



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم
ہم سے عبد اللہ بن مسعود نے بیان کیا کہ انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم سے عبد الحمز بن ابی حازم نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے ان کے والد نے اور ان سے انہوں نے بیان کیا کہ میں نے آپ کو یہ فرماتے ہوئے سنا کہ جنت میں ایک کوٹے جتنی جگہ دنیا اور اس میں جو کچھ ہے سب سے بہتر ہے اور اللہ کے راستے میں حج کیا شام کو تھوڑا سا چٹا بھی «الدیابلیہا» سے بہتر ہے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6415)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

CM Punjab pays tribute to 15 soldiers martyred in Tank operation

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the supreme sacrifice of 15 security personnel who embraced martyrdom during an operation against terrorists in Tank. She also commended the security forces and police personnel for eliminating 12 terrorists during the operation.



Pakistan's passport ranking rises to 101st in Henley Index 2026

Pakistan has moved up to the 101st position on the Henley Passport Index 2026, with a visa-free score of 29 destinations, improving from its 103rd ranking a year earlier. Despite the marginal improvement, Pakistan remains among the lowest-ranked passports globally, placed just ahead of Iraq, Syria, and Afghanistan, which occupy the bottom four positions on the index.

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Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif along with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir inaugurates Sky47, Pakistan's first purpose-built, AI-ready Tier III/IV data center and sovereign cloud platform, in Rawalpindi.



Photo: PID

PM Inaugurates Pakistan's First AI Cloud Facility, Calls Digital Infrastructure Key to Future

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated Pakistan's first AI and cloud computing facility, AI Cloud Sky47, describing it as a milestone in the country's digital transformation and a symbol of Pakistan's growing technological capabilities.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, the prime minister praised the engineers, experts

and institutions involved in completing the state-of-the-art facility in record time. He said the project demonstrated that Pakistan could achieve world-class technological initiatives through unity, innovation and determination.

Quoting Allama Muhammad Iqbal, Shehbaz Sharif emphasized that nations are built through visionary thinking and innovation. He said the successful completion of the

project reflected the country's immense talent in both the military and civilian sectors.

The prime minister commended the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and acknowledged the contributions of the Ministry of Information Technology, the IT Secretary and technology partner ZTE in making the project a reality. He said the AI cloud facility, with an initial capacity of 8.5 megawatts, would strengthen Paki-

stan's digital security, technological self-reliance and competitiveness in the global digital economy.

Shehbaz Sharif announced that similar AI and cloud infrastructure would also be established in Karachi and Lahore as part of the government's digital transformation agenda. He directed all state institutions to align their efforts with the country's technological development goals.

The prime minister described the facility as a valuable national asset that would accelerate innovation and support Pakistan's future in artificial intelligence and cloud computing. The ceremony was attended by Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, federal ministers Shaza Fatima Khawaja and Attaulah Tarar, senior government officials and other distinguished guests.

15 Security Personnel Martyred as Forces Foil Militant Attack on Tank Check Post



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Fifteen security personnel and government officials were martyred after militants attacked a joint security check post in Tank district during the night of July 23-24. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the attackers, identified as members of the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), attempted to storm the

check post but were repelled by security forces.

The ISPR said troops responded swiftly, preventing the militants from entering the facility. During the ensuing operation, 12 militants were killed while trying to flee. The attackers also rammed an explosives-laden vehicle into the perimeter wall of the check post, causing extensive damage.

The blast resulted in the martyrdom of 12 Pakistan Army personnel, two police officers, and one former Forest Department official. A sanitisation operation has been launched to clear the area of any remaining militants.

President Zardari and PM Shehbaz condemn Tank terror attack, hail forces for foiling assault

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif strongly condemned the terrorist attack on a joint security checkpoint in Tank district and paid tribute to security forces for repelling the assault.

President Zardari lauded forces for killing 12 militants and foiling the attack, calling it a display of courage and professionalism. He paid tribute to personnel martyred in the line of duty, prayed for them, and offered condolences to their families.

"The nation will never forget the sacrifices of its brave soldiers," he said, adding that terrorists aiming to sabotage peace would not succeed.



PM Shehbaz condemned the "cowardly" attack and commended the timely response. He expressed grief over the martyrdom of 12 Pakistan Army soldiers, 2 police personnel and 1 Forest Department official, and offered prayers for them.

Reaffirming commitment to counterterrorism, the PM said Pakistan will not rest until terrorism is eliminated and security forces will continue operations with full force to rid the country of the militant threat.

Dr. Musadik Malik attends COP31 Preparatory Retreat, Strengthens Climate Cooperation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr. Musadik Malik participated in the Heads of Delegations Retreat in Shamakhi, Azerbaijan, held as part of preparations for the COP31 climate conference scheduled for November 2026 in Antalya, Türkiye.

The retreat brought together delegates to discuss priori-

ties and key agenda items for the upcoming global climate summit.

On the sidelines of the event, Dr. Malik held bilateral meetings with senior officials from Azerbaijan, Türkiye and Kenya. During talks with the Kenyan delegation, both sides discussed developing a new vision for Margalla Hills National Park and strengthening the Islamabad Wildlife Management Board by drawing

on the successful model of Nairobi National Park. Kenya also agreed to support Pakistan through a proposed Memorandum of Understanding.

In separate meetings with Azerbaijani and Turkish officials, Dr. Malik discussed climate diplomacy and enhancing cooperation on climate action, reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to international collaboration in addressing climate challenges.



Petrol, Diesel Prices Raised for Fifth Consecutive Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Friday increased the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD) for the fifth consecutive day under the country's newly introduced daily fuel pricing mechanism.

According to an official noti-

fication, the price of petrol has been increased by Rs3.66 per litre, while high-speed diesel (HSD) has gone up by Rs4.80 per litre. The revised prices came into effect immediately.

The latest increase follows four consecutive daily hikes announced earlier this week. On Thursday, petrol prices were raised by Rs4.40 per litre

and diesel by Rs3.62 per litre, following earlier increases of Rs6.39 and Rs4.93 per litre for petrol and Rs7.83 and Rs7.15 per litre for diesel on the preceding days.

Last week, the government replaced the weekly petroleum pricing system with a daily pricing mechanism, authorising the Oil and Gas Regu-

latory Authority (OGRA) to determine ex-depot fuel prices using a rolling seven-day average of international oil prices.

Officials said the new system would allow faster adjustments in line with global market fluctuations and improve transparency in fuel pricing.

The continued increase in

fuel prices is expected to intensify inflationary pressures by raising transportation, logistics and production costs. Higher diesel prices will particularly affect the freight, agriculture and industrial sectors, while rising petrol prices will increase travel expenses for motorists and commuters across the country.

CM Maryam Nawaz Promises Electric Buses, Airport & Welfare Model for AJK at Mirpur Rally

 **Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif addressed a large public gathering in Mirpur, declaring the deep bond between Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. She called herself “a daughter of Kashmir” and said her roots are in the region.

She announced 10 electric buses for Mirpur and pledged to bring

Punjab-style welfare initiatives to AJK, including Kisan Card, Rashan Card, Safe City projects, and the Suthra Punjab cleanliness campaign. She said facilities in housing, health, education and policing available in Punjab would also be provided in AJK.

CM Maryam reaffirmed Nawaz Sharif’s commitment to build an international airport in Mirpur, stating “everyone knows Nawaz Sharif

honours his promises.” She credited PML-N governments with building roads connecting Murree, Kohala and AJK, ending load-shedding, making Pakistan a nuclear power, and delivering most major projects in the region.

Calling Kashmir “heaven on earth,” she noted its tourism potential could fund schools, colleges and hospitals. She pointed out that despite Mirpur’s fine houses, its roads remain poor and



promised development would now reach the city. She praised public turnout despite 40°C heat in Mirpur and rain in Muzaffarabad as proof of support for PML-N.

She highlighted Punjab’s record: 200,000 people received housing

assistance, thousands allotted five-marla plots, 200,000 acres of state land distributed, doorstep medicine delivery for heart, diabetes, cancer and TB patients, and initiatives like “Maryam ko Batayein” app and doorstep policing.

Expressing confidence that PML-N has already won the political contest in AJK, she urged voters to support the party, saying a PML-N victory would “change the destiny of Azad Jammu and Kashmir” through development and public welfare.

Cleaning with little hands

ISLAMABAD: A little boy cleaning the bank of Rawal Lake with his toys machines to highlight pollution in lake, which is main water, resaved of twin-cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

RPO Faisalabad Holds Open Court, Hears Over 240 Petitions

FAISALABAD: In line with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s vision, RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera held an open court at the Regional Police Office to provide prompt, impartial justice to citizens. More than 240 petitioners participated, with the RPO taking immediate action on 83 petitions and directing the rest to concerned officers for inquiry and timely reports.

RPO Sukhera stated that speedy justice, protection of citizens’ lives and property, and timely redressal remain top police priorities. He warned that mistreatment of citizens, delays in registering cases, and negligence of duty would not be tolerated, affirming strict enforcement of a zero-tolerance policy.

He directed officers to investigate cases transparently and on merit, free from pressure or influence, completing



all actions within legal timeframes. He emphasized that open courts aim to

deliver swift, transparent justice to common citizens, particularly the

vulnerable, while strengthening public trust in the police.

Faisalabad Labor Federations Stage Mass Protest Against Inflation, Unemployment and Illegal Taxes

FAISALABAD: All major labor federations and trade unions, under the Labor Action Committee, staged a large protest march from District Council Chowk to Ghanta Ghar against the industrial crisis, inflation, unemployment, budget neglect of workers, illegal electricity taxes, and rising petroleum and LPG prices. Thousands of workers participated, chanting slogans against government policies.

Speakers criticized the budget for ignoring workers, citing factory closures and rising unemployment in Faisalabad’s industrial sector. They demanded removal of illegal electricity taxes, abolition of the petroleum levy, reduced LPG and fuel prices, industrial revival, employment generation, minimum wage implementation, and social security/EOBI coverage for all workers.

Leaders warned that if demands



remain unmet, the protest movement will expand nationwide, including sit-ins and further demonstrations.

The rally was addressed by numerous labor leaders including Baba Latif, Mian Ijaz Hussain, Mian Shahbaz

Ahmed, Malik Nazir, and others representing various unions across Faisalabad’s industrial sectors.

AJK Chief Justice and Judges mourn martyrdom of Balochistan Judge in Terror Attack

 **Bureau Report**



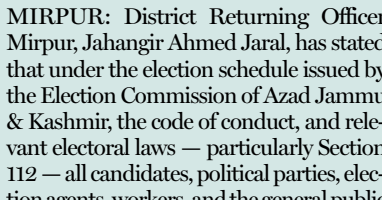
MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Justice of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan, Senior Judge of the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Justice Raza Ali Khan, and Judge of the Supreme Court of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Justice Khalid Yousaf Chaudhry, have expressed deep grief and sorrow over the martyrdom of District and Sessions Judge Mastung, Balochistan, Abdul Hakeem Kakar, and his gunman Muhammad Zaman, in a terrorist attack.

In their condolence statement, the honorable Chief Justice and Judges said that Abdul Hakeem Kakar was an honest, capable, and dutiful judicial officer who rendered invaluable services for the supremacy of law, upholding of the Constitution, and provision of justice. His martyrdom is an irreparable loss not only for the judiciary of Balochistan but for the judiciary of the entire country.

The honorable Chief Justice and Judges prayed for the elevation of the ranks of Abdul Hakeem Kakar and Muhammad Zaman, for their exalted place in paradise, and for patience and fortitude for the bereaved families. They also expressed heartfelt sympathy and solidarity with the families of the martyrs, the judiciary of Balochistan, and the entire legal community in this difficult time.

Mirpur Elections: Campaigning ends at midnight July 25-26, warns Returning Officer

 **Bureau Report**



MIRPUR: District Returning Officer Mirpur, Jahangir Ahmed Jaral, has stated that under the election schedule issued by the Election Commission of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, the code of conduct, and relevant electoral laws — particularly Section 112 — all candidates, political parties, election agents, workers, and the general public of District Mirpur are hereby informed that election campaigning will come to an end at midnight between July 25 and 26, 2026.

He said that after this deadline, holding, participating in, or organizing any public meeting, procession, rally, corner meeting, or election gathering of any kind in the concerned electoral constituencies will be legally prohibited. All candidates and political parties must ensure full compliance with the directives and code of conduct of the Election Commission of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, so that the elections can be held in a peaceful, transparent, free, and fair environment.

He made it clear that action will be taken in accordance with the law in case of any violation of the election code of conduct and related laws.

‘Behtar Qadam’ Campaign Reaches 90,000+ Citizens Across Punjab

LAHORE: The Punjab Family Planning Program (PFPP), a World Bank-supported initiative of the Health and Population Departments, announced the successful completion of phase one of its public awareness campaign “Behtar Qadam”. Implemented by RIZ Consulting and Rayn (Pvt) Limited.

Over six months, 650+ activities including university seminars, Sehat Melas and community meetings were held across Punjab, directly reaching more than 90,000 citizens — youth, young couples and community leaders. The campaign raised awareness on maternal and child health, responsible family planning, birth spacing, and youth advocacy through grassroots outreach. Partnerships with 100+ educational institutions helped engage young people in informed, responsible life choices.

Captain Usman, Director Program PFPP, said proper birth spacing with at least a two-year gap is essential to prevent health complications and nutritional deficiencies. “Every family deserves access to quality health services, accurate information, and care for a healthier future.”

PFPP said Behtar Qadam will now expand through enhanced digital and community engagement to further improve awareness and access to essential health information for healthier families and a more prosperous Punjab.

DC Chairs emergency board meeting on possible flood threat

 **Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Acting on the special directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration has intensified precautionary measures in view of a possible flood situation in the River Ravi. An emergency meeting of the District Emergency Board was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Maham Asif Malik to review preparedness, available resources, and contingency plans.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Waqar Akbar Cheema, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Dr. Tariq Usman, all Assistant Commissioners, and representatives of Rescue 1122, the Irrigation, Health, Agriculture, Livestock, Education, Civil Defence, Local Government, Highways, Excise, Buildings, Information, and Forest departments. Deputy Commissioner Maham Asif Malik directed all departments to remain on high alert and ensure close coordination to tackle any flood emergency. She ordered advance planning for the timely evacuation of residents living along the River Ravi, continuous monitoring of vulnerable areas, and completion of all precautionary measures to protect lives and property.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	3:36 am
Zohr	12:14 pm
Asr	5:10 pm
Maghrib	7:14 pm
Isha	8:52 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316

Daily Fuel Price Swings Push Industry Towards Crisis, NKATI Chief Warns

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Faisal Moiz Khan, President of North Karachi Association of Trade & Industry (NKATI), has warned that the government's decision to revise petroleum prices daily is creating deep instability for Pakistan's industry, exports and economy.

Khan said manufacturers already face high inflation, rising costs and energy shortages. Daily fluctuations in petrol and diesel prices add further uncertainty, making it difficult for businesses to remain competitive.

He noted exporters set monthly contracts in advance, but daily fuel changes disrupt cost calculations, pricing agreements and international commitments. Transport costs and raw material prices are also swinging constantly, complicating production schedules and planning.

Khan urged adopting a stable pricing model like regional competitors. If adjustments are needed, prices should be fixed for a set period. He appealed to PM Shehbaz Sharif and relevant ministers to review the policy and introduce a predictable fuel pricing system to protect trade and industry.

Chairman Senate Gillani Calls for National Unity, Lasting Peace and Inclusive Development in Balochistan

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani emphasized that

Balochistan is the cornerstone of Pakistan's unity, prosperity and national security, urging collective efforts for lasting peace and inclusive develop-



ment. Addressing the National Workshop on Balochistan at Aiwan-e-Sadr, he welcomed parliamentarians, civil servants, academia, youth and media, calling the workshop a platform fostering national cohesion.

Gillani highlighted Balochistan's strategic importance due to its coastline, mineral resources and location linking South Asia with Central Asia and the Middle East. While condemning terrorism and externally-backed elements targeting civilians

and development projects, he paid tribute to the Armed Forces, Frontier Corps, Police and law enforcement agencies, reaffirming the Senate's solidarity with security forces and honoring martyrs' sacrifices.

He stressed that sustainable peace requires empowering Baloch youth through education, employment and political participation, alongside security measures. Recalling his premiership, he cited initiatives like the Aghaz-e-Huqoq-e-Balochistan Package and

Seventh NFC Award. He reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to provincial rights and equitable representation.

Gillani urged participants to become ambassadors of national harmony, expressing confidence in Pakistan's youth. He praised Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto's vision for a bicameral legislature ensuring equal provincial representation, and commended civil-military leadership's efforts toward peace in Balochistan and beyond.

Talking to media

ISLAMABAD: Polish cyclist Slawomir Strzelczyk taking to media along with the Ambassador of Poland to Pakistan, Maciej Pisarski at the Embassy of Poland, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

NAVTTC Chairman vows to boost vocational training for Pakistan's youth

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTC) and MNA Engineer Qamar-ul-Islam Raja has emphasized that equipping youth with vocational and technical skills is vital for Pakistan's economic growth and future prosperity.

Addressing supporters who visited to congratulate him, Raja called the country's youth its greatest asset, capable of driving national development through quality technical training. He stressed that skilled youth power economic progress and innovation in today's fast-evolving world, pledging full effort to fulfill the responsibility entrusted to him by the Prime Minister.

A delegation including Malik Tahir Mahmood Awan, Tariq Mahmood Chauhan, Haji Muhammad Hanif, Malik Tanveer Noshahi, and notable figures



from Kallar Syedan, Rawat, Chak Beli Khan and Bahya Sharif visited his office, presenting floral bouquets and expressing confidence in his leadership.

Raja thanked the guests and reaffirmed his commitment to expanding vocational training opportunities for Pakistan's youth.

Free, Responsible Journalism Vital for Democracy and National Development: Governor Sindh

News Desk

KARACHI: Governor Sindh Syed Muhammad Nihal Hashmi has said that free, responsible and constructive journalism is essential for strengthening democracy, ensuring transparent governance and promoting national development.

He expressed these views during a meeting with a delegation of the Karachi Editors Club, led by its President Mubashir Mir, at the Governor House. The meeting discussed challenges facing the media, the role of journalism in national development, youth empowerment, public welfare and other issues of mutual interest.

Mubashir Mir briefed the



Governor on the Karachi Editors Club's activities, including journalist training programmes, media dialogues, seminars and public awareness campaigns. He also requested the allocation of a permanent premises for the Club to establish a modern centre for research, training and professional development.

Governor Hashmi appreciated the Club's efforts to promote ethical journalism and public awareness and assured his full support for its future initiatives. Both sides agreed to enhance cooperation between media organizations and public institutions while promoting professional journalism and capacity-building opportunities for young journalists.

D-8 Disability Forum Launched at Healthcare Expo 2026 Through Karachi Declaration

News Desk

KARACHI: A major step for regional disability inclusion was taken at Healthcare Expo 2026 with the formal establishment of the D-8 Disability Forum through the Karachi Declaration. NDF Pakistan Named Lead Organization

Dr. Kemal Aydin, President of the Ibne Sina Institute and World Council on Aging, Türkiye, announced the new regional alliance to promote rights, inclusion, rehabilitation, and empowerment of persons with disabilities across D-8 countries.

The National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) Pakistan was unanimously designated as the Lead Organization in recognition of its work in advocacy, rehabilitation and humanitarian action. "A Great Honor and Responsibility"

Mr. Abid Lashari, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, President NDF Pakistan, said NDF is committed to working with all D-8 partners to empower persons with disabilities, strengthen Organizations of Persons with Disabilities (OPDs), promote inclusive policies, and enhance regional cooperation. He added the Forum will also ensure representation of marginalized voices, including at COP-31 in Turkey. Forum to Drive Policy, Knowledge & Joint Advocacy

The D-8 Disability Forum will facilitate knowledge sharing, capacity building, policy dialogue and joint advocacy to advance disability rights across the 9 member states: Bangladesh, Egypt, Indonesia, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Türkiye and Azerbaijan. About D-8

Established in 1997, D-8 aims to strengthen economic cooperation, trade, investment, technology exchange and sustainable development among member countries representing over 1 billion people.



Four Drug Suspects Arrested in Attock, 6.15 kg Narcotics Seized

Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police arrested four suspected drug dealers in separate operations across the district and recovered a significant quantity of narcotics, including 1,350 grams of ice (crystal meth), 1,000 grams of heroin, and 3,800 grams of hashish.

According to the police spokesperson, Assistant Sub-Inspector Tahir Ali Khan of Attock Khurd Police Station, along with his team, intercepted and arrested Arif Ullah, son of Namoos Khan, a resident of Bajaur District, during a checking operation. Police recovered 1,350 grams of ice and 1,000 grams of heroin from his possession.

In another operation, Sub-Inspector Khurram Shahzad of City Hassan Abdal Police Station arrested Malik Mehran, son of Muhammad Shoaib, a resident of Hassan Abdal, and recovered 1,600 grams of hashish.

Meanwhile, Assistant Sub-Inspector Aqeel Raza of Injra Police Station arrested Ameen Khan, son of Mian Khan, a resident of Chhab, Tehsil Jand, after recovering 1,500 grams of hashish during a checking operation.

In a separate action, Assistant Sub-Inspector Muhammad Waseem of Hazro Police Station arrested Muhammad Iqbal, son of Ghulam Qadir, a resident of Hazro, after recovering 700 grams of hashish from his possession.

SMEDA Showcases MSME Support Services at Expo Faisalabad 2026

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Building on the success of its "Made in Pakistan" and "Made in Gujranwala" initiatives, the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) has deepened its MSME engagement through participation in the three-day Expo Faisalabad 2026, organized by the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) at Expo Center, Lahore.

SMEDA established a dedicated helpdesk offering information on flagship initiatives, advisory services and free business registration via the SME Registration Portal (SMERP). CEO Nadia Jahangir Seth said the initiative aligns with PM Shehbaz Sharif's vision of inclusive economic growth, describing such expos as platforms for collaboration, learning and market access that help formalize enterprises and connect entrepreneurs with support services.

She highlighted SMEDA's ongoing commitment to MSMEs through exhibitions and capacity-building programs nationwide. SMEDA is also conducting sessions on marketing strategies and export product quality improvement.

Calling Faisalabad Pakistan's textile capital, SMEDA aims to help MSMEs strengthen competitiveness and invited entrepreneurs to visit its helpdesk for advisory services, free registration and training sessions.

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Chitral’s Hidden Paradise Deserves the World’s Attention

Pakistan has long been blessed with an embarrassment of natural riches, and few places illustrate this more vividly than Chitral, where the mighty Tirichmir stands as the Hindu Kush’s crowning peak. Yet as the recent developments in this remote valley reveal, possessing beauty is not the same as being seen. In an age where travel decisions are made on smartphones rather than in travel agencies, Pakistan’s greatest mountain treasures risk remaining invisible simply because they are absent from the digital conversation.

The statistics tell a sobering story. Pakistan is home to five of the world’s fourteen peaks above 8,000 meters, yet its tourism sector generates a fraction of what comparable destinations earn. When China can draw over \$800 billion from tourism while Pakistan struggles to reach even \$15 billion at its peak, the gap is not one of natural endowment but of strategy, marketing and infrastructure.

The efforts now underway in Chitral offer real cause for optimism. The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority’s push to position the region as a premier adventure destination, the waiver of mountain royalty fees for 2026, and ambitious infrastructure proposals like the Mada-klasht-Kumrat cable car all signal serious intent. Equally heartening is the historic ascent of Phargam An Pass by a team that included Pakistan’s first women high-altitude climbers—a milestone that speaks not just to mountaineering achievement but to a broader shift in who gets to claim these landscapes as their own.

Yet as voices from within the industry rightly point out, ropes and climbing boots alone will not carry Tirichmir onto the global stage. Today’s traveler discovers destinations through Instagram reels, YouTube documentaries and blogger recommendations long before booking a ticket. Without a deliberate, well-resourced digital campaign—professional videography, multilingual content, partnerships with international travel influencers—even the most spectacular scenery will remain a secret known only to the few who stumble upon it.

There is also a human dimension that must not be lost amid the branding push. The guides, porters, hoteliers and artisans of Chitral stand to gain the most from a thriving tourism economy, and any strategy must ensure that local communities remain genuine stakeholders rather than passive backdrops to someone else’s adventure marketing.

The mountain has watched over Chitral’s people for generations. Now it falls to policymakers, private investors and digital storytellers to return the favor—ensuring that Tirichmir’s grandeur, and the resilience of the people who call it home, finally reach the audience they deserve.

Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-I

For nearly half a century following the Second World War, the Soviet Union stood as the United States’ principal strategic adversary. The Cold War divided the international system into two competing ideological, political and military blocs. Washington championed liberal democracy and market capitalism, while Moscow promoted centralized communist governance. Their rivalry extended far beyond military confrontation; it encompassed economics, science, technology, diplomacy, intelligence, space exploration and global influence.

The Soviet Union possessed virtually every attribute of a superpower. It maintained one of the world’s largest industrial bases, commanded an immense conventional military, developed strategic nuclear parity with the United States and became the first nation to launch both an artificial satellite (Sputnik) and a human (Yuri Gagarin) into space. Through the Warsaw Pact and extensive political relationships across Eastern Europe, Asia, Africa and Latin America, Moscow projected global influence that challenged American leadership for decades.

However, sustaining competition with the United States imposed enormous economic burdens. Central planning increasingly failed to generate innovation and productivity. Industrial inefficiency, declining economic growth, fiscal

strain from the arms race, and political rigidity gradually weakened the Soviet system. The decade-long Soviet intervention in Afghanistan (1979–1989) further strained national resources and damaged international prestige. While Afghanistan contributed to Soviet exhaustion, historians generally agree that the collapse of the USSR resulted from multiple structural causes rather than any single conflict.

In December 1991, the Soviet Union dissolved into fifteen independent republics. Russia inherited the Soviet Union’s permanent seat on the United Nations Security Council, most of its nuclear arsenal and much of its military-industrial infrastructure. Yet it did not inherit the Soviet Union’s comprehensive economic power.

Today, Russia remains one of the world’s foremost military powers. According to the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI), Russia ranked as the world’s third-largest military spender in 2025, allocating approximately US\$190 billion, equivalent to 7.5 percent of GDP, while the United States remained first at US\$954 billion and China second at US\$336 billion. Together, these three countries accounted for more than half of global military expenditure.

Russia also retains one of the world’s two largest nuclear arsenals. Alongside the United States, it possesses the overwhelming majority of global nuclear warheads, ensuring that Moscow remains a decisive military and strategic actor in international security.

Nevertheless, military strength alone no longer defines comprehensive global leadership. Unlike the Soviet Union, contemporary Russia does not compete with the United States across the full spectrum of national power. Russia’s economy, while resilient under difficult geopolitical circumstances, remains relatively modest in global terms. According to the

World Bank, Russia’s nominal GDP in 2025 stood at approximately US\$2.56 trillion, compared with an American economy exceeding US\$32 trillion and a Chinese economy exceeding US\$20 trillion.

Russia continues to be an important exporter of oil, natural gas, wheat, fertilizers, metals and military equipment. These sectors provide strategic influence and significant export revenues. However, Russia is not a dominant global supplier of consumer electronics, advanced semiconductors, electric vehicles, telecommunications equipment, commercial aircraft, digital platforms,

pharmaceutical products or large-scale civilian infrastructure systems.

This distinction is crucial. Russia can threaten the United States through military deterrence, nuclear capabilities, cyber operations and geopolitical disruption. It remains capable of altering regional security dynamics and challenging NATO in Europe. Yet Russia does not possess the broad-based industrial, technological and commercial ecosystem necessary to reshape the global economy.

China does. Over the past four decades, China has transformed itself from a relatively poor developing nation into one of the world’s largest economic powers. Unlike the Soviet Union, whose influence depended heavily on military and ideological competition, China’s rise has been driven primarily by industrialization, manufacturing, infrastructure development, international trade, education, technological innovation and long-term economic planning.

The scale of China’s transformation is unprecedented in modern economic history. According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), China remains the world’s second-largest economy in nominal GDP and the largest economy when measured by purchasing power parity (PPP), reflecting the enormous scale of its domestic productive capacity. The IMF projects China’s economy to continue expanding in 2026 despite global economic headwinds.

Continued on Page 7



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

The Declining Tower of Urban Politics

If there is one political party that transformed the character, language, and style of urban politics in Pakistan, it is the Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM). More than just a political party, MQM emerged as a political phenomenon that gave millions of Urdu-speaking residents of Karachi and Hyderabad a sense of identity, representation, and political empowerment. Yet history teaches an enduring lesson: political parties that fail to adapt to changing realities eventually collapse under the weight of their own legacy.

Founded in 1984, MQM built its political foundation on the grievances of the Urdu-speaking population in urban Sindh. Issues such as inadequate representation in state institutions, limited employment opportunities, and the demand for urban rights strengthened its narrative. Within a few years, it had dramatically reshaped Karachi’s political landscape and established itself as an undeniable political force.

During the 1990s, however, Karachi’s streets became symbols of conflict rather than political activism. Political killings, targeted violence, kidnappings for ransom, extortion, and the presence of armed groups severely damaged the city’s economy and social fabric. Various political parties and state institutions blamed one another for the violence, while ordinary citizens bore the greatest burden. It is impossible to deny that this turbulent period left a lasting scar on Karachi’s identity.

MQM’s greatest strength was its disciplined organizational structure, committed workers, and extraordinary loyalty to its

leadership. Over time, however, these very strengths became sources of weakness. When political parties revolve around personalities instead of institutions, internal dissent is suppressed, constructive criticism disappears, and opportunities for reform gradually vanish. This pattern increasingly became evident within MQM itself.

After 2013, security measures aimed at restoring law and order in Karachi significantly reduced crime. At the same time, however, MQM’s organizational grip steadily weakened. Party workers became fragmented, senior leaders chose separate political paths, and the party split into multiple factions. The events following 2016 further accelerated this fragmentation, weakening what was once regarded as Karachi’s “invincible political machine.”

Nevertheless, attributing MQM’s decline entirely to external factors would be an oversimplification. Every political party must ultimately account for its own shortcomings. When voters distance themselves from a party, leadership decisions, organizational weaknesses, diminishing public engagement, and the inability to adapt to evolving political realities all play significant roles.

Meanwhile, Karachi’s electorate has undergone a profound transformation. Today’s young voters are increasingly concerned with employment, water supply, public transportation, education, healthcare, effective local government, urban infrastructure, and transparent governance. While ethnic identity remains a political factor, it is no longer the sole determinant of electoral behavior. This shift is

redefining the future of urban politics in Pakistan.

It must also be acknowledged that Karachi’s challenges cannot be attributed to the failures of a single political party. Persistent disputes between the federal and provincial governments over administrative authority, a weak local government system, unbalanced urban planning, rapid population growth, and poor institutional coordination have all contributed significantly to the city’s crisis. Karachi’s decline reflects a broader collective political failure rather than the shortcomings of any one party alone.

MQM has not disappeared from Pakistan’s political landscape. It still possesses a historic vote bank, experienced party workers, and decades of experience in urban politics. However, if it hopes to regain public confidence, it must move beyond personality-driven politics and embrace institution-building, internal democracy, youth leadership, transparency, and a performance-oriented political narrative.

Pakistan’s urban politics has entered a new era. Citizens now demand results rather than slogans, public service rather than identity politics, and effective governance rather than emotional rhetoric. These are the standards by which every political party will be judged in the years ahead.

The story of MQM is not merely the tale of one party’s rise and decline; it is also a reflection of the evolution of urban politics in Pakistan. It reminds us that while earning public trust is difficult, preserving it is even more challenging. Political power may be temporary, but the verdict of the people ultimately becomes the final verdict of history.

The columnist is the first elected President of the Pakistan Federal Union of Columnists and Creators (PFUC), Karachi Chapter.

Every Great Teacher Must Have Five Skills – and Yes, They Can Be Learned

Teaching is one of the most influential professions in the world. A great teacher does much more than deliver lessons; they inspire curiosity, build confidence, and shape the future of every student they teach. While some people believe great teachers are born with special talents, the truth is that the most important teaching skills can be learned, practiced, and strengthened over time. Here are five essential skills every great teacher should develop.

1. Patience: The Foundation of Effective Teaching Every child learns at a different pace. Some understand concepts immediately, while others need more time, guidance, and encouragement. Great teachers recognize these differences and never rush the learning process. Patience creates a safe environment where students feel comfortable asking questions and making mistakes. It builds confidence and encourages learners to keep trying. Pressure, on the other hand, creates fear, anxiety, and self-doubt.

2. Communication: Helping Students Truly Understand Teaching is not simply about speaking it is about making learning meaningful. Great teachers communicate in ways that are clear, engaging, and easy to understand. They listen carefully, encourage questions, provide constructive feedback, and connect lessons to real-life experiences. Effective communication creates trust and helps students feel valued and understood. A great teacher doesn’t just explain information; they ensure every student understands it.

3. Creativity: Making Learning Exciting Children learn best when they enjoy the learning process. Creative teachers transform ordinary lessons into memorable experiences through stories, games, activities, discussions, experiments, and hands-on learning. Creativity captures students’ attention, increases participation, and helps them remember concepts for a longer time. When learning becomes exciting, students become naturally motivated to explore and

discover more.

Learning should never feel like a burden it should feel like an adventure.

4. Adaptability: Growing with Every Classroom No two classrooms are ever the same. Every group of students has different backgrounds, abilities, personalities, and learning needs. Great teachers remain flexible. They adjust their teaching methods, modify lesson plans, embrace new technologies, and continuously improve their skills. They understand that successful teaching requires lifelong learning. An adaptable teacher does not fear change they use it as an opportunity to become even better.

5. Empathy: Understanding the Child Behind the Behavior Every child enters the classroom carrying emotions, experiences, and personal challenges that may not always be visible. Great teachers look beyond a student’s behavior and try to understand what they are feeling.

Empathy helps teachers build stronger relationships with students, create an inclusive classroom, and provide the emotional support children need to succeed academically and personally.

Students may forget a lesson, but they rarely forget how a teacher made them feel.

The best teachers are not defined by perfect knowledge alone they are defined by patience, communication, creativity, adaptability, and empathy. These five skills create classrooms where students feel respected, motivated, and inspired to learn.

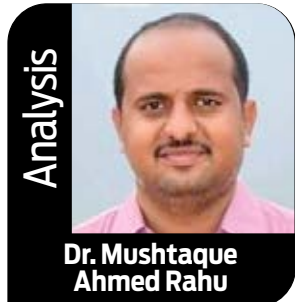
The good news is that none of these skills are limited to a select few. They can all be learned, practiced, and improved through dedication, reflection, and experience.

Every great teacher starts with the desire to make a difference and with these five skills, every teacher can become truly exceptional.

The writer is a PhD in Electronics, an Educator, and a Researcher. He writes on Education, Digital Transformation, and Youth Development.



Muhammad Mohsin Khan Rajput



Dr. Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu

SUPARCO Launches Nationwide ‘Space4Climate’ Symposium Series from Peshawar

Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Pakistan Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) on Thursday launched its nationwide “Space4Climate” symposium series from Peshawar to promote the use of indigenous space technologies for climate resilience and evidence-based policymaking.

Organized by SUPARCO’s Space Applications Center for Climate Sciences (SACCS), the regional symposium, titled “Space4Climate – Snow Cover Assessment, Forestry, Air Quality, Environment and Waterways Dynamics,” brought together senior government officials, scientists, policymakers, researchers, development partners, and environmental experts at the Serena Hotel.

The event marked the first of a seven-city symposium series that will also be held in Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Gilgit, and Muzaffarabad. The initiative aims to strengthen collaboration between federal and provincial

institutions while promoting the use of satellite-derived climate data in disaster risk reduction, environmental governance, natural resource management, and sustainable development.

The symposium was inaugurated by Talha Hussain Faisal, Senior Secretary, Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He emphasized the importance of integrating geospatial technologies and satellite-based information into climate governance and disaster management, noting that scientific data has become increasingly vital as Pakistan faces growing climate-related challenges.

Earlier, Aftab Ahmed Khan Lughmani, Secretary SUPARCO, welcomed participants, while Dr. Mohammad Farooq, Deputy Director General, SACCS, highlighted the growing role of space-based climate services in addressing environmental and climate issues.

Experts from SUPARCO, the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa,



WWF-Pakistan, the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF), and the University of Peshawar stressed the need for greater institutional collaboration and wider adoption of indigenous satellite technologies to strengthen climate adaptation and environmental protection.

A key feature of the symposium was the formal launch of SUPARCO’s Space4Climate Initiative and a live demonstration of its geospatial portals, showcasing how near real-time satellite data can support informed decision-making for climate and environmental management across Pakistan.

IIRIS Seminar: ‘Reviving the Silk Road’ to Boost ASEAN–Pakistan Trade, Tourism & Investment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The International Institute for Regional and International Studies (IIRIS), with the Indonesian Corner, Embassy of Indonesia, and Women University Mardan, hosted an international seminar on “Reviving the Silk Road to Connect ASEAN and Pakistan: Unlocking Trade, Tourism, and Investment Potentials.”

Shafiqat Rasool, President IIRIS, said ASEAN is one of the world’s most dynamic blocs and Pakistan has immense potential to expand engagement. He stressed that cooperation in trade, tourism, investment, education and people-to-people exchanges can drive sustainable growth and revive the historic Silk Road.

Keynote speaker Dr. Sadia Sulaiman of Quaid-i-Azam University said regional connectivity requires economic policy plus political commitment, leadership and institutional cooperation. She urged universities



and policy research to develop practical strategies for integration.

Guest of Honour MNA Maulana Nazim Ali Shah emphasized parlia-



mentary diplomacy to strengthen ASEAN ties and sustainable development.

Rahmat Hindiarta of the Indonesian Embassy said current USD 11 billion ASEAN-Pakistan trade does not reflect real potential. “Indonesia is Pakistan’s 3rd largest trade partner,

VC Women University Mardan, said universities are vital for innovation, research and preparing leaders. “Silk Routes are not only about trade, but also ideas, cultures, religions, and many more.”

The seminar was attended by the High Commissioner of Sri Lanka, Ambassadors of Mauritius and Vietnam, and other diplomats, reflecting growing international interest in Pakistan-ASEAN dialogue.

Participants agreed reviving the Silk Road can boost regional connectivity, tourism, investment corridors, cultural diplomacy and academic partnerships.

Speakers concluded that collaboration among governments, academia, private sector and civil society is essential to unlock ASEAN-Pakistan potential and foster peace and prosperity in Asia.

IIRIS reaffirmed its commitment to promoting dialogue, research and inclusive platforms for stronger Pakistan–ASEAN cooperation.

Zakharova: Russia Urges Restraint Amid Escalating Middle East Crisis



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova expressed concern over intensifying escalation in the Persian Gulf, noting continued strikes between conflicting sides causing extensive damage to civilian infrastructure in Iran and Arab countries. She warned of heightened risks to shipping in the Strait of Hormuz and Red Sea, complicating regional mediation efforts to revive US-Iran negotiations based on the June

17 Islamabad Memorandum.

Zakharova urged all parties to exercise restraint and avoid actions that could widen the conflict or worsen the region’s military-political situation, warning that further escalation threatens global energy and food security.

Russia reaffirmed its commitment to resolving disputes through political and diplomatic means, respecting the interests of all regional states, and offered to provide assistance toward achieving a peaceful settlement.

Russia Criticizes EU’s 21st Sanctions Package, Vows Response

News Desk

MOSCOW/BRUSSELS: Russia has strongly condemned the European Union’s adoption of its 21st package of sanctions, describing the measures as “illegitimate unilateral coercive measures” that would ultimately harm EU member states more than Russia.

In a statement issued by the Russian Permanent Mission to the European Union, Moscow said the lengthy negotiations leading to the sanctions package reflected growing divisions within the EU and increasing concern over the economic consequences of the bloc’s sanctions policy. The statement accused the European Commission of ignoring the economic costs of escalating

confrontation with Russia.

Russia argued that the new restrictions would worsen the EU’s social and economic challenges, citing rising energy costs, reduced Russian energy supplies, and continued financial support for Ukraine. It also referred to the European Central Bank’s assessment that geopolitical tensions and energy market instability remain major risks to the European economy.

The Russian Mission maintained that EU sanctions had failed to achieve their objectives and pledged that Moscow would respond with appropriate countermeasures to protect its national interests. The EU has said the sanctions are intended to increase pressure on Russia over its actions in Ukraine.



Pakistan’s Digital Health Vision Takes Shape Lahore Sessions Deliver Strong Momentum



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MoNHSR&C), in collaboration with the Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA), has completed the first two consultative workshops in Lahore under the nationwide Digital Sectoral Plan for Healthcare. The sessions brought together Punjab’s health leadership and key stakeholders to shape Pakistan’s future digital health vision, covering Human Resources for Health (facilitated by Prof. Mahmood Shaukat) and Maternal, Newborn & Child Health alongside AI, Data & Digital Health (facilitated by Dr. Naeem Majeed).

These sessions are part of a ten-workshop series across Islamabad, Peshawar, Lahore, Karachi, Gilgit and Muzaffarabad, aimed at building an inclusive digital health strategy.

PDA Founding Chairman Dr. Sohail Munir emphasized that sectoral transformation must be co-created with provinces as co-authors, not mere consultees, since health is a devolved subject, with private sector involvement in designing systems. He described PDA’s role as convening and enabling, with ownership resting with the sector, and thanked the Health and IT Ministries for their support, inviting broader stakeholder participation.

Public Safety, Not Punishment, Is Our Top Priority, Says Director Operations

Babar Chaudhry

MULTAN: The Punjab Food Authority (PFA) has intensified its campaign against food adulteration and substandard food products across South Punjab, with Director Operations South Punjab Ch. Rameez Zafar saying the authority’s foremost objective is to ensure the availability of safe and hygienic food rather than merely penal-

izing businesses.

In an exclusive interview with Daily Spokesman, Rameez Zafar said the PFA has been combating food adulteration for over a decade through routine inspections, surprise raids and strict enforcement of food safety laws. He said adulterated and substandard food products are confiscated immediately, while legal action, including registration of FIRs, is initiated against

violators. He cited a recent raid in which adulterated tea leaves were seized, adding that intelligence from the vigilance wing also helps identify offenders.

He said food samples are tested at divisional laboratories in Multan, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Lahore, with results generally available within three to four days. The authority plans to establish testing laboratories at district level in the future.

Rameez Zafar noted that leading restaurants and established food chains generally comply with PFA Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), while violations are more common among smaller food outlets. He acknowledged that complete control is difficult due to expanding urban areas and limited manpower but said heavy fines are imposed and unsafe food destroyed wherever

violations are detected.

He urged citizens to report food safety violations through the Punjab Food Authority’s Facebook page, website, email and complaint cell, adding that complaints are monitored through a digital tracking system to ensure timely action.

Highlighting ongoing reforms, he said inspection teams now submit reports through a mobile application,

while a new digital system will allow headquarters to assign daily inspection targets electronically, improving transparency and accountability.

He said around 90 per cent of food businesses in Punjab are now registered with the authority, while unregistered businesses are immediately brought into the licensing system or face legal action. Food outlets found producing adulterated or hazardous food or operating under unhygienic conditions can be sealed under the law.

“Our first responsibility is to educate food business operators and help them improve compli-



ance. Punishment is not our objective; our goal is to ensure that people receive safe, quality food,” Rameez Zafar said.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
171,021.20	171,739.44
Day's High	Day's Low
172,718.66	169,512.88
Index Value	Change
16,834,577,032	-718.24
Percentage	Time
-0.42%	24 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,736.23	+97.06
Percentage	Time
+0.91%	24 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,996.16	+284.51
Percentage	Time
+0.55%	24 Jul, 1:41 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
64,611.15	-1,811.45
Percentage	Time
-2.73%	24 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.44	198.25
Bahrain Dinar	742.21	752.68
Canadian Dollar	198.14	201.93
China Yuan	38.17	38.92
Danish Krone	42.70	43.37
Euro	318.99	322.68
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	891.24	901.75
Malaysian Ringgit	67	68.15
NewZealand \$	160.46	163.25
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	726.85	737
Qatari Riyal	75.94	75.35
Saudi Riyal	74.69	75.35
Singapore Dollar	215.43	219.25
Swedish Korona	28.38	28.97
Swiss Franc	340.92	344.37
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.90
U.A.E Dirham	76.45	76.95
UK Pound Sterling	373.28	377.95
US Dollar	278.85	278.95

*Iftikhar Ali
Malik Praises
Anas Sarwar's
Historic
UK Cabinet
Appointment*



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Friday congratulated Ch Muhammad Sarwar Arain, former Governor Punjab and member of the House of Lords, on the induction of his son Anas Sarwar into the new United Kingdom cabinet.

In his message of felicitation, Iftikhar Ali Malik said the appointment of Anas Sarwar to the UK cabinet was a matter of immense pride not only for his family but also for Pakistanis living across the globe. He said Anas Sarwar's achievement reflected his political acumen, leadership qualities, commitment and dedicated public service.

He expressed confidence that Anas Sarwar, with his experience and dynamic approach, would continue to play a constructive role in strengthening democratic institutions and serving the people of the United Kingdom with dedication and sincerity.

Iftikhar Ali Malik also praised Ch Muhammad Sarwar for his long-standing services to public life and said the elevation of his son to a key position in the UK government was a recognition of the family's contribution to public service.

He also extended his heartfelt congratulations and best wishes to Perveen Sarwar and her entire family, praying for Anas Sarwar's success, good health and a bright future in his new responsibilities.

GSP+ Vital for Pakistan's
Exports, Jobs and
Economy: Mian Zahid
Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and Chairman FPCCI Policy Advisory Board Mian Zahid Hussain has urged the government to take swift reforms and strengthen diplomatic engagement to safeguard Pakistan's GSP+ status with the European Union, calling it a lifeline for the country's exports and economy.

He said Pakistan exported goods worth €8.7 billion to the EU in 2025, with total bilateral trade reaching €12.2 billion. The EU accounts for 14.1 percent of Pakistan's total trade, while more than 85 percent of Pakistani exports, particularly textiles and garments, enjoy duty- and quota-free access under the GSP+ scheme.

Mian Zahid warned that any loss of preferential market access could reduce



the competitiveness of Pakistani exports, adversely affecting industrial production, employment, investment and foreign exchange earnings. He noted that although GSP+ benefits will continue during a tran-

sition period until December 31, 2028, Pakistan must qualify under the EU's new GSP+ framework, effective from January 1, 2027, which expands compliance requirements from 27 to 32 international conventions covering human rights, labour standards, environmental protection and good governance.

He called for the establishment of a high-level national coordination mechanism involving relevant ministries, provincial governments, FPCCI and the business community to ensure effective implementation, documentation and diplomacy. Stressing that GSP+ is a strategic economic asset rather than merely a trade concession, Mian Zahid said protecting the scheme is essential for safeguarding Pakistan's exports, industries, jobs and valuable foreign exchange earnings.

Fidel Forever

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Al Sadat Group Syed Sadat Hussain Shah with H.E. Damian Cordero Torres, Ambassador of Cuba to Pakistan, at the "FIDEL FOREVER" photo exhibition, organized by the Pakistan-Cuba Social Forum at the Embassy of Cuba in Islamabad to commemorate the 100th birth anniversary of Fidel Castro Ruz. Online photo



Photo: by Sultan Bashir

Humayun Khan Inaugurates
Three-Day EVS World and
Electricity Pakistan exhibitions



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: EVS World and Electricity Pakistan exhibitions opened today at Expo Centre Lahore, inaugurated by the Mr. Humayun Khan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division), Government of Pakistan, in the presence of leading industry stakeholders, government representatives, and international delegates.

Organized by FAKT Exhibitions, the

three-day event—running from July 24 to 26—features over 120 national and international companies, showcasing cutting-edge advancements in energy, power, and electric mobility solutions.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, Mr. Humayun Khan, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Energy (Power Division), Government of Pakistan, emphasized the importance of innovation and collaboration in achieving Pakistan's energy goals. "Exhibitions

like EVS World and Electricity Pakistan are vital for fostering industrial growth and attracting technology-driven investments," he said.

Saleem Khan Tanoli, CEO of FAKT Exhibitions, shared his vision for the event: "This exhibition is not just about technology—it's about shaping Pakistan's bright future. We're building a gateway where global innovation meets local ambition, creating space for solutions that truly matter."

Commerce Minister discusses measures to enhance
Pakistan's hand-knotted carpet exports

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, accompanied by Director General (Textile) Mudassar Raza Siddiqi, held a meeting with a delegation of the Pakistan Carpet Manufacturers and Exporters Association (PCMEA) to explore policy measures aimed at enhancing export competitiveness of Pakistan's hand-knotted Carpet Industry in international markets.

The delegation, led by Patron In-Chief Abdul Latif Malik, Vice Chairman Riaz Ahmed and Former Vice Chairman Usman Ashraf, highlighted that the disruptions in regional



trade and global supply chains were adversely impacting Carpet industry in Pakistan,

scored the need for a more facilitative business environment and regulatory assistance, highlighting that a predictable and business-friendly framework would enable the industry to sustain their current global market share while pursuing new export opportunities.

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan reaffirmed the Government's commitment to promoting exports through transparent, rules-based and investor-friendly policies. He stated that the Ministry of Commerce would examine the industry's proposals in consultation with relevant stakeholders to devise practical solu-

Business Line and
Leaders Network
Pakistan Launch
Global Outlook
Exchange

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Leaders Network Pakistan, partnering with SAP partner Business Line, hosted the inaugural Global Outlook Exchange, gathering business, diplomatic and policy leaders to discuss Pakistan's economic outlook and growth prospects.

Dr. Salman Ahmed of Fidelity International delivered the keynote, addressing global economic trends and reforms needed for Pakistan's sustainable growth. U. S. Consul General Stetson Sanders highlighted strengthening US-Pakistan trade ties, citing initiatives

like the SelectUSA Investment Summit. Business Line CEO Nabeel Ahmed emphasized that transformation requires leadership and dialogue, not just technology, reaffirming commitment to Pakistan's leadership ecosystem.

Other speakers included Anwar Kabir (Leaders Network founder), Zafar Masud (Bank of Punjab CEO) and Zaki Ijaz (FPCCI Regional Chairman), who stressed economic reforms and private sector leadership.

The event launches an ongoing platform for business-government dialogue on Pakistan's economic future.

Umeed-e-Sehar:
Misleading narratives
should not distract from
fight against illicit trade

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Umeed-e-Sehar has raised concerns over recent Senate discussions questioning the government's tobacco policy, warning that misleading narratives risk diverting attention from Pakistan's growing illicit economy. The organization suggested vested interests may be attempting to undermine FBR's intensified crackdown on illegal trade, urging that public debate remain evidence-based rather than inadvertently benefiting illicit operators.

The organization highlighted FBR's enhanced enforcement across tobacco, sugar, fertilizer and cement sectors, citing 66 raids in

May 2026 that seized over 81.8 million illicit cigarette sticks, with duty and tax impact exceeding Rs.331 million.

Spokesperson Muhammad Jamil Arif called it unfortunate that misleading narratives emerged during Pakistan's strongest enforcement drive, urging stakeholders to support anti-illicit trade actions instead of weakening public confidence.

He commended FBR's efforts and urged further strengthening of enforcement. Umeed-e-Sehar reiterated that combating illicit trade requires consistent enforcement, evidence-based policymaking and constructive public discourse.

PFC Chief Lauds Anas
Sarwar's Induction into
UK Cabinet as a Pride
for Pakistan

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council (PFC) Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Tamgha-i-Imtiaz, on Friday felicitated Anas Sarwar on his induction into the UK Cabinet as Minister of State and his simultane-

ous elevation to the House of Lords.

In a congratulatory letter, Mian Kashif Ashfaq said the appointment was a matter of great pride and honour for Pakistanis, particularly the Toba Tek Singh people especially Pir Mahal as Anas Sarwar had earned this prestigious position through his



dedication, political acumen and public service. He said entire credit of his success goes to his illustrious father Chaudhary Muhammad Sarwar for Governor Punjab and member House of Lords UK and his mother Perveen Sarwar for politically polishing and grooming Anas.

He hoped that Anas Sarwar Arain would continue to play a constructive role in strengthening UK-Pakistan relations, particularly in the fields of trade, investment and economic cooperation.

He also prayed for his success in discharging his new responsibilities and said his appointment would further enhance the image of Pakistanis and their valuable contributions to British society and public life.

CM Maryam’s Timely Decisions Strengthen WASA Ahead of Monsoon Season

Talha Mahmood Malik

The Government of Punjab has launched a series of transformative initiatives aimed at urban development, the provision of essential services, and the delivery of modern, citizen-centric facilities. In line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the reorganization and province-wide expansion of WASA Punjab has emerged as a significant milestone in modernizing urban infrastructure, improving drainage systems, and implementing sustainable development projects. Alongside this expansion, the provision of modern machinery and the projects being executed under the Punjab Development Plan are playing a pivotal role in creating a cleaner, safer, and more developed urban future for Punjab.

Rapid population growth and the expansion of urban areas in Punjab had made the provision of basic municipal services increasingly challenging. In particular, the timely drainage of rainwater during the monsoon season, sewerage management, access to clean drinking water, and the demands of modern urban planning highlighted the need for an integrated system capable of addressing both current and future challenges. Recognizing this need, the Punjab Government decided to expand the scope of WASA.

Previously, WASA’s administrative jurisdiction was limited to only five major cities. However, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif expanded its operations to 41 districts and announced the allocation of a historic emergency budget. Under the Punjab Development Plan, projects worth Rs. 205 billion are being implemented to improve drainage systems in urban areas. The primary objective of WASA Punjab’s expansion is to establish a uniform and effective system for water supply, drainage, and sewerage management across urban centers. This initiative will not only enhance administrative capacity but also improve municipal services for citizens.

In the first phase, work is underway



at critical points in 15 major cities, including Dera Ghazi Khan, Sargodha, Gujrat, Jhang, Okara, Multan, Sialkot, Jhelum, Hafizabad, Sahiwal, Faisalabad, Gujranwala, Sheikhupura, and Rawalpindi. Development works worth Rs. 56 billion are progressing rapidly, including the installation and rehabilitation of 2,265 kilometers of sewerage lines, 189 kilometers of water drains, 86 disposal stations, underground water tanks, the restoration of 752 kilometers of roads, and the laying of 33 million square feet of tiles.

The Punjab Government has also prioritized enhancing WASA’s operational capacity to align it with modern requirements. A major step in this regard has been the provision of advanced machinery. In response to recurring complaints about water accumulation and delayed drainage during the monsoon season, the government has equipped WASA with modern machinery, including suction machines, jetting machines, dewatering pumps, and other specialized equipment

and vehicles. A total of 965 modern machines and vehicles are planned for delivery during the current fiscal year. So far, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, accompanied by Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Bilal Yasin, has handed over a fleet of 300 modern machines and vehicles to WASA Punjab.

This technologically advanced machinery will not only improve operational efficiency but also reduce the burden on human resources. It will enable WASA personnel to deliver faster and more effective services through modern equipment. As a result, WASA’s operational capacity has increased significantly. Timely drainage of rainwater, cleaning of sewerage lines, and emergency response capabilities have become far more effective than before. These machines will enable authorities to address urban flooding and drainage-related issues in the shortest possible time.

Provincial Minister for Housing and Urban Development Bilal Yasin



has worked extensively to ensure the effective functioning of WASA in newly added districts through the appointment of officers and the provision of necessary resources. His visits to various districts and emphasis on coordination with local political and administrative stakeholders are expected to reduce operational challenges and improve resource availability.

Heavy rainfall is expected during the current monsoon season. Had the Punjab Government not taken timely preventive measures based on the lessons learned from previous years, many major cities could have faced urban flooding and property damage due to delayed rainwater drainage.

To further improve WASA Punjab’s performance, special emergency response teams and a central control room have been established. These facilities are operating on a 24/7 alert basis to respond to emergencies. Special camps and monitoring centers set up in different cities are ensuring the prompt resolution of citizens’ complaints. Continuous monitoring of water accumulation points and immediate operational responses have strengthened the effectiveness of the urban management system. The monitoring of disposal stations, underpasses, and major roads through surveillance cameras has also

enhanced accountability and transparency in administrative performance.

Under the Punjab Development Plan, special attention is being given to urban beautification, traffic management, and the development of modern infrastructure. Development projects in Lahore and other major cities have been accelerated to provide citizens with world-class facilities. At the same time, water supply and sewerage projects have been accorded special importance. Improvements in water supply schemes and the installation of new sewerage networks across various districts are enhancing access to essential services. These initiatives will help meet the growing demands of Punjab’s expanding urban population.

Environmental protection is also a key component of the Punjab Development Plan. Green belts, parks, and environmentally friendly development projects are being promoted throughout urban areas. In Lahore and several other cities, underground water storage tanks are being constructed beneath parks and sports grounds in low-lying and densely populated areas. These facilities will not only facilitate timely drainage but also help replenish groundwater reserves. Similarly, the construction of recharge wells across cities is expected to contribute significantly

cantly to improving declining groundwater levels. Modern urban planning is being prioritized to promote a cleaner and healthier environment.

The Punjab Government has also undertaken several initiatives to promote digitalization in urban planning. Modern monitoring systems are being introduced within WASA and other relevant institutions to effectively oversee development projects, complaint management, and operational activities.

The use of technology in service delivery has further improved institutional performance. Modern control rooms, surveillance systems, and digital monitoring mechanisms are ensuring the timely completion of development projects and the prompt resolution of public issues. The Punjab Government’s vision extends beyond merely launching development projects; it also emphasizes their sustainability and effective maintenance. The enhanced capabilities resulting from the expansion of WASA Punjab and the provision of modern machinery will play a vital role in improving the quality of urban services in the years ahead.

The Punjab Development Plan is laying the foundation for a prosperous and progressive Punjab where the provision of basic services to every citizen remains a top priority. The expansion of WASA Punjab, the induction of modern machinery, and the timely completion of urban development projects will serve as important milestones in transforming Punjab into a model province.

It would not be an exaggeration to say that these initiatives by the Punjab Government are not only addressing current urban challenges but are also helping to create a safer, more developed, and sustainable urban environment for future generations. The projects being implemented under WASA Punjab and the Punjab Development Plan present a vision of a modern Punjab that is moving steadily towards progress, prosperity, and public welfare.

The writer is Lahore based, Governance and public policy analyst.

UMT Athletes Bring Pride to Both the University and the HEC, Says Ibrahim Hasan Murad

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The weightlifters of University of Management and Technology (UMT) delivered an outstanding performance at the National Weightlifting Championship 2026, winning 6 Gold and 4 Silver medals and setting a new benchmark of excellence. Owing to the remarkable performance of UMT athletes, the Higher Education Commis-

sion (HEC) secured the Overall Championship Trophy in both the men’s and women’s categories.

Chairman and President of UMT, Ibrahim Hasan Murad, congratulated the UMT family, athletes, coaches and support staff on this remarkable achievement. He said that UMT’s weightlifters, through their hard work, dedication and exceptional talent, had brought honor not

only to the University but also to the HEC at the national level.

A total of 10 UMT weightlifters represented HEC in the championship and showcased exceptional skill and determination. In the women’s events, Maham Qasim, Arfa Mushtaq, Aqsa Bashir, Zoha Javed, Fiza Khokhar, along with other athletes delivered impressive performances. In the men’s competitions, Sameer Butt,

Noor Mustafa, Ahmad Butt, Syed Uzair, Mujahid Rasool and other athletes played a pivotal role in securing the championship through their outstanding performances.

During the championship, HEC Team Manager and UMT Sports Incharge Ali Raza played a vital role in guiding the team, managing operational affairs and providing continuous support to the athletes, which significantly



contributed to the team’s success.

Chairman HEC Dr. Niaz Ahmad and HEC DG Sports Rizwan Shaukat also congratulated UMT on its remarkable achievement. Dr. Niaz Ahmed

said that the credit for this success goes to the unwavering dedication of the UMT management, coaches, support staff and athletes, whose teamwork and commitment made this historic

victory possible. He expressed confidence that the UMT Markhorns would continue to bring further national and international honors to Pakistan and the HEC in the years to come.

First All Punjab Christian Cricket Tournament Promotes Interfaith Harmony

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The First All Punjab Christian Cricket Tournament was held at Bohra Wali Ground, bringing together players, community leaders, and distinguished guests under the theme of interfaith harmony and national unity.

The event was attended by Allama Mushtaq Ahmed Kamboh Mohammadi Molai, Ambassador of Peace International, Ambassador of Peace Pakistan and USA, Chief Coordinator of the Interfaith Peace Committee Pakistan, Patron-in-Chief of ZIH International, Chairman of Allama Iqbal Community Center, and Chairman of the Supreme Council of Jamiat Ulema Pakistan. Other prominent guests included G. M. Ansari Advocate, busi-



ness leader Haji Afzal Sialvi, Allama Tahir Hassan, Mohtasham Kamboh Mohammadi Molai, and Mukarram Kamboh Mohammadi Molai.

The guests received a warm welcome

from the tournament organizers and players, who presented floral garlands and bouquets. Allama Mushtaq Ahmed Kamboh Mohammadi Molai inaugurated the tournament by playing the

ceremonial first ball.

Addressing the participants, he said the tournament was organized to promote interfaith harmony, unity, and brotherhood. He urged Christian youth to represent Pakistan with pride and dedication, adding that sports help build healthy societies. “Where sports grounds flourish, hospitals become less crowded,” he remarked, encouraging young people to engage in positive activities.

Cash prizes of Rs50,000 and a trophy were awarded to the winning team, while the runners-up received Rs25,000 and a trophy. The chief guest also distributed prizes among outstanding players and congratulated both the winners and runners-up for displaying excellent sportsmanship.

WAPDA workers protest against MEPCO privatization, demand relief from inflation



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Hundreds of WAPDA workers staged a protest outside the MEPCO Headquarters on Khanewal Road, Multan, opposing the proposed privatization of profitable electricity distribution companies and demanding relief from rising inflation and soaring petroleum prices.

Led by Regional Chairman Chaudhry Ghulam Rasool Gujjar, the demonstrators urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Owais Leghari to halt the privatization of MEPCO, arguing that the move would not serve the national interest. They claimed previous privatization efforts, including that of the Rawalpindi Electricity Company, had failed and cited the challenges faced by Karachi Electric as an example.

Union leaders also called for lifting the decade-long ban on recruitment in MEPCO, saying staff shortages had increased workloads and workplace accidents. They demanded improved safety measures, recruitment of additional line staff and permanent employment for contract and daily-wage workers.

Speakers criticized high electricity tariffs, blaming expensive power purchases from Independent Power Producers (IPPs) and the growing circular debt. They urged the government to renegotiate IPP contracts, reform the power sector and establish a stronger regulatory framework to ensure affordable electricity and economic stability. The union also demanded employment opportunities for the children of martyred and deceased employees under the existing quota system. Special prayers were offered for martyred workers, security personnel and the country’s peace, security and economic prosperity.

Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-I

Continued from Page 4

Unlike Russia, China has embedded itself deeply within global production networks. Its factories manufacture everything from smartphones and consumer electronics to high-speed trains, renewable-energy equipment, industrial machinery and advanced electric vehicles. Chinese companies participate in supply chains that reach virtually every continent.

Trade has become one of

China’s greatest strategic assets. The World Trade Organization’s latest trade data continue to rank China among the world’s largest trading nations, with merchandise imports exceeding US\$2.47 trillion in 2024 alone and exports remaining among the highest globally. China has become the principal trading partner for dozens of countries across Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle East.

This economic integration fundamentally distinguishes China from the Soviet Union.

The USSR largely operated outside the capitalist global economy. China, by contrast, operates at its very center. Businesses, governments and consumers around the world rely on Chinese manufacturing, logistics, industrial inputs and consumer products. Even countries that maintain strategic disagreements with Beijing often remain economically interconnected with China through trade and investment.

This level of economic integration gives China forms of

influence that military power alone cannot achieve. It is therefore increasingly evident why successive American administrations—Republican and Democratic alike—have identified China, rather than Russia, as the United States’ principal long-term strategic competitor. Russia remains a formidable military power. China is a comprehensive national power. That distinction defines the strategic landscape of the twenty-first century.

(Part II will examine how China’s manufacturing strength, Belt and Road Initiative, technological innovation, renewable-energy leadership and control of critical supply chains have transformed it into America’s foremost comprehensive strategic challenger.)

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

Group photo

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in a group photo with the participants of National Workshop on Balochistan, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

PM reaffirms commitment to Balochistan’s development, vows equal progress for all provinces

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed the federal government’s commitment to ensuring the development and prosperity of Balochistan, saying Pakistan can only progress when all its provinces advance equally.

Addressing participants of the National Workshop Balochistan in Islamabad, the

prime minister announced that the Rs300 billion Karachi-Chaman dual carriageway project would be completed within the next one-and-a-half to two years. He also said the Kachhi Canal project would be completed on a priority basis, while Balochistan’s quota for laptops and scholarships had been increased by 10 percent to promote education among the province’s youth.

Highlighting federal

support, Shehbaz Sharif said Punjab had contributed Rs150 billion to Balochistan under the NFC Award, while other provinces had also played their role in the province’s development. He noted that nearly 27,000 tube wells in Balochistan were being converted to solar energy under a Rs75 billion project, with the federal government contributing Rs50 billion.

The prime minister stressed

that transparent governance, honesty and integrity were essential for Pakistan’s progress. During a question-and-answer session, he said corruption, particularly in the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), was depriving the country of vital resources and increasing reliance on foreign loans.

On security, Shehbaz Sharif accused India of supporting terrorism in Pakistan and

urged Afghanistan’s interim government to prevent its territory from being used by terrorist groups. He paid tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan’s armed forces and law enforcement agencies, noting that around 90,000 Pakistanis had lost their lives in the fight against terrorism.

Federal ministers, including Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Ahsan Iqbal and Attaullah Tarar, also attended the event.

Kazakhstan and Pakistan Reaffirm Strategic Partnership on SCO Sidelines

Spokesman Report

CHOLPON-ATA: On the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers meeting, Kazakhstan’s Foreign Minister Yermek Kosherbayev met with Pakistan’s Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Both sides reaffirmed strong political ties and focused on boosting trade and economic cooperation. Key areas discussed included joint projects, improved transport and logistics links, and practical steps to reach the Heads of State’s target of USD 1



billion in bilateral trade.

The ministers exchanged views on regional and global issues and pledged to deepen collaboration within the UN, SCO, OIC, and CICA.

Kazakhstan expressed appreciation for Pakistan’s support for President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev’s initiative to establish an International Water Organization for sustainable water resource management.

Concluding the meeting, both ministers reiterated their commitment to further strengthen the strategic partnership, implement existing agreements, and maintain active political dialogue.

FBR Announces Planned System Maintenance Activity

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: FBR hereby informs taxpayers and all stakeholders that a Planned System Maintenance Activity will be undertaken from 12:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 8, 2026, to 05:00 a.m. on Monday, August 10, 2026.

During this period, the following services will be temporarily unavailable: IRIS, Digital Invoicing (DI), Payment System, Synchronized Withholding Administration and Payment System (SWAPS), and POS Registration. Consequently, taxpayers and other users will not be able to access these services or

perform related transactions during the maintenance window.

All taxpayers and stakeholders are advised to plan their tax-related activities accordingly and complete all time-sensitive filings, payments, registrations, and other transactions well before the commencement of the scheduled

maintenance period.

All affected services are expected to resume immediately upon the successful completion of the maintenance activity.

FBR regrets any inconvenience caused and appreciates the cooperation and understanding of all taxpayers and stakeholders.

PMD Forecasts Heavy Rain, Thunderstorms Across Pakistan Until July 28

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast widespread rain and thunderstorms across much of the country from July 24 to 28 due to an active monsoon system, warning of heavy downpours and possible urban flooding in several regions.

According to the Met Office, a low-pressure weather system over southwest Rajasthan has intensified monsoon currents, bringing rain and

thundershowers to Sindh, Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Kashmir, and Islamabad.

Heavy rainfall is expected in parts of Sindh, southern and central Punjab, northeastern Balochistan, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, while Karachi is likely to experience cloudy weather with light rain during the forecast period.

The PMD warned that heavy rains could trigger urban flooding in cities including Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Multan, Bahawalpur, Rahim



Yar Khan, Sukkur, Hyderabad, Thatta, Badin, Sanghar, Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Khairpur, and Shaheed

Benazirabad between July 24 and 26.

Rain and thunderstorms are also expected in Gilgit-Baltistan through July 26 and Azad Jammu and Kashmir until July 28.

The Met Office has advised the public and all concerned authorities to remain alert and take precautionary measures to minimise the risk of weather-related emergencies during the forecast period.

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Nawaz Sharif promises new development projects for AJK in Mirpur rally



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) President Nawaz Sharif has pledged to accelerate development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), saying every major development project in the region bears the party’s imprint and promising new initiatives if the party returns to power.

Addressing an election rally in Mirpur, Nawaz Sharif said he was delighted to return to the city after several years.

He praised the enthusiasm of the people and said that the PML-N will win the election from Mirpur seat.

The former prime minister said his bond with the people of Kashmir remained strong and maintained that the PML-N had consistently taken practical steps for the development of Azad Kashmir.

“Every development project in Azad Kashmir carries the stamp of the PML-N,” he said, challenging political rivals to identify any comparable achievements by other parties.

Referring to Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Nawaz Sharif said, “Bilawal, don’t take my remarks personally. Political rivalry is part of democracy, but it should never turn into hostility or violence.”

General Aamer Raza Takes Command of Pakistan’s National Strategic Forces

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister of Pakistan, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has announced the promotion of Lieutenant General Aamer Raza, HI(M), SBT, Chief of the General Staff of Pakistan Army, to the rank of “Four-Star General” and his appointment as “Commander National Strategic Command”.

The Prime Minister congratulated General Aamer Raza, HI(M), SBT on his promotion and appointment wishing him the best for undertaking this important responsibility.



Bilawal says only Kashmiris have right to decide Kashmir’s future



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has said that only the people of Kashmir have the right to determine the future of the region.

In a message posted on social media platform X, Bilawal said the decision

on Kashmir’s future cannot be made by Islamabad or by any of Pakistan’s provinces, including Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan or Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

He stressed that the future of Kashmir should be decided solely by the people of Kashmir.

Bilawal also urged voters to support PPP candidates in the July 27 elections by casting their votes for the party’s election symbol, the arrow.

He said electing PPP candidates would strengthen the struggle for equal rights and ensure that the decision regarding Kashmir remains in the hands of the Kashmiri people alone.

FMs of eight Arab-Islamic states condemn Israeli escalation at Al-Aqsa Mosque

ISLAMABAD: The foreign ministers of the eight Arab-Islamic states on Friday strongly condemned the Israeli escalation at Al Aqsa Mosque, particularly the continued mass settlers’ incursions led by extremist Israeli ministers, into the holy place under the protection of the Israeli forces.

The foreign ministers, in a statement, also condemned the raising of the Israeli flag within courtyards of Al-Aqsa Mosque, the erection by Israeli police of two tents, and all other inflammatory acts.

The foreign ministers, who issued a joint statements included those of Pakistan, Egypt, Türkiye, Indonesia, Jordan, Qatar, Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates.

They stressed that these provocative and unacceptable actions constituted a flagrant violation of international law, the relevant United Nations reso-

lutions, and the historical and legal status quo at the holy sites in occupied East Jerusalem.

The ministers deplored and strongly condemned the illegal and extremist acts of incitement, incursions’ mobilization calls and violence by Israeli extremist ministers and groups, besides warning that these provocative actions fueled hatred and extremism, and obstructed efforts to advance a just and lasting peace on the basis of the two-state solution.

They said that the restrictions on access to the Old City of Jerusalem and its places of worship coupled with discriminatory and arbitrary access restrictions to the other places of worship in the Old City constituted a flagrant violation of international law, including international humanitarian law, and an unlawful attempt to alter the historical and legal status quo.