial and operational backbone of CPEC’s first phase. Major plants at Sahiwal, Port Qasim and Hub, together with Thar coal, Karot hydropower, Suki Kinari hydropower and several wind and solar facilities, added substantial generation capacity to Pakistan’s electricity system. According to the 2025

global BRI engagement assessment, Pakistan has received more than \$41.5 billion in cumulative Chinese energy-sector engagement since 2013, the highest recorded for any BRI country under that dataset.

CPEC financing, however, is not uniform. Its portfolio includes government-to-government concessional and commercial loans, grants, construction contracts, equity investment and independent power projects financed through combinations of sponsor equity and borrowing from Chinese financial institutions. Therefore, it would be misleading to describe the entire \$62 billion portfolio either as Chinese direct investment or as sovereign debt owed by Pakistan. Each project must be evaluated according to its own financing structure, repayment obligations, guarantees and expected economic returns.

Gwadar occupies a central position in CPEC’s long-term vision. The Eastbay Expressway has improved the port’s connection with Pakistan’s highway network, while the New Gwadar International Airport is intended to strengthen regional access. The Gwadar Free Zone and Smart Port City Master Plan provide foundations for future commercial, industrial and urban development.

Gwadar could eventually provide western China with a shorter potential route to the Arabian Sea and reduce dependence on longer maritime routes

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

Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain & Connected Technologies: Shaping the Future of Governance

The world is entering a new digital era where technology is transforming every aspect of life. Governments, businesses, educational institutions, and citizens are becoming increasingly connected through digital platforms and intelligent systems. Among the most powerful innovations driving this transformation are Artificial Intelligence (AI), Blockchain, and Connected Technologies such as the Internet of Things (IoT), cloud computing, big data, and advanced communication networks. These technologies are not only changing how organizations operate; they are redefining how nations are governed, how economies grow, and how societies solve complex challenges. As countries around the world accelerate their digital transformation journeys, Pakistan has a unique opportunity to harness these technologies to build a smarter, more transparent, and more inclusive future.

The New Age of Digital Governance: Governance has traditionally relied on policies, procedures, and human decision-making. While these remain important, modern governance increasingly depends on the ability to collect, analyze, and utilize data effectively.

This transformation can be understood through a simple but powerful framework: Data –Intelligence –Decisions –Impact. Every digital interaction generates data. When this data is analyzed using Artificial Intelligence and advanced analytics, it becomes intelligence. This intelligence helps leaders make informed decisions, and those decisions ulti-

mately create meaningful impact for citizens. Governments that successfully move through this chain can deliver better public services, improve transparency, reduce inefficiencies, and respond more effectively to the needs of their people.

Artificial Intelligence is rapidly becoming one of the most important tools for modern governance. AI systems can process enormous amounts of information in seconds, identify patterns, predict future trends, and support decision-making.

In government, AI can help improve healthcare services, optimize traffic management, strengthen disaster response systems, detect fraud, and enhance public safety. It can also automate routine administrative tasks, allowing government employees to focus on more strategic and citizen-centered responsibilities.

For a country like Pakistan, AI has the potential to improve service delivery in education, agriculture, taxation, healthcare, and public administration. By using AI-driven insights, policymakers can better understand citizen needs and design more effective programs.

However, AI is not a replacement for leadership. Technology can provide recommendations, but human leaders must make the final decisions based on ethics, values, and national priorities.

Blockchain and the Future of Trust: One of the greatest challenges in governance is maintaining trust. Citizens need confidence that systems are fair, transparent, and secure. This

Continued on Page 7

Government Announces Consortiums of International Banks for Pakistan’s GMTN and International Sukuks Programs

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a virtual meeting from Washington, D. C., with the senior leadership of the consortiums of international banks under Pakistan’s Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) Program and International Sukuk Program. The meeting marked the commencement of the Government’s strategic partnership with the selected financial institutions.

Following an evaluation process conducted in accordance with the criteria and procedures prescribed in the Requests for Proposals (RFPs), the Government of Pakistan has successfully concluded the competitive procurement process for the appointment of consortiums of international banks under its Global Medium-Term Note (GMTN) Program and International Sukuk Program. The financial institutions selected for each consortium, i.e. Eurobonds, Inter-

national Sukuks, and PKR Denominated-USD Settled Bonds, have now been announced as follows:

1. Eurobonds: The consortium banks include Standard Chartered Bank, Citibank, N. A., Deutsche Bank AG, Emirates NBD Capital, and MUFG Securities Asia Limited.

2. International Sukuks: The consortium banks include Standard Chartered Bank, Dubai Islamic Bank PJSC, Citibank, N. A., Emirates NBD Capital, and Mashreq Bank PSC.

3. PKR-denominated USD Settled Bonds: The consortium banks include Standard Chartered Bank, Citibank, N. A., and Deutsche Bank AG.

The consortiums have been appointed for a period of three years and will support Pakistan’s sovereign capital market issuances across both conventional and Islamic financing instruments. Upon completion of the required documentation and fulfillment of all applicable formalities, the Government of Pakistan intends to utilize these structures for frequent



issuances, as and when required, in line with its financing strategy.

This selection is not a one-off event, but rather part of a structured and ongoing process aimed at establishing a stable, diversified, and sustainable

external financing framework for Pakistan. The first-time inclusion of MUFG Securities Asia Limited and Mashreq Bank further broadens Pakistan’s engagement with leading international financial institutions.

Pakistan’s re-engagement with international capital markets is supported by the country’s improving macroeconomic environment. Sustained fiscal consolidation, the rebuilding of external

buffers, strengthening debt sustainability indicators, and the continued implementation of structural reforms have collectively reinforced investor confidence and reinforced Pakistan’s economic credibility. The positive reassessment of Pakistan’s improving macroeconomic outlook is also evident from the significant compression in sovereign credit spreads, with market pricing increasingly reflecting stronger underlying credit fundamentals and confidence in the country’s reform trajectory.

The Government’s objective extends beyond raising financing to developing a diversified, market-oriented funding platform that broadens the investor base, optimizes financing costs, and strengthens Pakistan’s long-term presence in international capital markets.

The Government of Pakistan welcomes the selected consortium banks and looks forward to working closely with them in supporting the successful execution of Pakistan’s sovereign capital market transactions.

OIC-COMSTECH Honors Outgoing Kazakh Ambassador for Strengthening Pakistan-Kazakhstan Ties

 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: OIC-COMSTECH hosted a farewell reception on July 20 in honour of H. E. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, in recognition of his contributions to strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and promoting cooperation with COMSTECH.

The event brought together ambassadors, diplomats, vice chancellors, academicians, and distinguished guests from OIC member and observer states, as well as friendly countries. Among the attendees were ambassadors of Turkmenistan, Tajikistan, Azerbaijan, Thailand, Nepal, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and representatives from the Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus, Qatar, Jordan, Iran, the British High Commission, and the Russian Trade



Office, along with officials from the Embassy of Kazakhstan.

Speaking on the occasion, Coordinator General OIC-COMSTECH Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal Choudhary praised

Ambassador Kistafin for his efforts in enhancing scientific, educational, technological, and diplomatic cooperation between Pakistan and Kazakhstan. He also acknowledged the ambassador’s

active support for COMSTECH initiatives aimed at strengthening collaboration across the Muslim world.

As a mark of appreciation, Prof. Choudhary presented the ambassador with a Certificate of Appreciation for his distinguished diplomatic services.

Ambassador Kistafin thanked COMSTECH for its support and hospitality, commending its role in advancing science, technology, higher education, and innovation across OIC member states. He reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening cooperation between Kazakhstan and COMSTECH.

The reception concluded in a spirit of friendship and mutual respect, reflecting the enduring partnership between Pakistan and Kazakhstan and COMSTECH’s continued commitment to promoting science diplomacy and international collaboration.

PCJCCI Calls Pakistan-China Educational Cooperation Key to Skilled Workforce, Modern Farming

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: PCJCCI Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar said stronger Pakistan-China educational collaboration is vital for building a skilled workforce, modernizing agriculture, and boosting Pakistan’s position in the global knowledge economy. He noted that 60% of Pakistan’s population is under 30, making youth development a key strength. Investment in education, vocational training, research and innovation is essential for sustainable growth. With agriculture contributing 22% to GDP and employing nearly one-third of the workforce, Munawar stressed technology transfer, research and modern agri-education are crucial for productivity, food security, exports and rural incomes. He cited recent agreements signed by PM Shehbaz Sharif on dried fruits, maize and animal vaccines. Under a capacity-building program, 1,000 Pakistani agri-graduates are receiving training in China on biotech, AI, climate-smart farming, irrigation and seed development. He urged joint research, faculty exchanges, digital learning and smart agriculture to equip youth with market-relevant skills.



Al-Shifa Trust surgeons save three-day-old infant with rare eye tumor

 Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Doctors at Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital have successfully performed a rare, life-saving operation on a three-day-old newborn suffering from an aggressive congenital eye tumor, saving the infant through emergency surgery.

The baby, from a village in Jhelum district, was brought to the hospital shortly after birth with a rapidly progressing tumor affecting one eye. Following an urgent assessment, specialists decided that immediate surgery was the only option to prevent the disease from causing further life-threatening complications.

The complex procedure was carried out by a multidisciplinary team comprising Dr. Tayyab Afghani, Dr. Faizan Tahir, Dr. Ali Raza Syed and Dr. Aiman, with support from anesthetists, nurses and other clinical staff. Due to the advanced nature of the disease, surgeons removed the affected eye to completely remove the tumor and save the infant’s life.

Doctors said a normal newborn eyeball weighs about three grams, but the tumor removed from the infant weighed 285 grams, about 95 times the normal weight of a newborn eyeball. According to the treating team, this appears to be the first documented case in Pakistan of a 285-gram congenital eye

tumor being successfully treated in a three-day-old infant.

Dr. Tayyab Afghani said the operation was successful and the infant was recovering well under close medical supervision. He said the baby’s condition had stabilized and doctors were satisfied with the post-operative progress.

He said congenital eye tumors in newborns are uncommon but can progress rapidly if not diagnosed and treated without delay. Early referral to a specialized eye care facility, he added, can significantly improve the chances of successful treatment and reduce the risk of serious complications.

Dr. Afghani appreciated the parents for seeking medical care

promptly, saying their timely decision enabled doctors to intervene before the disease advanced further. He urged parents to seek immediate medical attention if a newborn develops an unusually enlarged eye, persistent swelling, abnormal eye appearance or any other unusual changes around the eye, as early diagnosis can be critical.

He said the child will continue to receive regular follow-up care to ensure proper healing. Once recovery is complete, the hospital plans to fit the infant with a custom-made artificial eye to promote normal facial growth, improve appearance and support healthy development as the child



grows. The hospital said the case highlights the importance of

specialized pediatric eye care and timely intervention in managing rare congenital eye conditions,

particularly during the first days of life when prompt treatment can be lifesaving.

Kazakhstan Vows Deeper Economic Ties with Pakistan, Backs Regional Connectivity

 Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Kazakhstan’s Ambassador to Pakistan, Yerzhan Kistafin, has reaffirmed his country’s commitment to strengthening economic relations with Pakistan and advancing regional integration through tangible projects.

Speaking at a reception for senior journalists at the Kazakh Embassy, Kistafin said improved transport links across rail, road, and air are critical to unlocking regional trade. He highlighted the North-South and Middle Corridors as key drivers expected to boost commerce in the coming years.

The ambassador described Kazakhstan as one of Central Asia’s fastest-growing economies. He cited a GDP of about \$300 billion, per capita income near \$15,000, and single-digit



inflation. He added that a stable macroeconomic framework and investor-friendly policies have created new opportunities for regional cooperation.

On domestic changes, Kistafin said nearly 300 new laws have been passed in the last three

years to strengthen democracy and governance. Constitutional reforms, he noted, have expanded representative institutions and public participation.

He credited President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s agenda of institutional reform, economic



diversification, infrastructure upgrades, digital transformation, and human capital development for building long-term resilience.

Reviewing his tenure, which will end in coming months, Kistafin said Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations have grown signifi-

cantly. For the first time, Kazakhstan’s president, prime minister, and senior officials held high-level engagements with Pakistan.

New platforms including a bilateral Business Council and joint working groups on trade, IT, and education have also been



set up to explore investment and knowledge exchange.

Kistafin stressed that stronger connectivity will support not just trade but also energy, transit, and logistics across Central and South Asia. He expressed confidence that better infrastructure

and political will can turn Pakistan-Kazakhstan ties into a wider regional economic partnership.

The event ended with the ambassador awarding certificates of appreciation to journalists for their role in promoting Kazakhstan-Pakistan relations.

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
176,133.56	175,927.73
Day's High	Day's Low
178,370.45	176,062.69
Index Value	Change
22,891,273,238	+205.83
Percentage	Time
+0.12%	21 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,585.91	+61.15
Percentage	Time
+0.58%	21 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,283.31	+444.05
Percentage	Time
+0.86%	21 Jul, 1:17 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,232.19	+2,091.07
Percentage	Time
+3.26%	21 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195.35	199.26
Bahrain Dinar	741.15	751.95
Canadian Dollar	198.36	201.95
China Yuan	38.15	38.90
Danish Krone	42.68	43.35
Euro	319.63	323.91
Hong Kong Dollar	35.24	36.25
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.25
Japanese Yen	1.7115	1.8101
Kuwaiti Dinar	890.02	900.70
Malaysian Ringgit	67.05	68.10
NewZealand \$	161.67	164.95
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.45
Omani Riyal	725.81	735.90
Qatari Riyal	75.45	76.45
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.30
Singapore Dollar	214.54	218.52
Swedish Korona	28.32	28.97
Swiss Franc	342.11	346.33
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.90
U.A.E Dirham	76.25	77
UK Pound Sterling	376.42	380.91
US Dollar	278.95	279.15

REAP Delegation Reaches China to Boost Rice Exports, CG Calls China “Trusted Economic Partner”



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's Consul General in China Sardar Muhammad hosted a dinner in Guangzhou for a 17-member trade delegation of the Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan (REAP), stating that China is Pakistan's trusted economic partner and bilateral trade continues to expand.

The delegation was received by Trade and Investment Counsellor Muhammad Imran. Discussions covered Pakistan-China bilateral trade, agricultural cooperation, increasing Pakistani rice exports, and upcoming business engagements.

Sardar Muhammad said Pakistani rice holds a distinguished position in the Chinese market due to its quality. He noted such missions are vital for exploring new markets, boosting exports, and building long-term partnerships, and assured full diplomatic support to exporters.

Delegation head Javed Jillani, co-head Rafiq Suleman and Mahesh Kumar presented a shield to the CG. The delegation thanked TDAP for its support.

Over the next days, REAP will meet the Guangdong Chamber of Commerce, China Cooperative Trade Enterprises, Guangdong Agribusiness Groups, and others in Guangzhou. On July 23, meetings are scheduled in Shenzhen, and on July 24 the delegation travels to Beijing for further engagements. REAP expressed confidence the visit will open new avenues

Haroon Akhtar hails Star Charge-Bahum Global EV Partnership as major boost for Pakistan's Clean Energy Future

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan has described the partnership between StarCharge Energy Pakistan and Bahum Global as a major milestone for Pakistan's electric vehicle (EV) and clean energy sector, calling the country's transition to renewable energy and electric mobility a game-changer for future economic growth.

Speaking at the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony in Islamabad, the minister praised Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for fostering an investment-friendly environment that is accelerating the shift toward sustainable energy. He also commended StarCharge Energy Pakistan Director Omar Malik for his leadership in bringing world-class EV charging technology and international investment to Pakistan.

Haroon Akhtar Khan said the agreement represents one of the largest strategic



collaborations between a Pakistani and a Chinese company, reflecting growing international confidence in Pakistan's industrial and clean energy sectors. He noted that the

government's Vision 2030 prioritizes electric mobility, renewable energy infrastructure, innovation, and sustainable economic development.

The minister emphasized that expanding EV infrastructure is essential to reduce reliance on imported fuels, address rising energy demands, and provide cleaner, more affordable transportation. He added that investment in the sector would promote technological innovation, create economic opportunities, and support environmental sustainability.

The StarCharge-Bahum Global partnership is expected to strengthen Pakistan's EV ecosystem by encouraging foreign investment, advancing modern charging infrastructure, and supporting the country's long-term clean energy objectives. The collaboration also underscores the shared commitment of both companies to promoting sustainable transportation, industrial development, and a greener future for Pakistan.

Calls on

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Sam Waldock, Development Director at the United Kingdom's Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office (FCDO), calls on Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Xenith PR partners with IoBM to bridge Pakistan's corporate communications gap

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Xenith PR, one of Pakistan's leading PR and Corporate Communications firm, has announced a strategic partnership with the Institute of Business Management (IoBM) to launch a three-month Certificate in Strategic Communications & Digital Media, a dedicated program to equip students and professionals with real-world skills that are necessary to succeed in the global corporate markets.

"This program is a testament to our conviction that real-world knowledge must be infused into the classroom to meet the demands of an evolving industry. By partnering with IoBM, we are working towards bridging the gap between academic learning and boardroom execution, equipping professionals with the precise tools, techniques, and agile mindset necessary to drive high-impact success in a complex market like Pakistan's," said Raheel Nabi, Director & Chief Executive of Xenith PR.

Speaking at the MoU signing, Nabhan



Shah Karim, Head of Department for Marketing & Communications at IoBM, said: "The secret to success in corporate communications today lies in short, concise, and cutting-edge courses. Through this partnership, we are ensuring our students initiate their careers right

from their classrooms and laptops, propelling them into leadership roles for tomorrow".

Enrollment for the program will open on 23rd September 2026, with classes expected to commence in September of 2026 at IoBM's Karachi Campus.

SECP Approves First IPO of FY2026-27 for Tasdeeq Information Services Limited

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved the issuance, circulation, and publication of the prospectus for the Initial Public Offering (IPO) of Tasdeeq Information Services Limited.

Since the new management assumed office in February 2026, SECP has accelerated IPO approvals and enhanced facilitation for issuers, resulting in 10 IPOs entering the market. This marks the first IPO approved in FY2026-27, reflecting the continued momentum in Pakistan's primary capital market.

Tasdeeq Information Services Limited is a credit bureau licensed by the State Bank of Pakistan. The company collects, maintains, and disseminates credit information on individual and commercial borrowers to its member institutions, enabling informed credit assessment and lending decisions.

The company is offering a total of 219 million ordinary shares, comprising 69 million ordinary shares allocated to pre-IPO investors, and 150 million ordinary shares (representing 15.79% of the post-IPO paid-up capital) through the IPO.

The IPO will be conducted through the

book-building mechanism, with 75% of the issue allocated to institutional investors and high-net-worth individuals, while the remaining 25% will be offered to retail investors.

The approval reflects the effectiveness of SECP's regulatory framework in facilitating capital formation while ensuring transparency, efficient price discovery, and investor protection.

Recent reforms to simplify the IPO process through streamlined requirements, faster approvals, and greater digitalization have made it easier for companies to access Pakistan's capital market through public listings.

EDF, Pak EXIM join hands to enhance SME exports through finance, risk protection

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Export Development Fund (EDF) and the Export-Import Bank of Pakistan (Pak EXIM) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen Pakistan's export ecosystem by improving access to finance and risk protection for Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) exporters.

The MoU formalises collaboration between the two institutions on a range of initiatives aimed at expanding financial support and risk mitigation mechanisms for SME exporters, a news release said.

A key feature of the partnership is the establishment of a Joint Risk Pool to facilitate SME exporters through Pak EXIM's Export/Trade Credit Insurance (TCI) products.

The initiative is designed to protect exporters against political and commercial risks associated with international trade while improving their access to finance, a



major challenge limiting SME export growth.

The MoU signing ceremony was attended by Secretary Finance Imdad Ullah Bosal and Secretary Commerce Jawad Paul, reflecting the government's commitment to promoting exports and supporting the country's exporting community.

The agreement was signed by Dr Muhammad Saeed, Adviser to the Prime Minister and member of the EDF Board, and Shahbaz H. Syed, President and Chief Executive Officer of Pak EXIM, in the presence of senior government officials, EDF Board members, representatives of trade bodies and members of the exporting community.

Pakistan-China Ties shift to investment-led B2B Cooperation: Ambassador Hashmi

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's Ambassador to China H. E. Khalil Hashmi said Pakistan-China economic relations are entering an investment-led, business-to-business phase to convert the strong political partnership into trade and industrial projects. Speaking at ICCI, he said the Embassy, along with Ghulam Qadir, has pursued a research-driven strategy identifying 21 priority sectors for Chinese investment. Over 2.5 years, 6 B2B conferences and 6 roadshows in pharma, IT,

energy, agriculture, textiles and more yielded 670+ MoUs, 40 JVs and \$22 billion in commitments, with a 30% conversion rate. He urged Pakistani firms to bring bankable projects, and flagged future focus on semiconductors, surgical instruments, sports goods, plus skills training. Business facilitation desks in Guangzhou and ICCI Islamabad were lauded. ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said CPEC has built the foundation and ICCI will act as a bridge to strengthen B2B linkages and technology transfer.

Petrol pump owners announce nationwide strike after talks with govt fail

The All Pakistan Petrol Pumps Owners Association (APPPOA) announced a nationwide shutdown of petrol pumps from Wednesday night after negotiations with the government over the daily pricing mechanism for petroleum products ended without a breakthrough.

APPPOA General Secretary Nauman Butt said the association has rejected the government's daily fuel pricing mechanism and would close petrol pumps across the country in protest.

"We cannot accept daily changes in petroleum product prices under any circumstances," Butt said.

President Zardari felicitates Belgian leadership on National Day

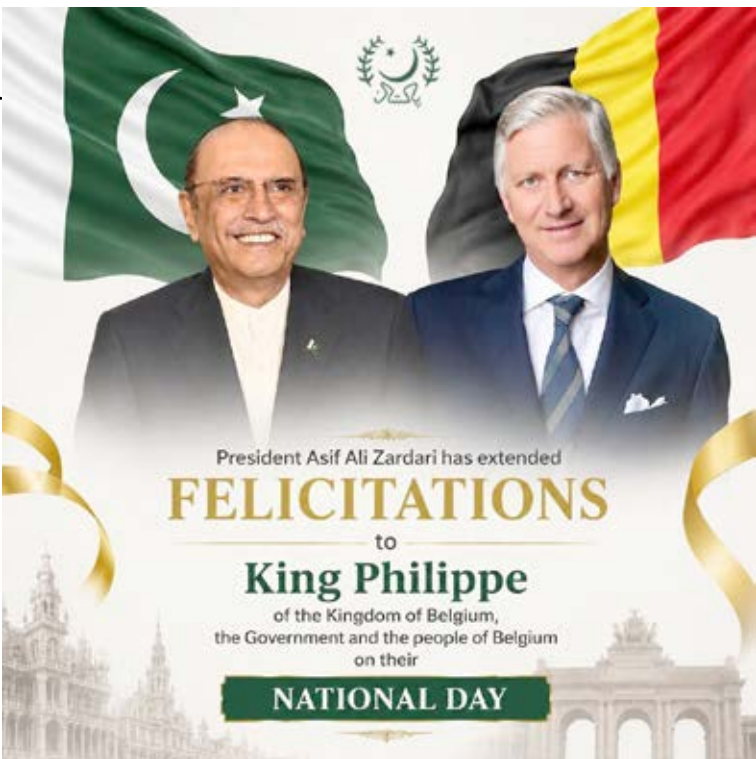
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has extended felicitations to King Philippe of the Kingdom of Belgium, the Government and the people of Belgium on their National Day.

The President highlighted that Pakistan and Belgium enjoy long-standing and cordial relations founded on mutual respect, trust and goodwill. He noted with satisfaction that over the years,

the two countries have developed a constructive partnership across diverse fields. He emphasised that Pakistan values its engagement with the European Union, in which Belgium plays a pivotal role, and looks forward to further strengthening cooperation to achieve their shared objectives of peace, sustainable development and mutual prosperity.

President Zardari expressed confidence that the bonds of friendship and



cooperation between Pakistan and Belgium will continue to grow stronger in the years ahead for the mutual benefit of the people of both nations.

Punjab Ensures Comprehensive Arrangements for Hazrat Baha-ud-Din Zakariya (R. A.) Urs: Dr. Ehsan Bhutta

Bureau Report

MULTAN: Secretary and Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has said Punjab is the land of great Sufi saints, and providing the best possible facilities to devotees visiting shrines remains a top priority of the provincial government. During his visit to Multan to review preparations for the annual Urs of Hazrat Baha-ud-Din Zakariya (R. A.), he said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed authorities to ensure maximum comfort, security, and hospitality for pilgrims.

Following a strategy meeting with Deputy Commissioner Dr. Muhammad Faisal Saleem, Dr. Bhutta instructed officials to maintain strict discipline and seamless coordination throughout the Urs to prevent any inconvenience. He reviewed security, administrative, and



logistical arrangements for the event. Officials informed the meeting that extensive facilities have been arranged, including renovated shrine premises, tents, carpeting, chilled drinking water,

over 70 mist and jumbo fans, uninterrupted power supply through a 50KV generator, 66 washroom units, medical camps, information desks, langar, milk sabeels, and accommodation for

around 18,000 pilgrims in schools, colleges, and the Haji Camp. Daily religious programmes, including Quran Khawani, Mehfil-e-Naat, Qawwali, and the Zakariya Conference, have also been finalized.

Dr. Bhutta said field hospitals, Rescue 1122, Civil Defence, Traffic Police, and emergency control desks will remain operational throughout the celebrations. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Faisal Saleem assured foolproof security through CCTV surveillance, integrated police deployment, and dedicated emergency assistance centres.

During the visit, Dr. Bhutta offered Fateha at the shrine, prayed for Pakistan's peace and prosperity, inspected development projects, and directed officials to complete all public welfare schemes on time while maintaining high-quality standards.

Pakistan to Face Sri Lanka in CAVA Volleyball Opener

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will kick off its campaign against Sri Lanka in the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) Men's Volleyball Championship 2026 starting from today (Wednesday) the Liaquat Gymnasium, Pakistan Sports Complex Islamabad following India's last-minute withdrawal from the tournament despite

receiving comprehensive security assurances. Speaking to the media after the championship's trophy unveiling ceremony, Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) Chairman Chaudhry Mohammad Yaqoob expressed disappointment over India's decision to pull out of the event. "We are surprised by India's withdrawal after all necessary arrangements had been completed. At their request, the federation,

in coordination with the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB), the Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) and other relevant government departments, secured all required NOCs and comprehensive security guarantees to ensure the Indian team's safe participation in Islamabad," he said.

Despite India's withdrawal, Yaqoob said the championship remains one of the biggest international volleyball events ever

hosted in Pakistan and reflects the country's growing stature as a safe and capable destination for international sports.

Organised by the Pakistan Volleyball Federation under the auspices of the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA), the championship will be held on 29 July feature teams from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Uzbekistan.

Xi's BRI, CPEC and the Enduring Pakistan-China Bond

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passing through the Strait of Malacca. However, this strategic possibility should not be mistaken for a fully operational alternative at present. It requires efficient port utilization, modern logistics, upgraded road and rail links, viable energy-transit infrastructure and sustained commercial demand.

Social projects—including the Pak-China Friendship Hospital, the Technical and Vocational Institute, desalination and drinking-water schemes, schools, fisheries assistance and community-development programmes—demonstrate that CPEC is gradually moving beyond physical infrastructure. Its ultimate test will be whether development produces visible

employment, skills and business opportunities for the people of Gwadar and Balochistan.

CPEC 2.0 must therefore concentrate on industrialization and productive investment. Infrastructure creates opportunities, but factories create wealth. Special Economic Zones at Rashakai, Allama Iqbal Industrial City, Dhabaji and Bostan are intended to attract manufacturing, promote technology transfer, create employment and integrate Pakistan into regional and global supply chains. Their success will depend upon reliable energy, policy continuity, simplified regulations, skilled labour and an export-oriented strategy.

Pakistan must encourage Chinese companies to establish manufacturing facilities and joint ventures rather than

limiting cooperation to construction and imports. Greater local sourcing, technology transfer and participation by Pakistani small and medium-sized enterprises would distribute CPEC's benefits more widely.

Agriculture presents another promising frontier. Modern irrigation, improved seeds, mechanization, livestock development, food processing and cold-chain logistics could raise productivity, reduce post-harvest losses and increase rural incomes. Digital cooperation in artificial intelligence, cloud computing, e-commerce, smart cities and information technology could similarly help Pakistan's young population participate in the knowledge economy.

CPEC must consequently be treated not as an end in itself but as a platform

for national transformation. This principle is consistent with the people-centred development philosophy presented in President Xi's Up and Out of Poverty: governments can create opportunities and improve infrastructure, but communities must build productive capacity and become active participants in development.

China's experience offers Pakistan several enduring lessons: policy continuity, disciplined implementation, capable institutions, accountability, investment in education and research, merit-based governance and sustained action against corruption. Above all, development must remain people-centred so that economic growth improves ordinary lives rather than enriching only a narrow section of society.

As Pakistan and China celebrate 75 years of diplomatic relations, established on 21 May 1951, their partnership remains one of the most enduring relationships in contemporary international affairs. It has survived wars, geopolitical realignments and leadership transitions because it rests upon mutual trust, sovereign equality and support for each other's core interests.

CPEC-2.0 is aimed at extending beyond conventional infrastructure into renewable energy, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, climate resilience, advanced manufacturing, mineral processing, healthcare, higher education and scientific research. This would transform the relationship from one centred primarily on connectivity into a partnership driven by knowledge, innovation and productive capacity.

For Pakistan, the most meaningful tribute to 75 years of friendship would go beyond commemorative ceremonies and official declarations. It would be a national commitment to policy continuity, institutional reform, human-capital development and disciplined implementation. By combining China's cooperation with Pakistan's own resolve, CPEC can transform its estimated \$62 billion vision into a sustainable pathway towards industrial strength, regional connectivity and shared prosperity.

The 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.

Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain & Connected Technologies: Shaping the Future of Governance

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is where blockchain technology offers significant value.

Blockchain creates a secure and tamper-resistant digital record of transactions and information. Once data is recorded, it becomes extremely difficult to alter or manipulate. This makes blockchain an effective tool for improving transparency and accountability.

Governments can use blockchain for land records, digital identity systems, public procurement, voting systems, financial transactions, and record management. By reducing opportunities for fraud and corruption, blockchain can strengthen public trust and improve governance outcomes.

For Pakistan, blockchain can support digital transformation efforts by creating more secure

and reliable public services while increasing transparency across government institutions.

Connected Technologies: Building a Smart Nation: Artificial Intelligence and Blockchain become even more powerful when combined with connected technologies. The Internet of Things, cloud computing, 5G networks, and smart digital infrastructure create an ecosystem where information flows seamlessly between people, devices, and institutions.

Smart cities, intelligent transportation systems, digital healthcare platforms, and connected educational environments are all examples of this technological convergence.

Imagine a future where traffic systems automatically reduce congestion, hospitals use predictive analytics to improve patient care, farmers receive real-time agricultural insights, and

government services are accessible through a single digital platform. These possibilities are becoming realities in many parts of the world.

For Pakistan, investing in connected technologies can improve efficiency, increase productivity, and enhance the quality of life for millions of citizens.

The Vision of the Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA): The vision behind the Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA) reflects the growing importance of digital transformation in national development. A forward-looking digital authority can serve as a catalyst for innovation, coordination, and technology adoption across the public and private sectors.

The PDA can play a vital role in developing digital policies, promoting innovation, estab-

lishing standards, supporting emerging technologies, and creating an environment where digital services thrive.

More importantly, it can help align national digital initiatives with long-term economic and governance objectives. By providing strategic direction and fostering collaboration, the PDA can accelerate Pakistan's journey toward a digital future.

Its success, however, will depend not only on technology adoption but also on strong leadership, institutional capacity, and a clear commitment to citizen-centric governance.

The Technology Triangle: Government, Industry, and Academia: No country can achieve digital transformation through government efforts alone. Sustainable innovation requires collaboration among three critical stakeholders: Government,

Industry, and Academia. This partnership forms what can be called the "Technology Triangle."

Government provides policies, regulations, and strategic direction. Industry brings innovation, investment, and practical implementation. Academia contributes research, knowledge creation, and talent development.

When these three sectors work together, they create an ecosystem that encourages innovation and accelerates technological progress.

Universities can develop future technology leaders. Businesses can transform research into practical solutions. Governments can create policies that enable growth while protecting public interests.

For Pakistan, strengthening this Technology Triangle is essential for building a competitive digital economy and preparing future generations for emerging opportunities.

Artificial Intelligence, Blockchain, and Connected Technologies are reshaping the future of governance and economic development. They offer unprecedented opportunities to improve transparency, efficiency, innovation, and citizen engagement.

As Pakistan advances toward a digital future, the vision of the Pakistan Digital Authority and the collaboration between Government, Industry, and Academia will play a crucial role in unlocking national potential.

The future will not be governed by technology alone, but by leaders who understand how to use it. Those leaders will transform data into intelligence, intelligence into decisions, and decisions into lasting impact. This is not just a technological journey; it is a roadmap for building a smarter, stronger, and more prosperous Digital Pakistan.

Inner Wheel District 343 Launches 'Grow & Flourish' Vision for Women's Empowerment

Quaratulain Asim

MULTAN: The annual installation ceremony of Inner Wheel Club District 343 was held with enthusiasm, as the newly elected leadership pledged to advance women's empowerment and community welfare under the annual theme, "Grow & Flourish."



District Chairman Sadia Kirmani said the district would focus on women's education, healthcare, economic empowerment, environmental protection, tree plantation, clean drinking water, and support for orphans and underprivileged children. She described the theme as a mission to equip women with skills, confidence, and opportunities to become active contributors to society. She also emphasized providing vocational training and small business opportunities to deserving women to help them achieve financial independence.

District Secretary Farah Shahid assured members that all district activities would be conducted in an organized, transparent, and effective manner while strengthening every club through teamwork, discipline, and dedicated service.

The ceremony was attended by presidents and office bearers of all District 343 clubs, District Trainer Ayesha Mazhar, former District Chairman Jina Ijaz, Vice Chairman Uzma Bashir, District 341 Chairman Ayesha Javed from Lahore, and numerous members. Speakers reaffirmed their commitment to improving the lives of women and children through welfare initiatives.

The event concluded with a special exhibition and business stalls showcasing handicrafts and products made by women entrepreneurs, promoting economic empowerment in line with the "Grow & Flourish" vision.

Global Markets, Trump's Politics, and the Price of Information

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There is another aspect that also deserves attention. Social media has accelerated the flow of information to an unprecedented degree. Today, a single sentence posted by a president or prime minister can influence global markets within seconds. In such an environment, the speed of information itself has become a form of economic power. Those who know first can act first—and those who act first often stand to gain the most.

That is why there is a pressing need to regulate the relationship between political office, social media platforms, and financial markets through clear laws and strong ethical principles. Public office should never become a means of securing private financial gain, nor should the public position of an officeholder be transformed into a commercial

service that gives certain individuals an extraordinary advantage over ordinary citizens.

This debate may have begun in the United States, but its implications could be felt around the world. Because if the price of news is determined by money, and timely access to information is also made conditional on wealth, then the question is no longer simply who received the news first. The real question becomes: Who, ultimately, are democracy, transparency, and equal opportunity meant to serve?

This is the question the modern world will have to answer. Because when news itself becomes a commodity, the greatest damage is not necessarily done to financial markets—it is done to public trust. And in any democratic society, public trust is a form of capital whose value cannot be measured on any stock exchange.

AI-Based PM office system

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the launch of AI-based Prime Minister's Office System (PMOS) on Wednesday.



Photo: Online

PM Shehbaz launches AI-Powered PM Office System to Modernise Governance

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday launched the Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based Prime Minister Office System (PMOS), describing it as a major step towards digital governance that will streamline the recording, communication, monitoring, and implementation of all directives issued by the Prime

Minister.

Speaking at the launch ceremony, the Prime Minister directed all ministries and departments to immediately adopt the new digital platform, declaring an end to traditional paper-based working. "From today onwards, I will not expect any of you with a file in your hands. Everything will be discussed through this mechanism," he said.

The AI-powered PMOS is Pakistan's first government platform to integrate artificial intelligence into decision-making and implementation monitoring. It has been developed to ensure the efficient communication of directives across government institutions while tracking their implementation, verifying completion, and enabling post-completion monitoring.

Prime Minister Shehbaz

praised IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja and the Ministry of IT for developing the system, expressing confidence that it would significantly improve governance and public service delivery.

Officials briefing the Prime Minister said PMOS would function as a secure digital decision-support platform, combining analytics, structured information, and AI to

enhance policy implementation and resource management. The system also creates a permanent digital repository of government decisions, allowing AI to classify and analyse directives rather than merely store them.

The government plans to implement the platform across the federal administration as part of its broader digital transformation and governance reform agenda.

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm commitment to strengthening educational, scientific cooperation

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr. Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui on Tuesday held a cordial meeting with Dr. Hossein Simaei Sarraf, Minister of Science, Research and Technology of the Islamic Republic of Iran, during his official visit to Pakistan.

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm commitment to strengthening educational, scientific cooperation

The meeting reflected the longstanding friendship and brotherly relations between Pakistan and Iran, underscoring the shared commitment of both countries to further strengthening cooperation in the fields of education, science, research, innovation, and higher learning.

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm commitment to strengthening educational, scientific cooperation



The Federal Minister warmly welcomed the distinguished Iranian delegation and expressed Pakistan's deep appreciation for the historic and close ties between the two neighboring countries. Both sides acknowledged the growing momentum in bilateral educational cooperation and reaffirmed their resolve to expand institutional partnerships for the mutual benefit of students, researchers, and

academic communities.

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm commitment to strengthening educational, scientific cooperation

During the meeting, both sides expressed satisfaction over the successful implementation of existing Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) between Pakistani and Iranian higher education institutions, including the National University of Modern Languages

(NUML). They also encouraged similar collaborations among other universities and research organizations.

Pakistan, Iran reaffirm commitment to strengthening educational, scientific cooperation

The discussions focused on enhancing cooperation in teacher education, curriculum development, digital learning, artificial intelligence, educational technology, technical and vocational education and training, joint research initiatives, faculty exchanges, and student mobility.

Both sides emphasized the importance of promoting collaborative research projects, academic conferences, innovation partnerships, and scholarship opportunities to strengthen academic linkages and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and expertise.

The Federal Minister reaf-

firmed Pakistan's commitment to implementing the education-related decisions of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Commission and translating the shared vision of both countries into meaningful and practical outcomes.

He highlighted the importance of sustained institutional engagement in addressing common educational challenges and advancing scientific and technological progress.

Dr. Hossein Simaei Sarraf appreciated the warm hospitality extended by the Government of Pakistan and expressed confidence that enhanced collaboration between the educational and scientific institutions of the two countries would further deepen bilateral relations and contribute to regional development through innovation, research excellence, and academic cooperation.

Mutahida Madaris Council distances itself from Fazl's remarks

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Mutahida Madaris Council Pakistan has distanced itself from recent remarks made by Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman regarding the Pakistan Army and the country's martyrs.

The council described his comments as his personal and political stance.

The council's spokesperson, Dr Mir Muhammad Asif Akbar Qadri, said that religious education boards, seminaries and the Council do not represent or endorse Maulana Fazlur Rehman's views.

He reaffirmed that the Pakistan Army's martyrs and war veterans are national heroes who are held in the highest regard, and any negative narrative against the sacrifices of the martyrs is unacceptable.

Dr Qadri clarified that religious seminaries, mosques, scholars and students have no connection with anti-state activities or campaigns targeting national institutions.

He called it unjust to use the names of seminaries and religious scholars for political campaigns.

Pakistan's religious seminaries have always played a vital role in safeguarding the country's ideological, intellectual and geographical frontiers, he added.

He reiterated that all religious boards, educational institutions and seminaries respect the Pakistan Army, security institutions, martyrs and Ghazis, and do not support any campaign or statement directed against them.

Maryam Nawaz unveils Development Package for AJK, pledges buses, laptops and scholarships

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has announced a comprehensive development package for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), promising improved public transport, education, healthcare, housing, and infrastructure if the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) wins the upcoming AJK elections.

Addressing a PML-N election rally in Muzaffarabad alongside party president Nawaz Sharif, Maryam described Kashmir as her ancestral homeland and reaffirmed the party's commitment to the region's development.

She announced the provision of 10 Green Line buses for Muzaffarabad, 15 mobile hospitals to improve healthcare access, 5,000 laptops, and 2,000 scholarships for students and youth.



She also pledged to introduce free education initiatives, establish new schools, and extend Punjab's "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" housing scheme to AJK. Maryam said a future PML-N government would focus on road construction and rehabilitation, ensuring Muzaffarabad and

other AJK cities receive development comparable to major cities in Punjab. She highlighted Punjab's welfare programmes, healthcare reforms, and the under-construction Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital as examples of the party's governance model.

Aurangzeb, Honeywell discuss investment to modernize refinery sector



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb discussed Honeywell Technologies' proposed investment in modernizing and expanding Pakistan's refinery sector.

In a meeting with Honeywell Technologies delegation, led by its Vice President and General Manager, Barry Glickman, in Washington, D. C., the minister welcomed Honeywell's proposed modernization and expansion of Pakistan's refinery sector, noting its potential to enhance the country's domestic refining capacity and reduce reli-

ance on imported petroleum products.

According to press release issued by finance ministry here Tuesday, the meeting included discussions on Honeywell's technology and equipment solutions, as well as potential financing through the U. S. EXIM Bank, the U. S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), export credit agencies, and leading international banks.

The minister emphasized that the proposed initiative would support Pakistan's energy security, industrial development, and sustainable economic growth, the statement added.

Petroleum Minister, KUFPEC discuss expanding energy cooperation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik Tuesday met with Tareq Ebrahim, Vice President Operations of Kuwait Foreign Petroleum Exploration Company (KUFPEC), to discuss opportunities for expanding cooperation in Pakistan's petroleum sector.

The Minister described Kuwait as one of Pakistan's closest friends, highlighting the two countries' more than 50-year partnership in the energy sector, said a news release.

He reaffirmed the government's commitment to further strengthening this longstanding relationship. Tareq Ebrahim thanked the Minister for his support in facilitating



investment opportunities and said KUFPEC sees strong potential for expanding its presence in Pakistan's upstream energy sector.

The Federal Minister assured KUFPEC of the government's full support and reiterated Pakistan's commitment to providing a conducive environment for international investment in the petroleum sector.

Pakistan Invites Chinese Investment in Ports and Logistics Sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has invited Chinese investors to expand investment in Pakistan's ports, logistics and maritime sectors, stating the government aims to position Pakistan as a regional transit trade, logistics and industrial hub.

Addressing the Regional Transit Trade Hub Initiative in Beijing, organized by Jiang Tonland International Holdings, the minister said Pakistan-China ties were moving into a new phase focused on connectivity, trade facilitation, logistics, industrial development and sustainable growth. He noted global trade is being reshaped by digitalization, smart logistics, green shipping and multimodal transport.

Chaudhry said Pakistan's strategic



location makes it a natural trade gateway. Institutions including Karachi Port Trust, Port Qasim Authority, Gwadar Port Authority and PNSC are undergoing reforms.

He described Gwadar Port, a flagship CPEC project, as offering opportunities in port operations, warehousing, free zone development, logistics and maritime industries.

The minister assured Chinese enterprises of a transparent, investment-friendly environment and thanked Jiang Tonland for promoting regional connectivity.

ECP issues schedule for delimitation of Islamabad union councils

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan has issued a schedule for the delimitation of union councils in Islamabad, with the final list set to be published on October 13, 2026.

According to the schedule, the collection of administrative information, maps and other relevant documents will be completed between July 22 and July 31.

The delimitation committee will prepare the preliminary lists of union councils from August 1 to August 25.

The initial delimitation proposals will be published on August 26 through Form 8, allowing registered voters to review the proposed boundaries.

Voters may file objections to the preliminary delimitations from August 27 to September 16.

The designated delimitation authority will be required to hear and decide all objections by October 1.

Decisions on the objections must be communicated to the delimitation committee by October 8 so that the necessary amendments can be incorporated into the final lists.

Following the completion of the process, the final delimitation of Islamabad's union councils will be published through Form 9 on October 13.

The Election Commission is constitutionally responsible for organising local government elections and carrying out the delimitation process in Islamabad Capital Territory.