

Azad Kashmir PM urges Global Action on Human Rights in Occupied Jammu and Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: In his special message on the occasion of the 10th birth anniversary of martyr Burhan Muzaffar Wani, Prime Minister Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that instill a new spirit of freedom in the Kashmiri youth and bring new attention to the struggle for self-determination at the global level.

The Prime Minister said that Burhan Wani's sacrifice of his life proved that the Kashmiri people

would never compromise their fundamental right, namely the right to self-determination. He said that the great sacrifices of all the martyrs of the Freedom Movement including Burhan Wani are the precious assets of the Kashmiri nation and they will always be remembered with honor and respect.

Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that the ongoing oppression, torture, serious human rights violations, extrajudicial killings, forced arrests and deadly protests in Jammu and Kashmir under India's illegal rule



Hurricane cannot be weakened. He said that Kashmiri people have been struggling for their legitimate and legal rights with unprecedented perseverance for the past several decades.

The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir urged the international community, especially the United Nations and international human rights bodies, to take notice of human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Play effective role to encourage autonomy according to resolutions of United Nations, he added.

AJK Election Commission Reviews 2026 General Election Preparations in High-Level Meeting



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal chaired a high level meeting was held to review preparations for the general elections of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. Senior EC member Khawaja Muhammad Ahsan, EC member Syed Nazir Hassan Gilani, EC Secretary Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan and other relevant officials attended the meeting.

The meeting reviewed in detail the arrangements made so far in connection with the 2026 general elections.

The Chief Election Commissioner expressed satisfaction with the elections preparations and assured that all phases were completed on time as per the stipulated election schedule. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Election Commissioner Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said that all responsibilities have been fulfilled according to the election schedule.

The next phase will ensure timely delivery of election materials to the returning officers to complete the printing of ballot papers. He said that the Election Commission is busy day and night preparing for the elections.

The Chief Election Commissioner expressed the commitment that the Election Commission would use all its abilities and resources to successfully complete the election process in accordance with the constitutional requirements and the stipulated schedule he pledged.

PPP Vows Victory in AJK July 3 Polls, Says Bilawal Will Be "Man of the Match"

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) Azad Kashmir Central Deputy Secretary Information Spokesperson Shaukat Javed Mir has said PPP will defeat PML-N and Shakkam-e-Pakistan Party (PKP) in the July 3 general elections.

Addressing workers at the Prime Minister's Secretariat, he said PPP will promote Pakistan's stability, strengthen the Kashmir freedom movement, and focus on education, health, employment, infrastructure, and local government reforms in Azad Kashmir. He recalled the sacrifices of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto, citing PPP's legacy on democracy, nuclear program, missile technology, and independent foreign policy.

Mir accused PML-N and opponents of horse-trading and money politics. He said Chairman Bilawal Bhutto and Chairperson Faryal Talpur are leading the campaign, and PPP President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, PM Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, and Chaudhry Riaz are active in the polls. He added PPP expects a fair election on July 27 and called the army's role in world peace a "bright chapter."

He also said PPP is a guarantor of strong federalism and of Kashmiris' right to self-determination.



JKDFP Pays Tribute to Burhan Wani, Martyrs on 10th Martyrdom Anniversary

Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: On the 10th martyrdom anniversary of Burhan Muzaffar Wani, the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) paid profound tribute to him and all Kashmiris who sacrificed their lives for the rights and aspirations of the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

JKDFP Spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal said Wani became a symbol of courage and resilience for Kashmiri youth, and his sacrifice again brought international attention to the unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute. He noted that over decades, thousands of Kashmiris have lost their lives, underscoring that the issue still requires a peaceful, just, and lasting settlement in line with the aspirations of Kashmiris and relevant UN resolutions.

Iqbal stated that remembering martyrs reaffirms principles of justice, human dignity, and the right to self-determination. He reiterated JKDFP's commitment to a peaceful, democratic, and political struggle.

He urged the international community, global human rights organizations, and world powers to protect human rights in Jammu and Kashmir and help facilitate a just resolution. He also prayed for martyrs, the injured, and the release of political detainees, including the party chairman.

Dr Haider Ali Khan Inspects Jhang Projects, Reviews Livestock Card Progress

Zafar Chishti

JHANG: Director Livestock Faisalabad Division Dr Haider Ali Khan paid an official visit to Jhang district, where he chaired a comprehensive review meeting at the office of the Additional Director Livestock Jhang to assess the district's overall performance and the progress of various departmental initiatives. During the meeting, a detailed review was conducted of veterinary service delivery, field activities, ongoing development programmes and other key departmental matters. The Director appreciated the efforts being made and issued necessary directions to further improve service delivery and departmental performance. Later, Dr. Haider Ali Khan inspected the ongoing civil work at the District Diagnostic Laboratory Jhang. He reviewed the pace and quality of construction and directed the concerned officials to ensure high construction standards and the timely completion of the project. He also offered useful suggestions to ensure that the work is completed in accordance with departmental specifications. The Director Livestock Faisalabad Division also chaired a separate meeting with Veterinary Officers of Tehsil Jhang regarding the Punjab Livestock Card (PLC) programme. During the meeting, he reviewed the latest recovery progress under the scheme.

After shelter home closing

ISLAMABAD: A poor man taking nap on the green belt along Seventh Avenue in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM Prioritizes Quality Education as Danish School Project Advances

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Project Director of Danish School Haveli Haroon Das, Project Manager Munir Ahmed and Project Director Haq Nawaz called on PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore at Prime Minister's Office Islamabad.

During the meeting, they discussed in detail various issues related to the ongoing progress of the university building project, construction issues and timely completion of the project. The delegation briefed the Prime Minister on the progress of the project and the next phases.

On this occasion, PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that the government has included promotion of quality education among its top priorities. He said that the college project will play an important role in providing best educational opportunities to the bright and deserving students from backward areas.

The PM directed the concerned authorities to ensure the completion of the project within the stipulated time and no compromise on



the construction and educational quality so that the students get the best educational environment.

Deputy Commissioner Leads Surprise Inspection to Evaluate City Cleanliness and Civic Services

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock, Dr. Mudassar Ahmed Shah, accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) and Administrator Municipal Committee Attock, Anil Saeed, paid a surprise visit to various parts of the city to inspect cleanliness arrangements, civic amenities and other municipal affairs.

During the visit, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Attock, Sardar Aftab Ahmed Khan, along with officials of the Municipal Committee and



other administrative officers, accompanied the Deputy Commissioner. The Deputy Commissioner inspected different localities, major

roads, markets and public places to review the ongoing sanitation operation.

The concerned officers briefed him in detail on cleanliness arrangements, waste management, the performance of sanitation staff and other civic services.

Directing the relevant departments to further improve sanitation standards, Dr. Mudassar Ahmed Shah instructed them to ensure the timely collection and disposal of solid waste and provide the best possible civic facilities to the public.

Ambassador Brahim Romani Pays Tribute to National Heroes, Honours Outstanding Students



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Algeria in Islamabad commemorated the 64th Anniversary of Algeria's Independence and Youth Day with a solemn and patriotic ceremony held under the theme "Independence: A Trust for Generations." The event brought together members of the Algerian community in Pakistan and embassy officials to celebrate the country's historic journey towards freedom and national development.

The ceremony commenced with the playing of the Algerian national anthem, followed by the recitation of verses from the Holy Quran and a minute of silence in memory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for Algeria's independence and sovereignty.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador of Algeria to Pakistan, H.E. Brahim Romani, highlighted the historic

significance of Algeria's liberation, describing it as the result of immense sacrifices and decades of struggle by generations of brave men and women who fought against colonial rule. He paid glowing tribute to the country's martyrs, stating that their courage and dedication enabled Algeria to regain its freedom, dignity, and national sovereignty. South Asians & Diaspora

The Ambassador also praised Algeria's remarkable progress in recent years under the leadership of President Abdelmadjid Tebboune, noting the country's achievements in economic development, infrastructure, education, and public services. He commended the government's continued efforts to improve services for Algerian citizens living abroad and encouraged members of the diaspora to contribute actively to the country's sustainable development and national progress.

Emphasizing the importance of



preserving the legacy of the independence movement, Ambassador Romani urged the younger generation to uphold

the values of patriotism, sacrifice, and national unity while benefiting from the experiences and expertise of Algerians

residing overseas.

As part of the celebrations, outstanding students from the Algerian community in Pakistan were honoured with certificates of appreciation and symbolic awards in recognition of their academic excellence. A documentary highlighting Algeria's major achievements and development milestones was also screened, accompanied by patriotic songs celebrating the nation's rich history and cultural heritage. South Asians & Diaspora

Guests were treated to traditional Algerian sweets and the country's

renowned Deglet Nour dates, creating a warm and festive atmosphere that strengthened the bonds among members of the Algerian community, the Embassy, and their homeland.

The ceremony concluded with renewed expressions of pride in Algeria's achievements and tribute to the sacrifices of the nation's martyrs. Participants reaffirmed their commitment to preserving the values of independence, unity, and national development while strengthening the connection between Algerians living abroad and their motherland.

Our Vision is to Make SOLAR ENERGY Accessible and Affordable for Everyone.

Q1: When did Solectra officially begin its operations?

Solectra, a venture of SM Solar Pvt. Ltd., commenced operations in July 2022. Operating under the well-established Adil Group, the company entered the renewable energy sector with a credible foundation and a clear mission; to make solar energy accessible and financially rewarding for both households and businesses across Pakistan.

Q2: Do you believe that switching to clean energy has a tangible impact on an individual's finances? Absolutely. One of Solectra's core objectives is to help individuals and businesses reduce their energy expenditure and retain more of their income. Transitioning to solar significantly cuts reliance on expensive grid electricity, delivering immediate reductions in monthly utility bills. Combined with government incentives and long-term energy independence, solar power stands today as one of the most effective and financially sound investments a household or business can make.

Q3: Which major projects or



Shahrukh Adil
Director
SOLECTRA by SM Solar PVT LTD.

organizations have partnered with Solectra so far?
We've had the opportunity to work with several well-respected organizations. Our



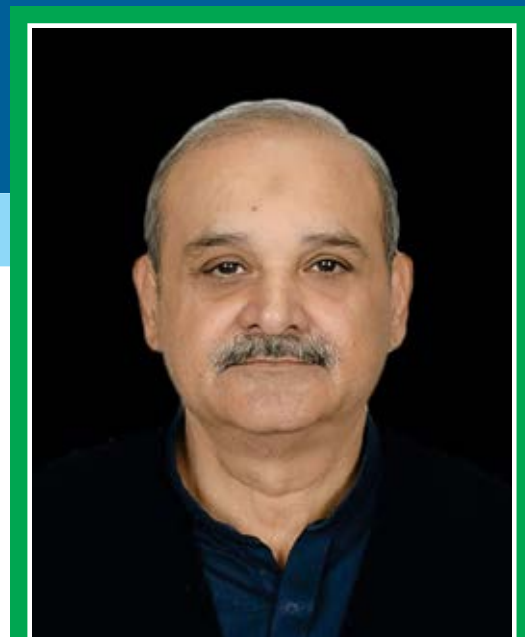
Mahnoor Adil
CEO and Founder
SOLECTRA by SM Solar PVT LTD.

portfolio includes Hyundai, Mian Mansha farm house, Lahore American School, Chughtai Lab, Nishat Farm House, Arshad Corporation in Faisalabad, Saleem Memorial Hospital, Hassan Flour Mills, Zia Cold Storage, LESCO, Pakistan Railways and Muhammad Nawaz Sharif University of Multan, among others. The feedback we've received has been extremely encouraging and reinforces our commitment to quality and reliability.

Q4: What drives the cost savings customers experience with Solectra?
At the heart of it is efficiency. We ensure that every unit of sunlight is effectively converted into usable energy. Through smart energy management systems, we minimize wastage, and with integrated storage solutions, we make sure power remains available even during outages. This allows our customers to significantly reduce their electricity bills while also contributing to a more sustainable future.

Q5: Can you elaborate on the equipment you use and what sets it apart?
We believe in doing things right the first time, which is why we focus on quality and reliability. We use premium-grade solar panels and high-performance inverters under our own brand. In addition, our Solectra lithium-ion battery solutions provide seamless backup by storing energy during the day. This ensures uninterrupted

Mian Adil Mehmood



Mian Adil Mehmood
Chairman Adil Group of Companies

power even during outages or peak hours, allowing our customers to operate without disruption. **Q6: Do your services cover small homes as well as large factories?** Yes, we cater to both. We design large-scale solutions for factories and warehouses with high energy demands, while also offering affordable and efficient systems for homes. We understand the financial pressure many households are facing, so we've made our residential solutions more accessible. We also support small businesses with systems that can scale as they grow. In simple terms, if you're looking to reduce your energy costs, we can help.

Q7: Maintenance is often a concern for customers. How does Solectra address this?
We see our work as a long-term

worry-free for our customers.

Q8: What is the long-term vision for Solectra and its customers?
Our vision is to make solar energy accessible and affordable for everyone. We want to help people reduce their dependence on the traditional power grid



Syed Zahir Hussain
Group Head of Sales
SOLECTRA by SM Solar PVT LTD.

partnership, not a one-time installation. We provide regular inspections, performance monitoring, and ongoing support to ensure systems continue to perform at their best. From the initial consultation to installation and a year of complimentary after-sales service, we aim to make the entire experience smooth and



Muhammad Ikhwan Younas
Director Finance
SOLECTRA by SM Solar PVT LTD.

and move towards more stable and predictable energy costs. At the same time, we are committed to contributing to a more sustainable future. With a one-time investment and systems backed by up to 25 years of warranty, we aim to give our customers both financial confidence and long-term peace of mind.

STOP PAYING, START SAVING WITH SOLECTRA!

SWITCH TODAY. SAVE TOMORROW

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The Sanctity of the Uniform

A uniform is not merely a specific set of clothing; it is a symbol of profound responsibility, exemplary character, discipline, national service, sacrifice, integrity, and loyalty. Every civilized nation regards the uniforms of its armed forces, law enforcement agencies, and public service institutions with honor and respect because they represent far more than institutional identity. They embody the dignity, authority, discipline, and values of the organizations they represent. When an individual wears a uniform, he or she rises above personal identity to become a representative of an institution, a nation, and a solemn public trust. Therefore, the sanctity of the uniform extends beyond the wearer to encompass the collective conscience of society, the rule of law, and the honor of the state. History bears witness that nations which respected their defenders, law enforcement personnel, and public servants achieved internal stability, peace, and prosperity. Conversely, societies that failed to uphold the dignity of their institutions often descended into disorder, insecurity, and institutional decline.

In Islam, clothing is not viewed merely as a means of covering the body. Rather, it symbolizes dignity, modesty, identity, and responsibility. The Holy Qur'an associates clothing with purity, honor, and righteousness, emphasizing that one's attire should reflect noble character and moral values. When a soldier, police officer, rescue worker, or any representative of a public institution puts on a uniform, he or she enters into a sacred

covenant of service. The uniform signifies that personal interests are set aside in favor of serving the nation, protecting society, and safeguarding humanity. It is this profound commitment that elevates the uniform above ordinary clothing and endows it with sanctity.

The true strength of a uniform does not lie in its color, style, or appearance, but in the responsibility it represents. A soldier's uniform symbolizes the defense of national borders; a police officer's uniform reflects the enforcement of law and justice; a rescue worker's uniform signifies the protection of human life; a doctor's white coat embodies compassion and healing; and a judge's robe represents impartial justice. Every uniform carries a moral message: the individual who wears it pledges to place the public interest above personal gain. When the wearer fulfills this responsibility with honesty, integrity, and dedication, the dignity of the uniform is enhanced. Conversely, negligence or misconduct not only tarnishes the individual's reputation but also damages the credibility of the institution represented. Thus, the responsibility for preserving the sanctity of the uniform rests first and foremost upon those who wear it.

Military uniforms, in particular, symbolize courage, sacrifice, patriotism, and unwavering commitment. Armed forces across the world instill in their personnel the principle that their foremost allegiance is to their country.

Whether enduring harsh climates, guarding difficult terrains, or standing vigilant under dangerous circumstances, soldiers uphold the honor of their uniform through selfless service. When they sacrifice their lives for the defense of their homeland, they immortalize the sanctity of the uniform with their blood. This is why the uniforms of fallen heroes are remembered with deep reverence, as they bear silent testimony to extraordinary acts of devotion and patriotism.

Similarly, the uniforms worn by police officers, rangers, civil defense personnel, rescue workers, firefighters, and other public servants represent security, protection, and humanitarian service. Whenever disasters strike, accidents occur, fires rage, or natural calamities threaten communities, these uniformed professionals risk their own lives to save others. Their dedication demonstrates that the true beauty of a uniform lies not in its appearance but in the noble service performed by those who wear it. A nation that honors such individuals is, in reality, honoring its own highest moral values.

A uniform is also a visible manifestation of discipline and institutional order. Every organization establishes a specific uniform to promote unity, professionalism, responsibility, and collective identity among its members. Wearing a uniform constantly reminds an individual that every action reflects not only upon oneself but also upon the entire institution. Consequently, a conscientious and principled professional treat the uniform with respect, maintains it with dignity, observes its code of conduct, and strengthens its honor through exemplary behavior.

Respect for the uniform is not solely the responsibility of public institutions; it is also a moral obligation of society. In developed and civilized nations, members of the armed forces, police, rescue services, and other public institutions are treated with respect because such respect is ultimately directed toward the rule of law and the stability of the state. When respect for the uniform diminishes, confidence in public institutions and the authority of the law may also weaken. However, such respect should never be blind or unconditional. It must be grounded in justice, accountability, ethical conduct, and adherence to the law, thereby fostering mutual trust between citizens and public institutions.

In today's digital age, social media has transformed the speed and reach of information. The actions of any uniformed individual whether commendable or regrettable can become public knowledge within moments. This reality places an even greater ethical responsibility upon those who wear the uniform to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, courtesy, integrity, and public service. Likewise, citizens must exercise responsibility by avoiding misinformation, baseless accusations, and unnecessary hostility. Mutual respect and trust between institutions and society remain essential for national unity and social harmony.

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Analysis
Muhammad Asif

US Congressional Debate Highlights Growing Scrutiny of Military Aid to Israel

A proposed amendment in the US House of Representatives seeking to end \$3.3 billion in annual military aid to Israel has drawn renewed attention to changing public attitudes toward the Israel-Gaza conflict, despite never reaching a vote due to procedural setbacks in Congress.

The amendment, introduced by Republican Representative Thomas Massie and backed by progressive Democrats including Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Greg Casar, aimed to require lawmakers to publicly vote on whether to continue unconditional military assistance to Israel. However, the proposal was never debated after the broader State Department spending package collapsed when a coalition of Democrats and conservative Republicans voted against the procedural rule needed to bring the legislation to the House floor.

Although the amendment did not proceed, political analysts view its introduction as a sign of growing debate in Washington over US policy toward Israel, particularly amid the ongoing conflict in Gaza.

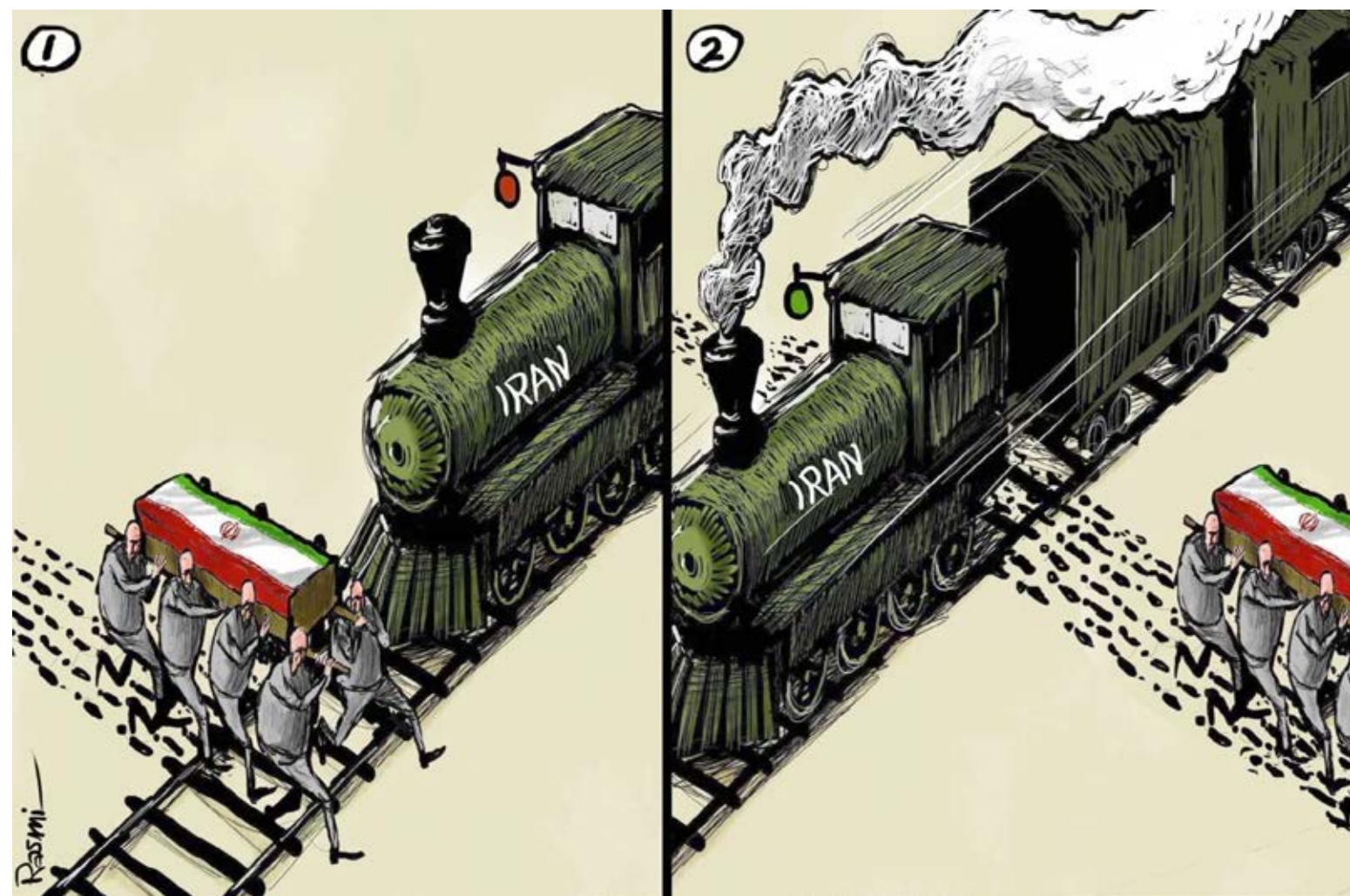
Recent public opinion polls indicate a notable shift in American attitudes. According to a Gallup survey published earlier this year, 41 percent of Americans expressed greater sympathy for Palestinians, compared with 36 percent for Israelis, marking the first time in more than two decades that Palestinians received higher public support. A separate Quinnipiac University poll found that 48 percent of American voters now believe the United States is "too supportive" of Israel, the highest level recorded since the survey began tracking the issue in 2017.

The article argues that the changing public mood is increasingly influencing American politics. It notes that the 2024 presidential election highlighted Gaza as a significant political issue, with some Democratic Party strategists reportedly concluding that the administration's handling of the conflict negatively affected voter support. Internal assessments suggested that US policy toward Gaza became a political liability, particularly among younger and progressive voters.

The article also points to changing rhetoric among progressive lawmakers. Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, who initially avoided using the term "genocide" to describe the situation in Gaza, gradually adopted stronger language as public pressure intensified. By early 2026, she publicly argued that continued US military assistance had enabled what she described as genocide in Gaza.

According to the article, this evolution reflects broader political calculations rather than an abrupt change in official policy. While bipartisan support for Israel remains strong in Congress, grassroots activism and shifting public opinion are placing increasing pressure on elected officials to reassess long-standing positions.

The article concludes that future elections, including the upcoming midterms, are likely to see continued debate over US policy toward Israel and Gaza. It argues that sustained public engagement and anti-war activism have begun reshaping the political conversation, making the conflict an increasingly important issue in American electoral politics.



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awcat)

When Contempt Dresses Itself as Faith

The other day, one of my students came to me, visibly excited. With unmistakable pride, he shared a story from his neighbourhood.

The Imam of their local mosque, he told me, had refused to accept the stipend recently announced by the Government of Punjab for mosque clerics. His reason, according to my student, was that sanitation workers—dismissively referred to by the derogatory term *chuhra*—were to receive a higher stipend.

For a moment, I found myself at a loss for words. Whether the government's stipend is adequate is a legitimate matter for debate. People may reasonably disagree on that question. What unsettled me was not the amount of money but the assumption that those who keep our streets and communities clean somehow deserve less dignity than those who lead our prayers.

The irony was difficult to ignore. The custodian of a faith that teaches that cleanliness is half of faith seemed unable to recognise the dignity of those whose labour makes cleanliness possible.

That brief conversation stayed with me long after the class had ended—not because it was extraordinary, but because it reflected something I have been noticing for years.

Life has allowed me to observe Pakistan from different vantage points. At the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan, I learnt that institutions ultimately stand or fall not on regulations alone but on the moral choices of the people entrusted with them. My years in the media taught me that words can illuminate truth or legitimise prejudice. Social work showed me how compassion can heal fractured communities, while teaching has convinced me that societies are shaped less by what they proclaim than by what they quietly teach their children.

Yet another journey has shaped my thinking

more profoundly than any professional experience. It has been my own intellectual journey from extremism to tolerance.

Like many others, I once believed that certainty was a virtue and that questioning inherited prejudices was a weakness. Over time, through reading, reflection, meaningful conversations, and encounters with people whose humanity transcended the labels attached to them, I came to realise that faith grows stronger through humility, not hostility; through compassion, not contempt.

Looking back, I now recognise that hatred rarely begins with violence.

It begins with contempt.

It begins when we convince ourselves that one profession is more honourable than another, one sect more deserving than another, one ethnicity more respectable than another, or one human being somehow less worthy of dignity than ourselves.

Viewed individually, these observations may seem unrelated.

Viewed together, they reveal a troubling pattern. We have become remarkably comfortable with contempt.

Too often, hatred disguises itself as honour, religious devotion, cultural pride, or moral superiority. By the time we recognise it for what it is, it has already found a home in our language, our institutions, and, most worryingly, in the minds of our children.

Pakistan was envisioned as the Land of the Pure. But purity was never meant to signify superiority over others. It was meant to reflect purity of character—justice over prejudice, humility over arrogance, and compassion over contempt.

Somewhere along the way, however, we have confused piety with pride.

Increasingly, we judge people by their occupation, sect, ethnicity, language, or social class before recognising their shared humanity.

That is how hatred quietly takes root. It rarely

announces itself with slogans or arrives carrying a flag. Instead, it finds its way into ordinary conversations, casual jokes, careless labels, sermons, classrooms, and countless everyday interactions. Because it spreads so quietly, we seldom notice when it begins to shape our attitudes—and eventually, our national character.

The conversation with my student reminded me that education neither begins nor ends at the school gate. Every sermon, every television programme, every social media post, every family conversation, and every casual remark teaches someone how to see another human being.

The question is not whether we are teaching. The question is what we are teaching.

If a child grows up believing that a sanitation worker deserves less respect simply because of the work he performs, then we have failed that child—not merely as educators, but as citizens and as believers.

The lessons we teach without realising are often the ones that endure the longest. Every conversation, every sermon, every classroom, every social media post, and every casual remark is shaping someone's understanding of what it means to be human.

If we teach contempt, we should not be surprised when hatred becomes ordinary. But if we teach dignity, humility, and compassion—in both our words and our conduct—we leave behind a different inheritance.

Perhaps the future of our country will be shaped less by the ideals we proclaim than by the values we quietly pass on each day.

That, perhaps, was the greatest lesson my student unknowingly brought into my classroom that morning.

The writer is an English language teacher, published writer, and advocate of responsible citizenship. His work explores education, civic responsibility, tolerance, and the ethical foundations of public life. Drawing on his intellectual journey from extremism to tolerance, he writes to encourage dialogue, critical reflection, and a more compassionate society.



Analysis
Muhammad Rabnawaz Awan



Analysis
Muhammad Waleed Akhtar

The Silencing of Kashmiri Cultural Identity: Language, Music and Memory Under Occupation

On 5 August 2025, the sixth anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, police officers in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir raided bookshops across the Valley and seized 25 books. Among the forfeited titles were works by Arundhati Roy, A. G. Noorani and Anuradha Bhasin, scholars and journalists whose writing had documented Kashmir's history from perspectives the state finds inconvenient.

The J&K Home Department declared the books a threat to public order for promoting false narratives and grievance culture. What the order actually revealed was something more precise: that a government confident in its version of Kashmir's story would not need to confiscate the competing ones.

The book raids were not an isolated act of administrative overreach. They were the most visible moment in a systematic effort to sever the people of Indian-Occupied Kashmir from the language, literature, music and memory that constitute their identity as a distinct people. That effort has been underway since 2019. It is accelerating.

Kashmiri, known to its speakers as *Koshur*, is the mother tongue of the majority in the Kashmir Valley. It carries within it centuries of Sufi poetry, folk narrative, oral history and cultural memory that exist in no other form. It is also a language being allowed to disappear

through deliberate policy choices dressed as administrative oversight.

In 2025, government schools across the Kashmir Valley conducted Kashmiri language examinations for students up to Class 8 without providing them Kashmiri language textbooks. Teachers and activists described the situation to Kashmir Times as deeply troubling, an assault on cultural roots disguised as a procurement failure. The National Education Policy 2020 explicitly emphasises mother-tongue instruction. The School Education Department and JKBOSE apparently found this principle inapplicable in the one territory where it matters most.

The 2020 Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Act added Hindi, Dogri and Kashmiri alongside Urdu and English. The celebrated inclusion of Kashmiri as an official language has not translated into its presence in classrooms. What the act accomplished instead was the promotion of Hindi, a language with no historical roots in the Valley, whose Devanagari script now dominates signboards across Srinagar in place of Urdu. Poet and linguist Zareef Ahmad Zareef described the language policy publicly as a conspiracy to erase cultural identity. Indian authorities maintain it promotes multilingualism. The textbook shortage suggests which description is more accurate.

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CM Maryam Nawaz Praises C&W Department for Completing 1,129 Roads in 75 Days

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Tuesday commended the Communication and Works (C&W) Department for completing the construction and rehabilitation of 1,129 roads spanning 1,795 kilometres in just 75 days, while saving Rs11 billion through efficient

project execution. Chairing a high-level meeting to review the department's ongoing development projects, the chief minister directed officials to ensure lane markings on all provincial highways and approved the establishment of six modern service areas along the Lahore Ring Road, expected to become operational by December 2026. The facilities

are projected to generate Rs500 million annually.

Officials informed the meeting that road projects worth Rs30 billion were completed through round-the-clock work in three shifts, resulting in significant cost savings. The chief minister praised the department for completing the projects within the stipulated timeframe.



The meeting also approved plans for the beautification of the Lahore Ring Road, restoration of its Northern Loop, and improvement of entry and exit points on roads across Punjab.

According to the briefing, nearly 32,000 kilometres of roads have been completed over the past two and a half years, including 6,000 kilometres constructed or rehabilitated between

April and July 2026. Progress under the "Sohne Pind Sohniyan Rahwan" rural road development programme was also reviewed.

Officials said Rs125 billion had been allocated for the Chief Minister's road initiatives, local road projects, and schemes nearing completion, with 99 percent of development funds successfully utilized.

The meeting was informed that the Local Roads Programme completed 1,567 schemes covering 3,400 kilometres at a cost of Rs79 billion. Major completed projects include the 93.5-kilometre Multan-Vehari Dual Carriageway, the 24-kilometre Faisalabad-Chiniot Dual Carriageway, and the 13-kilometre Tourism Highway Dual Carriageway.

FPCCI Vows Stronger Trade and Investment Ties with Saudi Arabia

LAHORE: FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh reaffirmed the Federation's commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and investment relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia, saying FPCCI continues to foster business linkages and economic cooperation between the private sectors of the two countries.

Speaking at an Exclusive Networking Session hosted by FPCCI Regional Office Lahore for a high-level Al-Raee Group delegation, Sheikh said the FPCCI Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Business Council is actively facilitating B2B engagement and creating new avenues for trade and strategic partnerships.

FPCCI Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Aijaz highlighted opportunities under Saudi Vision 2030 in construction, infrastructure, renewable energy, logistics, tourism, IT, healthcare, food security, and industrial development. He urged Pakistani exporters and industrialists to tap these prospects, noting Pakistan's strengths in textiles, agriculture, pharma, engineering, and a skilled workforce.

Al-Raee Group Chairman Bilal Mohammad Zubair invited Pakistani businesses to invest with 100% foreign ownership, citing Saudi Arabia's invest-



ment-friendly environment. FPCCI Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Busi-

ness Council Chairman Karim Aziz Malik stressed deepening institutional

linkages. The event drew chambers, industrialists, and exporters.

Engro Vopak Partners with S&P Global Energy for Feasibility Study on LPG Infrastructure Expansion

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Engro Vopak Terminal Limited (EVTL), Pakistan's leading chemical and gas terminal operator, has partnered with S&P Global Energy to launch a feasibility assessment for expanding its LPG infrastructure.

The study will evaluate the development of Pakistan's first refrigerated LPG import and storage facility to strengthen the LPG supply chain and meet rising demand. EVTL said Pakistan's reliance on LPG is growing due to increasing energy needs and declining domestic gas production. Over the past decade, LPG consumption has risen steadily and is expected to keep growing among households, commercial users, and industries.



Current market assessments indicate Pakistan could face a significant LPG supply gap in the coming years, making large-scale infrastructure investment critical for long-term energy security.

The proposed project aims to improve access to global LPG markets, enable handling of larger cargo volumes, enhance storage capacity, and build a more resilient and flexible LPG supply chain.

Syed Ammar Shah, CEO of Engro Vopak and Engro Elengy Terminal Limited, said combining Royal Vopak's global expertise with Engro's local engineering will help develop infrastructure to enhance energy security and support sustainable growth.

PSW and LUMS sign MoU to strengthen capacity building and research in trade facilitation

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate on capacity building, executive education, and research initiatives aimed at strengthening Pakistan's trade facilitation ecosystem.

The MoU signing ceremony was held at the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) Head Office in Islamabad, says a press release.

The agreement was signed by Aftab Haider, Chief Executive Officer of Pakistan Single Window, and Dr Tariq Jadoon, Provost of LUMS, in the presence of senior officials from both institutions.

Also in attendance at the signing ceremony was Dr Muhammad Adeel Zaffar, Dean of the Suleman Dawood School of Business (SDSB), LUMS.

Under the partnership, PSW and LUMS will collaborate to support capacity-building initiatives under the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) Postgraduate Diploma (PGD) Program for Probationary Assistant Collectors of Customs.

The collaboration will focus on enhancing knowledge and professional competencies in areas related to cross-border trade, digital trade facilitation, logistics, data governance, and other domains aligned with PSW's mandate.

The two institutions will jointly design and deliver executive education programmes, technical trainings, seminars, and other professional development initiatives on mutually agreed terms.

The partnership also provides a platform for both organizations to participate in each other's conferences, workshops, policy dialogues, exhibitions, and related events to promote institutional

collaboration and knowledge sharing.

In addition, the MoU establishes a framework for developing joint research initiatives, policy papers, analytical studies, and other knowledge products focusing on digital trade, trade facilitation, cross-border trade systems, logistics, and data governance.

These collaborative efforts are expected to contribute to academic research, support evidence-based policymaking, and generate practical insights for stakeholders engaged in Pakistan's trade ecosystem, including participants of the PGD Program.

Speaking on the occasion, Aftab Haider, CEO of Pakistan Single Window, said, "Developing a modern and efficient trade ecosystem requires continuous investment in human capital and knowledge.

Our collaboration with LUMS reflects PSW's commitment to building institu-

tional capacity, fostering innovation, and supporting the development of future leaders in customs and trade facilitation."

Dr Tariq Jadoon, Provost of LUMS, remarked, "LUMS is pleased to partner with Pakistan Single Window in advancing executive education and applied research that addresses national priorities.

This collaboration combines academic excellence with practical expertise to create meaningful learning opportunities and contribute to strengthening Pakistan's trade and customs landscape."

The MoU reflects the shared commitment of PSW and LUMS to advancing professional excellence, promoting research-driven policymaking, and supporting the modernization of Pakistan's cross-border trade environment through collaborative learning and institutional engagement.

Ziauddin University Holds Workshop on Mental Health and Well-being of Journalists

News Desk

KARACHI: Ziauddin University, in collaboration with the Karachi Editors Club, organized a workshop titled "Protecting the Mind Behind the News: Building Psychological Resilience in Journalism" to address the mental health and well-being of media professionals.

The workshop, held on July 7, 2026, focused on journalists who regularly face stress, trauma, and challenging field conditions. It was conducted by Prof. Dr. Jamshed Ahmed, Psychologist at Ziauddin University, who shared practical techniques for stress management, emotional resilience, and maintaining psychological well-being in high-pressure environments.

The session aimed to raise awareness about psychological challenges faced by reporters, promote healthy coping strategies, and encourage resilience while covering demanding assignments.

Amir Shahzad, Head of Public Relations & Communications at Ziauddin University, said protecting journalists' mental well-being is as important as strengthening their professional skills.

Mubasher Mir, President of the Karachi Editors Club, and General Secretary Manzar Naqvi appreciated the initiative and stressed the need for regular awareness programs to equip journalists with tools to manage workplace stress.

The workshop concluded with a Q&A session and certificate distribution by Prof. Dr. Jamshed Ahmed.

Pakistan-China Cooperation Opens New Era for Cotton Research and Mechanization

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Commercial Ambassador of Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI), Adeel Munawar, said Pakistan harvested only 5.6 million bales of cotton last season, the lowest in 30 years.

Speaking at PCJCCI Secretariat, he stressed that Pakistan has strong potential with good genetics, large cultivation area, skilled farmers, and a huge textile industry dependent on local cotton. He said the main issue is not ability but inconsistent, science-based field management like timely sowing, balanced nutrition, IPM, and proper harvesting.

He added Xinjiang Agricultural University has experimental fields in Faisalabad and plans to test mechanical picking, Xinjiang's 90% mechanization, plus drip irrigation and mulching, can be transferred to Pakistan to address water challenges.

PCJCCI Secretary General Salahuddin Hanif said a modern biotechnology center of excellence lab is being set up at CCRI, and CPEC is opening new avenues for cotton R&D to modernize Pakistan's cotton sector.



World First for Pakistan: Arif Balgamwala Wins Gold at Macao 2026 World Stamp Exhibition

Commerce Desk

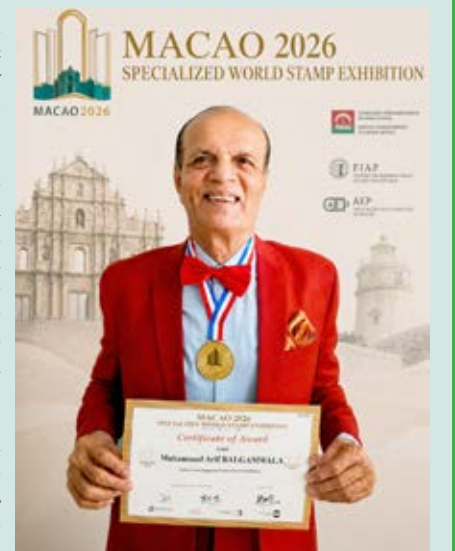
KARACHI: Pakistan has achieved a historic milestone in philately as renowned businessman and philatelist M. Arif Balgamwala, T. I., became the first philatelist in the world, and the first Pakistani in 79 years, to win a Gold Medal in the competitive Five-Frame category at the Macao 2026 Specialized World Stamp Exhibition.

Balgamwala won the honor for his exhibit "British India Stamps Overprints Pakistan 1947-1949", earning unprecedented international recognition for Pakistan.

The Macao victory adds to an exceptional year for the veteran philatelist. Earlier in 2026, he won a Gold Medal at the Dubai 2026 World Stamp Exhibition for "Pakistan Overprints on India Stationery 1947-1949."

In another first, he became the first Pakistani in history to be inducted into the Court of Honor at the Boston World Stamp Expo 2026, USA, one of the highest distinctions on the international philatelic circuit.

With three World Gold Medals in 2026, a historic Five-Frame Gold at Macao, and the Court of Honor honor, Balgamwala has set a new benchmark for Pakistan in global philately.



ISSI-PAIDAR Event Commemorates Rwanda's Journey from Genocide to Digital Innovation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organized an event to commemorate Rwanda's Liberation Day. The proceedings began with the national anthems of Pakistan and Rwanda. Speakers included Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, BoG, ISSI; High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou, High Commissioner of Rwanda to Pakistan; High Commissioner Naem Khan, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Rwanda; and Dr. Amina Khan; Director CAMEA. The Chief Guest on the occasion was Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed; President PAIDAR.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that Rwanda's Liberation Day commemorates the country's remarkable journey from the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to peace, reconciliation, and development. He noted that Pakistan values its growing partnership with Rwanda, based on mutual respect and shared aspirations. He recalled the long-standing historical linkages between the two countries, particularly Pakistan's contribution to UN peacekeeping and post-genocide recovery efforts. He paid tribute to former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, Shaharyar M. Khan, who served as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Rwanda during a critical period in the country's recovery. He stressed that this reflected Pakistan's enduring commitment to peace, stability, and reconciliation in Rwanda. He also observed that the establishment of diplomatic missions in Kigali and Islamabad has opened a new chapter in bilateral relations, creating new opportunities for cooperation in trade, education, technology, and people-to-people exchanges.

Dr. Amina Khan said that Rwanda's Liberation Day symbolizes the country's remarkable transformation from the tragedy of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi to peace, reconciliation, and sustainable development. She noted



that CAMEA is committed to promoting Pakistan's engagement with Africa and strengthening institutional linkages and fostering dialogue with African partners. She highlighted that the establishment of diplomatic missions in Kigali and

Islamabad has given new momentum to Pakistan-Rwanda relations and appreciated the efforts of Ambassador Muhammad Naem Khan and High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou in further strengthening bilateral coop-



eration. She expressed confidence that the friendship between Pakistan and Rwanda would continue to deepen in the years ahead.

Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed praised Rwanda's remarkable journey of

resilience, reconciliation, and socio-economic transformation, describing the country as a model of stability, modernization, and digital progress. He also underscored Pakistan's longstanding support for African liberation move-

ments and emphasized the growing momentum in Pakistan-Rwanda relations, particularly following recent high-level diplomatic exchanges. He further reaffirmed the shared commitment of both countries to strengthening bilateral cooperation, enhancing people-to-people ties, and promoting Afro-Asian solidarity in an evolving global landscape.

High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou paid tribute to the soldiers of the Rwanda Patriotic Army who sacrificed their lives during the country's struggle, saying that their courage and selfless sacrifices laid the foundation for Rwanda's remarkable transformation into one of Africa's cleanest, greenest, and most innovative nations. She highlighted Rwanda's achievements in artificial intelligence, digital innovation, healthcare, and peaceful nuclear energy, as well as its emergence as a leading conference destination. Reaffirming the strong and friendly ties between Pakistan and Rwanda, she emphasized the importance of expanding bilateral and multilateral cooperation, particularly in climate change and green energy, and appreciated the contributions of the Pakistani diaspora in Rwanda and the Friends of Rwanda in Pakistan in further strengthening relations between the two countries.

High Commissioner Muhammad Naem Khan said that Rwanda's Liberation Day marks a historic milestone and reflects the country's extraordinary achievements in peace, development, and nation-building. He praised Rwanda's remarkable progress in digitalization, governance, public service delivery, and transparent development, noting that its success offers valuable lessons for other countries. Highlighting the growing momentum in Pakistan-Rwanda relations, he referred to the exchange of high-level visits, including business delegations, which has contributed to increased bilateral trade. He also encouraged Pakistani businesses and tourists to explore the opportunities available in Rwanda and emphasized the need for both countries to fully capitalize on the expanding avenues of cooperation.

The Grand Daughter Of World Renowned Mathematician Allama Mashriqi **NINA KHAN MASHRIQI RECEIVES International British Asian 100 Who's Who Award 2026**

Nina Khan Mashriqi the grand daughter of World renowned Mathematician Islamic Scholar and Founder of The Khaksar Movement and grand neice of The ex Prime Minister of Bahawalpur Receives International Women Leadership Excellence Award in London British Asians Who's Who

has previously received several international awards for her contributions in different sectors. She has also organized major international events and serves in leadership roles across various companies, organizations, NGOs and institutions Inc world celebrities at her home the likes of Shah Rukh Khan, Princess Badiya of Jordan, 2026 Amir Khan and



8500 nominations overall was received in this event: British-Pakistani businesswoman and social activist Nina Khan Mashriqi has been honored with the highest International Women Leadership Excellence Award at the British Asians Who's Who Power 100 Awards 2026. The award recognizes her contributions to women's empowerment, humanitarian service, and welfare initiatives, philanthropy and as a leading entrepreneur. The event brought together distinguished personalities from around the world Inc leading Business community, politicians and professionals and celebrated individuals for their achievements in various fields. Receiving the award was a proud moment for both Nina Khan Mashriqi and Pakistan. She is widely known for

many women around the world who are working to advance women's rights and improve society and Palestine for which she attained worldwide recognition to have organized an 800 seated dinner event in Uk whereby she raised in excess of £100,000 (4 crore) and distributed the funds to Gaza 2024. She said the recognition would inspire her to continue serving humanity and expanding her efforts in welfare and women's empowerment. Nina Khan also paid tribute to her grandfather, the renowned scholar



her work in business, charity and advocacy for women's rights. Through various social and welfare projects, she has helped support vulnerable communities and promote opportunities for women. Nina Khan

Mashriqi said she was honored and grateful for the recognition. She thanked her husband, children, and humanity. She concluded by thanking mother for their support, saying their encouragement played a key role in her success. She dedicated the award to

Allama Mshriqi, and said she would continue his mission of service to humanity. She concluded by thanking mother for their support, saying their encouragement played a key role in her success. She dedicated the award to 100 Awards for the honor.

ConsTech Services International & CrystaLED & Lighting Brand

ConsTech, Lahore is an Engineering & Trading Company based in Lahore head office & branch office in Karachi. ConsTech was established in 2003 and later on it introduced its own brand **CrystaLED** with high quality and latest specs ConsTech also registered with The International Organization for Standardization for an **ISO Certification**. ConsTech is regularly participating in Pakistan Energy Exhibition & Conference **PEEC, POGEE & IEEEP Exhibition Events** is Pakistan. ConsTech has established its Product Experience Center in Lahore for quick demonstration of LED Lighting Products to check the technical specifications like power factors, wattages, energy costs and lux levels of light output of CrystaLED & other branded LED Lights.

ConsTech has started to keep stock of **CrystaLED Brand** for High Quality LED Street Lights, Flood Lights, Linear Lights, Down Lights & False Ceiling LED Panel Lights with different color temperatures of light output to enhance the decorum of the places. We can also offer lighting design and lux calculations using Dialux. We can offer our major LED Lighting range with high lumens per watts upto 200 Lm/W to save the energy even after maximizing light output.

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Bank of Punjab-Led Consortium Secures Rs4.76 Billion Islamic Financing for Air Link Expansion

Business Desk

ISLAMABAD: A consortium of leading financial institutions, led by The Bank of Punjab (BoP) and backed by InfraZamin Pakistan Limited, has successfully achieved the financial close of a Rs4.76 billion, 10-year Islamic Syndicated Term Finance Facility for Air Link Communication Limited and its subsidiary Select Technologies Limited.

The financing consortium includes Askari Bank Limited, BankIslami Pakistan Limited, Pak China Investment Company Limited, and The Bank of Punjab, while InfraZamin Pakistan is providing a Rs3.57 billion credit guarantee, enabling long-term financing at competitive pricing.

The investment will support the expansion of state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities at the Sundar Green Special Economic Zone, increasing local production of smartphones, consumer electronics, LED televisions, air conditioners, and home appliances. The initiative is expected to strengthen Pakistan's industrialization, promote import substitution, and enhance the country's manufacturing capabilities.

The project also includes the installation of a 1-megawatt solar power

plant, which is expected to reduce one million affordable smartphones



women, supporting greater female participation in the industrial workforce.

Apple, Xiaomi, Tecno, itel, Acer, and

annually, helping improve digital connectivity and access to technology across Pakistan. The expansion is also expected to create around 450 direct jobs within five years, with 25 to 30 percent of positions reserved for

participation in the industrial workforce.

Air Link Communication Limited, one of Pakistan's leading technology companies, is an authorized partner of global brands including Samsung,

iMiki. Its wholly owned subsidiary, Select Technologies Limited, manufactures Xiaomi smartphones and LED televisions, as well as Hisense air conditioners and televisions in Pakistan. Speaking on the occasion, Air Link

CEO Muzaffar Hayat Piracha said the financing would significantly advance the company's "Made in Pakistan" vision by expanding local manufacturing, encouraging innovation, and creating employment opportunities, particularly for young people and women.

InfraZamin CEO Maheen Rahman said the financing would strengthen local manufacturing, promote digital inclusion, create export opportunities, and support sustainable economic growth through innovative blended finance solutions.

Officials from The Bank of Punjab, Askari Bank, BankIslami Pakistan, and Pak China Investment Company described the transaction as a landmark achievement for Pakistan's financial sector, noting that it establishes a new benchmark for long-term Islamic syndicated financing and demonstrates how credit enhancement mechanisms can mobilize private investment for strategic industrial development.

The landmark financing underscores the growing collaboration between commercial banks and development finance institutions to support Pakistan's manufacturing sector, attract private investment, and accelerate sustainable economic growth.

Hashoo Foundation, UNDP Complete Five-Day Training on Environmental Justice and Peacebuilding in Swat

News Desk

SWAT: Hashoo Foundation, with the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), successfully concluded a five-day training programme aimed at promoting environmental justice, peacebuilding, and women's empowerment in Swat under the project "Empowering Women for Peace and Environmental Justice in Swat."

The training brought together Environmental Human Rights Defenders (EHRDs), community leaders, activists, and insider mediators to strengthen their knowledge and practical skills in environmental protection,

conflict resolution, climate action, and community-led development initiatives.

Participants received hands-on training in environmental justice, mediation and negotiation, conflict analysis, advocacy, climate-related grievance mechanisms, and the design of Community Environmental Justice and Peace (CEJP) projects. They also developed practical action plans to address local environmental challenges through peaceful and sustainable approaches.

Representatives from government departments, environmental institutions, and local administration participated in the programme, providing

guidance on official complaint mechanisms and opportunities for collaboration between communities and public institutions.

The closing ceremony was attended by Vice Chancellor of the University of Swat, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Qasim, who praised the initiative and highlighted the importance of protecting Swat's fragile ecosystem. He said such programmes help raise public awareness and strengthen community participation in environmental conservation and sustainable development.

Hashoo Foundation CEO Mrs. Sumaira Hashwani congratulated the participants and emphasized the vital role of local communities, particularly



women, in promoting environmental justice and lasting peace. She noted that sustainable environmental solutions require informed and empowered communities working together.

Certificates were distributed among participants, who are now expected to lead awareness campaigns, support environmental protection efforts, facilitate dialogue, and strengthen commu-

nity resilience across Swat. The initiative marks a significant step toward promoting inclusive environmental governance and sustainable peace in the region.

Finance Minister Announces SME Finance Task Force to Boost Access to Credit

Continued from Page 8

Highlighting Pakistan's improving economic outlook, the minister said the country had concluded the last fiscal year with a primary budget surplus, the lowest fiscal deficit in recent years, stronger debt indicators, a stable current account, record remittances, growing foreign exchange reserves, and renewed access to international capital markets, including the successful launch of Pakistan's first Panda Bond.

Aurangzeb reaffirmed the government's commitment to transforming macroeconomic stability into export-led and investment-driven growth through structural reforms and policy consist-

ency. He noted that the FY2026-27 budget introduced tax and financing measures to enhance competitiveness, support exporters, agriculture and manufacturing, encourage investment, and provide relief to the salaried class. He also announced that the government would soon introduce a Medium-Term Tax Strategy to provide greater certainty and predictability for businesses.

The finance minister highlighted ongoing reforms to modernize tax administration through a technology-driven operating model designed to minimize human intervention, improve transparency, and strengthen trust between taxpayers and the Federal Board of Revenue.

He also reiterated the government's commitment to expanding risk-sharing and partial credit guarantee schemes, particularly for SMEs and small farmers, while continuing targeted financing support for export-oriented industries. Aurangzeb stressed the importance of diversifying government borrowing through non-bank financing channels and developing domestic debt capital markets to create greater space for private-sector lending.

Outlining the broader financial sector reform agenda, the minister said the government was advancing initiatives in privatization, climate finance, digital assets, and financial innovation. He noted that the recently

enacted Virtual Asset Act 2026 had established a modern regulatory framework for digital assets and revealed that the government was exploring innovative financing options, including the tokenization of sovereign debt. He also underscored the importance of strengthening cybersecurity to support Pakistan's expanding digital financial ecosystem.

Concluding his address, Senator Aurangzeb reaffirmed the government's commitment to working closely with the banking industry and all stakeholders to build a modern, inclusive, and resilient financial system capable of supporting investment, innovation, and sustainable economic growth.

Omar Associates in final of Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Batting by Openers Arbaz Khan scored 80 with the help of 10 boundaries 3 Sixes and Ram Ravi 43 with 5 fours and a Six both added 121 for the opening 8 wicket partnership Omar Associates defeated Wing 999 Sports by 7 wickets in the 2nd Semi Final to moved into Final of the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament here at KCCA Stadium. Omar Associates will meet Y. J Sports in the Final.

Scores in Brief:

Omar Associates beat Wing 999 by 7 Wickets at KCCA Stadium. Wing 999 Sports 182/9 in 40 overs. Arif Khan 69 4x4 4x6, Abdul Basit 37 7x4 1x6, S. Syed 30. Arif Yaqoob 2/15, Adeel Meo 2/21, Ziaullah 2/36.

In reply Omar Associates 186/3 in 23.3 overs. Arbaz Khan 80 10x4 3x6, Ram Ravi 43 5x1 1x6, Ashir Ahmed 30 3x4 1x6, Zohaib Idrees 16 both not out.

The Silencing of Kashmiri Cultural Identity: Language, Music and Memory Under Occupation

Continued from Page 4

Indian authorities maintain that security measures in Indian-Occupied Kashmir target separatism rather than culture. The distinction collapses when applied to people whose only political act is making art.

Madhosh Balhama, a Kashmiri poet whose verses drew on the Sufi tradition of resistance and longing, faced repeated summons and interrogations for what authorities described as revolutionary poetry. Syed Areej Safvi, a female Ladishah performer in a tradition of satirical folk singing that has existed in Kashmir for centuries, shifted her material away from political themes after coming under pressure. Kashmiri rappers and YouTubers who documented human rights conditions or drew on resistance traditions in their work were routinely called in for questioning. The New York Times documented in 2021 that poets across the Valley were being forced into silence. The pattern has not reversed.

The UAPA and PSA extend their reach into the cultural sphere through the same mechanism applied to journalists. When Fahad Shah, Aasif Sultan and Irfan Mehraj are imprisoned for journalism that simultaneously preserved Kashmiri memory and historical consciousness, the chilling effect does not stop at the press. It reaches every poet, musician and writer who understands that documentation and artistic expression, in Indian-Occupied Kashmir, carry identical legal risk.

This is not without precedent in the history of contested territories. China's bilingual education policy in Tibet has produced a situation in which, according to the University of Cincinnati Law Review and reporting by The Diplomat in 2025, approximately 95 percent of school textbooks are now in Mandarin, with Tibetan children increasingly placed in boarding schools that sever the cultural transmission the home provides. Turkey banned Kurdish language education and public

expression for decades following the 1980 coup, restricting Kurdish cultural performances and media under security pretexts documented extensively by Human Rights Watch and PEN International. In each case, the strategy followed the same logic: present linguistic and cultural suppression as national integration, use administrative mechanisms rather than explicit prohibition where possible, and target the transmission systems through which identity passes between generations. What is happening in Indian-Occupied Kashmir fits this pattern with uncomfortable precision.

Under Article 15 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, India is obligated to respect the right of every person to participate in cultural life and to benefit from the protection of their literary and artistic production. That obligation does not permit the forfeiture of books, the removal of language textbooks, the surveillance of folk performers or the imprisonment of poets whose crime is memory.

The demographic engineering this series has documented, the new domicile laws, the land transfers, the settlement of non-locals, operates most effectively when the indigenous population has been separated from the cultural infrastructure through which identity is transmitted and defended. Language is that infrastructure. Music is that infrastructure. Literature is that infrastructure. A generation of Kashmiris growing up without Kashmiri textbooks, without access to the books that document their history, without poets willing to speak and musicians willing to perform, is a generation whose capacity to articulate what is being done to them has been pre-emptively reduced.

That is not an accident of policy. It is its purpose. The dispossession of a people is complete not when their land is taken but when they can no longer remember, in their own language, that it was ever theirs.

The author is a researcher at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations Islamabad.

The Sanctity of the Uniform

Continued from Page 4

Educational institutions also have a significant role to play in cultivating respect for the uniform among younger generations. Students should be taught that a uniform is not a symbol of privilege or superiority, but of service, discipline, accountability, and sacrifice. When young people understand these values, they are more likely to perform their future professional responsibilities with honesty, commitment, and a strong sense of public duty, regardless of the field they choose.

In conclusion, the sanctity of the uniform extends far beyond any single profession or institution. It represents the rule of law, national security, public service, disci-

pline, justice, and the highest moral ideals of society. The true honor of the uniform can only be preserved when those who wear it embody integrity, fairness, courage, selflessness, and unwavering dedication to their responsibilities, while society recognizes and respects their legitimate service. When noble character and sincere service are united with the uniform, it ceases to be merely an article of clothing and becomes a timeless symbol of dignity, trust, responsibility, patriotism, and national honor the very qualities upon which the strength, stability, and progress of great nations are built.

The writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at srasif786@gmail.com

Delegation-level talks

CHOLPON-ATA, Kyrgyzstan: President Asif Ali Zardari and President of the Kyrgyz Republic Sadyr Japarov lead delegation-level talks.



Photo: PID

President Zardari, Kyrgyz President agree to expand bilateral cooperation across key sectors

Spokesman Report

BISHKEK: President Asif Ali Zardari, accompanied by a high-level delegation, held talks with President Sadyr Japarov of the Kyrgyz Republic during his official visit to Bishkek, with both leaders reaffirming their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations and expanding cooperation across multiple sectors.

An official welcome ceremony was held in President Zardari's honour at the

Rukh Ordo Cultural Centre before the two leaders held delegation-level talks. They reviewed the full spectrum of bilateral ties and discussed enhancing collaboration in trade, energy, connectivity, investment, culture, education, people-to-people exchanges, and the CASA-1000 energy project.

President Zardari said Pakistan highly values its longstanding friendship with Kyrgyzstan, describing the relationship as one based on shared faith, history, and

cultural affinity. He recalled President Zhaparov's historic visit to Pakistan in December 2025, the first by a Kyrgyz president in two decades, which resulted in the signing of 16 agreements and Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) and gave fresh momentum to bilateral relations.

The President emphasized that Kyrgyzstan holds an important place in Pakistan's "Vision Central Asia" policy and congratulated the Kyrgyz Republic on its election as a

non-permanent member of the United Nations Security Council for the 2027-2028 term.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening cooperation at the United Nations, OIC, ECO, and SCO, while agreeing to expand parliamentary, defence, security, and strategic dialogue to promote regional peace and mutual understanding.

During the visit, the Ministry of Health of Kyrgyzstan and Pakistan's

Drug Regulatory Authority (DRAP) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance cooperation in the health sector. A Joint Statement was also signed by the two Presidents, reaffirming their shared commitment to broadening bilateral cooperation.

The meeting was attended by senior ministers and officials from both countries and concluded with an official reception hosted by President Zhaparov in honour of President Zardari.

Pakistan and Morocco strengthen strategic cooperation in agriculture

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain on Tuesday met with Morocco's Minister of Agriculture, Fisheries, Rural Development and Forests Ahmed El Bouari, in Rabat and discussed avenues for enhancing bilateral cooperation in the agriculture sector.

The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, reflecting the strong and friendly relations between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Morocco, said a press release issued by the Ministry of National Food Security.

The two ministers reviewed the existing bilateral cooperation in agriculture and food security and exchanged views



on expanding collaboration in agricultural trade, livestock development, capacity building, and the exchange of technical expertise.

Both sides reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening cooperation in areas of mutual interest and agreed to maintain close coordination to advance the agricultural partnership between the two countries.

During the meeting, Tanveer Hussain extended an invitation to Ahmed El Bouari to undertake an official visit to Pakistan at his convenience. The invitation was warmly welcomed, and both ministers expressed confidence that high-level exchanges would further deepen bilateral ties and promote mutually beneficial cooperation in the agricultural sector.

Finance Minister Announces SME Finance Task Force to Boost Access to Credit



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Tuesday announced the formation of a dedicated SME Finance Task Force to improve access to financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), describing expanded private-sector lending as essential for Pakistan's long-term economic growth.

Addressing the Pakistan Banking Summit 2026 in Karachi, the finance minister said the task force would be led by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and include senior representatives from the Pakistan Banks' Association (PBA), Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), chambers of commerce

and industry, and the Ministry of Finance. The body will recommend practical measures to expand SME financing and improve access to credit across the banking sector.

Aurangzeb emphasized that increased financing for SMEs, exporters, agriculture, manufacturing, construction, housing, and the information technology sector was "mission critical" for achieving sustainable economic growth. He stressed that improving SME access to finance should become an industry-wide responsibility rather than being limited to a few financial institutions, adding that the necessary budgetary allocations had already been made in the Federal Budget 2026-27.

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan Warns Any Attempt to Deny Water Rights Will Be "Act of War"



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding its water rights, sovereignty, and territorial integrity.

He warned that any attempt by India to deprive Pakistan of its lawful share under the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) would be considered an "act of war."

In a statement, Danyal condemned India's unilateral actions on the treaty as a violation of international law and treaty obligations. He said the IWT is a legally binding agreement that cannot be suspended unilaterally, and any effort to block,

divert, or "weaponize" Pakistan's water share threatens the water security of 240 million Pakistanis.

He stated Pakistan reserves the right to pursue all diplomatic, political, and legal remedies. While committed to peace and dialogue under the UN Charter, he said this should not be mistaken for weakness.

Referring to the 276th Corps Commanders' Conference chaired by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, he said the Armed Forces reaffirmed resolve to protect Pakistan's water rights at all costs.

He added that the government, parliament, armed forces, and people stand united under PM Shehbaz Sharif, and called on the UN and friendly countries to help preserve the treaty's integrity.

IT Minister Reaffirms Pakistan's Commitment to Global Digital Cooperation at Geneva Digital Week

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to international cooperation on digital transformation during engagements on the sidelines of Geneva Digital Week and the UN Global Dialogue on AI Governance.

According to an official release, the minister held bilateral meetings with UN Under-Secretary-General and Special Envoy for Digital and Emerging Technologies Aman-deep Singh Gill; UN Under-Secretary-General for Policy Guy Ryder; Saudi Arabia's Minister of Communications and IT Abdullah Alswaha; Kazakhstan's Deputy PM and AI



Minister Zhaslan Madiyev; Egypt's Deputy Minister for Digital Transformation Mahmoud Badawi; Sri Lanka's Chief Adviser on Digital Economy Dr. Hans Wijayasuriya; and Poland's Deputy PM Krzysztof

Gawkowski.

The discussions focused on expanding cooperation in artificial intelligence, digital governance, digital public infrastructure, AI sovereignty, cybersecurity, innovation ecosystems, and cross-border technology partnerships.

The talks also stressed collaborative policymaking to ensure digital technologies drive inclusive economic growth and sustainable development.

The minister said Pakistan continues to engage with international partners to exchange best practices and develop forward-looking policies to position the country as a responsible player in the global digital economy. She also thanked the UN for convening Geneva Digital Week.

Global Fuel Price Relief to Reach Consumers Soon, Says Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik on Tuesday assured that the government would pass on the full benefit of any decline in international petroleum prices to consumers, while outlining reforms for the petroleum, gas, and refining sectors during a National Assembly Standing Committee meeting.

Speaking to media, Malik said reducing fuel price burden remains a top priority. "The full benefit of any decline in the global market will be passed on to the public," he said, noting OGRA's 20-year-old pricing formula uses international averages and PSO import costs.

He said Pakistan imports 70% of its petrol, and while crude prices fell, refined products remain expensive due to Platts benchmarks and higher freight. He recalled PM Shehbaz allocated Rs130 billion for subsidised fuel for motorcycles and transport users.

Malik announced the Refinery Upgradation Policy has been sent to cabinet to produce Euro-5 fuel, and said consumers won't bear inefficiencies. He also cited ongoing gas sector deregulation with World Bank support, plans to privatise gas companies, and need to strengthen OGRA by appointing a permanent chairman.

The committee also questioned LPG price enforcement and CSR fund use. A heated exchange over LPG and RLNG prices led to adjournment.