

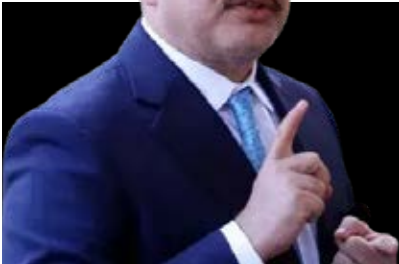


Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
ہم سے بیگانہ سلیمان نے بیان کیا کہ انہوں نے کہا کہ مجھ سے ازن و رب نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ کو عورت نے جڑی ان سے ایوانفر نے بیان کیا، ان سے سلیمان بن یونس نے اور ان سے عاتق نے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم ﷺ کا اس طرح کل کر بھی بیٹے نہیں دیکھا کہ آپ کے علق کا کو نظر آنے لگا، وہ آپ ﷺ کو صرف مسکراتے تھے۔
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Memon accuses PML-N of rigging, misusing state machinery in AJK elections

Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Tuesday launched a scathing attack on the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), accusing it of manipulating the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections through intimidation, rigging and misuse of state resources.



Federal government fixes diyat at Rs19.35 million for 2026-27

The federal government has fixed the value of diyat at Rs19,352,390 for the financial year 2026-27, according to a notification issued by the Finance Division. The amount has been determined as the equivalent value of 30,630 grams of silver under Section 323 of the Pakistan Penal Code, 1860.

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: Commander National Strategic Command, General Syed Aamer Raza called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters Islamabad on Tuesday.



Newly appointed Commander National Strategic Command calls on Chief of The Naval Staff

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Commander National Strategic Command, General Syed Aamer Raza called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad. Upon arrival Commander National Strategic Command was welcomed by Chief of the Naval Staff.

Naval Chief congratulated General Syed Aamer Raza

on assuming charge as the first Commander National Strategic Command. During the meeting, Chief of the Naval Staff highlighted the prevailing maritime challenges and Navy's comprehensive preparedness to maintain maritime security and safeguard national interests. General Syed Aamer Raza appreciated the operational readiness of Pakistan Navy in safeguarding the nation's maritime frontiers.

PML-N Claims nine seats in first phase of AJK elections



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah said the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured nine seats, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) won four seats in the first phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir local government elections. Addressing a press conference, he congratulated the successful candidates and described the polling as peaceful, transparent and well-organised.

Rana Sanaullah praised the Election Commission, civil administration, police and security agencies for ensuring smooth polling across Mirpur Division, noting that polling hours were extended by one hour to facilitate voters. He said the only major untoward incident resulted from a long-standing family dispute rather than election-related violence,

while another candidate was arrested in LA-6 for allegedly violating the election code of conduct by creating disorder and attempting to burn ballot papers.

Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam welcomed the peaceful elections, saying the results reflected public confidence in the PML-N and the leadership of Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Rana Sanaullah credited the party's success to effective campaigning, organisational reforms and teamwork, adding that Nawaz Sharif had pledged to personally oversee development projects in Azad Kashmir. He also urged all political parties to respect the public mandate and uphold democratic values, stressing that any election-related disputes should be resolved through legal and constitutional channels.

Bilawal Accuses PML-N of 'Stealing Mandate' in AJK Polls, Demands Judicial Inquiry

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari on Tuesday accused the PML-N of benefiting from alleged electoral manipulation in the AJK Legislative Assembly elections and demanded a judicial inquiry into polling-day incidents.

Addressing a PPP workers' convention in Muzaffarabad, Bilawal thanked Mirpur voters and said the PPP had secured a majority in several constituencies. According to provisional results from the first phase, PML-N won 9 of 13 seats in Mirpur while PPP won 4.

Questioning the fairness of the process, he cited attacks reported at around 30 polling stations and pointed to PPP leader Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin's loss in his own village

despite strong support. He alleged that holding elections in phases created opportunities for manipulation.

Bilawal also criticised internet shutdowns during polling and urged national institutions to prioritize Pakistan's interest over party interests. He called for an independent inquiry commission to investigate irregularities.

Pledging to protect the PPP's mandate, he said the August 2 Muzaffarabad elections must be free, fair and transparent, and warned that attacks on workers or polling stations were unacceptable.



PM meets U.S. Congressional, trade delegations, felicitates American nation 250th anniversary of Independence

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday met a U. S. Congressional delegation, comprising Rep. Ryan Zinke and Rep. Michael Baumgartner, here at the Prime Minister House and felicitated the Congressmen, the American people on the 250th anniversary of U. S. Independence, and conveyed his warm regards and best wishes for President Donald Trump.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch, and U. S. Chargé d'Affaires, Natalie Baker were also present on the occasion, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister welcomed both U. S. Congressmen to Pakistan and said that their visit was a welcome step towards building stronger Paki-



stan-U. S. ties.

The Prime Minister fondly recalled President Trump's bold

and decisive intervention that led to cessation of hostilities and ceasefire between Pakistan and

India in May 2025, and helped saved hundreds of millions of lives.

On bilateral relations, the

Prime Minister said that Pakistan was keen to further strengthen its cooperation with the U. S. in trade, investment, agriculture, IT, mines & minerals and the energy sector.

Both Congressmen thanked the Prime Minister for the warm hospitality extended to them during their visit. They noted that President Trump enjoyed excellent relations with the Pakistani leadership, which was also having a positive impact on the bilateral ties. They praised the Prime Minister for Pakistan's leading role in regional peace efforts.

The two sides agreed to increase the number and frequency of visits by Congressional delegations to Pakistan as well as visits of parliamentary delegations to the U. S.

The reception was also attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Federal Ministers, and senior government officials.

PM Shehbaz Reviews Progress on 'Apna Ghar Scheme,' Directs Faster Implementation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday reaffirmed that providing affordable housing to ordinary citizens remains one of the government's top priorities, and directed authorities to accelerate implementation of the Prime Minister's Apna Ghar Scheme.

Chairing a review meeting, the PM said the scheme was launched to enable low- and middle-income families to own a home. He urged public and private sector banks to maximize financing to ensure the initiative's success.

He also instructed officials to develop a comprehensive strategy for both vertical and horizontal housing models under the scheme.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, Housing Minister Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, and other senior officials.

Officials briefed the PM that banks have approved financing worth Rs204 billion under Apna Ghar Scheme, while Rs27 billion has already been disbursed.

Improved coordination, early warning systems made monsoon response more effective: Attaullah Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar said improved federal-provincial coordination and stronger early warning systems have made this year's monsoon response more effective, helping reduce loss of life and property compared to previous years.

During a visit to NDMA with Federal Ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Tanveer Hussain, Musadik Malik, Mian Muhammad Moeen Wattoo and Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, Tarar described the response as "very effective" and credited lessons learned from



last year. He praised NDMA Chairman Lt. Gen. Inam Haider Malik for leading coordination efforts.

Tarar said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif initiated timely meetings with NDMA, cabinet members, and provincial governments including Gilgit-Baltistan and AJK to ensure preparedness. He highlighted the National

Emergency Operations Centre as a rare national asset visited by international delegations, enabling timely public alerts through technology and the Pak NDMA Alert App.

He noted rainfall in some cities over a few days equaled months of normal rain, yet losses were minimized. The minister urged citizens to stay vigilant amid risks of cloudbursts and floods, and to support relief efforts.

Tarar reaffirmed the Ministry's commitment to public awareness through media and said the government will continue working with all ministries and provinces to tackle monsoon challenges.

IS Unofficial results

PML-N leads AJK polls in Mirpur division with 9 seats as PPP secures 4

AB Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) has emerged as the leading party in the first phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections held in the Mirpur Division, according to unofficial and unconfirmed results.

Out of 13 constituencies in Mirpur, Kotli, and Bhimber districts, results from 13 constituencies indicate that PML-N has won nine seats, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has secured four seats.

The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has officially announced results of three constituencies, while unofficial results for the remaining seats continue to emerge.

In LA-1 Dadyal (Mirpur), PML-N candidate Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq won with 15,427 votes, defeating PPP's Chaudhry Afsar Shahid, who secured 9,832 votes.

PPP candidate Qasim Majeed won LA-2 Chakswari/Islamgarh with

12,904 votes, while PML-N's Azeem Bakhsh Chaudhry finished second with 8,182 votes.

In LA-3 Mirpur City, PPP's Yasir Sultan secured victory with 12,590 votes, defeating PML-N candidate Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, who received 11,081 votes.

PML-N continued its performance in LA-4 Khari Sharif, where Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmed won with 20,172 votes, while PPP's Chaudhry Sohail Arshad came second with 13,865 votes.

The Returning Officer has announced the complete result of LA-5 Bhimber constituency in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections. According to the result from all 176 polling stations, Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Waqar Ahmed Noor secured victory after receiving 30,259 votes. PPP candidate Chaudhry Pervaiz Ashraf finished second with 29,574 votes, according to the announced results.

The constituency witnessed a close contest between the two candidates, with Waqar Ahmed Noor defeating his PPP rival by a narrow margin.

In LA-6 Samahni, PML-N's Chaudhry Muhammad Razzaq was leading with 23,923 votes, while IPP candidate Ali Shan Soni was in second place with 12,492 votes. The final result was delayed after allegations of ballot papers being burned in the constituency.

PML-N candidate Chaudhry Tariq Farooq won LA-7 Bhimber with 35,490 votes, defeating former prime minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq, who received 25,100 votes as an independent candidate.

In LA-8 Kotli Raj Mahal, PPP's Zafar Iqbal Malik won with 19,535 votes, while PML-N's Malik Muhammad Nawaz Khan finished second with 11,966 votes.

PML-N candidate Umair Naeem defeated PPP's Javed Iqbal Budhanvi in LA-9 Kotli Nakiyaal. Umair Naeem secured 31,037 votes, while Budhanvi

received 28,507 votes.

In LA-10 Kotli City, PPP President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin won with 12,421 votes, defeating PML-N's Fateh Mahmood-ul-Hassan, who received 9,063 votes.

PML-N's Raja Muhammad Asif won LA-11 Kotli Sehansa with 26,190 votes, while PPP candidate Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq secured 21,751 votes.

In LA-12 Kotli Chardhoi, PML-N's Raja Riasat Khan defeated PPP President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin. Raja Riasat Khan received 35,168 votes, while Yasin secured 30,320 votes.

In LA-13 Kotli Khoi Ratta, PML-N candidate Raja Ayaz Ahmed Khan won with 21,728 votes, while IPP's Ansar Abdali finished second with 15,648 votes.

AJK Chief Election Commissioner Justice (ret'd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said the first phase of the electoral process was completed in a free and transparent manner.

US congressional delegation calls on Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD: A United States congressional delegation led by Representatives Ryan Zinke and Michael Baumgartner on Tuesday called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq.

Ayaz Sadiq extended a warm welcome to the visiting US Congressional Delegation.

Chargé d'Affaires Ms. Natalie A. Baker was also present on the occasion. The meeting was focused on Pak-US bilateral relations and parliamentary cooperation.

Ayaz Sadiq reiterated that Pakistan attached great importance to its longstanding relationship with the United States, which was founded on mutual respect, trust and shared interests.

He said that parliamentary diplomacy could play a pivotal role in strengthening bilateral relations.

The Speaker stressed the need to further expand parliamentary exchanges and cooperation between the legislatures of Pakistan and the United States of America.

Ayaz Sadiq reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to promoting peace, stability and diplomatic solutions in the region.

He said that Pakistan has consistently supported restraint, dialogue and de-escalation during the recent regional tensions, adding that diplomacy and dialogue remained the most effective means of resolving disputes.

The US Congressmen thanked Ayaz Sadiq for the warm welcome and hospitality.

They appreciated Pakistan's positive and constructive role during the Iran-US conflict and acknowledged its efforts in promoting regional peace and stability.

Radio Pakistan Mirpur and Information Dept Agree to Strengthen Cooperation



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Deputy Director Information Raja Sohail Khan, along with Information Officer Khizar Hayat, visited Radio Pakistan Mirpur and met Station Director Khushbakht Shireen. Engineering Manager Ansar Mahmood and Compere/Reporter Humayun Mirza also joined the visit.

Officials were briefed on the station's professional activities, broadcasting system, and social media initiatives.

Station Director Khushbakht Shireen said Radio Pakistan is ready to work with the Information Department to deliver timely and authentic information to the public. She noted that during the AJK Legislative Assembly elections, Radio Pakistan Mirpur kept people updated with moment-to-moment reports. She added that Radio Pakistan has now expanded to social media platforms for better promotion of programs and news.

Deputy Director Raja Sohail Khan said modern media has transformed traditional communication and welcomed Radio Pakistan's use of digital platforms. He stressed that the goal of both institutions is to provide verified, factual, and timely information to counter fake news and prevent public anxiety.

He added that the Information Department and Radio Pakistan will further enhance cooperation to ensure effective coverage of AJK government's activities and public welfare initiatives through both traditional and modern media.

Attock Hosts Training Workshop for Community Health Inspectors

RA Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Under the supervision of Punjab Secretary for Health and Population, Nadia Saqib, a training workshop was organized in Attock for Community Health Inspectors.

During the session, Secretary Health Nadia Saqib guided the Community Health Inspectors serving in the field regarding their responsibilities and their vital role in promoting public health. She emphasized the importance of effective service delivery, community outreach, and professional commitment in improving healthcare at the grassroots level.

The training included detailed briefings on field operations, community engagement, and monitoring mechanisms to enhance the performance and effectiveness of health workers.

Deputy Director Khalid Sharif, Project Director PEPF Captain Usman, Additional Director PIU Dr. Farrukh Amin, and CEO Health Attock Dr. Asad Ismail were also present on the occasion.

AKMCCC Hyderabad Organizes Health Camp on World Hepatitis Day with Free Screenings and Subsidized Consultations

KA Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

HYDERABAD: In observance of World Hepatitis Day, the Aga Khan Maternal and Child Care Centre (AKMCCC), Hyderabad, organized a one-day health camp aimed at improving access to preventive healthcare and promoting early detection of liver disease. Held under the global theme "Hepatitis Elimination Starts with You," the camp offered discounted specialist consultations and complimentary diagnostic services to residents from across Hyderabad.

The health camp provided expert consultations with Family Medicine and Internal Medicine specialists at subsidized rates. To encourage timely diagnosis, participants received free rapid screening tests for Hepatitis B and C, along with complimentary assessments of blood pressure, pulse rate, height, and weight. The program also included health education and awareness sessions on hepatitis prevention, transmission, and treatment, as well as discounted laboratory and radiology services for further evaluation and follow-up.

"Hepatitis remains a significant public health challenge, yet early detection and timely intervention can drastically alter patient outcomes," said Syed Muhammad Sohail, Chief Operating Officer for Outreach Services and Off-Campus Hospitals at Aga Khan University Hospital (AKUH). "Through today's camp, AKMCCC is helping remove financial and geographic barriers to specialized care, empowering individuals across Hyderabad to take proactive steps toward their health," he added.

Health officials and AKMCCC representatives stated that such community outreach initiatives are essential to achieving the World Health Organization's goal of hepatitis elimination by 2030. They reaffirmed the centre's commitment to continuing similar programs in underserved areas to strengthen public health and foster a more informed community. The successful execution of the camp underscores AKMCCC's ongoing dedication to preventive healthcare and community well-being.

A view of garbage

KARACHI: A view of garbage lay along with Sea View Beach in the Provincial Capital creating problems for visitors and unhygienic atmosphere, showing the negligence of concern authorities.



Photo: Online

AJK Govt says peaceful Mirpur polls foiled disruptive elements, vows to uphold state writ

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Information and IT of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir, Muhammad Rashid Hanif, has said that the peaceful conduct of elections in Mirpur Division defeated the objectives of the banned Public Action Committee. Addressing a press conference alongside Deputy Inspector General of Police Irfan Masood Kashfi, he alleged that armed elements in Rawalakot were using women and children as human shields and attempting to disrupt law and order.

Hanif urged the public to disregard what he described as false reports circulated by Indian media and misleading



content on social media, claiming that outdated and fabricated videos were being shared to create unrest. He advised citizens to rely only on official

and verified sources for information. Reaffirming the government's commitment to protecting the democratic process, he said the state's writ

would be maintained and no one would be allowed to take the law into their own hands.

DIG Irfan Masood Kashfi stated that armed individuals possessed modern weapons, including M4 rifles, SMGs and Kalashnikovs, and were reportedly using snipers. He said investigations revealed offers of weapons and cash rewards for attacks on security personnel. Kashfi confirmed that one Rangers official was martyred and five others injured in firing, while security forces responded only in self-defence. He added that investigations into facilitators and financial backers were continuing and vowed that no group would be allowed to challenge the state's authority.

Abdul Mannan Ch. Promoted to Director General (BPS-20) at Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: According to an official notification (No. PBM/Estb/023/1597) issued by Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal (PBM), Ministry of Poverty Alleviation & Social Safety, Government of Pakistan, Mr. Abdul Mannan Ch., Director (BPS-19), has been promoted to the rank of Director General (BPS-20) in the Accounts / Audit Category Ex-Cadre with immediate effect.

The promotion was formally approved by the Managing Director, Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, on the recommendations of the Departmental Selection / Promotion Board. Prior to this elevation, Mr. Abdul



Mannan Ch. was serving as Director in the Fund

& Pension Branch at the PBM Head Office, Islamabad.

Following the announcement of his promotion to Grade 20, a continuous stream of felicitations and warm wishes has been pouring in from officers and staff across Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal. Senior management, regional directors, assistant directors, and field officers extended their heartiest congratulations, recognizing his professional capability, integrity, and dedication to public welfare.

Colleagues across all departmental tiers expressed confidence that his elevation to Director General will further strengthen administrative efficiency and expand PBM's welfare outreach nationwide.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:40 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:08 pm
Maghrib 7:11 pm
Isha 8:48 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan

12.9 million people are living with hepatitis in Pakistan: WHO

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of World Hepatitis Day, the World Health Organization (WHO) called on all stakeholders to take urgent science-based action and renewed its support for Pakistan's efforts to advance towards the goal of ending hepatitis as a public health problem by 2030.

According to WHO, hepatitis is a deadly disease that affects an estimated 12.9 million people in Pakistan, including 9 million with hepatitis C and 3.8 million with hepatitis B.

Every year, more than 48,000 people die in Pakistan due to hepatitis infections that are preventable and curable. This equals one death every 11 minutes.

With 9 million of the 47 million estimated cases worldwide, Pakistan bears the heaviest burden of hepatitis C globally. Only 3 out of 10 people affected know it, which prevents millions from receiving life-saving treatment.

The high burden is largely the result of historical health care-associated transmission, particularly the widespread reuse of needles for injections and unsafe blood transfusions.

In 2024, over 88,000 people were infected with hepatitis C across the country.

Under the international theme "Hepatitis: Let's break it down", WHO reiterated its full support for Pakistan's efforts to fight the disease, including the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C Infection.

"WHO will continue to partner with Pakistan to promote medical science to protect and save lives and adapt the best practices and lessons learned from around the world to the national context."

CM Maryam Nawaz launches revolutionary Green Railway Corridor project to transform Punjab into a greener, smog-free province

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to build a greener and smog-free Punjab, the provincial government has launched the revolutionary Green Railway Corridor project, inspired by modern urban development models.

The four-phase project aims to transform abandoned and garbage-strewn railway land into landscaped public spaces, with a target of developing 32 parks along railway corridors across the province.

Under the first phase, 20 acres of land stretching from Shahdara to Raiwind have been converted into green belts, gardens and recreational areas. In addition, 21 parks have already been developed along the railway track, providing quality recreational facilities for residents while contributing to environmental improvement.

The initiative reflects Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision of developing parks alongside railway tracks in line with international standards. It

forms part of the Punjab government's broader strategy to create a greener, cleaner and more beautiful province while expanding recreational opportunities for children, women and families.

The 45-kilometre Green Railway Corridor project carries an estimated cost of over Rs1.77 billion. Divided into four packages, it is being implemented jointly by the Punjab Horticulture Authority (PHA) and Pakistan Railways.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed the authorities concerned to remove all obstacles delaying the remaining phases of the project at the earliest and ordered that the pace of implementation be accelerated.

Residents welcomed the Green Railway Corridor initiative and expressed appreciation for the Chief Minister's efforts. They described the conversion of garbage dumps into attractive public parks as a commendable achievement, saying the project has provided children with safe places to play while significantly improving the surrounding environment.



An elderly resident remarked that it was hard to believe such a transfor-

mation could take place in Pakistan, describing the project as an inspiring

example of positive urban development.

Negligence

ISLAMABAD: A view of open main-hole on central green belt of Khayaban e Suharwardy in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

‘Serena Hotel Hosts Hepatitis Awareness Session and Screening Camp for Employees’

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In observance of World Hepatitis Day, an awareness session and hepatitis screening camp were organized for our associates to promote the importance of prevention, early detection, and timely treatment of hepatitis at Serena Hotel.

We were privileged to have Dr. Sumera Shahzad, Associate Professor & Head of Community Medicine, University Medical & Dental College, who delivered an



informative session on hepatitis awareness and encour-

aged healthy practices among participants.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the Screening Team of Faisalabad Institute of Cardiology (FIC) for their dedicated support in conducting hepatitis screening and collecting blood samples for our associates.

The enthusiastic participation of our team reflects our shared commitment to employee well-being and creating a healthier workplace. Together, we continue to raise awareness and take meaningful steps toward a hepatitis-free future.

NHA Successfully Restores Haramosh Bridge on JSR Route For All Traffic



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Highway Authority (NHA) has successfully completed the restoration work on Haramosh Bridge, located at RD 25 on the Jaglot-Skardu Road (JSR), which was recently affected by heavy rainfall. According to an NHA spokesperson, the bridge has been fully restored and reopened for all types of vehicular traffic, ensuring uninterrupted movement across the region.

The restoration was carried out on an emergency basis following the explicit directives of the Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan visited the site yesterday to review the progress of the restoration work and instructed officers to ensure the earliest possible completion.

Thanks to the swift execution by NHA maintenance teams, traffic flow on this vital route has now resumed smoothly without any delay.

Four Injured in Mirpur Firing, One Dead, Hospital Provides Emergency Care

PID

MIRPUR: Medical Superintendent Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur, Dr. Raja Ijaz has said that immediately after the firing incident that took place in Mirpur today, four injured persons were shifted to Divisional Headquarters Teaching Hospital Mirpur, where emergency, trauma, nursing and paramedical teams immediately mobilized and provided timely and best medical facilities to the injured. Among the injured, a patient named Sohail died during treatment due to the severity of his injuries, while the other three injured persons are undergoing treatment in the hospital. Senior experts, nursing staff and paramedical staff of the hospital are continuously taking care of the injured, the public should be encouraged, all possible and quality medical facilities are being provided to the injured. The hospital administration is fully prepared to deal with every emergency and all patients brought to the hospital are provided with timely, effective and best medical services without discrimination. Dr. Raja Ijaz, while expressing his heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the family of the deceased, appealed to the public not to believe in any unverified information or rumors regarding the current situation and not to spread them.

WASA Punjab Chairman Reviews Monsoon Preparedness, Public Services in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: On the directions of Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, WASA Punjab Chairman Nawabzada Chaudhry Sher Ali Khan visited Attock to review WASA's performance and monsoon preparedness.

He was received at the Deputy Commissioner's Office by former Provincial Minister Jahangir Khanzada, former MPA Sardar Iftikhar Ahmed Khan, and MD WASA Attock Muhammad Aqeel Awan, among other local leaders and officials.

In a meeting chaired by the Chairman and attended by DC Syed Mudassir Ahmed Shah, MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmed, parliamentarians, and WASA officials, MD WASA briefed on performance, desilting of drains, drainage arrangements, relief camps, and public complaints.

Addressing the meeting, Sher Ali Khan said WASA staff are fully mobilized for monsoon and relief camps have been set up in all district headquarters. He highlighted that the Punjab Government is providing bill subsidies: Rs. 368 for up to 3-marla households and Rs. 438 for 3-5 marla households to reduce public burden.

He noted WASA performed well during the current monsoon but stressed room for improvement. He thanked CM Maryam Nawaz for providing modern machinery and vehicles that enhanced service delivery.

The Chairman directed MD WASA Attock to prioritize public service, ensure field monitoring of drainage, and resolve complaints promptly to deliver on the government's people-centric vision.

Faisalabad Police and Pepperdine School Network Sign MoU for Education of Police Officers' Children

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Faisalabad and Pepperdine School Network signed an MoU to provide quality education to children of police officers.

The agreement was signed by RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera and Dr. Iftikhar Hussain Naqvi, Director Pepperdine School Network.

Under the MoU:

- 100% discount in tuition and other fees for children of police martyrs
- 75% discount for children of officers who died during service
- 50% discount for children of



serving and retired officers - 25% discount for children of police officers already studying at Pepperdine

Speaking on the occasion, RPO Sukhera said providing modern and quality education to police officers' children is a top priority. He added that cooperation with educational institutions for welfare of martyrs' families, veterans, and serving/retired staff is being expanded.

He reaffirmed the department's commitment to ensuring better higher education opportunities for all police families, and said such welfare initiatives will continue.

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Building the Logistics Backbone Pakistan’s Economy Desperately Needs

The 68th meeting of the National Logistics Board, chaired by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, offers a timely reminder that Pakistan’s economic ambitions cannot be separated from the mundane but essential business of moving goods efficiently. As the Minister rightly noted, logistics is no longer a peripheral sectoral concern; it is the backbone of a competitive economy and a strategic enabler of national security and sustainable development. This is not rhetorical flourish. Countries that have successfully transformed their economies have done so precisely by reducing the cost and time of doing business through efficient transport and seamless trade facilitation.

The progress highlighted at this meeting deserves genuine recognition. The establishment of Forward Transit Trade Hubs at Serhatabat in Turkmenistan, Termez in Uzbekistan, and Kashgar in China represents meaningful diversification of export routes, reducing Pakistan’s historical overreliance on limited trade corridors. These hubs, if properly developed, could open new markets for Pakistani exporters and reduce the region’s dependence on longer, costlier shipping routes.

Equally significant is the directive to expand the Sost Dry Port and establish a Khunjerab border terminal as strategic trade hubs. These northern crossings, gateways to Central Asia and China, have long been underutilized relative to their potential. Positioning them as serious logistics infrastructure, rather than seasonal border crossings, could meaningfully strengthen Pakistan’s role as a connectivity bridge linking South Asia, Central Asia, China, and the Middle East, particularly as CPEC enters its next phase.

The proposal for a state-of-the-art driving academy, training drivers to international standards and equipping them with foreign language skills, may seem a modest detail amid discussions of ports and trade corridors, but it reflects sound thinking. Cross-border logistics under CPEC will increasingly require Pakistani professionals capable of coordinating directly with counterparts in China, Central Asia, and beyond. Human capital, not just physical infrastructure, will determine whether these connectivity ambitions succeed.

Still, ambition must be matched by execution. Pakistan has periodically announced logistics modernization plans before, only to see them slowed by bureaucratic delays, inconsistent funding, or coordination failures between the many federal and provincial agencies involved in trade facilitation. The real test of this Board meeting’s outcomes will lie in whether the Sost Dry Port expansion, the Khunjerab terminal, and the driving academy move from directive to functioning reality within a reasonable timeframe.

As Pakistan pursues export-led growth under URAAN Pakistan, an integrated, technology-driven logistics ecosystem is not optional infrastructure — it is foundational. The NLC’s demonstrated capacity, acknowledged by the Minister himself, offers reason for cautious optimism. Whether this translates into a genuinely modernized logistics sector will depend on sustained political will long after this meeting’s headlines fade.

The Entrepreneur’s Path to Business Growth

In today’s rapidly changing business world, merely starting a business is not the true measure of success; the real challenge is to keep it on a continuous path of growth. Many people launch businesses, but due to a lack of proper planning, effective strategies, and timely decision-making, they fail to move forward. In contrast, a successful entrepreneur is not just a business owner but a visionary leader who drives growth through innovation, continuous learning, hard work, and a deep understanding of customers’ needs.

Competition in the business world is becoming more intense every day. Therefore, having a good idea alone is no longer enough.

Success belongs to those who adapt to changing circumstances, identify new opportunities, and pursue long-term strategies. An entrepreneur’s true strength lies in a positive mindset, determination, resilience, and effective leadership.

A successful entrepreneur begins with a clear vision and well-defined goals. They know where they want their business to be in the next five or ten years. This vision serves as the foundation for every decision, strategy, and investment. Without a clear sense of direction, it is difficult for any business to achieve sustainable growth. Clearly defined short-term and long-term objectives make decision-making easier, improve the use of resources, and create long-term stability.

Market research is another key driver of business growth. Successful entrepreneurs continuously study the market before launching a business and throughout its operation. They closely analyze customers’ needs, preferences, buying behavior, competitors, and emerging market

trends. When a business aligns its products and services with market demands, its chances of success increase significantly. Reliable market information helps prevent unnecessary losses and supports informed decision-making. Regular research also enables businesses to anticipate future changes and respond proactively.

Customers are the foundation of every successful business. Entrepreneurs who consistently prioritize customer satisfaction build stronger and more sustainable businesses. High-quality products, fair pricing, timely delivery, and excellent customer service foster trust and loyalty. A satisfied customer not only returns for future purchases but also recommends the business to others, making word-of-mouth one of the most valuable forms of marketing. Listening to customer feedback, acting on suggestions, and resolving complaints promptly further strengthen a company’s reputation and long-term success.

Innovation has become essential for business growth in today’s competitive environment. Successful entrepreneurs embrace new ideas, improve existing methods, and continuously enhance their products and services to meet changing customer expectations. The success of many global companies is rooted in their commitment to innovation and research.

Nokia is a notable example. Once one of the world’s leading mobile phone manufacturers, it lost significant market share because it failed to adapt quickly to the smartphone revolution and rapidly evolving technology. This illustrates that innovation is not merely about inventing something entirely new; it also involves improving existing products, services,

and business processes to remain relevant and competitive. Entrepreneurs who continue learning, develop new skills, learn from experience, and refine their strategies are better positioned for sustainable growth.

Financial management is one of the fundamental pillars of business success. Successful entrepreneurs maintain accurate records of income, expenses, profits, and investments. They avoid unnecessary spending and reinvest a portion of their profits to expand their businesses. Sound financial planning enables a business to remain stable even during challenging economic conditions. A realistic budget, transparent accounting practices, and long-term financial planning provide a solid foundation for sustainable growth.

A skilled and motivated team is equally important. Successful entrepreneurs recruit honest, competent, and responsible individuals and create an environment where employees can grow professionally. They invest in training, encourage innovation, and value their employees’ opinions. A culture of trust, collaboration, and mutual respect inspires creativity and improves organizational performance. Effective time management is another defining characteristic of successful entrepreneurs. They prioritize high-impact tasks, avoid unnecessary activities, and work according to carefully planned schedules. Efficient use of time increases productivity, reduces operational costs, and enhances overall business performance. Punctuality and discipline also strengthen customer confidence and improve organizational credibility.

Effective marketing is indispensable for business growth. Even outstanding products or services cannot succeed if potential customers are unaware of them. Today, social media, digital advertising, websites, online stores, and

Continued on Page 7

Trump’s Unilateral Pause, as Ukraine Enters the Iran War

For nearly two weeks, the United States has presented the renewed air campaign against Iran as a demonstration of overwhelming military superiority. President Donald Trump, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth and Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Gen. Dan Caine have described relentless attacks involving hundreds of aircraft, cruise missiles, drones and precision-guided weapons.

Judged exclusively through Western briefings, one might conclude that Iran should already have been rendered militarily helpless. Yet the battlefield is producing a different picture. Iran has neither capitulated nor accepted Washington’s political conditions. It continues launching missiles and drones, threatening American bases and challenging shipping arrangements in the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran has now offered its own account of the campaign. Iranian military officials claim that their objective is to “blind” the American war machine by attacking the systems that enable it to detect, interpret and respond. They list command-and-control centers, satellite communications, early-warning radars, Patriot-associated systems, maintenance installations, aircraft hangars, fuel tanks, missile depots and logistical facilities among the targets struck. Tehran also claims to have destroyed an Amazon Web Services facility in Bahrain, which it describes as an important data-processing and intel-

ligence-support center.

The vulnerability of U. S. deployments has also emerged in Washington. During a tense congressional exchange, Representative Pat Ryan cited surviving soldiers who said their position lacked meaningful counter-drone, counter-rocket and overhead protection despite earlier requests for stronger defenses. The contradiction between official assurances and accounts attributed to survivors has intensified questions about force protection and command accountability.

The argument that every American position is heavily fortified has consequently become difficult to sustain. Advanced systems such as Patriot and THAAD are formidable, but they are neither unlimited nor impenetrable. They can be strained by saturation attacks, maneuvering warheads, decoys and the economics of firing costly interceptors against comparatively inexpensive drones.

Trump has acknowledged meetings with major manufacturers—including Lockheed Martin, Boeing, Raytheon and Northrop Grumman—to accelerate or even quadruple production. These concerns over munitions stocks formed part of the background to the latest bombing pause, although the administration presents that pause as

an opportunity for diplomacy.

However, Tehran suspects that previous ceasefires and negotiations allowed the United States to reorganize, replenish and attack again. Washington says talks are progressing; Iran denies that direct negotiations are underway and remains deeply skeptical. Trump has simultaneously offered diplomacy and threatened renewed “strong military action” if no agreement is reached.

This distrust is now the conflict’s most dangerous force. At its center lies the Strait of Hormuz. Political scientist Robert Pape argues that Iran’s ability to selectively control passage—without permanently sealing the waterway—could elevate it into a fourth center of global power alongside the United States, China and Russia. Ships and governments prepared to accommodate Tehran may receive passage, while those supporting military action against it face delay, diversion or attack. Geography thereby becomes political leverage.

Pape’s description of Iran as an emerging world power is not a provocative thesis but increasingly supported by the war’s strategic outcome. Iran cannot yet match the United States, China or Russia in economic size, worldwide military reach or nuclear capacity. But power must also be measured by a state’s

ability to resist coercion, impose costs and compel other governments to alter their behavior.

By surviving the combined military pressure of the United States and Israel, continuing its retaliation and helping force Washington into another pause amid reported pressure on targets and munitions, Iran has frustrated the objectives of a superpower and its most capable regional ally.

Iran’s ability to withstand superior forces, disrupt global energy flows and influence the calculations of states far beyond the Middle East supports Pape’s central thesis: the war intended to reduce Iran may instead be accelerating its emergence as the world’s fourth major power.

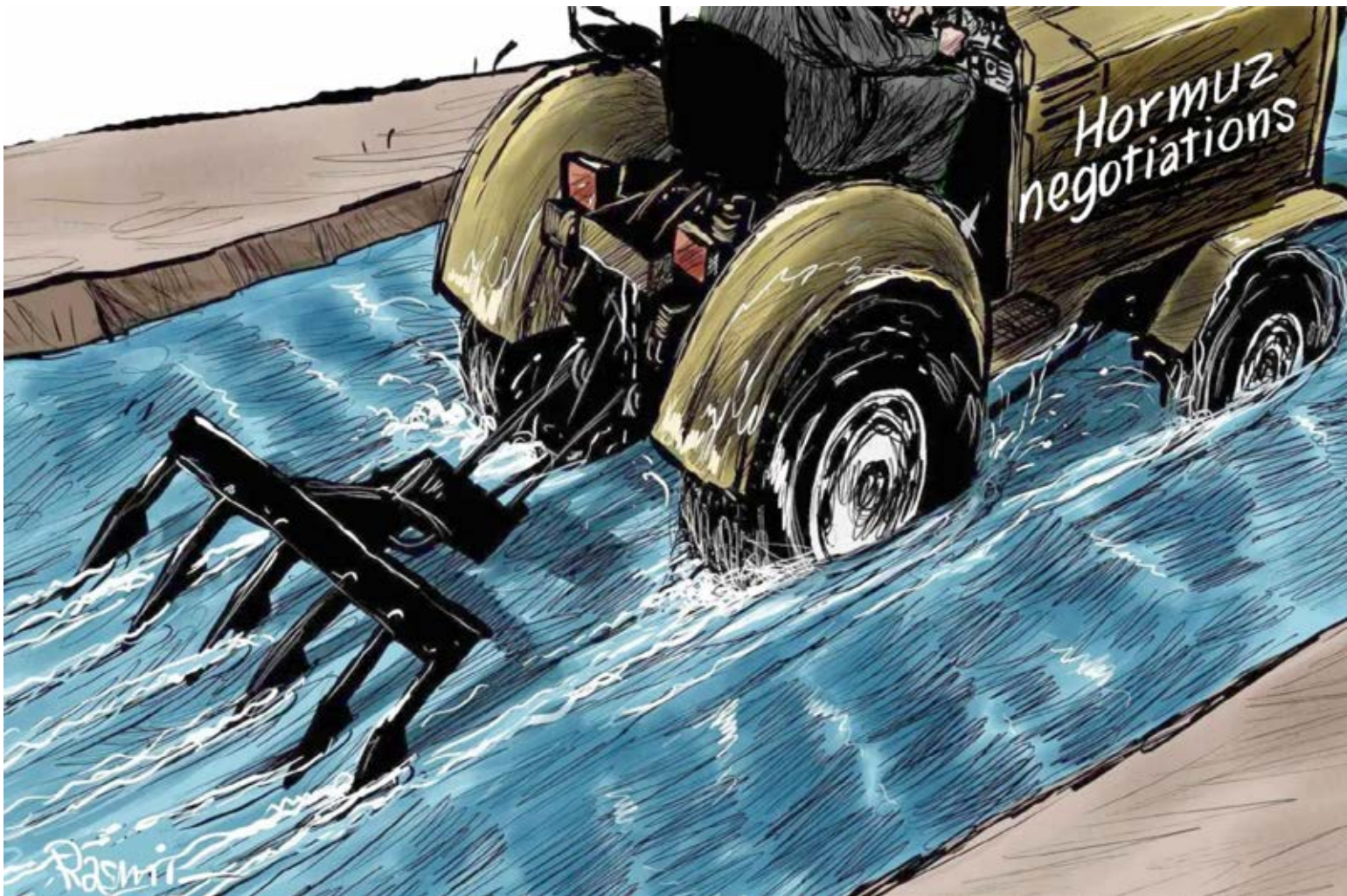
The conflict is also expanding dangerously. Iran has accused Ukraine of attacking an Iranian-flagged vessel in the Caspian Sea, while Kyiv maintains that the targeted ships were carrying military cargo connected to Russia.

Iran has promised consequences. Interestingly, Ukraine has risks opening another front while Kyiv remains heavily engaged against Russia. Iran also possesses economic leverage as Kyiv is highly dependent on imported fuel.

Ukraine already has defense-for-fuel arrangements with Saudi Arabia, Qatar and the UAE, with additional agreements reportedly being pursued with Oman, Kuwait and Bahrain.

Much of the Gulf-origin crude or petroleum products leave the Gulf

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

Pakistan Needs a Path to Economic Independence, Not Just \$10 Billion

Pakistan’s economy is once again passing through a critical phase in which foreign exchange reserves, external debt repayments, rupee stability and investor confidence have become central concerns of national economic policy. Against this backdrop, reports that Pakistan has sought a \$10 billion backstop facility from the United States have attracted considerable attention. If approved, such a facility could provide temporary support to Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves, ease pressure on the rupee and strengthen the country’s external payments position. Yet, from an economist’s perspective, the more fundamental question is this: does Pakistan need another \$10 billion in external financing, or does it need meaningful economic relief that can help it break free from its recurring dependence on foreign assistance and borrowing?

According to reports, Pakistan has requested a \$10 billion backstop facility from the United States for a period of five years. The facility is reportedly being sought under the US Exchange Stabilization Fund. If approved, it could help restore confidence in international financial markets, strengthen Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves and protect the rupee from undue pressure. However, there has so far been no formal confirmation or denial of the reported request.

Pakistan is currently operating under an IMF programme of around \$7 billion. To meet the programme’s conditions, the government has had to take difficult measures, including raising taxes, reducing public expenditure, reforming the energy sector and enforcing greater fiscal

discipline. These measures have helped bring a degree of short-term stability to the economy, but they have also increased the burden of inflation and taxation on ordinary citizens.

It is also a fact that Pakistan narrowly avoided the risk of default in 2023 through a \$3 billion IMF Standby Arrangement. The country has also received financial assistance from international institutions to deal with the effects of climate change.

Deposits and loan rollovers from friendly countries have repeatedly helped shore up Pakistan’s foreign exchange reserves. Financial assistance from Saudi Arabia and the repayment of external obligations involving the United Arab Emirates further illustrate the extent to which Pakistan’s external financial position continues to depend on support from partner countries.

But the question remains: how long can this cycle continue?

Even if Pakistan succeeds in securing a \$10 billion backstop facility from the United States, the money would essentially be a financial cushion, not a permanent source of income. At some point, it would have to be repaid or carry a financial cost. It would therefore be more appropriate to view such a facility as a protective shield rather than an economic breakthrough. Pakistan’s real economic success will come when it no longer has to turn to the IMF, friendly countries or major global powers every few years to keep its external accounts in balance.

This is where the government needs to broaden the scope of its economic diplomacy.

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Four Pakistan Navy Commodores Promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Commodore Tasawar Iqbal, Commodore Muhammad Umair, Commodore Shahid Wasif, and Commodore Rao Ahmed Imran Anwar of Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral. South Asians & Diaspora

Rear Admiral Tasawar Iqbal was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1995. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has also completed Inter Services Staff Course from France. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including Commanding Officer PNS ALAMGIR, Commander 25th Destroyer Squadron, Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy and Senior Pakistan Navy Officer at Riyadh, KSA. Rear Admiral Tasawar Iqbal is currently serving as Commander West. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral has been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Rear Admiral Muhammad Umair was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1996. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad.



REAR ADMIRAL TASAWAR IQBAL SI(M) REAR ADMIRAL MUHAMMAD UMAIR SI(M) REAR ADMIRAL SHAHID WASIF SI(M) REAR ADMIRAL RAO AHMED IMRAN SI(M) T B

He has also done Communication Command Course from China and Naval Staff College Course from USA. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including Commanding Officer PNS QUWWAT, PNS TARIQ, PNS TABUK and Commander 14th Destroyer Squadron. The Admiral also served as Deputy Director Naval Operational Plans (Strategy) at Naval Headquarters Islamabad. Rear Admiral Muhammad Umair is currently

serving as Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, Karachi. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral has been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Rear Admiral Shahid Wasif was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1996. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has also completed Advance Command and Staff Course from UK with Masters Degree in

Defence Studies from King's College London, Defence & Strategic Studies Course from Australia and Masters in International Relations from Deakin University Australia. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including Commanding Officer PNS SAIF, Deputy Director Naval Operational Plans (Strategy), Assistant Naval Secretary (Operations), Director Human Resources and Principal Secretary to Chief of the Naval

Staff at Naval Headquarters Islamabad. Rear Admiral Shahid Wasif is currently serving as Commander 25th Destroyer Squadron, Karachi. In recognition of his meritorious service, the Admiral has been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Rear Admiral Rao Ahmed Imran Anwar was commissioned in Operations Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1996. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore and National Defence University, Islamabad. He has also completed Advance Command & Staff Course from UK with Masters Degree in Defence Studies from King's College London. The Admiral has an illustrious career covering vast experience of various Command and Staff appointments including Commanding Officer PNS ZARRAR, PNS SHAMSHEER, PNS ZULFIQUAR and Commander 10th Patrol Craft Squadron. The officer has also served as Assistant Chief of Naval Staff (Operations) at Naval Headquarters Islamabad, Naval Advisor (Pakistan) at New Delhi (India), and Deputy Commandant at Pakistan Navy War College, Lahore. Rear Admiral Rao Ahmed Imran Anwar is currently serving as Naval Secretary at Naval Headquarters Islamabad. In recognition of his meritorious service, he has been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Tamgha-e-Basalat. South Asians & Diaspora

UNDP, Hashoo Foundation Complete Environmental Justice Training for Swat Community Leaders



 Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Pakistan, in partnership with the Hashoo Foundation and the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Climate Change, Forestry, Environment and Wildlife Department, has completed a training programme for 40 Environmental Human Rights Defenders and Insider Mediators from Swat. The initiative, comprising 20 women and 20 men, was conducted under the project "Empowering Women for

Peace and Environmental Justice in Swat," part of UNDP's Decentralization, Human Rights and Local Governance (DHL) Project.

Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Syed Fakhar Jehan, addressing the closing ceremony as chief guest, praised the programme, saying grassroots conflict resolution and environmental advocacy are essential for regional stability and addressing climate-related challenges. Special Secretary Talha Hussain reaffirmed the provincial government's commit-



ment to strengthening community-based environmental protection networks.

UNDP Pakistan Resident Representative Dr. Samuel Rizk highlighted the link between environmental degradation and social tensions, noting that trained community mediators can help identify emerging issues, promote dialogue and connect communities with relevant public institutions. He stressed that the initiative complements, rather than replaces, government institutions.

Ten participants shared their experiences of applying mediation skills to environmental issues, encouraging women's participation and responsible engagement with authorities. The programme aims to strengthen community resilience by promoting inclusive dialogue, environmental justice and effective coordination with disaster management, justice and local governance institutions. The event concluded with a group photograph and official luncheon attended by government representatives and partner organisations.

12.9 million people living with Hepatitis in Pakistan, WHO renews support to advance 2030 elimination targets

 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On World Hepatitis Day, WHO called for urgent, science-based action and renewed its support for Pakistan's efforts to eliminate hepatitis as a public health problem by 2030. Hepatitis affects an estimated 12.9 million people in Pakistan, including 9 million with hepatitis C and 3.8 million with hepatitis B, with over 48,000 deaths annually—one every 11 minutes.

Pakistan bears the world's heaviest hepatitis C burden, holding 9 million of 47 million global cases, though only 3 in 10 affected people know their status. The high burden stems largely from historical healthcare-associated transmission, including needle reuse and unsafe blood transfusions. Over 88,000 new hepatitis C infections were recorded in 2024 alone.



Under the theme "Hepatitis: Let's break it down,"

WHO reaffirmed support for Pakistan's initiatives, including the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C Infection. WHO Representative Dr. Luo Dapeng pledged continued partnership to accelerate research, integrate hepatitis services into universal health coverage, enhance prevention including vaccination, and ensure equitable testing and treatment access.

Common transmission routes in Pakistan include unregulated blood banks, reused syringes, unsafe surgical and dental procedures, and unsterile practices at barbershops and tattoo parlors. Globally, hepatitis B and C caused 1.34 million deaths in 2024, with over 4,900 new infections daily.

WHO emphasized continued support for newborn hepatitis B vaccination within 24 hours of birth, alongside strengthened diagnosis and treatment access nationwide.

Tarab Nafees Appreciates Pakistan Idol for Reviving Young Talent

 Bureau Report

KARACHI: Emerging singer and Pakistan Idol finalist Tarab Nafees has expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Pakistan Idol platform, saying the competition has provided aspiring singers with an invaluable opportunity to showcase their talent to the audience.

In a private gathering, Tarab said Pakistan Idol is more than just a singing competition—it is a platform that discovers, nurtures, and promotes young artists from across the country, regardless of their background.

"I sincerely appreciate Pakistan Idol for providing emerging musicians the opportunity to pursue their dreams. For many talented individuals, this platform serves as a gateway to the music industry and allows them to share their passion with millions of people," she said.

Tarab noted that after taking a break from music for several years to focus on her education, Pakistan Idol gave her the confidence to return to the stage and rediscover her passion for singing.

"Making it through the last few episodes of the competition has been an incredible honor. The experience has not only helped me grow as a vocalist but has also strengthened my confidence as a performer. Every performance has been a learning experience," she added.

She also appreciated the judges, mentors, production team, and organizers for their professionalism and commitment to encouraging new talent.

"I am deeply thankful to the judges for their valuable guidance and constructive feedback, and to the entire production team for creating such a professional environment where contestants can perform at their best," she said. Tarab further expressed gratitude to her supporters across Pakistan and abroad for their overwhelming love and encouragement throughout the competition.

"The messages, prayers and unwavering support from people across the country have been my greatest source of motivation. I am truly grateful to everyone who has believed in me and stood by me throughout this journey," she remarked.

Reaffirming her commitment to music, Tarab said she hopes to continue learning, improving her craft and, one day, represent Pakistan on the international stage.

She added that platforms like Pakistan Idol play a vital role in strengthening the country's music industry by discovering fresh talent and inspiring the next generation of artists to pursue their dreams with confidence and dedication.



DPM/FM Dar expresses deep grief over losses in Japan's devastating quake

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar, Tuesday, expressed deep sorrow over the devastating earthquake that struck Japan's Kumamoto Prefecture.

In a message posted on his official X account, the DPM/FM conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to the Government and people of Japan, particularly to the families who lost their loved ones.

He also wished a swift recovery for all those injured in the disaster. "Pakistan stands in solidarity with Japan during this difficult time," the statement said, underscoring Islamabad's support for Tokyo in the aftermath of the tragedy.

Japan, UNICEF Reaffirm Longstanding Partnership for Children in Pakistan

 News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan and UNICEF have reaffirmed their decades-long partnership to improve the lives of children in Pakistan through investments in health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation, hygiene, and child protection.

Japan remains one of UNICEF's largest and longest-standing global partners, supporting Pakistan's efforts in emergency response, polio eradication, and strengthening essential public services. Following the

devastating 2022 floods, Japan provided US\$6.48 million to UNICEF to assist vulnerable communities in Sindh and Balochistan. The funding enabled access to safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, healthcare, and nutrition services, while helping communities build resilience against future disasters.

Speaking on the occasion, Japanese Ambassador H. E. Akamatsu Shuichi said the partnership reflects a shared commitment to ensuring every child has the opportunity to live a healthy, safe, and dignified life. He also

highlighted Japan's longstanding support for Pakistan's polio eradication programme, which has reached millions of children in remote areas.

Acting UNICEF Representative Sharmela Rasool praised Japan's unwavering support, saying it has enabled millions of children to survive, recover, and thrive during emergencies while strengthening long-term development systems. She said the continued collaboration will help ensure sustainable recovery and improved opportunities for children and families across Pakistan.



 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
177,623.88	178,262.33
Day's High	Day's Low
179,123.00	177,434.96
Index Value	Change
29,343,294,208	−638.45
Percentage	Time
−0.36%	28 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,871.02	+89.27
Percentage	Time
+0.83%	28 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,802.31	+592.23
Percentage	Time
+1.13%	28 Jul, 1:43 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
62,364.92	−2,566.27
Percentage	Time
−3.95%	28 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	197.73	201.53
China Yuan	38.17	38.92
Danish Krone	42.70	43.37
Euro	319.25	323.75
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	75.88	76.35
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.30
Singapore Dollar	216.03	219.05
Swedish Korona	28.35	28.95
Swiss Franc	342.17	346.37
Thai Bhat	8.60	8.95
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	373.65	379.47
US Dollar	278.75	278.95

Hard Work and Dedication Lead to Success: Omar Aitzaz Promoted to Askari Bank EVP

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Omar Aitzaz has been promoted to Executive Vice President (EVP) at Askari Bank, crediting hard work, honesty, and dedication for his success. Speaking after the promotion, he said sincerity, commitment, and fulfilling responsibilities with integrity are key to personal and professional growth. He added that Allah never lets sincere efforts go unrewarded. Reflecting on his career, Aitzaz shared that he worked day and night with dedication to achieve excellence at Askari Bank. "This promotion is the result of years of hard work and the blessings of Allah Almighty," he said, expressing gratitude. To mark the occasion, colleagues Malik Qasim Majeed, Hammad Tahir, Aqib Hussain, Raja Hamza and Hafiz Malik Muhammad Bilal visited his office, congratulated him, and presented flowers.

Packages mall and inDrive partner to waive parking entry fee for passengers and drivers

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: inDrive, a global mobility and urban services platform, has announced a strategic partnership with Packages Mall, one of Lahore's premier shopping destinations, to introduce dedicated in-mall pick-up hotspots for its users. As part of this collaboration, passengers and drivers using the inDrive platform will no longer be required to pay the mall's entry fee when accessing these designated pick-up points. The initiative is designed to streamline the rider experience, reduce friction for drivers, and make urban mobility more accessible and cost-effective.

Pak-China Pharma Deals Worth \$1.4bn hailed as “Game Changer” - Must Turn Into Plants, Jobs and Exports: Mian Zahid Hussain

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and Chairman FPCCI Policy Advisory Board Mian Zahid Hussain has welcomed the major Pak-China pharmaceutical and healthcare agreements, calling them a key opportunity to cut import dependence, strengthen health security and build an export-oriented industry. He noted the Pakistan-China Pharmaceutical and Healthcare B2B Conference produced 22 commercial agreements worth \$629.5 million and 84 MoUs valued at around \$800 million. The event hosted 240 Chinese delegates from 140 companies and 430 Pakistani delegates from 210 companies, with 340 bilateral business meetings held.

The deals cover 8 projects for local vaccine production, 8 for medical-device manufacturing, 2 for active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs), 2 for clinical trials, and 2 for generic formulations and injectables. Hussain stressed these must now be converted into operational plants with clear investment timelines, local job targets and mandatory technology transfer. He highlighted Pakistan's structural weakness: while 85% of finished medicines are made locally, 95% of raw materials/APIs are imported. This exposes prices and supply to currency depreciation and global disruptions. Local API production can save forex and improve supply security. Pakistan currently imports all 13 vaccines under the national immunization program, with the import bill projected to hit \$1.2



billion by 2030. The new National Local Vaccine Production Policy, backed by

Chinese investment, can build domestic capacity in vaccines, biologics and cold-chain tech. Pharma exports hit a record \$457 million in FY2024-25, up 34% to 80+ markets, but Hussain said this is still far below potential given Pakistan's manufacturing base and access to Central Asia, Middle East and Africa. He noted production contracted 5.1% in July–March FY2026 vs 2.3% growth last year, and urged new investments to reverse this through modern machinery, R&D and international certifications. He appreciated PM Shehbaz Sharif, Ministry of NHS, DRAP, TDAP, BOI and Pakistan's embassy in China for facilitating the deals. He also welcomed 85% digitization of DRAP processes and cut in medical-device approval time to 20 days.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan Mr. Khazar Farhadov called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

GSMA Brings National Leaders Together to Advance Digital Pakistan 2030

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senior representatives from Pakistan's federal and provincial governments, Gilgit-Baltistan, regulators, the mobile industry, and international development partners gathered at the GSMA Digital Nation Pakistan Ministerial Roundtable to discuss practical measures for accelerating the Digital Pakistan 2030 agenda. The roundtable focused on strengthening collaboration among governments, industry, and development partners to sustain Pakistan's digital transformation. On the occasion, the GSMA launched its discussion paper, "Digital Pakistan 2030: Building Momentum for Sustainable Investment, Trust and Inclusive Growth," outlining progress made in spectrum policy, mobile internet and smartphone adoption, women's digital inclusion, cybersecurity, and government-industry cooperation. Speaking at the event, Julian Gorman, Head of Asia Pacific at GSMA, said Pakistan has established strong foundations for digital growth, but achieving Digital Pakistan 2030 will require sustained collaboration, coordinated implementation, and long-term investment. The report identified five strategic priorities: creating investment certainty, accelerating digital inclusion through affordable connectivity and digital skills, preparing infrastructure for the AI economy with 5G, fibre and data centres, strengthening cybersecurity and digital trust, and improving national coordination among stakeholders. The meeting concluded with a joint Call to Action, reaffirming a shared commitment to promoting digital innovation, inclusive economic growth, and coordinated implementation of Pakistan's digital transformation agenda.



security and digital trust, and improving national coordination among stakeholders. The meeting concluded with a joint Call to Action, reaffirming a shared commitment to promoting digital innovation, inclusive economic growth, and coordinated implementation of Pakistan's digital transformation agenda.

Both sides observed that the Ambassador's tenure witnessed significant progress in political, economic and commercial cooperation, marked by frequent high-level exchanges, strengthened institutional collaboration,

Calls for promoting processed meat exports

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pak International Business Forum (PIBF) has expressed serious concern over the Punjab government's policy permitting the export of live animals, stating that such a practice undermines Pakistan's meat processing industry, reduces value addition, and deprives the country of much-needed export earnings and employment opportunities. PIBF President Dr. Mushtaq Mangat said that Pakistan possesses one of the largest livestock populations in the region and should focus on exporting

processed and value-added halal meat instead of live animals. He said the export of processed meat not only generates higher foreign exchange but also creates jobs across the value chain, including livestock farming, slaughtering, meat processing, packaging, cold storage, logistics and allied industries. PIBF Lahore Vice President Abdul Hannan, who is also Chairman All Pakistan Meat Exporters Association, said that the country's meat processing sector has made substantial investments in internationally compliant processing plants and cold-chain infrastructure.

Outgoing Azerbaijani envoy calls on Commerce Minister, both sides hail historic bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD: Outgoing Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, Khazar Farhadov, called on Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan at the Ministry of Commerce, where both sides reviewed the remarkable progress achieved in Pakistan–Azerbaijan relations during the Ambassador's successful tenure and reaffirmed their commitment to further expanding bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation. The meeting reflected on a historic period of unprecedented momentum in bilateral engagement, driven by the close friendship and shared vision of the leadership of Pakistan and Azerbaijan, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

enhanced people-to-people contacts and growing trade and investment opportunities. Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan commended Ambassador Khazar Farhadov for his outstanding contribution to strengthening the strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries. He appreciated the Ambassador's professionalism, constructive diplomacy and unwavering commitment to promoting bilateral cooperation, describing his tenure as one of the most productive phases in the history of Pakistan–Azerbaijan relations. The Minister noted that the strong rapport between the leadership of both countries had translated political goodwill into tangible economic outcomes.



Sindh Inaugurates Modern Agricultural Research Labs to Boost Food Security

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: The Sindh government has inaugurated state-of-the-art Agriculture Research Laboratories in Tandojam to modernize agricultural research, improve food security, and help farmers tackle climate change and crop diseases. Sindh Agriculture Minister Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mahar inaugurated the facilities in the presence of senior officials, scientists, and growers. During the ceremony, he announced that crop disease diagnostic services would be provided free of cost to farmers. The new molecular testing laboratory can detect crop diseases and viruses within

two hours and analyse up to 90 agricultural samples simultaneously. The minister said research is underway to combat Panama Wilt, a serious disease affecting banana crops, while speed breeding technology is being used to develop climate-resilient wheat varieties that mature faster and produce higher yields. Mahar also announced a province-wide crackdown on the sale of fake agricultural medicines and substandard fertilisers, warning that officials failing to act would face action, including possible referral to the Anti-Corruption Establishment. He directed authorities to submit a report on enforcement measures within one week.



First Lady Asifa Bhutto visits Spencer Eye Hospital in Lyari

Bureau Report

KARACHI: First Lady and Member of the National Assembly, Asifa Bhutto Zardari, on Tuesday visited the Spencer Eye Hospital in Lyari, which has recently been renovated and modernized under a public-private

partnership by the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation led by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab and the Government of Sindh.

During the visit, she was briefed that the hospital is providing free outpatient (OPD) services to around 4,000 patients daily. Since



April 2026, more than 700 laser and other medical procedures have been successfully performed at the facility.

The First Lady reviewed the free and quality healthcare services being provided at the hospital and appreciated the dedication and profes-

sional commitment of the doctors, paramedical staff and the entire hospital team for serving the public.

Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Member of the National Assembly Shazia Marri, and other officials accompanied First Lady Asifa Bhutto Zardari during the visit.

CDA, Clean and Green Islamabad Launch Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, launched its Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign by planting 1,000 saplings at Parade Ground, marking the start of a broader drive to plant 10,000 trees across the federal capital.

The campaign was inaugurated by CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf and Clean and Green Islamabad Move-



ment Chairman Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari. The ceremony was

attended by senior CDA officials, business leaders, representatives of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and members of the public.

Speaking on the occasion, Sohail Ashraf said the campaign aims not only to plant trees but also to ensure their long-term care and survival, stressing CDA's commitment to environmental sustainability and urban greening.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari called for collective efforts by government institutions, the business community, educa-

tional institutions, and citizens to transform Islamabad into a true Green Capital. He also urged improvements in city cleanliness, drainage systems, and drinking water facilities.

CDA Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi assured full support for environmental initiatives and said traders would be consulted in future policymaking. The event concluded with commemorative shields presented to distinguished participants in recognition of their contributions to environmental conservation.

Multan Administration on High Alert as Flood Preparedness Intensified

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Multan district administration has intensified flood preparedness measures and maintained a red alert across the district in view of a possible flood situation, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Faisal Saleem said during a visit to flood-prone areas.

The deputy commissioner inspected the river belt, safety embankments, and flood

protection arrangements in Jalalpur Pirwala, including Head Muhammad Wala, Band Bosan, and Sher Shah. He also received a detailed briefing from relevant departments on the water situation in the Chenab and Sutlej rivers.

Officials informed him that around 165,000 cuses of water is currently flowing through the Chenab River in Multan district, categorised as a low flood level, with no immediate threat of

high flooding anywhere in the district.

Dr. Faisal Saleem directed officials to maintain continuous monitoring of safety embankments, keep all emergency resources ready, and ensure timely evacuation of residents living in vulnerable riverine areas if required. He stressed that protecting human lives remains the administration's top priority.

The deputy commissioner



also urged citizens to avoid believing rumours about high floods and rely only on official information. He assured the public that district administration teams are deployed in the field and all necessary arrangements have been completed to respond promptly to any flood emergency.

DPM/FM Dar invites US firms to invest in Pakistan, projects \$20 bn bilateral trade in five years

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"The Government of Pakistan remains committed to deepening its constructive engagement with the U. S. government, businesses, investors and entrepreneurs to expand bilateral trade and investment across goods and services, including IT, AI, energy, manufacturing, critical minerals, agriculture and other emerging sectors," he said.

He said Pakistan remained ready to offer competitive incentives for greater U. S. investment, including opportunities in special economic zones and technology parks.

The deputy prime minister also expressed the hope that the U. S. Export-Import Bank (Ex-Im Bank), the U. S. International Development Finance

Corporation (DFC) and the U. S. Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) would continue supporting expanded trade and investment between the two countries.

Inviting American investors to become partners in Pakistan's economic transformation, the deputy prime minister assured them that the government, under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, would continue providing full facilitation for their long-term success.

He said Pakistan's embassy in Washington, D. C., and its consulates across the United States would remain available to assist American investors in connecting with relevant institutions in Pakistan.

Highlighting the broader bilateral relationship, Ishaq Dar said Pakistan and the United States shared the common

objective of promoting lasting peace, stability and prosperity. He said Pakistan remained committed to dialogue and diplomacy as the only sustainable path towards resolving disputes and maintaining regional peace.

The deputy prime minister said Pakistan had transformed its diplomatic standing over the past few years and was now widely recognised as a responsible peacemaker contributing to regional and international stability.

He urged members of the visiting U. S. business delegation to serve as ambassadors of Pakistan's positive image in the United States and play an active role in promoting the country's vast economic potential and investment opportunities among the American business community.

Trump's Unilateral Pause, as Ukraine Enters the Iran War

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through Hormuz before reaching Ukraine. Iran could therefore delay, restrict or threaten Ukraine-linked cargoes, increasing shipping and insurance costs and aggravating Ukrainian fuel shortages. Such sustained disruption at Hormuz would give Tehran a potent means of inflicting economic and logistical pressure on Kyiv.

Moreover, Tehran has already demonstrated its ability to launch missiles at Diego Garcia, approximately 4,000 kilometres, or 2,500 miles, from Iran, whereas, Kyiv is closer to Iranian territory and could therefore fall within the range of Iran's longer-range systems.

If Tehran joined Moscow in attacking Ukrainian military or energy infrastructure, Kyiv could face coordinated pressure from Russia in the north and east and Iran from the south, further stretching Ukraine's limited air-defence

interceptors. That would not necessarily mean the "end of Ukraine," but it could seriously worsen its already precarious military and economic position.

Kyiv therefore has a compelling strategic interest in repairing relations with Tehran, explaining or limiting its Caspian operations and avoiding actions that could transform one formidable adversary into two.

Against this background, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is again in Washington today (July 27) with Iran at the top of his talks with Trump. Netanyahu continues to frame the desired outcome in terms of ending Iran's nuclear ambitions and fundamentally weakening its governing system. Yet almost five months of war have shown that bombing may destroy facilities without compelling political surrender.

Iran has absorbed enormous punishment, but it has also demonstrated

that it can impose costs on the United States, Israel and their regional partners. It demonstrates something strategically more important: superior firepower has not produced submission.

The war intended to reduce Iran to weakness may instead be teaching the world how much leverage Iran possesses. Peace will not emerge from another tactical pause designed merely to reload. It requires credible negotiations, reciprocal security guarantees and faithful implementation of whatever is agreed.

Otherwise, every pause will become preparation for the next round—and the war meant to contain Iran may continue expanding both Iran's influence and the battlefield itself.

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

Pakistan Needs a Path to Economic Independence, Not Just \$10 Billion

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Securing a facility that helps Pakistan maintain \$10 billion in reserves may be important, but Islamabad should simultaneously seek a broader and more sustainable package of economic relief. Such a package should include measures to reduce the burden of debt servicing, encourage investment, expand exports, facilitate the transfer of modern technology and improve access for Pakistani products to international markets.

The relationship between Pakistan and the United States has a history spanning several decades. The two countries have cooperated at various points on issues of regional peace and security. From the Cold War to the Afghan crisis, Pakistan has played an important role in the wider geopolitics of the region. The country also

paid a heavy price, in both human lives and economic losses, during the war against terrorism. Even today, Pakistan continues to face serious security challenges, with terrorism affecting not only law and order but also economic activity and investor confidence.

In this context, Pakistan's efforts to seek financial and economic cooperation from the United States and other developed countries are understandable and legitimate. But such cooperation should not be confined to loans. The international community should work towards building a genuine economic partnership with Pakistan that enables the country to develop a stronger and more productive economy.

The reality is that borrowing to increase foreign exchange reserves and then borrowing

again to repay previous loans cannot constitute a sustainable economic model. Similarly, obtaining oil on deferred payment terms from Saudi Arabia or securing deposits from friendly countries may provide temporary relief, but neither approach addresses the structural weaknesses of the economy. Pakistan must narrow the widening gap between imports and exports, broaden its tax base, tackle the accumulation of circular debt in the energy sector and stem the persistent losses of state-owned enterprises.

At the same time, attracting foreign direct investment is essential. Pakistan has considerable potential in minerals, information technology, energy and other emerging sectors. International interest in major projects such as Reko Diq is an indication

that the country does not lack economic opportunities. What it lacks is policy continuity, political stability, security and investor confidence.

Investors around the world do not put their money into a country merely because it has mineral resources or a relatively inexpensive labour force. They also assess the strength of the rule of law, the consistency of government policies, the security environment and the extent to which their investments will be protected. If Pakistan genuinely wants to attract greater foreign investment, it must address these fundamental concerns.

Tensions in the Middle East, volatility in global energy prices and potential disruptions to international supply chains pose significant risks to a country like Pakistan, which remains heavily

dependent on imported energy. In such circumstances, strengthening foreign exchange reserves is certainly important. But even more important is the need to expand Pakistan's export capacity and reduce its import bill on a sustainable basis.

The government should therefore continue its efforts to secure a \$10 billion backstop facility from the United States if it can strengthen the country's external financial position. But it should also put forward a broader economic proposition. Pakistan should urge its international partners to view it not merely as a borrower in need of financial assistance, but as a potential economic partner capable of playing a meaningful role in promoting peace, trade and regional economic connectivity.

Pakistan now needs more than loans. It needs investment, trade opportunities, technology, access to export markets and relief from the burden of external debt. If the United States and other developed countries genuinely want to help Pakistan achieve sustainable economic stability, they should move towards a long-term economic partnership rather than relying primarily on short-term financial support.

Ultimately, it must be recognised that a \$10 billion backstop facility could certainly provide Pakistan with useful financial breathing space, but it cannot offer a permanent solution to the country's structural economic problems. True success will come when Pakistan is able to build its foreign exchange reserves through its own economic strength, significantly expand

exports, reduce its dependence on external borrowing and establish a productive and competitive economy.

Pakistan must now move forward not on the strength of repeated bailouts and borrowed money, but through economic reforms, exports, investment and sustainable growth. Securing \$10 billion from the United States would certainly be welcome. But an even greater achievement for Pakistan would be to reach a point where it no longer needs to ask another country for \$10 billion simply to maintain economic stability.

The writer and analyst holds an MSc in Economics from the University of Karachi and is a journalist. His articles and analytical pieces are regularly published in newspapers and magazines.

Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani Calls for Collective Action to Eliminate Hepatitis Disease

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Marking World Hepatitis Day 2026, Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has called for renewed national resolve to eliminate hepatitis, stressing that greater awareness, early diagnosis, and timely treatment are the cornerstones of protecting public health and achieving a hepatitis-free future.



In his message on World Hepatitis Day 2026, observed under the theme "Hepatitis: Let's Break It Down," the Chairman Senate stressed the need to break down barriers to awareness, testing, and treatment.

He said that hepatitis remains a silent but preventable disease, and collective efforts by the government, healthcare professionals, civil society, and citizens are vital to achieving the global goal of eliminating viral hepatitis by 2030.

Chairman Senate called upon all Pakistanis to adopt preventive measures, get tested, and encourage others to seek early medical care.

The Entrepreneur's Path to Business Growth

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other digital platforms allow businesses to reach wider audiences at relatively low cost. Successful entrepreneurs develop strong brand identities, create valuable content, and maintain meaningful engagement with their target audiences. In the digital age, an effective online presence has become a necessity rather than an option.

Technology has become an indispensable part of modern business. Successful entrepreneurs leverage computerized accounting systems, online payment solutions, e-commerce, artificial intelligence (AI), data analytics, cloud computing, and other digital technologies to improve efficiency and decision-making. These technologies help reduce costs, enhance product quality, streamline operations, and deliver faster, more personalized customer service. Businesses that embrace technological innovation are more likely to remain competitive and achieve long-term success.

Building strong professional networks is another important factor in business growth. Successful entrepreneurs establish meaningful relationships with business leaders, industry experts, investors, suppliers, and customers. These professional connections create opportuni-

ties for partnerships, investment, knowledge sharing, and expansion into new markets. In today's interconnected business environment, sustainable success depends not only on quality products and services but also on trust, collaboration, and effective communication.

In conclusion, successful entrepreneurs do not rely solely on financial capital to grow their businesses. They build lasting success through a clear vision, strategic planning, continuous learning, innovation, customer-centric thinking, effective financial management, modern technology, strong leadership, capable teams, professional networking, and the ability to adapt to change. Sustainable business success is not the result of luck; it is earned through informed decisions, perseverance, integrity, discipline, and consistent hard work. Entrepreneurs who embrace change, seize emerging opportunities, and transform challenges into opportunities for growth not only elevate their businesses but also play a meaningful role in driving economic growth, fostering innovation, creating employment opportunities, and building a more prosperous society.

The writer is MBA Finance, Teacher | Educational Researcher and Columnist.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing the second meeting of the Committee on Genetically Modified (GM) Corn at the Finance Division on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister chairs second meeting of Committee on GM Corn

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today chaired the second meeting of the Committee on Genetically Modified (GM) Corn to review progress on the Committee's mandate and deliberate on the way forward for adoption of GM corn technology in Pakistan.

Opening the meeting, the Finance Minister called for focused and constructive deliberations, emphasizing

that the Committee should build consensus through scientific evidence, technical expertise, and international best practices while addressing the concerns of all stakeholders.

The Committee reviewed the follow-up actions from its previous meeting, including the circulation of policy documents and written submissions received from stakeholders. Members exchanged views on the opportunities presented by GM corn technology to enhance agricultural productivity, strengthen

food security, reduce import dependence, and improve competitiveness, while also discussing the need to safeguard Pakistan's maize milling industry, export markets, and existing agricultural value chains.

The meeting also considered stakeholders' recommendations regarding coexistence of GM and non-GM maize, regulatory oversight, biosafety protocols, traceability, storage infrastructure, and supply chain management. Participants highlighted the importance of developing a structured transition framework supported by effective regulatory supervision and international best practices to facilitate the adoption of new technology while preserving export competitiveness.

The Finance Minister emphasized that the working group should engage closely with all stakeholders and develop consensus-based recommendations on a priority basis, reaffirming the Government's commitment to promoting innovation and

modern agricultural technologies while safeguarding Pakistan's agricultural sector and export interests.

The meeting was attended by representatives from public as well as private sector including Coordinator to Prime Minister on Agriculture and Food Security, Federal Secretary for National Food Security and Research, CEO Pakistan Green Initiative, relevant business and export sectors as well as technical and scientific experts with domain knowledge.

Pakistan, Qatar pledge deeper security partnership as Naqvi holds talks in Doha

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Qatar have agreed to strengthen bilateral security cooperation and expand collaboration between their interior ministries following talks between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and his Qatari counterpart Sheikh Khalifa bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani, in Doha.

The two ministers discussed ways to strengthen institutional ties, enhance cooperation across a range of security sectors and exchanged views on the regional security situation.

The meeting focused on enhancing collaboration across a wide range of security-related sectors, with both ministers holding detailed discussions on ways to deepen



their strategic security partnership. They also reiterated their

resolve to further strengthen cooperation between the interior ministries of the

two countries, emphasising the importance of sustained engagement in addressing shared security challenges.

Speaking on the occasion, Naqvi said Pakistan remains firmly committed to expanding cooperation with Qatar in the fields of security and other areas of mutual interest, adding that closer institutional coordination would further strengthen the longstanding relationship between the two friendly nations.

During the meeting, Naqvi also conveyed his heartfelt condolences to his Qatari counterpart on the passing of his father, former Amir of Qatar Sheikh Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani.

Noreen Niazi booked under PECA over alleged anti-state remarks

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Noreen Niazi, the sister of former prime minister Imran Khan, has been booked for levelling false allegations against the country and its armed forces and spreading anti-state propaganda.

The case has been filed with the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in Islamabad.

Noreen Niazi has been booked under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA), 2016, as well as sections 505 and 506 of the Pakistan Penal Code.

According to the FIR, Noreen Niazi made "false and baseless" allegations against the state and the security forces during a podcast, with the intent to undermine public confidence in state institutions and create panic.

It further claims that she used social media to disseminate false, provocative, defamatory and threatening content, while engaging in what investigators described as a coordinated propaganda campaign against state and security institutions.

DPM/FM Dar invites US firms to invest in Pakistan, projects \$20 bn bilateral trade in five years

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Tuesday invited American businesses to take advantage of Pakistan's improving investment climate, saying the two countries had the potential to double bilateral trade to US\$20 billion over the next five years through enhanced economic cooperation and investment.

Addressing a visiting U.S. Congressional delegation (CODEL) and a high-level American business delegation at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the deputy prime minister said Pakistan attached great importance to its long-standing strategic and economic partnership with the United States and was committed to expanding cooperation in trade, investment and emerging sectors.

Welcoming the delegation, DPM/FM Ishaq Dar said the visit reflected the enduring friendship between the two countries and the growing positive momentum in Pakistan-U.S. relations.

He said Pakistan and the United States, home to the world's fifth and third largest populations respectively, possessed immense potential to build a mutually beneficial partnership by



leveraging each other's economic strengths.

"The United States is Pakistan's largest single-country export destination, with bilateral trade reaching US\$9.4 billion during the last fiscal year," he said, expressing confidence that the volume could be doubled to US\$20 billion over the next five years.

The deputy prime minister said Pakistan believed in fair, balanced and reciprocal trade that created value for both economies and delivered shared prosperity for their peoples.

He noted that Pakistan remained among the largest importers of U. S. cotton and soybeans, supporting Amer-

ican farmers, while also emerging as an important market for U. S. hydrocarbons. Likewise, Pakistan's growing demand for advanced machinery, technology and capital goods offered significant opportunities for U. S. manufacturers.

He said leading U. S. companies were exploring opportunities in Pakistan's technology, artificial intelligence, critical minerals, energy, defence and manufacturing sectors, adding that the country's ongoing structural reforms and competitive U. S. tariff regime had further enhanced its attractiveness as an investment destination.

DPM/FM Dar highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), describing it as a one-window platform established to facilitate investors by streamlining approvals and ensuring effective coordination among government institutions.

He encouraged the visiting business leaders to continue engaging with the SIFC to convert emerging opportunities into long-term commercial partnerships.

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PM Shehbaz Orders Faster SME Loan Access, Sets Target to Double Financing by 2028



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting and directed authorities to expedite SME loan access, calling easy credit the foundation of sustainable growth. He said improved financing will boost investment, production, jobs and exports.

To institutionalize reforms, the PM approved a three-tier governance structure. He will personally head the

top-tier committee. The second tier, an Access to Finance (A2F) steering committee, will be led by the Finance Minister with SBP Governor as co-chair. Sector-specific sub-committees will cover SME, agriculture, IT, renewable energy and housing finance.

Officials said SME financing currently stands at Rs 1.15 trillion as of June 2026 and is targeted to reach Rs 2 trillion by June 2028. The number of SME borrowers is set to rise from 324,000 to 775,000, while SME lending's share of total bank credit should grow from 9.9% to 13%.

To track progress, a scoring system will evaluate bank performance on SME and business lending. The PM also announced an annual award for the bank with the highest credit to SMEs.

The meeting was attended by Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Muhammad Aurangzeb, MoS Bilal Azhar Kayani, SAPM Haroon Akhtar, SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad, PBA Chairman Zafar Masud and senior officials.

Gunmen abduct seven labourers in Balochistan, sparking massive search operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Armed men abducted seven labourers after intercepting their vehicle in Balochistan's Turbat district on Tuesday, prompting police and law enforcement agencies to launch a large-scale search operation.

According to police, the incident occurred in the Kalatak area, where armed assailants set up a roadblock and stopped a vehicle carrying non-local workers. The gunmen forcibly removed all seven labourers from the vehicle and took them to an unknown location.

Police said a local passerby, identified as Abdul Razzaq, was killed

after the attackers opened fire during the incident.

Shortly after the abduction, authorities recovered the bullet-riddled body of one of the abducted non-local workers from the Surag area. Efforts are underway to trace and rescue the remaining abducted labourers.

Following the attack, police and other law enforcement agencies cordoned off the area and launched a search operation.

Raids are being conducted at multiple locations to locate the kidnappers and recover the remaining workers.

Police said an investigation into the incident is also underway.

Arrested militant exposes armed network behind Rawalakot violence, authorities say



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Fresh revelations have emerged about the violence in Rawalakot after authorities said arrested operatives of a proscribed action committee confessed to their involvement in armed attacks on security forces and exposed the group's violent agenda.

According to official sources, Mohammad Abid, an arrested militant affiliated with the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC), admitted during interrogation that he was part of the group's armed wing.

He confessed that he and 10 to 15 accomplices were injured during an exchange of fire with Rangers and claimed their gunfire wounded four to five Rangers personnel.

Abid further disclosed that around 100 to 150 armed militants linked to the proscribed JAAC remain deployed at various locations with weapons.

Authorities said the suspect also revealed that he had been brought from abroad around two weeks ago specifically to take part in the operation.

He admitted to being a trained sniper, a disclosure officials say confirms the presence of professionally trained armed elements among those involved in the unrest.

Security experts said these disclosures indicate the violence was pre-planned and organised, while law enforcement agencies exercised restraint, professionalism and responsibility to restore peace and maintain public order.