



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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LHC judge Sardar Akbar Dogar decides 337 cases in four days during summer vacations

The figures showed that Justice Dogar disposed of a large number of criminal petitions while sitting on both single and division benches, maintaining a rapid pace of hearings despite the vacation period. Of the total cases decided, 293 were disposed of by the single bench, while 44 were decided by the division bench.



Ishaq Dar, Saudi foreign minister discuss Red Sea, Palestine situation

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan, with the two sides discussing regional and global developments, the Foreign Office said. The ministers reviewed the latest situation in the Red Sea and the Bab al-Mandab Strait, a strategically important maritime route linking the Red Sea with the Gulf of Aden.

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Addressed

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi addressing during Pakistan Economic Summit at Jinnah Convention Center, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Naqvi calls for new provinces, says system 'collapsed'

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday said Pakistan's existing governance system could no longer address the country's challenges, calling for sweeping reforms and the creation of new administrative units or provinces to improve public service delivery.

Addressing the Pakistan Economic Summit in Islamabad, Naqvi said the country's current system had effectively "collapsed"

and required a complete reset to resolve long-standing structural problems.

"Whether people accept it or not, the system has collapsed," he said. "If this system continues, we will still be discussing the same issues 10 years from now."

Naqvi said participants at the summit had not only identified the country's key economic and governance challenges but had also proposed practical solutions.

He acknowledged that policymakers themselves shared

responsibility for Pakistan's current situation and stressed that meaningful reforms, rather than temporary measures, were needed to achieve lasting progress.

The interior minister said he remained a strong supporter of democracy but argued that democratic governance must also evolve through institutional reforms.

He said devolving powers to the grassroots level and establishing new administrative units

— whether described as provinces or by another name — could help address governance issues more effectively.

Naqvi also pointed to the country's youth, saying they primarily sought employment opportunities but were often deprived of even this basic need.

"We cannot solve problems by distributing a few thousand rupees or tablets," he said, adding that policymakers needed to address underlying issues and ensure opportunities for young

people through sincere reforms.

He also remarked that Pakistan's international image had improved in recent years, but emphasised that substantial domestic reforms remained necessary to strengthen governance and economic stability.

Warning against complacency, Naqvi said delayed reforms could worsen the country's challenges, expressing hope that timely decisions and decentralisation would help put Pakistan on a more sustainable path.

PM Shehbaz orders technical audit of DISCOs, pushes power sector reforms



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed a comprehensive technical audit of DISCOs' billing systems, calling power sector reforms a top government priority.

Chairing a review meeting, he said while DISCO performance has improved, more work is needed. He termed nationwide smart meter installation essential for turn-around and ordered strict enforcement to eliminate electricity theft. The Power Division was told to set clear performance indicators and integrated targets with timelines. The best-performing

DISCO will be formally awarded to promote competition.

To address rural load-shedding, the PM directed village-level solarization projects for decentralized energy solutions.

Officials briefed that technical and commercial losses are declining. IESCO, LESCO, and GEPCO recorded lowest losses last fiscal year, while IESCO, LESCO, GEPCO, FESCO, and MEPCO achieved 100% recoveries in FY 2025-26. DISCO Support Units are operational in 5 regions.

The first phase of AMPS for transformers will finish by Sept 30, and a plan to install 16.2 million AMI meters in 5 regions is under consideration.

Dar, Turkish FM discuss Gaza crisis, reaffirm support for Palestinians

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Thursday held a telephone conversation with Turkey's Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan to discuss the worsening situation in Palestine and recent regional developments.

The two foreign ministers expressed deep concern over the continued Israeli military actions in Gaza and the Occupied West Bank, repeated violations at the Al Aqsa Mosque compound in occupied East Jerusalem, and the worsening humanitarian situation.

They also exchanged views



on recent regional and international developments, with particular focus on the grave situation in Palestine.

They reaffirmed their unwavering support for the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and discussed Jordan's proposal to convene a meeting of Arab and Islamic countries to coordinate diplomatic efforts in support of the Palestinian people.

Two Miners Dead, 20 Trapped in Coal Mine Explosion Near Quetta

Bureau Report

QUETTA: At least two miners were killed and around 20 remain trapped after an explosion caused a private coal mine to collapse in Spin Karez, Soranj near Quetta, officials said Thursday.

Around 25 labourers were working

inside when the blast occurred. Three miners were evacuated safely and two bodies have been recovered so far. A large-scale rescue operation is underway to reach those trapped under debris and toxic gases.

PDMA dispatched rescue teams and four ambulances on the orders of DG

Jahanzeb Khan. Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfaraz Bugti directed the chief inspector of mines and senior PDMA officials to supervise the operation.

Provincial Minister for Mines Mir Shoaib Noshervani said all machinery and emergency resources have been

deployed. Rescue teams are ventilating the mine and clearing debris, but unstable tunnels and gases are hampering efforts.

Labour leader Pir Muhammad Kakar urged the government to use all resources. Authorities said safety arrangements will be strengthened and the cause of the explosion will be investigated.

Pakistan Working to Ease US-Iran Tensions Through Diplomacy

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan on Thursday reaffirmed its commitment to regional peace, saying it is actively working to help bring the United States and Iran back to the negotiating table under the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). Speaking at the weekly media briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said Islamabad is engaged with key regional stakeholders to reduce tensions in the Middle East and restore stability, particularly around the Strait of Hormuz.

He highlighted recent diplomatic engagements, including Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's telephone conversation with the Saudi Crown Prince, Deputy Prime



Minister Ishaq Dar's talks with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia and Jordan, and the recent visit of Kuwait's foreign minister to Pakistan.

Andrabi rejected a Deutsche Welle documentary on Pakistan's nuclear programme,

calling it misleading and reaffirming that the country's nuclear assets are secure under internationally recognised command and control mechanisms. He also criticised India's restrictions on Pakistani social media accounts, describing them as evidence of intolerance.

The spokesperson confirmed that Pakistan will host the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) Council of Heads of State summit next year and invite all member states. He further clarified that diplomatic

Health Minister calls on PM Shehbaz Sharif, briefs him on ongoing projects

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal on Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed matters of mutual interests.

During the meeting, the minister briefed the prime minister on the ministry's ongoing projects and special initiatives aimed at preventing and controlling diseases.

The overall political situation in the country also came under discussion, a press release issued by the PM Office said.

Govt Targets 6% Export-Led Growth, \$100 Billion Exports by 2035: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal said the government is pursuing product and market diversification to achieve sustainable 6% export-led growth and reach \$100 billion in exports by 2035.

Addressing a media briefing, he said Pakistan is working with industry and the State Bank of Pakistan to transform the top 20 export clusters into globally competitive sectors, while promoting non-traditional industries like engineering, light engineering, chemicals, and advanced manufacturing.

"Our destination is not

only stabilization but sustainable growth. That growth has to be export-led, otherwise it will become another bubble," he said, adding Pakistan still exports the same products to the same markets as 40 years ago.

Despite shipping disruptions and the Iran-US conflict, overall goods and services exports grew last fiscal year. Workers' remittances hit a record \$41.6 billion, up 8.6%. GDP grew 3.7% despite floods.

S&P upgraded Pakistan's rating to B. The CDWP approved 192 projects expected to create over 713,000 jobs.

PM AJK Pays Tribute to Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on His Death Anniversary

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has paid tribute to Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on the occasion of his death anniversary, describing him as the founding leader of the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and one of the foremost figures of the Kashmir freedom movement.

In a special statement issued on Thursday, the Prime Minister said that Ghazi-e-Millat's vision was to secure freedom for the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir from Dogra rule and to realize

the aspirations of the people regarding the future of the State. He stated that the mission of Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan would continue until the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

The Prime Minister said that the life of Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, spanning from 1915 to 2003, was marked by dedication, resilience, and unwavering commitment to principles. He noted that throughout his public life, Ghazi-e-Millat remained steadfast in his convictions and never compromised on matters of principle.

He observed that the history of the



Kashmir freedom movement cannot be separated from the contributions

of Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan, whose leadership played a defining role in both the political and constitutional dimensions of the movement. He said that his vision, courage, and commitment remain an enduring source of inspiration for future generations.

Recalling a significant milestone in the history of the Kashmir movement, the Prime Minister noted that on July 19, 1947, Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan hosted the historic meeting at his residence in Srinagar where the Resolution for the Accession to Pakistan was adopted, an event that, he said, reflected the political aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.



President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan called on Sajjada Nasheen Golar Sharif Peer Seyad Qutabul Haq Gilani at Golra Sharif shrine. Sardar Attique Ahmed remained there for some time and discussed mutual interest matters.

Acting President AĴK Pays Tribute to Ghazi-e-Millat on Death Anniversary

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD/MUZAFFARABAD: Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar has paid tribute to Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on his death anniversary, calling him the founding President of AJK, a distinguished leader of the Kashmir freedom movement, and a prominent advocate of the Kashmiri cause.

In his message, he said Sardar Ibrahim Khan played a pivotal role in the liberation of AJK and provided visionary leadership. He represented Kashmiris at the United Nations and other international forums.

The Acting President recalled the historic 19 July 1947 Accession to Pakistan Resolution adopted at Ibrahim Khan's Srinagar residence, and noted he laid the foundation of the Azad Government on 24 October 1947 as its first President.

Reaffirming commitment to the ideals of accession to Pakistan, he said Kashmiris continue to sacrifice for the cause. He pledged to keep highlighting the Kashmir issue internationally and to advocate for an end to human rights violations in IIOJK until a peaceful resolution is achieved.



AĴK Election Commission Announces Midnight Deadline for Electioneering on July 31

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Spokesperson for the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has informed all contesting candidates, political parties, election agents, supporters, and the general public that, in connection with the General Elections 2026 for the Muzaffarabad Division and the twelve constituencies of Jammu & Kashmir Refugees residing in Pakistan, scheduled to be held on August 2, 2026, the election campaign will officially conclude at 12:00 midnight between July 31 and August 1, 2026.

In accordance with the electoral laws of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, after the expiry of the campaign period, the holding, organizing, or participation in any public meeting, rally, procession, corner meeting, or any other election-related gathering within the concerned constituencies shall be strictly prohibited.

The Election Commission expects all contesting candidates, political parties, election agents, and their supporters to ensure full compliance with the electoral laws, the Code of Conduct, and the instructions issued by the Commission. Such adherence is essential to facilitate the conduct of elections in a peaceful, transparent, free, and fair manner.

The Election Commission further reiterates that any violation of the electoral laws or the Code of Conduct shall be dealt with strictly in accordance with the applicable legal provisions.



AĴK Assembly Adopts Resolution for Peace, Truth Commission, and Rule of Law

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The AJK Legislative Assembly, in a session chaired by Ms. Nabeela Ayub, unanimously adopted a resolution by Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin reaffirming commitment to peace, democracy, and constitutional governance.

The House paid tribute to martyred security forces, police, and civilians, offering prayers and expressing solidarity with affected families. It stressed that every affected family deserves truth, justice, and humanitarian support.

The resolution affirmed that peaceful protest and freedom of expression are fundamental rights, while rejecting violence, vandalism, and armed activity as means of political expression. It urged citizens and protesters to disassociate from violent elements and called on the government to take impartial lawful action to restore peace.

The Assembly supported establishing an independent Truth Commission to investigate deaths, injuries, and property losses, with agreed Terms of Reference and transparent reporting. It urged the Federal Government and protest leadership to jointly endorse the Commission, end protests, and restore roads, medical access, communications, and supplies.

The House reiterated that political differences must be resolved through dialogue, elections, and constitutional processes.

Sardar Attique Pays Tribute to Ghazi-e-Millat on 22nd Death Anniversary

Spokesman Report



MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former AJK Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan paid rich tribute to Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan on his 22nd death anniversary, calling him a great benefactor of Kashmiris and a key architect of the Kashmir freedom movement.

In his message, he said Ghazi-e-Millat devoted his life to the Kashmir cause and completion of Pakistan. He recalled the 19 July 1947 Resolution for Accession to Pakistan adopted at Ibrahim Khan's Srinagar residence, calling it the cornerstone of Kashmiris' struggle for self-determination.

Sardar Attique noted that on 24 October 1947, Ibrahim Khan became the first President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and laid the foundations of state institutions. He also highlighted his diplomatic efforts in projecting the Kashmir issue at the UN and international forums.

Urging youth to study his life and mission, Sardar Attique said Ghazi-e-Millat envisioned a sovereign J&K acceding to Pakistan, and that Kashmiris remain committed to continuing their peaceful struggle for that goal.

Terrorists attacked

HANGU: Security beefed-up after terrorists attacked the Khazina Banda check post resulting nine cops, including a deputy superintendent of police (DSP), were martyred and 28 others were injured.



Photo: Online



Bureau Report

NEELUM: Pakistan Muslim League

(N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Shah Ghulam Qadir on Thursday rejected PPP Chairman Bilawal

PML-N AJK Rejects Bilawal's Claims on Election Transparency

Bhutto Zardari's remarks on the AJK elections, calling them baseless and an attempt to undermine the public mandate. He said the people had delivered a clear verdict in favour of the PML-N, which all political parties should respect.

In a statement, Shah Ghulam Qadir said allegations regarding the electoral process, including objections over the Nikyal constituency, were unfounded. He maintained that the victories of candidates from the political family of late Fatah Muhammad Karelvi, as well as Sardar Umair Naem and Raja Ayaz, reflected the confidence of

voters. He also questioned the PPP's allegations of irregularities in constituencies where it had not even fielded candidates, while remaining silent on claims related to Mirpur City.

Urging Bilawal Bhutto Zardari to avoid creating unnecessary political controversy, Shah Ghulam Qadir called on him to accept the public verdict and rely on verified facts. He expressed confidence that the PML-N would continue its strong electoral performance and predicted the party would win all nine seats in Muzaffarabad Division in the August 2, 2026 elections.

AJK Assembly Adopts Resolution on Rawalakot, Calls for Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on Thursday unanimously adopted a resolution condemning recent statements by certain federal ministers regarding the Rawalakot incident and calling for the establishment of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission. The resolution, moved by former AJK President and Prime Minister Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan during a session chaired by Ms. Nabeela Ayub, expressed concern over remarks attributed to Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif, stating they had hurt public sentiment and questioned the Kashmiri identity of Rawalakot's residents.



The House paid tribute to the sacrifices of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and prominent leaders of the Kashmir freedom movement, including Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan. It maintained that the ministers' statements had intensified tensions in Rawalakot, across Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and among the Kashmiri

diaspora.

The Assembly endorsed PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's proposal to establish a Truth and Reconciliation Commission and urged that further action relating to the Rawalakot situation be suspended until the commission begins its work. It also called on the Election Commis-

sion to ensure free, fair, and transparent elections, while addressing concerns over alleged irregularities in the recent Mirpur Division polls. Stressing dialogue and reconciliation, the House warned that internal divisions could be exploited by hostile elements and emphasized the need to restore public confidence and stability.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:42 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:07 pm
Maghrib 7:10 pm
Isha 8:46 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249

KP Govt Raises Journalists' Endowment Fund to Rs500 Million: Shafiullah Jan

Abdul Waheed Khan

MANSEHRA: Provincial Minister for Information and Broadcasting Shafiullah Jan said the KP government believes in freedom of press and is taking practical steps for journalists' welfare, during a "Meet the Press" at Mansehra Press Club. He announced the Journalists Endowment Fund has been increased from Rs200 million to Rs500 million. Facilities will also be provided for medical treatment, marriage, children's education, foreign training, and interest-free loans up to Rs5 million. Rs500 million has been allocated for media colonies and Rs400 million for payment of media dues. He also announced Rs10 million for Mansehra Press Club welfare, a solar system, renovation through ADP, and land purchase for a media colony. Criticizing the federal government, he called it "a bunch of incompetents" over inflation and fuel prices, noting petrol was Rs150/L during Imran Khan's tenure and is now Rs325/L. He said a big rally on August 5 in Peshawar will mark 3 years since Imran Khan's arrest and launch a movement for his release, with rallies also planned in Punjab, Sindh and Balochistan.

CM Punjab approves 800 more mini dams for Potohar Water Conservation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has approved the construction of 800 additional mini dams in the Potohar region over the next three years to strengthen rainwater conservation and improve water security. Chairing a meeting on agriculture transformation and water management, she reviewed progress on ground-water conservation and was informed that 110 mini dams had already been completed across Punjab.

The chief minister directed officials to prepare a comprehensive plan for developing water bodies to store rainwater



and ordered further strengthening of the legal framework for groundwater management. She also instructed the agriculture, irrigation, housing and local government departments to work in close coordination, while approving dedicated staff for water conservation and monitoring.

The new mini dams are expected to provide storage capacity of 32,000 acre-feet of rainwater. The meeting also approved the provision of 1,000 laser land levellers to farmers on a 50 per cent subsidy during the current fiscal

year.

Officials informed the meeting that lining of 2,600 watercourses covering 7,000 kilometres had already saved about 20 per cent of water, while another 4,500 watercourses would be rehabilitated over the next three years. High-efficiency irrigation systems have conserved 18,000 acre-feet of water and increased crop yields by 50 per cent, with an additional 30,000 acres to be brought under drip and sprinkler irrigation. Another 300 recharge wells are also nearing completion across Punjab.

Operation against Violation

ISLAMABAD: Police officials lift vehicle during the operation against car dealers who occupied the footpaths and commuters parking area in G-8 Markaz, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Govt Distributes 1,391 Acres to 596 Landless Farmers in Toba Tek Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" (My Farm, My Livelihood) Programme, allotment certificates for 1,391 acres of state-owned agricultural land were distributed to 596 landless farmers in Toba Tek Singh.

Deputy Commissioner Maham Asif Malik, as chief guest, called the initiative a historic, farmer-friendly step to make landless families economically self-reliant. She said farmers are the backbone of Pakistan's economy and the CM has directed maximum support, including modern facilities, to boost productivity.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue) Waqar Akbar Cheema said selection was done strictly on merit through a digital



system, scrutiny, appeals, and computerized balloting out of 6,950 applications.

He added the Revenue Department will ensure possession of land, while the

Agriculture Department will provide technical guidance on modern farming, seeds, fertilizers, irrigation, and crop management.

Beneficiaries thanked the

Punjab Government, saying the land allotment offers sustainable employment, secures their families' future, and will help strengthen agricultural development.

CM Maryam Nawaz Orders Crackdown on Child Abuse, Rape and Corruption

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has directed authorities to take strict legal action against those involved in rape, child abuse, and corruption, calling for a foolproof strategy to eradicate these crimes.

Chairing a high-level law and order meeting, she said "Women and children are my red line" and stressed a zero-tolerance policy on crimes targeting them. She also ordered mobile police stations to provide services at citizens' doorsteps: "If a citizen cannot come to the police station, the police must go to their home."

Officials briefed that the Safe City Project is complete in all 43 districts and will be inaugurated soon. The CM approved 2,000+ additional cameras for Lahore and expansion to 98 more tehsils and Katcha areas.

Other decisions included: a dedicated CTD cell for blasphemy cases, a new Special Cyber Unit, 29,000 body cameras for police by September, and induction of more personnel for tribal areas.

The meeting was also told that Imam registrations are complete with Rs10 billion released, and over 139,000 illegal residents have been repatriated.

PP-112 Candidate Umar Israr Meets Nawaz Sharif, Discusses Constituency Issues

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD:

Umar Israr Ahmed Khan, PML-N candidate for constituency PP-112, met with Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

During the meeting, Umar Israr briefed Nawaz Sharif in detail on public problems in his constituency, including development projects, basic amenities, roads, sewage, education and health issues.

Nawaz Sharif stressed the need for immediate and lasting solutions to public problems. He said PML-N has always served the people and followed an agenda of national development. He assured that all possible steps will be taken to resolve constituency issues and complete development projects.

Umar Israr also updated the party leader on the political situation and public expectations in PP-112, and expressed full confidence in the party leadership's guidance.

The meeting was held in a pleasant atmosphere, where future political strategy and various aspects of public service for the constituency were also discussed.

NDF Pakistan and Iltizam Relief Society Agree to Strengthen Disability Inclusion Partnership

SHAH ALAM, MALAYSIA: Mr. Abid Lashari, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and President of National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) Pakistan and Convenor D-8 Disability Forum, met with the leadership of Iltizam Relief Society in Shah Alam to strengthen international cooperation for disability inclusion and humanitarian assistance.

The meeting focused on long-term collaboration to implement initiatives for persons with disabilities and other marginalized communities in Pakistan. Both sides discussed joint work in inclusive rehabilitation, emergency response, livelihood support, and social protection.

Mr. Lashari thanked Mr. Muhammad Shah, CEO of Iltizam Relief Society, and his team for their hospitality and commitment to humanitarian service. He said strong international partnerships are essential for inclusive and sustainable development.

He added: "By working together across borders, we can create greater opportunities for persons with disabilities, strengthen humanitarian action, and build more inclusive communities where no one is left behind."

Both organizations committed to explore future joint initiatives for persons with and without disabilities in Pakistan.



US-Pakistan Academic Collaboration: AIPS Delegation Visits Hazara University

Abdul Waheed Khan

MANSEHRA: Dr. Matthew A. Cook, President of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies (AIPS), and Country Director Dr. Alia Sohail Khan visited Hazara University Mansehra and met Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Ikramullah Khan.

AIPS, an NGO working to strengthen US-Pakistan higher education and research linkages, discussed ongoing academic activities with the VC, deans, and department heads.

Dr. Cook said AIPS promotes collaboration through joint research, academic exchanges, training



programs, and conferences. He expressed interest in expanding ties with Hazara University to provide more opportunities for faculty and students in culture, archaeology, environment, social and scientific disciplines, and to facilitate pathways for international research and professional development.

VC Dr. Ikramullah Khan briefed the delegation on the university's recent ranking, financial stability, and research-focused faculty.

Dr. Cook also toured the university museum, where Prof. Dr. Shakirullah, Dean of Arts & Humanities, briefed him on artifacts and archaeological findings.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
(jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Syed Afraz Ali Nazish
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone:+92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408

Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
Karachi Phone:021-33399390
Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com

Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

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Beyond Warnings: Strengthening Pakistan’s Fight Against Tobacco

Tobacco use remains one of the leading preventable causes of disease and death worldwide, and Pakistan continues to bear a significant share of its devastating health consequences. Medical experts have once again highlighted an uncomfortable truth: while awareness of smoking’s dangers has increased over the years, millions of people continue to smoke, placing themselves at risk of cancers and other life-threatening illnesses. Their call for stronger prevention measures, improved smoking cessation services and continued scientific evaluation of harm-reduction approaches deserves serious attention.

The scientific evidence is clear. The greatest danger from smoking lies not in nicotine alone but in the toxic chemicals released when tobacco is burned. Cigarette smoke contains more than 7,000 chemicals, many of which are poisonous and dozens of which are proven carcinogens. These substances are responsible for a wide range of cancers, particularly of the lungs, mouth and throat, as well as heart disease and respiratory illnesses that impose a heavy burden on Pakistan’s healthcare system.

The most effective way to reduce these risks remains complete cessation of tobacco use. However, the reality is that many smokers struggle to quit despite repeated attempts. This is where the concept of Tobacco Harm Reduction (THR) has entered global public health discussions. By focusing on reducing exposure to the harmful by-products of combustion, THR seeks to provide scientifically evaluated alternatives for adult smokers who are unable to quit completely. Nevertheless, such approaches must never be misunderstood as safe or encouraged among non-smokers, former smokers or young people.

Pakistan’s tobacco control strategy should therefore rest on a balanced and evidence-based foundation. Prevention must remain the first priority through stronger public awareness campaigns, stricter enforcement of tobacco control laws and effective measures to discourage smoking among youth. At the same time, healthcare facilities should expand access to smoking cessation services, counselling and medical support to help smokers overcome nicotine dependence.

Equally important is continued scientific research and open public health dialogue. Policies should be guided by credible evidence rather than misconceptions or commercial interests. As medical experts rightly point out, reducing exposure to harmful chemicals while encouraging complete cessation can complement—not replace—traditional tobacco control efforts.

Ultimately, protecting public health requires a comprehensive strategy that combines prevention, education, cessation support and evidence-based policymaking. Pakistan cannot afford complacency in the fight against tobacco. Every successful effort to reduce smoking translates into fewer cancers, healthier families and a stronger, more productive nation.

Iran’s Nuclear Capability, Retaliation and Global Catastrophe

The potential for nuclear escalation represents the most terrifying dimension of the Iran war. The Trump administration’s framing of the Pickaxe mountain facility as a potential existential threat to the United States and the global community is deeply concerning.

This facility is so strong, so formidable, and so meticulously designed that normal conventional weapons are unable to reach its core. The durability of Pickaxe to conventional interdiction has led to discussions in media, in podcasts and in political parlance about the potential use of nuclear weapons as perhaps the only solution to prevent Iran from assuming the status of a nuclear power.

There are troubling indications that Donald Trump has already considered the use of nuclear weapons, with reports suggesting he has approached the Pentagon at least once, perhaps twice, to draw up nuclear strike options against Iran.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff has rejected these requests, citing fundamental unconstitutionality. However, the danger lies in the potential use of intelligence information to manufacture a threat that would be adaptable to US doctrine.

The nuclear posture review and the commander’s guidance to the nuclear implementation plan have already created a definition that permits the United States to use nuclear weapons if an existential

threat is identified.

If the United States determines that Iran is installing a viable centrifuge capability or has installed a nuclear warhead assembly plant, the cognitive justification for nuclear use becomes dangerously plausible.

The potential for a nuclear strike on the Pickaxe facility would have catastrophic consequences. While Iran might survive a nuclear attack if it does not fall on most of its cities, the Iranian counterattack would likely eliminate Israel, a small country that cannot survive even a small or middle-level nuclear warhead. Furthermore, Iran has declared it possesses fissile material to produce 10 to 15 atomic warheads, along with sophisticated delivery mechanisms.

Iran has made it clear that it possesses the fissile material necessary to produce nuclear weapons and has the delivery mechanisms already available in a very sophisticated form. The war has fundamentally altered the nuclear calculus. With the killing of the previous Supreme Leader, US intelligence agencies now assess that his successor is far more interested in pursuing a nuclear weapon. This shift represents a grave consequence of the US policy of regime change. Iran’s leadership likely views the acquisition of nuclear capability as the ultimate deter-

rent against the existential threat posed by Washington and Israel.

The retaliatory potential extends beyond the immediate region. While Iran’s delivery systems may not currently be able to reach the United States directly, such weapons could be transported through cargo ships and launched when they approach American shores. This possibility is logically, militarily, and otherwise plausible. The threat of retaliation would likely cause the United States and Israel to think hundreds of times before making such a decision, but the Trump administration’s pumped-up ego and hubristic attitude may lead it to continue pursuing domination on the battlefield regardless of the consequences.

Secondly, Iran’s ability to shut down the Strait of Hormuz represents the most potent economic weapon at its disposal. The impact would extend far beyond those countries that import oil to include those that import fertilizers and food.

Without fertilizer, the production of grain and food will be diminished to a large extent, creating starvation in many countries of the world. Both the shortage of oil, which runs the economy, and the shortage of fertilizer, which keeps the population alive, would affect billions of people.

The resultant immigration pressure

on Europe and other countries would be catastrophic. Millions of people would die, and those who are not admitted by European countries and other nations would perish in the sea or on the land.

This catastrophic scenario has a great possibility if the issue is not resolved amicably. The expansion of the conflict to the Red Sea, where Iran’s Houthi allies in Yemen have declared a naval blockade against Saudi Arabia, threatens to close a second major global shipping route, exacerbating the disruption of essential commodities.

Europe, by remaining deaf, dumb, and blind to the crimes being committed by the United States, faces a future of unimaginable suffering. When Africa goes under, when the Sahel and West Africa lose the capacity to produce food, tens of millions of people will begin a forced migration because they have no choice. They will lose tens of millions in the deserts of the Sahara, but they will arrive at the shores of the Maghreb, of North Africa, and they will surge into Europe.

The Iranian population, when they lose the capacity to produce food, will move through Turkey into Europe. Turkey will give them the sign to keep going, and Europe will be literally overrun by desperate refugees that will suck Europe dry.

This is the future of Europe because of the policies of Donald Trump. The potential for billions of people to die represents the future of humanity because of

Continued on Page 7



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

Pakistan’s Rise Leaves India Isolated: A Setback for Modi’s Strategy

As the US–Israel military campaign against Iran entered its fourth week in March 2026, a significant geopolitical shift reshaped South Asia and the Middle East, allowing Pakistan to reassert itself after years of marginalization during India’s diplomatic rise under Narendra Modi. The conflict created an opportunity for Pakistan to leverage its geography and relationships, and it quickly launched a coordinated diplomatic effort led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir, reversing its isolation and redirecting pressure toward India. Following the February 28 offensive, Pakistan avoided choosing sides and instead positioned itself as a neutral stabilizer with ties to both the United States and Iran, emphasizing its stake in de-escalation due to its shared border. This approach was driven by rare civil-military unity, with Sharif engaging the Muslim world and appealing for unity, including direct outreach to Iran’s president, while Munir used his high-level connections in Washington to open backchannel communications that enabled exchanges between US and Iranian officials, helping secure a temporary de-escalation and establishing Pakistan as a credible mediator.

The impact of this strategy became clear when President Donald Trump announced a conditional pause on strikes against Iranian energy infrastructure, citing productive discussions that reflected Pakistan’s behind-the-scenes role, and further reinforced it by reposting Sharif’s March 24 offer for Pakistan to host US–Iran talks, signaling tacit US endorsement despite White House caution that negotiations remained speculative. Pakistan’s coordination

with Turkey and Egypt and its emergence as a potential venue for talks marked a major diplomatic victory, challenging India’s long-standing strategy of isolating Pakistan and portraying it as unstable. Instead, Pakistan demonstrated strategic coherence and responsibility, earning recognition as an indispensable stabilizing force, a shift highlighted by analysts like Vali Nasr. This reversal prompted criticism within India, where Congress leader Jairam Ramesh described Pakistan’s diplomacy as superior and called the situation a setback for the Modi government, attributing it to missteps such as Modi’s visit to

Israel before the conflict, which undermined India’s neutrality; consequently, India’s “Vishwaguru” ambitions and “hug diplomacy” were criticized as ineffective compared to Pakistan’s pragmatic and geostrategically valuable role during the crisis.

The architect of Pakistan’s success in securing such favorable access to the US administration is widely acknowledged to be Field Marshal Asim Munir, whose efforts to rebuild ties with Washington began long before the war with Iran erupted. Throughout 2025, Munir engaged in a methodical campaign to reverse the diplomatic isolation that Pakistan experienced during the Biden administration. A pivotal moment came when Pakistan nominated President Trump for the Nobel Peace Prize, citing his role in de-escalating tensions between India and Pakistan. This shrewd move, which played to Trump’s well-known desire for the prestigious award, was rewarded with an invitation for Munir to a one-on-one White House lunch—a privilege rarely granted to a foreign military leader who was not also a head of state. Furthermore, Pakistan aligned itself with Trump’s economic and

political interests by embracing cryptocurrency and signing agreements with the Trump family’s World Liberty Financial company, a move that further solidified the personal rapport between the military leadership and the US President. This careful cultivation of the Trump administration gave Munir and his team the direct line to Washington that proved invaluable when the Iran crisis erupted. While India, still navigating its own complex relationship with the US—strained by issues such as the Pannun case and differing views on the Ukraine war—found itself unable to match Pakistan’s access at the highest levels, Islamabad was able to leverage its newfound influence to position itself as a vital partner.

The contrast between the diplomatic fortunes of Pakistan and India in this period could not be more pronounced. While Pakistan was basking in the spotlight as a potential peacemaker and hosting high-level backchannel discussions, India found itself on the sidelines of a conflict that directly impacts its energy security and the safety of its vast diaspora in the Gulf region. The perception of isolation that had long plagued Pakistan now appeared to be shifting toward India, which was criticized for being unable to influence the trajectory of the conflict despite its growing economic and military power. The strategic geometry of the region had been altered, not by India’s rise, but by Pakistan’s ability to use its specific geographic and historical assets to solve a problem for the United States. As the Financial Times and other publications detailed Pakistan’s central role in relaying communications between Washington and Tehran, the international community began to reassess Islamabad’s strategic utility. The nation that was once viewed primarily through the lens of its rivalry with India was now being seen as a crucial gateway for stability in the Middle East,

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A Badge Is Not a Licence to Break the Law

The recent police raid on the residence of Pakistan’s Attorney General, Mansoor Awan, allegedly carried out on the basis of incorrect information, has raised serious questions about the conduct of law enforcement agencies. Reports suggest that police officers forcibly entered the house, harassed domestic staff, damaged property, seized the CCTV Digital Video Recorder (DVR), and allegedly deleted its recordings. If the sanctity of the home of the country’s highest legal officer can be compromised on the basis of unverified information, one must ask: how secure are the life, dignity, privacy, and fundamental rights of an ordinary citizen?

This incident is not merely an operational error; it reflects a broader systemic problem in which law enforcement agencies are, at times, perceived to act beyond the limits of the law.

The true strength of a state lies not in the arbitrary exercise of authority but in adherence to the rule of law, transparent investigations, and effective accountability.

The police are among the most powerful institutions of the state. However, in a civilised society, the legitimacy of police authority is derived not from force or weapons but from the law itself. When police operate within legal boundaries, public confidence grows. Conversely, when they appear to exceed their lawful powers, the issue extends far beyond a single raid—it undermines the credibility of the entire justice system.

In Pakistan, complaints frequently arise that police officers conducting raids fail to comply with Section 103 of the Code of Criminal Procedure, 1898 (CrPC). The law requires

that, wherever practicable, two or more respectable and impartial local witnesses be present during a search, that a complete inventory of seized items be prepared, and that the search be conducted transparently. If these legal safeguards already exist, the question is: why are they so often ignored?

Even more troubling are allegations by some affected citizens that CCTV cameras are damaged during raids, DVRs are seized, and the recorded footage later becomes unavailable. If such allegations are proven in any case, they would represent not merely administrative misconduct but a serious threat to the integrity of criminal investigations and the administration of justice.

Police officers must recognise that a CCTV camera is not a witness for the accused; it is a witness to the truth. It records both lawful police conduct and any potential misconduct by any party. This

is precisely why law enforcement agencies across the world preserve CCTV footage and other digital evidence instead of destroying or tampering with it.

The law certainly permits police to seize a DVR or other electronic device if it constitutes relevant evidence in a criminal investigation. However, such seizure must strictly follow due process. A proper seizure memo, a documented inventory of recovered items, the presence of independent witnesses where required, and an unbroken chain of custody are essential safeguards. If recordings are deleted, altered, or a DVR is intentionally damaged to conceal misconduct, it raises serious concerns regarding the transparency of the investigation and the integrity of subsequent judicial proceedings.

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Lavrov Says Russia Will Not Accept Western Ultimatums, Reaffirms Sovereignty and Security Priorities

 Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov has said that Russia's relations with the West have fundamentally changed since the launch of the special military operation in February 2022, arguing that Moscow no longer trusts Western governments after what he described as repeated attempts to deceive Russia.

In an interview with TASS, Lavrov said President Vladimir Putin's declaration that "there is no going back to the way things were before February 2022" reflected Russia's assessment of its future relations with Western countries.

Lavrov accused Western governments of pursuing policies aimed at weakening Russia, claiming that calls for Russia's "strategic defeat" and

"decolonisation" amounted to efforts to dismantle the Russian state. He said Moscow viewed these developments as a serious threat and urged people to recognize what he described as the West's broader intentions.

Commenting on the conflict in Ukraine, Lavrov asserted that Russian forces continue to make steady progress on the battlefield while prioritising the safety of their personnel. He alleged that Ukraine, with Western support, was attempting to offset battlefield setbacks through attacks targeting civilian infrastructure and public life.

The Russian foreign minister also criticised Western military assistance to Ukraine, saying that some governments were portraying recent attacks involving long-range weapons as evidence that Ukraine could eventu-



ally defeat Russia.

Lavrov described the conflict as part

of a broader historical struggle, saying Russia was confronting forces he char-

acterised as successors to Nazism. He also criticised recent statements by German Chancellor Friedrich Merz regarding Germany's future role in Europe, warning that such rhetoric carried serious implications.

Outlining Russia's foreign policy priorities, Lavrov said the country's core national interests are to preserve its sovereignty, maintain its status as an independent civilisation, secure its borders, and prevent outside powers from interfering in its internal affairs.

He added that Russia's civilization is distinguished by its respect for history and the sacrifices of previous generations, contrasting this with what he described as the West's different outlook.

Addressing prospects for peace negotiations, Lavrov rejected proposals that would require a ceasefire before

comprehensive talks. He criticised Western proposals involving a temporary truce followed by the deployment of multinational forces led by France and Britain, describing such ideas as an ultimatum that would freeze the front line while leaving the current Ukrainian government in place.

Lavrov reiterated that Russia must continue to rely on its own capabilities, echoing President Putin's long standing position. Despite what he described as the serious consequences of the ongoing conflict, he said Russia remained determined to achieve its objectives, invoking the legacy of those who fought against Nazi Germany during World War II.

The interview reflects Moscow's current official position on the conflict and Russia's relations with Western countries.

D-8, ICYF Agree to Strengthen Youth Cooperation

 Spokesman Report

ISTANBUL: The Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) and the OIC-affiliated Islamic Cooperation Youth Forum (ICYF) have agreed to expand collaboration on youth engagement and empowerment through joint programmes, training initiatives, and entrepreneurship projects.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood and ICYF President Taha Ayhan at the D-8 Secretariat in Istanbul. Both sides reviewed progress under the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 2025 and emphasized closer cooperation in youth leadership, capacity-building, skills development, and entrepreneurship.

Ambassador Sohail Mahmood highlighted recent D-8 youth initiatives, including the first D-8 Youth Summit, the inaugural Youth Ministers' Meeting, and the D-8 Youth Dialogue held in Baku, while Ambassador Mustafa Özcan briefed participants on the Baku Youth Declaration. Taha Ayhan reaffirmed ICYF's commitment to strengthening cooperation with D-8 in support of sustainable development and youth empowerment across OIC member states.

The two organizations agreed to accelerate the launch of the Investment



and Youth Entrepreneurship Forum envisaged under the 2025 MoU and to organize joint events alongside major international gatherings. ICYF will

also partner with the D-8 Secretariat in the D-8 Youth Bridges Programme, scheduled to mark International Youth Day on August 12, 2026. The meeting

concluded with both organizations reaffirming their commitment to achieving practical outcomes through enhanced institutional cooperation.

Industrialist Urges Limited Private Wheat Imports to Curb Hoarding

 Zain Khan Malghan



MULTAN: Industrialist and Member of the National Export Development Board Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum has urged the government to allow limited private-sector wheat imports, saying the move would compel hoarders to release concealed stocks and help stabilize wheat prices.

In a statement, Anjum said farmers in major agricultural districts, including Multan, Khanewal, Muzaffargarh, Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan, and Dera Ghazi Khan,

were forced to sell wheat below fair market value during harvest, while the same wheat was later sold at much higher prices. He alleged that middlemen and hoarders benefited at the expense of both farmers and consumers.

He proposed allowing the private sector to import only two wheat shiploads, arguing that even such a limited announcement would discourage hoarding, increase market supply, and reduce artificial price hikes without significantly increasing imports.

Anjum also called for structural reforms, including digitisation of the flour mills' wheat quota system, scientific grain storage through modern silos, electronic monitoring of the wheat supply chain, and strict action against hoarders. Referring to Article 38 of the Constitution, he urged the federal and Punjab governments to reform wheat procurement, storage, and distribution systems to ensure fair returns for farmers, eliminate hoarding, and provide consumers with affordable, quality flour.



UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026 Begins to Drive FinTech Innovation

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026 has commenced at the National Incubation Center (NIC) Karachi, bringing together 25 teams from across Pakistan to develop innovative solutions for the country's banking, financial, and payments sector. Organized by NIC Karachi, an Ignite-funded initiative under the Ministry of IT and Telecom, in collaboration with United

Bank Limited (UBL), the 72-hour competition offers a grand prize of Rs5 million.

The hackathon has attracted students, startups, software professionals, researchers, and technology enthusiasts, with participants competing to create practical, customer-focused digital finance solutions. Promising teams will also receive continued mentorship and incubation support to transform their ideas into market-ready prod-

ucts through the UBL-powered FinTech Lab.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, UBL Head of Creative Technology Abdur Rehman urged participants to focus on solving real customer challenges, highlighting the growing role of artificial intelligence, machine learning, and data analytics in shaping the future of financial services. NIC Karachi Project Director Syed Azfar Hussain said the initiative aims to identify emerging

talent, promote collaboration, and provide innovators with the resources and industry exposure needed to commercialize their ideas.

The hackathon reflects NIC Karachi's commitment to fostering innovation through industry partnerships and supporting next-generation FinTech solutions that advance financial inclusion, accelerate digital transformation, and contribute to Pakistan's economic growth.

AJK Election Results Reflect Public Trust in PML-N

The people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir have once again demonstrated their confidence in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), reaffirming that public trust is earned through performance, public service and a commitment to development rather than political rhetoric.

Democracy is built on respecting differences of opinion and accepting the people's mandate. The true spirit of democracy lies in acknowledging the verdict of the electorate, even when it does not favour one's own political interests. Attempting to impose personal opinions on the public or refusing to recognise the people's decision runs contrary to democratic principles. Political parties earn public support through their performance, and voters naturally place their confidence in those who address their problems and work sincerely for the country's progress.

The development projects and welfare initiatives undertaken by the PML-N leadership across Pakistan and Azad Kashmir stand as testi-

mony to the party's commitment to public service. PML-N has consistently respected the people's mandate and, whenever entrusted with power, has sought to deliver on its promises. Pakistan's history reflects that many of the country's landmark infrastructure and development projects were completed under PML-N governments. Unlike many of its political opponents, the party has traditionally sought votes on the basis of its performance rather than by launching personal attacks against rivals.

Former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif has always pursued a politics of national unity instead of division. His leadership continues to enjoy the confidence of the people of Azad Kashmir, and the recent election results in Mirpur Division once again reflect that trust.

The first phase of the Azad Kashmir elections produced a decisive outcome, with the PML-N securing nine of the 13 seats in Mirpur Division by convincing margins. This victory is a clear endorsement of Nawaz Sharif's leadership and the party's performance. The successful PML-N candi-

dates deserve congratulations for earning the confidence of the Kashmiri electorate. Questioning the party's mandate after such a verdict amounts to questioning the democratic choice of the people of Azad Kashmir themselves.

Rather than expressing frustration over the election outcome, political parties should respect the public's decision. Those who claim to champion democracy must also demonstrate the democratic spirit of accepting electoral results. Democracy demands tolerance, respect for opposing views and acceptance of the people's verdict.

Recent remarks made by PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari regarding Nawaz Sharif crossed political boundaries. His subsequent withdrawal from his own statement about the distinction between state interests and party interests only raised further questions. Political leaders should stand by their words and demonstrate

consistency in their public positions.

The Pakistan Peoples Party also needs to answer legitimate questions about its governance record in Sindh. After nearly two decades in power, Karachi continues to struggle with deteriorating roads, inadequate supplies of clean drinking water and persistent waste management problems. These are issues that directly affect millions of citizens and deserve serious attention.

By contrast, the Punjab government under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has launched a series of development and public welfare initiatives. These include the introduction of 1,500 electric buses, the distribution of 30,000 Green Tractors to farmers, 27,000 electric bikes for students, 100,000 laptops, 80,000 scholarships and 200,000 houses under the Apni Chhat Apna Ghar programme. In addition, 30,000 kilometres of roads have been constructed across Punjab, while major transport

projects elsewhere continue to face delays.

CM Maryam Nawaz's governance initiatives have earned recognition across Pakistan. Electric buses have also been provided to Azad Kashmir, while students in Azad Kashmir, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa have previously benefited from laptop and scholarship programmes. Public service should never be confined by provincial boundaries, and development should remain the shared objective of every government.

Punjab has also introduced an air ambulance service and undertaken extensive reforms in the healthcare sector. Government hospitals across the province have been revamped, with medicines and diagnostic tests now being provided free of charge. The Nawaz Sharif Cancer Hospital in Lahore was completed within a year, the Cardiology Hospital in Sargodha has been completed, and the Clinic on Wheels and Maryam Nawaz Health Centres are delivering healthcare services across Punjab.

If Sindh's healthcare system is as efficient as its leadership claims, it is

fair to ask why senior provincial ministers continue to seek medical treatment abroad. Unfortunately, whenever questions are raised about the PPP's 18-year governance record, the response often shifts from accountability to personal attacks.

The PPP remains an ally of the PML-N in the federal coalition, and both parties have the right to pursue their respective political agendas. However, political competition should be based on governance and performance rather than on hostility towards development in other provinces. The PML-N's guiding principle remains the progress of Pakistan and the welfare of its people. It is this commitment to performance and public service that continues to earn the confidence of voters, including those in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Author is a prominent Pakistani politician and practicing lawyer currently serving as the Provincial Minister for Information and Culture in Punjab. She assumed office on March 7, 2024, as a key member of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's cabinet



Analysis

Azma Bokhari

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
175,547.98	176,042.98
Day's High	Day's Low
176,234.28	174,612.14
Index Value	Change
18,323,230,682	−495.00
Percentage	Time
−0.28%	30 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,897.27	−11.14
Percentage	Time
−0.10%	30 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,145.96	+551.82
Percentage	Time
+1.07%	30 Jul, 1:31 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
61,867.43	+433.24
Percentage	Time
+0.71%	30 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

Kaspersky Reports 12.2% of Pakistan Users Faced Online Threats in H1 2026

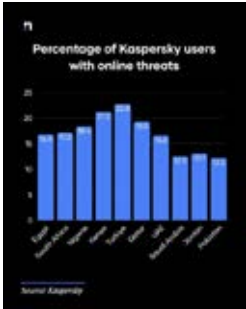
Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Cybersecurity company Kaspersky has reported that 12.2% of its users in Pakistan encountered online threats during the first half of 2026, placing the country among those with the lowest share of web-based attacks in the Middle East, Türkiye and Africa (META) region. The findings were presented at the Cyber Security Weekend conference, where experts highlighted the growing sophistication of cyberattacks driven by artificial intelligence (AI).

According to Kaspersky, cybercriminals are increasingly using large language models to generate phishing emails, malicious code, and other tools that enable faster and more effective attacks. Researchers also observed AI-assisted malware development in campaigns linked to the FunkSec group and the RevengeHotels operation.

The report identified cloud-based data exfiltration, ransomware targeting business operations, and attacks on AI agents with broad system access as emerging threats facing organizations. Kaspersky warned that compromised AI tools could be manipulated to steal sensitive data, execute unauthorized actions, and maintain persistent access to enterprise systems.

Sergey Lozhkin, Head of Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team for APAC and META, said AI is expected to remain a major driver of cyber threats in 2026 by enabling attackers to develop and adapt malicious tools more rapidly. Kaspersky advised organizations to strengthen cybersecurity through regular patching, vulnerability management, employee awareness, threat intelligence, and advanced security solutions to counter increasingly sophisticated AI-assisted attacks.



Saudi Firm Eyes \$10 Billion Investment in Pakistan, BOI Assures Full Support

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment (BOI) Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Thursday reaffirmed the government's commitment to facilitating foreign investors

during a meeting with a high-level delegation from Saudi-based Falcon Vision Group and overseas Pakistani business leaders. The delegation informed the minister that Falcon Vision, a diversified business group headquartered in Jeddah, is exploring investment oppor-



tunities worth up to US\$10 billion in Pakistan across infrastructure, construction, technology, and industrial sectors.

Welcoming the interest, the minister described it as a strong vote of confidence in Pakistan's investment climate and highlighted the country's strategic location, growing market, and young workforce. He said Special Economic Zones (SEZs) offer incentives, including income tax exemptions until 2035 and duty-free import of plant and machinery, while Business Facilitation Centers provide one-window services for registrations, licensing, and approvals.

The meeting also discussed real estate, technology, and tourism projects, including plans for a Special Technology Zone, a modern shopping mall in Chakwal, and a Gandhara Club near Taxila to promote religious and cultural tourism. The minister said SEZ regulations had been amended to encourage greater private-sector participation and assured investors of BOI's full support. He added that Pakistan permits 100 percent repatriation of profits and is pursuing regulatory reforms to improve the ease of doing business, while addressing challenges such as energy costs and procedural bottlenecks.

Hard work

ISLAMABAD: Capital Development Authority (CDA) workers repairing streetlight at Saddar road ahead of the Chehlum procession in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Digital Transport Portal for Umrah Pilgrims Launched in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A digital transport system portal developed in collaboration with Zaka Saudia Services and SAHLH Transport Makkah was inaugurated in Faisalabad.

Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Farooq Yousuf Sheikh formally launched the portal and called it a revolutionary step for pilgrims, saying modern technology has made the transport system effective, transparent and easy.

Nadeem Iqbal, Chief Executive Zaka Travel, said after successful launches in Islamabad and Lahore, the Faisalabad rollout reflects public and trade trust in the project. He added the portal will provide digital booking, real-time tracking, smart fleet management, and safe, timely transport for Umrah pilgrims in Saudi Arabia. The project aligns with Saudi Vision 2030 and aims to deliver world-class services to



guests of Allah.

Attendees included former FCCI President Rehan Naseem Bharara, Muhammad

Yousuf Moti and Azizullah Tariq. Guests appreciated the initiative and welcomed modern facilities for pilgrims.

PPL discovers gas and condensate from its operated Rahi X-1, Shah Bandar Block in Sindh

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has made a gas and condensate discovery from its exploratory well Rahi X-1 in Shah Bandar Block located in District Sujawal, Sindh. This is the fourth consecutive discovery in Shah Bandar Block by PPL as operator with 63% Working Interest (WI) along with joint venture partners Mari Energies Limited with 32% WI, while Sindh Energy Holding Company Limited & Government Holdings Private Limited has 2.5% WI each.

The exploratory well Rahi X-1 was spud on June 17, 2026, and drilled down to the MD of 2,612 m to test the hydrocarbon potential of Upper Sand of Lower Goru Formation. Based on the drilling results, acquired / interpreted wireline logs data, hydrocarbon bearing zone was identified which was tested through cased hole DST.

During testing, the well flowed 0.493 MMscfd gas and 12 bbl/d condensate against the wellhead flowing pressure of



133 lb/ sq inch at 32/64 choke from Lower Goru Upper Sands (A -Sand).

As a leading national E&P company,

PPL remains committed to energy security of the country with fast-track exploration and development efforts.

DIB Pakistan Partners with Systems Limited for Temenos Core Banking Modernization

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: DIB Pakistan and Systems Limited have signed an agreement to migrate DIB Pakistan's core banking system from Oracle Flexcube to Temenos' cloud-native platform, with Systems Limited leading implementation as a certified Temenos partner. The CBS modernization is a key step in DIB Pakistan's digital transformation strategy. The shift to Temenos, an API-first cloud-native solution, aims to deliver faster, more secure, and scalable financial services and accelerate new product launches. Muhammad Ali Gulfaraz, CEO DIB Pakistan, said the partnership is the first

big step toward leveraging market-leading technology for better customer experience. Santhosh Rao, MD MEA Temenos, called Temenos a trusted partner helping banks across MEA serve customers with greater speed and efficiency. Asif Peer, Group CEO Systems Limited, said the firm will act as the execution engine using its domain expertise and Country Model Bank accelerator. Ammara Masood, Global GM B&FSI, and DIB's COO Syed Farhan Ahmed and CIO Imran Ali Khan Soomro emphasized the platform will enable operational resilience, regulatory excellence, and support for the bank's digital and AI ambitions.

CCP approves acquisition of BP's Global Castrol Lubricants Business by Stonepeak

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the proposed acquisition of BP plc's global Castrol lubricants business by Motion JVCo Limited, a special purpose vehicle established by U. S.-based Stonepeak Partners, following a Phase-I review.

Under the deal, BP will sell Castrol Group Holdings Limited to Motion JVCo. Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPP Investments) will take an indirect minority stake, while Stonepeak will retain indirect sole control. In Pakistan, Castrol products are marketed through a third-party distributor.

CCP identified the relevant market as the sale of lubricants in Pakistan. It found that neither Stonepeak nor CPP Investments has existing operations in Pakistan's lubricants market, so there is no horizontal or vertical overlap with Castrol's operations.

The Commission concluded the transaction will not alter market structure, create entry barriers, or strengthen a dominant position. It authorized the deal under Section 31(1)(d)(i) of the Competition Act, 2010.

The approval covers competition assessment only; other legal and regulatory approvals still apply.

RCCI calls for balanced fuel pricing mechanism to safeguard SMEs, exporters

RAWALPINDI: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat called on the authorities concerned Thursday to introduce targeted safeguards alongside market-based fuel pricing reforms to protect businesses from price volatility. In a press statement, Usman Shaukat acknowledged the federal government's initiative to transition toward market-driven fuel pricing via daily adjustments, describing it as a positive step toward fiscal transparency, curbing fuel smuggling, and supporting the State Bank of Pakistan's inflation targets.

However, the RCCI President cautioned that daily

price fluctuations could create severe uncertainty for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), transport operators, manufacturers, and exporters by driving up freight charges, production costs, and agricultural inputs.

To mitigate operational disruption, Usman Shaukat urged authorities to adopt a price-band mechanism with fortnightly revisions instead of daily changes.

He also proposed temporary fuel tax rebates for export industries, targeted subsidies or tax credits for SMEs, and automatic fuel surcharge adjustments for the transport sector to sustain economic growth and market competitiveness.

Senate Chairman urges stronger Pakistan-South Korea cooperation in biotechnology and AI

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani on Thursday called for enhanced cooperation between Pakistan and South Korea in biotechnology, artificial intelligence, healthcare, pharmaceuticals, and advanced manufacturing during a meeting with a high-level South Korean delegation at Parliament House.

The delegation, led by KOA-Bio CEO Mr. Cho, included representatives of KOA Corporation, Scale Sniper, and other South Korean companies specializing in biotechnology, AI, health, and advanced medical technologies.

Welcoming the delegation, Gillani said Pakistan values its longstanding ties with South Korea and is keen to expand collaboration in research, innovation, information technology, and digital healthcare. He invited South Korean companies to explore investment opportunities in joint ventures, technology transfer, medical device manufacturing, pharmaceutical production, AI-based medical research, and digital health services. He also highlighted the role of the Special Investment Facilita-



tion Council (SIFC), saying its single-window system is providing effective support to foreign investors.

The Senate chairman emphasized that parliamentary diplomacy, the Pakistan-South Korea Parliamentary

Friendship Group, and stronger links between educational and research institutions could further deepen bilateral relations.

The South Korean delegation thanked Gillani for the warm welcome, appreci-

ated Pakistan's scientific potential and investment-friendly environment, and expressed its commitment to long-term cooperation in biotechnology, healthcare, artificial intelligence, research, and investment.

PPP leadership expresses confidence ahead of AJK elections

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders on Thursday expressed confidence that the party would perform strongly in the upcoming Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections, citing its election campaign, organizational strength, and public outreach.

The views were shared during a dinner hosted by PPP South Punjab President and former Punjab Governor Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood in honour of Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan. Senior PPP leaders discussed the party's election strategy, organizational matters, and the prevailing political situation in AJK.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahmed Mahmood said the PPP was gaining public trust under the leadership of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari through its commitment to public service,



democratic values, and the vision of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He expressed confidence that the party's workers, with public support, would achieve significant success in the elections.

Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan described the PPP as a well-organized political force and said party workers were actively conducting door-

to-door campaigns to convey the party's message to voters across Azad Kashmir. He termed party workers the backbone of the organization and credited their efforts as the key to electoral success.

The meeting also agreed to strengthen organizational coordination, intensify the election campaign, and ensure full participation of party workers in the upcoming AJK polls.

Russia condemns alleged Ukrainian drone strike on Iranian cargo vessel in Caspian Sea



MOSCOW: Russia has condemned what it described as a Ukrainian drone attack on an Iranian merchant vessel carrying civilian cargo in the Caspian Sea, calling the incident an act of aggression and a violation of international law.

Responding to a media question, Russian Foreign Ministry Spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said the alleged July 25 attack targeted an Iranian commercial vessel transporting civilian cargo from Astrakhan.

Zakharova described the incident as a "criminal act" that, according to Russia, demonstrates the Ukrainian government's intention to expand the geographical scope of the conflict and its "terrorist activities."

She further said the alleged attack on a civilian vessel highlighted what Moscow views as a direct threat to the security of the Caspian littoral states.

"The Caspian Sea must remain free from military incidents and continue to serve as a region of peace, good-neighbourliness, and cooperation," Zakharova said.

Her remarks reflect the official position of the Russian Foreign Ministry regarding the reported incident. Ukraine has not publicly responded to the Russian allegations, and the claims could not be independently verified.

Zindigi Wins TAF "Public-Private Collaboration of the Year" Award for Advancing Digital Pakistan



KARACHI: Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, has been honored with the "Public-Private Collaboration of the Year Award" by the "Tech Advisory Forum (TAF) Pakistan" for its role in advancing Pakistan's digital ecosystem.

TAF recognized Zindigi for leveraging technology to modernize public services, foster innovation, and deliver measurable impact for citizens in line with the national digital agenda.

In partnership with the "State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), CDA, and MCI", Zindigi has launched key public sector initiatives. These include "digitized public parking, smart airport payment solutions, cashless Sunday bazaars, digital cattle markets, government payment ecosystems, and nationwide Z Pay Raast QR acceptance".

"Mohsin Khan, Head of Merchant Channel & Retail Sales", said: "True digital transformation is measured by the lives we make simpler. This recognition inspires us to continue building solutions that empower citizens and contribute to a more connected Digital Pakistan."

The award reinforces Zindigi's commitment to building a smarter, more connected and digitally empowered Pakistan.

DC Attock Reviews Ongoing Beautification Projects, Stresses Timely Completion



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassar Ahmed Shah visited several ongoing beautification projects in the city to review progress. He was accompanied by Assistant Commissioner Attock Arif Qureshi, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Sardar Aftab Khan, and other officials. The DC inspected the Pleader Line Beautification Project, CM Food Park, Nawaz Sharif Food Park, and Campbellpur Food Park. He reviewed construction, landscaping, cleanliness, plantation, public amenities, and overall work quality. He directed officials to complete all projects within the stipulated timeframe while maintaining high construction standards. Dr. Shah said that in line with Punjab Government directives, enhancing city beauty, improving the environment, and providing quality recreational facilities are top priorities for the district administration. These initiatives will improve the city's appearance and give residents a healthier, more pleasant environment. He assured citizens that all beautification projects will be completed at the earliest to provide modern, clean, and attractive public spaces, and instructed departments to ensure timely, quality completion.

Iran's Nuclear Capability, Retaliation and Global Catastrophe

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the catastrophe that is about to unfold. Once this process begins, once the infrastructure of life support deteriorates, it cannot be readily reconstituted. The world will be losing so much of its energy and resources responding to these global catastrophes that it will not be able to put the effort into reconstitution. Humanity is being condemned to an absolute decade or more of catastrophe.

The responsibility for this war and its repercussions rests entirely with both Israel and the United States. They are the ones who should bear the burden of putting back the clock and turning the world once again to a normal situation.

If the United States decides to use nuclear weapons, the world might see a total catastrophic situation that must be avoided by all countries putting their heads together in unity to stop this war as soon as possible, ensuring that humanity is not eliminated from the face of the earth.

The international community must recognize that the conflict has reached a point where Iran has refused to succumb and the United States is bent on making Iran surrender. In both these situations, the only weaponry system the United States has now which can change the war scenario is the nuclear weapon.

But if Iran also surprises both Israel and the United States as it has done in conventional warfare while starting nuclear warfare, then the world might see a total catastrophic situation.

The potential for nuclear escalation, the disruption of global energy supplies, the threat of mass starvation, and the prospect of millions of refugees overwhelming Europe represent a catastrophic scenario that the world must recognize and address.

The cycle of violence appears destined to continue, with Iran having learned to manage the conflict and the United States lacking a clear path to victory. The world needs to start shouting. The crimes being committed by the United

States must be exposed, and the international community must demand an end to this insane policy.

Donald Trump's decisions are condemning humanity to catastrophe, and every European leader who remains silent shares the responsibility for what is to come.

The time for action is now. The world must put its head together in unity to stop this war as soon as possible, ensuring that humanity is not eliminated from the face of the earth. The alternative is unthinkable: a future of starvation, migration, and death on a scale never before witnessed in human history. This is not hyperbole; this is the reality of the moment, and it must be confronted with the urgency it demands.

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's Rise Leaves India Isolated: A Setback for Modi's Strategy

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a role that India could not play due to its close alignment with Israel and its lack of a border with Iran.

Of course, this diplomatic gambit carries substantial risks for Pakistan. The pause in strikes is conditional, and the country walks a dangerous tightrope; if the backchannel fails and the US proceeds with its threat to destroy Iran's power grid, Pakistan's mediation efforts could be rendered moot, leaving it vulnerable to the very instability it is trying to prevent. Iran, for its part, continues to publicly deny direct negotiations to maintain its domestic political posture, even as it privately reviews messages sent through the Pakistani conduit. Analysts caution that despite the flurry of activity, the deep-seated mistrust between Washington and Tehran means a breakthrough remains uncertain. However, regardless of the even-

tual outcome of the US-Iran war, Pakistan has already achieved its primary objective: it has successfully rebranded itself on the global stage. By positioning itself as a necessary intermediary, Pakistan has demonstrated that it is a nation with agency, capable of independent and effective diplomacy, and not merely the sum of its rivalries with India.

The narrative of Pakistan's diplomatic isolation, so carefully constructed by India over the past decade, has been turned on its head by the events of March 2026. Through a combination of shrewd strategic calculation, unified civilian-military leadership, and the cultivation of unique, indispensable relationships with both Washington and Tehran, Pakistan has not only escaped the diplomatic shadow cast by India but has illuminated its own path as a key regional stabilizer. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's articulation of a unified Muslim

response, combined with Field Marshal Asim Munir's unparalleled backchannel access to the Trump administration, created a one-two punch that forced the world to pay attention to Islamabad's voice. The resulting success in facilitating a pause in the US-Iran war and the offer to host peace talks represent a historic high for Pakistani diplomacy.

In doing so, the country has inflicted a severe blow to the Modi government's global standing, with critics within India itself lamenting the "superior" narrative management of its arch-rival. While the path forward remains fraught with peril, the immediate outcome is undeniable: the policy of isolating Pakistan has been ruined, and the isolation that was meant for Islamabad has, in a stunning reversal of fortune, been redirected and now shadows India's diplomatic ambitions.

A Badge Is Not a Licence to Break the Law

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Similarly, damage to private property during a raid is a significant legal issue. Breaking doors, windows, CCTV cameras, or other property without necessity undermines the professionalism and credibility of law enforcement. The use of force must always remain proportionate and strictly limited to what the law and the circumstances require. Unnecessary destruction not only violates

constitutional rights but also erodes public trust in the state.

Unfortunately, Pakistan still lacks consistent implementation of comprehensive and uniform Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for police raids. In many developed jurisdictions, police officers wear body cameras, every raid is video-recorded, forensic copies of digital evidence are created, and the original recordings are preserved securely. Such practices protect not only citizens

but also honest police officers, enabling false allegations against them to be disproved swiftly.

It is time for the Government, the Judiciary, and the Police leadership to implement meaningful reforms, including:

Mandatory video recording of every police raid.

Gradual but compulsory introduction of body-worn cameras.

Strict enforcement of Section 103 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

Forensic imaging of DVRs and other digital evidence while preserving the original recordings.

Departmental and legal action against officers responsible for unjustified damage to private property.

Providing affected citizens with a certified inventory of all seized property immediately after every raid.

Respect for the police is essential in any civilised society.

However, respect is earned not merely by wearing a uniform but by faithfully observing the law. When the police themselves remain accountable to the law, public confidence naturally follows. But when the very institution responsible for enforcing the law disregards legal safeguards, justice is weakened and the moral foundations of the state begin to erode.

The strength of the state does not lie in breaking citizens' CCTV

cameras, flower pots, or doors. Its true strength lies in conducting every operation in a manner that commands the confidence of the courts, the law, and the public alike. That is the true essence of the Rule of Law, and it is the foundation of a strong, dignified, and just Pakistan.

The Constitution of Pakistan, particularly Articles 4, 9, 10A, and 14, guarantees every citizen the right to be treated in accordance with the law, the protection

of life and liberty, the right to due process and a fair trial, and the inviolability of the dignity and privacy of the home. Likewise, the Police Rules, 1934 require police officers to perform their duties within the framework of the law while respecting the fundamental rights of citizens. Any violation of these principles during a police raid is therefore not merely an administrative lapse but a matter of constitutional and legal accountability.

Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: A view of containers placed around the route of Chehlum procession in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM Orders Maximum Facilitation for Overseas Pakistanis

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday directed authorities to provide maximum facilitation to overseas Pakistanis, describing them as valuable national assets and making their welfare a top government priority. Chairing a meeting on improv-

ing consular services, he was briefed on measures to digitize embassy services, simplify document attestation, and introduce online systems for complaints and payments from abroad.

Officials informed the meeting that QR code-based services have been introduced for Power of Attorney, property trans-

actions, document attestation, and complaint registration. The prime minister directed that QR codes be prominently displayed at all Pakistani embassies and called for a public awareness campaign to encourage overseas Pakistanis to use the digital system.

The meeting was also told that document attesta-

tion services are now available at Islamabad's Asaan Khidmat Centre, with an evening shift introduced at the Foreign Office. A courier-based attestation facility has been integrated with the databases of HEC, IBCC, NADRA, and the National Police Bureau, while the Apostille system has reduced attestation to

a one-step process.

Officials further informed the prime minister that a mobile application is being developed with the National Information Technology Board to enable digital verification of birth, death, marriage, family registration, and other official certificates.

Naqvi briefs Zardari on security situation in KP, Balochistan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday briefed President Asif Ali Zardari on the overall law and order situation in the country, with particular focus on the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan.

During the meeting in Karachi, Naqvi briefed the president on the prevailing security situation in the two

provinces and the government's ongoing measures to combat terrorism.

President Zardari paid tribute to the bravery, professionalism and sacrifices of the armed forces, law enforcement agencies and police in the fight against terrorism.

He said the entire nation stands firmly behind the country's security forces in efforts to eradicate terrorism and establish

lasting peace.

"The whole nation stands with its security forces for the elimination of terrorism and the establishment of sustainable peace in the country," the president said.

The meeting also included a detailed discussion on the country's current political situation, while both leaders exchanged views on other matters of national importance and mutual interest.

Pakistan Navy Ship Taimur successfully rescues stranded fishing vessel in North Arabian Sea



Bureau Report

KARACHI: In a swift and coordinated emergency response, Pakistan Navy successfully rescued Fishing Vessel (FV) AL JALALI, which had been in distress about 120 NM south of Gwadar. A total of 19 crew members onboard the vessel, including 11 Pakistani and 8 Iranian nationals, were stranded at sea due to engine failure of the vessel. The situation was further aggravated

by deteriorating weather conditions in the North Arabian Sea during the ongoing monsoon, placing the lives of the crew in immediate danger.

Upon receipt of the distress call, Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) promptly coordinated with Pakistan Navy to initiate an immediate Search and Rescue Operation. PNS TAIMUR was immediately tasked to undertake the rescue operation and provide assistance

to the stranded FV.

Owing to the swift and timely response, crew members of FV AL JALALI were provided with food, drinking water, and medical care at sea, and the stranded vessel was thereafter towed safely towards shore.

The successful operation is a testament to Pakistan Navy's unwavering resolve to ensure the safety of life at sea and its readiness to respond to maritime emergencies across the region.

President, PM pay tribute to Pakistan Navy for rescuing fishermen in Northern Arabia Sea

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday commended the Pakistan Navy for successfully rescuing 19 fishermen stranded in the northern Arabian Sea. The rescue operation was carried out by the Pakistan Navy ship PNS Taimur.

In their separate statements, they said the successful rescue operation reflected the Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment and constant readiness to protect human lives at sea.

President Asif Zardari underscored that the protection of human

lives at sea demonstrated the Pakistan Navy's strong commitment to fulfilling its national and international responsibilities.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the officers and personnel of the Pakistan Navy involved in the operation for safely rescuing all 19 members aboard the fishing vessel, including

11 Pakistani and 8 Iranian nationals.

"The Pakistan Navy personnel provided the stranded crew with food, drinking water, and medical assistance at sea, which is a practical demonstration of our armed forces' humanitarian values and professional excellence," the prime minister added.

DPM reviews Pakistan's international education cooperation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Thursday chaired an inter-ministerial meeting to review Pakistan's international education cooperation and scholarship programmes for students from friendly countries.

The Federal Secretary for Education briefed the meeting on the scholarships being extended to students from various countries.

DPM/FM appreciated the efforts of the Ministry and expressed satisfaction with the progress made in promoting educational linkages and cooperation.

DPM/FM directed the Ministry and the relevant departments to further expand the scope of educational cooperation with friendly countries and explore new avenues for strengthening people-to-people ties through academic exchanges and scholarship opportunities.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Science & Technology, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Secretary for Education, the Chairman of HEC, and senior officials from the relevant departments.

DPM conveys best wishes to Malaysian government and people on upcoming elections

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday conveyed his best wishes to the Government and people of Malaysia on the upcoming state elections.

The deputy prime minister spoke with Foreign Minister of Malaysia Dato' Seri Mohamad Hasan, where both the dignitaries exchanged views on regional and international developments, including Palestine and particularly the situation in East Jerusalem, a DPM's Office news release said.

ہم تحریک آزادی کشمیر والحق پاکستان کی لازوال جدوجہد کے داعی آزاد جموں و کشمیر کے بانی صدر

غازی ملت

سردار محمد ابراہیم خان کو خراج عقیدت پیش کرتے ہیں

غازی ملت سردار محمد ابراہیم خان کی برسی کے موقع پر اس عزم کی تجدید کرتے ہیں کہ جس عظیم مقصد والحق پاکستان کیلئے بیس کیمپ کی حکومت کا قیام عمل میں لایا گیا اس کے حصول تک اپنا بھرپور کردار ادا کرینگے

انشاء اللہ وہ دن دور نہیں جب تحریک آزادی کشمیر یعنی تحریک تکمیل پاکستان کامیابی سے ہمکنار ہوگی

محکمہ اطلاعات آزاد حکومت ریاست جموں و کشمیر

AK-14N/7/2026