



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے سعید بن ابی مرجم نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے ابو خسان نے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے ابو حازم نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے سہل رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا میں اور نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے اپنی دوا انگلیوں کے اشارے سے (اس نذر بی کو) بتایا پھر ان دونوں کو پھیلایا۔
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Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Governor Kundi invites Chinese investors to explore opportunities in KP

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi invited Chinese investors to invest in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, assuring them of full support and security for investment projects in the province. The invitation came during a meeting with a high-level delegation of Tabani Group and Shandong Hi-Speed Group, led by Hamza Tabani.



AJK elections: PML-N leads early vote count

Vote counting continued on Monday after polling ended in the first phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections, with early unofficial and unconfirmed results showing the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) leading in several key constituencies. Polling was held in 13 constituencies across the districts of Mirpur, Kotli and Bhimber.

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Called on

RAWALPINDI: US Lawmakers, Mr. Ryan Keith Zinke and Mr. Michael James, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters.



Photo: PID

US Lawmakers meet Field Marshal Asim Munir to bolster bilateral defense and economic ties

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Mr. Ryan Keith Zinke, Member House of Representatives (State of Montana) and Mr. Michael James, Member House of Representatives (State of Washington) called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, discussions focused on matters of mutual interest, regional security, bilateral defense cooperation and avenues for enhancing economic collaboration and prosperity.

The Field Marshal highlighted Pakistan's vast economic potential, emphasizing that sustainable regional stability is deeply anchored in economic growth, trade

expansion and connectivity. He underscored Pakistan's ongoing structural reforms aimed at fostering a business friendly environment and attracting foreign investment.

The visiting dignitaries acknowledged Pakistan's critical role in regional stability and economic resilience. Recognizing the professional backgrounds and insights of the delegation, both sides discussed potential opportunities for bilateral economic engagement, private sector partnerships and enhancing bilateral trade ties.

The visiting delegation thanked the military leadership for the warm hospitality and expressed a shared commitment to promoting deeper economic, commercial and institutional linkages between the United States and Pakistan.

Amir Muqam rejects PPP rigging allegations in Azad Kashmir elections

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engineer Amir Muqam has rejected the Pakistan Peoples Party's allegations of election rigging, saying the prime minister, government and entire administration in Azad Kashmir are under the PPP's control.

Amir Muqam said the PPP leadership and its ministers were making statements without due consideration, adding that



accusing the PML-N of rigging before

vote counting had even begun was "ridiculous."

Referring to the fatal incident in Fatehpur Takyal, he described it as deeply tragic and said a PML-N worker was also injured in Saturday's violence.

He recalled that during the election campaign, senior PML-N worker and local leader Malik Ashiq Hussain was killed in a firing incident in Fatehpur Takyal.

The federal minister urged political parties to refrain from making premature allegations, saying it was regrettable to

issue such statements before the completion of the vote count.

Amir Muqam said PML-N leader Nawaz Sharif, along with himself and other party leaders, had presented the party's previous development record and future plans to voters during the election campaign.

He added that the PML-N had a strong and hardworking team, and criticised the PPP for launching allegations before the counting process despite, according to him, having access to all government resources in Azad Kashmir.

Khawaja Asif dismisses Indian defence minister's remarks on Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif strongly dismissed recent irresponsible remarks by the Indian defence minister on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, calling them irresponsible and misleading.

Asif said the comments were another attempt to distort internationally recognised legal realities through political rhetoric and coercive posturing, he wrote on his social media platform X.

He said that such statements do not



change the status of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, nor do they help

promote regional peace, stability, or meaningful dialogue.

He said Jammu and Kashmir remains an internationally recognised disputed territory, the final disposition of which is to be determined in accordance with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the freely expressed will of the Kashmiri people.

Asif said India's repeated attempts to malign Pakistan lack credibility in light of its own well-documented record of state-sponsored terrorism and criminal activities.

Pakistan slams Indian defence minister's remarks on Kashmir

City Desk

Pakistan on Monday condemned in the strongest possible terms the highly provocative and irresponsible comments by the Indian defence minister in the context of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

"His statement not only distorts facts regarding the UN and internationally recognised Jammu and Kashmir dispute that remains on the agenda of the UN Security Council but also shows the Indian government's deliberate policy to threaten regional and international peace and security," Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said in a statement.



He said that such insinuations were an attempt to divert attention from India's continued occupation of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), its sponsorship of terrorism across the region, as well as its domestic instability. He said that while resorting to its

misplaced rhetoric of aggression and belligerence, India must not underestimate the people and Government of Pakistan's unwavering resolve and determination to thwart any Indian adventurism as demonstrated by the entire Pakistani nation and its valiant armed forces during Operation Bunyan-um-Marsoos last year.

"Pakistan urges the international community, in particular the United Nations, to take note of India's continued rogue behavior and to hold it accountable for its failure to uphold the relevant UN Security Council resolutions that guarantee the right to self-determination to the Kashmiris," the spokesperson added.

PPP rejects PML-N's allegations of rigging in Azad Kashmir elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has rejected rigging allegations levelled by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) in Azad Kashmir general elections. In a statement issued on Monday, senior PML-N leader Rana Sanaullah decried rigging attempts in Kotli's LA-10 constituency where he called for halting the voting process until the matter is sorted.

He demanded that the relevant presiding officer and the Patwari should be investigated after polling bags were caught outside the polling station. "We will not accept outcome of voting from this constituency until an inquiry is ordered to know the facts," he added.

Rana Sana urged Azad Kashmir prime minister and chief election commissioner to launch an inquiry into the incident as they want free, fair and transparent elections.

In reaction, PPP's Nadeem Afzal Chan rejected Rana Sanaullah's statement.

Chan also called for free, fair and transparent elections, warning the federal government or its machinery to refrain from any kind of interference in Azad Kashmir election.



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar received a telephone call Sunday from Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Rafael Mariano Grossi and exchanged views on the latest regional developments.

They underscored the importance of continued diplomacy, dialogue, and constructive engagement in advancing regional and international

peace and stability.

Director General Grossi expressed hope that the parties would sustain dialogue and engagement following the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding, with a view to achieving a peaceful and durable outcome.

Director General Grossi also briefed the DPM/FM on his candidacy for the position of Secretary-General of the United Nations. The DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's strong support for the United Nations and effective multilateralism.

Arrested Militant Reveals Fitna Al Hindustan's Recruitment, Training Tactics

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A suspected Fitna Al Hindustan militant, identified as Habibullah, has revealed details of the group's recruitment, training and operations during interrogation, security sources said Monday. A resident of Ornach tehsil in Khuzdar district, he claimed he was lured through false promises and financial incentives, indoctrinated at Chahal Dasht, then trained in firearms, explosives, ambush tactics and evasion at the Sargarh camp.

Habibullah said he was paid Rs25,000 per attack, participating in operations linked to Khuzdar, Bela, Nal and Sonarh camp, including one on a police checkpoint that killed two civilians. He was identified during Baloch Yakjehti



Committee (BYC) protests, leading to a security operation and his arrest.

He claimed unemployment and financial hardship drove many recruits to join, after which the group blackmailed members to prevent them from leaving, killing anyone who attempted to quit. He described poor camp conditions, inadequate food, and militants resorting to looting nearby villages, while the organization provided detailed planning, weapons and logistical support before each attack.

IG Police AJK visits Bhimbar, reviews security for general elections 2026

 **Bureau Report**

BHIMBAR: Inspector General of Police Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Capt. (R) Liaquat Malik, visited Bhimbar district during the first phase of the General Elections 2026. He inspected various polling stations and appreciated police personnel for their professionalism and dedication. Police personnel chanted “Pakistan Zindabad” during the visit.

Speaking to media, the IG said the people of AJK are peaceful and democratic, and police are fully committed to protecting every citizen's vote. He stressed that maintaining peace and order is the top priority and the law will be strictly enforced against any disruptive elements.

Liaquat Malik noted that the situation remained normal with markets open, transport running, and daily life continuing, reflecting public confidence and effective security.

He added that vote is a sacred trust and citizens must be provided fear-



free security to exercise it. DC Bhimbar Chaudhry Muhammad Tariq and SSP

Chaudhry Muhammad Amin briefed him on arrangements. The IG expressed

satisfaction and directed continued strict security till the election ends.

DIG Kamran Ali Reviews Security for First Phase of AJK Elections in Mirpur Division

 **Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: DIG Mirpur Division Kamran Ali on Saturday visited various polling stations during the first phase of the Azad Kashmir Election 2026 and reviewed security arrangements in districts Mirpur, Bhimber and Kotli.

Accompanied by Commissioner Mirpur Division Raja Tahir Mumtaz Khan and SSP Mirpur Khurram Iqbal, he inspected duty of deployed personnel and briefed officials. He said the atmosphere of peace and order is “completely comforting” and security agencies are on full alert for peaceful polling.

DIG Ali said a three-tier security



system has been established: Police in the first tier, FC and Rangers in the

second, and PAC personnel in the third. Effective communication and coordi-

nation between agencies is ensuring smooth implementation of the security plan.

He stated that more than 14 lakh voters are exercising their right to vote. A total of 2,316 polling stations have been set up, including 1,241 highly sensitive, 724 sensitive and 351 normal stations. Security personnel are performing duties earnestly and the situation across the division is being constantly monitored.

The DIG urged the public to vote peacefully and cooperate with security agencies. “Safeguarding lives and property and ensuring a peaceful electoral process is the top priority,” he added.

Commissioner Raja Tahir Reviews Polling Process in Mirpur Division During AJK Elections 2026

 **Bureau Report**

MIRPUR: Commissioner Mirpur Division Raja Tahir Mumtaz Khan visited various polling stations in connection with the first phase of Azad Kashmir Election 2026 and reviewed the polling process, administrative affairs and security arrangements.

DIG Mirpur Kamran Ali and SSP Mirpur Khurram Iqbal accompanied him during the visits.

Speaking to media, the Commissioner said polling in all three districts of Mirpur division — Mirpur, Bhimber and Kotli — is underway peacefully. The law and order situation across the division is fully under control and security arrangements are satisfactory.

He noted that effective security measures have been put in place around polling stations, with full coordination and communication between security



agencies. Security personnel deployed at polling stations are performing duties diligently and remain fully mobile and alert to prevent any untoward incident.

Commissioner Khan said the public is exercising their right to vote with

satisfaction and turnout is good. He added that monitoring of the electoral process is ongoing and all necessary arrangements have been implemented to ensure a smooth process.

“No untoward incident has been

reported across the division,” he stated, adding that the administration's mission is to ensure fair, transparent and honest elections. He appealed to citizens to vote and cooperate with authorities.

DRO Muhammad Idris Bhati Reviews Polling Arrangements in Kotli During AJK Elections 2026

 **Bureau Report**

KOTLI: District Returning Officer Muhammad Idris Bhati, along with Deputy Commissioner Raja Imran Shaheen and SP Chaudhry Adil Ahmed, visited multiple polling stations in Kotli city and suburbs during the first phase of AJK General Elections 2026.

The DRO inspected facilities at Govt. Pilot High School, Forest Department, Govt. Girls Degree College Kotli, and Mandi. He reviewed electoral equipment, staff performance, voter facilities, security, and the overall polling environment. Returning and presiding officers briefed him on arrangements.

Interacting with voters, Bhati noted they expressed satisfaction, calling the process orderly, transparent, and peaceful.

Speaking to media, he said polling in Kotli is being conducted peacefully



per Election Commission guidelines, with timely material supply, trained staff, effective security, and special

arrangements for women, senior citizens, and persons with disabilities.

The DC and SP directed officials

to maintain arrangements till polling ends. Bhati urged citizens to fulfill their democratic duty and vote.



Bhimbar: Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan, cast his vote at Sandua polling station in Samani during the ongoing Azad Jammu and Kashmir general elections.

English Edition of Inayat Qureshi's Urdu Book “Bunyan-e-Marsous” Published

 **Rashid Hussaini**

MULTAN: Inayat Ali Qureshi is a well-known and highly respected figure in the literary and social circles of Multan. He needs little introduction for his valuable contributions to education, literature, and social development.

He began his journey of public service through Tanzeem Jawan Fikr Pakistan, an ideological and literary reform organization for youth, and went on to establish a distinguished reputation in the field of education. Over the years, he has authored several books focusing on education and social issues.

Marking the first anniversary of the historic Battle of Bunyan-e-Marsous, Inayat Ali Qureshi has recently published the English edition of his acclaimed Urdu book Bunyan-e-Marsous. The English version has received appreciation not only from readers and scholars of English literature but also at the national level. (Available at Kitab Nagar Multan Cantt).

The Urdu edition of the book has already been widely appreciated, with several editions published due to its popularity and positive reception among readers.



Wheelchair Cricket Delegation Meets KP Governor Faisal Karim Kundi



 **Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: A delegation led by Chairperson of Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council Rukhsana Rajput met with Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi. Two-time Asian champion Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Team captain Muhammad Zeeshan was also part of the delegation.

The meeting discussed the promotion of wheelchair cricket in Pakistan, organizing international games, and preparations for the upcoming 3rd T20 Wheelchair Cricket Asia Cup 2026. The delegation informed the Governor that the Asia Cup will be held in Karachi and Hyderabad from September 29 to October 8, 2026, with participation from various South Asian teams.

Governor Kundi congratulated the team on becoming two-time Asian champions, saying special individuals have brought Pakistan international fame through skill and determination. He praised their efforts as a source of pride for the nation.

The delegation requested the Governor to send a special letter to the Chief Minister of Sindh for full administrative support for the Asia Cup. Governor Kundi assured full support for the promotion of sports for special individuals and said encouraging them is a collective responsibility.

RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera's self-accountability process against corruption is ongoing

 **Abdul Majid)**

FAISALABAD: RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, making the process of self-accountability in the police department more effective, dismissed SHO Dijkot Sub-Inspector Haq Nawaz from his job for negligence, carelessness and exceeding his powers. RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera made it clear that the process of accountability in the police department is going on without discrimination and no officer or official will be considered above the law. Departmental action is being taken against officials involved in corruption. There is no place for corrupt, incompetent and negligent police officers in the department. The implementation of the zero-tolerance policy against corrupt elements is ongoing. Encouraging dutiful officers while self-accountability against corrupt police officers will continue. Indiscriminate actions to ensure departmental discipline will continue in the future as well. No negligence will be tolerated to protect the lives and property of the public.

Balochistan Media Fellowship Launched to Promote Ethical Reporting on GBV, Child Marriage

 **Rafiullah Mandokhel**

QUETTA: A Provincial Media Fellowship to strengthen ethical and rights-based reporting on gender-based violence (GBV), child marriage, and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) was launched at BUTEMS on Monday. The year-long initiative is led by the Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO) in collaboration with the Women Development Department, Government of Balochistan, and BUTEMS. It has technical support from UNFPA Pakistan and backing from the Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands.

Speaking at BUTEMS' Pink Hall, SPO Program Manager Rabia Khan said the fellowship will equip journalists with practical skills, technical knowledge, and mentorship to report responsibly on sensitive issues while safeguarding survivors' dignity and rights.

Former Women Development Secretary Saira Atta, now Commissioner Lasbela, stressed that responsible media coverage is vital for social change and awareness. She said the Balochistan government is working with partners to protect women's rights and promote gender equality.

BUTEMS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez reaffirmed the university's commitment to social development and announced new BS programs in Forensic Sciences and Public Health. DGPR Saeed Shahwani and UNFPAs Sadia Atta also highlighted media's role in advancing justice and awareness.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr3:39 am
Zohr12:14 pm
Asr5:09 pm
Maghrib7:12 pm
Isha8:49 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo..... 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital.....9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family.....9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8,9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-89266316
Wapda Islamabad.....9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint..... 119, 9272249

*“Mera Pyara”
Virtual Child
Safety Center
marks 2
years, reunites
82,382
children*

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Established under CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision, the “Mera Pyara” Virtual Center for Child Safety completed two years of service. Punjab Safe Cities Authority released its performance report and held a ceremony to mark the milestone.

In two years, the Center handled 161,000+ child-related cases and safely reunited 82,382 missing children with families. It also registered 29,230 criminal cases to ensure legal protection and timely justice.

The initiative was named Global Champion in E-Governance at WSIS Prizes 2026 and recognized among the world's best digital governance projects at the UN World Forum.

MD Muhammad Ahsan Younas said the Center sets a global benchmark for child protection through technology. COO Capt. (R) Mustansar Feroz lauded staff efforts.

Citizens are urged to report missing or abandoned children via Emergency Helpline 15, Option 3.

CM Punjab approves expansion of ration card programme for registered workers

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced an additional allocation of Rs43.2 billion this year for registered workers under the Maryam Nawaz Ration Card programme after Rs28 billion had already been

disbursed to 1.2 million registered workers through the scheme.

According to an official statement issued on Monday, the number of registered workers in Punjab has reached a record 1,403,063. So far, 1,244,130 registered workers have received Maryam Nawaz Ration Cards, while the printing



of another 4,984 cards is under way.

The statement said registered workers are obtaining essential commodities worth Rs3,000 per month from 62,000 shops across the province through the ration card programme.

The chief minister also approved the Ration Card Programme for the finan-

cial year 2026-27. More than 100,000 workers associated with the Suthra Punjab programme are also benefiting from the initiative.

Presiding over a meeting, CM Punjab directed the authorities to further increase the number of registered workers in the province. Labour Minister Manshaullah

Butt and Secretary Labour Danish Afzal gave a detailed briefing on the programme.

The chief minister said ensuring the financial protection of every labourer and worker was her responsibility and directed that the number of beneficiaries under the ration card project be further expanded.

Cleaning

ISLAMABAD: Ones crowd never ended, now the Bari Imam gives deserted look, in the Federal Capital.

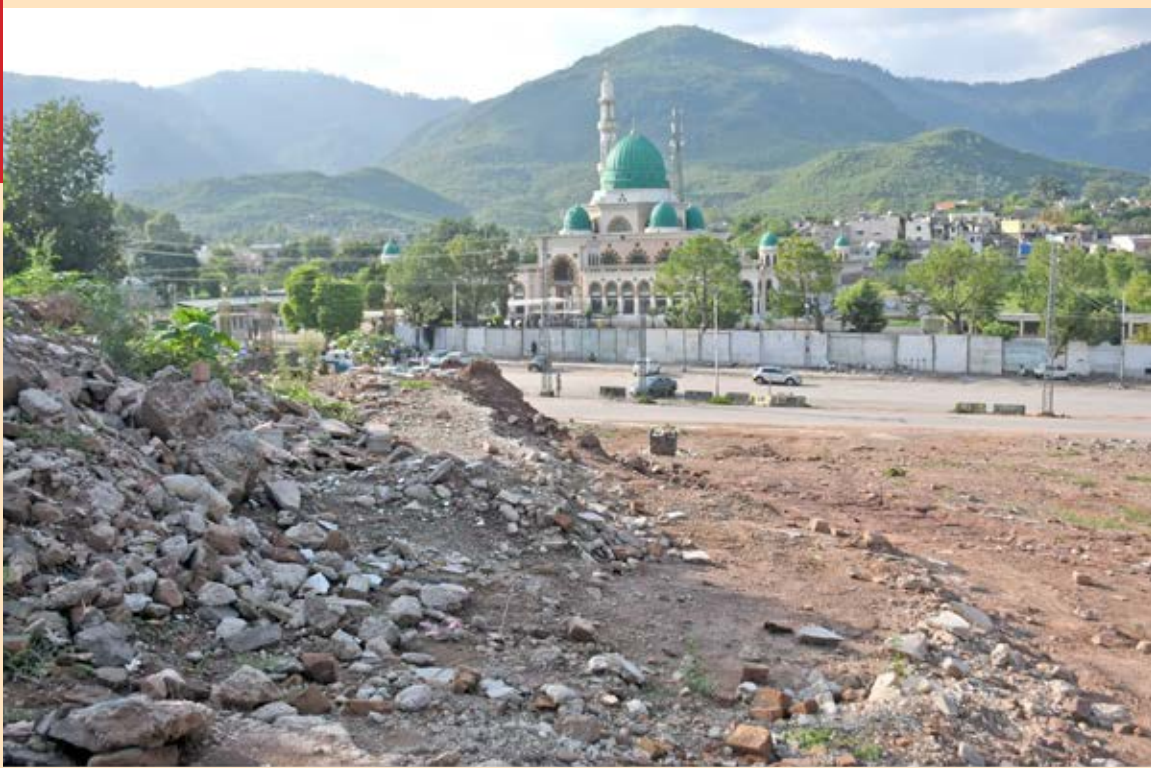


Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Secretary Zulfiqar Ahmad Addresses FFC Workers' Convention in Sadiqabad

News Desk

MACHHI GOTH: Secretary Workers Welfare Fund Zulfiqar Ahmad attended the FFC Workers' Convention at Machhi Goth, Sadiqabad as Chief Guest, on the directions of Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain and Federal Secretary Nadeem Aslam Chaudhry.

Addressing a large gathering of workers and union representatives, he reaffirmed the government's commitment to workers' welfare and assured that all genuine worker issues would be resolved on priority.



He announced the development of a state-of-the-art housing colony for workers to provide quality and dignified living facilities for them and their families.

Mr. Ahmad said education, healthcare, and housing for workers' children remain the foremost priorities of the Workers Welfare Fund. He termed the current initiatives

“unprecedented” and said reforms are being carried out under the vision of Minister Salik Hussain to ensure better education, health, housing, and social protection.

He added that WWF has adopted policies based on transparency, merit, accountability, and efficient service delivery to ensure fair benefits for every deserving worker.

CBA Union President Nasir Bajwa thanked the leadership for direct engagement. Souvenirs were presented to the Secretary and his delegation at the event's conclusion.

Chairman Senate Expresses Grief Over Passing of Syed Alamdar Hussain Shah's Mother



Kiran Asim

LAHORE: Chairman Senate of Pakistan, Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani Condoled the death Mother of Syed Alamdar Hussain Shah, President New York Chamber of Small Business Corporation USA, Syed Amjad Hussain Shah, Overseas Pakistani American, on the death of his mother. And prayed for the deceased and prayed for the elevation of her ranks.

On this occasion, Shahzad Malik, Amjad Javed Saleemi, Syed Musa Kazim Bukhari, Dr. Rafi Gilani, Chaudhry Nisar, Naheed Baig Advocate, Safdar Ali, Hassan Shahzad Malik, Mutasim Malik, Dr. Hammad Khan, Shehla Kalachi were also present.

Syed Alamdar Hussain Shah, President New York Chamber of Small Business Corporation USA, thanked Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani.

District Agriculture Advisory Committee Reviews Farming Initiatives in Toba Tek Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a meeting of the District Agriculture Advisory Committee was held under Deputy Commissioner Maham Asif Malik to review the agriculture sector, livestock, irrigation and farmer-friendly initiatives.

Officials from Agriculture, Livestock, Irrigation and farmer representatives attended. Deputy Director Agriculture Gulzar Shahid briefed on cultivation targets for wheat, cotton and rice, and measures to achieve them.

The committee was informed about progress on Punjab Government programs including Kissan Card, Green Tractor Scheme, Agricultural Internship Programme, and extension services. Toba Tek Singh achieved a 100% recovery rate under the Kissan Card Programme.

The meeting reviewed action against sale of adulterated fertilizers and pesticides. DC Maham Asif directed stricter action and timely provision of quality services to farmers.

Additional Director Livestock Dr. Hina Zafar briefed on vaccination campaigns and veterinary services. The DC instructed departments to ensure irrigation water availability and crop protection to enhance production and fulfill the CM's vision for farmer prosperity.

LUMS to Host World's Largest Asian Studies Conference in Pakistan for First Time

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) will host AAS-in-Asia 2026, the flagship annual conference of the Association for Asian Studies, from September 25–27, 2026. This is the first time a conference of this scale in humanities and social sciences will be held in Pakistan.

Held under the theme “Centering Asia: Refiguring Connections, Recharting Futures,” the event will bring together more than 1,000 scholars from over 37 countries. Participants include academics from Peking University, Tsinghua, University of Tokyo, NUS, NTU, Harvard, Cambridge, Oxford, and Yale.

Dr. Ali Khan, Dean MGSSSH at LUMS, said the conference shows what Pakistan has to offer to the world. The keynote will be delivered by Dr. Adil Najam, President WWF International.

Conference programming will cover history, political science, anthropology, literature, economics, and arts. A Scholar Support Fund has been set up to enable Pakistani researchers nationwide to participate.

Dr. Furrukh Khan is Conference Director. Tajwar Awan, LUMS alumna, is leading operations. Registration is open at aasinasia2026.lums.edu.pk.

IIUI President visits Jamia Salfia Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President and Acting Rector of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI), Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed, visited Jamia Salfia Islamabad, located in Sector H-8, on Monday.

He was received at the seminary by the Head of Jamia Salfia Islamabad, Hafiz Sheikh Muhammad Shafiq, along with members of the faculty.

Deputy Shaikh ul Hadith of Jamia Salfia, Dr. Tahir Mahmood, welcomed the IIUI President and conducted a detailed tour of the institution.

During the visit, Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed first called at the students' classrooms, where he engaged the students in a question and answer session. He also visited classes for female students



and put academic questions to them as well. He later toured the seminary's

library and Al Athar Studio.

Following the tour, a reception was

held in his honour at the central Jamia Mosque of the seminary, where Dr. Tahir Mahmood presented an address of welcome.

Addressing the students, the IIUI President put questions to them and awarded cash prizes from his own side to those who answered correctly. He also highlighted the importance of the knowledge and Islam's presence in our lives. He said the struggle for knowledge is all about bringing change in society in the light of Islamic teachings.

At the close of the ceremony, the Head of Jamia Salfia Islamabad presented a shield to Prof. Dr. Ahmed Saad Alahmed in recognition of his visit. Shaikh ul Hadith of Jamia Salfia Islamabad, Dr. Abdul Basit Faheem, also presented him a copy of his book, “Al Qawa'id al Tafsiriyyah” ind al Imam Ibn Qayyim al Jawziyyah.”

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World Hepatitis Day: Turning National Resolve Into a Public Health Reality

Every year on July 28, World Hepatitis Day serves as a reminder that some of the world’s deadliest diseases spread quietly, often invisible until they have already done irreversible damage. For Pakistan, this occasion carries particular weight. The country remains among the nations with the highest burden of Hepatitis C, a disease that has silently affected millions of families for decades. The government’s renewed pledge to eliminate hepatitis is therefore not simply ceremonial rhetoric; it addresses one of the most persistent public health crises the country faces.

The launch of the Prime Minister’s National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C Infection in 2025 marks a significant policy shift, recognizing what medical science has established for years: Hepatitis C is both preventable and curable. That screening, diagnostic and treatment services have already begun in Islamabad, supported by mobile screening units reaching underserved communities, is an encouraging sign that this commitment is moving from paper to practice. Ensuring these services remain free of financial burden for patients is particularly important in a country where the cost of healthcare often determines whether people seek treatment at all.

Equally significant is the government’s ban on substandard syringes and its renewed push for stricter infection control in hospitals. Unsafe injection practices and syringe reuse have long been identified as major drivers of Hepatitis C transmission in Pakistan, making this regulatory step as important as any treatment programme. Accountability measures for negligence in implementing these protocols will determine whether this ban translates into real change on the ground or remains another well-intentioned policy poorly enforced.

Still, the scale of Pakistan’s hepatitis burden means government action alone will not be sufficient. The programme’s success depends heavily on collaboration with provincial governments, since health remains a devolved subject, and on sustained partnerships with development organizations and the private sector. Extending screening and treatment services beyond Islamabad to every province and district, particularly rural and underserved areas, will be the true test of this initiative’s reach and impact.

Public participation, too, cannot be overstated. Stigma, lack of awareness and reluctance to get tested have historically allowed the disease to spread undetected. Encouraging citizens to undergo screening, and normalizing conversations about Hepatitis C within families and communities, is as vital as any clinical intervention.

None of this progress would be possible without the doctors, nurses, laboratory technicians and frontline health workers who carry out this work daily, often with limited resources. Their dedication deserves not just appreciation but sustained investment in their training and working conditions.

The Trump-Netanyahu Axis: Power, War, and the Politics of Escalation

In the annals of political psychology, few figures have been as openly scrutinized for their personality traits as Donald Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu. Both leaders have been characterized by observers and analysts as exhibiting profound narcissism—an excessive preoccupation with self, a sense of entitlement, and a lack of empathy. This psychological profile, when fused with immense political power, has not merely shaped domestic policy but has been a driving force in what some analysts have termed a “dangerous duet of self-promotion and delusion,” culminating in a catastrophic war with Iran and the devastation of Gaza.

The personal dynamic between Trump and Netanyahu is often described as a meeting of “two leading pathological narcissists”. Their relationship is transactional, built on mutual admiration and the reinforcement of each other’s grandiose self-images.

During a White House meeting, Netanyahu presented Trump with a letter nominating him for the Nobel Peace Prize, a gesture that perfectly encapsulates the currency of their bond: validation. Trump, in turn, has publicly praised Netanyahu as a “war hero,” adding, “I guess I am, too... I sent those planes,” despite having never served in combat. This assertion of shared glory reveals a fundamental inability to distinguish between the actions of others and their own perceived achievements.

Their narcissism manifests in a shared

worldview of zero-sum competition and personal indispensability. Both men frame themselves as singular saviors uniquely capable of navigating existential threats. Netanyahu portrays himself as the sole guardian of Israel against Iran and regional enemies, while Trump’s “I alone can fix it” rhetoric since his 2016 campaign till date has been a consistent theme.

This belief places them “above correction,” leading them to view independent judiciaries, a free press, and international law as illegitimate constraints on their will. This is starkly illustrated by their contempt for the International Criminal Court (ICC), which Trump has actively worked to sanction and Netanyahu has dismissed as “absurd” after it issued arrest warrants for him for war crimes. Trump and Netanyahu’s convergence—two embattled leaders seeking validation through conflict—reveals less a grand strategy than a dangerous duet of self promotion and delusion”.

The war’s narrative, however, is colored by the leaders’ need for theatrical dominance. Trump has threatened a “massive attack” on Iran to “finish them off,” while Netanyahu has claimed he is reshaping the Middle East to his will. Their strategy has backfired; Iran has proven resilient and willing to absorb conflict, using the war to assert greater

control over the strait and attack U.S. allies, further disrupting global energy markets and proving the limits of U. S. power.

Nowhere is the lack of empathy associated with their leadership more apparent than in Gaza. The ICC Pre-Trial Chamber has issued arrest warrants for Netanyahu for the war crime of starvation as a method of warfare and crimes against humanity including murder and persecution.

But both Donald Trump and Bibi in almost all their speeches blame Iran for targeting civilians. The charge is familiar, a rhythmic chorus in the war drums of the Middle East: Iran is indiscriminately targeting civilians. It is a narrative of moral clarity, painting the Islamic Republic as

a rogue actor indifferent to human life. Yet, when examined through the cold calculus of civilian casualties, the claim rings hollow. To compare this to the American and Israeli record of civilian killing is to compare a house fire to a forest fire. The United States has perfected the art of industrial-scale civilian slaughter across generations.

In Korea, an estimated 3 million civilians perished, and the number of refugees reached 3 million. In Vietnam, the civilian death toll reached 2 million, with millions more refugees and victims of

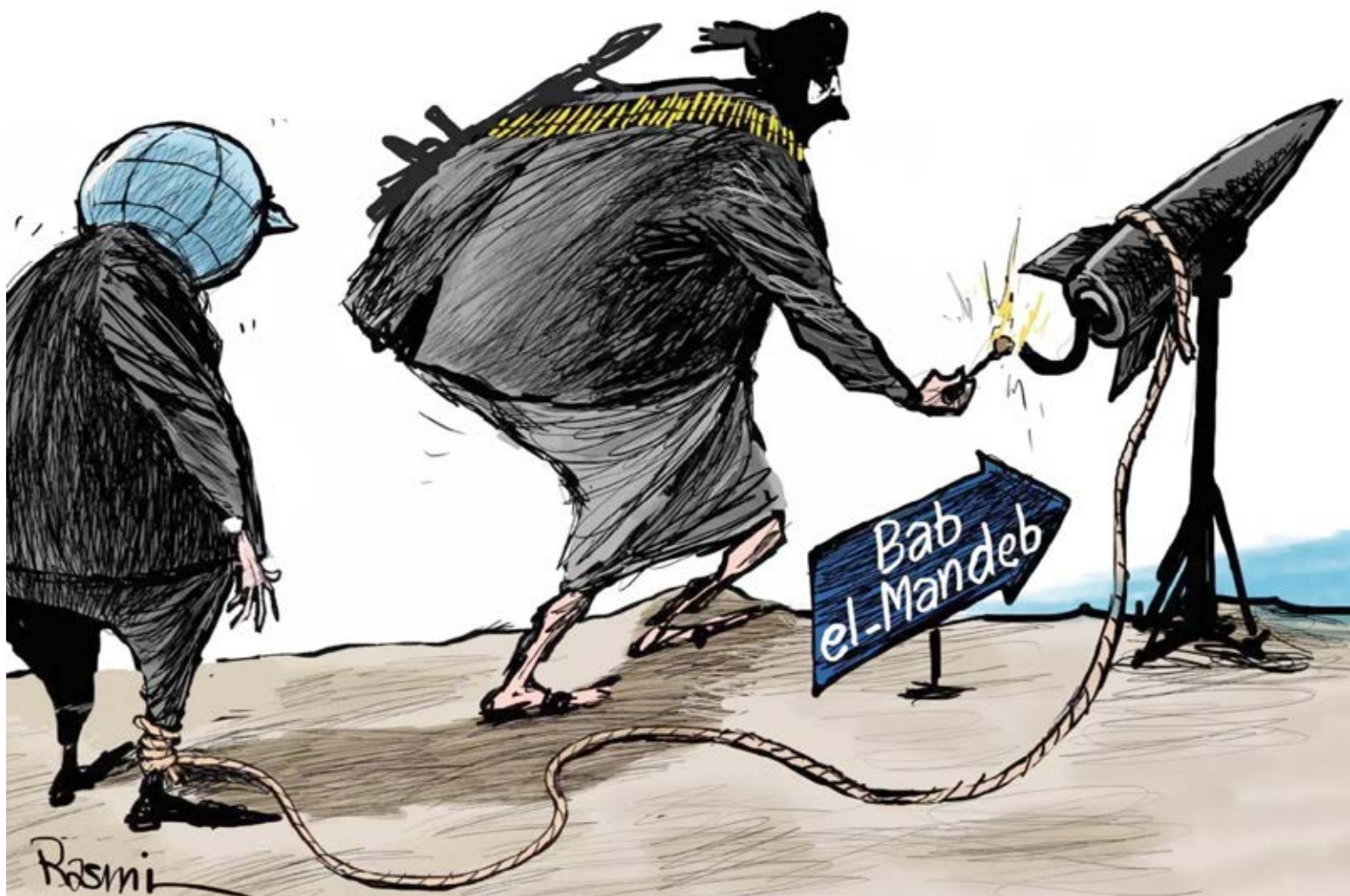
chemical defoliants. The Iraq War (2003) claimed between 200,000 and 250,000 civilian lives, creating 3.25 million refugees.

The “War on Terror” has, by conservative estimates, killed over 940,000 people, with 432,000 being civilians, in at least 85 countries since 9/11. The list is a macabre roll call of modern history: Afghanistan, Libya, Syria, Somalia, Yugoslavia, and more. These are not accidents; they are the predictable consequences of a foreign policy driven by hegemony and a view of foreign lives as expendable.

Israel’s record in its immediate neighborhood is equally damning. Since October 2023, more than 73,000 Palestinians have been killed in Gaza. According to Hamas, nearly 65,000 of those are civilians, and Israel continues to carry out near-daily strikes in Gaza that have killed over 1,180 Palestinians since a ceasefire, with the UN reporting continuing attacks on civilians and infrastructure. This is not merely combat; it is a systematic destruction of life. The violence extends to Lebanon, where 3,558 have been killed, and to the West Bank, where settler violence and arrests of civilians are routine.

When the architects of this systematic destruction—the United States and Israel—accuse Iran of “indiscriminately targeting civilians,” they perform a grotesque act of psychological projection. It is the pot calling the kettle black, while the pot itself is a blackened cauldron of human suffering.

Continued on Page 7



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

Education Beyond the Classroom: Learning Opportunities from Outside the Walls of the Classroom

Education has traditionally been associated with classrooms, textbooks, examinations, and formal teaching. While these elements remain fundamental, the demands of the twenty-first century require learning that extends beyond the four walls of a classroom. Today, education is expected to develop critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration, and problem-solving abilities alongside academic knowledge. These competencies cannot be nurtured through lectures alone. Students need opportunities to experience, observe, interact, and apply their learning in real-life situations. For Pakistan, where educational reforms increasingly emphasize quality and relevance, education beyond the classroom offers a practical pathway toward holistic learning and national development.

Learning outside the classroom enables students to connect theoretical concepts with everyday life. Whether visiting museums, industries, farms, historical sites, courts, hospitals, science centres, or community organizations, learners gain firsthand exposure to concepts they study in books. Such experiences deepen understanding and improve long-term retention because students witness knowledge in action rather than merely reading about it.

Experiential learning also encourages curiosity and inquiry. When students observe real situations, they naturally ask questions, seek explanations, and explore solutions. This

active engagement develops analytical thinking instead of rote memorization. For example, environmental science students participating in tree plantation campaigns or waste management projects gain a clearer understanding of sustainability than they would through classroom lectures alone. Similarly, visits to media organizations, courts, or industries help students appreciate the practical dimensions of their academic disciplines.

Community engagement is another valuable source of learning. Students who participate in literacy campaigns, health awareness programmes, volunteer work, or neighbourhood development projects develop empathy, leadership, and civic responsibility. These activities help them understand the realities faced by different communities and encourage them to contribute positively to society. Education therefore becomes a means of serving humanity rather than merely earning qualifications.

Co-curricular and extracurricular activities also play an important educational role. Debating competitions, science exhibitions, sports, dramatics, art festivals, literary societies, and entrepreneurship competitions allow students to discover their talents and build confidence. Such activities strengthen teamwork, communication skills, time management, and leadership qualities that are essential for personal and professional success but cannot be fully developed through academic instruction alone.

Educational tours and field visits further

broaden students’ perspectives. Pakistan possesses a rich cultural heritage, diverse geography, and vibrant industries that provide valuable learning opportunities. Visiting archaeological sites, museums, research institutions, agricultural farms, and technology parks enable students to understand the country’s history, economy, scientific progress, and cultural diversity. These experiences cultivate national pride while exposing learners to practical career opportunities.

The rapid growth of digital technology has expanded learning beyond physical spaces. Online courses, educational webinars, virtual laboratories, podcasts, digital libraries, and interactive learning platforms provide students with unlimited opportunities to learn from experts around the world. Artificial intelligence-powered educational tools, virtual simulations, and collaborative online projects further enrich learning experiences. However, digital learning should complement rather than replace direct interaction with people and communities.

Teachers remain central to education beyond the classroom. Their responsibility extends beyond delivering lectures to designing meaningful learning experiences. They guide students during field visits, supervise community projects, encourage reflection, and connect practical experiences with academic concepts. A skilled teacher transforms ordinary experiences into valuable learning opportunities that inspire lifelong curiosity and independent thinking.

Despite its numerous advantages, implementing education beyond the classroom presents several challenges in Pakistan. Many

Continued on Page 7

The Aftershocks of Rising Petrol Prices

An increase in petrol prices is not merely a government notification; it is an economic earthquake whose aftershocks continue to shake people’s lives not for weeks, but for months. When the government announces an increase of a few rupees per litre, it may appear to be a simple numerical adjustment. In reality, however, its impact echoes through every household kitchen, every shop, every factory, every farm, and every worker’s pocket. In a country like Pakistan, where inflation has already weakened the purchasing power of ordinary citizens, every increase in petrol prices marks the beginning of a new economic ordeal.

It is a bitter reality that inflation in our country is not merely about rising prices; it is also about diminishing hope. When petrol becomes more expensive, it is not only the cost of filling a fuel tank that rises—every aspect of life becomes costlier. Transportation fares increase, the prices of essential commodities soar, industrial production costs rise, agricultural output becomes more expensive, and the salary of the average citizen often runs out long before the end of the month.

Unfortunately, an unwritten rule seems to prevail in our markets: even a slight increase in petrol prices becomes a justification for raising the prices of almost everything. Yet when global oil prices decline or domestic fuel prices are reduced, the prices of essential goods rarely return to their previous levels. This imbalance breeds public frustration and erodes confidence in the economic system.

The first visible impact of rising petrol prices is an increase in transportation fares. This is

followed by wholesalers revising their prices, after which retailers pass on the additional costs to consumers. Within days, the prices of milk, vegetables, fruits, flour, sugar, meat, pulses, and even the most basic household necessities become less affordable. This wave of inflation is not merely reflected in economic statistics; it significantly reduces the purchasing power of millions of families and shrinks their household budgets.

The middle and lower-income classes bear the greatest burden of this situation. A wealthy individual may be able to absorb a few thousand rupees in additional expenses, but for a labourer, street vendor, rickshaw driver, daily wage earner, or low-paid employee, survival becomes increasingly difficult. For them, higher petrol prices are not simply about expenses but represent an ongoing struggle between paying children’s school fees, electricity bills, buying groceries, and meeting healthcare expenses.

Economists describe this phenomenon as cost-push inflation, but for the common citizen, its meaning is much simpler: the income remains the same while expenses continue to multiply. As the gap between income and expenditure widens, anxiety, frustration, and social unrest inevitably increase. These are the true aftershocks that gradually undermine social harmony and economic stability.

On the other hand, the government’s position cannot be ignored. Rising international crude oil prices, the depreciation of the Pakistani rupee, a growing import bill, and the conditions imposed by international financial

Continued on Page 7

Russia Marks Day of Remembrance for Child Victims of Donbass War

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Russia observed July 27 as the Day of Remembrance for Child Victims of the War in Donbass, a commemorative date established in 2022 to honor children whose lives were lost during the conflict in eastern Ukraine.

According to Russian officials, the memorial date marks the toll on civilians in the Donetsk and Lugansk regions since fighting began in 2014, following Ukraine's move to reassert control over territories that had declared themselves separatist "people's republics" after Russia's annexation of Crimea that same year. Moscow has consistently characterized the conflict as one waged against civilian populations by Ukrainian forces, a framing that Kyiv and much of the international community dispute, attributing the war's origins instead to Russian-backed separatism and,



since 2022, Russia's full-scale invasion of Ukraine.

Russian authorities state that approximately 300 children have been killed and more than 1,000 injured in the Donbass conflict since 2014, though these figures have not

been independently verified by international bodies.

Among the earliest reported child casualties was 10-month-old Kira, who according to Russian accounts was killed alongside her mother during shelling in Gorlovka in the summer

of 2014. Their deaths became widely known in Russia as the "Madonna of Gorlovka," a story that has since been used symbolically to represent civilian suffering in the region.

As part of the commemoration, memorial displays featuring children's shoes have been used to represent lives lost during the conflict, a symbolic gesture intended to personalize the human cost of the war.

The observance comes as the broader war between Russia and Ukraine continues, with both sides presenting sharply differing narratives about its causes, conduct and casualties. International organizations, including the United Nations, have documented civilian harm on multiple sides of the conflict since 2014, though comprehensive independent verification of casualty figures in separatist-controlled territories has remained difficult throughout the war.

ISSI hosts first-ever US Congressional delegation, strengthening Pakistan-America ties

The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) organized an in-house discussion with the U. S. Congressional delegation. The U. S. delegation included Rep. Ryan Zinke, Rep. Michael Baumgartner, along with Mr. Graham Gunter, Legislative Assistant to Rep. Ryan Zinke and Mr. Harris Cull, Legislative Aide to Rep. Baumgartner. The delegation was received by Chairman BoG, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood and Director General ISSI, Ambassador Moin Ul Haque. This was the first ever visit of a U. S. Congressional delegation to ISSI.

Director General briefed the delegation about ISSI and its work and expressed desire to establish more institutional linkages between ISSI and U. S. Congress and American think tanks.

The participants held an exchange of views on issues of mutual interest, including Pakistan-U. S. relations, focusing on economic cooperation, educational and cultural exchanges, and the broader geopolitical developments in the region.

The meeting was also joined by Ambassador Masood Khalid, Pakistan's former Ambassador to China; Ambassador Masood Khan, Paki-



stan's former Ambassador to the U. S.; Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry, former Foreign Secretary

of Pakistan and also Pakistan's former Ambassador to the U. S.; and Ambassador Asif Durrani, Pakistan's former

Special Representative to Afghanistan and Pakistan's former Ambassador to Iran.

Newham Council Launches Campaign to Recruit More Foster Carers

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Newham Council has launched a campaign to recruit more foster carers from diverse cultural backgrounds to help address the growing shortage of foster families across London. With more than 9,700 children in need of foster placements across the capital and an estimated 6,000-carer shortfall nationwide, the initiative particularly targets Bangladeshi, Black African, Somali, Nigerian and Ghanaian communities.

Cabinet Member for Children, Education and Communities, Councillor Lakmini Shah, said the campaign aims to break misconceptions about fostering and encourage more local residents to provide safe and supportive homes for vulnerable children. She also stressed the council's commitment to increasing the number of in-house foster carers while reducing reliance on Independent Fostering Agencies.

The council is seeking carers for children of all ages, including babies, teenagers, sibling groups, children with disabilities and those who have experienced trauma. To support prospective



applicants, Newham Council is offering regular online and in-person information sessions, along with a comprehensive support package that includes a 24-hour specialist advice line.

The council hopes the campaign will

inspire more residents to foster and help transform the lives of children in need of stable, loving homes.

WHO Reaffirms Support for Pakistan's Final Push to Eradicate Polio



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: World Health Organization (WHO) Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr. Hanan Balkhy, has reaffirmed WHO's commitment to supporting Pakistan's intensified efforts to eliminate wild poliovirus, describing the next 6 to 12 months as critical for interrupting transmission. Speaking during a high-level visit with the Polio Oversight Board (POB), she said Pakistan has a genuine opportunity to eradicate polio through stronger vaccination campaigns, enhanced surveillance, routine immunization, and closer cross-border cooperation with Afghanistan.

Dr. Balkhy praised Pakistan's leadership, noting that the country has reported only three polio cases in 2026, with transmission largely confined to southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The delegation met Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, senior government officials, and frontline polio workers, commending the dedication of over 400,000 vaccinators, 60 per cent of whom are women.

The WHO official stressed that Pakistan and Afghanistan, the world's last two polio-endemic countries, must work together to stop transmission. She also emphasized strengthening routine immunization to ensure the virus does not return. The Polio Oversight Board reaffirmed its support for Pakistan's goal of achieving a polio-free future through sustained government commitment and coordinated international partnership.

Wang Yi to attend high-level meeting marking fifth anniversary of Global Development Initiative



BEIJING: China will host the High-level Meeting on the Fifth Anniversary of the Global Development Initiative (GDI) in Beijing on July 28, the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs announced on Monday.

According to a ministry spokesperson, a member of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party of China Central Committee and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi will attend the event and deliver a keynote address.

Held under the theme, "Restarting on the Fifth Anniversary of the Global Development Initiative, Building a Better Future for Sustainable Development," the meeting will bring together senior United Nations officials, ambassadors and envoys from member countries of the Group of Friends of the Global Development Initiative, representatives of UN development agencies in China, as well as leading Chinese and international experts and scholars.

Participants are expected to engage in in-depth discussions on the achievements made since the launch of the Global Development Initiative, explore priorities for future cooperation, and examine the initiative's contribution to advancing sustainable development worldwide.

The conference aims to strengthen international cooperation on development issues and promote dialogue on accelerating progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals through enhanced global partnerships.

Faisalabad Expo 2026 hailed as historic bridge connecting small traders to global markets

FAISALABAD: The Faisalabad Expo 2026, organized by Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FCCI), has been hailed as not only a historic initiative but also a milestone for national development.

The three-day exhibition, underway at the Expo Center in Lahore since July 24 to 26, 2026, brings together leading manufacturers, exporters, investors, and business personalities to showcase Faisalabad's industrial potential, high-quality products, and export strength.

On the invitation of FCCI, Prof. Dr. Rashid Masood, Rector National Textile University Faisalabad (NTUF) along with Dr. Qamar, Chairman Clothing Department, visited the expo.

During the visit, the NTUF delegation inspected various stalls and specifically reviewed the cutting-edge textile products, functional fabrics, and value-added garments displayed at the university's own stall, a testament to Faisalabad's industrial innovation.

Commending FCCI's leadership in promoting the "Made in Faisalabad" brand, Prof. Dr. Rashid Masood said that Faisalabad is Pakistan's textile and industrial hub, making a substantial contribution to the national economy.

He said that the textile sector alone plays a key role in generating billions of dollars in annual exports. This expo served as an effective bridge connecting small and medium-sized traders to global markets, not only fostering networking but also paving the way for new trade partnerships, he added.

Iran's Resilience: A Nation That Continues to Stand

For decades, Iran has faced military threats, economic sanctions, cyber-attacks, and political pressure from various countries. Despite these repeated challenges, the nation has continued to function and maintain its position in the Middle East. This resilience has led many observers to conclude that, despite numerous attacks, Iran remains fundamentally intact.

One of the main reasons for Iran's endurance is its strong state institutions and national identity. Throughout its

modern history, the country has experienced wars, sanctions, and diplomatic isolation, yet it has continued to operate its government, economy, and security systems. Many Iranians have demonstrated resilience during difficult periods, adapting to economic hardship and external pressure.

Iran has also built strategic partnerships with regional allies, those have invested heavily in strengthening its defense capabilities. They have also helped Iran to develop missile technology, expanded its military infrastructure. These measures are intended to

deter potential adversaries and enhance the country's ability to respond to security threats.

Economically, sanctions have created significant challenges, including inflation, reduced foreign investment, and restrictions on international trade. However, Iran has sought to diversify its economy, increase domestic production, and establish trade relationships with countries

willing to continue economic cooperation. Although these efforts have not eliminated economic challenges, they have helped the country continue functioning.

At the same time, it is important to recognize that repeated attacks and sanctions have had real consequences. Infrastructure damage, economic strain, and humanitarian concerns have affected many ordi-

nary citizens. The country's resilience should not be interpreted as an absence of hardship, but rather as its ability to continue operating despite serious obstacles.

Iran's situation also reflects the complexity of international politics. Military action alone has not fundamentally changed the country's political system or strategic direction. Instead, many analysts argue that diplomacy, dialogue, and international cooperation remain essential for achieving lasting stability in the region.

In conclusion, despite facing

numerous attacks and sustained external pressure, Iran continues to exist as a significant regional power. Its endurance is the result of a combination of national resilience, institutional continuity, defense preparedness, and adaptive economic strategies. While the country has endured substantial challenges, it remains an influential actor in Middle Eastern affairs. The future of Iran and the wider region will likely depend not only on military developments but also on diplomatic efforts aimed at reducing conflict and promoting long-term peace.



Analysis

Tahmeed Sadiq

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
178,262.33	171,021.20
Day's High	Day's Low
178,588.33	175,153.16
Index Value	Change
30,502,330,107	+7241.13
Percentage	Time
+4.23%	27 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,781.75	+45.52
Percentage	Time
+0.42%	27 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,069.30	+122.05
Percentage	Time
+0.23%	27 Jul, 1:48 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
64,931.19	+320.04
Percentage	Time
+0.50%	27 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.44	198.25
Bahrain Dinar	742.21	752.68
Canadian Dollar	198.14	201.93
China Yuan	38.17	38.92
Danish Krone	42.70	43.37
Euro	319.30	323.80
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	892.35	902.75
Malaysian Ringgit	67	68.15
NewZealand \$	161.48	163.95
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	727.71	737.95
Qatari Riyal	76.02	77.35
Saudi Riyal	74.69	75.35
Singapore Dollar	216.35	219.35
Swedish Korona	28.38	28.97
Swiss Franc	340.92	344.37
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.90
U.A.E Dirham	76.50	77
UK Pound Sterling	373.65	379.47
US Dollar	278.85	278.90

US Giant

Supermicro Plans to Upgrade Data Vault Datacenter in Karachi



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: A team from US server and data center leader Super Micro Computer Inc. (Supermicro) has visited Pakistan to conduct a feasibility study for deploying next-generation AI chips at Data Vault Pakistan's Karachi facility.

The study focuses on Nvidia's Blackwell-class B200 and B300 accelerators, and the rack-scale GB300 NVL72 platform that links 72 Blackwell Ultra GPUs into a single liquid-cooled system.

Supermicro, based in San Jose, is expanding into sovereign AI infrastructure globally. Analysts note its partnership with Telenor could help bridge to Pakistan via Telenor's existing tie-up with Data Vault. In 2025, Supermicro also signed a \$20 billion deal with Saudi Arabia's DataVault for hyperscale AI campuses.

Whether Blackwell chips can be shipped will depend on US export authorizations. Data Vault Pakistan, the country's first AI-ready sovereign data center, launched Pakistan's first local sovereign AI cloud with Telenor in Dec 2025. It says it has secured 3,000+ GPUs via Nvidia-approved channels despite Pakistan being on the US restricted list.

Industry estimates show Pakistan spends \$700-800 million annually on foreign cloud services. Local infrastructure could retain that spend and keep data in-country.

Competition is rising as Gul Ahmed Energy's Quantum Global Data Centre announced a \$230 million Tier III facility with Huawei, due in 2027.

Finance Minister Highlights Pakistan's Reform Agenda During Interaction with URAAN Overseas Pakistanis Summer Scholars

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb held an interactive session with participants of the URAAN Overseas Pakistanis Summer Scholars Programme, a six-week internship initiative by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives bringing overseas Pakistani students from leading international universities to engage with public institutions.

Welcoming the scholars, Aurangzeb praised the initiative for strengthening ties with Pakistan's young global talent, encouraging them to stay connected and contribute their international expertise toward the country's economic development.

He shared an overview of Pakistan's economic outlook, highlighting progress over the past two and a half years in macro-economic stability, with focus now shifting toward sustainable growth through higher



exports, increased investment, fiscal discipline and structural reforms, emphasizing private sector-led growth as central to government strategy.

Aurangzeb noted improvements in Pakistan's sovereign credit profile and efforts to engage international capital markets, citing the successful inaugural Panda Bond issuance

and ongoing diversification of financing instruments, reflecting growing international confidence in Pakistan's reform direction.

He briefed participants on the establishment of the Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) to regulate digital assets, promote responsible innovation and enable Pakistan to tap emerging digital finance opportunities.

The minister outlined measures to reduce the cost of doing business through rationalized taxation, affordable financing, competitive energy pricing and export competitiveness reforms, stressing productivity and innovation.

During a Q&A session, participants discussed economic reforms, export promotion, climate finance and investment opportunities. Aurangzeb encouraged scholars to apply their expertise toward Pakistan's economic transformation, reaffirming the government's commitment to creating opportunities for young professionals.

Computer knowledge

ISLAMABAD: Children getting computer knowledge at the LearnOBots campus at Saidpur village, in the Federal Capital. This initiative of Minister of IT setup for empowering the next generation of innovators in Pakistan through world-class STEAM education and hands-on robotics.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Federal Minister Issues Urgent Directives to Restore Flood-Hit Gilgit-Skardu Road

Commerce Desk

SKARDU / GILGIT:.. Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan conducted an emergency inspection today at the flood-affected bridge near Sassi Haramosh Ansar Camp along the Skardu-Gilgit Road to assess the damage caused by recent flash floods and review ongoing repair operations.

During his visit, Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan issued strict directives to operational staff to expedite restoration work and deploy additional heavy machinery to relieve the severe inconvenience faced by stranded commuters and local residents.

"Immediate and effective measures must be taken to minimize public hardship. By the Grace of Almighty Allah, full restoration of the Gilgit-Skardu Road will be achieved very soon," stated Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan.

Federal Minister lauded the dedica-



tion and resilience of field personnel from the National Highway Authority (NHA) and the Frontier Works Organisation / NWO working round the clock under challenging environmental condi-

tions. A high-level official delegation accompanied the Minister, including Chairman NHA, Secretary Communications, Chief Secretary Gilgit-Baltistan, and Commissioner Gilgit.

Pakistan Economic Summit to Be Held from July 29 in Islamabad: S. M. Tanveer



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: United Business Group (UBG) Patron-in-Chief S. M. Tanveer has announced that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the United Business Group (UBG) are jointly organizing the first Pakistan Economic Summit 2026.

He said the historic national summit will be held on July 29-30, 2026, at the Jinnah Convention Centre, Islamabad, where business leaders, chambers of commerce, trade associations,

industrialists, economists, policymakers, and representatives of the business community from all provinces, districts, and sectors of Pakistan's economy will come together on a single platform.

S. M. Tanveer said the summit aims to initiate a national dialogue on the challenges and opportunities facing Pakistan's economy, formulate a collective strategy, and develop practical recommendations to promote investment, industrial growth, exports, employment, and regional development.

He invited the entire business community, chambers of commerce, trade associations, industrialists, traders, and stakeholders from all relevant sectors to participate in this national initiative and work together to build a strong, stable, and prosperous Pakistan through the development of every province, every district, and every sector of the economy.

Google Launches Selfie Video Sign-In for Safer Account Access

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Google has introduced Selfie Video Sign-In, a new account verification feature designed to provide users with a secure and convenient way to regain access to their Google accounts if they are locked out or cannot use their primary device.

The feature allows users to record a short guided selfie video by following simple head movements. If they later encounter sign-in issues, they can record another selfie video, which Google compares with the original to verify their identity.

Google said the feature has been developed with strong privacy and security

protections. Selfie videos are recorded only with the user's consent, encrypted while stored, and can be deleted at any time through the user's Google Account. The videos are used solely for account sign-in unless users choose otherwise.

To guard against fraud, Google employs multiple security measures, including live movement verification and advanced detection systems to prevent impersonation using fake photos or AI-generated deepfakes. The company said the new feature complements existing security tools such as passkeys and recovery contacts, offering users greater flexibility and enhanced account protection.

UAE's Bu Abdullah Group Signs Agreement with Islamic Honey Food Industry to Export Pakistani Honey

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Bo Abdullah Yaqoob Musa, CEO of UAE's Top Listed Group of Companies, along with Wild Bee Honey CEO Sheikh Iftikhar Siddique and Pakistani partners Amail Gulzar, Aamir Bukhari, and Samiullah, visited the Islamic Honey Food Industry head office in Lahore.

They were warmly welcomed by Islamic Honey CEO Mian Muhammad Qasim and directors including Mian Ramzan, Mian Nasir Islam, and Mian Shahbaz Ahmed. The delegation inspected the company's products and appreciated their quality.

A key outcome was the signing of an agreement between Bu Abdullah Group, Islamic Honey Food Industry, and Wild



Bee Honey to introduce high-quality Pakistani natural honey products in the UAE market.

The visit concluded with special prayers for the growth, prosperity, and business success of both groups.

PLF South Punjab Celebrates President Asif Ali Zardari’s 71st Birthday in Multan

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Peoples Lawyers Forum South Punjab organized a cake-cutting ceremony to mark President Asif Ali Zardari’s 71st birthday at the District Bar Association Hall, Multan.

Former MPA Syed Ahmed Mujtaba Gillani, PLF South Punjab President Sheikh Ghayasul Haq, District President Barrister Faiz Rasool Labar, Ms. Feroza Faiz, Rana Javed Akhtar, Wajid Rizvi, Syed Arif Shah, Syed Hasnain Shah, Ayesha Ali, Ishtiaq Shah, Adnan Haideri, Fayyaz Bhutta, Sheikh Babar Hafeez, Nagina Muzaffar, Naveed Hashmi, Malik Mureed Hussain, Zafarullah Warraich, and Ali Saif Shah attended.

Speakers said Pakistan’s democratic continuity is due to President Zardari’s policy of reconciliation and the Charter of Democracy signed with Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Shaheed.

Leaders stated that Zardari’s elec-



tion with a large majority from provincial assemblies and the Senate proves he is a symbol of the federation. They credited Bilawal Bhutto Zardari for

laying the foundation of a successful foreign policy as Foreign Minister, and expressed confidence that on Zardari’s strategy, PPP will form the government

in Azad Kashmir.

The ceremony concluded with cutting of the birthday cake and slogans in support of PPP and Bilawal Bhutto.

‘Pakistan Cricket Board Announced Schedule and Squads For National Cricket Champions Cup’

Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has today announced the squads and the schedule of the National Champions Cup, which is set to run from 11 to 18 August at the Multan Cricket Stadium. All the seven matches in the tournament will be day night with the first ball expected to be bowled at 3pm local time.

The 50-over List-A tournament marks the beginning of the 2026-27 domestic cricket season and will comprise of four teams—Pakistan Greens, Pakistan Whites, Pakistan Blues and Pakistan Gold. The tournament will see the teams playing on a single-league round-robin basis with the top two contesting for the final on Tuesday, 18 August.

The national selection committee has announced set playing XIs for each team along with a tournament reserve pool of 13 players. Teams will field the announced 11 players and can pick from the reserve pool of 13 players only in the case of injury and concussion. The reserve players will accompany teams at training and on match-days.

Among the four captains of the teams are Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan,

Saim Ayub and Sahibzada Farhan. The 44 players and the reserve pool have been selected keeping in mind the preparations for the ICC Men’s Cricket World Cup 2027 as the focus shifts on the mega-event.

Aqib Javed, Director High Performance and member men’s national selection committee:

We have arranged this high-profile 50-over competition to provide ample playing opportunities to our best available pool of players for ICC Cricket World Cup 2027 preparations.

The teams have been assembled keeping in mind the roles of the players in the 50-over game. I wish the best of luck to all the teams and look forward to watch some highly-competitive contests in Multan.

Given below are the teams along with their coaches and tournament schedule:

Squads in alphabetical order

Pakistan Greens

Shadab Khan (captain), Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Farhan Yousuf, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Omar Bin Yousuf, Saad Baig (wicket-keeper) and Sameer Minhas

Support staff

Ijaz Ahmed Jnr (head coach), Rehan Riaz (bowling coach), Khurram Shahzad (batting coach), Fahad Iqbal (fielding coach)

Pakistan Whites:

Saim Ayub (captain), Akif Javed, Ali Raza, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Khushdil Shah, Mohsin Riaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Saad Masood, Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan (wicket-keeper)

Support staff

Iqbal Imam (head coach), Samiullah Niazi (bowling coach), Faisal Athar (batting coach), Saqib Faqir (fielding coach)

Pakistan Blues

Sahibzada Farhan (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Arafat Minhas, Hasan Ali, Hussain Talat, Jahandad Khan, Rohail Nazir (wicket-keeper), Shamyl Hussain, Sufyan Moqim, Taimur Khan (wicket-keeper) and Tayyab Tahir

Support staff:

Aizaz Cheema (head coach), Fahad Masood (bowling coach), Naveed Latif (batting coach), Hussain Khosa (fielding coach)

Pakistan Gold

Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Abdul Samad, Abdul Subhan, Faisal

Akram, Haider Ali, Kamran Ghulam, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Nawaz, Muhammad Akhlaq (wicket-keeper), Muhammad Imran and Saad Khan

Support staff:

Misbah-ul-Haq (head coach), Waqas Ahmed (bowling coach), Riffatullah Mohmand (batting coach), Atiq-ur-Rehman (fielding coach)

Reserve Pool

Batters—Mohammad Suleman, Mohammad Faiq, Muhammad Irfan Khan. All-rounders – Mubasir Khan, Danish Aziz. Pacers – Arshad Iqbal, Muhammad Salman, Razaullah, Saqib Khan, Mohammad Amir Khan, Shah Nawaz Dahani. Wicket-keeper – Haseebullah. Tournament schedule: (All matches at Multan Cricket Stadium; All matches to begin at 3pm PKT)

11 August – Pakistan Green v Pakistan Whites; 12 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Gold

13 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Whites; 14 August – Pakistan Gold v Pakistan Green

15 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Green; 16 August – Pakistan Gold v Pakistan Whites; 18 August – Final (Top two teams)

Jansher Khan BARD-Markhor Challenger Squash Tournament 2026 Concludes Successfully in Islamabad

ISLAMABAD: The Jansher Khan BARD-Markhor Challenger Squash tournament 2026, sponsored by the BARD Foundation and Markhor Squash Foundation in collaboration with the Pakistan Squash Federation (PSF) and Professional Squash Association (PSA), concluded successfully at Mushaf Squash Complex, Jinnah Sports Complex, from 22-26 July 2026.

The four-day championship, organized to honor squash legend Jansher Khan’s legacy, featured top Pakistani players showcasing exceptional talent and competitive spirit, providing emerging athletes a professional platform.

In the final, Nasir Iqbal defeated Anas Ali Shah 3-0 (11-1, 11-3, 11-2) in just 15 minutes to claim the championship title.

The closing ceremony was graced by former World Champion Jansher Khan and senior officials from the Pakistan Air Force, PSF and PSA, who distributed trophies and cash prizes.

BARD Foundation President Abdul Razak Dawood praised the tournament for honoring Jansher Khan’s legacy and inspiring young talent, reaffirming commitment to strengthening Pakistan’s sporting landscape through public-private partnerships.

Markhor Squash Foundation CEO Hussain T. Hasan said the foundation aims to invest in Pakistan’s next generation of champions through strategic partnerships, elite coaching and player development, helping the country reclaim its place in world squash.

The event reflected the shared commitment of all partner organizations to revive Pakistan’s squash legacy and create opportunities for young athletes on the international stage.



Oath-taking ceremony of Fitness Federation held



News Desk

LAHORE: The executive body meeting and oath-taking ceremony of the Younus Classic Fitness Federation was held at Pak Arab Society, Lahore.

The ceremony was attended by MNA Rana Mubashir, several MPAs, Federation Founder and CEO Monis Ch, Chairman Younus Classic Federation Punjab Munir Hussain Gujar, Vice Chairman Khawaja M Ali Advocate, Vice Chairman Mian Umar Rasool, renowned weightlifter Aqeel Javed Butt, Mr Pakistan Aslam Khan, Sohail Ch, M Sadiq, Jamshed Ch, Shehbaz Hassan, Hafiz Kashif, Dr Ashraf Shad, Women’s Wing representative Shehzadi Gulfaam, and other distinguished personalities.

The participants, on the occasion, reaffirmed their commitment to intensifying joint efforts for the promotion of bodybuilding, fitness, and power sports across the country.

Younus Classic Federation Punjab Patron-in-Chief Ch Ali Hassan Chandi joined the ceremony online from Switzerland while a large number of participants from Lahore, Karachi, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and other cities also attended virtually and pledged their full practical support for the federation.

The Trump–Netanyahu Axis: Power, War, and the Politics of Escalation

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Trump, who threatened Iran with “unconditional surrender,” and Netanyahu, who has dismissed international law as “absurd,” have no moral authority to condemn anyone for civilian deaths. Their hands are steeped in the blood of a thousand conflicts. The hypocrisy is not merely cynical; it is pathological.

To ask whether these leaders have the “right” to blame Iran is to miss the point entirely. Their “right” is not a moral one but a claim rooted in power and propaganda. They have shown, through their actions, that they do not value civilian life—not the lives of Palestinians, not the lives of Iranians, and not the lives of the millions of others who have perished in American and Israeli wars. They view civilian casualties as a necessary cost, a statistic to be managed, or a tool for leverage.

Both Israel and the USA cite chanting of the death of America and Death of Israel by Iranians as one of the most important reasons to attack

Iran. Knowing very well that these slogans are not a genocidal manifesto or a declaration of capability, but rather a visceral, symbolic expression of rage against two nations that have systematically subjected their country to decades of covert sabotage, assassinations of nuclear scientists, cyberattacks on infrastructure, and overt military threats—all while Iran possessed no nuclear weapon.

Despite the rhetoric, Iran does not possess the capacity to “destroy” America by any stretch of imagination, nor can it annihilate Israel, a nuclear-armed state with superior military technology. However, Iran has demonstrated a formidable capability in asymmetrical warfare—precision missiles, drone strikes, and regional proxies—to repulse aggression and inflict significant pain.

Therefore, these chants should be viewed not as a credible existential threat, but as the desperate, cathartic outcry of a besieged nation responding to relentless assault, which the United

States and Israel conveniently weaponize to justify their own aggression while conveniently ignoring their own role in provoking this animosity.

Ultimately, the “reality created by themselves” that Trump and Netanyahu inhabit is one where their personal survival and political ambitions are prioritized over the lives of millions. Their policy of narcissism has led to a fractured Middle East, an energized and emboldened Iran, a horrific humanitarian disaster in Gaza, and a significant erosion of international norms and legal institutions. Their legacy is one of “moral rot,” leaving behind battered societies struggling to recover from the narcissistic tyranny of men who crowned themselves as saviors but instead became the “sculptors of their nations’ destruction.”

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Education Beyond the Classroom: Learning Opportunities from Outside the Walls of the Classroom

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schools face financial constraints, limited transportation facilities, safety concerns, rigid curricula, and examination-oriented teaching practices. Teachers often struggle to organize field activities because of heavy workloads and administrative restrictions. In many institutions, academic success continues to be measured primarily through examination results rather than practical competencies.

To overcome these challenges, educational policymakers should incorporate experiential learning into the national curriculum. Schools and universities should establish partnerships with industries, museums, research centres, local governments, non-governmental organizations, and community institutions. Teacher training programmes should emphasize project-based learning, community engagement, and outdoor educational methods. At the

same time, assessment systems should recognize practical learning, creativity, collaboration, and community service alongside academic achievement.

Educational institutions should also promote internships, service-learning programmes, environmental campaigns, innovation competitions, and entrepreneurship projects from an early stage. Such initiatives prepare students for the realities of modern society by developing adaptability, resilience, leadership, and problem-solving abilities. Learning becomes more meaningful when students understand how classroom knowledge contributes to solving real-world challenges.

Education beyond the classroom also supports inclusive learning by recognizing that students possess different abilities, interests, and learning styles. Some children learn best through observation, others through practical activities, teamwork, or creative expression.

Offering diverse learning opportunities ensures that every learner has the chance to participate, succeed, and develop confidence according to their strengths.

In conclusion, education should not be confined to classrooms alone. True learning occurs when knowledge is connected with experience, community, innovation, and everyday life. Education beyond the classroom nurtures curiosity, creativity, responsibility, and practical competence while preparing students to face the challenges of a rapidly changing world. For Pakistan, embracing experiential and community-based learning can strengthen the education system and produce graduates who are academically competent, socially responsible, and prepared to contribute meaningfully to national development.

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The Aftershocks of Rising Petrol Prices

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institutions often compel policymakers to make difficult decisions. However, for ordinary citizens, everyday survival matters far more than macroeconomic arguments. If a government employee, laborer, or small shopkeeper cannot meet basic household expenses, improvements in economic indicators hold little practical significance.

The real need is to ensure that increases in petrol prices are not viewed merely as a means of generating government revenue. Their broader social consequences must also be carefully considered. If the government imposes an addi-

tional financial burden on the public, it should simultaneously provide affordable and efficient public transportation, strictly monitor the prices of essential commodities, take decisive action against hoarding and profiteering, and introduce relief packages for low-income families. At the same time, investment in renewable energy, electric vehicles, solar power, and indigenous energy resources has become an urgent necessity to reduce Pakistan’s vulnerability to fluctuations in global oil markets.

It must also be acknowledged that responsibility does not rest solely with the government. Various segments of society

contribute to inflation through unjustified profiteering, artificial shortages, hoarding, and arbitrary price increases. These practices magnify the aftershocks of rising petrol prices many times over. If the state fulfills its regulatory responsibilities and the business community adheres to ethical principles, the severity of this inflationary storm can be significantly reduced.

Pakistan now needs to move beyond short-term decisions and adopt a comprehensive energy and economic strategy. As long as the country’s economy remains heavily dependent on imported fuel, every international crisis, war, or increase in global oil prices will directly

affect the dining tables of Pakistani households. Self-reliance, investment in alternative energy resources, and long-term economic planning offer the only sustainable solution to this recurring challenge.

In this entire situation, the government’s responsibility extends beyond determining petrol prices; it must also provide meaningful relief to the people. This requires a serious review of unnecessary fuel quotas, official privileges, and excessive expenditures granted to members of the National Assembly, the Senate, provincial assemblies, and the higher bureaucracy. National resources should primarily

serve the people rather than unnecessary official luxuries. If the ruling class reduces its own privileges and redirects those savings toward the welfare of low-income, middle-income, and working-class citizens, affordable public transportation, subsidies on essential commodities, and stronger social protection programmers, genuine public relief can be achieved. Otherwise, the aftershocks of economic hardship may become even more severe. Persistent inflation, unemployment, and despair can push some individuals toward tragic and desperate actions, while millions of children and young people may begin to see their

future as increasingly uncertain. These children and youth are the nation’s most valuable asset and the architects of its future. If their education, health, and hopes are not protected today, the dream of a strong, prosperous, and stable Pakistan may become increasingly difficult to achieve. Therefore, all state institutions must treat public hardship not merely as an economic statistic but as a national responsibility, giving priority to justice, fiscal discipline, and people-centered policies.

In conclusion, an increase in petrol prices may appear to be temporary news, but its aftershocks are felt in the daily lives of

ordinary people for a long time. A successful government is not one that merely presents impressive economic statistics; rather, it is one that makes life easier for its citizens, safeguards their purchasing power, and assures them that the state stands beside them. After all, when the people are economically secure and socially confident, the economy becomes stronger as well. But when citizens are crushed under the weight of financial hardship, every claim of national progress remains confined to numbers rather than becoming a reality in people’s lives.

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Meeting

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari chairs a meeting reviewing progress on various Sindh-China cooperation initiatives with Chinese delegations of Anhui Nengtong New Energy Technology Co., Ltd. and Luoyang Modern Biology Group at CM House.



Photo: PID

President Zardari reviews progress on Sindh-China Cooperation, calls for timely implementation

Bureau Report

KARACHI: President Asif Ali Zardari chaired a meeting at CM House to review the progress of MoUs and cooperation initiatives between the Government of Sindh and Chinese companies, directing that agreed projects be advanced expeditiously with remaining procedural and technical requirements completed at the earliest.

The meeting, facilitated by the China-Pakistan-Africa Economic and Trade Cooperation Promotion Association, involved delegations from Anhui Nengtong New Energy Technology Co., Ltd. and Luoyang Modern Biology Group. The President was briefed on cooperation covering EV charging infrastructure, veterinary vaccines, animal traceability, agricultural technology, healthcare and fire safety equipment.

Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to its All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership with China and strengthening CPEC, now in its 2.0 phase, noting his regular China visits reflect this commitment.

On EV cooperation, discussions covered charging stations, solar-storage facilities, energy storage and smart charging networks with Anhui Nengtong. The President highlighted Karachi and Hyderabad's potential for EV infrastructure, suggesting the Karachi-Hyderabad M-9 corridor as a starting point for intercity charging facilities, expressing confidence this would support green mobility.

Regarding Luoyang Modern Biology Group, the President was briefed on veterinary vaccine cooperation, animal traceability, and work on the Sindh-08 foot and mouth disease strain, with vaccine trials expected to conclude by November 2026. He said this would strengthen epidemic prevention, livestock management and export competitiveness.

The meeting was attended by CM Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Senator Saleem Mandviwala, provincial ministers, Chief Secretary Sindh, Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, and senior officials, alongside Chinese delegation members including Tao Xu and Hao Yuejiao.

Aurangzeb Chairs First Meeting of Access to Finance Steering Committee

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired the inaugural meeting of the Access to Finance Steering Committee, established to provide strategic oversight for the Prime Minister's Access to Finance Plan 2026-2028. The meeting focused on enhancing affordable financing for priority sectors including SMEs, agriculture, IT, exports, renewable energy and housing.

The Committee reviewed the proposed governance structure, targeted outcomes, and implementation workstreams aimed at expanding financial inclusion and affordable credit access.

Updates were provided on the SME Finance Sub-Committee and flagship financing initiatives, including Zarkhez-e (Asaan Zarai Qarza), the Apna Ghar Scheme, and the Pakistan Accelerated Vehicle Electrification (PAVE) initiative supporting E-Bikes and E-Rickshaws.

Members deliberated on a three-tier governance framework comprising monthly updates to the Prime Minister, fortnightly Steering Committee oversight, and weekly sectoral sub-committee meetings. The proposed reporting framework includes Resolution Target Dates, an escalation mechanism, and a progress monitoring dashboard to strengthen accountability.

Aurangzeb said the Committee would serve as the central platform for strategic oversight, policy coordination and timely decision-making, fostering collaboration among regulators, financial institutions and implementing agencies while focusing on measurable outcomes.

The meeting reviewed application, approval and disbursement trends across Zarkhez-e, Apna Ghar and PAVE programmes, alongside operational challenges requiring continued institutional engagement. Discussions also covered national SME finance outcomes, including increasing outstanding SME financing, expanding SME credit share, and boosting active SME borrowers through a results-oriented framework.

Members were briefed on reforms including SME credit scoring, an Open Banking Framework, SME Digital Portal, and credit bureau integration.

Aurangzeb stressed that the Plan's success depends on disciplined execution, accountability and institutional coordination, with the Steering Committee sustaining reform momentum. The meeting was attended by Finance Secretary Imdadullah Bosal, the SBP Governor, SECP Chairman, PBA Chairman, Karandaaz Pakistan's CEO, and senior officials from Finance Division, SBP and SECP.

Govt Anchors Economic Agenda on Stability, Reforms and Private Sector Growth

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Adviser to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad said the government's long-term economic strategy is based on macroeconomic stability, structural reforms, and private-sector-led growth. Speaking at 'Pakistan Economic Outlook: FY2027 and Beyond' in Lahore, he outlined recovery over the past 2-3 years.

He noted real GDP growth recovered to 3.7%, with agriculture at 2.89%, LSM at a 4-year high of 6.1%, and services at 4.4%. The fiscal deficit was contained to under 1% in 9 months, with projections near 3% vs 8% in 2022. Primary balance posted a record surplus and debt-to-GDP fell from 75% to 68%.

The current account deficit dropped to under \$150 million from \$17.5 billion in 2022. FX reserves rose to \$18 billion from \$3 billion, giving 3+ months import cover. Inflation eased to 7.5%. Key inflows included \$13 billion in Roshan Digital Accounts, \$4.6 billion in IT exports, and \$1.76 billion in freelance earnings.

Mr. Schehzad highlighted 11 reforms including SOE privatization, CTBCM energy market, faceless FBR system, and pension shifts. Tax relief, 4.5% export refinancing, and 11 IPOs signal renewed private sector confidence. Two new frameworks on industrial and tax policy are being finalized.

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General Syed Aamer Raza takes charge of National Strategic Command After Guard of Honour Ceremony

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: General Syed Aamer Raza, HI (M), S Bt was presented Guard of Honour on being appointed as Commander National Strategic Command. The General laid floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada and offered Fateha to pay tribute to the Shuhada.

CNSC later called on the Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces at General Headquarters.

The Field Marshal congratulated the General Officer on assumption of command.

Petroleum Minister constitutes committee to resolve OTCA issues

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik held a meeting with a delegation of the Oil Tanker Contractors Association (OTCA), led by its President, Abidullah Afridi. Both sides agreed to work together to resolve the issues facing the oil tanker industry.

The Minister constituted a high-level committee under the chairmanship of the Special Secretary Petroleum to examine the concerns raised by the association and submit its recommendations within one week, said a news release.

The committee will comprise the Director General (Oil), representatives of OGRA, the Oil Tanker Contractors Association (OTCA), and the Secretary General of the Oil Companies Advisory Council (OCAC).

During the meeting, the OTCA delegation presented its key demands, including a decreased quota for the White Oil Pipeline, a transparent mechanism for the award of freight contracts by Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs), linkage of the freight formula with the Consumer Price Index (CPI), and the immediate discontinuation of commercial loading.

The Minister directed OGRA to work closely with stakeholders to resolve the genuine concerns of oil tanker contractors.

He requested OMCs submit their written policies governing the award of freight contracts so that any discriminatory practices, if found, could be addressed.

Furthermore, he instructed OGRA to ensure effective tracking of oil tankers and to ensure that dealers' vehicles are not included in primary transportation.

Ali Pervaiz Malik emphasized that the Government's foremost priority is to ensure uninterrupted fuel supplies and facilitate the public.

He said all stakeholders must work together in the national interest, particularly during challenging times, and assured the delegation that all genuine concerns would be given due consideration and resolved through mutual consultation.

The OTCA appreciated the Minister's positive approach and welcomed the constitution of the committee, expressing confidence that the issues would be resolved through dialogue and cooperation.

Govt Committed to Welfare, Capacity Building of Journalists: Info Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said the government is committed to the welfare and capacity building of journalists.

Addressing the inauguration of the National Press Club's website in Islamabad, he termed the club an integral part of the Islamabad media fraternity and welcomed its digitalization. He directed authorities to immediately establish a digital lab at the National Press Club.

The Minister said the government is ensuring timely payment of dues to television channels, and urged media organizations to pay journalists' salaries on time.

He announced immediate steps to introduce health cards for journalists to strengthen social welfare, and said the government is considering measures to address journalists' housing issues in consultation with the media community.

Highlighting the need for digital content creation, Tarar said the government will enhance professional capacity through short training courses.

He added that a policy is being formulated to address financial challenges facing journalists and media organizations. "Promoting electronic and print media is a shared responsibility of both the government and journalists," he stated.