



Irani leaders called on Minister of State for Finance and Railways

Mr. Mehran Ghorbani, Deputy Minister of Transport of Iran, and Mr. Mehdi Dousti, Deputy Minister of Interior for Economic Affairs of Iran, called on Mr. Bilal Azhar Kayani, Minister of State for Finance and Railways. The two sides discussed matters of mutual interest, including economic cooperation, trade and connectivity.



Bilawal pledges PPP will restore rights of the people of AJK

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari on Wednesday said the upcoming election in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) was perhaps the "most significant" in the region's history, saying its future was tied to the outcome.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Safar 8, Thursday, July 23, 2026



www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 93

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

RAS Expo 2026

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshall Syed Asim Munir attending the Indus RAS Expo 2026 on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

PM Launches Robotics Drive to Position Pakistan as Global Innovation Hub

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday called for the creation of a unified national innovation ecosystem as he inaugurated the Indus RAS – Robotics and Autonomous Systems Expo 2026, urging universities, research institutions, startups, industries, and farmers to collaborate in developing indigenous technological capabilities.

Addressing the event, the

Prime Minister said Pakistan must embrace the global technological revolution while ensuring its benefits reach every segment of society. He stressed that robotics and autonomous systems should promote inclusive growth by empowering farmers, small businesses, women entrepreneurs, young innovators, and underserved communities rather than remaining limited to advanced economies.

Highlighting the rapid

advancement of emerging technologies, Shehbaz Sharif emphasized the need for strong regulatory and ethical frameworks to ensure autonomous systems remain safe, transparent, and beneficial to humanity.

The Prime Minister announced two major initiatives to strengthen Pakistan's technology sector: the Spark and Elevate Programme, aimed at transforming research into globally competitive technologies and high-value jobs, and the

Pakistan Venture Fund, with an initial allocation of \$20 million to support innovation and technology-based enterprises.

Shehbaz Sharif noted that the Indus RAS Expo follows the successful Indus AI Summit held earlier this year and demonstrates Pakistan's growing capabilities in artificial intelligence and robotics. He highlighted the transformative role of emerging technologies in agriculture, disaster management, health-care, and industrial develop-

ment.

The Prime Minister also praised Pakistan's indigenous progress in defence technologies, stating that locally developed simulators and drones have significantly strengthened the country's security capabilities under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Speaking on the occasion, IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja said Pakistan is committed to achieving technological self-reliance.

Pakistan reserves right to use force against Houthis: FO

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Wednesday strongly condemned the continued threats issued by Yemen's Houthi militia against Saudi Arabia and commercial shipping in the Red Sea, warning that such actions endanger regional security and global trade.

In a statement, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said the Houthi

threats undermine freedom of navigation, challenge the rules-based maritime order and jeopardise the uninterrupted flow of international commerce.

He said threats targeting commercial vessels and trade linked to Saudi Arabia were unacceptable and violated established principles of international law.

Pakistan expressed particular concern over reports that ships engaged in lawful commercial trade with Saudi Arabia had

been threatened.

The spokesperson reaffirmed that any hostile act against Pakistani-flagged vessels or Pakistan's maritime interests would be considered a serious threat to the country's national security and sovereignty.

He said Pakistan reserved the right, in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law, to take all necessary measures, including the



lawful use of force in self-defence, to safeguard its maritime assets and national interests.

Andrabi also voiced concern over attempts to draw Saudi Arabia further into the ongoing Middle East conflict, reiterating Pakistan's unwavering support for the kingdom's security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity.

Pakistan, Iran Vow Closer Cooperation on Security and Trade

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Iran reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral ties, expanding trade and enhancing cooperation on regional security during high-level talks between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Iranian counterpart Eskandar Momeni in Islamabad.

Momeni was received at the Ministry of Interior with a guard of honour by the Federal Constab-

ulary. The Iranian delegation included the Governor General of Sistan-Baluchestan, deputy interior and urban development ministers, the head of National Iranian Oil Company, and other senior officials.

On the Pakistani side, Minister of State Talal Chaudhry, interior secretary, NADRA chairman, FIA DG, ANF DG, and other senior officials attended.

Both sides reviewed the full spectrum of relations and

expressed resolve to deepen economic and commercial ties.

Security cooperation featured prominently. Both countries agreed to enhance collaboration on counterterrorism and anti-narcotics operations, and strengthen joint efforts against illegal immigration and human trafficking. The ministers stressed a coordinated approach to prevent narcotics and terrorism flows from the Afghan border, calling it a shared challenge. Naqvi said



Pakistan is ready to expand cooperation in all sectors and praised

Iranian leaders for efforts toward regional peace.

10 terrorists killed in Balochistan IBOs, two female suicide bombers arrested

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 10 terrorists were killed in separate intelligence-based operations (IBOs) conducted by security forces in Balochistan's Surab and Mastung districts, the military's media wing said on Wednesday.

Security forces also arrested two female suicide bombers and a facilitator linked to the India-backed Fitna Al Hindustan terrorist group.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were conducted on intelligence reports regarding the presence of militants in the two districts.

During the operation in Surab, security forces killed seven militants after an intense exchange of fire.

In a separate operation in Mastung, three more militants



were killed, while two female suicide bombers and one facilitator were taken into custody.

The ISPR said the arrested suspects were affiliated with Fitna Al Hindustan.

Security forces also recovered a cache of weapons, ammunition and improvised explosive devices (IEDs) from the militants during the operations.

The military said the operations were part of ongoing efforts to eliminate terrorism and dismantle militant networks operating in Balochistan.

President, PM Laud Forces for Killing 10 Terrorists in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday commended security forces for killing 10 terrorists in Surab and Mastung districts of Balochistan.

In a statement, President Zardari said effective operations against terrorist networks of _Fitna al-Hindustan_ and _Fitna al-Khawarij_ operating in Balochistan are essential for national peace. He added that the fight against terrorism fueled by external interference will continue, and the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with security forces and law enforcement agencies.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised officers and



personnel for eliminating 10 terrorists and for arresting one facilitator along with two female suicide bombers.

"No one will be allowed to disrupt peace in Balochistan," he said, adding the fight against terrorism will continue until it is completely eradicated from the country.

He termed terrorists enemies of Balochistan's development and prosperity, and said the entire nation, including himself, stands with the Armed Forces of Pakistan in defending the homeland.

Petrol dealers announce nationwide 24-hour strike over daily fuel pricing

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Petroleum Dealers Association has announced that petrol pumps across the country would remain closed for 24 hours starting 6am Thursday until 6am Friday, in protest against the government's policy of revising petroleum product prices on a daily basis.

Addressing a press conference on Wednesday, Petroleum Dealers Association representatives rejected the daily pricing mechanism, calling it unacceptable for dealers.

They said the association had held consultations after a meeting with the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA) and decided to proceed with a nationwide 24-hour strike.

Meanwhile, sources said all factions of the petroleum dealers association have united over the planned nationwide strike and said petrol pumps



across the country will be shut if the government fails to accept their demands.

The sources said the association presented three key demands to the government to break the deadlock.

The dealers' first demand is an increase in their profit margin from the current 2.6% to 8%.

Secondly, dealers want the government to scrap the recently introduced daily fuel pricing mechanism and restore the previous system of revising petroleum prices every 15 days or once a month.

Their third demand is the abolition of the quota system imposed by oil marketing companies.

PM Rathore launches monsoon plantation drive with sapling at PM House

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Muntaz Rathore inaugurated the plantation campaign organized by the Forest Department in connection with the monsoon season by planting a sapling in the green area of the Prime Minister's House.

On this occasion, the Prime Minister also cut a cake in connection with the plantation campaign of the monsoon season and officially launched the campaign. Speaking on this occasion, the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said that plantation is the responsibility of every citizen of the state to combat the consequences of the current climate change and to reduce them, plantation is the only solution.

At present, the world is extremely vulnerable to global warming and climate change. Plantation and tree cultivation are extremely important to reduce its effects.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir urged the public to play their part in making Azad Kashmir green and envi-



ronmentally sustainable by planting more and more trees.

He directed the officers of the Forest Department to take all necessary steps to make the national tree plantation campaign during the rainy season a success.

The Prime Minister directed that all officers and officials should play their role in providing information regarding the tree plantation campaign.

On this occasion, Secretary Forest Chaudhry Farid, Secretary Education Colleges Ansar Yaqub, Secretary Law Arshad Qureshi, Secretary Schools Qazi Inayat, Secretary Electricity Muhammad Rakib, Area Forestry Director Malik Asad, Chief Development Director Raja Zahid Hussain, Project Director Dr. Zakir, Forestry Director Khizr Gilani, Atiq Shirazi, forest rangers and other staff were also present. On this occasion, Secretary Forest Chaudhry Farid presented a shield to the Prime Minister, while the forest rangers thanked the Prime Minister for the announcement of the permanent status of the rangers and garlanded him.

Pakistan must keep the door of diplomacy open to prevent a wider regional war: Masood Khan

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD.: Despite the escalating conflict between Iran and the United States, diplomacy remains the only viable path to preventing a wider regional war, said Sardar Masood Khan, Former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China and the United Nations, and former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He stressed that Pakistan, alongside Qatar, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Egypt, must continue facilitating dialogue to create conditions for de-escalation and a peaceful settlement of the crisis.

Speaking in a television interview on regional developments, Sardar Masood Khan observed that the latest escalation has entered a far more dangerous phase, with attacks increasingly targeting civilian and critical infrastructure instead of purely military installations. He warned that such actions would deepen humanitarian suffering, destabilize the wider Middle East and inflict severe damage on regional and global economic stability.

Sardar Masood Khan urged Pakistan to continue pursuing proactive diplomacy while safeguarding regional stability. He emphasized that dialogue, constitutional governance and peaceful engagement remain the most effective instruments for resolving conflicts, protecting national interests and promoting lasting peace across South Asia and the Middle East.



ACE Toba Tek Singh vows crackdown on corrupt public officials

 **Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Toba Tek Singh has intensified operations against corrupt officials across the district, following the vision of DG ACE Punjab Sohail Zafar Chatttha and directives of Regional Director Faisalabad Khalid Masood Farooqa.

Circle Officer ACE Toba Tek Singh Hafiz Farooq Saeed, with his team, is conducting continuous operations on corruption complaints in various government departments. In a recent raid, a Patwari was allegedly caught red-handed while accepting a bribe. A case was registered and legal proceedings were initiated.

Sources said Saeed has previously arrested several officials from different departments while allegedly taking bribes. Cases were registered under anti-corruption laws and the accused were produced in competent courts.

Regional Director Khalid Masood Farooqa has directed ACE officers in Faisalabad Division to strictly enforce zero tolerance against bribery, abuse of authority, record tampering, and financial loss to the national exchequer.

ACE Toba Tek Singh stated that complaints are being thoroughly investigated, and immediate raids are conducted once evidence is collected. Citizens have appreciated the campaign, expressing hope it will promote transparency, merit, accountability and rule of law in government institutions.



Preparation of Samosa patti

RAWALPINDI: Workers prepares samosa patti on a huge tawa, rolling the dough by hand step by step, at Kashmiri Bazaar area.



Photo: Online

Chief Election Commissioner Visits Poll Training Center, Donates Rs 1 Lakh to College

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice (ret'd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal on Wednesday visited the training center for presiding officers at Government Model Science College Muzaffarabad. On this occasion, he presented a check of Rs 1 lakh to the Principal of the institution, Professor Shagufta Bukhari, on his behalf, after drawing attention to the needs of the college and assur-



ing her of continued support for the betterment of the college. The Chief Election Commissioner appreciated the steps taken by the Principal for the betterment of the college. On this occasion, he also planted a sapling in the premises of the institution along with Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan, Judge Election Tribunal Liaquat Ali Khan, Returning Officer Sardar Ghazanfar Khan, Principal Model Science College Professor Shagufta Bukhari and college staff.

CEC AJK Urges Presiding Officers to Ensure Free, Transparent Elections

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner AJK Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, along with Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan, visited training centers for Presiding Officers and addressed their orientation session in Muzaffarabad. "Your Role is Key to Credible Elections"

Speaking to officers, the CEC said Presiding Officers play a vital role in conducting free, transparent and impartial elections for the AJK Legislative Assembly. He called conducting fair polls a challenge for the Election Commission and urged officers to perform duties with honesty and perseverance. "You are the backbone of the state system. The government for the next five



years will be in your hands," he said, adding officers must remain loyal only to the state and have no affiliation with any party or candidate. He stressed treating election duty as a religious responsibility. Three-Phase Polls, Security Assured

Mughal said the election process has been divided into three phases to ensure safety of officials and voters. Pakistan Army, police and Quick Response Force will be deployed for security. He vowed the Commission will ensure protection for Presiding Officers and peaceful polls despite attempts to disrupt them. Other speakers included Additional District & Sessions Judge Chaudhry Munir Hussain, ROs Sardar Ghazanfar Khan and Aftab Tariq Mir, and Judge Election Tribunal Liaquat Ali Khan.

Sundas Foundation launches Pakistan's first gene therapy center for thalassemia



 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Sundas Foundation, in collaboration with the Global Thalassaemia Foundation (UK), has announced Pakistan's first Gene Therapy Center of Excellence, introducing advanced CRISPR-Cas9 gene editing technology for the permanent treatment of Thalassemia Major.

The initiative marks the most significant step against Thalassemia in Pakistan. For the first time, a patient's own stem cells will be genetically corrected to naturally produce healthy hemoglobin. International clinical research shows nearly 89% of patients can achieve long-term independence from regular blood transfusions.

Pakistan has approx. 15 million carriers and over 100,000 children living with Thalassemia Major, with about 9,000 new cases born each year.

The Foundation is also launching Pakistan's first _Labs on Wheels_ — mobile genetic screening labs operating in Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad and AJK. They will provide doorstep carrier screening and genetic counseling to reduce new cases by over 90% through early detection.

A National Thalassemia Registry will also be established to build a genetic database, support collaboration with pharmaceutical companies, and enable participation in global clinical trials.

For three decades Sundas Foundation has provided transfusions and care. The new center aims to move from management to permanent treatment and a _Thalassemia-Free Pakistan_.

HEC completes quality assurance review of computing programmes across KP varsities

ISLAMABAD: A comprehensive Quality Assurance (QA) Review of Computing Programmes offered by public and private universities across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has been successfully conducted in line with the directives of the Prime Minister, aimed at strengthening the quality, relevance, and effectiveness of higher education in Pakistan.

The review covered computing-related academic programmes offered by different institutions of the province, including University of Technology, Nowshera; Northern University, Nowshera; Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan; Women University Mardan; University of Buner; University of Swabi; Women University Swabi; Sarhad University of Science and Information Technology; The University of Agriculture Peshawar; Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University (SBBWU) Peshawar; Brains Institute; University of Lakki Marwat; Gomal University; Khushal Khan Khattak University; and FATA University.

The review was undertaken to assess programme-level practices against recognised quality assurance benchmarks and to identify opportunities for continuous improvement in computing education, said a news release issued here.

The evaluation was conducted against eight quality standards, such as Programme Mission, Objectives and Outcomes; Curriculum Design and Organisation; Subject-Specific Facilities; Student Advising and Counselling; Teaching Faculty and Staff; Institutional Policies and Process Control; Institutional Support and Facilities; and, Institutional General Requirements.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:34 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:10 pm
Maghrib 7:16 pm
Isha 8:54 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

Cost Pressures Hit Record High in Q2, Accountant Confidence Remains Fragile

News Desk

LAHORE: Global cost pressures surged in Q2 2026 amid Middle East conflict fallout, according to the ACCA and IMA Global Economic Conditions Survey. Over 75% of accountants reported higher operating costs, topping the previous record after Russia's Ukraine invasion. For CFOs, 83% faced increased costs, up 20+ points from Q1 and near 2022-2023 peaks, driven by soaring commodity prices and supply chain disruptions. Despite this, accountant confidence recovered slightly from a near-record low in Q1, reflecting global economic resilience and hopes for conflict resolution. However, New Orders, Capex and Employment indices fell, signaling slower growth due to caution, inflation and tight monetary policy. Economic pressures topped risk concerns at 22%, ahead of geopolitics at 20% and cybersecurity at 14%. AI was cited for value and cyber resilience. ACCA and IMA leaders warned that renewed hostilities or energy spikes could derail growth in H2 2026.

Pakistan Navy Chief becomes first to address IISS in Landmark UK Visit

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf concluded an official visit to the United Kingdom, holding high-level meetings with British defence, maritime and strategic leaders to strengthen bilateral cooperation in maritime security and defence.

A key highlight of the visit was Admiral Ashraf's address at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS) in London, where he spoke on Indian Ocean security and the need for a regional maritime security framework. According to the Pakistan Navy, he is the first Pakistan Navy Chief to deliver a lecture at the prestigious institution.

During the visit, Admiral Ashraf met senior officials of the Royal Navy, the UK



Ministry of Defence, the Commander of NATO Allied Maritime Command, and the Commandant of the Royal College of Defence Studies (RCDS). Discussions focused on professional cooperation, maritime security, and strategic affairs.

The naval chief also visited the Nautical Institute and held talks with representatives of the Lloyd's Market Association and the Joint War Committee on maritime insurance, regional security, and developments in the Indian Ocean.

Admiral Ashraf attended the Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT) at RAF Fairford, where he interacted with senior military leaders and defence industry representatives. He also visited the Pakistan High Commission in London to discuss ways to further strengthen Pakistan-UK defence and maritime relations.

The Pakistan Navy said the visit underscored its commitment to international maritime cooperation and reinforced longstanding defence ties between Pakistan and the United Kingdom.

Cleaning

ISLAMABAD: Following the hundreds of fish were seen floating near Rawal Dam on 19 July 2026, a volunteer pick dead fish at the bank of Rawal Lake during the Capital Development Authority (CDA)'s Rawal Lake Cleanses Drive, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

CM Maryam Nawaz reaffirms commitment to economically empower rural women

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has launched the Free Livestock Programme aimed at promoting the economic empowerment of rural women under her vision of sustainable rural development.

Acting on the chief minister's directives, the distribution of free livestock has commenced for eligible rural women in the first phase across 13 districts of Punjab. The programme covers Multan, Rahim Yar Khan, Taunsa, Bahawalnagar, Khanewal, Vehari, Lodhran, Dera Ghazi Khan, Muzaffargarh, Rajanpur, Layyah, Kot Addu, and Bahawalpur.

Under the initiative, divorced and widowed rural women up to the age of 55 years will be eligible to receive free livestock. Applicants must have their marital status verified by the Punjab Social Protection Authority (PSPA). Women who have already received live-



stock under any government scheme during the past five years will not be eligible to apply again.

To facilitate applicants, Chief Minister Facilitation Desks have been

established at nearby veterinary hospitals and animal health centres. Applications can also be submitted online through the official portal: attrw.punjab.gov.pk.

LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum Inaugurates Ladies' Bar Room, e-Library in Attock



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Chief Justice Lahore High Court Justice Aalia Neelum inaugurated a newly constructed Ladies' Bar Room and a state-of-the-art e-Library at the District Bar Association Attock, highlighting the judiciary's commitment to better facilities for lawyers and modern legal resources.

Accompanied by LHC Justice Sadaqat Ali Khan, District & Sessions Judge Attock Ali Zulfarnain Awan and senior judicial officers, the Chief Justice first met judges to review judicial affairs and administration of justice.

At the Bar, she was received by District Bar President Malik Rab Nawaz Hayat Bilal, Punjab Bar Council member Sardar Tauseef Ahmad Khan, SC Advocate Sheikh Ahsanuddin, former presidents Abdullah S. Awan and Advocate Rizwana Raja, and other legal fraternity members.

Justice Neelum formally inaugurated the Ladies' Bar Room to support women practitioners and the e-Library equipped with modern legal research tools. She interacted with women lawyers on professional challenges and the need for an inclusive environment, and offered prayers for the facilities.

Addressing the Bar, she described law as a noble profession requiring dedication, integrity, honesty and hard work — values essential for public trust and excellence. The event was attended by bar office-bearers, senior advocates, and women lawyers.

Over 200 Volunteers Join Rawal Dam Cleanliness Drive, 2 Tons of Waste Collected

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: CDA and MCI, in collaboration with Jazz World, organized a special cleanliness drive at Rawal Dam under the direction of the CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad.

The drive was led by Chief Officer MCI Dr. Anum Fatima. Over 200 volunteers from CDA, MCI, NGOs, students and civil society participated enthusiastically.

During the campaign, volunteers collected 80 bags of garbage and removed approximately 2 tons of solid waste from the dam surroundings. Dr. Fatima said the drive aimed to promote environmental protection and responsible waste disposal. She added that CDA and MCI, with the Punjab Government, are working on sustainable measures including a wastewater treatment plant to stop polluted water entering Rawal Dam.

She urged citizens to avoid dumping garbage in nullahs from Bhara Kahu and Murree, key pollution sources. CDA and MCI appreciated all partners and pledged more such efforts for a cleaner, greener Islamabad.

Seminar on Pakistan Army Martyrs and National Stability Held at Osmania University Razaabad



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A seminar on the martyrs of Pakistan Army and the stability of Pakistan was held at Osmania University Razaabad under the auspices of Pakistan Ulama Council (WIZIH).

Chief guest Allama Mushtaq Ahmed Kambho Mohammadi Maulai, Chairman WIZIH, said the martyrs of Pakistan Army are "the crown of our heads" and insulting them is unacceptable. He added that Pakistan was created in the name of Islam and the Pakistan Army and security institutions are the pride of the nation. "Those who insult our martyrs are not patriots. We stand as a leaden wall against those who conspire against Pakistan and the Army," he said.

Central Deputy General Secretary Allama Tahirul Hassan said the Army and security institutions have foiled every conspiracy, whether of the Khawarij or external actors. "The martyrs who defended our homeland are the capital and pride of the entire nation. If we sleep in peace today, it is because of their sacrifices," he said, urging those who insult martyrs to apologize to the nation and heirs.

Speakers including Qari Yasin Zafar, Mufti Nasrullah Aziz, Maulana Sikandar Hayat Zaki and others said national interest, state institutions and dignity of martyrs will be prioritized at all costs. They pledged to stand with the Pakistan Army, security institutions and police, and to eliminate any voice raised against the homeland.

Sindh to Launch Multiple Insurance Schemes with Private Sector, CM Tells 1st Intl' Insurance Conference

News Desk

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah said the provincial government is working with the insurance industry to introduce multiple schemes in collaboration with the private sector to expand financial protection and social safety nets.

Addressing the 1st IAP & PSOA International Insurance Conference 2026 as chief guest,

he said Sindh was first in Pakistan to introduce mandatory third-party motor vehicle insurance. It provides Rs700,000 compensation for death and Rs500,000 for permanent disability from road accidents.

The government is also developing a scheme to provide Rs100,000 accidental death coverage for every resident aged 18 and above. Additional initiatives in health and agriculture insurance are planned to extend

welfare to Sindh's people. The CM cited supportive policies, including tax reduction and budget allocation for premiums. PM's Coordinator on Commerce Rana Ahsan Afzal Khan said agricultural financing schemes are being upgraded and suggested micro digital insurance via mobile users to expand outreach. He proposed a joint committee to address legal and regulatory bottlenecks.

Adviser to Finance Adnan Pasha noted that doubling insurance penetration to 2% of GDP could generate billions in economic activity. IAP Chairman Shoaib Javed Hussain said Pakistan's insurance-to-GDP ratio is 0.9% vs 4% regionally, calling it an untapped opportunity.

Over 500 executives and experts attended the Karachi conference themed "Reimagining Pakistan's Resilience".



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408

Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com

Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

Affordable Fertilizer: The Foundation of Pakistan's Food Security

Agriculture remains the backbone of Pakistan's economy, contributing significantly to the country's GDP, employment, and food security. At a time when farmers are grappling with rising production costs, climate-related challenges, and market uncertainties, ensuring the timely availability of fertilizers at affordable prices is not merely an agricultural issue—it is a national priority. The recent meeting chaired by Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, alongside Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Shah, reflects the government's recognition of this critical challenge.

The assurance that there is no shortage of fertilizers in the country is an encouraging development. Reports of scarcity often trigger panic buying, hoarding, and artificial price hikes, placing unnecessary financial pressure on farmers. The government's confirmation that fertilizer manufacturing plants are operating normally and that sufficient stocks are available should help restore confidence among growers preparing for the upcoming crop season.

However, availability alone is not enough. The real concern for farmers is affordability. Fertilizer prices have risen sharply over recent years, significantly increasing cultivation costs and reducing profit margins. By urging fertilizer companies to lower urea prices, the federal government has taken a positive step toward easing the financial burden on farmers. Such efforts must continue through constructive dialogue with manufacturers while ensuring that price reductions are sustainable and do not disrupt production.

Equally important is the coordination between the federal and provincial governments. Agriculture is a shared responsibility, and effective cooperation is essential to ensure smooth distribution, eliminate supply bottlenecks, and prevent market manipulation. The commitment by the Punjab government to work closely with the federation demonstrates the collaborative approach needed to safeguard farmers' interests across the country.

At the same time, stronger regulatory oversight is necessary to curb hoarding, black marketing, and profiteering, particularly during peak sowing seasons. Digital monitoring of fertilizer stocks, transparent distribution systems, and strict enforcement against illegal practices can help ensure that subsidies and market benefits reach genuine farmers rather than intermediaries.

Looking beyond the immediate season, Pakistan must adopt a long-term strategy for agricultural sustainability. Promoting balanced fertilizer use, encouraging soil testing, investing in research, and supporting modern farming practices will improve productivity while reducing unnecessary input costs. Farmer awareness programs can also play an important role in enhancing fertilizer efficiency and environmental sustainability.

Ultimately, affordable fertilizer is more than an input for farming—it is an investment in national food security, rural prosperity, and economic stability. If the government's commitments are backed by consistent implementation, transparent market regulation, and continued cooperation among all stakeholders, Pakistan's farmers will be better equipped to increase productivity, strengthen food supplies, and contribute to sustainable economic growth.

Empowering Punjab's Youth with Modern Skills

Pakistan, particularly Punjab, is currently at a unique population advantage due to its large youth population. Unfortunately, this valuable human capital has not been effectively connected with modern technology, research, and local industry. Most young people still rely on traditional apprenticeships, substandard workshops, or limited vocational institutions where they are taught only repair and installation skills rather than product design, manufacturing, research, and innovation. As a result, Pakistan imports billions of dollars' worth of electronic, solar, electrical, and mechanical components every year, causing a significant outflow of foreign exchange while leaving domestic industries unable to compete globally.

Although Punjab has institutions such as the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA), the Punjab Vocational Training Council (PVTC), and government polytechnic colleges, their curricula and laboratory facilities are not fully aligned with the rapidly evolving needs of modern industry. The world is moving towards artificial intelligence (AI), robotics, the Internet of Things (IoT), embedded systems, 3D printing, CNC machining, electric vehicles, lithium battery technology, and advanced solar manufacturing. In contrast, many of our training institutions continue to focus on conventional technical skills. Consequently,

local industries remain dependent on imported components instead of manufacturing high-quality products domestically.

The solar energy sector is one of the fastest-growing industries worldwide. However, most of the solar panels, inverters, MPPT and PWM charge controllers, battery management systems (BMS), lithium batteries, smart energy meters, Wi-Fi monitoring devices, power electronics, control circuits, MOSFETs, IGBT modules, transformers, inductors, heat sinks, circuit breakers, MC4 connectors, mounting structures, and numerous other essential components used in Pakistan are imported. If these products and their components were manufactured locally, Pakistan could substantially reduce imports while creating a new industrial economy.

Similarly, home-based manufacturing and micro-industries have become key pillars of modern economies. In many countries, thousands of small manufacturing units produce plastic housings, printed circuit boards (PCBs), resistors, capacitors, diodes, transistors, integrated circuits (ICs), wiring harnesses, switches, plugs, motors, bearings, gears, connectors, rubber seals, and many other components for larger industries. Pakistan also has the potential to establish

thousands of such businesses, provided that young people receive practical training in advanced manufacturing, product design, prototyping, and industrial research.

A review of the world's most successful economies including China, Germany, South Korea, Japan, and Türkiye shows that their industrial growth was built not only on vocational education but also on strong collaboration between research institutions, industry, and educational organizations. Young people in these countries are not merely trained to operate machines; they are encouraged to invent new products, practice reverse engineering, obtain patents, establish startups, and compete in international markets. Punjab can successfully adopt a similar model.

The Government of Punjab should establish a Centre for Innovation, Research and Advanced Technology (CIRAT) in every division. These centers should integrate solar manufacturing, electronics, robotics, 3D printing, PCB design, CNC machining, injection molding, battery assembly, product testing, incubation centers, patent and innovation cells, and startup support under one roof. The objective should not merely be to award certificates but to enable young entrepreneurs to design, manufacture, and commercialize their own products.

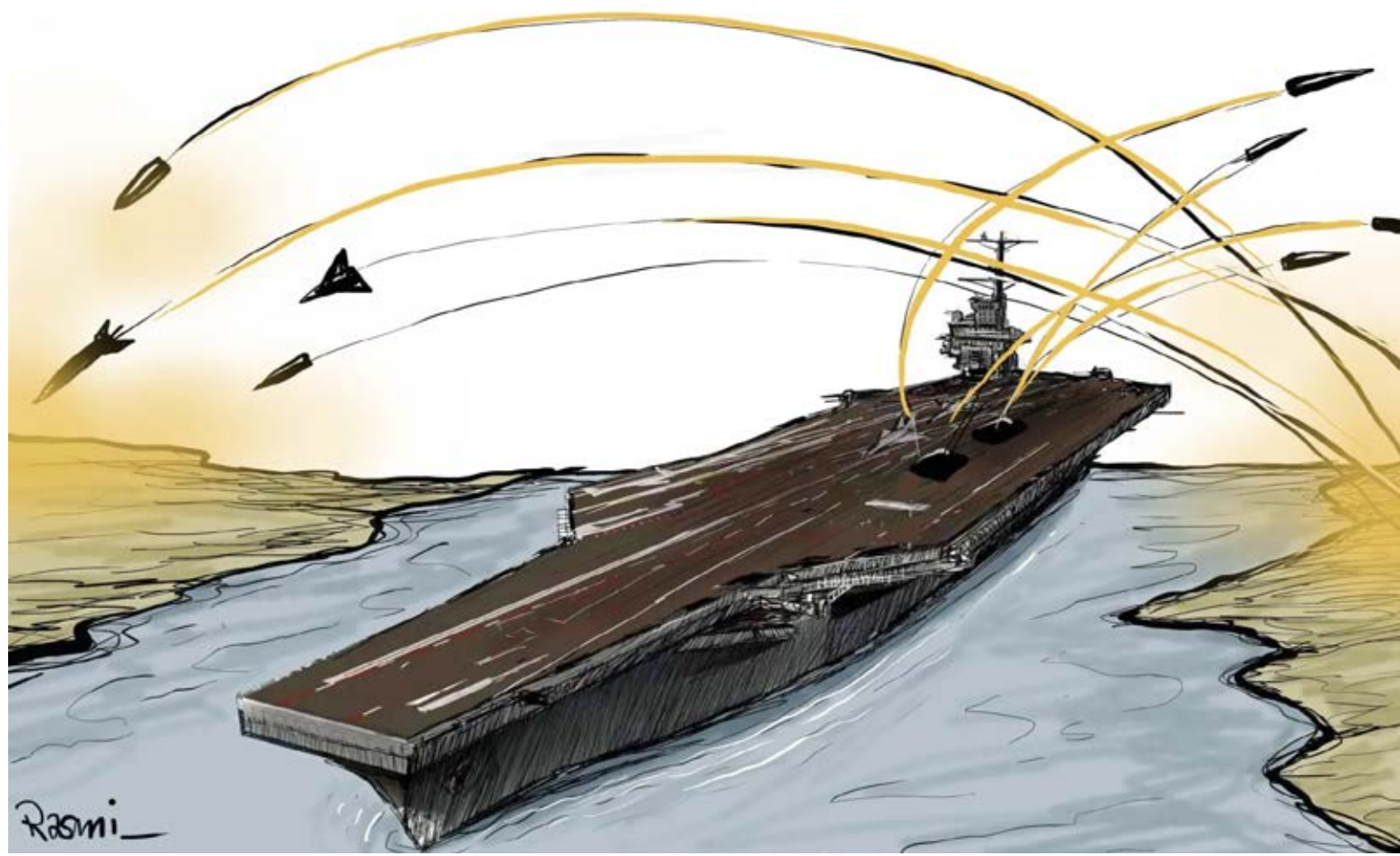
cialize their own products.

The government should also promote public-private partnerships (PPP) by involving industries directly in these centers. The government should provide infrastructure, buildings, qualified instructors, and research facilities, while private industries contribute advanced machinery, internships, industrial mentoring, and market access. Interest-free or low-interest loans, startup funds, technology vouchers, and export support programs should be introduced so that young people become job creators rather than job seekers.

There is also an urgent need to modernize the curricula of TEVTA, PVTC, and polytechnic institutions in accordance with international industrial standards. Subjects such as solar electronics, PCB design, Surface Mount Technology (SMT), embedded systems, Arduino, Raspberry Pi, PLC automation, EV charger manufacturing, electric bike controllers, lithium battery assembly, industrial automation, and artificial intelligence should become integral parts of technical education. Strong partnerships should also be established between universities, industries, and research organizations so that academic research is transformed into commercial products, patents, and export opportunities rather than remaining confined to scholarly publications.

The government should further encourage domestic manufacturing by

Continued on Page 7



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

Glacier Melting and Water Availability in Pakistan

Pakistan faces an unprecedented environmental and water security crisis as its glaciers continue to melt at alarming rates due to climate change. The Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Himalayan mountain ranges contain some of the world's largest concentrations of glaciers outside the Polar Regions, collectively storing vast quantities of freshwater that sustains the livelihoods of over 200 million Pakistanis.

These glaciers feed the Indus River system, which supplies water for agriculture, hydropower generation, and domestic consumption across the nation. However, accelerating glacial retreat threatens the long-term availability of water resources that Pakistan depends upon for economic development and survival. The relationship between glacier melting and water availability in Pakistan, exploring the causes of glacial retreat, its current impacts on water resources and the potential consequences for the nation's future.

Pakistan contains approximately 7,253 glaciers covering an area of roughly 13,680 square kilometers, making it the largest reservoir of ice outside the Polar Regions. The Indus River basin, which depends heavily on glacial meltwater, supports agriculture on approximately 16.2 million hectares of irrigated land and provides water to nearly 180 million people.

The Karakoram Range alone contains over 3,000 glaciers, including the Siachen Glacier, the world's longest glacier outside the Polar Regions, and the Baltoro Glacier. These ice masses act as natural water towers, storing precipitation as snow and ice during winter months and releasing it gradually during

the warmer months when water demand is highest. This natural water storage mechanism has historically allowed Pakistan to balance seasonal water availability and support a thriving agricultural economy that comprises approximately 18.5% of the nation's GDP and employs roughly 43% of the workforce.

The hydrological significance of glaciers extends beyond immediate water supply. The cold, relatively pure meltwater from glaciers flows into major river systems, including the Indus, Sutlej, and Chenab rivers, which form the backbone of Pakistan's Indus Basin Irrigation System. This system, developed during the British colonial period and expanded in the decades following independence, represents one of the world's largest coordinated irrigation networks. The system's functionality depends critically on the timing and volume of water flows, with glacial melt playing a crucial role in maintaining adequate supplies during the dry season when precipitation is minimal.

Scientific evidence demonstrates that Pakistan's glaciers are retreating at an accelerating pace, most glaciers in the Himalayas and Hindu Kush have been in continuous retreat since the late 19th century, with the rate of retreat intensifying significantly since the 1990s. Temperature increases in the mountain regions have exceeded the global average warming trend, a phenomenon known as high-mountain amplification. This amplified warming effect is particularly pronounced in Pakistan's northern mountain ranges, where temperatures have increased by approximately 0.3°C per decade, roughly double the global average.

The Siachen Glacier, despite being located

in a heavily glaciated region, has experienced a retreat of several hundred meters over the past two decades. Similarly, the Baltoro Glacier and numerous smaller glaciers throughout the Karakoram, Hindu Kush, and Himalayan ranges show consistent evidence of mass loss. Remote sensing data and field measurements have documented that many glaciers that extended across multiple kilometers just fifty years ago have now fragmented into smaller segments separated by exposed rock and moraines. Some glaciers have completely disappeared entirely, leaving behind proglacial lakes that present new hydrological and hazard challenges.

The acceleration of glacier melt is driven by multiple factors working in combination. Rising atmospheric temperatures remain the primary driver, as increased heat melts glacier surfaces during the ablation season. Reduced precipitation, particularly in winter months, limits the accumulation of new snow and ice that would otherwise offset melting losses. Additionally, dark-colored dust and soot particles, transported from urban and industrial areas and deposited on glacier surfaces, reduce the albedo or reflectivity of glaciers, causing them to absorb more solar radiation and melt more rapidly. Anthropogenic black carbon emissions from fossil fuel combustion and biomass burning represent a significant contributor to accelerated glacier melting in the Hindu Kush-Karakoram-Himalayan region.

The relationship between glacier melting and water availability in Pakistan presents a complex paradox in the short to medium term. As glaciers retreat, the increased rate of meltwater release actually augments water availability in many river basins. This phenomenon, known as peak water, represents a transitional period during which accelerated melting

Continued on Page 7

Science and Technology Diplomacy Importance of Foreign Policy of Pakistan in the Contemporary World

There are numerous changes in the field of international relations. Unlike military strength and economic stability that were among the most influential components in the past, now scientific innovations play an equally important role in establishing power. Artificial intelligence, quantum computing, biotechnology, cybersecurity, space exploration, and digital technologies determine the dynamics of international politics. In these conditions, science and technology diplomacy becomes one of the most essential elements of foreign policy.

Science and technology diplomacy is an activity aimed at using scientific knowledge and cooperation in the sphere of technologies to enhance international relations and solve global issues. There are three elements of science and technology diplomacy. Firstly, it involves scientific cooperation of researchers from different countries within the framework of diplomatic relations. Secondly, scientific information is used as the basis for decision-making in terms of climate change, public health, food security, and environmental protection. Thirdly, science and technology cooperation can serve as a tool to reconcile the countries with worsening political relations.

The COVID-19 crisis has shown us the significance of scientific collaboration and has led to sharing of information, development of vaccines, saving of millions of lives, and much more. Similarly, tackling climate change at the global level

needs a great deal of science and technology. Cooperation between the scientists and diplomats will be necessary in order to arrive at an agreement concerning carbon emissions, renewable energy sources, and climate change adaptations.

There has been a growing role of technological rivalry in the politics of the contemporary world. The US and China are engaged in competing with each other in fields such as artificial intelligence, production of semiconductors, quantum technologies, and communication technologies. Technology has become a matter of security apart from being an economic power.

Furthermore, the application of science in diplomacy to achieve cooperation even against political differences can also be seen through the collaborative science projects that are carried out in science by nations having strategic differences. This is an explicit illustration that science is the forum of discussion when there is no diplomatic discussion between countries. In today's world, there is much geopolitical competition; therefore, scientific diplomacy has become one of the very few forums of discussion between nations.

Science and technology diplomacy is very important for the developing nations as this can help them in accessing networks, technology, investment, expertise and innovative environment for sustainable development. Those countries which support their scientific strengths are

Continued on Page 7

Chairman Senate reaffirms strong Pakistan-Azerbaijan ties in farewell meeting with Ambassador

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani paid tribute to Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan, Khizr Farhadov, during a farewell meeting, praising his role in strengthening the longstanding friendship and strategic partnership between the two countries.

Gilani commended the ambassador's efforts to enhance political, parliamentary, economic, and people-to-people relations, describing Pakistan-Azerbaijan ties as being founded on mutual trust, shared values, and consistent support on key national issues. He



welcomed the progress achieved through recent high-level exchanges, including Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev's visit to Pakistan and the Pakistani Prime Minister's visits to Baku.

The Chairman Senate emphasized the importance of expanding parliamentary cooperation and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to achieving the agreed US\$2 billion investment target. He also welcomed Azerbaijan's decision to eliminate import duties on Pakistani rice by 2027 and called for stronger collaboration in energy, information technology, agriculture, health-care, artificial intelligence, innovation, and tourism.

Gilani appreciated the launch of direct flights and the ASAN visa program, saying these initiatives would boost tourism, trade, and cultural exchanges. Reiterating Pakistan's support for Azerbaijan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, he thanked Azerbaijan for its continued backing of Pakistan's position on the Jammu and Kashmir issue.

Ambassador Khizr Farhadov expressed gratitude for the hospitality extended during his tenure and reaffirmed Azerbaijan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation with Pakistan.

Turkmenistan Intensifies Preparations for 35th Independence Anniversary, Khalk Maslakhaty Meeting

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Presidium of the Khalk Maslakhaty of Turkmenistan has reviewed extensive preparations for the country's 35th Independence Day celebrations and the upcoming meeting of the Khalk Maslakhaty, reaffirming its commitment to ensuring the successful organization of these landmark national events. The meeting, chaired by the National Leader of the Turkmen people and Chairman of the Khalk Maslakhaty, Hero-Arkadag, focused on implementing directives issued by President Serdar Berdimuhamedov regarding the celebrations and the national forum.

Addressing the meeting, Hero-Arkadag described the Independence Day celebrations as a historic occasion reflecting Turkmenistan's sovereignty, neutrality, and continued socio-economic progress. He emphasized that the Khalk Maslakhaty plays a central role in shaping the country's future development and ensuring coordi-

nated efforts among government institutions. Preparations include organizing the national forum, recognizing distinguished citizens with state awards and honorary titles, and implementing commemorative activities throughout the country.

Participants discussed the implementation of key national development strategies, including the "Revival of the New Epoch of the Powerful State" National Program (2022-2052) and the Presidential Program for Socio-Economic Development (2022-2028). The meeting stressed maintaining economic stability, attracting investment, creating employment opportunities, strengthening healthcare, improving education, and modernizing key sectors such as oil and gas, agriculture, energy, textiles, construction, and the pharmaceutical industry. Food security and youth development were also identified as national priorities.

Special attention was given to Turkmenistan's internationally recog-

nized policy of permanent neutrality. Officials highlighted the country's expanding diplomatic relations across Europe, Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia, as well as its constructive cooperation with international organizations. The leadership reaffirmed that Turkmenistan's foreign policy, based on peaceful coexistence, good-neighborly relations, and international cooperation, continues to strengthen regional and global peace and sustainable development. Hero-Arkadag noted that Turkmenistan's neutral status has been recognized three times through resolutions adopted by the United Nations General Assembly.

The Presidium also reviewed preparations for a series of national and international events being organized under the theme "Independent Neutral Turkmenistan - The Homeland of Purposeful Winged Horses." Considerable emphasis was placed on promoting the country's renowned Akhal-Teke horses through exhibi-

tions, equestrian competitions, scientific conferences, and cultural activities both at home and abroad. Officials highlighted the recent international achievements of Turkmen equestrians and the growing global recognition of Turkmen horse-breeding traditions.

Members of the Cabinet, Parliament (Mejlis), regional authorities, political parties, public organizations, and security institutions presented progress reports on organizational, logistical, and security arrangements for the forthcoming Khalk Maslakhaty meeting. They assured the leadership that all necessary administrative, technical, and operational measures would be completed to ensure the successful conduct of the national forum. The meeting also emphasized strengthening public awareness through educational programs, media outreach, and youth engagement activities highlighting the historical and political significance of the Khalk Maslakhaty.

The Presidium concluded by



formally approving resolutions to convene the next meeting of the Khalk Maslakhaty, determining its date and venue, and establishing an organizing committee to oversee all preparations. Hero-Arkadag called on all institutions to work in close coordination

to ensure the successful organization of the historic event, reaffirming that the ultimate objective remains the continued socio-economic development of Turkmenistan, the strengthening of national unity, and the well-being of its people.

Federal Minister for Human Rights calls for strengthening scientific and educational cooperation at OIC-COMSTECH Forum

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar Calls for Strengthening Education, Scientific Research and Innovation Across the Muslim World at COMSTECH Forum

Federal Minister for Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, today called for strengthening education, scientific research and innovation across the Muslim world, describing them as essential pillars of human rights, sustainable development and shared prosperity, while addressing the Inter-Islamic Forum for the Advancement of Education, Scientific Research and Innovation, organised by OIC-COMSTECH at its Secretariat in Islamabad.

The Forum brought together representatives of OIC institutions, diplomats, vice chancellors, eminent scientists, scholars and delegates from OIC Member States to deliberate on strengthening cooperation in higher education, scientific research, technological innovation and knowledge-sharing across the Muslim world.

Welcoming the Federal Minister, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General of COMS-



TECH, congratulated Pakistan on the successful hosting of the 9th OIC Ministerial Conference on Women and on assuming its Chairmanship for the next two years. He highlighted Islam's rich intellectual heritage and the concept of "Ilm-un-Nafi" (beneficial knowledge), emphasizing that knowledge should serve humanity while reaffirming COMSTECH's commitment to expanding research collaboration, innovation and capacity-building across OIC Member States.

Addressing the Forum as the chief guest, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar commended COMSTECH for its significant contributions to scientific cooperation through scholarships, research collaborations, academic exchanges, capacity-building programmes and support for young scientists. He also

appreciated COMSTECH's educational support for scholars and students from Palestine, Yemen, Bangladesh, Africa and other countries facing exceptional challenges, describing these initiatives as a reflection of Islamic solidarity and cooperation.

H. E. Mohamed Adan Khalif, Governor of Mandera County; Kenya, H. E. Tuan Jaziri Alkaf, Senator of Malaysia and Chairman of MyProdigy Foundation Malaysia, Prof. Dr. Shahid Mahmud, Honorary Advisor, OIC-COMSTECH, Dr. Salma Noor, Founder and Patron of Dream Team CBO, and Vice Admiral (R) Abid Hameed HI(M), Rector, Bahria University also addressed the Forum. They emphasized the importance of strengthening academic partnerships, scientific research, innovation, institutional collaboration and youth empowerment to advance sustainable development across OIC Member States.

The Forum concluded with a vote of thanks by Mr. Murtaza Noor, Focal Person, Outreach, CCoE & Media, OIC-COMSTECH, followed by the presentation of a commemorative shield to the Chief Guest, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, and a group photograph of the distinguished participants.

AIOU Holds Seminar on Research Innovation and Global Opportunities for Academic Excellence

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized a one-day awareness seminar titled "Research Innovation and Global Opportunities for Academic Excellence" to familiarize students, researchers and faculty members with international opportunities in higher education, research, scholarships and global academic collaboration. The seminar was organized by the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) as part of the University's ongoing efforts to strengthen research culture and promote academic excellence.

The keynote speaker and resource person for the seminar was Prof. Dr. Waseem Haider of Central Michigan University, USA who shared valuable insights into the rapidly evolving global higher education landscape and the opportunities available to Pakistani students aspiring to pursue advanced studies abroad.

Addressing the participants, Prof. Dr. Waseem Haider highlighted the growing importance of research, innovation and international academic collaboration in today's knowledge-driven world. He explained



that technological advancements have significantly simplified access to leading universities worldwide, enabling students to explore admission requirements, scholarship opportunities, research programs and academic collaborations through digital platforms.

He informed the audience that Pakistani students have excellent prospects for pursuing graduate studies and research at renowned American universities. He noted that graduates holding a four-year bachelor's degree may qualify for direct admission to PhD programs at many U. S. institutions where they can benefit from merit-based full or partial scholarships, research assistantships and teaching assistantships.

The seminar also featured an interactive question-and-answer session, during which participants actively engaged with the speaker by raising

questions related to admissions, scholarship opportunities, research funding, academic requirements and career prospects in international universities. Prof. Dr. Haider responded comprehensively, offering practical guidance to aspiring researchers and students.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Akhtar Khan, Director of the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) said that the seminar was designed to equip young scholars with essential knowledge about international admissions, research funding mechanisms, scholarships and emerging global research trends. He stressed that such initiatives are instrumental in preparing students to seize international academic and research opportunities and contribute effectively to Pakistan's knowledge economy.

The event formed part of the University's ongoing academic engagement initiatives being carried out under the vision and leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood aimed at promoting research excellence, innovation and internationalization while creating greater awareness among students about emerging global academic opportunities.

PIEAS Graduates 270 in 12th Convocation, Celebrating Women's Rising Role in STEM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS University), under the auspices of the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), held its 12th Convocation at the Inam-ur-Rehman Auditorium on July 22, 2026. Chairman Board of Governors (BoG) PIEAS University and Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC), Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar, graced the ceremony as the chief guest and conferred degrees upon 270 graduates in various disciplines of engineering and applied sciences.

Degrees were awarded in Electrical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Materials and Metallurgy Engineering, Chemical Engineering, Physics, and Computer and Information Sciences.



The convocation was attended by Scientist Emeritus Dr. Inam-ur-Rehman

(SI), Members of the Commission, Director Generals, Directors, distin-

guished faculty members, graduates, and their families.

Addressing the convocation, Chairman BoG PIEAS University, Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar first expressed his pleasure that female graduates constituted a significant proportion of this year's graduating class, describing it as a reflection of the growing role of Pakistani women in science, engineering, and emerging technologies. He said their achievements demonstrate that the nation's daughters are making remarkable contributions to scientific advancement and are playing an increasingly important role in Pakistan's national development.

The Chairman further emphasized the importance of entrepreneurship and experience-based learning in shaping successful professional careers. He remarked, "Do not limit your ambi-

tions to seeking employment alone; aspire to become job creators through entrepreneurship."

Highlighting the role of science and technology in national development, Dr. Raja Ali Raza Anwar reaffirmed PAEC's commitment to strengthening higher education, advanced research, and human resource development through institutions such as PIEAS University. He said, "The future of Pakistan depends on the knowledge, character, and commitment of its young professionals. Wherever life takes you, serve your country with honesty, uphold its dignity, and become true ambassadors of Pakistan through your conduct." He stressed that the graduating students should firmly believe in excellence, integrity, and dignity in their professional careers.

Earlier, in her welcome address,

Rector PIEAS, Dr. Anila Usman, congratulated the graduating students and thanked the Chairman BoG and the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission for their continued support. She highlighted the outstanding employability and industry readiness of PIEAS graduates and noted that, in the recently released QS World University Rankings 2027, PIEAS ranked 3rd among Pakistani universities and significantly improved its global standing to 560th among the world's top universities.

She stated, "PIEAS remains committed to preparing future scientists and engineers through excellence in education, impactful research, and meaningful engagement with industry, enabling them to contribute effectively to Pakistan's scientific and technological progress."

Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
174,429.92	176,133.56
Day's High	Day's Low
176,255.64	174,104.06
Index Value	Change
17,249,237,011	−1703.64
Percentage	Time
−0.97%	22 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,716.97	+131.06
Percentage	Time
+1.24%	22 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,303.66	+79.02
Percentage	Time
+0.15%	22 Jul, 1:23 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,115.60	−116.59
Percentage	Time
−0.18%	22 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

UBL Announces

PKR 40 Billion

'Building

Pakistan's Future'

Nation-Building

Initiative



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: United Bank Limited (UBL), Pakistan's largest bank by deposits, announced three landmark initiatives worth up to PKR 40 billion, reinforcing its role in Pakistan's long-term economic and social development.

1. Agriculture: UBL is establishing a dedicated agricultural subsidiary with investment of up to PKR 8 billion. The platform will provide R&D support, tech-driven advisory, affordable financing, quality inputs, market access, and logistics to improve productivity, farm incomes, food security and export competitiveness.

2. Education: UBL committed PKR 10 billion to establish a university in Pakistan. Matched by an equal contribution from the Bestway Foundation, the combined PKR 20 billion project aims to become a centre of excellence for teaching, research and leadership.

3. Financial Sector Stability: UBL committed up to PKR 22 billion in capital to Khushhali Microfinance Bank (KMBL), which had negative equity of PKR 16.15 billion as of Dec 31, 2025. The injection aims to strengthen KMBL and broader financial market stability.

President & CEO Muhammad Jawaaid Iqbal said the initiatives reflect UBL's obligation to invest in education, financial stability and agriculture — key pillars for national progress. Collectively, the PKR 40 billion commitment underscores UBL's strategy of creating sustainable value beyond traditional banking and supporting inclusive, long-term growth.

Mian Zahid Hussain Welcomes

SBP's Revised SME Definition, Calls

for Uniform National Framework

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and Chairman FPCCI Policy Advisory Board, Mian Zahid Hussain, has welcomed the State Bank of Pakistan's revised definition of micro, small and medium enterprises (SMEs), describing it as a timely, business-friendly step that reflects the country's changing economic realities. He said the revised classification would enable more businesses to qualify for SME financing and banking facilities.

Under the revised definition, effective July 16, 2026, businesses with annual sales of up to Rs30 million will be classified as microenterprises, those with sales between Rs30 million and Rs400 million as small enterprises, and businesses with annual sales of up to Rs2 billion



as medium enterprises. SMEs operating for up to five years will also qualify as startups.

He noted that the revision would particularly benefit businesses whose turnover has increased due to inflation rather than actual expansion.

Mian Zahid clarified that the new classification does not guarantee automatic financing, as banks will continue to evaluate applications based on cash flow, repayment capacity, credit history, and overall financial health.

Citing State Bank data, he said SME financing stood at approximately Rs854 billion by the end of March 2026, accounting for only 7.63 percent of total private-sector financing, with around 312,355 SME borrowers, indicating significant potential for expanding credit to the sector.

He also appreciated the revised prudential regulations, which require complete financing applications to be processed within 15 working days while promoting digital applications,

credit scoring, technology-based assessments, and cash flow-based lending.

Mian Zahid Hussain pointed out that different SME definitions used by the State Bank of Pakistan, SMEDA, the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), and the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) create confusion for businesses seeking financing, tax incentives, and regulatory benefits. He urged all relevant institutions to adopt the SBP's revised turnover-based classification as the national standard, establish a central SME registry, and review the thresholds every three years. He said a unified SME framework would reduce compliance issues, improve official data, and make access to finance, tax concessions, government procurement, and development programmes more transparent and efficient.

Mismanagement

ISLAMABAD: A view of traffic jam on Faisal Avenue due to VIP movement in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Leaders Network Pakistan, Business

Line Host Inaugural Global Outlook

Exchange in Lahore



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Leaders Network Pakistan, in partnership with Business Line — an SAP Partner and technology and outsourcing company — hosted the inaugural 'Global Outlook Exchange', convening senior leaders from business, government, technology, diplomacy and the corporate sector to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook and growth opportunities.

Powered by Business Line, the exclusive forum featured a keynote by Dr. Salman Ahmed, Global Head of Macro & Strategic Asset Allocation at Fidelity International, on the global economic outlook, emerging market trends and structural reforms needed for Pakistan's sustainable long-term growth.

U. S. Consul General in Lahore Stetson Sanders said

the U. S. values its economic partnership with Pakistan and cited initiatives like the SelectUSA Investment Summit as opportunities to deepen trade, investment and business ties.

Business Line Pakistan CEO Nabeel Ahmed said lasting progress is driven by informed leadership and dialogue, adding the partnership aims to create a platform for leaders and innovators to shape the country's future.

Remarks were also delivered by Anwar Kabir, Founder of The Leaders Network Pakistan; Zafar Masud, President & CEO of The Bank of Punjab; and Zaki Ijaz, Regional Chairman & VP of FPCCI. Speakers stressed economic reforms, investment and private sector leadership for competitiveness.

The Exchange marks the start of an ongoing leadership platform by Business Line and The Leaders Network Pakistan.

FIA Raids Multan

Medicine Market,

Seizes Millions in

Fake Drugs

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Multan Zone conducted a major raid in the city's Medicine Market at Ghanta Ghar, seizing a large quantity of fake, unregistered and spurious medicines worth millions of rupees.

The operation was carried out on the directives of the Director FIA Multan Zone under the supervision of the Deputy Director. The team included SI Tahir Ausaf, ASI Masroor Ahmed, Constables Naeem Mirani and Faheem Khan.

During the raid, officials

searched Al Fareed Traders, where a substantial stock of counterfeit and unregistered pharmaceutical products was allegedly recovered.

The seized medicines were sealed on the spot in the presence of the Drug Inspector and other health authorities. Evidence has been taken into custody and legal proceedings have been initiated.

FIA officials said the crackdown against the manufacture, storage and sale of fake medicines will continue, reaffirming commitment to protect public health.

Industrialist Urges Punjab to Establish Modern

Technical Research and Skill Centers

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Chaudhry Zulfikar Ali Anjum, has urged the Punjab government to establish modern Technical Research and Skill Development Centers across the province to equip youth with industry-focused skills and strengthen the manufacturing sector.

Speaking on workforce development, Anjum said Punjab's young people have immense potential but often struggle to secure jobs due to a lack of practical training and exposure to modern industrial

technologies. He emphasized that academic qualifications alone are no longer enough, and hands-on technical education is essential to meet current industry demands.

Based on his experience in the industrial sector, Anjum noted that many graduates possess degrees but lack practical expertise, familiarity with advanced machinery, and industry-relevant training. He proposed that the new centers provide practical education in emerging fields such as solar energy, electronics, robotics, artificial intelligence (AI), electric vehicle technology, 3D printing, CNC machining,

product design, and local manufacturing.

He also called for public-private partnerships to establish world-class Skills, Research, and Innovation Centers in every division of Punjab, integrating research, startup incubation, prototype development, patent registration, and industry-linked training.

Anjum said strategic investment in technical education could transform Punjab into Pakistan's leading industrial hub while producing entrepreneurs, innovators, and skilled professionals capable of generating employment and boosting value-added exports.



The First World Championship for Akhal-Teke Horses to be held in the Netherlands

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: From 4 to 6 September 2026, the Peelbergen Equestrian Centre in the Kingdom of the Netherlands will host the First World Championship for Akhal-Teke Horses—a landmark international event dedicated to one of the world's oldest and most treasured horse breeds.

The Championship will bring together breeders, owners, equestrian experts, judges, and admirers of the Akhal-Teke horse from around the world, providing a unique platform for international cooperation and the promotion of this exceptional breed.

The Akhal-Teke horse, the national heritage and pride of Turkmen people,

has for centuries symbolized beauty, elegance, endurance, intelligence, and loyalty. Thanks to the consistent efforts of Turkmenistan in preserving and promoting this ancient breed, the Akhal-Teke horse has gained worldwide recognition as one of the finest horse breeds in the world.

The inaugural World Championship represents an important milestone in the international promotion of the Akhal-Teke breed and reflects the growing global appreciation for its unique qualities and historical significance.

One of the highlights of the event will be performances by the renowned "Galkynys" National Equestrian Games Group and artists of the State



Circus of Turkmenistan. A distinguished governmental and cultural delegation from Turkmenistan will



travel to the Netherlands to participate in the extensive program of events.

The three-day forum promises a comprehensive program extending well beyond sporting competitions.

A wide range of events will be held at the Peelbergen Equestrian Centre, including equestrian competitions, the traditional beauty contest featuring the finest representatives of the Akhal-Teke breed, an international scientific and practical conference devoted to the preservation, breeding, and promotion of Akhal-Teke horses, as well as a large-scale exhibition showcasing Turkmen culture, crafts, and traditions.

The event is expected to attract participants and visitors from numerous countries, strengthening international cooperation and contributing to the preservation and development of the priceless heritage of the Akhal-Teke horse.

UN Recognition Boosts Pakistan's Football Diplomacy and Social Impact

News Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's "Football for Mental Health Programme" has received recognition at the United Nations, marking a significant achievement for the country's sports diplomacy and reinforcing its positive image on the global stage. The recognition highlights Pakistan's growing contribution to youth development, mental well-being, and community empowerment through football.

Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President Syed Mohsen Gilani described the honour as an endorsement of Pakistan's ability to use football as a tool for social progress. He said the initiative reflects the country's commitment to innovation, social responsibility, and community development while promoting a positive international image.



Gilani emphasized that the programme underscores the importance

of mental health, noting that football can improve emotional well-being and strengthen communities by fostering inclusion and connection.

PFF Chief Operating Officer Muhammad Shahid Niaz Khokhar said the UN platform enabled Pakistan to engage with international football administrators, policymakers, development organizations, athletes, and youth leaders, creating opportunities for collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Officials said the recognition reflects the PFF's commitment to expanding football's role beyond competition to address social challenges. They expressed hope that the achievement would encourage greater international cooperation and support for similar initiatives while strengthening Pakistan's reputation as a constructive member of the global football community.

Karachi Win Men's Title, Hyderabad Crowned Women's Champions At All Sindh Sepaktakraw Championship 2026

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The All Sindh Sepaktakraw Championship 2026 concluded successfully at Hyderabad Club. The event was organized by Hyderabad Sepaktakraw Association in collaboration with Sindh Sepaktakraw Association, Sports Department Hyderabad, and Sindh Olympic Association.

Teams from all divisions across Sindh participated in the championship.

Semi-Final 1: Karachi defeated Hyderabad 15-12, 13-15, 15-11

- Second Semi-Final: Larkana



beat Mirpur Khas 15-10, 15-11.

Final: Karachi outplayed Larkana 15-10, 15-9 to win the Men's Championship title

Women's Event: Hyderabad

Emerge Champions:

First Semi-Final: Hyderabad defeated Karachi 15-12, 15-13.

Second Semi-Final: Mirpur Khas beat Larkana 15-8, 15-9

-Final: Hyderabad secured the Women's title with a 15-7,

15-12 victory over Mirpur Khas.

The Chief Guest of the closing ceremony was Deen Muhammad Keerio President of Hyderabad Sepaktakraw Association. He was accompanied by Dr. Muhammad Arif Hafeez, Chairman Sindh Sepaktakraw Association, Mr. Shabbir Ahmed, President, and Ms. Maryam Keerio District Sports Officer Hyderabad. Together they distributed trophies to the winning teams and individual awards to players.

Mr. Noushad Ahmed Khan, Secretary General of Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation,

addressed the ceremony and congratulated the organizers for hosting a successful event. He expressed hope that such events would continue to be held in Hyderabad in the future.

Other speakers at the ceremony included Mr. Deen Muhammad Keerio, Dr. Arif Hafeez, Shabbir Ahmed, Maryam Keerio, Muhammad Khalid, Dr. Dilip Kumar, and Humaira Rajput.

The championship was hailed as a major step towards promoting Sepaktakraw and youth sports development across Sindh.

Glacier Melting and Water Availability in Pakistan

Continued from Page 4

produces higher water flows than would occur under stable glacial conditions. For Pakistan, this has temporarily masked some of the effects of long-term climatic changes and has allowed continued agricultural expansion and economic development despite population growth.

However, this temporary increase in water availability masks underlying vulnerabilities. The timing of water availability has become increasingly unpredictable, with more intense melting

during heat waves creating flooding risks, while reduced glacial reserves threaten dry season flows. The 2010 Pakistan floods, which inundated approximately one-fifth of the country's land area and affected nearly 20 million people, were partially exacerbated by intense glacial melt combined with extreme monsoon rainfall. Similarly, the 2022 devastating floods that affected over 33 million people demonstrated the vulnerability of Pakistan's water systems to extreme hydrological events, many of which are influenced by altered glacial melt

patterns.

While the short-term impacts of glacier retreat have created transitional abundance, long-term projections paint a concerning picture. Climate models suggest that if current warming trends continue, Pakistan's glaciers could lose 50% to 80% of their current volume by the end of the 21st century. This projections are not merely speculative; they are based on well-established relationships between temperature and glacier mass balance, validated through decades of observational data. The consequences

of such extensive glacial loss would be catastrophic for Pakistan's water security.

Pakistan must pursue comprehensive domestic adaptation strategies including enhanced water storage infrastructure, improved agricultural efficiency, groundwater management, wastewater recycling and transboundary cooperation mechanisms. These adaptations require substantial institutional development and behavioral change across society.

The writer is a Post-Doctorate (Peace Education) at International Islamic University Islamabad

Science and Technology Diplomacy Importance of Foreign Policy of Pakistan in the Contemporary World

Continued from Page 4

also defining their economy and image internationally.

At present, Pakistan is at an important juncture because Pakistan is a nation with a young population, digital connectivity and entrepreneurship. The scientists, engineers and technologists of Pakistan have made progress in education, medicine, IT and space sciences but this potentiality of the nation is not exploited in its foreign policy.

There are several issues that hinder scientific potential of Pakistan from being fully utilized. First, there are not enough investments in research and development sector, poor relations between universities and industry and many talented people migrate due to lack of opportunities in their homeland. Technologies like artificial intel-

ligence, biotechnologies and quantum computers require huge amounts of investment in education, research facilities and innovation environment. Otherwise, Pakistan may fall behind in this high-tech epoch.

There are several options on how to utilize scientific and technological diplomacy in order to overcome the problems. In order to develop scientific potential, Pakistan should establish cooperation with prominent universities and scientific institutions located in Asia, Europe, North America and Middle East countries. These countries should promote innovations, educational initiatives, technology transfer and cooperation in areas like renewable energy, water resources, agriculture, healthcare and digital governance. Cooperation between Ministry of Foreign Affairs, universities and scientific institutions is required in order to

produce new type of diplomats who would deal with scientific and technological issues.

Moreover, there is no escape route even for the involvement of private players in this context. The businesspersons, IT firms, and innovation centers can work hand in hand with each other as partners for this purpose to make Pakistan a country of global importance. And that is how the partnership among government, academia, and private sector will contribute towards the realization of the goal of utilizing scientific knowledge to promote economic growth.

Besides this, it is also imperative for Pakistan to involve itself in global debates concerning issues such as regulation of artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, digital trade, biotechnology regulation, and climate technologies. Failure to do so would mean losing

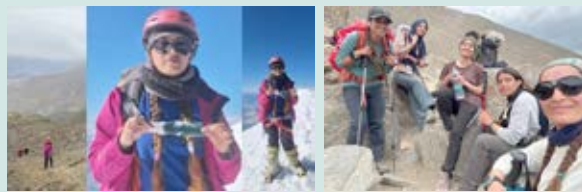
the power to make decisions to other nations.

These are the countries that will rule the coming twenty-first century owing to their knowledge, creativity, and diplomacy. The current times have seen science emerge as an important tool that has affected economics, security, and power. Those countries that utilize science and technology in pursuit of their foreign policies will be able to deal with the challenges and opportunities.

In the case of Pakistan, the issue of science and technology diplomacy has become a necessity rather than an option. With the help of science and technology, it will enhance its diplomatic power.

Writer is student of university of Balochistan in international relations department email rhamatulahmmk@gmail.com

Balochistan teenager Malaika Khilji makes mountaineering history



Sports Desk

Fourteen-year-old student Malaika Khilji has made history by becoming the first female mountaineer from Balochistan to successfully summit Khusar Gang Peak, marking a proud moment for the province and the country.

The expedition was organized by the Alpine Club of Pakistan and is being recognised as an important milestone in Pakistan's mountaineering history. Malaika's achievement reflects the growing participation of young Pakistanis, especially women, in adventure sports and high-altitude mountaineering.

After reaching the summit, Malaika proudly hoisted Pakistan's national flag, symbolising her love for the country and the determination, courage, and spirit of Pakistan's youth.

The Alpine Club of Pakistan congratulated Malaika Khilji and her family on this historic accomplishment, praising her dedication, perseverance, and remarkable achievement at such a young age.

Malaika's success sends a powerful message to the world that the true identity of Balochistan lies in its talented, brave, and hopeful young people who continue to make the province and the nation proud.

Her achievement is not only a remarkable mountaineering feat but also an inspiring story of hope, resilience, determination, and patriotism. It serves as an encouragement for young people, especially girls, to pursue their dreams with confidence and courage.

Pakistani climber Abidullah Baig achieves oxygen-free ascent of Gasherbrum II

News Desk

Pakistan has celebrated another major achievement in mountaineering after renowned climber Abidullah Baig from Hunza successfully summited Gasherbrum II, one of the world's highest peaks. According to the TV channel report, standing at 8,035 metres, Gasherbrum II is the world's 13th-highest mountain.



Baig completed the demanding ascent without the use of supplemental oxygen and without Sherpa assistance, an accomplishment widely regarded as one of the toughest challenges in high-altitude mountaineering.

The latest success further strengthens Baig's reputation as one of Pakistan's leading climbers.

He has previously summited Nanga Parbat, Gasherbrum I and Broad Peak, while also climbing Tirich Mir and several other major peaks without supplemental oxygen.

Fellow climbers and supporters have praised the achievement, describing it as a proud moment for Hunza, Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan's mountaineering community and a testament to the country's growing presence in international high-altitude climbing.

Empowering Punjab's Youth with Modern Skills

Continued from Page 4

offering tax incentives for research and development (R&D), concessions on imported industrial machinery, preferential procurement of locally manufactured products, and the launch of a "Made in Punjab, Made in Pakistan" initiative. In addition, every district should establish Maker Spaces and Fab Labs, modern technology workshops where young innovators can develop prototypes at minimal cost and transform their ideas into successful businesses. Overseas Pakistani engineers and technology experts should also be connected with these centers to transfer global knowledge and expertise to local industries.

If Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz establishes modern Technical Research and Skill Development Centers across every division of the

province, it will become one of the most historic and transformative achievements of her tenure. Invests today in research, advanced technical education, and local manufacturing, it can produce millions of skilled workers, establish thousands of new industries, save billions of dollars in imports, and significantly increase exports over the next decade. Pakistan's youth do not lack talent, they lack opportunities. Modern technical research and skill development centers are not merely educational initiatives; they are the foundation of industrial self-reliance, economic stability, employment generation, export growth, and national development. A decision made today to invest in such institutions will become a milestone in building a stronger, more self-reliant, and industrially advanced Pakistan for future generations.

Ishaq Dar arrives in Manila

MANILA: Elmer G. Cato, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Intelligence and Security Services (OISS), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) of the Philippines, receives Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on his arrival at the airport in Manila.



Photo: FO

Ishaq Dar arrives in Manila for ASEAN Regional Forum meeting

Spokesman Report

MANILA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar arrived in Manila on Wednesday along with his delegation to participate in the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting.

On his arrival at the airport, the deputy prime minister was received by Elmer G. Cato, Assistant Secretary for the Office of Intelligence and Security Services (OISS), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) of the Philippines, Pakistan's Ambassador to the Philippines Ambassador Asima Rabbani, and officials of the Embassy

of Pakistan.

The ministerial moot will bring together foreign ministers and delegates from the 27 ARF member states, including the Secretary-General of ASEAN.

At the meeting, Dar will participate in discussions on political and security issues affecting the Asia-Pacific region, with a special focus on promoting peace, stability, and mutual cooperation through sustained dialogue and diplomacy.

He will also hold bilateral meetings with his Philippine counterpart and several other participating dignitaries on the sidelines of the meeting.

Pakistan, Russia vow to boost trade, energy, connectivity cooperation



Spokesman Report

MANILA: Pakistan and Russia on Wednesday reaffirmed their commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation in trade, energy, connectivity and other key sectors, while also agreeing to strengthen coordination at multi-lateral forums.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and his Russian counterpart Sergey Lavrov on

the sidelines of the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) Ministerial Meeting in Manila.

During the meeting, the two leaders also reviewed the state of Pakistan-Russia relations and underscored the importance of sustained high-level engagement to further deepen bilateral ties.

They also exchanged views on key regional and global developments and agreed to remain in close contact to advance cooperation on issues of mutual interest.

PM welcomes S&P Global’s upgrade of Pakistan’s sovereign credit rating

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Wednesday, welcomed the decision of S&P Global Ratings to upgrade Pakistan's sovereign credit rating from 'B-' to 'B', describing it as a significant milestone for the country's economy.

The prime minister said the upgrade reflected the international community's confidence in the government's effective economic policies, fiscal discipline, structural reforms, and sustained efforts to stabilize the national economy.



He noted the improved rating served as evidence that the government's measures to

strengthen economic stability, reform the tax system, reduce the fiscal deficit, and build

foreign exchange reserves were moving in the right direction, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister further said the government had taken difficult but necessary economic decisions, the positive outcomes of which were now being acknowledged internationally.

He expressed confidence that the upgrade would boost international investors' confidence, create new investment opportunities and further accelerate Pakistan's economic growth.

The prime minister

also commended Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, the government's economic team, and all relevant institutions for their contributions to this achievement.

Reaffirming the government's commitment to economic reforms, he said the reform agenda would continue with determination and resolve to provide Pakistan with a strong and sustainable economic foundation.

PPP asks AJK Election Commissioner to restore internet before polls

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President of the Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Azad Kashmir chapter president Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has written an important letter to the Chief Election Commissioner Azad Kashmir. In the letter, Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin demanded for immediate restoration of internet service in Azad Kashmir.

He said election campaign is being severely affected by internet shutdown. Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin said to ensure provision of timely and accurate information to voters.



Internet shutdown can hinder transparent election process, Chaudhry

Muhammad Yasin added. He said internet shutdown is increasing the risk of spreading fake news and rumors.

He said protection of voters' right to information is the responsibility of the Election Commission. Restoration of internet is essential for uninterrupted continuation of election campaign, Chaudhry Yasin said.

Internet service should be restored by contacting the concerned institutions immediately, text of letter said.

Chaudhry Yasin said availability of internet is essential for free, fair and transparent elections.



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The world is again looking at Pakistan after its positive mediation role in US and Iran war. The global journal "Foreign Affairs" has declared Pakistan the guarantor of peace and the victor of the conflict following the conclusion of the devastating war between Iran and the United States.

ed States.

The Foreign Affairs Journal further stated that Pakistan won the war between Iran and Pakistan and emerged as a big power on the international level.

The Journal quoted as saying that the phone call made by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to US President Donald Trump on the last movements

World lauds Pakistan’s mediation in US-Iran war

of the expiry of the deadline averted a dangerous atmosphere.]"

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir urged both President Trump and the Iranian leadership to stop the war, and the war was stopped within hours after the phone call.

The Field Marshal fearlessly demonstrated his leadership mettle amidst uncertainty.

Amidst a perilous crisis, Pakistan accomplished what even powers like China, France, Germany, India, and the UK could not.

If the US wants to distance itself from costly wars, it has no choice but to have close ties with new powers, including Pakistan.

Pakistan has emerged as a new power on the global stage, thanks to prudent leadership and effective diplomacy.

Gilgit-Baltistan notifies 12-member cabinet, PPP gets eight portfolios

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Gilgit-Baltistan government on Wednesday issued a notification for its 12-member cabinet after Governor Syed Mehdi Shah approved the summary sent by Chief Minister Amjad Hussain.

According to the notification, the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has been allotted eight ministerial positions, while the Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) has secured four cabinet posts.

The PPP ministers include Ali Akhtar, Iqbal Hassan, Nasir Ali, Syed Jalal, Muhammad Naseem, Tauqeer Mehdi, Neknam Karim and Zulfiqar

Murad.

The IPP nominees inducted into the cabinet are Muhammad Dilpazeer, Aman Ali, Asad Shafiq and Anwar Ali.

The cabinet has been constituted to ensure representation from all regions of Gilgit-Baltistan.

Five ministers belong to Baltistan Division, five to Gilgit Division, while two represent the Diamer-Ashtore Division. The notification was issued after Governor Syed Mehdi Shah formally approved the cabinet summary forwarded by the chief minister, completing the process for the formation of the provincial cabinet.