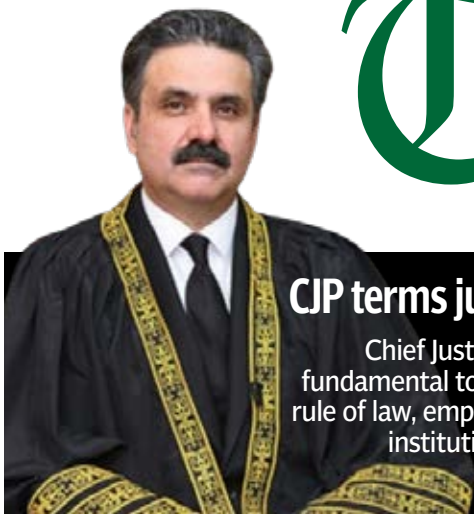




CJP terms judicial well-being essential to effective justice system

Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi has said that the wellbeing of judges is fundamental to judicial independence, institutional integrity and public confidence in the rule of law, emphasizing that a strong justice system depends not only on sound laws and institutions but also on the welfare of those entrusted with administering justice. (Report on Page 8)

A Leading National Daily



Daily The Spokesman

فرمان رسول
رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ ہمارا رب تبارک و تعالیٰ ہر رات آسمان دنیا کی طرف نزول فرماتا ہے اس وقت جب رات کا آخری تہائی حصہ باقی رہ جاتا ہے اور فرماتا ہے کہ کون ہے جو مجھ سے دعا کرتا ہے کہ میں اس کی دعا قبول کروں، کون ہے جو مجھ سے شکایت کرے کہ میں اسے دوں، کون ہے جو مجھ سے بخشش طلب کرتا ہے کہ میں اس کی بخشش کروں۔
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MQM-P candidates step down in favour of PML-N in AJK elections

In an important development ahead of the general elections in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) to be held on Monday, the MQM-P on Saturday said that all its candidates were stepping down in favour of the PML-N candidates. Addressing a joint press conference with the PML-N leaders at the MQM-P's headquarters in Bahadurabad, Karachi

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Addressed

LAHORE: Finance Minister, Muhammad Aurangzeb, addressing the Closing and Certificate Distribution Ceremony of FBR-PGD in LUMS Lahore on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Work Under Way Rapidly on FBR Reforms, Cashless Economy: Finance Minister

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb said the government, under PM Shehbaz Sharif's leadership, is taking vigorous steps to strengthen Pakistan's financial system through tax reforms, improved FBR efficiency, promotion of a cashless economy and modern technology. He was addressing the closing ceremony of FBR's Postgraduate Diploma Programme at LUMS, attended by FBR Chairman Muhammad Rashid Langrial and program graduates.

Aurangzeb said a new, more transparent model is being introduced at FBR, and congratulated graduating officers, expressing confidence they would help make the institution modern and people-friendly. He noted the 2026

program would be remembered as a milestone when Pakistan marks 100 years of independence in 2047.

He said reforms began at home, starting with the sugar sector—linked to the PM's family business—followed by monitoring measures in cement. Major sales tax evasion cases have been detected, boosting revenue collection. The government is developing modern databases with national institutions to curb evasion and improve policy-making, while urging officers to leverage AI and stay updated with technology.

Aurangzeb emphasized officers' responsibility to restore public trust in FBR and ensure reform benefits reach citizens, calling this LUMS collaboration the first program of its kind.

FBR Chairman Langrial said enhancing officers' professional skills through such training is essential for an effective tax system, praising officers' dedication and stressing continuous hard work. He expressed commitment to strengthening institutions for Pakistan's development. The ceremony concluded with awards and certificates distributed to top-performing officers.

FBR to suspend online tax services for scheduled maintenance from Aug 8

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) on Friday announced that its key online tax services will remain temporarily unavailable from 12:30 a.m. on Saturday, August 8, 2026, until 5:00 a.m. on Monday, August 10, 2026, due to a planned system maintenance activity.

According to an FBR announcement, the services that will remain unavailable during the maintenance period include IRIS, Digital Invoicing (DI), the Payment System, Synchronized Withholding Administration and Payment System



(SWAPS), and POS Registration.

The FBR said taxpayers and other users would not be able to access these platforms or carry out related transactions during the scheduled maintenance window.

It advised taxpayers and all stakeholders to plan their tax-related activities accordingly and complete all time-sensitive filings, tax payments, registrations and other online transactions well before the commencement of the maintenance period to avoid any inconvenience.

The Board said all affected services are expected to resume immediately after the successful completion of the maintenance activity.

The FBR also expressed regret over the temporary inconvenience and thanked taxpayers and stakeholders for their cooperation and understanding.

Naqvi Stresses Implementation of 'Master Plan' for Restoring Peace in Balochistan

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said immediate implementation of the master plan, along with enhancing the professional capacity of the Anti-Terrorism Force and police, and accelerating development projects, is essential for restoring peace in Balochistan. He made these remarks while jointly chairing a high-level law and order meeting with Balochistan CM Sarfaraz Bugti in Quetta on Saturday.

CM Bugti briefed participants on the province's law and order situation, ongoing measures and future strategy, emphasizing that peace, progress and prosperity are interconnected and must advance simultaneously with federal cooperation.

The meeting decided to strengthen police and Anti-Terrorism Force capacity, with Naqvi assuring full cooperation and resources from the Interior Ministry. He stressed utilizing former police chiefs' experience, modern technology and coor-

minated intelligence in the fight against terrorism, affirming federal-provincial unity and resolve against pressure.

Bugti vowed to establish the state's writ at all costs, prioritizing youth engagement through education, skills and employment opportunities while promoting merit-based opportunities. He reiterated that peace and development must progress together, with federal cooperation accelerating both security and development initiatives in Balochistan.

PPP Approaches AJK Election Commission Over CM Maryam's Electric Bus 'Gifts'

City Desk

The Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has filed a complaint with the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission over Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's announcement to provide 10 electric buses to the region ahead of AJK elections. PPP Secretary General Nayyar Bukhari met AJK Chief Election Commissioner Justice (ret'd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal and urged action against the buses carrying pictures of the Punjab CM. Bukhari alleged that using taxpayer-funded buses for political purposes after the election schedule was announced violates electoral laws.



He termed it a "political bribe" to influence the vote and questioned whether the buses were purchased from personal funds, stressing that government resources cannot be used to promote any political figure.

Maryam Nawaz had earlier announced 10 modern green electric buses for AJK during campaign rallies, with the vehicles sent bearing her pictures and the message: "A gift for Azad Kashmir."

DPM/FM, Tajik FM reaffirm longstanding brotherly ties between two countries



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Tajikistan Sirojiddin Muhriddin, Saturday, reaffirmed the longstanding, brotherly and close ties between Pakistan and Tajikistan.

They also expressed their shared commitment to further expanding cooperation in trade, investment, connectivity, energy, culture, and people-to-people exchanges.

The DPM/FM met with the Tajik foreign minister on the sidelines of the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers meeting in

Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

They underscored the importance of sustained high-level exchanges to further strengthen the bilateral partnership.

Foreign Minister Sirojiddin Muhriddin reaffirmed Tajikistan's support for Pakistan's continued efforts to promote peace, stability, and the peaceful resolution of regional issues.

The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and global developments and emphasized the importance of cooperation at multilateral forums to advance peace, stability, and prosperity.

Pakistan accelerating shift to EVs to cut fuel imports, says Ahsan Iqbal

Bureau Report

LAHORE: "80% of Petrol Used in Transport, EV Transition Vital for Economy" Federal Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal said Saturday that Pakistan is moving quickly toward electric vehicles as the global EV revolution gains pace.

Speaking at the EVS World and Electricity Pakistan Exhibition, he noted that 80% of petrol in Pakistan is consumed by transport. He said promoting EVs will help reduce fuel import costs and dependence. The government has announced incentives,

including subsidies up to Rs. 80,000 for electric motorcycles and duty cuts on EVs in the recent budget.

Iqbal added Pakistan must shift two, three and four-wheelers to electric energy in phases and use 6,000-8,000MW of domestic solar power for transport. Export-Led Growth TargetThe minister stressed moving from an import-based to an export-based, "dollar-earning" economy, with a target of over \$100 billion in exports by 2035. He also cited FBR digitalization and tax reforms to broaden the base and cut evasion.

Exports Play Vital Role in Strengthening National Economy: Rana Tanveer



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said exports play a vital role in strengthening the economy, stressing the need to significantly boost Pakistan's export volume for sustainable growth. Speaking to media at Expo Centre, he said increased exports would also reduce import dependence.

He described Faisalabad as Pakistan's industrial hub and third-largest city by revenue generation, noting PM Shehbaz Sharif's business-friendly policies aim to facilitate trade and enhance exports.

Rana Tanveer said Pakistan

received record remittances of \$41.6 billion in FY2025-26, but cautioned that remittances alone cannot drive economic progress. Citing Vietnam and Bangladesh's export performance, he said Pakistan has set a \$60 billion export target, calling it essential for economic strength. "We can say goodbye to the IMF by boosting exports," he remarked.

He praised Pakistani skilled workers abroad as a positive sign, and commended Finance Minister Aurangzeb's efforts, noting \$10 billion sought under the Exchange Stabilization Support Facility.

The minister lauded Expo Faisalabad 2026, highlighting the textile industry's potential to boost exports. Referring to global tensions, he noted economic pressure from the US-Iran conflict, affirming government commitment to strengthening Pakistan amid these challenges.

IS Exclusive Report

The Spokesman report prompts action as Sindh Food Control Authority seals suspected illegal cooking oil unit

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Acting on an exclusive report published by The Spokesman, the Sindh Food Control Authority has carried out a major operation in Hyderabad's SITE area after Deputy Commissioner Zain-ul-Abideen Memon took notice of the alleged production of cooking oil, poultry feed and other products from poultry waste and discarded materials. According to officials, the Authority's vigilance team raided the suspected facility and recovered allegedly substandard cooking oil, poultry feed and raw materials. The prepared cooking oil was declared unfit for use, the premises were sealed, and an investigation was launched. The operation followed The Spokesman's report highlighting alleged food safety violations in the



SITE area and raising concerns over public health and the effectiveness of regulatory oversight. The action has also raised serious questions about how such alleged activities could continue for a prolonged period in Hyderabad,

Sindh's second-largest city, despite the presence of the district administration, police and food safety authorities. Authorities are expected to determine whether the suspected products had entered the market, trace

their distribution network and establish whether any unsafe food items reached consumers. Experts have called for laboratory testing of all seized samples and urged the authorities to make the findings public. If laboratory analysis confirms violations of food safety standards or risks to public health, legal action is expected against all those responsible. The investigation is also expected to determine whether regulatory lapses allowed the alleged operation to continue unchecked and whether additional individuals or businesses were involved. The Spokesman will continue to monitor the case in the public interest and publish responses from the Hyderabad district administration, Hyderabad Police, the Sindh Food Control Authority and the Health Department as they become available.

Attention for concerned

RAWALPINDI: A view of rain water accumulated on Murree Road at Sixth Road area near the WASA flood emergency response camp.

Photo: Online

Training Session and Awareness Walk Held at Children's Hospital Multan to Combat Dengue

Irum Asim

MULTAN: A training session and dengue awareness walk was organized at Children's Hospital Multan to strengthen the hospital's response to dengue virus and fever. Held under the leadership of Dean Professor Muhammad Kashif Chishti, the program aimed to enhance the professional capacity of medical staff and raise awareness about timely diagnosis, effective treatment, and preventive measures for dengue. The session was



attended by medical officers, graduate resident doctors, and women medical officers, post-graduate resident doctors, and nursing staff. It was conducted in line with guidelines issued by the Dengue Expert Advisory

Group (DEAG), Government of Punjab. Experts highlighted modern principles of early dengue diagnosis, clinical management, patient care, and treatment protocols. Speakers included Dr. Sadia Khan, Dr. Khurram Nawaz, Dr. Rubina Qureshi and other senior doctors and nurses. The event concluded with a dengue awareness walk led by Prof. Muhammad Kashif Chishti, aimed at spreading public awareness about prevention and control of dengue in the community.

District Bar Multan lawyers issue 72-hour deadline, demand removal of LHC Chief Justice

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Lawyers at District Bar Multan have expressed serious reservations over bar affairs and issued a 72-hour ultimatum to the bar leadership, warning of protests if their demands are not met. A consultative meeting chaired by former president Riaz Gilani and Nasheed Arif Gondal was attended by senior lawyers including Zakir Naqvi, Mehboob Sandila, Zawar Qureshi, Amara Tahir, and dozens of other bar members. The meeting demanded immediate return of money deposited for young lawyers' chambers and registration of FIRs against those alleged



edly involved in embezzlement. If not done within 72 hours, participants warned they would surround the offices of the Bar President and Secretary. Citing "inappropriate and contemptuous behavior" toward young lawyers, the bar resolved not

to invite any judge to the District Bar room until conduct improves. Serious reservations were expressed against the Chief Justice of Lahore High Court. The resolution stated she has created obstacles to justice and demanded her immediate removal. The bar also announced it will not invite or welcome her to any event and will hold protests in Multan during her visits. Lawyers also rejected the alleged Rs. 100 parking charges outside the parking plaza, announcing they will not pay them in future. Speakers said lawyers reserve the right to announce further action if the passed resolutions are not implemented.

CBD Punjab's monsoon preparedness keeps CBD Route 47 fully operational during heavy rainfall

News Desk

LAHORE: Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) ensured uninterrupted traffic flow on CBD Route 47 during the recent heavy monsoon spell, showcasing its focus on climate-resilient and future-ready urban infrastructure. Despite nearly 300 mm of cumulative rainfall across Lahore over 48 hours, CBD Route 47, Kalma Chowk Underpass and Walton Road remained open with smooth traffic and no water accumulation. The city received an average of 88 mm in 2 days, with 263 mm recorded near the Airport. Built to international standards, CBD Route 47's state-of-the-art storm-water drainage system enabled rapid rainwater disposal, preventing water-logging. The system also provided relief to Walton residents by resolving a drainage issue that had persisted for over four decades. CBD Punjab's Operations and Maintenance teams stayed on high alert, conducting regular inspections and timely interventions to maintain safety and connectivity. CEO Imran Amin said the route's performance reflects CBD Punjab's commitment to "resilient infrastructure, proactive planning and sustainable urban development." CBD Punjab also continued technical support to WASA and Walton Cantonment Board for drainage and traffic management. While Kalma Chowk Underpass and Walton Road have been handed over, coordination remains in place to ensure smooth operations during rains. This collaborative approach underscores CBD Punjab's commitment to a resilient and sustainable transport network for Lahore.

Multan reviews arrangements for MDCAT 2026 to ensure transparent and peaceful conduct



Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN,: On the directions of the Government of Punjab, the Medical and Dental College Admission Test (MDCAT), organized by the University of Health Sciences (UHS) in collaboration with the Multan district administration, will be held on August 16, 2026. To review preparations for the examination, Deputy Commissioner Multan Dr. Faisal Saleem chaired a high-level meeting of district departments. The meeting reviewed security, traffic management, examination centres, electricity supply, Rescue 1122 camps, sanitation, and other administrative arrangements to ensure the smooth conduct of the test. Addressing the participants, the Deputy Commissioner directed all concerned departments to complete preparations well before the examination. He stressed that the MDCAT must be conducted in a transparent, fair, and foolproof manner, with the best possible facilities provided to candidates at examination centres. Dr. Faisal Saleem also instructed officials to ensure the effective implementation of the security and traffic management plans and directed all relevant agencies to remain on high alert to respond promptly to any emergency, ensuring a safe, peaceful, and conducive examination environment for all candidates.

Malik Amin Aslam Slams Govt Over Inflation, Calls for Immediate Relief Measures

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Former Federal Minister-Malik Amin Aslam Khan has criticized the government for failing to control inflation, saying daily increases in petroleum prices have made life unbearable for citizens.



Aslam said the public is already burdened by soaring inflation, and repeated hikes in petrol and diesel prices have further worsened hardships. He added that the government has failed to deliver on pre-election promises, and earning enough for two meals a day has become difficult for ordinary families. He noted that alongside fuel prices, heavy electricity, gas and water bills have added to public distress. Every increase in petroleum prices, he said, leads directly to higher transport fares and a rise in essential commodity prices. Urging immediate action, Aslam warned that if inflation is not controlled now, it may become impossible to manage later. He said the government should prioritize poverty reduction and direct relief for the poor over development projects. "Development projects alone cannot feed the people. Poverty should be eliminated first, after which development should be prioritized," he added.

Chenab Swells, NDMA warns of critical 48 hours

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) on Saturday warned of rising flood risks across several parts of Pakistan as monsoon rains continue to swell rivers and streams, with medium level flooding reported at key points along the Chenab River and flash flood threats looming over northern Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan during the next 24 to 48 hours. According to the NDMA's National Emergencies Operation Centre (NEOC), medium level flooding was recorded at Khanki, Qadirabad and Chiniot Bridge on the Chenab River, while the Palkhu Nala at Wazirabad was also flowing at medium flood level. Low level flooding persists at Kalabagh, Chashma and Taunsa on the Indus River, Marala and Trimmu on the Chenab River, Balloki and Sidhnai on the Ravi River, and Nowshera on the Kabul River. Low flood conditions were also reported at Nala Aik and Palkhu Nala Cantonment Bridge. The authority said water flows in the Chenab River are expected to increase further during the next 24 hours at Marala, Khanki, Qadirabad and Chiniot Bridge. Water levels at Trimmu Barrage are also likely to rise to medium flood level during the same period. NDMA warned of possible flash floods in the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan, seasonal streams in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and parts of northern Balochistan over the next 24 to 48 hours. Urban flooding risks have also been forecast for Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin, Sialkot, Narowal, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Jhang, Multan, Hafizabad and Lahore as heavy monsoon rains continue. The authority advised the public to avoid unnecessary travel to flood affected areas and urged motorists to check weather forecasts and road conditions before setting out. NDMA directed all relevant departments to maintain continuous monitoring of vulnerable locations, keep emergency response teams on standby and ensure immediate restoration of roads in case of closures.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:37 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:09 pm
Maghrib 7:14 pm
Isha 8:51 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

ADCG Usman Tariq, MD WASA Review Monsoon Preparedness in Toba Tek Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: In line with CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision and on directives of DC Maham Asif Malik, Managing Director WASA Chaudhry Kamran Kahlon along with Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Dr. Usman Tariq inspected various parts of Toba Tek Singh to review monsoon preparedness. The officials visited the underpass, Shahbaz Chowk, major roads, low-lying areas and other sensitive points. They also checked disposal stations, drainage infrastructure, sewerage lines and WASA field teams. "Machinery and Teams to Remain on High Alert"

MD WASA directed officers to ensure uninterrupted drainage and said all dewatering pumps, machinery and staff must stay ready for emergencies. He added that prompt response to public complaints and immediate clearance of accumulated rainwater are top priorities. ADC-G Dr. Usman Tariq expressed satisfaction with the emergency plan and stressed inter-departmental coordination, saying the district administration and WASA are fully mobilized to provide civic services during the monsoon.

Punjab ensures swift rainwater drainage amid prolonged monsoon rains: CM Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has said that despite continuous monsoon rains over the past 10 days, roads, markets, streets and neighbourhoods across the province

have remained clear due to the effective performance of the provincial administration and drainage teams.

According to an official handout issued here on Saturday, the prolonged spell of torrential monsoon rains has continued across Punjab, while a new record has



been set in the timely disposal of rainwater. Unlike the past, where drainage would take weeks, rainwater is now being cleared within hours.

The handout said the chief minister was personally monitoring drainage operations in every district and city. Commissioners, deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) teams remained present in the field throughout the rainfall in various areas of Lahore, Gujranwala, Faisalabad and Sargodha divisions.

It said the drainage system remained fully operational in Lahore, Sialkot, Narowal, Hafizabad, Chichawatni, Gujrat, Sheikhupura and Kasur, ensuring the prompt disposal of rainwater.

The handout added that rain continued throughout the night in different parts of Lahore, while the entire drainage system remained active to ensure immediate removal of accumulated rainwater. WASA teams stayed deployed at Liberty Roundabout and adjoining areas, preventing any water accumulation despite continuous rainfall.

It further said Circular Road, Sheranwala Gate, Farooq Ganj Mohalla, their main roads and markets remained clear, while successful drainage operations at Mazang Chungi and surrounding localities kept the roads open for traffic.

According to the handout, Jain Mandir Chowk was also cleared despite overnight rainfall and traffic continued uninterrupted.

It added that Wasa teams remained present at Lakshmi Chowk during several hours of heavy rainfall and did not allow water to accumulate.

Summer Camp

ISLAMABAD: Children take interest in toys during Back to School Summer Camp at local mall in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan Holds First National Self-Care Dialogue to promote preventive healthcare

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan marked International Self-Care Day by hosting its first-ever National Self-Care Dialogue, bringing together senior government officials, healthcare experts, academics, development partners and industry leaders to promote self-care as a key public health priority.

Organised by Haleon Pakistan, the event, titled "Self-Care as a Public Health Imperative," highlighted the importance of prevention, health literacy and empowering individuals to take greater responsibility for their health. Participants included Joint Secretary, Ministry of National Health Services, Syed Salahuddin Ahmed, and British Deputy High Commissioner to Karachi, Alison Blackburne.

In his keynote address, Syed Salahuddin Ahmed stressed that a healthier Pakistan requires greater focus on prevention, health education and responsible self-care



alongside medical treatment. He called for stronger collaboration between federal and provincial stakeholders to build a more resilient healthcare system.

Haleon Pakistan CEO and General Manager Qawi Naseer said self-care extends beyond

self-medication and involves equipping people with reliable health information to make informed decisions and adopt healthier lifestyles.

The dialogue also featured a panel of healthcare experts from the Sindh Healthcare Commission, Aga Khan

University, Habib University and UNICEF. Participants concluded by reaffirming their commitment to strengthening health literacy, promoting preventive healthcare and integrating self-care into Pakistan's broader public health agenda.

Punjab intensifies drainage operation as monsoon rains lash province

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Under CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's supervision, the Punjab government has intensified drainage operations amid torrential monsoon rains. For the first time, modern drainage machinery has been provided to all 41 districts, with over 1,000 dewatering machines currently in use.

The CM is in direct contact with district administrations and personally monitoring department performance.

WASA, municipal corporations and district staff are working in Gujranwala, Faisalabad, Sargodha, Wazirabad, Jhelum, Mandi Bahauddin, Narowal, Sahiwal and Hafizabad. In Hafizabad, pumps cleared Misri Khan Road, College Road and other key points. Mandi Bahauddin teams ensured timely drainage with modern equipment.

Officials said arrangements also cover rural areas. Citizens welcomed the swift response, noting rainwater was cleared within hours — a contrast to past delays.

Punjab Safe Cities Authority Intensifies Rain, Flood Monitoring During Monsoon

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has intensified its Rain and Flood Monitoring Operations across the province to ensure public safety during the ongoing monsoon spell, following the directives of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

According to a PSCA spokesperson, all Smart Safe City Operations Centres are continuously monitoring rainfall, urban flooding, underpasses, major roads and other vulnerable areas through the authority's advanced surveillance network. Any emergency or unusual situation is being detected in real time and immediately communicated to the relevant departments for swift action.

The PSCA is also providing the Water and Sanitation Authority (WASA) with real-time alerts to speed up drainage operations. In addition, drones are conducting aerial surveillance of rivers, barrages, bridges and flood-prone locations to monitor water levels and identify potential risks.

The Rain and Flood Monitoring Cell remains in close coordination with district administrations, PDMA, Rescue 1122 and other agencies to ensure an effective emergency response. Citizens have been advised to avoid unnecessary travel, stay away from waterlogged areas and contact the Punjab Emergency Helpline 15 in case of any emergency.

ICT Police team attacked in Shahzad Town; Custody suspect wounded by accomplices' fire

ISLAMABAD: A suspect in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) police custody was injured after his accomplices opened indiscriminate fire on a police team in the jurisdiction of Shahzad Town Police Station while officers were returning from a recovery operation based on his disclosure.

A police official told APP on Saturday that the police team was escorting the detained suspect, Khaliq Akhtar, after recovering evidence on his identification when armed accomplices, who had been lying in wait along the route, launched an attack on the police party.

During the exchange of fire, the suspect sustained injuries after being hit by bullets allegedly fired by his own accomplices, while the police personnel remained unharmed due to the use of bulletproof jackets and other protective measures.

The injured suspect was shifted to a hospital for medical treatment, the official said.

Foreign Office, COMSTECH Launch First 2026 Issue of Journal of Science Communication and Diplomacy

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in collaboration with the OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), launched the first 2026 issue of the Journal of Science Communication and Diplomacy at a ceremony held at the Foreign Office, marking two years of the journal's successful publication.

Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna Baloch attended the

event as the chief guest. The ceremony was attended by ambassadors, diplomats, scientists, academics, heads of national institutions and senior officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and COMSTECH, along with representatives from the ECO Science Foundation, Higher Education Commission and Pakistan Academy of Sciences.

Addressing the gathering, Coordinator General COMS-

TECH Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary said science diplomacy had become an effective tool for addressing global challenges through international cooperation, innovation and scientific knowledge. He highlighted the scientific potential of the 57-member Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and stressed the need to strengthen collaboration among universities, research institutions, governments and industry.

Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna Baloch said global challenges require collective solutions and emphasised the growing importance of science diplomacy in linking scientific research with foreign policy. She called for enhanced scientific cooperation among OIC member states and greater participation of developing countries in the governance of emerging technologies.

The latest issue of the journal features 11 articles, including



seven written by diplomats from Pakistan's Ministry of Foreign

Affairs, reflecting the country's growing contribution to science

diplomacy and international scientific cooperation.

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Flood Recovery Efforts: NHA’s Response Reflects Institutional Resilience, But Structural Lessons Must Not Be Ignored

The recent flooding that swept across Gilgit-Baltistan has once again exposed the fragility of Pakistan’s northern road infrastructure, even as it has showcased the responsiveness of institutions tasked with keeping the country connected. The National Highway Authority’s swift mobilization, its round-the-clock coordination with district administrations, and the rapid restoration of the Gilgit-Shandur Road deserve genuine appreciation. In a region where roads are not a convenience but a lifeline, restoring full traffic within days of a bridge being swept away at Yangal in Ghizer District is no small achievement.

Yet this episode should prompt reflection beyond the immediate relief effort. The recurring pattern of bridges and embankments giving way to floodwaters in Gilgit-Baltistan is not simply bad luck; it is a symptom of infrastructure that was often designed for a climate regime that no longer exists. As glacial melt accelerates and monsoon patterns intensify across the mountainous north, water flows are becoming more erratic and destructive. Structures built decades ago, or even those constructed more recently without adequate climate-resilience standards, are increasingly vulnerable to exactly this kind of sudden, forceful damage.

The NHA’s field response—clearing debris at RD 25, back-filling with stone dumping at Ansar Camp, diverting water flow at JSR Sassi Bridge—demonstrates operational competence under pressure. Field personnel deserve credit for working amid genuinely difficult conditions, where strong water currents are delaying the deployment of heavy machinery. But emergency patchwork, however skillfully executed, is not a substitute for long-term planning. Each flood season that requires alternate routes and improvised repairs is also a reminder that Pakistan’s mountain highway network needs a fundamental reassessment of design standards, drainage capacity and bridge engineering suited to a changing climate.

There is also a broader lesson here about transparency and communication. The NHA’s practice of issuing regular updates on restoration progress is commendable and should become standard practice across all infrastructure agencies during emergencies. Travelers and local communities in remote areas depend heavily on accurate, timely information to plan their movements safely.

As machinery is progressively shifted from RD 25 toward RD 16, and as water levels are expected to recede, the immediate crisis may ease. But the underlying vulnerability will remain until Pakistan invests seriously in climate-resilient infrastructure for its northern regions. The NHA’s current response deserves credit for competence and urgency. What remains to be seen is whether this becomes the exception or the beginning of a more forward-looking approach to road building in a landscape reshaped by climate change.

Summer vacation opens window to Gandhara’ timeless legacy for young visitors

Fakhar-e-Alam

For many children, summer vacation is more than just a break from school; it is a celebration of childhood, marked by animated cartoons, energetic cricket matches, refreshing swims and precious moments shared with family.

But for brothers Ismail Khan and Ibrahim Khan, this year’s holidays became a journey through more than two millennia of history as they discovered the timeless legacy of the Gandhara civilization at the historic Peshawar museum.

The two brothers, students of the first and third grades at a private school, had only read about founder of Bhuddism, Lord Buddha and the ancient Gandhara civilization in their textbooks.

Walking into the world lone Ghandhara art museum’s galleries, however, transformed those lessons into a living experience for the archaeology lovers.

Standing before the towering statue of Lord Buddha, the brothers fell silent, gazing with curiosity at a masterpiece carved centuries ago.

The calm expression on the Buddha’s face, the delicate folds of the robe and the remarkable craftsmanship left them visibly fascinated.

“We had heard a lot about Lord Buddha, but seeing his grand statue with our own eyes is like a dream come true,” said young Ibrahim (8), unable to hide his excitement as he eagerly explored one gallery after another.

Accompanied by their father, the children carefully read the information panels. They listened attentively as museum guides narrated the life of Prince Siddhartha from his birth and royal upbringing to his enlightenment beneath the Bodhi tree and his final passing.

What had once been words in a classroom suddenly became interesting stories told

through stone sculptures and centuries-old relics.

Among the exhibits that captivated the brothers most was the celebrated relief depicting the birth of Prince Siddhartha.

The intricate sculpture portrays Queen Maya standing beneath a Sal tree while celestial beings welcome the newborn prince before he takes his symbolic first seven steps.

The children stood quietly before the unique artwork, absorbing every detail of a masterpiece that has survived for nearly two thousand years.

Their father believed such practical experiences provide lessons that no classroom alone can offer.

“Museums help children understand that Pakistan’s history is much older and richer than what they read in archology books. When they see these treasures with their own eyes, they develop pride in their heritage and become curious to learn more about Ghandhara art,” he said.

As schools remain closed for the summer break till August 30, museums and archaeological sites across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are witnessing an increase in family visits.

Parents are increasingly choosing educational excursions that allow children to discover Pakistan’s rich civilization heritage while escaping the routine of holidays spent indoors.

The Peshawar Museum remains one of the country’s greatest cultural treasures, where nearly 14,000 priceless artefacts are kept for tourists.

It possesses one of the world’s finest collections of Gandhara art which is a remarkable fusion of Greek, Persian, Central Asian and South Asian artistic traditions that emerged after Alexander the Great’s campaigns and flourished under the Kushan Empire nearly 2,000 years ago.

Furthermore, its galleries display elegant

Buddha statues, Bodhisattvas, narrative reliefs, coins, manuscripts, jewelry and archaeological discoveries that continue to attract students, historians, researchers, pilgrims and international visitors eager to explore one of the world’s most distinctive artistic traditions.

Director General of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Department of Archaeology and Museums, Dr Abdul Samad Khan, said Pakistan possesses an extraordinary archaeological wealth, with UNESCO World Heritage sites including Mohenjodaro, Taxila, Makli Necropolis, Rohtas Fort, Lahore Fort, Shalimar Gardens, Baltit Fort, and Takht-i-Bahi Mardan among its most celebrated landmarks.

He said Khyber Pakhtunkhwa alone is home to more than 2,000 archaeological and religious heritage sites besides around 30,000 relics of the Gandhara civilization, making the province the heartland of ancient Buddhist heritage in South Asia.

“UNESCO sites such as Takht-i-Bahi and Sahr-i-Bahlol in Mardan and Peshawar museum, besides numerous archaeological remains across the province, especially in Swat, continue to attract historians, researchers, pilgrims and heritage enthusiasts from around the world,” he said.

Experts believed the growing interest shown by children and families in summer vacations can support Pakistan’s tourism economy if heritage sites are projected through digital media.

Professor Dr Muhammad Naem of the Department of Economics at the University of Swabi said that faith-based and heritage tourism remains one of Pakistan’s most promising yet underutilized sectors. The country possesses an exceptional combination of Buddhist archaeological sites, Sikh religious shrines, Sufi sanctuaries, Hindu temples and

Continued on Page 7

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai: The Eternal Voice of Humanity

Asadullah Mahezar

تن تسبیح، من مثنیو، دل دمپورو جن
تندان جي طلب مر، وحدت سر وڃن
وحده لا شریک لہ، ایء راڳ رڳن
سی ستائی سو نهن، نند عبادت ان جي.

“Their bodies are their rosaries, their souls the beads of remembrance, and their hearts the tambura that sings only of the Divine. Every vein echoes the eternal refrain of God’s Oneness. Such is their complete absorption in the Beloved that even their sleep is transformed into worship.”

Every year, as devotees, scholars, artists, and ordinary people gather at Bhitt Shah to celebrate the Urs of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai (1689-1752), they do more than remember a revered Sufi poet. They renew a centuries-old relationship with a man whose words continue to illuminate hearts and minds across generations. His shrine is not merely a resting place, it is a symbol of hope, tolerance, and the enduring spirit of Sindh.

More than two and a half centuries have passed since Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai left this mortal world, yet his message remains remarkably alive. In an age marked by intolerance, division, and material pursuits, his poetry continues to remind us that the true measure of a society lies not in its wealth or power but in its humanity.

Bhittai was much more than a poet.

He was a philosopher, a mystic, and an interpreter of society. He understood the sufferings of ordinary people because he lived among them, travelled across Sindh and neighbouring regions, and listened to the voices of shepherds, fishermen, travellers, peasants, women, ascetics, and wandering fakirs. Their hopes and hardships became the soul of his poetry. Rather than praising kings and courts, he celebrated those whose resilience and dignity often went unnoticed.

One of Shah Latif’s greatest contributions was his solid commitment to the Sindhi language. At a time when Persian dominated the courts and Arabic was regarded as the language of religious scholarship, he deliberately chose Sindhi to communicate profound spiritual and philosophical ideas. In doing so, he elevated the language of ordinary people into a vehicle of timeless wisdom. His Shah Jo Risalo became not only a literary masterpiece but also a cultural foundation for Sindh, preserving its folklore, values, and collective memory.

What distinguishes Shah Latif from many poets of his time is the universality of his message. He never confined spirituality within narrow sectarian boundaries. His journeys with Yogis and Sannyasis, his appreciation of seekers from different traditions, and his emphasis on sincerity over ritual reflected a vision that embraced humanity before identity. For him, the search for truth exceeded labels, and love for humanity was the highest expression of faith.

His poetry also challenged the misuse of religion and authority. Bhittai believed that genuine faith should liberate people from fear, injustice, and exploitation rather than become a means of domination. He consistently stood beside the oppressed and reminded his audience that moral courage is inseparable from spiritual devotion. His message was never one of passivity; it called upon individuals to uphold truth, dignity, and compassion in every sphere of life.

The women who occupy Shah Jo Risalo including Sassui, Marui, Moomal, Noori, and Suhni are not merely romantic figures. They symbolize perseverance, devotion, sacrifice, and unwavering commitment to truth. Through these timeless heroines, Shah Latif transformed familiar folk narratives into profound lessons about human endurance and the pursuit of higher ideals. Their struggles continue to inspire readers because they speak to universal experiences of hope, patience, and resilience.

His life itself reflected the ideals he preached. He preferred simplicity over luxury, contemplation over prestige, and service over recognition. Bhittai sought solitude not to escape society but to understand it more deeply. The sand dunes of Bhitt Shah became a place where spiritual reflection merged with social consciousness, producing poetry that belongs as much to humanity as it does to Sindh.

In today’s Pakistan, where differences of opinion too often lead to division and hostility, Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai’s

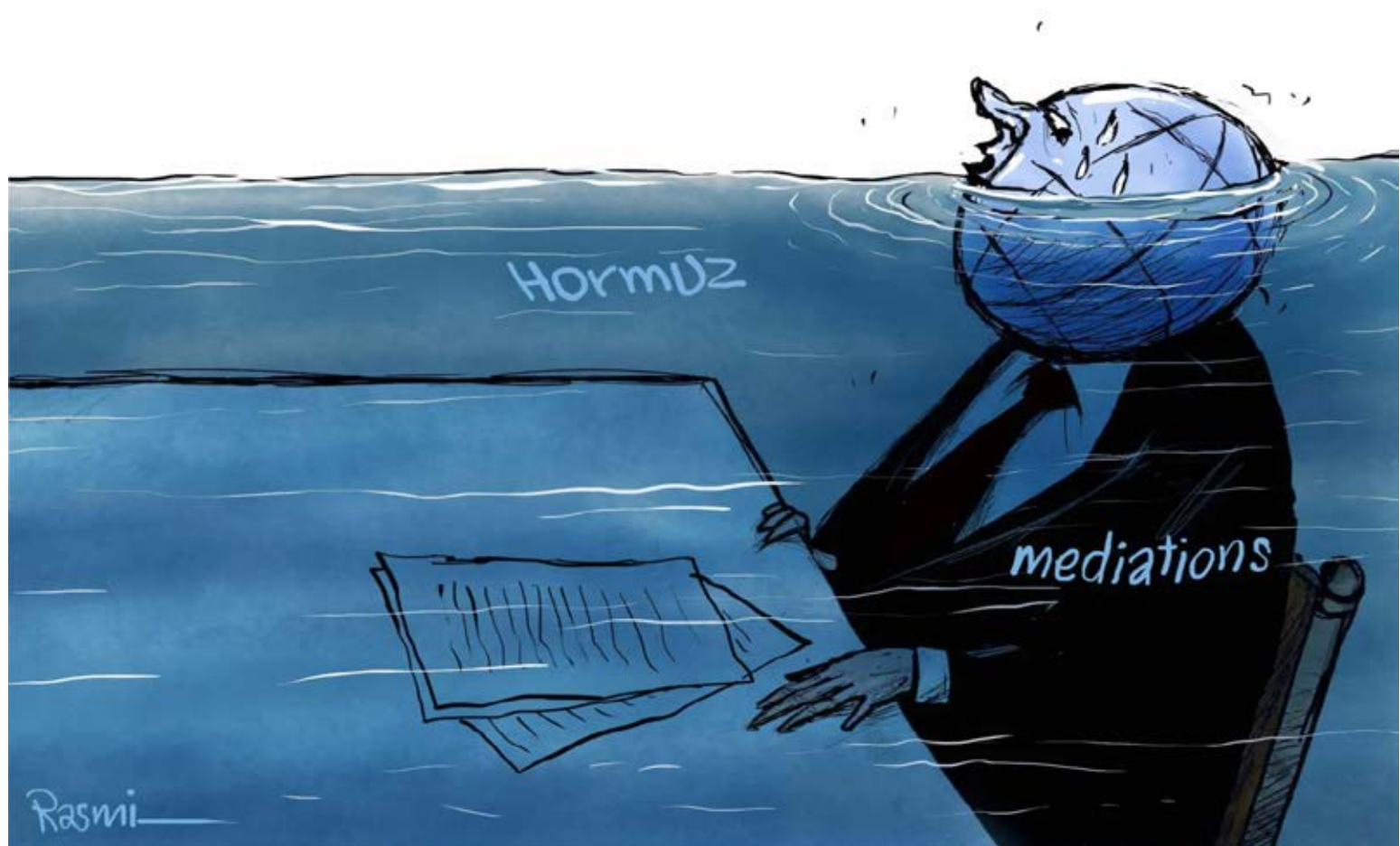
teachings deserve renewed attention. His message encourages dialogue instead of hatred, coexistence instead of exclusion, and wisdom instead of prejudice. He reminds us that nations are strengthened not by intolerance but by justice, mutual respect, and compassion.

Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai belongs to no single community, sect, or generation. He belongs to every person who believes that love is stronger than hatred, that knowledge is superior to ignorance, and that humanity is the highest calling of all.

The annual Urs, therefore, should not remain only a cultural celebration or a religious gathering. It should also become an occasion for reflection. The finest tribute we can pay to Bhittai is not merely by reciting his verses or visiting his shrine but by practising the values he cherished, honesty, humility, tolerance, service to humanity, and unwavering commitment to truth.

As Sindh once again bows its head in reverence before its greatest poet, may we remember that Bhittai’s most enduring legacy is not confined to the pages of Shah Jo Risalo. It lives wherever compassion succeeds over prejudice, wherever justice prevails over oppression, and wherever human beings choose understanding over division. That is the Shah Latif we must continue to celebrate not only during his Urs, but every day.

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

Climate Emergency in Pakistan & Debt the World Won’t Pay

Eighteen people lost their lives in Pakistan this year on the first days of July before the monsoons had even started. The Pakistan Meteorological Department issued after-issue flood warnings, indicating the rise in river levels in the northern areas, urban flooding in Rawalpindi, Lahore, Peshawar, Islamabad and Faisalabad, while the warning for glacial lake outburst floods was issued for Gilgit-Baltistan where the melting of glaciers has exceeded the seasonal pace as a result of an unusually intense heatwave in the pre-monsoon period. This is NOT the unlucky year. This is the fourth time in the last four years that Pakistan has declared a state of emergency for a period that should be considered a season; and this time the emergency has come early and has been extended. But Pakistan’s contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is less than one per cent of the global emission while the country is among the top on the list of climate disaster exposure. This isn’t just a matter of location. It’s the spirit of injustice, it’s the spirit of Rawalpindi, and the melting point of Hunza.

The situation is now sadly familiar. According to the government and World Bank data, in 2022, the monsoon floods claimed the lives of over 1,700 people and displaced over 33 million others, resulting in economic losses in excess of \$30 billion, or ten per cent of the country’s economy that year. In 2025, once again over a thousand people lost their lives to floods. As in 2026, the same alarms ring again: flash floods are occurring in the hill torrents; landslides are hanging over Swat and Chitral, and river levels are rapidly rising throughout the northern part of the country, before the season has even reached its height. There is a changed tone to

the response this year. The Chief Minister of Punjab has cited the new embankments, flood boats, the mock evacuation drills and the night vision drones as proof of a change from a reactive to preventative approach to governance in the province. However, it does not alter the reality that Pakistan is spending its money on constructing walls to ward off a flood that it was not directly responsible for. Scientists know exactly how this works: As the air gets warmer, it absorbs more water, and monsoon rains are getting more intense, but more focused in short, violent episodes. The risk of flooding has not abated at all, despite projections of less rain this year — it was never “how much” rain that was the problem, it was “how the rain falls”.

It is the glacial ice in Northern Pakistan that is greater than in most parts of the world on Earth except the poles, and until recently these glaciers were melting at their own more leisurely pace — centuries, not seasons. Disaster management authorities this year have blamed the early start and unusually severe heatwave in the region as the direct cause of glacier melting in the area, urging residents to be vigilant of the possible surge in rivers and glacial lakes with little lead time. The glacial lake outburst flood was once considered a once every 10 years occurrence but is now regularly added to the national weather advisory, along with heatstroke and urban flooding. As southern Punjab and Sindh experience another heat wave and struggle to keep their soil moist, another climate-driven crisis is unfolding in the north, where ice sheets are being destabilised—one crisis leading to another, and little the country can do but watch and warn.

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Analysis

Nayab Noor

Palestinian Ambassador H. E. Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid Visits UMT

Bureau Report

LAHORE: His Excellency Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid, Ambassador of the State of Palestine to Pakistan, visited the University of Management and Technology (UMT), where he met with Chairman and President UMT, Ibrahim Hasan Murad. The meeting focused on strengthening academic cooperation, research partnerships, institutional linkages and other areas of mutual interest to further enhance educational ties between Pakistan and Palestine.

During the meeting, both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to deepening the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Palestine. They agreed to expand higher education opportunities for Palestinian students, promote collaborative research, facilitate faculty and student exchange programmes, and strengthen institutional partnerships between universities in both countries.



Speaking on the occasion, Ibrahim Hasan Murad reaffirmed UMT's unwavering solidarity with the Palestinian people. He said that UMT remains committed to advancing quality education, research and academic cooperation for Palestinian students and

will continue to play a proactive role in supporting educational initiatives that contribute to the development of Palestine.

He emphasised that education is a powerful bridge between nations, fostering mutual understanding,

sustainable peace and shared prosperity.

Ambassador H. E. Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid commended UMT for its commitment to academic excellence, impactful research, international collaboration, an innovation driven learning environment and its efforts to nurture young people into responsible and future-ready leaders. He noted that institutions such as UMT are making a significant contribution to developing visionary leadership and promoting knowledge-based societies.

During his visit, the Ambassador also participated in UMT's tree plantation campaign by planting a sapling, symbolising the shared commitment of Pakistan and Palestine to environmental sustainability, peace, friendship and a greener future.

At the end of the visit, Chairman and President UMT, Ibrahim Hasan Murad, presented a souvenir to Ambassador H. E. Dr. Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid.

Lavrov says SCO Ministers finalise key summit agenda, defends Russia's position on Ukraine

News Desk

CHOLPON-ATA, KYRGYZSTAN, JULY 24: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov said the meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Foreign Ministers successfully concluded preparations for the SCO Summit to be held in Bishkek later this year.

Addressing the media after the meeting, Lavrov said the foreign ministers approved draft documents proposing the establishment of a Universal Centre for Countering New Challenges and Threats and a Centre for Combating Drug-Related Crime. He added that the ministers also adopted a joint statement outlining the SCO's assessment of the international situation and future cooperation



tion in areas including energy, artificial intelligence and healthcare.

Responding to questions about his recent meeting with US Secretary of

State Marco Rubio, Lavrov defended Russia's position on the proposed Anchorage agreements, arguing that Moscow had accepted compromise proposals put forward by the United States but alleged that Ukraine had failed to support their implementation.

Lavrov claimed that continued military assistance and intelligence support from Western countries had encouraged Ukraine to reject the proposed arrangements. He reiterated Russia's position that Western military aid was prolonging the conflict and accused Ukraine of using advanced weapons to target civilian infrastructure. He maintained that Russia remained committed to pursuing a political settlement while blaming Kyiv and its allies for the failure of the proposed agreements.

D-8 Secretary General, Turkish Agribusiness Leader Discuss Agricultural Cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: D-8 Secretary General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood met Turkish agribusiness leader Zeki Güvercin to discuss strengthening cooperation in agriculture and the agri-food sector among D-8 member states.

During the meeting, the two sides explored opportunities to enhance collaboration between public institutions and the private sector, with a focus on promoting investment, technology transfer and sustainable agricultural development across D-8 countries and Africa.

They emphasized the importance of building stronger partnerships to improve agricultural productivity, food security and innovation through greater regional cooperation.

The discussion also highlighted the D-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation's commitment to agriculture and food security as strategic priorities. With a combined population of approximately 1.3 billion people across its eight member states, the organization aims to expand cooperation in agriculture to support sustainable economic growth and strengthen food systems.



'Blood and Toil' Book Launched at IoBM

News Desk

KARACHI: The Global and Regional Studies Center (GRSC) at the Institute of Business Management (IoBM) hosted the launch of "Blood and Toil," a memoir by Brigadier Tariq Khalil, SJ, SI(M), IS Gallantry (Bar) (Retired), highlighting leadership, military service, resilience and national responsibility.

The event was attended by academics, retired military officers, professionals, diplomats and students. A panel comprising Lt. Gen. (R) Moinuddin Haider, Col. (R) Mukhtar Butt, Syed Manzar Naqvi, and Dr. Zaituna Shah reviewed the book and discussed its reflections on leadership, governance and Pakistan's evolving geopolitical environment.



IoBM President Talib Karim said the book would enrich research

and learning by offering valuable insights into leadership, governance

and national affairs. Brigadier Tariq Khalil described the memoir as a record of his life from the pre-Partition era through Pakistan's major conflicts, including the 1971 war, saying it would serve as a useful reference for historians, researchers and policymakers.

The reviewers praised the book for preserving first-hand accounts of Pakistan's history and encouraging informed debate on national issues. Earlier, Ambassador G. R. Baluch, Director of GRSC, said the book launch reflected IoBM's commitment to promoting intellectual dialogue and knowledge creation. The ceremony concluded with an interactive question-and-answer session on Pakistan's geopolitical challenges and national development.

Palestinians, journalists suffer suffocation as Israeli forces raid village near Nablus



WAFA

NABLUS: Several Palestinians and journalists suffered suffocation on Saturday evening after Israeli occupation forces raided the town of Sarra, southwest of Nablus.

WAFA correspondent reported that armed Israeli colonists attempted to storm the town, but local citizens confronted them and prevented their advance.

Israeli occupation forces then raided the town to provide protection for the colonists and fired a barrage of tear gas canisters, causing several Palestinians, including journalists, to suffer suffocation.

On Friday, Israeli colonists attacked the town, assaulting three Palestinians and completely or partially burning six homes and five vehicles, amid clashes with residents who confronted the attackers.

18 Maltese organisations urge government to back EU trade restrictions on Israeli colonies

WAFA

VALLETTA: A coalition of 18 Maltese organisations has sent a letter to Malta's Foreign Minister Chris Fearn, calling on the government to support a proposed European Union measure restricting trade linked to illegal Israeli colonies and to introduce domestic legislation mirroring such a ban.

Palestine's Ambassador to Malta, Fadi Hanania, said Malta is obliged to support the initiative following its official recognition of the State of Palestine and its position that Israeli colonies are illegal, stressing that this recognition must be translated into concrete measures.

The letter follows Malta's decision not to support a proposal on the issue, after an EU initiative to impose trade restrictions on Israeli colonies failed to secure the required majority during a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Brussels.

Malta justified its position by saying it favours reaching a unanimous decision on foreign policy matters of this nature, while insisting that it would not obstruct the imposition of restrictions if other countries pursued such measures.

The signatories to the letter include human rights, religious and humanitarian organisations, cultural bodies, and the Faculty of Education at the University of Malta.

Advisor to CM Punjab Ali Dar Inaugurates Expo Faisalabad 2026 In Lahore

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Advisor to Chief Minister Punjab on AI and Special Initiatives Ali Dar inaugurated Expo Faisalabad 2026 in Lahore as the Chief Guest. During the visit, he toured exhibition stalls showcasing products and innovations from leading companies representing the textile, IT, and various industrial sectors.

Speaking on the occasion, Ali Dar said that under the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Government is committed to promoting a business-friendly environment, accelerating industrial growth, and encouraging investment across the province. He stated that Faisalabad remains one of Pakistan's strongest industrial hubs, with its textile and manufacturing sectors making a significant contribution to the country's GDP, exports, and employment. He added that the city possesses tremendous industrial potential and offers vast opportunities for further growth.

Ali Dar described Expo Faisalabad 2026 as an excellent platform for promoting industry, trade, and investment. He noted that the participation of leading companies from the textile, IT, and other key sectors reflects the strength and diversity of Pakistan's industrial landscape. He emphasized that such industrial and trade exhibitions create new opportunities for investment, exports, and business collaboration while contributing to long-term economic stability. He reaffirmed that the Punjab Government will continue to facilitate the business community and support initiatives that drive industrial development, economic growth, and employment generation across the province.

Chinese, Pakistani cities to deepen pragmatic cooperation

BEIJING: Loudi of Hunan Province and Gujrat of Punjab, Pakistan, signed a sister-city memorandum of understanding (MoU) marking a new phase of institutionalized and pragmatic cooperation between the two cities. The MoU was signed by Yang Wei, Mayor of Loudi City, and Shafay Hussain, Minister for the Industries, Commerce and Investment Department of the Government of Punjab, at a ceremony in Lahore, witnessed by Sun Yan, Consul General of China in Lahore.

The agreement establishes a framework for long-term collaboration in economic development, trade, investment and cultural exchange, reflecting the growing synergy between the two countries under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) framework.

The sister city partnership is expected to facilitate knowledge sharing and technical cooperation in key sectors, particularly in agricultural modernization where Loudi's manufacturing strengths complement Gujrat's industrial and agricultural base.

During the visit, Mayor Yang Wei led a delegation of chairpersons from five Loudi-based enterprises, including three small agricultural machinery manufacturers and two small home appliance companies, for a three-day business mission in Lahore. The delegation conducted on-site inspections and held substantive discussions with their Pakistani counterparts to explore cooperation projects in the agricultural machinery sector, CEN reported. In a parallel development, Liu Yongzhong, President of the Loudi Branch of the China Council for the Promotion of International Trade (CCPIT), and Hu Zhuncheng, President of the Liaison Center of the Pakistan-Hunan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, signed a friendship and cooperation agreement on behalf of their respective organizations. Under the agreement, the two sides will strengthen exchanges and cooperation in economic development, science and technology, cultural engagement, investment promotion and personnel visits, further facilitating business-to-business ties and fostering a more robust bilateral trade ecosystem.

 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	

PSX remains bearish, loses over 718 points



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) remained in the red on Friday, shedding 718.25 points, a negative change of 0.42 percent, to close at 171,021.20 points against 171,739.45 points recorded on the previous trading day.

During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 579.945 million shares with a traded value of Rs23.896 billion, compared to 525.122 million shares valuing Rs23.428 billion in the previous session. The market capitalization stood at Rs19.278 trillion, down from Rs19.361 trillion a day earlier.

Out of 492 active companies in the ready market, 186 advanced, 270 declined, and 36 remained unchanged.

Cnergyco PK led the volume chart with 59.328 million shares, followed by Trust Brokerage with 36.978 million shares and Kohinoor Spinning with 32.627 million shares.

The top gainers included PIA Holding Company LimitedB, which surged by Rs716.00 to close at Rs17,668.00, and Siemens (Pakistan) Engineering, which gained Rs61.22 to settle at Rs1,534.77.

On the losing side, Unilever Pakistan Foods Limited declined by Rs237.00 to close at Rs25,011.00, while Khairpur Sugar Mills Limited fell by Rs122.79 to settle at Rs1,105.08.

In the futures (DFC) market, turnover increased to 191.880 million shares with a traded value of Rs7.511 billion, compared to 156.959 million shares worth Rs6.357 billion in the previous session.

Out of 302 futures-market companies, 85 advanced, 214 declined, and three remained unchanged.

Pakistani Business Delegation Explores Pharmaceutical Investment Opportunities in Uzbekistan

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A Pakistani business delegation led by Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, Patron-in-Chief of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry and CEO of D. Watson Group, visited the Pharmaceutical Industry Development Agency of Uzbekistan to explore opportunities for cooperation in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, medical supplies, research and investment.

Officials of the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan also attended the meeting, reaffirming both countries' commitment to strengthening private-sector collaboration and expanding bilateral economic ties.

Welcoming the delegation, Mirjalal, Chief Specialist at the Pharmaceutical Industry Development Agency, said Uzbekistan's pharmaceutical market was valued at approximately US\$2.5 billion and highlighted the country's ambition to become a leading pharmaceutical manufacturing and investment hub in Central Asia. He noted that Uzbekistan currently has 32 pharmaceutical investment projects and 58 medicine manufacturers holding national Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP) certification, with locally produced medicines exported to 55 countries. He also



outlined investment incentives, including a 15 percent corporate income tax and benefits available in specialised pharmaceutical economic zones.

Speaking on the occasion, Saidnazirkhanov Saidkamil, Director of the Department of Foreign Economic Activity at the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Uzbekistan, described pharmaceuticals as a key area for

bilateral cooperation and assured full support to Pakistani companies seeking local partners and investment opportunities.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari said Pakistan's well-developed pharmaceutical industry was well positioned to meet Uzbekistan's growing demand for quality medicines and healthcare products. He expressed interest in joint ventures and manufacturing investments while

calling for stronger institutional linkages and regular exchanges of business delegations to promote trade and investment.

Zafar Bakhtawari, Secretary General of the United Business Group-FPCCI, stressed that closer private-sector cooperation would help boost bilateral trade and proposed formal collaboration between the chambers of commerce of both countries.

Waiting for customers

RAWALPINDI: A vendor sells umbrellas at his roadside workplace during cloudy weather in the city.



Photo: Online

HCSTSI President warns successive petroleum hikes fueling inflation, hurting businesses

 Commerce Desk

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders and Small Industry (HCSTSI) President Muhammad Saleem Memon expressed deep concern over the latest petroleum price hike, saying repeated increases are intensifying inflation, raising production costs, and undermining business confidence. He noted that in July 2026 alone, petrol prices were increased three times and cut twice — a net rise of Rs. 20.58 per liter against a total reduction of Rs. 2.32. Such volatility, he said, has disrupted business planning, increased transport and supply chain costs, and weakened public purchasing power. "Entire Supply Chain Impacted"

Memon said higher fuel costs are pushing up prices of



flour, sugar, vegetables, medicines and construction materials. Small industries already facing high electricity, gas, taxes and interest rates are now losing competitiveness, risking lower production, exports and jobs. He urged the federal government to review the hike, cut petroleum levy, ensure pricing transparency, and adopt stable, business-friendly policies to restore investor and trader confidence.

ICCI Intensifies Economic Diplomacy to Boost Pakistan-Türkiye Trade to \$5 Billion

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), under President Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has stepped up efforts to position Pakistan as a preferred hub for trade, investment and industrial collaboration with Türkiye.

Speaking to visiting business leaders at Chamber House on Saturday, Sardar Tahir Mehmood said ICCI is fully committed to supporting the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to increase bilateral trade from the current US\$1.4 billion to US\$5 billion. He noted that ICCI is moving beyond discussions by facilitating B2B meetings, joint ventures, business matchmaking and direct private sector engagement.

As part of this initiative, ICCI will lead a high-powered business delegation to Istanbul for the Pakistan-Türkiye Business Opportunities Conference and Excellence Award Ceremony on August



ness Opportunities Conference and Excellence Award Ceremony on August

13, 2026.

The conference will bring together entrepreneurs, industrialists and investors from both countries to explore joint ventures, strengthen B2B linkages, and identify opportunities for trade, investment and technology transfer. It will feature structured B2B meetings and sector-specific interactions to help finalize commercial agreements and strategic partnerships.

The event is being organized with support from the Embassy of Pakistan in Ankara, the Embassy of Türkiye in Islamabad, and relevant trade institutions of both countries.

Visiting trade leaders appreciated ICCI's proactive role in strengthening economic diplomacy and expressed optimism that the conference will usher in a new era of bilateral trade and industrial cooperation between the two brotherly nations

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) has called on the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP) and the federal government to revisit the recent medical device import notification and consult all stakeholders before enforcement.

PCJCCI President Nazir Hussain expressed concern that the notification only recognizes refurbished devices, while ignoring second-hand equipment which meets nearly 90% of private healthcare sector needs. He warned the policy could disrupt affordable

equipment supply chains and jeopardize hundreds of importers and thousands of jobs.

Commercial Ambassador Adeel Munawar said excluding the Second-Hand Medical Equipment Importers Association risks business closures and higher costs for hospitals and clinics. Executive Committee Member Khalid Raffique Ch stressed that effective reforms require collaboration with industry, healthcare professionals and trade bodies.

PCJCCI urged DRAP to start comprehensive consultations to ensure regulations protect patient safety while preserving access, employment and investment.

Zubair Tufail congratulates Chaudhry Sarwar on his son's induction into the UK Cabinet

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Former President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and President of the United Business Group (UBG), Zubair

Tufail, congratulated former Governor of Punjab and member of the House of Lords, Chaudhry Muhammad Sarwar, on the induction of his son, Anas Sarwar, into the new UK cabinet.

Zubair Tufail stated that the elevation of Chaudhry

Muhammad Sarwar's son to a key position in the UK government is a recognition of the family's services to the public, adding that Anas Sarwar's appointment to the UK cabinet is a matter of immense pride not only for his family but also for



Pakistanis living across the globe.

He further remarked that Anas Sarwar's achievement reflects his political acumen, leadership

qualities, dedication, and committed public service. He expressed confidence that Anas Sarwar, with his experience and dynamic approach, will continue to

play a constructive role in strengthening democratic institutions and serving the people of the United Kingdom with dedication and sincerity.

Kishan, Varma hit half centuries as India win Zimbabwe T20 series



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ishan Kishan and Tilak Varma struck half-centuries to overshadow teenage star Vaibhav Sooryavanshi as India beat Zimbabwe by 90 runs on Saturday to win a Twenty20 international series.

Wicketkeeper Kishan made 81 off 44 balls and unbeaten Varma 60 from 29 deliveries at Harare Sports Club as the tourists took an unassailable 2-0 lead. The final match is scheduled for Sunday.

A second victory in three days marked a turnaround for India, who arrived in southern Africa after series losses in Ireland and England.

Sooryavanshi, the 15-year-old batting

prodigy who scored his maiden T20I half-century on Thursday in Harare, scored 20 runs.

Put in to bat, India posted 219-5 with whirlwind stands of Kishan and Varma tormenting the Zimbabwe bowlers. Zimbabwe were all out for 129 in reply.

Batting at No. 3, Kishan put on 66 runs for the third wicket with captain Shreyas Iyer (25) and 95 for the fourth with Varma.

Kishan struck two sixes and nine fours before slicing a Newman Nyamhuri delivery outside off stump. Brian Bennett darted forward from deep to pull off a superb catch.

Varma, like Kishan, part of the 2026 T20I World Cup-winning team, struck



three sixes and five fours in his undefeated knock.

Sooryavanshi hit a six and three fours off nine balls before a sliced pull off a Richard Ngarava delivery was caught by Blessing Muzarabani retreating from mid-on.

Zimbabwe lie 10 places below India in the world T20I rankings and were always struggling, with only opener Bennett (32) and wicketkeeper Tadiwanashe Marumani (24) enjoying some batting success.

Yash Thakur claimed his first T20I wicket by dismissing Bennett. His

delivery outside off was lobbed behind the stumps, and Kishan made a simple catch.

Left-arm spinner Abhishek Sharma (3-17), another 2026 T20I World Cup winner, was the most successful Indian bowler.

Brief scores

India 219-5 in 20 overs (I. Kishan 81, T. Varma 60 not out) v Zimbabwe 129 in 17.5 overs (B. Bennett 32; A. Sharma 3-17)

Result: India won by 90 runs

Series: India have an unassailable 2-0 lead before the final match on Sunday

Confident Babar Azam says there is no pressure on players

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will take on the West Indies in the first match of the two-Test series, starting on Saturday, 25 July at the Brian Lara Stadium in Trinidad and captain Babar Azam said he is confident that his team will deliver.

Talking to media men, Pakistan cricket team captain Babar Azam has said that "we are preparing ourselves for the cricket series with England and West Indies for the last two months".

He also expressed regret over Abdullah Fazal being sidelined due to injury. "My morale is high now that I have been entrusted with the captaincy again; I learned a great deal from my previous stint as captain".

Babar Azam said that better decisions should be made that benefit Pakistan. The combination of senior and junior players has turned out very well.

"It is disappointing for Abdullah Fazal; he is a talented player, but he was injured during practice. Following the report received today, he has been ruled out of the Test series. I am quite impressed by Abdullah Fazal; he is an excellent player."

Babar also highlighted the team's preparations and backed his side to deliver, noting that players had worked



hard on their fitness. "As a team, we are fully prepared. Our preparations have gone really well. We have been getting ready for this series and the upcoming assignments for nearly two months," he said.

"The players have worked extremely hard on their fitness and on improving their skills," he added.

"There is no pressure. I am confident after being entrusted with the captaincy again. I learned a great deal from my previous stint as captain, and I will try to use that experience this time," Babar remarked.



"We have a very good combination of young and experienced players. As a team, we are confident," he continued.

"The pitch looks quite different at the moment. It has been raining, and the surface has remained under covers. The conditions here generally favour the fast bowlers," he concluded.

The second Test will be played from 2 to 6 August at Queen's Park Oval.

Both Test matches are part of the ICC World Test Championship 2025-27. The upcoming Test series will be Pakistan's third series in the current cycle and their second away series.

As part of their preparations for the series, the 16-member Pakistan squad also participated in a four-day match in Port of Spain. The batters took full advantage of the tour match, with opening batter Azan Awaish and captain Babar scoring centuries in the first innings. Shan Masood and Abdullah Fazal struck half-centuries. In the second innings, Awaish Zafar and Salman Ali Agha scored half-centuries.

In the bowling department, Pakistan's Mohammad Ali took five wickets in the first innings against the West Indies Select XI.

Climate Emergency in Pakistan & Debt the World Won't Pay

Continued from Page 4

In 2022, at COP27, developed countries agreed to a Loss and Damage Fund for precisely this scenario: for the countries at the lowest end of the climate risk spectrum, which are the ones that suffer the most. That fund has been established, but the amount of money going into it isn't commensurate to the issue. Its board met in Manila this month and took an initial pool of about \$250 million and considered \$2.8 billion in funding requests from 176 vulnerable countries, while most of them won't be paid this cycle. Researchers estimate global loss and damage to be

hundreds of billions of dollars a year while only half of that amount, or \$449 million, has been received by developing countries so far, despite the rich countries pledging \$822 million at COP27. This is where the monsoon is no longer just a weather pattern and a climate justice issue: the costs are being borne in part by the already stressed budgets of Pakistan, not its own by the eco-emissions that created the warming of the atmosphere. Flooding is not a problem for the countries that caused the flooding but rather for the country that suffered it, and it is not being held accountable at the table.

All this is not intended to downplay

the prevention work already underway. Improved drainage and early warnings and pre-positioned rescue equipment save lives – and it's a positive change in Punjab's approach to preparedness, not a mockery. However, the only way to prevent the threat is if it is within the borders of Pakistan, and it is in the atmosphere and industrial past of other countries. Despite building all the embankments a country can afford, Pakistan can lose one season's crop, its homes and lives to a flood which, quite literally, originates somewhere else.

Like every year, the rain will pass and the round of news will go on to other

topics. The one issue that no global gathering is in a rush to address is who pays and when: who will pay and when won't move on. Climate emergency is not a headline that Pakistan can afford to take lightly, as it is now an oft-repeated bill sent to the government of Pakistan, which borrowed nothing – and until the logic of loss and damage catches up with the logic of emissions, the same warning, the same loss and the same question will be heard again next July.

The writer is MPhil IR student and she can be reached at Najabnoor828@gmail.com



FAISALABAD: Caretaker Iqbal Stadium Naveed Nazir is presenting the T-shirt of Commissioner XI to the newly appointed Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh. While Public Relations Officer Radio Mast FM 103 Abdul Rauf Jatt (Raufi), and others are also present. Photo by Abdul Majid

West Indies opt to bat after winning toss in first Test against Pakistan



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: West Indies won the toss and elected to bat first against Pakistan in the opening Test of the two-match series at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy in Trinidad.

The match marks a historic occasion as it is the first-ever Test to be played at the Brian Lara Cricket Academy.

Speaking after the toss, Pakistan captain Babar Azam said his side would also have chosen to bat first had they won the toss, expressing confidence in the team's preparations for the contest.

The biggest talking point from Pakistan's lineup was the Test debut of 33-year-old left-arm spinner Ali Usman, who earned his maiden cap for the national side.

Pakistan will be aiming for an early breakthrough after being asked to field first, while the hosts look to make the most of the batting-friendly conditions in the historic Test.

Playing XIs

West Indies: 1 Tagenarine Chanderpaul 2 Brandon King 3 Kavem Hodge 4 Shai Hope (wk) 5 Amir Jangoo 6 Justin Greaves 7 Roston Chase (capt) 8 Kemar Roach 9 Jomel Warrian 10 Shamar Joseph 11 Jayden Seals

Pakistan: 1 Azan Awaish 2 Imam ul Haq 3 Shan Masood 4 Babar Azam (capt) 5 Mohammad Rizwan (wk) 6 Salman Ali Agha 7 Aamir Jamal 8 Ali Usman 9 Khurram Shahzad 10 Mohammad Ali 11 Mohammad Abbas

Pakistan's blunder hands India 7-3 win in Asian Five-a-Side hockey tournament



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's hockey team suffered a setback against India in the group stage of the Asian Five-a-Side Hockey Tournament after a serious management mistake forced the team to play with only four players for a short period.

During the match, Pakistan mistakenly fielded six players instead of the permitted five in violation of the tournament rules.

The referee spotted the rules violation during the match and immediately took action, showing a yellow card to one Pakistani player.

As a result, Pakistan was forced to play the remainder of the match with only four players instead of five, giving India a significant advantage.

India made full use of the extra space and numerical superiority to secure a comfortable 7-3 victory over Pakistan.

The rules breach could have further consequences, with Pakistan reportedly facing the possibility of disciplinary action, including a fine and a suspension, over the incident.

The defeat has been widely attributed to the Pakistani team's management error rather than on-field performance, as the avoidable mistake significantly affected the course of the match.

Despite the league-stage defeat, Pakistan has qualified for the tournament final, where it is once again scheduled to face India in the title clash.

The incident has also revived memories of a similar management lapse during the Asia Cup, when then head coach Olympian Khawaja Junaid mistakenly fielded 12 players against Japan.

Summer vacation opens window to Gandhara' timeless legacy for young visitors

Continued from Page 4

Islamic monuments that could attract millions of international visitors if highlighted on social media platforms.

He appreciated the federal government's ten-year national tourism strategy, which aims to expand tourism's contribution to the national economy by promoting Pakistan's mountains, archaeological sites, cultural heritage and religious monuments.

According to Dr Naeem, Pakistan has the long-term poten-

tial to generate between US\$30 billion and US\$40 billion annually from tourism if security, infrastructure, international marketing and visitor facilities continue to improve.

Despite possessing immense tourism resources, he said, Pakistan continues to face challenges in converting its heritage assets into substantial foreign exchange earnings.

He suggested that digital storytelling, short documentaries and social media campaigns highlighting archaeological treasures could significantly improve Paki-

stan's global image and attract more foreign visitors.

"Today is the age of digital media. Well-produced videos showcasing our archaeological sites and cultural heritage can inspire tourists across the world to visit Pakistan," he said, adding that hiring digital communication specialists, travel bloggers and international influencers could greatly strengthen the country's tourism promotion efforts.

One of the country's most ambitious heritage initiatives is the Gandhara Trail – a network of 22 archaeological and religious

destinations spread across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

The trail links Buddhist monasteries at Takht-i-Bahi, ancient stupas, museums, Sikh gurdwaras, Hindu temples, the archaeological sites of Harappa and Mohenjodaro, and Islamic landmarks such as Mohabbat Khan mosque in Peshawar and Badshahi mosque in Lahore, are presenting visitors with a remarkable journey through South Asian civilization.

Experts said improved conservation, better visitor facilities, modern museums, efficient trans-

port links and stronger international promotion could transform heritage tourism into a major source of employment while ensuring that Pakistan's archaeological treasures are preserved for future generations.

Recognizing this potential, the federal government has increased investment in heritage preservation. Around Rs445 million has been allocated under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) for 2026-27 for archaeological research, museum development and conservation initiatives.

The projects include establishing a research and development center within the department of Archaeology and museums, construction of the national museum and DoAM headquarters at Shakarparian in Islamabad, and continued conservation work at the historic Shah Allah Ditta Caves.

For young visitors like Ismail and Ibrahim, however, the significance of these ancient monuments extends far beyond tourism statistics or development plans.

As they left the museum carrying souvenirs and memories

of towering Buddha sculptures besides making selfies, ancient carvings, artefacts, and stories from a civilization that flourished on the very land they call home, the brothers had discovered something every museum hopes to inspire.

Their summer vacation had become more than a family outing, rather a journey into Pakistan's ancient past, where silent stones spoke of forgotten kingdoms, remarkable artistry and a shared human heritage that continues to inspire new generations.

Call on

LAHORE : Former Federal Minister and Senior leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khawaja Saad Rafique calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday.



Photo: PID

DPM/FM Dar’s participation in SCO-CFM reaffirms Pakistan’s historic ties, commitment to promote agenda

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar’s participation in the SCO Council of Foreign Ministers’ Meeting in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyz Republic, underscored Pakistan’s historic ties with SCO member states and reaffirmed its readiness to assume the SCO Chair for 2026-27, the Foreign Office said.
During July 23-24, Dar held meetings and informal interactions highlighting Pakistan’s priorities for effective



SCO mechanisms. He engaged with foreign ministers of China, Iran, Kazakhstan, Belarus, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, attended a dinner hosted by Kyrgyzstan’s foreign minister, and called on President Sadyr Zhaparov, expressing desire to strengthen bilateral cooperation.
Leading Pakistan’s delegation, Dar delivered the national statement reiterating commitment to the SCO Charter and “Shanghai Spirit,” warning against confrontational geopolitics and aggression. He high-

lighted Pakistan’s role in the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding for Middle East peace, stressed connectivity and poverty alleviation, and praised CPEC as complementing SCO’s regional integration vision.
Dar conveyed Pakistan’s readiness to assume the SCO Council of Heads of State Chair in September and host the 2027 CHS Summit, inviting all member states to Pakistan. He also attended a reception hosted by Kyrgyz Foreign Minister Kulubaev for visiting dignitaries.

Nawaz Sharif’s Politics Centered on National Unity and Public Service: Barrister Danyal Ch

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry said Saturday that former Prime Minister Muhammad Nawaz Sharif’s politics is based on national unity, public service, and democratic values.
Responding to criticism by Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon, Barrister Danyal said taking Nawaz Sharif’s remarks out of context was unwarranted.



He added that every speech by the PML-N leader reflects the aspirations of the entire nation, and disrespecting any province or region has never been part of his narrative.
He stated that PML-N holds the people of Sindh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and all other regions in equal esteem. Mutual respect, tolerance and national harmony, he said, remain the party’s foundational principles.
The Parliamentary Secretary added that some elements deliberately create

controversy out of every statement, while Nawaz Sharif has consistently advocated reconciliation and democratic norms.
Rejecting lectures on

public mandate, he noted that the people elected Nawaz Sharif Prime Minister three times, which proves the mandate is democracy’s true cornerstone. He urged critics to look at PML-N’s record in infrastructure, health and education in Punjab as proof of performance.
He advised political opponents who have “lost public trust” to focus on their own governance record, and reaffirmed that PML-N will continue pursuing constructive politics, national cohesion and public welfare.

Election campaign ends today as Mirpur braces for polls on July 27

Abdul Majeed Tahir

Campaigning for the first phase of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) general election will end at midnight today, with polling set to take place on July 27 across Mirpur Division amid heightened security.
According to the AJK Election Commission, all election activities, including public meetings, rallies, processions and corner meetings, will be prohibited after the campaign period ends.
The commission warned that candidates, political parties and supporters must strictly comply with election laws and the code of conduct, adding that violations would invite legal action.
The AJK government has declared July 27 a public holiday across Mirpur Division to facilitate voting.
Kotli, the largest district going to the polls in the first phase, will elect representatives on six legislative assembly seats.
A total of 135 candidates are contesting the seats, while more than 647,000 registered voters are expected to cast their ballots.
In Bhimber district, around 300,000 voters will vote for candidates contesting three constituencies — LA-5 Barnala, LA-6 Samahni and LA-7 Bhimber.



A total of 63 candidates are in the race.
In LA-5 Barnala, PML-N candidate and serving minister Colonel (retd) Waqar Noor faces former minister Chaudhry Pervez Ashraf of the Pakistan Peoples Party, while Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party (IPP) candidate Malik Iftikhar Tayyab Awan is also in the contest.
LA-6 Samahni is expected to witness a close race between PML-N’s Chaudhry Muhammad Razaq and IPP candidate Chaudhry Ali Shan Soni.
In LA-7 Bhimber, former AJK prime minister Chaudhry Anwarul Haq is contesting as an independent candidate against PML-N AJK Secretary General Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, with

IPP’s Professor Raja Ayaz Khan also in the fray.
Meanwhile, security has been significantly reinforced for the elections, with around 16,000 police personnel deployed from across Pakistan.
Punjab Police has contributed 14,000 officers for election duty, while Sindh has dispatched 2,000 personnel.
Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has sent 500 officers, Balochistan 200 and Gilgit-Baltistan 100.
Additional contingents have also been drawn from various districts of Punjab, including Lahore, Nankana Sahib, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Gujranwala, Mandi Bahauddin and Hafizabad, to assist in maintaining law and order during polling.
Authorities said the large-scale deployment is aimed at ensuring peaceful, transparent and orderly elections during the first phase of the AJK polls.

Four Fitna al-Khawarij terrorists killed as attack on S. Waziristan check post foiled

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Security forces foiled an attack by India-backed Fitna al-Khawarij militants on a check post in South Waziristan, killing four attackers, including a suicide bomber, in an operation that left no casualties among security personnel, the military’s media wing said on Saturday.
According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the militants attempted to breach the security of the check post, but were repelled due to the alertness and swift response of security forces.
The military said an explosives-laden vehicle driven by a suicide bomber was destroyed outside the perimeter of the check post before it could reach its target.
The suicide bomber was killed in the explosion, while the blast caused no damage to the check post, the ISPR said.
Security personnel later surrounded three other militants



who had taken refuge in a nearby compound.
All three were killed during a subsequent clearance operation, the statement added.
The ISPR said no security personnel were injured during the operation.
A search and sanitisation operation is underway in the area to eliminate any remaining militants.
The military said security forces and law enforcement agencies would continue counterterrorism operations under the Azm-i-Istehkam campaign, adding that operations against India-backed Fitna al-Khawarij would continue until militancy is eliminated.

Nawaz Sharif fulfills pledge to AJK as Punjab sends 10 electric buses

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Muslim League-N (PML-N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has fulfilled his commitment to the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) as 10 state-of-the-art electric buses gifted by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif have reached the region.
The electric buses received a warm welcome upon their arrival in AJK where PML-N leaders, party workers and local residents greeted the convoy with slogans. The fleet had departed from Islamabad a day earlier for Azad Kashmir.
The buses were adorned with banners carrying the photograph of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif along with a message describing them as a gift for the people of AJK.
Nawaz Sharif and Chief Minister



Maryam Nawaz had announced the provision of the electric buses during the PML-N’s first election rally in Muzaffarabad. The commitment was fulfilled within 72 hours, with the buses now reaching Azad Kashmir for public service.

Public holiday announced in Azad Kashmir on July 27

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: After the directives from the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission, the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on Saturday announced a public holiday on July 27, 2026, due to the general elections.
The Department of Services and General Administration (S&GAD)

issued a proper notification in this regard.
In the first phase, elections for the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly will be held on July 27, 2026.
Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission proposed a public holiday on the day of polling.
The holiday will be observed in Mirpur division only.

CJP terms judicial wellbeing essential to independent and effective justice system



that continued investments in digital transformation, improved court infrastructure, institutional support and judicial education reflected the judiciary’s belief that strengthening judges ultimately strengthens justice itself.
Justice Yahya Afridi paid tribute to the dedication, integrity and resilience of judges across the country for administering justice with courage, professionalism and an unwavering commitment to the rule of law.
He paid special tribute to judges serving in remote and far-flung districts under difficult and challenging circumstances, saying their service exemplified the highest traditions of Pakistan’s judiciary.
The chief justice said the observance of the International Day for Judicial Wellbeing should reaffirm the commitment to a judiciary that values both excellence in adjudication and the human dimension of justice.
He stressed that every judge deserves institutional support to serve with dignity, confidence and excellence, adding that strengthening judges ultimately strengthens justice itself.

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi has said that the wellbeing of judges is fundamental to judicial independence, institutional integrity and public confidence in the rule of law, emphasizing that a strong justice system depends not only on sound laws and institutions but also on the welfare of those entrusted with administering justice.
In a message issued on the International Day for Judicial Wellbeing, the chief justice said judges shoulder immense responsibility, often under demanding circumstances, and must be supported by institutions that promote professional growth, modern working environments, effective administrative systems, and a culture of respect and recognition.
He said the judiciary of Pakistan remained committed to embedding these principles within its ongoing reform agenda. He noted