



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
ہم سے سعید بن ابی اسیر نے بیان کیا،
ان سے عبد اللہ بن مسعود نے بیان کیا،
ان کے ہاں سے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ
علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: کبھی سب سے
بڑے گناہ کی تہذیب دوں۔ صحابہ رضی اللہ
عنہم نے عرض کیا: کیوں نہیں بد رسول اللہ!
نہی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ اللہ کے
ساتھ شریک کرنا اور اللہ کی ہادہ دہی کرنا۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6273)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

Chinese traders call on Chaudhry Shujaat

A delegation of Chinese traders, led by the deputy mayor of Hunan province's Loudi city Yang Wai, met with former prime minister and PML-Q President Chaudhry Shujaat Hussain in Lahore on Thursday. Bilateral relations and economic cooperation between Pakistan and China came under discussion at the meeting.



Election Commission rejects KP local government law amendment

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has rejected the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government's proposed amendment to the provincial local government law, saying it conflicts with the Constitution. The commission has formally communicated its decision to the Chief Secretary of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa through an official letter.

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20th National Workshop Balochistan

RAWALPINDI: Participants of the 20th National Workshop Balochistan pose for a group photograph with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.



Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir Addresses 20th National Workshop Balochistan

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI(M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, interacted with participants of the 20th National Workshop Balochistan at GHQ. He said consistent efforts by security forces and law enforcement agencies, backed by public support, will bring lasting peace to Balochistan. He reaffirmed that targeted operations against Fitna al Khawarij and Fitna al Hindustan will continue until terrorism and its abettors are eliminated. Pakistan remains committed to dismantling terrorist infrastructure wherever it threatens the country. The COAS & CDF stated that foreign-sponsored proxies are seeking to fuel violence and destabilize

Balochistan, but their designs will be defeated through a decisive military response and the unity of the Pakistani people. Describing Balochistan as "the pride of Pakistan," he noted its natural wealth and resilient, patriotic people as its greatest strength. He highlighted ongoing federal and provincial development initiatives aimed at transforming the province's socio-economic landscape through an inclusive, people-centric approach. He lauded the role of civil society, academia, media and youth in strengthening national integration and Balochistan's long-term prosperity, and stressed the need for national unity and perseverance. The session ended with participants reaffirming their commitment to Pakistan's stability, progress and sovereignty.

PM Shehbaz Reviews IT Roadmap, Sets Focus on Digital Economy and Exports

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif reviewed progress on Pakistan's strategic IT roadmap and reaffirmed that expanding the digital economy and boosting IT exports remain top government priorities.

Chairing a high-level meeting, the PM welcomed annual IT exports reaching \$4.6 billion, a 21% increase year-on-year. He commended Federal IT Minister Shaza Fatima Khawaja and her team, saying the growth reflects the government's policies to strengthen the digital economy.

Officials briefed that mobile spectrum availability jumped from 274 MHz in



June 2025 to 880 MHz in June 2026, expected to significantly improve internet speed and connectivity. Smartphone penetration rose from 62% in 2024 to 72% by June 2026. Fixed broadband and fibre connections now reach 5.1 million households. The Software Technology Park in Bagh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, has been completed.

Freelancers contributed \$1.164 billion to IT exports last fiscal year. Under the Digital Nation Pakistan initiative, 130 government services have been digitized. A total of 942,646 training certificates were awarded, including 5,053 high-end training programs and 2,700 leadership and soft skills sessions.

The PM directed credible third-party validation of IT training courses and stressed no compromise on skills quality. He also ordered further improvement of digital infrastructure nationwide.

Preparations are underway for Connect Pakistan Vision 2030. The Women Innovation and Startup Empowerment Lab will be inaugurated soon. Under an MoU with Alibaba, AI projects and training are being rolled out across federal ministries and institutions including the State Bank, FBR, Pakistan Railways, SECP and HEC.

The meeting was attended by senior ministers, the State Bank Governor, and top officials.

PM Shehbaz condemns Houthi attacks on Saudi oil tankers in call with Crown Prince MBS

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif held a telephone conversation with Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

The PM expressed Pakistan's condemnation "in the strongest possible terms" of the Houthi militia attacks on Saudi oil tankers in the Red Sea. He said such



actions are unacceptable, violate international law, threaten freedom of navigation and commercial shipping, and undermine regional peace and stability.

Reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with Saudi Arabia, Shehbaz said he, along with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and the Pakistani nation, stand firmly with the Saudi leadership. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kingdom's security, sovereignty, territorial integrity and prosperity.

The PM assured Crown Prince MBS

that Pakistan will continue working closely with Saudi Arabia and the international community to support peace, security and the uninterrupted flow of lawful maritime commerce in the Red Sea, Strait of Hormuz and the wider region.

Crown Prince MBS appreciated Pakistan's steadfast support and fraternal ties. The PM also conveyed warm regards to King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Aurangzeb Discusses IMF Reforms and U. S. Financing Cooperation in Washington

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb held key meetings in Washington, D. C. with senior IMF officials and the U. S. EXIM Bank President to review Pakistan's reform agenda and boost bilateral economic ties.

In his meeting with U. S. EXIM Bank President John Jovanovic, Aurangzeb discussed expanding Pakistan-U. S. cooperation with focus on financing for long-term projects and increased trade in agriculture—cotton, soybeans—and hydrocarbons. The U. S. EXIM Bank proposed a

broader framework to consolidate priority projects, create a multi-year transaction pipeline, and facilitate U. S. financing, technology, equipment and services. Both sides agreed to identify near-term deals, appoint focal persons, and aim to sign the strategic framework on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly in September 2026.

Separately, Aurangzeb met IMF senior management including First Deputy MD Dan Katz, Deputy MD Nigel Clarke, and Pakistan Mission Chief Iva Petrova. He reviewed progress under the EFF, RSF and IMF reform programme, highlighting improved fiscal and external balances,

achieved revenue targets, stronger FX reserves, record remittances, and a better current account.

Talks also covered tax and energy reforms, privatization, tariff rationalization, debt management, and Pakistan's return to international capital markets. They further discussed human capital, women's economic participation, technology-led growth and export-oriented development.

Aurangzeb thanked the IMF for acknowledging Pakistan's ownership of reforms and reaffirmed the government's commitment to fiscal discipline, policy



credibility and long-term transformation.

Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar, Guard killed in Mastung attack



Bureau Report

QUETTA: District and Sessions Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his guard were gunned down on Thursday after their vehicles came under attack while heading to Mastung from Quetta, officials said.

According to Balochistan Home Department aide Babar Yousafzai, Judge Kakar and Additional Sessions Judge Tariq Lashari were targeted by unknown armed men at Wali Khan crossing. Kakar and his

guard died on the spot. The two injured, including Judge Lashari, were taken to a hospital in Mastung.

Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfraz Bugti took notice of the incident. His aide for political affairs Shahid Rind said "all aspects will be considered" and those found negligent "will not be spared."

Rind said the judge was targeted "only because he is from the judicial fraternity," linking it to recent BYC leadership sentencing in Quetta. He stated the terrorists wanted to send a message: "if you give verdicts against us, we will target you."

He warned against "political confusions" and stressed the need to respond to terrorists with force "without any confusion," while voicing support for "faceless courts."

President, PM condemn killing of Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar in Mastung attack

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the attack near Mastung in which Session Judge Abdul Hakeem Kakar and his gunman were killed, reaffirming Pakistan's resolve to eliminate terrorism.

President Zardari expressed deep sorrow over the martyrdom of Judge Kakar and his security guard, praying for the elevation of their ranks and patience for their families. He also prayed for the speedy recovery of injured Judicial Magistrate Tariq Lashari and others. Zardari said the sacrifices of martyrs will not go in

vain and that hostile elements with external backing will not succeed. He stressed Pakistan will continue its struggle until terrorism is completely eradicated, and terrorists cannot weaken the state's resolve.

Prime Minister Shehbaz



Sharif also condemned the attack and offered condolences to the bereaved families. He prayed for the injured and said such cowardly acts will not allow terrorists to achieve their objectives, reiterating the government's determination to root out all forms of terrorism.

Internet services begin phased restoration in Mirpur

 **Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: Internet services in Mirpur district and surrounding areas of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have begun to be restored in phases after a prolonged shutdown, bringing relief to residents, students, businesses and freelancers.

Social media platforms and other online services have been partially restored in several areas, although users in some localities continue to report slow speeds and limited connectivity.

The business community welcomed the restoration, saying the shutdown had disrupted commercial activities, banking services, e-commerce and online transactions. Traders expressed hope that economic activity would regain momentum as connectivity improved.

Students also regained access to online classes, educational resources



and assignment portals, while freelancers and people working in the information technology sector

described the restoration as a major relief. Residents said the prolonged

suspension of internet services had severely affected daily life and urged the government to ensure uninterrupted connectivity in the future.

The local administration said services were being restored gradually and that full internet access would soon be available across the district.

Earlier, Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari said reports indicated that internet and digital communications would soon be restored in Mirpur.

He expressed gratitude for the efforts of the AJK chapter of the PPP and the timely intervention of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission.

Bilawal also voiced hope that requests for the restoration of internet services in Muzaffarabad and other parts of Azad Kashmir would be approved soon, allowing residents to regain full access to communication facilities.



Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Meets Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan in Rawalpindi.

AJK PM Rathore extends condolences to Chief Justice on brother's death

 **City Desk.**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the demise of the brother of the Chief Justice of the High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice Sardar Liaquat Hussain.

In his condolence message, the Prime Minister extended his heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family and prayed that Almighty Allah may grant the departed soul the highest ranks in Jannah and bless the members of the bereaved family with patience, fortitude, and the strength to bear this irreparable loss.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari welcomes restoration of internet in AJK

 **Bureau Report**

ISLAMABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari commended the Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir for its efforts to restore internet and digital connectivity in the region, and welcomed the timely action by the AJK Election Commission.

In a social media post, he said internet and digital connectivity in Mirpur, AJK, will soon be restored, and expressed hope that similar requests for Muzaffarabad and other areas will also be accepted soon.

He said uninterrupted digital connectivity across Azad Jammu and Kashmir will improve public access to information and support the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari praises PPP's role in restoring internet in Azad Jammu and Kashmir

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, has commended the effective efforts of the Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Jammu and Kashmir in advocating for the restoration of internet and digital connectivity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He also welcomed the timely action taken by the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in this regard.

In a post shared on social media, Mr. Bhutto Zardari stated: "I understand that internet and digital connectivity in Mirpur, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, will soon be restored. I am hopeful that our requests for Muzaffarabad and other areas will also be accepted at the earliest."

He expressed optimism that uninterrupted digital connectivity across Azad Jammu and Kashmir would facilitate public access to information and support the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Meets Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan in Rawalpindi

 **City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: President of Tehreek-e-Istaikam Party Azad Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan met with President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan at Mujahid Manzil, Rawalpindi.

The two leaders discussed the overall political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the upcoming Legislative Assembly elections, and other matters of mutual interest.

They welcomed the Election Commission's decision to hold elections in phases, saying it would ensure a smooth and orderly process. However, they proposed that results should be announced collectively after all phases are completed, as practiced in many countries. They noted this would strengthen the integrity, neutrality, and public confidence in the electoral process.

Attendees included Sardar Usman Attique, Dr. Irfan Ashraf, Sardar Imtiaz Shaheen, Sardar Manzoor Advocate, Sardar Mehmood Khan, Sardar Ifikhar Rashid, Sardar Shuja Mangol Advocate, Sardar Shabrez Sabir, Pir Abdul Qadir, Sardar Affan Attique, Raja Abdul Jabbar, and Sardar Hafeez Khan.

Pakistan must preserve democratic stability in AJK and promote regional peace: Sardar Masood

 **Spokesman Report**



ISLAMABAD: Former Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan urged Pakistan to uphold democratic continuity in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and play a leading diplomatic role to prevent regional escalation in the Middle East.

Welcoming phased elections in AJK as a balanced approach, he said constitutional matters should be resolved through the Legislative Assembly. He called on political parties to avoid divisive rhetoric that could be exploited by adversaries and weaken Pakistan's stance on the Kashmir dispute.

On regional affairs, Khan said Pakistan, trusted by Tehran and engaged with Washington and Riyadh, is uniquely positioned to help prevent an Iran-US conflict from widening. He stressed using all diplomatic channels with Qatar, Oman, Türkiye, Egypt and Iraq to bring parties back to negotiations.

He noted Pakistan's defence ties with Saudi Arabia but said its priority must be preventing conflict expansion to protect trade, energy and stability. He also highlighted the need for transparency in the new US-Saudi civilian nuclear deal.

Letter of intent

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC), Dr. Syed Murataza Hassan Andrabi, and Chief Executive Officer of FAMSUN Group, Mr. Jack Chen, sign a Letter of Intent (LoI) in the presence of Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain.



Photo: PID

PML-N Candidates Reaffirm Unity and Shared Strategy in Meeting with Federal Minister

 **Bureau Report**

KOTLI: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, accompanied by Pakistan Muslim League (N) Legislative Assembly candidate Fateh Mehmood Kayani, visited the residence of Malik Muhammad Nawaz, the party's candidate for Constituency LA-8 Raj Mahal-I.

On the occasion, in the presence of the Federal Minister, both Pakistan Muslim League (N) candidates reaffirmed their commitment to moving



forward with complete unity, mutual cooperation, and a coordinated electoral strategy in accordance with the

vision and guidance of the party's leader, Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. They agreed to make every effort

to ensure the party's success and strengthen unity among its workers.

Addressing the gathering, Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam stated that the unity of Pakistan Muslim League (N) candidates is the cornerstone of the party's electoral success. He urged party workers to conduct the election campaign with cohesion, discipline, and a shared sense of purpose so that the party could effectively reach the electorate and continue its mission of public service with renewed strength and commitment.

AJK Chief Election Commissioner Chairs Key Meeting on 2026 Election Result Management System

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, chaired an important meeting regarding the Result Management System (RMS) for the General Elections 2026.

The meeting was attended by Senior Member of the Election Commission Khawaja Muhammad Ahsan, Member Syed Nazir-ul-Hasan Gilani, Secretary Information & IT Muhammad Rashid Hanif, Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan, Deputy Secretary Information & IT Malik Hamid Siddique, as well as



officials from the IT Board, the Local Government Department, and the Planning & Development Department.

During the meeting, the Chief Election Commissioner was given a comprehensive briefing on the development and implementation of the

Result Management System (RMS). Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal directed the relevant officials to ensure that the RMS is made fully operational at the earliest and emphasized that there should be no room for error in its functioning.

He stated that the primary objective of introducing the Result Management System is to enhance transparency in the conduct of the General Elections and to ensure the timely dissemination of election results to the public. He further observed that the system would enable the Election Commission to compile and announce accurate, transparent, and timely election results in an efficient manner.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:35 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:10 pm
Maghrib 7:15 pm
Isha 8:53 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
Potohar Town 9209224

Pakistan Launches First-Ever Short-Term Sovereign Hybrid Sukuk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank has congratulated the Ministry of Finance on the successful launch of Pakistan's first-ever short-term sovereign hybrid Sukuk, marking a major milestone in the country's Islamic finance sector. Acting as Joint Financial Advisor, Meezan Bank helped structure and execute the innovative three-month and six-month Sukuk, which combines Ijarah and Commodity Murabaha structures to provide an asset-light sovereign funding solution while improving liquidity management for Islamic banks.

The transaction was developed in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, the State Bank of Pakistan's Islamic Finance Development Department, Dubai Islamic Bank Pakistan, BankIslami, and Bank Alfalah Islamic, with operational support from the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), Central Depository Company (CDC), and National Clearing Company of Pakistan Limited (NCCPL).

The three-month Sukuk received bids exceeding PKR 153 billion against a target of PKR 25 billion, with the government accepting over PKR 80 billion at a weighted average yield of 11.44 percent. The six-month issue attracted bids of more than PKR 41 billion, while the government accepted around PKR 24 billion at an average yield of 11.57 percent, reflecting strong investor confidence in Pakistan's Islamic capital market.

Punjab sets a new benchmark in good governance as Lahore clears rainwater in one hour

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab set a new benchmark in good governance as government agencies swiftly completed rainwater drainage operations during the ongoing monsoon spell under the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

With the intensity of monsoon rains increasing, the Punjab government mobilised all relevant departments, including Suthra Punjab, WASA and local authorities, to ensure the prompt disposal of accumulated rainwater. In Lahore, rainwater was cleared in less than an hour, setting a new operational record.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif commended all departments and field staff for their timely response and remained engaged in continuous digital monitoring of the overall situation.

Despite recording 343 millimetres of rainfall over a continuous 48-hour period, Lahore witnessed no major waterlogging, providing significant relief to residents. Through coordinated efforts, authorities successfully prevented the accumulation of rainwater at most major intersections,

roads and underpasses across the city.

Rapid drainage operations were carried out on Mall Road, Club Chowk, Main Boulevard Gulberg, Liberty Chowk and Ferozepur Road. Water was also cleared within a few hours from Bank Stop, Qainchi Stop and adjoining sections of Ferozepur Road.

Traffic remained uninterrupted in Karim Block, Iqbal Town, Samanabad Underpass and surrounding areas following the timely completion of drainage operations.

For the first time, Lahore's modern drainage infrastructure, supported by a comprehensive monsoon management strategy, successfully prevented widespread road closures caused by heavy rainfall.

On the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Commissioner Lahore, Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioners, along with officers and field staff of WASA, the Local Government Department and other relevant agencies, remained present in the field to supervise and ensure the smooth execution of relief operations.



For concerned authority

ISLAMABAD: A view of garbage on the side of Rehman Baba road in the Federal Capital after dig up from sewerage nullah creates environment and health problems.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Prof. Dr. Masood-ur-Rauf Hiraj Retires as Dean of Surgery, Nishtar Medical University

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Professor Dr. Masood-ur-Rauf Hiraj, prominent surgeon of Nishtar Medical University and Hospital and widely known as the "Edhi of Nishtar Hospital," has retired on completion of his term as Dean of Surgery.

Farewell ceremonies were held by various departments of Nishtar Medical University and Hospital to honor his teaching, medical, administrative and welfare services. An Academic Council meeting chaired by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Mehnaz Khakwani also paid tribute to his contributions and extended best wishes.

Dr. Hiraj has served as Presi-



dent of Pakistan Medical Association (PMA) Multan since 2018 and continues in the role. He was recognized for raising doctors' professional and welfare issues with authorities and for being an effective voice for the medical community.

During his career he introduced modern surgical treatment methods at Nishtar Hospital, donated medical machinery worth millions, and completed projects including libraries, a state-of-the-art gym, and renovations of

doctors' and students' hostels. He prioritized training and mentoring junior doctors.

Speakers at the events said his services as physician, teacher, administrator and doctors' leader will be remembered with great respect.

Presiding Officers Trained For Transparent AJK General Elections 2026

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: As part of the preparations for the General Elections 2026 to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, a training workshop for Presiding Officers was conducted under the supervision of Returning Officer for Constituency LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I, Aftab Tariq Mir.

The workshop was attended by Presiding Officers designated for various polling stations across the constituency. Participants were provided comprehensive training on polling procedures, election-day responsibilities, statutory powers, polling station management, vote counting, and the handling of various situations that may arise during the electoral process.

Addressing the participants, Returning Officer Aftab Tariq Mir emphasized that every vote is a national trust and that Presiding Officers bear the solemn responsibility of safeguarding the sanctity of the ballot. He urged them to ensure the secure handling and accurate recording of every vote with the utmost honesty and integrity.

He observed that Presiding Officers play a pivotal role in ensuring that elections are conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and impartial manner. He called upon all officers to discharge their duties with professionalism, impartiality, and a strong sense of responsibility.

The Returning Officer further underscored the critical importance of strict adherence to the Election Commission's instructions, electoral laws, and the prescribed Code of Conduct throughout the polling process. He stated that compliance with these standards is essential to providing voters with a peaceful, orderly, and conducive environment in which to exercise their democratic right to vote freely.

Pakistan Secures Top Global Apparel Role as Ijaz Khokhar Becomes IAF Vice President

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's apparel industry has achieved a historic first as Ijaz A. Khokhar, former PRGMEA Chairman and leading Sialkot exporter, was elected Vice President of the International Apparel Federation (IAF). He is the first Pakistani apparel manufacturer to hold this senior global office.

IAF President Stefano Festa Marzotto announced the nomination, citing Khokhar's long association and services to the global apparel sector. The General Assembly unanimously approved it.

Founded in 1972, IAF is the world's only global federation representing apparel manufacturers across 40+ countries, with 100,000+ companies employing 20 million people. It promotes trade, innovation, sustainable supply chains and industry standards.

Khokhar, who heads Ashraf Industries (Pvt) Ltd, a pioneer in martial arts garments since 1969, has previously served as IAF Executive Board Member and Regional President. He is also PRGMEA Chief Coordinator and founding AAF Board Member. A Sitara-e-Imtiaz recipient, his company won the FPCCI Export Trophy for 25 straight years.

Industry bodies welcomed the appointment, saying it will strengthen Pakistan's voice in global policy, open new trade and investment avenues, and boost the country's image as a reliable sourcing destination.



Pakistan's Business Confidence Improves in Q2, Budget Concerns Persist: Gallup

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, JULY 23: Business confidence in Pakistan improved during the second quarter of 2026, with companies reporting better current conditions and a more optimistic outlook, according to the latest Gallup Pakistan Business Confidence Index.

The survey, conducted among 527 businesses across key sectors, showed the Current Business Conditions score improved from minus 19% to minus 10%, while the Future Business Conditions score rose by 25 percentage points to plus 12%, turning positive for the first time in three quarters. The Direction of the Country score also improved, though it remained in negative territory.

Gallup Pakistan attributed the improved sentiment partly to easing regional uncertainty following the Iran-US conflict and lower fuel prices.

Despite the recovery, businesses continued to cite inflation as their biggest challenge, while 72% reported power outages during the survey period. The Federal Budget 2026-27 received a largely negative response, with 39% of businesses rating it unfavourably. Nearly half expected higher business costs and lower investment prospects under the budget. Gallup Pakistan said sustained improvements in inflation, energy supply, and operating costs would be essential to maintain the recovery in business confidence.

IIUI President Visits Hazara University, Both Sides Agree to Pursue Academic Cooperation Pact

City Desk

MANSEHRA: Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, President and Acting Rector of International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), visited Hazara University as chief guest on the invitation of Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf.

During meetings with Hazara University Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ikramullah Khan Marwat, deans and faculty, both sides agreed to pursue a Memorandum of Understanding focused on faculty exchange and promotion of Arabic language education.

Addressing students and faculty, Dr. Alahmed highlighted the brotherly ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia



based on shared faith. He stressed that universities nurture future leaders and scholars, and expressed IIUI's commitment to academic partnerships, joint

research and sharing best practices to strengthen higher education in Pakistan.

Minister Sardar Muhammad Yousaf

formally requested expanded collaboration between IIUI and Hazara University in Islamic Studies, Shariah, Law and Arabic language through joint research, student/faculty exchanges, seminars and curriculum development. He praised IIUI as a premier institution and acknowledged Saudi Arabia's contribution in building the King Abdul Aziz Mosque on Hazara University's campus, calling it a symbol of enduring Pakistan-Saudi relations.

Dr. Marwat welcomed the initiative, noting Hazara University's status as KP's top-ranked university, and said the university plans to expand Arabic teaching through its Islamic Centre.

The visit concluded with a tour of the mosque and a luncheon hosted by the Religious Affairs Minister.

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Small Dams — A Shield Against Floods, Poverty and Climate Threats

As monsoon clouds gather over Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the calm waters of Kundal Dam in Swabi tell a new story. Where floodwaters once forced families to flee, children now play by the shore and parents enjoy evenings by the reservoir. It is a quiet transformation, but one with profound meaning for a country grappling with climate shocks.

Pakistan remains among the most climate-vulnerable nations. The 2022 floods swept away homes, hotels and farmland across KP, Punjab and Sindh, costing billions. This year alone, PDMA reports 35 monsoon deaths in KP since late June, most from collapsed roofs and flash floods. The pattern is clear: heavier, erratic rains are the new normal.

Yet the solution may not lie only in mega-projects that take a decade and billions to complete. The experience of Kundal, Tanda, Pezu, Khattak Bandhan and dozens of other small dams suggests a faster, more localized path to resilience. These reservoirs do two things at once: they trap seasonal flood flows that would otherwise devastate downstream villages, and they store water for irrigation, livestock and domestic use during dry months.

The numbers are compelling. One cusec of stored water can irrigate an acre of wheat or rice. When multiplied across thousands of acres, small dams directly protect food security and rural incomes. They also create new economies. Kundal and Tanda have evolved from flood-control structures into recreation sites, drawing tourists, supporting fisheries, local vendors and small businesses. Climate adaptation, in this sense, is also job creation.

Pakistan’s water stress makes this urgent. Per capita surface water has fallen from 5,260 cubic meters in 1951 to near 1,000 today, and is projected to drop further. Engineers estimate we will need an additional 76 MAF by 2050. At the same time, enormous volumes of monsoon water still flow unused to the sea because storage is lacking. Small dams, which can be built in 2-3 years instead of 10-15, offer a practical way to capture that water now.

The Irrigation Department reports 24 small dams under construction in KP with 75,008 acre-feet storage, and designs for 7 medium dams with over 520,000 acre-feet capacity underway. Globally, countries like China and India built tens of thousands of such structures. Pakistan has only about 150, despite huge potential in KP and Punjab.

But infrastructure alone is not enough. Success depends on funding, technical capacity in remote areas, and community involvement from planning to water-sharing. Disputes over land and distribution must be resolved early. Hydrological surveys need expansion so dams are placed where they protect the most people.

Large dams will remain vital for national water security. Yet as climate threats intensify, we cannot afford to wait. Small dams deliver immediate, tangible protection to the communities on the frontline.

Back at Kundal, floodwater has become a source of life, livelihood and leisure. That is the lesson: sometimes the most powerful response to a growing crisis is not the biggest structure on the horizon, but the one built close to the people it shields. For Pakistan, scaling up small dams is not an alternative to big projects. It is the shield we need right now.

Iran War at Five Months: Who Won What?

Five months into the United States-Iran war, the central question is no longer who possesses greater military power. That answer has never been in doubt. The real question is what each side has actually achieved—and whether battlefield dominance has translated into strategic success.

The United States and Israel with its allies in the Middle East and around the world entered the conflict with overwhelming military superiority. Since the war began, the United States and Israel have relentlessly targeted Iran’s conventional military assets expecting that sustained destruction would erode Tehran’s capacity and compel a political retreat.

Although Iran has largely stood alone against the combined military weight of the United States, Israel and their regional partners, it has shown little evidence of strategic paralysis or political capitulation.

On the contrary, it has continued to retaliate, absorb punishment and impose costs on its adversaries. The destruction of military targets inside Iran has therefore weakened its conventional capabilities but has not compelled Tehran to abandon its core policies, strategic objectives or determination to continue the conflict on terms that exploit its asymmetric strengths.

The absence of a clearly defined American end state has become increasingly apparent. Throughout the conflict,

Washington’s objectives appeared to evolve—from preventing nuclear weaponization to degrading Iran’s missile capability, protecting Israel, securing the Strait of Hormuz, weakening Iran’s regional influence and, at times, implying regime change. Each objective demanded a different strategy, yet they often merged into a single military campaign without a clearly articulated political destination.

That uncertainty became evident during Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth’s appearance before the Senate while defending the Trump administration’s emergency supplemental request of \$87.6 billion, including \$67 billion for Pentagon operations related to Iran. Hegseth acknowledged that the war had already cost approximately \$37.5 billion, prompting unusually sharp bipartisan scrutiny.

Sen. Patty Murray questioned why the administration continued relying on presidential Article II authority instead of seeking explicit congressional authorization for an expanding conflict. Sen. Kirsten Gillibrand highlighted a glaring contradiction: if Iran’s military capabilities had been “obliterated,” why was the administration requesting tens of billions more to continue fighting them? Republican Sen. John Kennedy repeatedly demanded “straight talk,” pressing Hegseth to explain what victory actu-

ally looked like, what justified continued escalation, and what the strategic consequences would be of either withdrawing or remaining indefinitely.

Other lawmakers criticized the Pentagon for withholding comprehensive casualty information while requesting unprecedented emergency funding. Collectively, the hearing reflected a growing bipartisan concern that overwhelming military superiority had yet to be matched by strategic clarity.

Iran, by contrast, pursued narrower and more consistent objectives: preserve the state, maintain deterrence, retain influence over regional affairs and ensure that any military escalation imposed significant political and economic costs on its adversaries. Iran never needed to defeat the United States militarily. It merely needed to survive, retaliate and prevent Washington from imposing its political will.

The strategic equation shifted sharply when President Trump threatened to destroy an Iranian bridge or power plant for every attack on shipping in the Strait of Hormuz. Tehran refused to be intimidated and responded with a doctrine of reciprocal vulnerability: if Iran’s bridges, electricity networks or desalination facilities were struck, comparable infrastructure in the Gulf states enabling U. S. and

Israeli military operations could also become exposed.

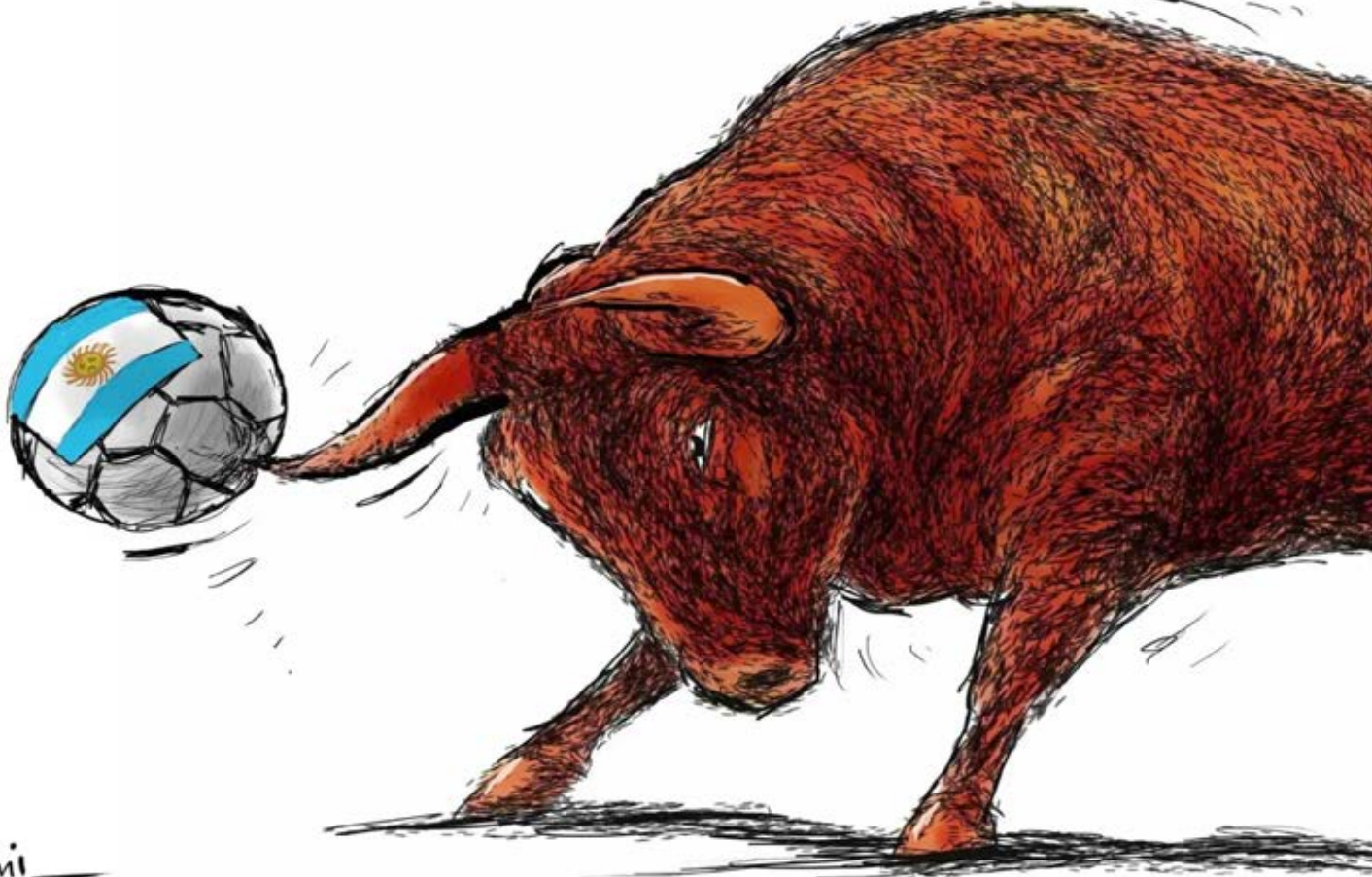
This was more than retaliatory rhetoric; it transferred the prospective cost of attacking Iran’s civilian lifelines to Washington’s regional hosts, whose power grids, water supplies, ports and energy installations are highly concentrated and difficult to defend comprehensively.

These governments, already bearing economic and security consequences from a war they neither initiated nor controlled, were suddenly confronted with an intolerable choice: pressure Washington to restrain attacks on Iranian civilian infrastructure, or reconsider the presence and operational use of U. S. bases that could turn their territories into retaliatory battlefields.

By converting American regional access from a strategic asset into a potential liability, Iran appears to have imposed a powerful deterrent against the threatened infrastructure campaign—demonstrating once again how asymmetric warfare can frustrate superior firepower without matching it weapon for weapon.

This asymmetric strategy fundamentally altered the character of the war. While the United States dominated the skies, Iran maintained the ability to strike American bases, Israeli territory and regional energy infrastructure with missiles and drones. Every escalation carried consequences extending well beyond the battlefield, affecting oil markets, shipping routes, insurance costs

Continued on Page 7



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

Nawaz, Maryam Pillar of New AJK Hope

History occasionally records certain days not merely as dates on a calendar but as defining moments that reflect collective emotions, political consciousness and the future direction of nations. The grand public gathering of Pakistan Muslim League (N) in Muzaffarabad was one such historic occasion. After a gap of eight years, the arrival of PML-N Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif in Azad Jammu and Kashmir not only revived political activity in the region but also renewed the enduring bond of love, trust and ideological connection between the people of Kashmir and Pakistan — a relationship built on sacrifice, loyalty and a shared national vision.

The atmosphere in Muzaffarabad was charged with enthusiasm. The mountains echoed with slogans, elderly citizens offered prayers, young people expressed their passion, women participated in large numbers, and thousands remained present at the gathering despite heavy rain. Their presence demonstrated a simple but powerful reality: when political relationships are built on trust, service and sincerity, even harsh weather cannot become an obstacle.

The gathering was not merely an election-related event; it was a reflection of public sentiment, confidence and the enduring popularity of Pakistan Muslim League (N) among sections of Kashmiri society.

Although several political and development-related announcements were made during the gathering, one statement by Muhammad Nawaz Sharif attracted particular

attention. In a simple yet meaningful remark, he expressed his willingness to serve as Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir if Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif ever nominated him for the position.

Some political circles interpreted this statement as a temporary political remark. However, viewed beyond the narrow lens of politics, it represented something deeper: a sentiment of service, affection and a personal attachment with the people of Kashmir.

The question naturally arises: why would a leader who has served three times as Prime Minister of a country of nearly 250 million people, who played a historic role in making Pakistan a nuclear power despite international pressure, and who could still aspire to the highest political office in Pakistan, express a desire to become Prime Minister of a region with a population of approximately four and a half million?

The answer lies not in the pursuit of power but in the desire to serve.

For Nawaz Sharif, Azad Jammu and Kashmir is not merely an administrative territory. It represents Pakistan’s ideological frontier; a symbol of national commitment and a central reference point in the Kashmir issue. He understands the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, their extraordinary attachment with Pakistan and their historic resilience.

Perhaps this emotional connection explains why he expressed the desire that, if given an opportunity, he would consider it a privilege to directly serve the people of this region.

It was not a desire for office; it was a desire for service. It was not a search for authority;

it was an expression of affection and responsibility towards the people of Kashmir.

If Nawaz Sharif were given an opportunity to directly contribute to the development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, many believe the region could witness a transformation similar to the development initiatives associated with his previous governments in Pakistan — including motorways, infrastructure projects, energy schemes, industrial development, educational institutions and healthcare facilities.

While political differences regarding his governments may exist, there is no denying that infrastructure development, large-scale projects and economic planning remained significant features of his political vision.

During his Muzaffarabad address, Nawaz Sharif referred to previous increases in development resources allocated for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and expressed the hope that these resources should be multiplied in the future so that the region could emerge as a model destination for tourism, trade, education, healthcare and investment.

This was not merely an electoral promise; it reflected a development-oriented vision that has remained central to his political approach.

It is also important to recall that Nawaz Sharif has maintained a unique connection with Kashmir. Shortly after undergoing heart surgery, he undertook a lengthy visit to Azad Jammu and Kashmir in 2011, travelling from Bhimber to Neelum and meeting people across different districts. He listened to their concerns and laid the foundations of several development initiatives.

The future chapter of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will be written by its people — through their democratic voice, their vision for development and their commitment to a peaceful, prosperous and dignified future.

Trichmir: An untapped treasure awaiting digital lens for economic prosperity

Fakhar-e-Alam

As black clouds drift lazily across the towering Hindu Kush and the monsoon winds sweep down from the snow-capped slopes of mighty Trichmir, life in Chitral takes on a different rhythm with seasonal flowers paint the breathtaking valleys in vibrant colors.

Amid butterflies hovering over flowers en route to upper Chitral, the crystal-clear streams swell with glaciers melt emanating from Trichmir, the highest mountain Pakistan’s peak outside Gilgit-Baltistan.

Shepherds guide their flocks through alpine meadows while eagles circle high above rugged cliffs. Every so often, the mighty 7,708-meter Trichmir which is the highest peak in the Hindu Kush and the tallest mountain outside Gilgit-Baltistan emerges from behind drifting monsoon clouds, reminding visitors why generations have regarded it with awe.

For the people living in its tall shadow, however, the mountain represents much more than breathtaking scenery. It is a source of identity, pride and, increasingly, hope for economic prosperity, requiring digital spotlight to attract foreign tourists for economic prosperity.

“This mountain has always been our guardian,” said local trekking guide Zamurd Khan while preparing climbing equipment at Trichmir base camp.

This, officials said, is beginning to change. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA) has launched an ambitious campaign to position Chitral as Pakistan’s premier destination for high-altitude adventure tourism.

A major milestone came in July 2025 when the Trichmir base camp welcomed its first organized

group of national and international trekkers under a government-supported initiative, marking a new chapter for adventure tourism in Chitral.

For residents, the arrival of trekkers and mountaineers brought excitement rarely witnessed in these remote valleys.

Children gathered to greet visitors carrying colorful backpacks, women displayed traditional handicrafts, while local musicians welcomed guests with Chitrali folk melodies.

The smiles on the faces of villagers said everything. People saw opportunity returning to their villages.

The renewed attention follows another historic achievement. A Pakistani expedition recently crossed and summited the remote Phargam An Pass (5,100 meters) for the first time in 27 years, reopening an ancient route linking Laspur valley in Upper Chitral with Golain valley in Lower Chitral.

Supported by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority (KPCTA), the climbers battled unstable glaciers, steep snowfields, loose rock and avalanche-prone terrain before successfully reaching the summit.

Kamran Khan became the first climber to stand atop the pass, accompanied by Mehrosh Akhtar, Samar Khan, Noman Khan, Noormal Rehman, Zohaib Khan, Omar Khitab Sheerani, Sohniya Babar, Amina Shabbir and Madeeha Syed.

The expedition also made history as the first successful ascent by women climbers, with Mehrosh Akhtar among those leading the achievement. Chitrali sisters Smell Rose and Madhu Shala Akhtar also participated, inspiring young girls across the region.

“It wasn’t just a climb,” Mehrosh Akhtar said after the expedition. “It was about proving that Pakistani women can excel in high-altitude mountaineering while representing their country with pride.”

Cuba Marks Fidel Castro's Centenary with 'Fidel Forever' Photo Exhibition in Islamabad



the Pak-Cuba Social Forum, paid glowing tribute to Fidel Castro and highlighted the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Cuba. He said the relationship between the two countries is rooted in mutual respect, sincere friendship, and humanitarian cooperation.

"The people of Pakistan will never forget Cuba's generous support during the devastating 2005 earthquake, including the deployment of Cuban medical teams and the provision of medical scholarships for Pakistani students," he said.

Ramzan Mughal added that the "Fidel Forever" exhibition serves as an important cultural and diplomatic bridge, preserving the shared history of Pakistan and Cuba while strengthening bilateral relations for future generations.

The exhibition featured a carefully curated collection of historic photographs depicting key moments in Fidel Castro's life, his humanitarian vision, and significant milestones in Pakistan-Cuba diplomatic relations. Guests toured the gallery and appreciated the photographs highlighting the enduring friendship, mutual respect, and international solidarity shared by the two nations.

The event concluded with a renewed commitment by the Embassy of Cuba and the Pak-Cuba Social Forum to further strengthen cultural, social, and diplomatic cooperation between Pakistan and Cuba.

Photos by Sultan Bashir

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Cuba in Pakistan, in collaboration with the Pak-Cuba Social Forum, organized a photo exhibition titled "Fidel Forever" at the Cuban Embassy in Islamabad to commemorate the birth centenary of Commander-in-Chief Fidel Castro.

Prominent Pakistani politician, veteran journalist, geopolitical analyst, and foreign policy expert Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed, accompanied by his spouse Dr. Dushka Hyder Saiyid, attended the event as the Chief Guest. H. E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, Ambassador of Turkmenistan and Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Pakistan, was the Guest of Honour. The ceremony was attended by members of the diplomatic corps,



academics, distinguished personalities from civil society, and friends of Cuba.

Addressing the gathering, Senator Mushahid Hussain Syed congratulated the Embassy of Cuba and the Pak-Cuba Social Forum for organizing the "Fidel Forever" exhibition.

Sharing his personal memories of Fidel Castro, he described the late Cuban leader as one of the most influential statesmen of the 20th century. He said Fidel Castro's visionary leadership transformed Cuba into a modern and resilient nation despite numerous challenges and external pressures.



Senator Mushahid highlighted Castro's remarkable achievements in education, healthcare, science, and international solidarity, observing that his unwavering commitment to social justice, national sovereignty, and human

development earned him worldwide respect. He added that Fidel Castro's legacy continues to inspire people across the globe.

Earlier, H. E. Damián Cordero, Ambassador of Cuba to Pakistan, along with his spouse, welcomed the distinguished guests. In his

remarks, Ambassador Cordero reflected on the enduring vision and revolutionary leadership of Commander Fidel Castro. He described the event as a dual celebration—honouring Fidel Castro's birth centenary while also recognizing Cuba's recent diplomatic success at the United Nations against the longstanding US blockade, achieved with the support of friendly nations around the world.

Ambassador Cordero highlighted Fidel Castro's enduring legacy, particularly his philosophy of international solidarity. He noted that Cuban medical missions and humanitarian professionals continue to serve selflessly in some of the world's most remote and underserved regions.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramzan Mughal, President of

Chairman NAB Stresses Integrity and Anti-Corruption During Visit of Sindh Civil Service Officers

Spokesman Report

Islamabad: A delegation of participants from the 3rd Senior Management Course of the Sindh Provincial Civil Service visited the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Headquarters, where Chairman NAB Lieutenant General (Retired) Nazir Ahmed emphasized the importance of integrity, character-building and an uncompromising commitment to eliminating corruption.

Welcoming the delegation, the Chairman urged senior civil servants to uphold the highest standards of honesty, professionalism and public service. He stressed that strong moral values, personal integrity and

professional competence are essential for effective governance. Calling for zero tolerance toward corruption, he encouraged officers to reject dishonest practices, safeguard state assets and perform their responsibilities with dedication and sincerity. Reaffirming NAB's resolve to combat corruption, he said the bureau remains committed to protecting national resources and promoting transparency.

Earlier, Director General (Operations) Amjad Majeed Aulakh briefed the participants on the National Accountability Ordinance (NAO) 1999, NAB's organizational structure, institutional reforms, anti-money laundering investigations, international coopera-

tion and the bureau's overall performance.

Highlighting NAB's achievements, he said the bureau had recovered assets worth Rs14.485 trillion (approximately US\$51.73 billion) during the past three years. He added that NAB's current priorities include recovering state land and assets, addressing cases involving fraud against the public and pursuing anti-money laundering cases.

The visit concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session, during which participants discussed administrative and anti-corruption issues with NAB officials. A group photograph and exchange of souvenirs marked the end of the visit.



Beyond Kindness: Animal Welfare as Public Responsibility

For a long time, animal welfare in Pakistan was viewed as a matter of personal kindness rather than public responsibility. It was associated with volunteer feeding of stray dogs or a passerby feeling sympathy for an overworked donkey on a hot afternoon. Compassion toward animals was often treated as a noble gesture, but not as a social priority.

That perception, however, is beginning to change.

Across the country, more people are recognizing that protecting animals is not merely an act of charity; it is a reflection of our values as a society. How we treat the most vulnerable

beings around us says a great deal about who we are.

This change is increasingly visible in our laws, policies, and judicial decisions. Pakistan is gradually moving away from outdated and often cruel practices such as the mass poisoning and culling of stray dogs. Instead, animal welfare is finding a place within broader discussions of public health, environmental protection, and governance. Organizations such as Environmental and Animal Rights Consultants (EARC-Pakistan), co-founded by advocate Altamush Saeed, have played an important role in advancing these conversations and strengthening legal protections for animals.

A recent Islamabad High Court judgement on the management of stray dogs in the Islamabad Capital Territory reflects this evolving approach. The Court emphasized that public safety and animal welfare must be pursued together rather than treated as competing interests. Rejecting indiscriminate poisoning, shooting, and mass culling, it directed authorities to adopt humane and scientifically recognized measures, including catch-neuter-vaccinate-release programmes, rabies preven-

tion, responsible waste management, public awareness campaigns and stronger institutional oversight. Significantly, the Court observed that animals are sentient beings capable of suffering and that a civilized society must protect them from unnecessary cruelty. The judgment reflects a growing recognition that animal welfare is linked not only to compassion, but also to public health, environmental balance, and the values of a just society.

Animal welfare is also gaining

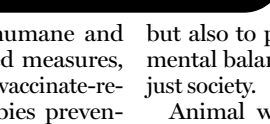
importance during times of crisis. In the past, livestock were often left behind during floods and other disasters, causing severe losses for farming communities. Today, initiatives such as Pakistan's first Disaster Zone Farm Animal Shelter are helping address this challenge. These efforts are guided by the "One Health, One Welfare" approach, a global paradigm promoted by organizations like the FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization), WHO (World Health Organization) and WOA (World Organisation for Animal Health) to unite human health, environmental protection, and animal welfare under a single policy framework. By doing so, they safeguard livelihoods, strengthen rural

economies, and support food security.

Yet policies and institutions alone cannot create a more humane society. Laws can punish cruelty, but they cannot teach compassion. That responsibility belongs to each of us, often through simple acts such as placing water outside during extreme heat, slowing down when animals cross the road, or speaking up against abuse. As Pakistan moves forward, its progress should be measured not only by roads, buildings, or economic indicators, but also by how it treats its most vulnerable and voiceless inhabitants. Recognizing our responsibility toward animals is not simply good for them; it is essential for building a kinder and more civilized society.

Analysis

Syeda Aaleen Hussain



 Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
171,739.44	174,429.92
Day's High	Day's Low
175,237.59	171,655.09
Index Value	Change
16,746,772,249	−2690.48
Percentage	Time
−1.54%	23 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,639.17	−77.80
Percentage	Time
−0.73%	23 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT +1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,729.31	−489.27
Percentage	Time
−0.94%	23 Jul, 1:28 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,422.60	+307.00
Percentage	Time
+0.46%	23 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

ICCI Urges
Government
to Prioritize
Ease of Doing
Business for
Economic
Growth



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has called on policymakers to make ease of doing business central to Pakistan's economic agenda, saying a business-friendly environment is essential for growth, investment and job creation.

Speaking to a delegation from the Traders Welfare Association, Steel Market I-10/3, he said ICCI is actively raising business community concerns with FBR, CDA, Islamabad Police, District Administration, IESCO and other institutions. He reaffirmed ICCI's role as the collective voice of traders and industrialists, stressing that consultation and consensus are key to lasting solutions.

Haji Zafar, Secretary General, sought ICCI's help for allotment of remaining plots to steel fabricators and flagged issues of encroachments, sewerage, streetlights and poor infrastructure. He also demanded removal of temporary huts, citing security risks.

The session was moderated by former ICCI Senior VP Khalid Chaudhry and attended by executive members and a large number of traders.

ICCI reiterated its commitment to work with authorities to resolve these issues and improve the business environment in Islamabad.

Bangladesh urges Pakistani
industrialists to deepen trade ties,
invites SITE delegation

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bangladesh's Deputy High Commissioner in Karachi, H. E. Muhammad Sakib Sadakat, has urged Pakistan and Bangladesh to strengthen bilateral trade and deepen economic cooperation by encouraging greater business-to-business engagement, saying both countries possess significant untapped commercial potential that can be unlocked through closer collaboration and increased exchange of trade delegations.

Speaking during a meeting with a delegation of the S. I. T. E. Association of Industry (SAI), the deputy high commissioner invited Pakistani industrialists to visit Bangladesh to explore investment and trade opportunities, assuring them of the High Commission's full support in facilitating business contacts and market access.

The SAI delegation was led by President Abdul Rehman Fudda and included Senior Vice President Ahmed Zulfikar Chaudhry, Vice President Muhammad Tahir Goreja, former President Abdul Rasheed, and Chairman of the International Relations and Diplomatic Affairs Committee Junaid-ur-Rehman.



During the meeting, both sides discussed measures to enhance bilateral trade, diversify

the range of traded products, facilitate the exchange of business delegations, and improve overall trade connectivity.

The industrialists highlighted the need to increase the frequency of direct flights between Pakistan and Bangladesh and expand sea cargo services, saying improved logistics would help reduce trade costs and significantly boost bilateral commerce.

Deputy High Commissioner encouraged Pakistani exporters to study the Bangladeshi market and align their products with local demand, describing Bangladesh as a promising destination for Pakistani exports and investment. He assured the delegation that the Bangladesh Deputy High Commission would extend every possible assistance to businesses interested in entering the Bangladeshi market.

He emphasised that sustained engagement between the private sectors of both countries, coupled with stronger institutional cooperation, would help unlock the full potential of bilateral trade and investment.

Raini session

ISLAMABAD: Vehicles drive through Faisal Avenue during rain in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Nestlé Pakistan
continues its
growth momentum
in H1 2026

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Nestlé Pakistan net sales for the six-month period ended June 30, 2026, amounted to PKR 107 billion, representing a growth of 5.7%. The Company successfully sustained business momentum through increased investment behind its brands, consumer centric innovations & renovations, focused marketplace executions, and strengthening export route-to-market.

An improved topline,

disciplined overhead management, and continuous focus on value chain optimization initiatives have resulted in an increase of 5.7% in gross profit as compared to the same period last year. However, this improvement in gross profit reduced to 2.8% at operating profit level mainly due to increased investment behind brands and higher distribution costs, driven by fuel prices. Net profit after tax declined by 4.3% mainly impacted due to higher incidence of taxation.

PMEX and IFC
Launch Agriculture
Roadshow to Promote
Deliverable Maize
Futures

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI, PAKISTAN: Pakistan Mercantile Exchange Limited (PMEX) and the International Finance Corporation (IFC) have launched a nationwide Agriculture Roadshow Series to create awareness about regulated deliverable agricultural futures contracts.

The first roadshow was held in Pakpattan, Punjab on July 20, 2026, with around 125 farmers, traders, commission agents, processors, feed manufacturers and brokers. Pakpattan was chosen as a key maize-producing and trading hub.

The session focused on the PMEX Deliverable Yellow Maize Futures Contract, which offers exchange-based price discovery, standardized quality, regulated settlement, and physical delivery

through approved centers. The program included presentations, a trading platform demo, and a Q&A.

IFC is the strategic partner providing technical and financial support to strengthen agricultural



market infrastructure and risk-management tools. Meskay & Femtee Trading Company, a licensed PMEX broker, facilitated local stakeholder participation.

PMEX plans to hold more roadshows in major agricultural regions. Trading in the Deliverable Yellow Maize Futures Contract is available through licensed PMEX brokers.

Leading Public and Private Sector
Institutions Honoured at IAP
Partner Awards 2026

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Twenty-one leading public sector, private sector and development institutions were honoured at the IAP Partner Awards 2026, organised by the Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP) at the historic Mohatta Palace in recognition of their outstanding contributions to Pakistan's insurance ecosystem.

Among the recipients were the Prime Minister's National Health Program (Sehat Card), Asian Development Bank (ADB), Sindh Police, Sindh Revenue Board, Central Depository Company (CDC), iLINK, and several other organisations recognised for their leadership in innovation, financial inclusion, digital transformation, public service and industry development.

The awards were presented by Rana Ahsan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, together



with Shoaib Javed Hussain, Chairman of the Insurance Association of Pakistan (IAP).

The ceremony was attended by senior

leaders from the insurance industry, government, regulatory authorities, financial institutions, development organisations and the corporate sector.

Kaspersky Warns Mobile-Data Buyers About
Scammers Posing as Telecom Operators

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: With tourist season driving up demand for mobile internet, Kaspersky has flagged a rise in scams targeting people buying mobile connections and SIM cards worldwide.

Cybercriminals are creating fake telecom websites that closely mimic real operator portals to steal phone numbers, personal details, and banking information. Kaspersky identified multiple examples:

1. Fake login pages copying major telecom brands operating in

Asia, Africa and Europe. Some look different, others closely mimic the real login page to trick users into entering credentials.

2. Fake top-up sites posing as international operators in North Africa, the Middle East and Southeast Asia, asking users to enter card details to recharge data plans.
3. Fake bill-payment pages asking for personal data to "check and pay" bills, aimed at harvesting info for fraud or account hacking.

Kaspersky cybersecurity expert Tatyana Kulikova warned that AI is making these fake pages more

convincing. She advised using official apps or eSIMs to avoid suspicious sites, and to verify domains for misspellings or extra characters.

Safety tips:

- Double-check websites and sender emails before entering data
- Buy eSIMs through official apps/stores like Kaspersky eSIM Store
- Use security software with anti-phishing, such as Kaspersky Premium, which was "Approved" in AV-Comparatives 2025 Fake Shops Detection test.

Entering data on fraudulent sites can lead to financial loss, spam, and fraud calls.



Punjab Youth Games to be country’s biggest talent hunt programme: Sports Minister

 **Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar has said the Punjab Youth Games will serve as the country’s largest talent hunt programme, providing a platform to identify and nurture future champions for national and international competitions.

He made these remarks during a meeting with Secretary Sports Punjab Fazal ur Rehman and Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi at the National Hockey Stadium on Wednesday.

The meeting reviewed preparations for three major upcoming sporting events: the CM Punjab Champions League, the Punjab Youth Games and the Pakistan-China Friendship Games.

The minister stressed the importance of implementing Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz’s vision of promoting sports by creating greater opportunities for young athletes across the province. He expressed confidence that the CM Punjab Champions League would help discover emerging sporting talent.

Referring to the Pakistan-China Friendship Games, Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said the event would be organised to mark the 75th anniversary



of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China, further strengthening sporting and cultural ties between the two countries.

Describing the Punjab Youth Games as the largest sporting festival

in the province’s history, he said the event would offer thousands of young athletes an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and compete at a high level.

The minister reiterated the Punjab government’s commitment

to expanding youth participation in sports, adding that developing modern sports facilities and quality infrastructure remains a top priority to ensure the long-term growth of sports in Punjab.

PCB unveils Men’s Domestic Cricket Calendar For Season 2026-27 with ICC Cricket World Cup Preparation in Sharp Focus, says official

 **Asim Tanveer**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board has today unveiled the Men’s Domestic Cricket Calendar for the season 2026-27 which is set to run from 11 August 2026 to 15 June 2027. The upcoming domestic season will include two List-A, three first-class, two non-first-class three-day, two T20, an U19 50-over and an U19 three-day, U15 50-over and an U17 two-day tournament along with District Challenge Leagues, Inter-District U19, Inter-District senior three-day and School Cricket in 100 districts.

The domestic cricket calendar has been designed with a vision to cater to the development and preparatory requirement of national, domestic, emerging, age-group and aspiring cricketers across the length and breadth of the country.

At the heart of the 2026-27 domestic calendar sit two List-A tournaments, which kick-start the season as focus shifts to the preparations for ICC Cricket World Cup in 2027 in South Africa scheduled from 4 October to 21 November 2027.

Another major development in strengthening the regional cricket framework and widening the player development and scouting net is the introduction of one extra regional team from Sialkot and Peshawar, respectively. These two regions along with Lahore and Karachi become the only four of the 16 regions to have two teams each.

Quaid-e-Azam Trophy—the oldest and the most prestigious event in Pakistan’s domestic cricket calendar – will see two divisions in 2026-27 with the previously non-first-class four-day event Hanif Mohammad Trophy’s status being changed to four-day first-class event and has been named Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Silver.

The PCB has also arranged a red-ball event for U19 cricketers of all 16 regions comprising of 47 three-day matches. They will also take part in a 50-over tournament with both the tournaments running concurrently as PCB looks to develop the future cohort of professional cricketers.

The U15 One-Day and U17 two-day cups across the 16 regions will continue as they took place in the previous season, while the Districts will continue to play Challenge league before Inter-District U19 and Inter-District senior tournaments.

PCB Talent Hunt Programme for Schools has been expanded from 450 schools to 1200 and from 39 districts to 100 districts for the 2026-27 season.

Below are further details of the Domestic Cricket Calendar

Regional Cricket
The regions will take part in Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and National T20 Cup. Both tournaments are divided into two divisions.

Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Gold will comprise of top eight teams of the previous edition. The tournament will run from 1 November to 17 December in Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad and Rawalpindi with each team playing seven first-class matches before the top two lock horns in the final to determine the winner of the premier first-class tournament.

The Quaid-e-Azam Trophy silver will comprise of 12 teams which include the two new teams from Peshawar and Sialkot, two relegated teams (Abbottabad and Bahawalpur) and the eight teams who featured in Hanif Mohammad Trophy last year and couldn’t qualify.

These 12 teams will be divided into two groups of six each. After every team has played five matches in their group on single-league round robin basis, the toppers of each group will face off in the final. The tournament will run from 1 November to 5 December.

The winner of the QeAT Silver will secure promotion to the Gold division for season 2027-28, while the bottom teams of the Gold division will be relegated to Silver.

The National T20 Cup Silver will comprise of 12 teams and will take place in Lahore from 5 February to 19 February. The two finalists will qualify for National T20 Cup Gold, which will also take place at the same venue from 23 to February to 6 March with 10 teams taking part.

Departmental Cricket

The President’s Cup Grade-I is scheduled in Karachi from 21 August to 8 September with eight teams taking part in it. At the end of the single-league round robin stage, the top four teams will contest the semi-finals, followed by the final.

The President’s Trophy Grade-I first-class and Grade-II Gold and Silver will all begin on the same day – 12 September – across eight cities. With this arrangement, around 34 departmental teams

are set to be in action in four-day first-class and three-day non-first-class tournaments.

Age-Group Cricket

The 20 U19 regional teams are set to be treated to the best possible development pathway as they will take part in National U19 Cup and Championship with both the tournaments scheduled to be played in white-ball and red-ball rounds. They will take place in Faisalabad, Peshawar, Sialkot and Multan from 15 September 6 November.

The 20 U15 regional teams will take part in One-Day tournament from 22 October to 6 November, while the two-day National U17 Cup will take place from 10 November to 5 December. Age group trials for U15 and U17 teams and U19 district teams will take place inn September.

Osama Sharoon, Senior General Manager Domestic Cricket Operations PCB:

It is our great pleasure to announce the 2026-27 Domestic cricket season which promises to be a memorable one with a number of exciting tournaments lined-up and especially with all of our 16 regions playing first-class cricket. Departmental cricket continues to be on the rise and we have also arranged red-ball three-day matches for U19 players.

We are incredibly thankful to honorable Chairman PCB for his support and guidance in providing first-class cricket opportunities to all regions, for establishing year-long regional academies and for extending all the required leadership and financial support to the extensive domestic cricket circuit in the country by keeping the players’ interest as the first priority.

This year the focus has been pinned on Pakistan men’s team’s preparations for the Cricket World Cup and for that the Domestic Cricket Operations Department has strategically arranged two List-A tournaments to start the season. With a number of top-quality national and emerging stars appearing this year in the various domestic tournaments, the fans will surely enjoy the coming season and our cricketers will develop by leaps and bounds.”

Men’s Domestic Cricket Calendar 2026-27

National Senior Events (With formats, tentative venues and tentative windows)
National Champions Cup – Four

teams–List A – Multan – 11 to 18 August

President’s Cup Grade-I – Eight teams – List A – Karachi – 21 August to 8 September

President’s Trophy Grade-I – Eight teams – Four-day first-class – Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Rawalpindi – 12 September to 28 October

President’s Trophy Grade-II (Gold) – 14 teams – non-first-class three-day – Karachi, Lahore, Sheikhupura, Peshawar – 12 September to 19 October

President’s Trophy Grade-II (Silver) – 14 teams – non-first-class three-day – Bahawalpur and Sheikhupura 12 September to 19 October

Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (Gold) – Eight teams – four-day first-class–Islamabad, Peshawar, Abbottabad, Rawalpindi – 1 November to 17 December (Bottom team at the end of tournament will be relegated to Silver for 2027-28 season)

Quaid-e-Azam Trophy (Silver) – 12 teams – four-day first-class – Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan – 1 November to 5 December (Winner of the tournament will be promoted to Gold in 2027-28 season)

National T20 Cup (Silver) – 12 teams – Lahore – 5 February to 19 February 2027

National T20 Cup (Gold) – 10 teams – Lahore – 23 February to 6 March 2027

Age-group Events
National U19 Championship (three-day) and National U19 Cup (50-over) – Faisalabad, Peshawar, Sialkot, Multan – 15 September to 6 November

U15 and U17 in all 16 regions and U19 trials in – September

National U15 Cup – 20 teams – 50-over – Faisalabad, Peshawar, Sialkot – 22 October to 6 November

National U17 Cup – 20 teams – two-day–Faisalabad, Peshawar, Sialkot – 10 November to 5 December

District events and School Cricket
District Challenge League – Two-day intra-district matches – 15 March to 10 April 2027

Regional Inter-District – 112 district and zonal teams – 3-day matches – 12 April to 20 May 2027

Challenge League U19 – 50-over intra-district matches – November 2026
Regional Inter-District U19 – 112 district and zonal teams – 25 May to 15 June 2027

PCB Talent Hunt Programme for Schools – August to November 2026

Policy Research Challenge 2026 concludes, empowering youth to drive disaster risk reduction policy in Pakistan

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The four-day Policy Research Challenge (PRC) 2026 bootcamps concluded successfully, bringing together 16 adolescent and 17 youth researchers from across Pakistan to develop evidence-based policy solutions for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR).

Held under Pur Azm Pakistan – Generation Unlimited, the initiative is a partnership of UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, PMYP, NDMA and SoLE. The program aimed to build capacity through expert sessions, mentorship and collaborative learning on policy and action research.

Participants were trained on Pakistan’s DRR framework, anticipatory action, resilient communities, evidence-based policymaking, research methods and disaster preparedness. They also received guidance on research design, data analysis and pitching policy recommendations.

Speaking at the bootcamps, Dr. Muhammad Ali Malik, Joint Secretary PMYP, highlighted youth’s role in shaping inclusive policies. UNFPA and NDMA officials stressed the importance of youth participation and evidence-driven planning for disaster resilience.

The challenge ended with research proposals presented to an expert panel. 5 adolescent and 10 youth projects were selected for grants and mentorship to further develop policy solutions.

The PRC reflects a shared commitment to equipping young people with research, leadership and advocacy skills to strengthen Pakistan’s resilience and development agenda.

ACP pays tribute to Austrian mountaineer for selfless rescue mission

The ceremony, held at the ACP headquarters under the patronage of ACP President Maj. Gen. (Retd) Irfan Arshad, was attended by Austrian Ambassador to Pakistan Wolfgang Oliver Kutschera as chief guest.

Secretary Ministry of Inter-Provincial Coordination (IPC) Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Director General Pakistan Sports Board Yawar Hussain, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic community, renowned mountaineers, climbers and media representatives also attended the event.

According to the ACP, Woerle abandoned his summit attempt after finding Pakistani high-altitude porter Murtaza in critical condition on the summit ridge of Broad Peak.

With the assistance of American climber Dan Buonomo, he successfully rescued the porter and brought him safely to Camp 3, placing human life above personal achievement.

Speaking on the occasion, ACP President Irfan Arshad said Woerle’s selfless act embodied the true spirit of mountaineering and would continue to inspire climbers across the world.

He said such humanitarian actions further strengthened the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Austria while promoting ethical values within the international mountaineering community.

Austrian Ambassador Wolfgang Oliver Kutschera appreciated the ACP for recognizing an exceptional act of courage and praised Woerle’s humanitarian spirit and commitment to save a fellow mountaineer.

On the occasion, the ACP president presented a commemorative shield and a Certificate of Honour to Lukas Woerle in recognition of his bravery, sacrifice and invaluable contribution to save the life of the Pakistani high-altitude porter.

The Alpine Club of Pakistan reiterated its commitment to promote responsible, ethical and humanitarian values in mountaineering, saying acts of courage and compassion such as those demonstrated by Woerle continue to inspire the global mountaineering community.

Lahore Qalandars begin GSL 2026 campaign with commanding win over Perth Scorchers XI

Lahore Qalandars launched their ExxonMobil Global Super League (GSL) 2026 campaign in impressive fashion, defeating Perth Scorchers XI by 16 runs in the tournament opener at the Providence Stadium on Wednesday, thanks to sparkling half-centuries from Shayan Jahangir and Farhan Yousaf, followed by a disciplined bowling performance led by Mohammad Imran.

After being invited to bat first by Perth Scorchers XI captain Ashton Turner, the Pakistan Super League (PSL) champions recovered from an early setback to post a competitive 171/7 in their allotted 20 overs. Opener Shayan Jahangir laid the foundation with an enterprising 65 off 45 balls, striking eight boundaries and three towering sixes. Displaying excellent timing and composure, he anchored the innings before being dismissed in the 14th over after giving Lahore Qalandars a strong platform.

The momentum was maintained brilliantly by Pakistan Under-19 captain Farhan Yousaf, who produced an explosive unbeaten 50 off just 23 deliveries. His innings, laced with five fours and three sixes, provided the late acceleration that lifted the Qalandars beyond the 170-run mark. The youngster’s match-winning knock earned him the Player of the Match award.

Apart from the two half-centurions, only Abdullah Shafique (12) and skipper Michael Bracewell (10) managed to reach double figures as Perth’s bowlers kept the middle order under pressure. Fast bowler Jhye Richardson was the standout performer for the Scorchers with 3-37, while Brody Couch claimed two wickets. D’Arcy Short and Ashton Agar picked up one wicket each.

In reply, Perth Scorchers XI never truly gained momentum despite a few promising partnerships and were restricted to 155/7, falling 16 runs short of the target. Pakistan batter Usman Khan top-scored with a determined 41 off 32 balls, including three boundaries and two sixes, while veteran West Indies opener Andre Fletcher provided an aggressive start with 35 from 22 deliveries.

Iran War at Five Months: Who Won What?

 **Continued from Page 4**

and regional stability. Military inferiority did not translate into strategic irrelevance.

The evolution of the conflict also raises an important strategic question. Had the dispute remained focused exclusively on nuclear weaponization, diplomatic mechanisms could have addressed inspections, enrichment limits and verification. Instead, the Strait of

Hormuz increasingly became the defining strategic issue, suggesting that maritime control, regional influence and global energy security had become as significant as the nuclear question itself.

The conflict offers sobering lessons for all parties. For the United States, overwhelming military superiority cannot substitute for clearly defined political objectives. Destroying military assets does not neces-

sarily change state behavior, and prolonged military campaigns become increasingly difficult to justify without a credible political end state.

Iran has also learned costly lessons. Its conventional military infrastructure proved vulnerable to sustained precision strikes, reinforcing the importance of dispersed capabilities, mobility and asymmetric deterrence. Yet survival should not be mistaken for

success. The war has imposed enormous economic, military and human costs that will burden Iran for years.

Israel demonstrated remarkable intelligence penetration and operational reach, significantly weakening Iran’s military infrastructure. Nevertheless, it did not eliminate Iran’s capacity to retaliate, dismantle its strategic doctrine or fundamentally alter the regional balance of power.

Five months into the conflict, the verdict is nuanced. The United States and Israel won the contest of conventional firepower. Iran won the contest of political survival. Washington demonstrated unmatched military capability but has yet to achieve all of its evolving political objectives. Tehran suffered severe military damage but preserved the essential pillars of its national strategy.

The war therefore has no

absolute victor. It has produced different forms of success and different forms of failure for each side. Military power has shaped the battlefield, but it has not settled the political dispute. Lasting stability will ultimately depend not on another round of airstrikes or missile exchanges, but on a negotiated framework addressing nuclear safeguards, regional security, missile restraint and the future governance of the Strait of Hormuz.

The enduring lesson is simple: wars may be won militarily, but peace is secured politically. The side that best aligns military power with achievable political objectives ultimately defines success.

The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Michigan, USA

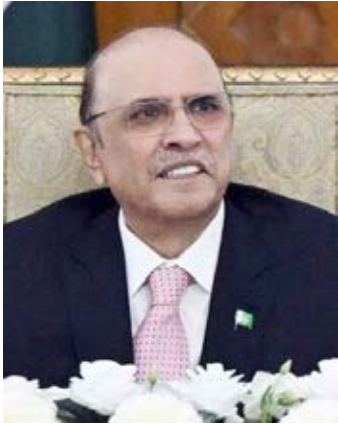
Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets a delegation of FAMSUN, a Chinese firm, led by Mr. Jack Chen, Chief Executive Officer on Thursday.



Photo: PID

President directs coordinated measures to protect lives and property amid intensifying monsoon rains



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has directed all federal, provincial and local authorities to intensify coordinated preparedness, rescue and relief measures as the country enters a critical phase of the monsoon season, with increasing rains raising the risk of flash floods, cloud bursts, glacial lake outburst

floods (GLOFs), landslides, river flooding and urban flooding in vulnerable areas.

The President expressed deep sorrow over the loss of precious lives and damage to homes, infrastructure and property caused by the recent rains and related incidents. He extended his heartfelt condolences to the families who have lost loved ones and expressed solidarity with all those affected.

The President directed the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) as well as provincial and local authorities to maintain close coordination and ensure timely dissemination of early warnings. He called for continuous monitoring of rainfall, river flows and water levels in upper catchment regions, particularly in Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and directed downstream areas to make advance preparations for possible flooding.

Cabinet Division releases record of 21 Toshakhana gifts

City Desk

The Cabinet Division has released details of 21 valuable gifts received by senior government officials between April and June 2026, including items presented to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the deputy prime minister.

According to the Toshakhana record, the prime minister received a sugar bowl, a valuable pen, a model of the Prophet's Mosque, a shield and a tie.

He also received a model of the Chinese space station, a cup, a watch and another shield during the three-month period.

The deputy prime minister received a Chinese leather belt, a model of an Egyptian statue and cufflinks, the record showed.

The gifts received by both officials have been deposited in the Toshakhana.

The Cabinet Division said the monetary value of the gifts was being assessed.

Senator Kamran Murtaza raises concerns over petrol price proposal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Kamran Murtaza has submitted a calling attention notice in the Senate over the federal government's proposed plan to revise petroleum product prices on a daily basis instead of the existing fortnightly mechanism.

According to the notice, Senator Kamran sought an explanation from the government regarding the reasons behind the proposed policy and the procedure for its implementation.

Kamran Murtaza expressed concern that daily changes in petroleum prices could increase inflation, transport fares and the prices of essential commodities.

The notice also questioned the possible impact of the proposed system on business activities and the cost of living.

The senator further asked the government to explain what measures it plans to take to protect consumers from unusual price fluctuations and requested that details of those safeguards be presented before the Senate.

5 Food Dept officials suspended over alleged connivance in wheat hoarding case

KARACHI: The Government of Sindh has taken another significant step to strengthen transparency and accountability in its province-wide campaign against illegal wheat hoarding by suspending five officials of the Food Department over allegations of misconduct, negligence and suspected facilitation of wheat hoarders.

The action was taken on the directives of Provincial Minister for Food Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman following the receipt of a detailed report submitted by the Commissioner Sukkur Division regarding recent anti-hoarding operations in District Khairpur. Acting swiftly on the findings of the report, the Food Department placed five officials under immediate suspension pending a transparent departmental inquiry.

Provincial Minister for Food Makhdoom Mehboob-uz-Zaman said that the Sindh Government had adopted a zero-tolerance policy against corruption, abuse of authority and any form of collusion with hoarders. He said that the government's campaign against

illegal wheat stockpiling was aimed at protecting consumers, ensuring uninterrupted availability of wheat and flour, preventing artificial shortages and maintaining price stability across the province.

According to the report, intelligence-based verification revealed that substantial quantities of wheat were allegedly shifted over the past two days from previously identified commercial premises in Abul Wah Chowk, Gambat, to properties reportedly owned or controlled by influential individuals in an apparent attempt to evade enforcement action by the Food Department.

The inquiry further suggested that confidential operational information regarding planned raids may have been leaked in advance, enabling certain wheat traders to conceal or relocate illegally hoarded stocks before the arrival of raiding teams. The report observed that, if established through inquiry, such actions would constitute gross misconduct, abuse of official position and active facilitation of illegal hoarding.

DPM Dar at ASEAN MoU Highlights Kashmir and Gulf Crisis as Key Threats to Peace

Spokesman Report

MANILA: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, addressing the 33rd ASEAN Regional Forum Ministerial Meeting in Manila on July 23, urged the international community to support peaceful resolutions to core regional conflicts. He identified the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute and India's unilateral decision to hold the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance as central to South Asian instability.

Dar said failure to resolve Kashmir, in line with the UN Charter, Security Council reso-



lutions and Kashmiri aspirations, continues to undermine regional security. He condemned India's move on the Indus Waters Treaty as a violation of international obligations that threatens the lives

and livelihoods of 250 million Pakistanis, calling it an "arbitrary, illegal, unilateral action" that must be addressed.

On the Gulf crisis, Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's role in facilitating peace, including a cease-

fire and the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding. He thanked the US, Iran, Gulf states and other partners for their trust and urged restraint, dialogue, reopening of the Strait of Hormuz, and resumption of shipping.

He also outlined seven other challenges: Gaza, counter-terrorism, Afghanistan, Ukraine, South China Sea, and climate change. Dar condemned atrocities in Gaza and reiterated support for a sovereign Palestinian state with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as capital. On terrorism, he noted Pakistan's 90,000 lives lost and \$150 billion in losses, and

called on the Afghan Taliban to prevent groups like TTP from using Afghan soil.

Dar reaffirmed support for diplomatic solutions in Ukraine and the South China Sea, and Pakistan's One-China policy. Citing Pakistan's climate vulnerability despite <1% of emissions, he called for cooperation based on common but differentiated responsibilities.

He welcomed the Manila Plan of Action 2026 and pledged Pakistan's commitment to ASEAN's consensus-driven approach and cooperation on AI, cybersecurity, food and energy security, and disaster resilience.

Iran President Pezeshkian calls for stronger ties with Pakistan

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Iranian President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian called for more urgent expansion of bilateral collaboration with Pakistan across economic, trade and security sectors, saying current cooperation does not yet reflect both nations' full potential.

While accepting the credentials of new Pakistani Ambassador to Tehran Imran Ahmed Siddiqui, the President described Pakistan-Iran ties as deeper than a conventional neighborly relationship. He said the partnership is rooted in historical, cultural, religious and fraternal bonds, and that Iran views Pakistan as a trusted partner, brotherly nation and "a second home



for all Iranians." He expressed confidence that relations will continue to strengthen.

President Pezeshkian commended Pakistan's leadership for its role in recent

regional developments, specifically praising Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field

Marshal Syed Asim Munir for facilitating dialogue between Iran and the United States. He said such efforts and ongoing Tehran-Islamabad consultations are highly valued by Iran.

He conveyed warm regards to PM Shehbaz, Field Marshal Munir, Deputy PM & Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, and assured the new ambassador of full official support.

Ambassador Siddiqui called Iran-Pakistan ties a model of historic solidarity and reaffirmed commitment to unlocking opportunities in trade, investment and infrastructure. He also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to working with Iran for regional peace and Muslim Ummah unity.

India releases more water into Chenab River sans prior information

City Desk

LAHORE: India has released more water towards Pakistan as there has been a significant increase in the water inflow into the Chenab River as it enters Pakistan from India.

According to official data released by WAPDA, water inflow in the Chenab River at Head Marala has reached 202,700 cusecs. Yesterday, the inflow of water into the Chenab River at Head Marala was 139,700 cusecs.

The water discharge in the Chenab River at Head Marala today stands at 184,700 cusecs.

Sources said that India had not provided Pakistan with advance infor-



mation regarding upstream river flows. A week ago, the water inflow in the Chenab River at Head Marala was 50,300 cusecs.

Pakistan has issued a flood alert after India released a large volume of water

into the Chenab River following heavy rains in occupied Kashmir. Authorities warned that rising water levels could affect nearby areas.

According to Punjab's Irrigation Department, India opened all gates

of the Salal Dam after intense rainfall in the region. The released water is expected to reach Wazirabad through the Chenab River within 48 hours.

Officials said the increased water flow has started raising levels in the Chenab River. Authorities placed Sialkot and Wazirabad districts on high alert due to possible flooding risks.

Water levels in the Chenab River begin to rise in Jhang area as at Head Trimmu water inflow was recorded at 121,000 cusecs. A major flood surge is expected to pass through Head Trimmu within the next 24 hours. There is risk of low-lying areas being submerged by river water.