



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے سید بن ابی ہریرہؓ نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے عبد اللہ بن ابی بکرؓ نے اور ان سے ان کے باپ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ میں تمہیں سب سے بڑے گناہ کی خبر دوں۔ صحابہ رضی اللہ عنہم نے عرض کیا کیوں نہیں بد رسول اللہ! نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ اللہ کے ساتھ شریک کرنا اور دین کی تافہی کرنا۔ (صحیح بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6273)
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US announces new global visa policy

The United States has introduced a new global visa restriction policy targeting individuals involved in cybercrime and cyber-enabled crimes, including online scams and sextortion, according to a statement issued by the U. S. Department of State.



Pakistan appoints 'Ali Asad Gilani' as new ambassador to China

Pakistan has appointed senior career diplomat Ali Asad Gilani as its new ambassador to China, replacing Khalil Hashmi, who completed his three year term in Beijing. The appointment comes as Pakistan and China continue expanding cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure and regional security.

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Inauguration

QUETTA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurating the newly constructed state-of-the-art Frontier Corps Hospital in Turbat.

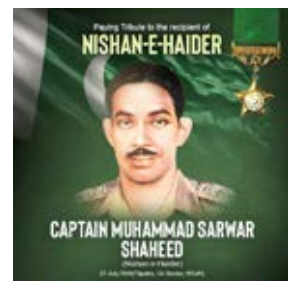


Photo: PID

Field Marshal Munir, Top Brass Honor Captain Sarwar Shaheed on 78th Martyrdom Anniversary City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of the Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces; Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff; Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of the Air Staff and the Armed Forces of Pakistan solemnly commemorate the 78th martyrdom of Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, paying rich tribute to his unparalleled courage, unwavering commitment and supreme sacrifice in the defence of the nation.

On 27 July 1948 during the First Kashmir War at Tilpatra, Azad Kashmir, Captain Muhammad Sarwar Shaheed became the first Pakistani to be recipient of Nishan-e-Haider after embracing martyrdom in the line of duty for freedom of Kashmir. Leading his men from



the front, he displayed extraordinary courage, exceptional tactical brilliance and unwavering devotion to duty.

His eternal sacrifice stands as a timeless symbol of courage, resilience and selfless devotion to the nation. The people and Armed Forces of Pakistan pay profound tribute to his enduring legacy with the deepest respect and gratitude. His supreme sacrifice continues to inspire present and future generations to uphold the highest principles of duty, honour and patriotism.

India-Funded Anti-Pakistan Digital Propaganda Network Exposed: Info Minister

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tatar said an organized India-funded digital propaganda network targeting Pakistan's state institutions, armed forces and leadership has been exposed, operating through digital marketing services and bot farms. He said a detained digital marketing service provider revealed foreign links, with much of the promoted content related to the Joint Action Committee (JAC) in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Tatar alleged the detained individual received payments from



India to make specific content viral, with financial transactions

broken into smaller amounts to evade monitoring. He said

evidence included WhatsApp exchanges discussing views and payments, AI-generated images, and old videos falsely presented as Kashmir footage to incite sectarianism.

The minister reiterated the government's position that JAC aims to undermine the Kashmir cause and weaken Pakistan-Kashmir relations, questioning why the group doesn't contest elections instead of promoting violence. He cited incidents including the killing of police personnel, road blockades and armed activity during protests.

Tatar noted large public gatherings by political parties across

Kashmir reflect rejection of "conspiratorial politics," calling Pakistan-Kashmir ties unbreakable. He credited PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir's leadership for Pakistan's diplomatic successes, asserting India-sponsored propaganda would not succeed.

He said investigations continue into digital payment gateways and coordinated posts against the armed forces, with bot networks operating via Android applications using VPNs traced to India-based devices. Tatar said relevant evidence would be presented to the nation at an appropriate time.

PM lauds security forces for foiling terrorist attack



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday paid a glowing tribute to the security forces for foiling a cowardly attack by the terrorists of the Indian-backed 'Fitna al-Khawarij' on a check post in South Waziristan and killing four terrorists.

The prime minister praised the professionalism, excep-

tional bravery, and timely response of the security forces during the successful operation.

"Our brave soldiers have once again thwarted the enemy's nefarious designs, proving that no harm will be allowed to come to Pakistan's security," the prime minister said.

He stated that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with its brave armed forces and law enforcement agencies to defeat the enemies of peace.

Shehbaz Sharif reiterated the national resolve, stating that the government and the security forces would continue their operations under Operation 'Azm-e-Istehkam' with full force until the complete eradication of the scourge of terrorism from the country.

Interior Minister inaugurates FC Hospital in Turbat

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi inaugurated the newly constructed state-of-the-art Frontier Corps Hospital in Turbat today.

Speaking on the occasion, he commended the professional preparedness of FC Balochistan-South and paid tribute to the force for its successful operations against Fitna al-Hindustan and other proscribed terrorist groups. He also appreciated the courage and professionalism of FC personnel in maintaining peace and security in the province.

Earlier, Inspector General Frontier Corps Balochistan South, Major General Bilal Sarfraz Khan, gave him a detailed briefing on the force's professional training and ongoing field operations.

The Interior Minister also inspected the hospital's OPD, various wards and operation theatres.

29 citizens die, 203 injured in rain-related incidents in Punjab: PDMA



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) stated that as many as 29 citizens killed and 203 were injured in various accidents due to rains in Punjab, reported 24NewsHD TV channel on Sunday.

According to PDMA spokesperson, 52 houses were partially affected due to monsoon rains and six cattle died due to recent rains. Punjab government is providing Rs1 million to Rs5 million assistance to the families of the deceased.

Most of the deaths occurred due to the collapse of dilapidated buildings.

Govt Approves Rs4.188 Billion Package for PASSCO Employees Amid Closure Plan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has approved a Rs4.188 billion severance package for employees of the Pakistan Agricultural Storage and Services Corporation (PASSCO) as part of its closure and restructuring plan.

The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) cleared the package, but implementation will depend on disposal of PASSCO's remaining wheat stocks and third-party verification. The process is expected to be completed by December 2026.

Of the total, Rs3.967 billion is for employee compensation and benefits, while Rs221 million is allocated for maintenance grants to 38 widows and 236 retired employees.

Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar Khan stressed transparent monitoring. The Ministry of National Food Security said wheat stocks must be sold quickly to proceed.

PASSCO's closure follows a PM Office directive of Aug 26, 2025. The ECC had earlier approved creating the Wheat Stock Management Company (WSMC) to manage wheat reserves.

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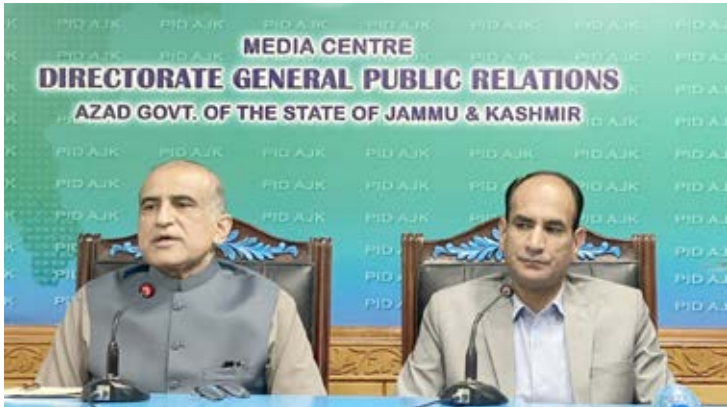
AJK Electoral Process to Commence July 27

Chief Secretary announces comprehensive preparations

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Secretary of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Khush-hal Khan, announced that the formal electoral process will commence on July 27 in accordance with the Constitution, confirming that all arrangements have been finalized and polling materials delivered to Returning Officers. He commended the district administration, Election Commission and relevant institutions for their coordinated preparedness efforts, speaking at a joint press conference alongside Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan.

Highlighting a vibrant democratic atmosphere, the Chief Secretary noted full-scale election activities including corner meetings, campaign banners and party flags, with leadership from major Pakistani political parties visiting AJK to campaign and present manifestos. Approximately 17,000 security personnel,



including police from all four provinces, have been deployed alongside AJK Police to ensure peaceful conduct. He expressed confidence in continued high voter turnout, while warning that authorities are monitoring misleading election-related information on social media and would strictly deal with any disruption to public order.

He noted campaigning had peaked, particularly in Mirpur Division, with active voter engagement across the region.

Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan stated the first phase of elections would be held in Mirpur on July 27, with all arrangements completed following a high-level review meeting.

Approximately 22,000 election personnel have been deployed, with materials dispatched to polling stations. The Chief Election Commissioner personally visited Mirpur and expressed satisfaction with preparations, while staff training was completed transparently. Police, Rangers and Federal Constabulary have been placed on high alert.

Shakeel Khan emphasized that outdated boycott videos circulating online were misleading, as campaigns had continued peacefully with no untoward incidents reported. He praised political parties' cooperation with the Code of Conduct and noted citizens themselves were reporting obstruction attempts, reflecting public confidence in the system.

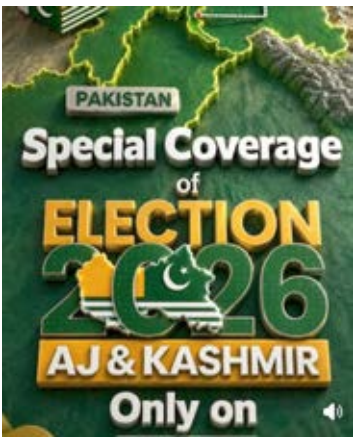
He urged citizens to exercise their democratic right through voting, reaffirming the Commission's commitment to peaceful, free, fair and transparent elections across Mirpur Division and AJK.

Mismanagement

ISLAMABAD: A view of massive traffic jam at Shahdara valley road outskirts of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: The dispatch of polling materials to designated polling

Polling materials dispatched across Mirpur as general elections 2026 approach on July 27

stations is underway in Mirpur District in preparation for the General Elections 2026, scheduled to be held on July 27, 2026.

Under the supervision of District and Sessions Judge/District Returning Officer (DRO) Mirpur, Jahangir Ahmad Jaral, polling materials are being dispatched to all 611 polling stations across the district's four Legislative Assembly constituencies.

As part of the distribution process, Presiding Officers have also been dispatched to their respective polling stations under stringent security arrangements. All logistical and administrative measures have been finalized to ensure that the electoral process is conducted in a peaceful, transparent, and well-organized manner.

For the conduct of the elections, a total of 3,643 election personnel have

been deployed across the district. Of the 611 polling stations, 320 have been classified as highly sensitive, 162 as sensitive, and 129 as normal.

Enhanced security measures have been put in place at all highly sensitive and sensitive polling stations to safeguard the integrity of the electoral process and to ensure a secure, peaceful, and orderly polling environment for voters and election staff alike.

JKDFP condemns crackdown, demolition of homes in Indian-Occupied Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jammu and Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) spokesman Advocate Arshad Iqbal has condemned what he described as a large-scale crackdown by Indian forces in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, alleging that nearly 3,000 Kashmiri youth were detained over the past two days and several residential houses were demolished.

In a statement, he termed the reported arrests and demolition of civilian homes as collective punishment and alleged they violated international human rights and humanitarian law. He claimed the measures were intended to suppress the political aspirations of the Kashmiri people and their right to self-determination.

Advocate Arshad Iqbal also expressed concern over the condition of Kashmiri political leaders and activists detained in



Indian prisons, alleging that many had been denied adequate medical care and legal safeguards.

He urged the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the European Union, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and international human rights organizations to take notice of the situation, seek an independent investigation into the reported arrests and demolitions, and work to protect the rights of detainees in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Mirpur Ready for July 27 Polls as Distribution of Election Materials Begins

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: District and Sessions Judge/District Returning Officer (DRO) Mirpur, Jahangir Ahmad Jaral, has announced that the phased distribution of polling materials for the General Elections 2026, scheduled for July 27, is in progress across the district.

He said polling materials, including ballot boxes and other essential supplies, are being delivered to Presiding Officers for all four Legislative Assembly constituencies. Polling will be held from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. without interruption, in accordance with the Election Commission's Code of Conduct.

The DRO urged voters to bring

their original Computerized National Identity Card (CNIC), including an expired original CNIC, as no other identification document will be accepted for voting.

He said Mirpur has 611 polling stations and 1,011 polling booths for 411,140 registered voters, including 208,898 men and 202,242 women. A total of 3,643 election personnel have been deployed, while 320 polling stations have been declared highly sensitive, 162 sensitive, and 129 normal, with comprehensive security arrangements in place.

The DRO appealed to citizens to exercise their constitutional right to vote and expressed confidence that peaceful, transparent and credible elections would be held.

Poonch Administration Issues Public Advisory Amid Joint Security Operation in Rawalakot

Bureau Report

RAWALAKOT: The Poonch Divisional Administration has issued a public advisory in light of the prevailing law and order situation in parts of Poonch Division.

According to the advisory, a joint operation by law enforcement agencies has been launched against elements allegedly involved in unlawful activities. Comprehensive security measures have been put in place to maintain public order and ensure citizen safety.

The administration has urged the public to remain indoors where possible, avoid unnecessary travel, and refrain from unlawful gatherings. Parents and guardians were asked to ensure family safety and discourage children from participating in activities that could endanger them.

It further stated that no unauthorized procession or group will be permitted to enter the municipal limits of Rawalakot. Security personnel have been directed to take legal action against violators or those threatening public order.

The administration appealed to citizens to remain vigilant, cooperate with authorities, and avoid misinformation, reiterating that all measures are being taken to safeguard lives, property, and regional peace.

AJK Election Commission Approves Robocall Campaigning Ahead of 2026 Polls

Spokesman Report



MUZAFFARABAD: According to a press release issued by the spokesperson for the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission, the Commission has considered a request submitted by the President of the Pakistan Peoples Party (AJK) and the Secretary General of the Pakistan Peoples Party, Syed Nayyar Hussain Bukhari, seeking a No Objection Certificate (NOC) for conducting election campaigning through automated telephone calls (Robocalls).

After due consideration, the Election Commission has granted permission, in accordance with Clause 17 of Paragraph 2 of the Code of Conduct for Registered Political Parties, Contesting Candidates and Election Agents for the 2026 Elections, to use automated telephone calls (Robocalls) for election campaigning up to 48 hours prior to polling day.

The Commission reiterated that all political parties, contesting candidates, and election agents are required to strictly adhere to the provisions of the Code of Conduct and all applicable election laws while carrying out their campaign activities.

Kotli finalizes arrangements for peaceful AJK General Elections

Bureau Report

KOTLI: Comprehensive arrangements have been completed in Kotli District for the smooth, peaceful and transparent conduct of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Elections 2026, according to Information Officer Kotli Shaukat Malik.

The district administration, Election Commission, police and other relevant institutions have finalized all preparations through close coordination. A total of 647,383 registered voters, including 338,549 men and 308,834 women, will cast their votes across six Legislative Assembly constituencies.

The administration has established 1,098 polling stations and 1,789 polling booths, comprising 683 male, 683 female and 423 combined booths. A total of 126 candidates are contesting the elections in the district.

Authorities have ensured the availability of essential facilities at polling stations, including security, electricity, drinking water, medical assistance, communication services and transportation. Enhanced security arrangements have been made at sensitive and highly sensitive polling stations to maintain law and order.

The district administration and the Election Commission have urged voters to bring their valid National Identity Cards (CNICs), visit their designated polling stations during polling hours and actively participate in the democratic process by exercising their constitutional right to vote.

Pakistani Researcher Dr. Adnan Arshad Wins Prestigious International Award in Biometeorology

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Dr. Adnan Arshad, a researcher from Toba Tek Singh, Pakistan, has been honored with a prestigious 'Best Research Article Award' at the recent International Congress of Biometeorology. The congress was held at the University of Novi Sad in Serbia. Dr. Arshad was selected as one of only three award winners for his outstanding scientific paper, which focuses on cotton production and the calibration of phenology-driven models for sowing and yield optimization in drip-irrigated arid climates. This research holds significant promise for improving agricultural practices in water-scarce regions. The awards are sponsored by the Dutch Solco W. Tromp Foundation. The late Dr. Solco W. Tromp was a co-founder of the International Society of Biometeorology, established 70 years ago and was also the initiator of the International Journal of Biometeorology. This award carries the weight of this rich scientific legacy. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to Dr. Adnan Arshad on this remarkable achievement and wish him continued success in his future scientific endeavors.





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Those Responsible for Obscene Stage Dramas Now Claim to Be Reformers, Asma Butt



City Desk

Renowned director, playwright, and CEO of Dolphin Communication, Asma Butt, said that press conferences alone cannot revive stage theatre, stressing that only quality productions and practical efforts can restore its dignity. She said family theatre flourishes through dedication to art and adherence to moral and cultural values.

Welcoming the Punjab government's efforts to revive the film industry, she urged similar practical measures for stage theatre. She criticized those now advocating family theatre despite having previously been associated with vulgar commercial productions, calling it a contradiction. Asma Butt said Dolphin Communication has spent the past 19 years promoting quality family theatre in Pakistan and abroad while consistently opposing obscenity and refusing to produce unethical plays. She added that artists should prove their commitment through quality performances rather than press conferences, noting that Punjab's Arts Councils already provide suitable venues.

Punjab intensifies monsoon drainage operations with AI-based monitoring: CM Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab government has intensified drainage operations across the province amid continuing monsoon rains, deploying advanced machinery and AI-assisted monitoring systems to ensure the timely removal of rainwater, according to an official handout issued on Sunday.

The handout said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision and confidence had led to improved drainage operations in Water and Sanitation Agency (WASA) districts through the induction of modern machinery. More than 1,000 machines and thousands of Wasa workers are engaged in field operations across the province.

On the chief minister's directions, the accumulation of rainwater is being monitored digitally through 300 modern cameras. An AI-based system linked with the Punjab Safe Cities Authority is also being used to identify stagnant rainwater.

The handout said the chief minister was overseeing coordinated efforts involving the district administration, the Provincial Disaster Management

Authority (PDMA), Rescue 1122 and Wasa. It added that underpasses in Lahore and other cities were being monitored round the clock through a digital surveillance system during rainfall.

Field operations in WASA districts are continuing without interruption, with Wasa teams remaining engaged throughout the prolonged monsoon spell. Workers equipped with dewatering sets, sucker machines and other drainage equipment are carrying out operations, while monsoon emergency relief camps have been established in every city.

According to the handout, WASA teams are actively engaged in drainage operations in Lahore, Attock, Chakwal, Murree, Taunsa, Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, Gujranwala, Gujrat, Narowal, Bhakkar, Layyah, Toba Tek Singh, Okara, Sargodha, Nankana Sahib, Sialkot, Faisalabad, Sahiwal, Khushab, Chiniot, Lodhran, Bahawalnagar, Khanewal, Rawalpindi, Sheikhupura, Jhang, Pakpattan, Hafizabad and Rahim Yar Khan.

The handout further said that, on the chief minister's directives, 400 kilometres of sewerage lines, more than 700



kilometres of drains and over 225,000 manholes had been cleaned, with positive results beginning to emerge.

Happy Sunday

ISLAMABAD: Children enjoying bathing at Shahdara valley outskirts of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Curtain Raiser Held for 4th Pakistan Marketing Day Summit & PMD Awards 2026

News Desk

LAHORE: The curtain raiser ceremony for the 4th Pakistan Marketing Day Summit and the first PMD Awards for Marketing Excellence 2026 was held during "MAP Coffee Connection - Chapter 12" organized by Marketing Associates and Professionals of Pakistan (MAP).

Business leaders, marketing experts, university representatives, corporate institutions, and media attended the event. The focus was on promoting marketing's role in national development.

LCCI President Faheem-ur-Rehman Segal said Pakistan's natural resources and talent can secure a global position with proper use, and lauded MAP Pakistan's efforts. He termed the October Marketing



Day and Excellence Awards a vital impetus for purposeful marketing.

MAP Founder Tariq Ismat announced October 14 as Pakistan Marketing Day. The

4th Summit will be held on that day, while the 1st PMD Awards are set for November 7, 2026 to honor excellence in branding, digital marketing, innovation and leadership.

Prem Union Leaders Mourn Passing of ISI Secretary General Amir-ul-Azeem

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: President of the Prem Union Sheikh Muhammad Anwar and Chief Organizer Khalid Mahmood Chaudhry have expressed deep sorrow over the demise of Jamaat-e-Islami Central Secretary General Amir-ul-Azeem, calling it an "irreparable loss" for Jamaat-e-Islami and Islamic movements worldwide.

In a joint statement, they said the void created by his passing can never be filled. Amir-ul-Azeem remained affiliated with Jamaat-e-Islami from his student days till his last days. Even during Zia-ul-Haq's martial law, prolonged imprisonment and violence could not shake his commitment and independence.

The leaders described him as a "metaphor for ideology, discipline and obedience," and said such personalities are the crown jewels of ideological movements and role models for workers.

They prayed that Allah Almighty grant him the highest place in Paradise and said political workers will continue to follow his example of sacrifice and leadership.



5th Death Anniversary of Hazrat Sakhi Sultan Sahibzada Qazi Muhammad Qasim (RA) on July 28

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 5th death anniversary of revered Sufi scholar Hazrat Sakhi Sultan Sahibzada Qazi Muhammad Qasim (RA), a distinguished disciple of Sultan-ul-Arifeen Hazrat Maulana Sain Muhammad Ashraf Badshah Qadri Qalandari (RA), will be observed on July 28 at Darbar-e-Aliya Qadria Qalandaria, Tamir Sharif.

The gathering will be jointly presided over by Pir-e-Tariqat Sahibzada Khawar Ali Sarkar, Sajjada Nasheen of Darbar-e-Aliya Kamra Sharif, and educationist Professor Qazi Habib-ur-Rahman.

Keynote address will be delivered by Sunni scholar Pir Muhammad Jameel Naqshbandi, with proceedings by Sahibzada Samar Abbas Attari.

The programme begins at 4:00 pm with Quran recitation, Mehfil-e-Naat, and prayers for the Muslim Ummah. Gold medallist Naat reciter Abbas Abidi Ali Ashraf will also perform.

Organizers said the event aims to honor Qasim (RA)'s spiritual and reformative services and introduce youth to Sufi teachings.



AJK Heads to Polls Amid Unrest: JAAC Ban, PTI Boycott, and a Contest Between PPP and PML-N

As Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) is set to go to the polls beginning July 27, 2026, in an election overshadowed by weeks of unrest, a controversial ban on a civil rights alliance, and a boycott by one of Pakistan's major political parties. South Asians & Diaspora

The AJK government formally banned the Jammu Kashmir Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) on June 5, 2026, declaring it a proscribed organization under the Anti-Terrorism Act. Authorities accused the group of involvement in "potential violence, acquisition of weapons, attacks on

law-enforcement personnel, and plans to disrupt normal life." JAAC has strongly denied these allegations, maintaining that its movement for rights has remained peaceful throughout.

The roots of the unrest lie in a dispute over 12 seats in the 45-seat AJK Legislative Assembly reserved for refugees from Indian-administered Kashmir who migrated to Pakistan after the 1947 partition. JAAC had called for the abolition of these seats and organized a strike on June 9 to press its demands. Following the ban, thousands of JAAC supporters set up sit-ins on the outskirts of Rawalakot, roughly 100 kilometers south of Muzaffarabad, vowing to continue

their protest. The subsequent weeks saw clashes between protesters and law enforcement that reportedly left around 30 people dead, disrupted campaigning, and shuttered businesses across the region.

Amid this backdrop, Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) announced on July 3 that it would not participate in the AJK elections. The party's Central Information Secretary, Sheikh Waqas Akram, said the decision reflected "unwavering solidarity" with the aspirations of the

Kashmiri people and their democratic rights, describing it as a principled stance rather than a political strategy.

PTI called for the JAAC issue to be resolved through dialogue and urged authorities to address the group's demands fairly.

With PTI out of the race, the electoral contest has largely narrowed to a competition between the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), the two parties expected to dominate the Legislative Assembly seats up for

Analysis



Naveed Ahmad Khan

grabs. South Asians & Diaspora

Despite the unrest, AJK's Chief Election Commissioner Justice (Retd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal has repeatedly affirmed that the elections will proceed as scheduled, describing postponement as constitutionally untenable. The Election Commission has since revised the polling schedule into three phases: Mirpur Division votes on July 27 as originally planned, Muzaffarabad Division and the 12 refugee-reserved seats will vote on August 2, and Poonch Division will go to the polls on August 10.

To ensure security, authorities have deployed police, paramilitary forces, and army personnel across polling

areas. Mughal has stated that all administrative and logistical preparations, including printing of ballot papers and distribution of election material, have been completed.

As AJK approaches this politically charged election, questions remain over how the JAAC ban, the security situation, and PTI's absence will shape both voter turnout and the credibility of the process in the eyes of the public.

The writer is Editor, Daily The Spokesman; Managing Editor, Daily Inmroze; Founder President, Tourism Association of Pakistan; and Convener, FPCCI Standing Committee on Heritage & Hospitality.

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Monsoon Preparedness Must Move Beyond Meetings

The fifth meeting of the Prime Minister’s Emergency Response Committee on Monsoon 2026 reflects the government’s recognition that disaster preparedness is no longer a seasonal responsibility but a national priority. Chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, the meeting brought together federal ministers, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs), and other stakeholders to review preparedness and response mechanisms. While the commitment to coordination is encouraging, the real measure of success will be judged not in conference rooms but in the safety of communities vulnerable to floods and extreme weather.

The statistics presented during the meeting are a sobering reminder of the human cost of natural disasters. Between 26 June and 25 July 2026, Pakistan recorded 97 deaths and 297 injuries, with roof, wall, and house collapses emerging as the leading causes of fatalities. More than 130 rescue operations, the evacuation of 3,841 people, and the delivery of 219 tons of relief supplies demonstrate that emergency institutions are responding effectively. However, these figures also underline the urgent need to address structural vulnerabilities rather than merely reacting to disasters after they occur.

It is reassuring that the country’s major rivers currently remain within safe limits despite the ongoing monsoon spell. Nevertheless, Pakistan’s unpredictable weather patterns, intensified by climate change, demand constant vigilance. Early warning systems, modern forecasting technologies, and uninterrupted communication with district administrations are essential to reducing casualties. Climate Change Minister Dr. Musadik Masood Malik rightly emphasized the critical role of local administrations in ensuring timely dissemination of warnings, as district authorities are always the first line of defence during emergencies.

Equally significant is Professor Ahsan Iqbal’s directive to audit flood mitigation projects undertaken after previous floods. Accountability is an indispensable component of disaster management. Every rupee invested in embankments, drainage systems, and protective infrastructure must deliver measurable results. Transparent evaluations will not only strengthen public confidence but also ensure that future investments are directed where they are most needed.

Pakistan’s recurring monsoon challenges require a long-term national resilience strategy that integrates urban planning, climate adaptation, environmental conservation, and public awareness. Emergency response saves lives, but prevention saves communities. The government’s emphasis on coordination between federal, provincial, and district institutions is a positive step, yet sustained implementation, adequate funding, and community participation remain equally important.

As the monsoon season continues, preparedness must remain proactive rather than reactive. Protecting lives, livelihoods, and infrastructure requires more than periodic reviews—it demands continuous commitment, institutional accountability, and collective national resolve. Only then can Pakistan transform disaster management from crisis response into genuine resilience.

Heinous Narrative Targeting the Pak Army and Marka e Huq

Noreen Niazi, sister of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder Imran Khan, made controversial remarks in a widely circulated podcast that drew widespread criticism across Pakistan. She alleged that the military confrontation with India, referred to in Pakistan as Marka-e-Haq (Battle of Truth), was a staged event rather than a genuine act of national defence and claimed there was a secret understanding between the Pakistan Army and Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi to mislead the Pakistani public. She further alleged that Israel and the United States were behind the conflict, claiming India acted under Israeli influence to pressure Pakistan into recognizing Israel through the Abraham Accords, that Pakistan’s government and military had secretly contacted Israeli officials, and that praise from US President Donald Trump for Pakistan’s leadership was part of this alleged agenda. She admitted she had no official information or evidence for these claims and had reached them through her own reasoning, prompting critics to dismiss the allegations as baseless misinformation that undermined the Pakistan Army, the country’s foreign policy, and the sacrifices of its soldiers.

Her remarks triggered legal and political condemnation. The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency issued her a legal notice and summons, accusing her of spreading false, offensive, and inflammatory content intended to defame state institutions, harm national unity, and warning of legal consequences under Section 174 of the Pakistan Penal Code if she failed to comply. Political leaders, including Punjab Information Minister Azma

Bokhari, condemned the remarks, linked them to Imran Khan’s political outlook, argued they were contrary to Pakistan’s national interests and achievements, and warned they could be exploited by hostile foreign media to damage the country’s image. Her allegations about Israel were also rejected as inconsistent with Pakistan’s longstanding foreign policy, which supports the Palestinian cause, rejects recognition of Israel until an independent Palestinian state is established on the pre-1967 borders with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital, and was reaffirmed by Defence Minister Khawaja Asif in May 2026. Pakistan’s passport, which remains invalid for travel to Israel, was also cited as evidence contradicting claims of secret normalization efforts.

The Marka-e-Haq operation itself was a monumental moment for Pakistan that redefined the country’s military strategy and deterrence capability. The operation was not just a simple skirmish but a carefully planned and executed response to aggression that showcased the exceptional capabilities of the Pakistan Army and the Air Force. The armed forces, through coordinated leadership and superior tactics, successfully foiled any Indian attempts to escalate the conflict. The entire operation demonstrated Pakistan’s resolve to defend its borders at all costs and highlighted the nation’s advancements in modern warfare and technology. The Director General of the Inter-Services Public Relations provided a detailed briefing to the nation, outlining the ten strategic outcomes of the Marka-e-Haq. He explained how the operation transformed the nature of warfare and re-established a balance of power in the region. The entire Pakistani nation, from the northern

areas to the southern coast, united in support of its military and celebrated the professionalism and bravery displayed by the armed forces. This unity was a source of immense strength and sent a clear message to the international community about the resilience of the Pakistani nation. It is this very success and the strengthening of national unity that act as a major irritant for the country’s enemies, both internal and external. Those who seek to destabilize Pakistan and weaken its military understand that a strong and confident army is the biggest obstacle to their nefarious plans. Therefore, they continuously resort to such malicious propaganda, attempting to create divisions and lower the morale of the forces. The false narratives propagated by individuals like Noreen Niazi are thus seen as a direct tool of these enemies to achieve their destabilizing objectives.

The Pakistani nation, with its rich history of resilience and unwavering patriotism, has categorically rejected these heinous and baseless narratives. The people of Pakistan are not naive, and they are fully capable of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, especially when it concerns the defence and integrity of their homeland. The anger expressed on social media and in public gatherings shows that the public is fully aware of the sacrifices made by the armed forces. They recognize that the soldiers serving on the borders are the nation’s heroes and that any attack on them is an attack on the country itself. This widespread public condemnation has actually served to strengthen the bond between the people and the military. The false narratives, instead of creating doubt, have opened the eyes of the nation even further and have made it easier for the average citizen to differentiate between those who work for the country’s prosperity and those who, driven by selfish political interests,

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Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-III

Why? China—Not Russia—Has Become America’s Principal Strategic Challenger. America’s Response and the Defining Strategic Competition of the Twenty-First Century

Recognizing China’s rapid rise, successive American administrations—Republican and Democratic alike—have fundamentally reoriented U. S. national security strategy. Although they have differed in tactics, they have shared the same underlying conclusion: China is the only nation with the economic, technological, industrial and military capacity to challenge American leadership across the full spectrum of national power.

This bipartisan assessment has been reflected in official U. S. strategy documents, defence planning and economic policy. The U. S. Department of Defense consistently describes the People’s Republic of China as America’s “pacing challenge,” meaning it is the only competitor capable of reshaping the international order while simultaneously modernizing its military, expanding technological capabilities and increasing global influence.

The Department’s 2025 Pacific Deterrence Initiative requested nearly US\$10 billion to strengthen American military posture, missile defence, logistics, infrastructure and alliances throughout the Indo-Pacific region, reflecting Washington’s strategic focus on maintaining

regional balance. The Pentagon’s annual reports also emphasize China’s rapid military modernization, including advances in naval power, missile systems, cyber capabilities, artificial intelligence and space technologies.

Military competition, however, represents only one dimension of the broader strategic rivalry. Unlike the Cold War, today’s competition extends deeply into economics, trade, finance, technology and industrial supply chains.

Beginning in 2018, the United States introduced sweeping tariffs on hundreds of billions of dollars of Chinese imports under Section 301 of the Trade Act. These measures sought to address concerns relating to intellectual property, industrial subsidies, technology transfer and broader trade imbalances.

The tariffs continued under subsequent administrations, although implementation evolved through negotiations, exemptions and targeted modifications. According to the Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR), these policies encouraged some diversification of supply chains and supported certain domestic industries. Imports shifted toward countries such as Vietnam, Mexico and India in selected sectors.

However, the broader objective of substantially reducing China’s industrial and technological competitiveness has proven considerably more difficult. China remains the world’s largest manufacturing nation, one of the world’s largest exporters and a dominant supplier of countless industrial inputs. Global supply chains have adjusted, but they have not fundamentally displaced China’s central role in world manufacturing.

The experience demonstrates an important reality. Tariffs can alter trade patterns. They cannot rapidly replicate decades of accumulated industrial ecosystems, engineering expertise, supplier networks, logistics infrastructure and manufacturing scale.

Consequently, both Washington and Beijing have discovered that complete economic separation—or “decoupling”—is extraordinarily difficult. Instead, policymakers increasingly speak of “de-risking” supply chains rather than eliminating economic engagement altogether.

The United States has complemented tariffs with export controls, investment screening and industrial policy. Washington has introduced restrictions on advanced semiconductor equipment, high-performance computing technologies and certain artificial intelligence

applications, seeking to slow China’s access to cutting-edge technologies with potential military applications.

At the same time, the CHIPS and Science Act and the Inflation Reduction Act have directed hundreds of billions of dollars toward semiconductor manufacturing, clean-energy technologies and advanced industrial production within the United States.

These initiatives acknowledge that long-term strategic competition will be determined not simply by military spending but by leadership in innovation, manufacturing and advanced technologies.

China has responded by accelerating domestic research, expanding semiconductor investment, increasing support for indigenous innovation and strengthening supply chains for critical industries. The result is a technological competition unprecedented in modern history.

One of the defining characteristics of the current rivalry is that the two largest economies remain deeply interconnected. The United States and China continue to conduct hundreds of billions of dollars in annual trade.

American companies manufacture in China. Chinese firms invest internationally. Universities, researchers and multinational corporations continue to cooperate in many scientific fields despite increasing strategic competition.

Continued on Page 7



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

Punjab’s Welfare Transformation

When Maryam Nawaz Sharif took the oath as Pakistan’s first woman chief minister of Punjab on Feb 26, 2024, she inherited the responsibility of governing a province that accounts for more than half of Pakistan’s population and nearly 60 percent of its economic output. The challenge extended beyond routine administration. It demanded restoring public confidence through efficient governance, expanding social protection, embracing digital transformation and accelerating infrastructure-led economic growth.

Over the past two years, the Punjab government has pursued a governance model centered on citizen service delivery, institutional modernization and technology-enabled governance. Rather than relying solely on conventional welfare programs, the provincial government has sought to integrate digital governance, targeted subsidies, urban renewal, transport modernization and public health into a broader framework of inclusive development.

One of the government’s defining features has been its emphasis on citizen-centric governance. Through flagship initiatives such as Maryam Ke Dastak, public services are increasingly delivered at citizens’ doorsteps instead of requiring visits to government offices. Supported by the Punjab Information Technology Board, the initiative represents a shift toward proactive service delivery and digital government, reducing bureaucratic hurdles while improving transparency and accessibility.

Punjab has simultaneously strengthened its digital public infrastructure. Platforms including the Punjab e-Government

Gateway, ePay Punjab, eBiz Punjab, the Punjab Socio-Economic Registry and the GoPb mobile ecosystem are gradually transforming how citizens interact with the state. These initiatives reflect international best practices in GovTech by integrating online payments, digital identity verification, service tracking and mobile-first governance into everyday public administration.

Housing has emerged as another major pillar of the government’s welfare agenda. Programs such as Apni Chhat Apna Ghar and Apni Zameen Apna Ghar seek to expand affordable housing opportunities for lower-income families through subsidized financing and land allocation.

In developing economies, secure housing serves not only as a social benefit but also as an economic asset, contributing to financial stability, job creation and improved living standards.

Healthcare reforms have similarly emphasized accessibility and financial protection. The provincial government has expanded health initiatives while investing in specialized healthcare infrastructure, including plans for Punjab’s first public-sector cancer hospital. Simultaneously, digital health systems and targeted welfare programs aim to reduce out-of-pocket medical expenditures, one of the principal causes of household poverty in developing countries.

Infrastructure development has been treated as both a social and economic investment. The Punjab government has accelerated road rehabilitation, urban sanitation and environmentally sustainable transport. Procurement of electric buses, expansion of public transport, promotion of electric bikes for students and the

Continued on Page 7

Diplomatic Goodwill and Praise Follow Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah’s Landslide Victory in Pakistan Press Club London Elections

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Following a decisive election victory at the Pakistan Press Club London, newly elected President Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah and his panel have been receiving widespread congratulations from key media and diplomatic figures across the UK and Pakistan.

Among the prominent well-wishers, Pawan Dhande, Director of Communications at the British High Commission in Islamabad, extended warm congratulations to Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah on his election to the presidency.

In a message to the newly elected president, Dhande commended the panel’s impressive performance,



noting that securing 11 out of 13 seats



represents a significant vote of confi-

dence from the journalism community. He expressed confidence in Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah’s leadership to guide the Press Club forward and wished his entire team success in their upcoming term.

Speaking on the overwhelming support received following the election, Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah reaffirmed his team’s commitment to promoting professional unity, supporting working journalists, and strengthening media links between the UK and Pakistan.

The landslide mandate marks an important chapter for the Pakistan Press Club London as the new cabinet prepares to roll out its planned initiatives for the community.

Religious Leaders Demand Probe as Shrine Construction Halt Causes Hardship for Pilgrims

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi.

HYDERABAD: Religious leaders and organizers have urged the Sindh government and relevant authorities to immediately intervene after construction work at the Shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh (Bibi Maham SA) in Agham Kot was reportedly suspended, causing difficulties for thousands of pilgrims during the annual pilgrimage season.



According to a statement, walking caravans of pilgrims began arriving on 25th Muharram and will continue until 21st Safar, with thousands of men, women and children visiting the shrine daily. The organizers alleged that incomplete development work and inadequate facilities have created serious hardships for the visitors.

The statement claimed the contractor had assured that construction would be completed before the final week of Muharram but allegedly halted work after leaving on a pilgrimage, with the site supervisor reportedly announcing that work would not resume until after Chehlum (Arbaeen).

Religious leaders, including Allama Syed Aal-e-Ahmad Bilgrami and other community representatives, condemned the situation and called for an immediate investigation by the Sindh government, the Auqaf Department and other relevant authorities. They demanded prompt completion of the development work, improved facilities for pilgrims and action against those found responsible, according to the statement.

OIC-COMSTECH Honours Outgoing Ambassadors of Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan for Advancing Scientific and Diplomatic Cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The OIC Ministerial Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) hosted a farewell at its Islamabad Secretariat honoring outgoing Ambassadors Yerzhan Kistafin of Kazakhstan and Khazar Nadir Farhadov of Azerbaijan, recognizing their contributions to bilateral relations and COMSTECH cooperation in science, technology, education and innovation.

The event drew diplomats, officials, vice chancellors and scientists from OIC and friendly states. Coordinator General Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary praised Ambassador Kistafin for transforming Pakistan-Kazakhstan scientific engagement, citing initiatives like the OIC-15 Dialogue Platform, Al-Farabi Forums, alumni forums, and workshops on agriculture, AI and biosecurity. He also lauded Ambassador Farhadov’s role in expanding Azerbaijan-COM-

STECH ties, particularly in plant sciences and university partnerships under the COMSTECH Consortium of Excellence.

Choudhary emphasized both ambassadors’ steadfast support for science diplomacy and capacity building, calling science and education vital instruments for peace and shared prosperity among OIC states. He presented Certificates of Appreciation to both envoys.

Expressing gratitude, the ambassadors thanked COMSTECH for its



hospitality and partnership, praising its leadership in advancing science and research across OIC Member

States, and expressed confidence in continued growing cooperation. The event concluded reaffirming

enduring partnerships between Pakistan, Azerbaijan and Kazakhstan.



Zulfiqar Ahmad Cheema’s New Books Launched at Literary Ceremony

Aziz ur Rehman Mujahid

ISLAMABAD: Renowned poet Iftikhar Arif has praised the writings of former Inspector General of Police and columnist Zulfiqar Ahmad Cheema, saying they are marked by sincerity, honesty and a genuine commitment to social reform rather than artificiality or pretension.

He was speaking at the launch of Cheema’s three new books—Persistent Struggle (Jehd-e-Musalsal),

Fresh Thoughts (Afkar-e-Taza) and What I Believe to Be the Truth (Samajhta Hoon Jise Haq)—attended by prominent figures from literature, academia and public service.

Chairperson of the Pakistan Academy of Letters Dr. Najeeba Arif said Pakistan needs principled individuals like Cheema who remain steadfast in their faith and values. Novelist Hameed Shahid described Persistent Struggle as a true reflection of the author’s life, praising its

engaging narrative and emphasis on principles over personal achievements.

Former Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Zakaullah commended Cheema’s patriotism, while columnist Qurat-ul-Ain Haider highlighted the simplicity and clarity of his writing.

The event, moderated by poet Mehboob Zafar, concluded with Zulfiqar Ahmad Cheema thanking the audience and reading excerpts from his books.

The Custodial Killing That Shook Public Trust in Police

In every murder investigation, there are often dozens of unanswered questions. Yet among them, there is usually one decisive question that holds the key to the entire case. The alleged custodial killing of Muhammad Amjad in Rahim Yar Khan is no different. Every thread of this tragic case appears to converge on a single question: Where, and how, was Muhammad Amjad’s body recovered on the pointing out of the accused SHO? Once that question is answered, many of the mysteries surrounding the investigation begin to unravel.

Muhammad Amjad was neither an influential figure nor a member of any criminal network. He was described by those who knew him as a respectable, soft-spoken and harmless man, remembered for his humility and willingness to help others. Standing in stark contrast was a police officer who, it is alleged, allowed the authority of his uniform to override the rule of law during his first posting as a Station House Officer (SHO).

When the uniform that symbolises the state’s duty to protect citizens becomes a tool for the abuse of power, public confidence in the justice system itself is inevitably shaken. During

the initial investigation, the accused SHO denied all allegations, insisting that Muhammad Amjad had never visited his official residence. However, modern criminal investigations rely not merely on statements but on objective evidence. CCTV footage reportedly contradicted that claim, dramatically changing the course of the investigation and dismantling the defence on which the accused had relied.

Given the sensitivity of the case, the investigation was entrusted to Inspector Muslim Zia, an officer known for handling complex criminal investigations. While investigative techniques cannot be disclosed due to legal and professional considerations, it can be said that sustained psychological questioning, scientific methods and evidence-based investigation gradually broke through every layer of the accused’s defence.

Initially, the accused, Sub-Inspector Naqash, allegedly confessed to the killing but claimed that the victim’s body had been thrown into a river. Rescue teams were mobilised, search operations commenced and checkpoints were established. Yet the investigating officer reportedly found little credibility in that account. As

investigators continued analysing the evidence and narrowing the scope of questioning, the accused eventually broke down. What followed was not merely the discovery of a murder but an account that, if proven in court, reflects a grave crime against humanity. Acting on the accused’s alleged disclosure, police recovered Muhammad Amjad’s body from a deep pit where it had allegedly been buried in secrecy—an anonymous grave that might never have been discovered had the investigation remained a routine procedural exercise.

The case also serves as a reminder that while a few rogue officers can tarnish the reputation of an entire institution, there are also officers within the police force who remain committed to the rule of law. Without the oversight of the senior police leadership, the SP Investigation and the professionalism of the investigative team, this case might have joined the long list of unsolved custodial deaths whose truth never emerges.

An FIR (No. 464/26) under Section

302 of the Pakistan Penal Code has been registered at Kot Samaba Police Station against SHO Syed Naqash Raza and other concerned officials, and the arrest of the principal accused demonstrates that when an institution decides to hold its own accountable, the law recognises neither rank nor uniform. That principle forms the foundation of every civilised society and reflects the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz and the stated commitment of the Punjab Police leadership to the delivery of justice.

This incident is not merely about the alleged murder of one individual; it is also a test of how the state exercises and accounts for its authority. If law enforcement agencies continue to act impartially against those within their own ranks who violate the law, public trust can gradually be restored. Justice is not only about a court’s verdict—it is also about uncovering the truth, even when that truth lies buried beneath the ground. The recovery of Muhammad Amjad’s body from an unmarked grave

stands as a powerful symbol of that principle.

The tragedy also highlights a deeper problem: the culture of fear surrounding police stations. Today, many ordinary citizens become fearful the moment an FIR is registered against them or they are summoned by the police. That fear stems not from the law itself, but from the perception that some police officials misuse their authority.

According to the allegations, Muhammad Amjad had appeared at Kot Samaba Police Station after being summoned by SHO Naqash Shah in connection with FIR No. 450/26 under Section 363 of the Pakistan Penal Code. It is alleged that shortly afterwards, SHO Naqash Shah, Sub-Inspector Maqbool Abbasi and other police personnel took him from the police office to a private residence adjacent to the police station, which has been described by the complainants as a torture cell. It is further alleged that some individuals present attempted to intervene but were unsuccessful. According to the complainant, Amjad’s family visited the police station daily seeking information about his whereabouts but received no satisfactory

response, before later alleging that he had died as a result of torture.

If these allegations are ultimately proven before a court of law, this would not merely constitute a murder case but represent one of the gravest examples of the alleged abuse of state authority. Such incidents fuel public fear of police stations, police uniforms and law enforcement agencies, despite the police’s constitutional role being to protect citizens and uphold justice rather than inspire fear.

There is an urgent need for the Punjab Chief Minister and the Inspector General of Police to ensure a transparent, impartial and expeditious investigation. Any police officer found to have exceeded the limits of the law should be held fully accountable so that public confidence can be restored and police stations become symbols of justice rather than intimidation.

Given the nature of the allegations, the case may also attract the application of The Torture and Custodial Death (Prevention and Punishment) Act, 2022. If the evidence supports the allegations, the relevant provisions of the Act should be incorporated into the case and presented before the trial court in accordance with the law.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

 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	

Pakistan can save billions in forex by increasing cultivation of sugarcane, pulses, wheat

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Conven-er Federation of Paki- stan Chamber of Commerce and Industry regional committee on food Shahid Imran on Sunday said Paki- stan can save billions of dollars in foreign exchange annually by bringing more arable land under cultivation of sugarcane, pulses and wheat, reducing dependence on costly food imports.

Talking here today to a delegation of women entrepreneurs led by Ms Nida Tariq Ch he said greater emphasis should be placed on modern farming techniques, high-yielding and climate-resilient seeds, efficient irrigation systems, mechanisation and timely availability of quality inputs. He also called for stronger research and extension services to guide farmers about profitable crop choices.

Leader of the delegation Ms Nida Tariq Ch said food import bill jumps to \$9.1 bn on higher sugar, edible oil purchases in FY 26. She said on the import side, palm oil constituted the largest share among imported food items, followed by pulses, tea, soya bean oil and sugar. Pakistan imported 309,545 tonnes of sugar in FY26, marking an unprece- dented increase of 8,716.43pc compared to just 3,508 tonnes in the same period last year, according to official trade data. In value terms, sugar imports jumped to \$175.182m in FY26 from \$3.508m a year earlier, reflecting a sharp rise of 4,893.80pc.

However, Pakistan imported pulses worth \$832.038m compared to \$1.016bn last year, showing a decline of 18.13pc. During July-June FY26, soybean oil imports value reached \$108.683m, declining 68.41pc from \$344.028m recorded in the same period last year, she concluded.

Iftikhar Malik Urges Public-Private Partnerships to Tap Balochistan’s Untapped Wind and Solar Wealth

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former Presi- dent Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday said its high time to fully tap Balochistan’s abundant renewable energy potential to produce economical power for contin- ued sustainable industrial production and offset energy crisis.

In a statement here today he said Balochistan holds substantial, largely untapped renewable energy potential, esti- mated at over 1.2 million MW of solar and 20,000 MW of wind capacity, particularly in the Chagai and Makran regions. Stra- tegic deployment of off-grid solar solu- tions, including the conversion of agricul- tural tubewells, is essential for reducing energy costs in the region. He said approx- imately 40% of Balochistan receives direct solar radiation greater than 6 kWh per square meter, and a total solar potential of 1.2 million MWin Balochistan.



He said the public-private partnership authority can play a pivotal role in this process by extending support through viability gap funding mechanisms and facilitating access to bank financing for both provincial and national investors. At the same time he said creating conducive environment marked by improved secu- rity, regulatory predictability and ease of doing business will be critical to attract foreign direct investment.

He said global investors are more likely to engage in renewable energy ventures in Balochistan if assured of institutional support, risk mitigation and long term policy stability. He said encouraging renewable investments in Balochistan also opens avenues for generating carbon credits under inter- national climate financing mechanisms. Unlocking the renewable energy potential of Balouchistan holds significant promise for addressing Pakistan’s persistent energy crisis, he concluded.

Daily wager

ISLAMABAD: An elderly vendor sells sweet donuts at Shahdara valley outskirts of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Turkish Consul General Visits Expo Faisalabad 2026, Explores Trade Opportunities

 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye in Lahore, Mehmet Eymen Şimşek, visited Expo Faisalabad 2026, where he was warmly welcomed by Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI) President Farooq Yousaf Sheikh, Senior Vice President Naveed Akram Sheikh, and Vice President Engr. Asim Munir.

During his visit, the Consul General toured various exhibition stalls, interacted with exhibitors and appreciated the inno- vation, product quality and manufacturing excellence displayed by Faisalabad’s leading industries.

He noted the growing economic part- nership between Pakistan and Türkiye and emphasized the importance of expanding bilateral trade, investment and industrial cooperation. The visit highlighted new opportunities for strengthening busi- ness-to-business linkages and enhancing



collaboration between the two countries. FCCI officials reaffirmed their commit- ment to promoting international trade and facilitating stronger commercial relations with Türkiye through initiatives such as Expo Faisalabad 2026.

Pakistan Can Earn \$5 Billion Annually from Seafood Exports via Local Shipping: FTO Coordinator



 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombuds- man Saif ur Rehman said Sunday that Pakistan’s ship- ping industry can generate nearly \$5 billion in foreign exchange annually by exporting fish through locally owned, modern vessels instead of relying on foreign companies.

Speaking to exporters led by Ms. Amna Abdullah, he noted Pakistan still exports tuna and seafood largely

in raw or semi-processed form. Gulf states, Thailand and Vietnam import it, then process, brand and sell it at much higher prices.

Rehman said 95% of Pakistan’s seaborne trade is carried by foreign ships, costing about \$5 billion in freight yearly. He urged developing local ship- building and offering incen- tives to the private sector to move up the value chain, capture export margins, and turn maritime geography into sustainable growth.

DWP Group Announces Successful Redemption of PKR 3 Billion Short-Term Sukuk

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: DWP Group is pleased to announce the successful redemption of PKR 1.5 billion Short- Term Sukuk -1 (STS -1) & 1.5 billion Short-Term Sukuk -2 (STS -2) by Digital World Pakistan (Private) Limited.

This milestone reflects the continued trust of investors and stakeholders in DWP Group’s financial strength, business credi- bility and long-term growth outlook.

The redemption under- scores DWP Group’s disci- plined financial manage- ment and commitment

to meeting its obligations while supporting sustain- able business growth. It further reinforces the Group’s position as a diver- sified and future-focused business with a strong founda- tion across consumer electronics, technology, engineering, manufacturing and infrastructure-linked sectors.

As DWP Group continues to expand its presence across key sectors of Pakistan’s economy, it remains focused on creating long-term value for its stakeholders through responsible governance, operational excellence and strategic investments.

Workers Welfare Fund is committed to developing a skilled workforce

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: This was stated by Secretary WWF Zulfikar Ahmed during his visit to the FFC Learning and Development Centre Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited at Goth Machhi, Sadiqabad.

Earlier upon arrival, he was received by Manager FFC Learning and Development Centre Asif Shafi.

The secretary was briefed on Centre’s training programmes, state- of-the-art facilities, and ongoing initi- atives.

It was told that the Centre provides high-quality technical and vocational training not only to participants from

Pakistan but also to trainees from other countries.

It was further highlighted that the Centre is also playing a significant role in equipping local youth with modern technical skills through quality voca- tional training. A number of grad- uates of the Centre are working as supervisors, engineers, and other key technical professionals in various industrial organisations and manu- facturing facilities.

During the visit, the Secre- tary witnessed the Centre’s various training units, workshops, laborato- ries, and practical training facilities.

Zulfikar Ahmed appreciated the FFC Learning and Development



Centre for its modern infrastruc- ture, high standards of training, and overall performance. He commended the management and training staff for their dedication and professional efforts.

PPP Multan District Celebrates Birthday of President Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: On the occasion of the 71st birthday of the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, a ceremony was organized by the Pakistan Peoples Party Multan City and District under the chairmanship of City Presidentd Malik Naseem Labar. Malik Naseem Labar, special guest candidate NA-150 Rana Shahidul Hassan, e Divisional General Secretary Dr. Javed Siddiqui, e District General Secretary Rao Sajid Ali, e Divisional Vice President Saleem Shahzad, Divisional Secretary Information Saleem Raja, District Secretary Information Chaudhry Yasin, Senior Vice Presidents City Mian Manzoor Qadri and Sajid Baloch, Salim-ur-Rehman Meo, Mir Ahmed Kamran Magsi, Razia Rafique, Allah Bakhsh Bhutta, Haji Khalil Raan, Nawaz Khan Sutrak, Meher Shakir, Akram

Ansari, Haji Mushtaq Ansari, Rana Zulfiqar KTG, Malik Iftikhar Ali, Tariq Khokhar, Irfan Ansari, Malik Iftikhar Ali, Nazir Kathia, Shabbir Alvi, Ali Mush-taq Baloch, Dawood Chavan, Kaku Shah, Rana Umair, Arshad Mughal, Abdul Rauf were present. Lodhi, Mushtaq Ansari, Deputy Mushtaq Ansari, Malik Imdad Jholay Lal and others congratulated President Asif Ali Zardari on his birthday and said in a joint statement that we all pay tribute to President Asif Ali Zardari today because due to his CS insight and understanding, a democratic government is established in Pakistan today. Asif Ali Zardari's life is a symbol of democracy, sacrifice and public service. Asif Ali Zardari's role in carrying forward the unfinished democratic mission of Pakistan People's Party founder Chairman Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Democracy Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto is



of historic importance. They said that President Asif Ali Zardari is a true champion of democracy, supremacy of the constitution

and people's rights.

They said that the hardships of imprisonment and imprisonment could not shake Asif

Ali Zardari's democratic determination and courage. President Asif Ali Zardari emerged stronger from every difficulty and

continued his journey of serving Pakistan.

Through the historic slogan of Pakistan Khupe, Asif Ali Zardari gave a message of national unity and solidarity, defended democracy and the constitution in every difficult time, restored the authority of the parliament and strengthened democratic institutions.

The Eighteenth Constitutional Amendment is a historic achievement of Asif Ali Zardari's democratic leadership. President Asif Ali Zardari strengthened the role of the elected Prime Minister and the parliament. Through the NFC Award, the provinces were given their constitutional and financial rights. He played a key role in strengthening the federation and consolidating democracy. Reconciliation, tolerance and political stability are the basis of President Zardari's politics. On this occasion, a birthday cake for President Asif

Ali Zardari was also cut. A large number of party office bearers and workers including Iqbal Yanis, Abid Thahim, Tariq Shad, Zafar Awan, Ishaq Bhutta, Jamil Bhatti, Ashfaq Qureshi, Saleem Rehmani, Aslam Comrade, Saleem Dahar, Taj Mohand, Javed Bhatti, Mukhtar Shah, Nadeem Ansari, Ishaq Ansari, Muhammad Madani, Chairman Liaquat, Khurram Shahzad, Zahid Khan participated in the ceremony. Multan, On the occasion of the 71st birthday of President Asif Ali Zardari, a birthday celebration was organized by Pakistan Peoples Party Multan City under the chairmanship of City President Malik Naseem Labar. Malik Naseem Labar, Rana Shahidul Hassan, Dr. Javed Siddiqui, Rao Sajid Ali, Saleem Shahzad, Saleem Raja, Khawaja Imran, Chaudhry Yasin, Saleem Ur Rehman Mayo, Mir Kamran Magsi, Razia Rafique and others were cutting the cake.

Multan Horticulture Agency Completes Over 3,000 Shade Trees Plantation, Aims for 5,000 More in August



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Managing Director Horticulture Agency Multan Syed Waseem Hassan has said that the Horticulture Agency Multan has completed the plantation of more than three thousand shade trees and plants on the city's green belts. This includes Vehari Road, Southern Bypass to Sahu

Chowk, Metro Route and other places. The plantation of more than five thousand more trees will be completed in the month of August. Tree plantation and grass planting are also being done in the squares and parks of the city. The construction of Khatm-e-Nabuwvat Chowk No. 14 has been completed. Beautification work is also underway in the city under public-private part-

nership. Paint work has been completed on the walls of Chowk No. 9, Chowk Rashidabad, and University of Education. Steps are being taken to increase self-income to strengthen the institution. MD Horticulture Agency Multan Syed Waseem Hassan further said that the series of steps related to beautification and plantation issues, including development projects, will continue in

the city. Development work is underway at No. 14 Chungi, Aziz Hotel Chowk, No. 9 Chungi, Rashidabad Flyover, Kachhari Flyover and Shah Shams Park. Extensive tree plantation is being done in the city from this month to August. The rehabilitation and beautification of Bahawalpur Bypass will be completed soon. Extensive tree plantation will be done on green belts and squares.

Punjab's Welfare Transformation

Continued from Page 4

launch of the Suthra Punjab sanitation initiative demonstrate an effort to align provincial development with climate resilience and sustainable urban management. Such investments support productivity while addressing environmental challenges confronting rapidly urbanizing regions.

Education and youth empowerment remain central components of Punjab's long-term human capital strategy. IT internship programs, digital education initiatives, expansion of STEM laboratories, teacher capacity building and scholarships seek to prepare a workforce capable of participating in the global digital economy. Simultaneously, initiatives supporting entrepreneurship, vocational training and business facilitation reflect recognition that sustainable economic growth depends upon innovation, skills and private-sector participation.

Governance reforms have also

focused on strengthening institutional capacity. New regulatory mechanisms, digitized monitoring systems, performance-based administration and centralized service delivery platforms are intended to improve accountability and reduce administrative fragmentation. Punjab's emphasis on data-driven governance, real-time monitoring and integrated public services mirrors international trends toward evidence-based policymaking and whole-of-government approaches.

Punjab's development agenda has been reinforced through historically large public investment programs. The budgets introduced during CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's tenure allocated substantial resources toward health, education, infrastructure, agriculture, social protection and digital transformation. These fiscal priorities illustrate an attempt to combine welfare spending with productivity-enhancing investments capable of generating long-term economic returns.

Punjab's reform agenda demonstrates how political commitment, administrative modernization and digital innovation can converge to redefine public governance. Rather than pursuing isolated interventions, Punjab has adopted an integrated approach that links social welfare, economic development, infrastructure and technology-enabled public service delivery. The emphasis on institutional reforms, evidence-based policymaking and citizen-centric governance is steadily creating a more responsive and efficient state. These initiatives have the potential to strengthen public trust, attract greater investment, accelerate human development and establish Punjab as a benchmark for modern governance in the developing world.

Since Feb 2024, Punjab has emerged as a compelling example of how visionary political leadership, digital innovation and citizen-centric policymaking can reshape provincial governance. By integrating technology-driven

public services, infrastructure modernization, targeted social protection, healthcare, education and economic reforms into a coherent development framework, the province is steadily building a more responsive, transparent and efficient state. This whole-of-government approach reflects international best practices in digital governance, evidence-based policymaking and inclusive development. As these reforms continue to mature, Punjab is well positioned to strengthen public trust, enhance economic competitiveness, attract investment and improve the quality of life for millions of citizens. For the international community, Punjab's ongoing transformation offers a noteworthy case study of how subnational governments in emerging economies can harness innovation, institutional reform and public service excellence to drive sustainable and inclusive growth.

(The writer is Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratu@gmail.com)

Chemically adulterated milk sold openly in Takht Bhai poses deadly health risks

Tariq khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Public Health at Risk as Chemically Produced Harmful Milk Continues to Be Sold Openly, The sale of chemically manufactured, unsafe milk continues openly at several locations in Takht Bhai, posing a serious threat to public health According to sources, areas including the canal roadside, Takht Bhai Phatak, and several other locations have become major hubs for the sale of artificial milk made with harmful chemicals. Large quantities of this fake and potentially toxic milk are reportedly distributed from these locations every day. The consumption of such chemically produced milk poses serious health risks, particularly to children and the elderly. It may lead to stomach and digestive disorders, kidney damage, gastrointestinal diseases, and potentially increase the risk of cancer.

Local residents have expressed deep concern over the situation, describing it as a grave threat to the lives and well-being of the public. They have called on the Assistant Commissioner of Takht Bhai, the Food Safety Authority, and the relevant authorities to take immediate and strict action against those involved. Citizens have demanded an urgent crackdown on this illegal trade, the arrest of those manufacturing and selling chemically adulterated milk, and strict legal action to protect the public from this dangerous practice. The public is also urged to exercise caution and ensure the quality and authenticity of milk before purchasing it.



Heinous Narrative Targeting the Pak Army and Marka e Huq

Continued from Page 4

are willing to jeopardize the nation's security for their own gain. The people are demanding that strict action be taken against all such elements, regardless of their political background or connections. They believe that the law must take its course and that such individuals must be held accountable for their words and actions. The unity and resilience of the

Pakistani nation remain unshakable, and such cowardly attempts to create discord and spread lies will only serve to strengthen the resolve of the people to defend their motherland and its institutions. The state is determined to protect its ideological and geographical frontiers, and with the full backing of its patriotic populace, it will successfully thwart all such attempts to undermine its stability and sovereignty.

Why Is China Emerging As A Superpower? Part-III

Continued from Page 4

This reality distinguishes today's geopolitical environment from the Cold War. The United States and the Soviet Union maintained relatively limited economic interaction.

The United States and China compete while simultaneously remaining major trading partners. This creates mutual dependence as well as mutual vulnerability. American industries depend upon Chinese manufacturing capacity for numerous products and intermediate components.

Chinese growth continues to benefit from access to global markets, advanced technologies and international finance. Neither side can impose unlimited economic costs upon the other without also affecting itself. The rivalry is therefore characterized not by complete isolation but by strategic interdependence.

Ultimately, the strategic competition between the United States and China extends beyond individual policies such as tariffs or export controls.

It concerns what political scientists often describe as comprehensive national power—the combined strength derived from economic performance, industrial capacity, scientific innovation, technological leadership, military capability, financial influence, diplomacy, education, infrastructure and national institutions.

Measured through this broader lens, China has emerged as the only country capable of challenging the United States simultaneously across multiple dimensions.

Russia remains an indispensable military power. Its nuclear deterrent, advanced missile systems, cyber capabilities and geopolitical influence ensure that

it will continue to shape international security. However, Russia does not possess China's manufacturing ecosystem, technological breadth, global trade integration or industrial scale. It is therefore primarily a military challenger rather than a comprehensive systemic competitor.

China is different. Its industrial base underpins global supply chains. Its research institutions produce world-class scientific output. Its companies increasingly compete in telecommunications, renewable energy, electric vehicles, artificial intelligence, biotechnology and advanced manufacturing.

Its Belt and Road Initiative has expanded infrastructure connectivity across large parts of the developing world. Its growing financial and diplomatic engagement increasingly shapes international institutions and development priorities. No previous

American rival combined these diverse forms of power to the same extent.

The outcome of this strategic competition remains uncertain. The United States retains formidable advantages. It possesses the world's largest nominal economy, the dominant international reserve currency, unmatched capital markets, leading universities, exceptional entrepreneurial culture, powerful alliances and the most capable global military.

China possesses different but equally significant strengths. It leads the world in manufacturing scale, infrastructure construction, renewable-energy deployment, electric-vehicle production, battery manufacturing and numerous critical supply chains. It has become one of the largest investors in research and development and continues to expand its technological capabilities.

Neither country enjoys decisive

superiority across every domain. Rather than a contest likely to produce a single overwhelming victor, the twenty-first century is more likely to witness prolonged competition between two exceptionally capable powers.

Success will depend less upon military confrontation than upon sustained innovation, economic resilience, educational excellence, technological leadership, institutional effectiveness and international partnerships.

The decisive question is therefore not whether one country can simply stop the rise of the other. It is which nation can more effectively mobilize its resources, talent, institutions and alliances while adapting to a rapidly changing global economy. History demonstrates that great-power competition evolves with changing sources of national strength.

During the Cold War, mili-

tary capability and ideological confrontation defined the rivalry between Washington and Moscow. Today, the competition has expanded into manufacturing, technology, artificial intelligence, infrastructure, renewable energy, finance, critical minerals, trade and global supply chains. Russia remains one of the world's foremost military powers and an indispensable actor in international security.

China, however, has become something fundamentally different. It has built the world's largest manufacturing economy, emerged as one of the world's leading trading nations, invested heavily in science and technology, developed extensive global infrastructure partnerships through the Belt and Road Initiative and established strategic influence across numerous industries essential to the twenty-first-century economy.

Unlike the Soviet Union, China operates not outside the global economy but at its very centre. That distinction explains why American policymakers increasingly regard Beijing—not Moscow—as the United States' principal long-term strategic challenger.

The defining contest of this century will not be decided solely by military strength. It will be determined by innovation, productivity, industrial capability, technological leadership, resilient institutions and the ability to shape the rules, standards and economic architecture of an increasingly interconnected world.

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

Addressed

BHURBAN: Advisor to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Mr. Khurram Schehzad, addressing the National Tax Seminar jointly organized by the Pakistan Tax Bar Association and the Lahore Tax Bar Association at Pearl-Continental Hotel Bhurban, Murree, on Sunday.



Photo: PID

Khurram Schehzad Outlines Reform Agenda, Budget Priorities at National Tax Seminar

Commerce Desk

BHURBAN: Advisor to the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Khurram Schehzad, addressed the four-day National Tax Seminar jointly organized by the Pakistan Tax Bar Association (PTBA) and Lahore Tax Bar Association (LTBA), outlining Pakistan's improving macroeconomic outlook, structural reform agenda, FY2026-27 budget priorities, and the New Tax Operating Model (NTOM).

The seminar was attended by PTBA President Ehsan-ul-Haq Sheikh, LTBA Presi-

dent Rana Saqib Munir, PTBA Patron Abdul Qadir Memon, Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue Member Zahoor Ahmed as Guest of Honour, and keynote speaker economist Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque, along with tax professionals and practitioners nationwide. Schehzad said Pakistan has made significant progress restoring macroeconomic stability through fiscal discipline, rebuilt external buffers and strengthened debt management, transitioning toward sustainable, private sector-led growth. He noted these reforms are reflected

in improved credit ratings, successful IMF reviews and renewed access to international capital markets. He described the FY27 budget as balanced and pro-growth, offering relief to salaried classes, enhancing business competitiveness, advancing tariff reforms and broadening the tax base without burdening compliant taxpayers. He highlighted the wider reform agenda spanning tax administration, debt management, privatization, pension and energy sectors, and Digital Pakistan initiatives.

A key focus was NTOM, representing a shift from an officer-driven system to a data-led, technology-enabled, faceless tax administration. Schehzad explained the model separates audit, assessment and field operations, using digital technologies and risk-based compliance to reduce discretion, minimize physical interaction, and improve transparency, while compliant taxpayers benefit from simpler services and enforcement targets evasion through data intelligence. He appreciated tax bar associations' constructive

role, emphasizing continued stakeholder engagement for successful reform implementation. The seminar featured technical sessions on provincial sales tax, budget measures, faceless administration and digitalization. Dr. Nadeem Ul Haque delivered the keynote, while Muhammad Rehan Siddiqui presented on faceless jurisdiction. Organizers Sheikh, Munir and Memon appreciated government engagement and reaffirmed commitment to building a simpler, transparent, business-friendly tax system.

India Cannot Unilaterally Suspend Indus Waters Treaty, Says Qaiser Sheikh

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Sheikh said India can neither suspend nor terminate the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) unilaterally, calling any such move illegal and contrary to international law. He was addressing a seminar organized by EMPAK Strategies in Islamabad marking the launch of its research report, "Water, Climate, and Diplomacy: Securing Pakistan's Indus Basin Future." He warned that continued water tensions could have serious

consequences for South Asia and global peace. The report urges Pakistan to move beyond short-term emergency responses toward a comprehensive national water security policy, noting recent Chenab River flow surges exposed weaknesses in water management. It cites extreme rainfall, upstream flows, inadequate storage, aging infrastructure, weak groundwater governance and limited flood preparedness as key vulnerabilities, compounded by climate change, glacier melt and population growth. Five policy priorities are



recommended: implementing the 1991 Water Apportionment Accord; expanding

water storage and flood infrastructure; enhancing hydrological cooperation with China

and dialogue with Afghanistan; promoting climate-smart agriculture and ground-water regulation; and mobilizing international climate finance. EMPAK CEO Ahmad Younis said the Chenab flow increase shows water security is no longer just a seasonal issue, calling for a long-term strategy integrating governance, climate resilience and regional diplomacy. He said water security is now central to Pakistan's economic, food and national security, requiring stronger institutions and science-based planning.

President Zardari marks 71st birthday

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari celebrated his 71st birthday today, receiving warm wishes from political leaders, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, who praised his contribution to Pakistan's democratic development and national unity. Born on 26 July 1955, Zardari is serving as Pakistan's 14th president, having returned to the office in 2024 after previously serving as the country's 11th president from 2008 to 2013. A senior leader of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), he is the first Pakistani head of state born after the country's independence and is the widower of former prime minister Benazir Bhutto. In a congratulatory message issued on Sunday, Governor Kundi prayed for President Zardari's long life, good



health, continued success and many more opportunities to serve the country and its people.

The governor described President Zardari as an experienced statesman and a strong supporter of reconcilia-

tion, saying he had played a significant role in strengthening democracy, safeguarding the Constitution and reinforcing the federation throughout his political career. Kundi said the president's political wisdom and services to national unity would be remembered for years to come. He expressed confidence that Pakistan would continue to make progress towards democratic stability, stronger constitutional institutions and greater national harmony under President Zardari's leadership. He added that the leadership and workers of the Pakistan Peoples Party, along with people across the country, extended their best wishes to the president on his birthday. The governor also prayed that Almighty Allah grant President Zardari good health, a long and happy life, and the strength to continue serving Pakistan.

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U. S. Congressional Delegation Visits Punjab Safe Cities Authority



Bureau Report

LAHORE: A high-level delegation of the United States Congress, comprising Congressman Ryan Zinke and Congressman Michael Baumgartner, visited the Headquarters of the Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA), where they were briefed on the Authority's cutting-edge Artificial Intelligence (AI), smart surveillance, and digital public safety system. The delegation was warmly received by the Managing Director PSCA, Muhammad Ahsan Younas, and Chief Operating Officer, Muntansir Feroz on their arrival at PSCA. During the visit, the delega-

tion visited various operational units of the Authority and was apprised about the latest AI-powered upgrades, smart monitoring capabilities, and innovative digital initiatives designed to enhance public safety across Punjab. The delegation appreciated these initiatives as progressive and effective models for leveraging technology to strengthen public safety and citizen services. At the conclusion of the visit, commemorative shields were presented to the members of the U. S. Congressional delegation. Senior officials of PSCA and other relevant departments were also present on the occasion.

Mangroves Key to Coastal Protection, Blue Economy: Maritime Minister



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has emphasized the critical role of Pakistan's mangroves in protecting the coastline, supporting fisheries and strengthening climate resilience ahead of World Mangrove Day. In a statement, the minister said Pakistan is home to the world's largest arid-climate mangrove forest, mainly located in the Indus Delta, and ranks among the top countries globally in mangrove coverage. He noted that continued restoration efforts could further improve the country's global standing.

Junaid Chaudhry said mangroves protect coastal communities from erosion, flooding and storm surges while serving as breeding grounds for fish, shrimp and other marine species vital to fisheries and aquaculture. He added that Pakistan's mangrove carbon market has the potential to generate \$20-50 million annually. The minister highlighted rehabilitation efforts by the Karachi Port Trust, including mangrove plantation drives, coastal clean-up campaigns and restoration initiatives. He called for stronger action against encroachments, greater public awareness and increased public-private investment to protect mangrove ecosystems and promote the country's blue economy.

Kundi pays tribute to Manjhi Khel checkpoint martyrs



News Desk

PESHAWAR: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi Sunday paid tribute to the policemen martyred in the Manjhi Khel checkpoint attack, reaffirming that Pakistan's security forces would continue fighting terrorism until the last militant is eliminated, 24NewsHD TV reported. Speaking to the media at the RPO Office in Dera Ismail Khan, Kundi said Pakistan was confronting both internal and external security challenges, alleging that Afghan territory was being used for activities against Pakistan. He added that the country's armed

forces and law enforcement agencies remained on the front line in the fight against terrorism and that the nation stood firmly with its martyrs and war heroes. He said two policemen embraced martyrdom while four others were injured, adding that despite the intensity of the attack, greater damage was prevented. The governor said the assault caused a massive explosion involving around 1,500 kilograms of explosives. He also praised the courage and high morale of the injured personnel. Governor Kundi stressed that terrorism could not be defeated unless all stakeholders stood united.