



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے عبد اللہ بن مسعود نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے کہا کہ ان سے ابو ابراہیم نے ان سے کہا کہ ان سے اعراب نے اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ نے کہا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا تم میں سے کوئی شخص اس طرح نہ کہے کہ یا اللہ! اگر تو چاہے تو مجھے معاف کر دے میری مغفرت کر دے۔ بلکہ یحییٰ بن کثیر نے کہا کہ اگر اللہ پر کوئی فرد سب سے زیادہ نیک ہے۔ (صحیح بخاری، صفحہ نمبر 6339)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Iranian president thanks PM Shehbaz for attending Khamenei's funeral

In a post on X, Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has thanked Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for attending the farewell and official funeral ceremonies of Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, saying the gesture reflected the longstanding solidarity between the two neighbouring nations.



DPM, British HC discuss Pakistan-UK ties

British High Commissioner Jane Marriott called on Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday and discussed Pakistan-UK relations and exchanged views on regional developments, including the recent U. S-Iran situation. DPM/FM highlighted Pakistan's constructive mediation efforts in support of dialogue, diplomacy and de-escalation. The British High Commissioner appreciated Pakistan's role in promoting regional peace and stability.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Muharram-ul-Haram 24, Friday, July 10, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

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Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 80

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

High-level meeting

QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif addresses the Provincial Apex Committee meeting under the National Action Plan to review the security situation in Balochistan. Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, also attended the high-level meeting.



Photo: PID

PM Briefed on Overall Security Environment in Balochistan

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif was given a comprehensive briefing on Balochistan's security situation during his visit to Quetta, with focus on recent terrorist incidents, ongoing intelligence-based operations, and measures by the military and law enforcement agencies. He was accompanied by Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Information Ataullah Tarar, and Adviser Rana Sanaullah. Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhel and Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti were also present. The Prime Minister paid tribute

to the Shuhada and expressed solidarity with their families. He reaffirmed the nation's support for the armed forces, LEAs, and the people of Balochistan in the fight against terrorism. Shehbaz Sharif said peace in Balochistan is central to Pakistan's stability and progress, and attempts by enemies to derail development will not succeed. He acknowledged the resolve of security forces against what he termed Indian-sponsored terrorism and stressed zero tolerance against all forms of terrorism. He reaffirmed that the federal government, in coordination with the provincial government, will continue efforts to eliminate terrorist networks and ensure peace and opportunity for Balochistan.

PM says political, military leadership resolved not to step back till elimination of last terrorist

Bureau Report

QUETTA: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday categorically declared the unwavering resolve of both the political and military leadership to completely eradicate the menace of terrorism from the country, asserting that anti-terror operations would continue until the very last terrorist is eliminated from Pakistani soil.

"I want to announce this decision today, on behalf of myself, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, and the Balochistan government, that we will not step back from fighting this menace. We will eliminate it by utilising all available resources, and Pakistan will become a cradle of progress and prosperity," the prime minister said in his remarks while chairing the Provincial Apex Committee meeting on

the National Action Plan here. The high-level meeting was attended by Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Federal Ministers Attaullah Tarar and Ahad Khan Cheema, Advisor to PM Rana Sanaullah, Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhel, Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti, and the heads of various law enforcement agencies.

The prime minister said that very serious incidents had taken place during the last four days, resulting in the martyrdom of policemen, soldiers, and civilians, assuring that the entire nation stood shoulder-to-shoulder with the armed forces and law enforcement agencies in this testing time. He said that the nefarious designs of Fitna al-Khawaraj and other hostile elements

stemmed from their inability to digest Pakistan's growing diplomatic achievements and successes on the international horizon. Concluding his remarks, Prime Minister Shehbaz prayed for peace for the martyred souls and extended his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families, praying for strength to them to bear the loss with fortitude.

Ahsan Urges Diaspora to Back Pakistan's AI, Innovation and Export-Led Growth

News Desk

NORTHERN CALIFORNIA: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal called on the Pakistani diaspora in the U. S. to unite under "Pakistan First" to drive economic transformation through innovation, technology and exports. Addressing the community, he said URAAN Pakistan aims

to build a knowledge-based economy, targeting a \$1 trillion economy by 2035 and exports over \$100 billion. He urged overseas Pakistanis to promote investment, technology transfer and business linkages, noting the U. S. is Pakistan's largest export market. The government is establishing National Centres of Excellence in AI, Cyber Security, Big Data and Quantum Computing. Plug and Play Tech Center offered to support 300 Pakistani startups and open offices in Islamabad and Karachi. Community members proposed consulates as export hubs and Silicon Valley advisory groups. Ahsan welcomed the ideas and said Pakistan's youth

and IT workforce can make it a regional innovation hub.



and IT workforce can make it a regional innovation hub.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Awaiz Ahmed Khan Leghari said Pakistan and Russia have immense untapped potential in trade, energy, education and connectivity, and that improved transport links and economic cooperation could push bilateral trade past the \$1 billion mark.



Addressing the webinar "Pakistan-Russia: Strengthening Trade, Education and Energy Collaboration" organized by UWCM Moscow and IRS, Leghari said ties have gained momentum over the last two decades based on mutual trust and shared commitment to regional stability. He noted relations are now driven independently of geopolitics, with both sides upholding the UN and international law. Bilateral trade was \$243.412 million in FY2025, down from over \$1 billion in FY2024 due to issues in payments, banking, financing and shipping. He expressed hope the Pakistan-Russia Economic Cooperation Programme to 2030 would revive growth.

On connectivity, he highlighted the INSTC and MoUs on the Belarus-Russia-Kazakhstan-Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan corridor and a 2024 railway cooperation deal. A rail link and upgrade of the Quetta-Taftan line could boost trade. Direct flights are also under consideration, with possible code-sharing and cargo routes. In energy, Leghari cited Zarubzhneft's MoUs with PPL and OGDCL in Feb 2025 and its operations from Aug 2025, plus interest from NOVATEK in gas/LNG and RusHydro in hydropower. Reviving Pakistan Steel Mills was termed a flagship symbol of partnership.

He noted 1,087 Pakistani students study in Russia and called for expanded scholarships in science and tech. He also welcomed the Pakistan-Russia Readmission Agreement and urged an easier visa regime.

Raisa Adil posted as Principal Information Officer



Officer (PIO). According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting here, Raisa Adil, who was currently serving as the Executive Director General of the External Publicity Wing (EPW), has been transferred and posted as Executive Director General/Principal Information Officer, Press Information Department (PID), Islamabad. The appointment has been made in her own pay and scale with immediate effect and until further orders, the notification added.

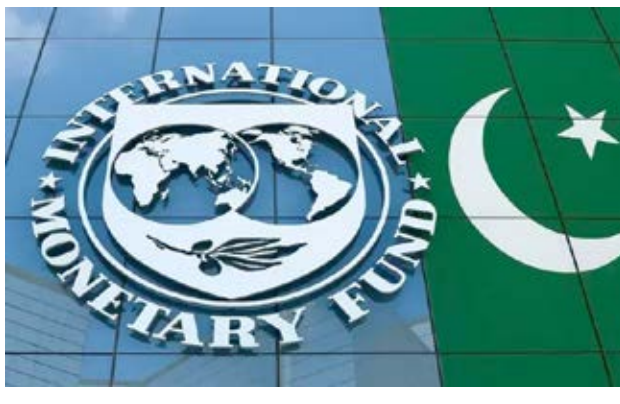
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government on Thursday transferred Raisa Adil, a BS-20 officer of the Information Group, and posted her as the new Principal Information

IMF sees Pakistan's growth at 3.5%, below government's target

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Monetary Fund has projected Pakistan's economy to grow at 3.5 per cent for the current fiscal year, which is 0.5 per cent lower than the government's target of 4 per cent. In its latest World Economic Outlook (WEO) update released on Wednesday, the IMF also retained its forecast of 3.6% GDP growth for Pakistan in fiscal year 2025-26, unchanged from its



projections issued in April. According to the report, Pakistan's economy expanded by 3.2% in 2025 and is expected to grow by 3.6% in 2026 before moderating slightly to 3.5% in 2027. Globally, the IMF projected economic growth of 3.0% in 2026 and 3.4% in 2027, broadly unchanged from its April outlook. The Fund said the global economic outlook remains uneven, with the impact of ongoing conflict weighing on energy-importing and vulner-

able economies, while rising demand linked to artificial intelligence continues to benefit countries integrated into global technology supply chains. The report also warned that global disinflation has stalled, although risks are more balanced than in April. It cautioned that renewed geopolitical conflict and financial market volatility remain key downside risks and urged policymakers to maintain price stability, rebuild fiscal buffers and strengthen economic resilience.

Punjab unveils Climate Resilience Plan, strengthens flood preparedness ahead of monsoon

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a high-level meeting with Federal Minister for Climate Change Dr. Musadik Malik to review the province's climate resilience strategy, flood preparedness and coordination mechanisms ahead of the monsoon season.

During the meeting, Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb presented the Punjab Climate and Disaster Resilience Plan 2026, outlining measures to improve disaster management and climate adaptation. It was decided to establish a joint federal-provincial early warning system for forecasting extreme weather events and install centralized information screens at district and tehsil levels. Authorities agreed to begin coordinated response efforts at least six hours before any severe weather event.

The Chief Minister directed immediate mock drills for monsoon prepar-



edness and instructed the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) to enhance coordination with the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA). She also ordered the issuance of timely advisories on heatwaves and rainfall, strengthened flood response logistics, and controlled tourism during extreme weather

conditions.

Maryam Nawaz highlighted Punjab's successful handling of the 2025 floods, noting that despite widespread flooding, no major disease outbreaks occurred due to timely provision of food, medicines, clean water, shelters, Clinics on Wheels and field hospitals. She said Rescue

1122 and PDMA had been modernized, water storage capacity expanded, and WASA services extended to every district.

Officials informed the meeting that Punjab had introduced Pakistan's first climate-tagged budget, rescued around three million people and 2.5 million livestock during the 2025 floods, restored all damaged irrigation infrastructure, and implemented a comprehensive three-year climate resilience strategy.

Federal Minister Dr. Musadik Malik praised Punjab's disaster management efforts and assured full federal support under the Prime Minister's "Fix, Expand and Build" policy. The meeting also reviewed flood risks posed by heavy rainfall, flash floods, cloudbursts, snowmelt and potential river flooding, while confirming that all vulnerable districts have been issued advance warnings and emergency response teams remain on high alert.

AJK PM Pays Tribute to Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan on 11th Death Anniversary

Bureau Report



ISLAMABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore in his message on 11th death anniversary of former President and former PM Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan he said that Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan was a prestigious, respected and influential personality of state politics who led the Azadi Movement and made the region of Azad Jammu and Kashmir independent. He said that Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan rendered valuable services for the construction and development of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, promotion of democratic traditions and highlighting the of Jammu and Kashmir issue. He said that the late Sardar Abdul Qayyum services will always be remembered. He has dedicated his entire political career to protection of people's rights, stability of institutions and better future of the state. We need to work with the same spirit for the happiness and welfare of the people. The AJK Premier prayed that Allah Almighty grant Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan a high position in his mercy.

Muslim Conference Leader Vows to Uphold Qayyum Khan's Ideology Until Kashmir's Independence

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference leader and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the Mujahideen will continue to implement the ideologies of Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. When Kashmir becomes independent and becomes part of Pakistan, he expressed these views in a message on the occasion of the 10th birth anniversary of Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan. He was an advocate and spokesperson of Islam, ideology of Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Azadi. Played important role in establishing a dignified government in Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that Mujahid e Awwal never compromised on people's rights He was the first to interpret the feelings of the Kashmiri people by firing the first shot against another dictatorship and the Kashmiri people are still following the same path. All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference is a candle of the ideology of Mujahid e Awwal who is still fighting for the cause of freedom and Kashmir. Personalities are not only born in centuries, but their teachings, ideas and ideologies have been influenced by centuries. The Muslim Conference is not limited to a region, nation or country but to the entire human brotherhood. And took advantage of the unprecedented leadership Mujahid e Awwal launched Jihad-Azadi Kashmir on August 23, 1947 from the position of Nila But and under his leadership the Muslims' Conference.



Muslim Conference Leader Honors Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan's Legacy of Islamic Ideology and Kashmir Freedom

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: Muslim Conference Secretary General Mohterma Meharunisa In her message on the occasion of Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan's anniversary she said that Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan was an advocate and spokesperson of Islam, theory of Pakistan and Tehreek-e-Azadi e Kashmir. He dedicated his entire life to promoting these ideologies and intellectual guidance of the nation. Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan played an important role in establishing a dignified government in Azad Kashmir. She said that Mujahid e Awwal interpreted the feelings of the Kashmiri people by firing the first shot against Dogra regime and the Kashmiri people are still struggling on the same path. Mohterma Meharunisa said that the All Jammu Kashmir Muslim Conference is still trying to fulfill the goals of freedom of Kashmir with the candle of the ideologies of Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan.

Hot and Humid Weather

ISLAMABAD: Youngsters taking bath in Korang nullah to cool-off themselves during hot and humid weather in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab, U. S. Discuss Cultural Cooperation and Welfare Initiatives

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari met with U. S. Consul General in Lahore, Stetson Sanders, to discuss mutual interests, cultural cooperation, and the Punjab government's development and public welfare programs.

Also present were Punjab Information Secretary Syed Tahir Raza Hamdani and U. S. Consulate Political and Economic Advisor Sadaf Saad.

Consul General Sanders praised Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for her initiatives in public welfare, culture, and the arts. He commended the Punjab government's efforts to



establish Punjab Film City and revive the province's theatre industry.

Both sides discussed a potential cultural partnership between American artists and Alhamra Arts Council, and joint cultural activities in Lahore.

Bokhari briefed the Consul General on landmark welfare measures for women, students, and farmers. She highlighted the "Apni Chhat, Apna Ghar" program, under which construction of 170,000 homes is underway.

The two sides agreed to strengthen cooperation in culture, arts, and creative industries. Bokhari presented a commemorative souvenir to Sanders at the meeting's conclusion.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Thursday issued a power suspension programme for Friday in various areas of its region due to necessary maintenance and routine development work. According to an IESCO spokesperson, in Attock Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 5 am to 11 am, Munirabad, Garhi Afghan, Lala Rukh, Industrial feeders. In Chakwal Circle, electricity supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Abdullah Pur, Jalal Pur, Sagharpur, CWO, Feeders. Similarly, in Jhelum Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 6 am to 10 am, Karoli, Feeder.

In GSO Circle, power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 am to 04:00 pm, 132kv AWC HMC Taxila and 132KV Sangjani-Burhan, from 08:00 am to 06:00 pm, 132-KV Chakwal- Bhagwal- Talagang, 132KV Kahuta City- Palandri, 132KV New Wah-Bahtermore along with related earth switch and surrounding areas.

FIA Arrests NADRA and Union Council Officials Over Illegal CNIC Issuance to Afghan Nationals

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Deputy Director of the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) Multan, Khawaja Hammad, has revealed the arrest of several officials from the National Database and Registration Authority (NADRA) and a Union Council for their alleged involvement in issuing Pakistani Computerized National Identity Cards (CNICs) to Afghan nationals through fraudulent means.

Speaking to the media, Khawaja Hammad said the FIA had dismantled an organized network responsible for facilitating the illegal issuance of Pakistani identity documents. Those arrested include a NADRA Additional Director, two other NADRA

officials, and Union Council Secretary Sajjad Haider. He said the operation was the outcome of months of intelligence-based investigations and emphasized that all individuals involved would be brought to justice without exception.

He explained that during the ongoing repatriation of Afghan nationals, the FIA received information that some Afghan citizens had obtained Pakistani identities using forged documents. During the investigation, a suspect identified as Hammad was arrested, and his mobile phone was taken into custody. Analysis of the phone's data, along with other evidence, enabled investigators to trace the network allegedly involved in producing illegal identity documents.

According to the FIA, records of 19 Afghan nationals linked to the network were identified. Fifteen have already been deported, one suspect remains in custody, while efforts are underway to trace the remaining three individuals.

Khawaja Hammad stated that the principal accused allegedly bribed Union Council officials to obtain fake birth certificates, marriage certificates, and other supporting documents. These forged records were then used to secure Pakistani CNICs from NADRA.

He further noted that the issuance of fresh birth certificates for individuals aged 16 and 17 should have raised serious concerns, but the relevant Union Council officials deliberately ignored the irregularities. He maintained that both Union Council and

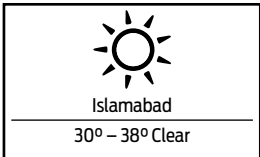
NADRA officials share equal responsibility, as the fraudulent CNICs could not have been issued without forged entries at the initial stage.

The FIA official reiterated that the agency would not tolerate any facilitation that could undermine Pakistan's law and order or national security. He warned that anyone found assisting terrorists or anti-state networks would face strict action under the government's zero-tolerance policy.

Khawaja Hammad stressed that officials involved should have realized the grave consequences of creating illegal identity documents, as such documents could potentially be used by individuals involved in terrorism or anti-state activities. He assured that the investigation is being conducted



in a transparent manner and that all those responsible will be prosecuted to their logical conclusion, sending a clear message that no public servant will be allowed to compromise national security for personal financial gain.



SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:23 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 5:12 pm
Maghrib 7:21 pm
Isha 9:03 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
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

48% of Travelers Avoid Sharing Sensitive Data With AI: Kaspersky Survey

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky's latest survey shows travelers widely use AI to save time and find personalized, budget-friendly travel options, but data security concerns remain high.

According to the research, 73% of users turn to AI to simplify planning, 65% for attraction information and personalized recommendations, 63% for deals, and 61% to find hard-to-access information. AI is also increasingly used for booking hotels and tickets.

However, 48% of respondents avoid sharing sensitive data with AI due to security risks. Another 37% are careful despite having few concerns. In total, 86% of AI-using travelers think about data security, while only 14% believe sharing any data with AI is totally safe.

Kaspersky advises against sharing IDs, addresses or passwords with AI, and to verify links to avoid phishing. Group Manager Vladislav Tushkanov said a cautious approach helps AI become a safe, reliable travel assistant.

Pakistan Navy successfully rescues 20 crew members from sinking Cargo Dhow East of Ormara

Bureau Report

KARACHI: In a swift and coordinated emergency response, Pakistan Navy, in coordination with Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), has successfully rescued all 20 crew members from a sinking cargo dhow operating east of Ormara. The cargo dhow, which was transiting from Karachi to the Gulf of Oman, experienced severe flooding. The situation quickly escalated due to deteriorating weather conditions at sea, placing the vessel and its crew in immediate danger.

Upon receipt of the distress call, the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) promptly coordinated with Pakistan Navy to initiate an immediate search and rescue operation. Pakistan Navy swiftly mobilized and deployed both surface and air assets. PNS HUNAIN was immediately diverted to the scene to undertake the rescue operation. Additionally, a Sea King helicopter was simultaneously tasked to provide critical aerial surveillance and extrac-



tion support. Owing to the rapid response and professional execution by Pakistan Navy units, all 20 crew members were safely recovered from the distressed vessel and are receiving the necessary medical care and attention. The successful operation underscores Pakistan Navy's unwavering commitment to ensuring the safety of life at sea and its readiness to respond to maritime emergencies around the clock.

Meet and greet

ISLAMABAD: Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Yahya Afridi, in meeting with His Excellency Sheikh Dr. Mohammad bin Abdulkarim Al-Issa, Secretary General of the Muslim World League (MWL) at the Supreme Court of Pakistan, on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Beaconhouse Partners with PCB to Train Cricketers in Communication Skills



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Beaconhouse has partnered with the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) to deliver 'Communication Skills for Professional Cricketers' for players at the National Cricket Academy camp.

Developed at PCB's request,

the 11-session programme recognizes communication as key to teamwork, leadership, media engagement and professional representation in high-performance sport.

The customized training covers professional communication, media readiness, active listening, emotional

intelligence, self-awareness, emotional regulation, and effective representation. Through practical scenarios and simulations, players learn to apply these skills in high-pressure, public-facing environments.

Speaking on the initiative, Beaconhouse Director Education Development Fareeha

Ahmad said the program aims to support athletes in representing themselves, their teams and Pakistan with greater confidence and professionalism.

The collaboration reflects Beaconhouse's commitment to leadership development and lifelong learning beyond the classroom.

Chinese Biomedical Engineering Delegation Visits NUTECH



Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD (ABDUL WAHEED KHAN): A delegation from the School of Biomedical Engineering, Wuhan Textile University (WTU), China, visited the National University of Technology (NUTECH) to explore academic and research collaboration. Led by Prof. Dr. Zhaowei Zhang, Dean, the delegation included Dr. Tang Yun, Dr. Zareen Zuhra, and Dr. Wajid Hussain from WTU. Officials from PSF including Prof. Dr. Mohammad Akmal, Dr. Mirza Habib Ali, Ms. Zaibana Farooq and Raja Abdul Rehman also attended. The delegation received a briefing on NUTECH's academic programs, research facilities, and industry initiatives, including the Magic QC Machine for textile quality control. They toured state-of-the-art labs, NSDD, NIC, and NEIC. Discussions covered regional scientific cooperation, technology transfer, joint research, and international academic networking. Both institutions reaffirmed commitment to advance biomedical engineering research, knowledge exchange, and development of globally competitive graduates.

Industrialists Inaugurate Graphic Design Exhibition at GCWUF, Offer Platform to Students

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Renowned industrialists Mr. Sohail Khattak, Dr. Khurram Tariq, and Mrs. Farzana Musadiq joined GCWUF Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen to inaugurate Degree Show 2026 by the Department of Art & Design.

The exhibition showcased final-year projects of 36 Graphic Design students, featuring branding solutions, digital campaigns, visual communication, and smartphone game designs addressing social, economic, and environmental issues.

Guests praised students' creativity, originality, and entrepreneurial mindset. Dr. Khurram Tariq announced support for selected students to exhibit at an upcoming expo. Mrs. Musadiq highlighted the platform's role in empowering young women.

Prof. Dr. Ameen thanked industry partners and stressed that academia-industry linkages can turn creative talent into professional opportunities.



BISP, WFP, UNICEF & WHO Extend Benazir Nashonuma to Protect 3.3 Million More Women and Children

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) together with WFP, UNICEF and WHO announced a three-year extension of the Benazir Nashonuma Programme to protect an additional 3.3 million pregnant and breastfeeding women and children under 2 from malnutrition across Pakistan. Integrated into

BISP, the programme delivers nutrition and health services through 578 facilitation centres and 224 nutrition stabilization centres nationwide. Since 2020 it has reached 4.7 million people. With this extension, total reach is expected to hit 8 million. Chairperson BISP Senator Rubina Khalid called it "a renewed national commitment" to give every child a healthier start and every mother a better future, saying

it carries forward Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto's vision. Evidence shows strong impact: children enrolled were 22% less likely to be stunted at 6 months. The programme also improved maternal nutrition, antenatal care uptake, pregnancy weight gain, and birth outcomes. In Pakistan, 4 in 10 children under 5 are stunted — 10 million children — while wasting affects 5 million, causing an estimat-



ed \$17 billion annual economic loss. WFP's Anita Hirsch said the extension will consolidate results. UNICEF's Pernille Ironside praised government leadership and pledged continued work on equitable nutrition access. WHO's Dr Luo Dapeng highlighted the power of integrated, science-based approaches. The partners will contin-

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)
 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
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

How America Backstabbed Iran at Hormuz - I

Washington used the MoU to secure the reopening of Hormuz, then moved to neutralise Iran's leverage, bypass its authority and impose American power on a waterway that does not belong to the United States.

The renewed confrontation over the Strait of Hormuz did not erupt in a political vacuum. Nor can it honestly be explained by repeating the convenient narrative that Iran suddenly attacked commercial vessels and the United States merely responded in defence of freedom of navigation.

Such an explanation begins the story at the moment most favourable to Washington and ignores the chain of military, diplomatic and strategic developments that preceded the explosions.

The real story begins with the Memorandum of Understanding between the United States and Iran. Iran entered the understanding after suffering enormous military damage from American and Israeli attacks on its military infrastructure, air defences, command structures and strategic installations.

position clear. The future management of the Strait would be discussed with Oman and other concerned Gulf states, with Tehran envisaging a maritime mechanism reflecting the rights and responsibilities of the coastal and regional countries.

One may disagree with Iran's proposed fees, reject unilateral tolls or demand international guarantees against discriminatory passage, but these were precisely the disputes that negotiations were supposed to resolve.

To Tehran, such a declaration could hardly inspire confidence in American intentions. Diplomacy was being discussed at the negotiating table while, according to Trump's own boast, strategic facts were being created on the water. Yet Iran still entered the MoU, agreed to temporary free commercial passage and allowed negotiations to proceed towards the more difficult question of Hormuz's future management.

Then Washington moved towards an alternative passage closer to the Omani side of the Strait. This became the decisive mistake or, from Tehran's perspective, the decisive betrayal.

Yet one powerful instrument remained in Tehran's hands: its geographical and strategic influence over the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world's most important energy arteries.

Hormuz was Iran's surviving strategic leverage. Iran did not invent the geography, and the United States did not build the Strait. The narrow waterway lies

between Iran and Oman, the two littoral states whose coastlines physically embrace the passage through which a substantial share of the world's traded oil and gas traditionally moves. The United States, by contrast, is thousands of miles away and possesses no coastline on the Strait.

This geographical fact is essential because Washington increasingly behaves as if military superiority creates maritime ownership. It does not. International law recognises navigational rights through straits used for international passage, but freedom of navigation is not synonymous with American administration.

A right of passage does not give a distant military power sovereign authority to redesign a waterway, impose its preferred management system or establish a parallel transit regime under the protection of warships.

This is precisely where the deception surrounding the MoU becomes visible. Article 5 was central to the interim understanding, under which Iran committed itself to facilitating safe commercial passage through Hormuz for 60 days without charging vessels.

The objective was clear: remove the immediate danger to international shipping, reduce military tensions and create sufficient diplomatic space for negotiations over a permanent settlement.

Iran repeatedly made its longer-term

negotiation. From Tehran's perspective, this is exactly what Washington attempted to do under the shadow of the MoU.

Even before the MoU was finalised, President Donald Trump publicly claimed that the United States had quietly moved an enormous quantity of oil—100 million barrels, according to his own assertion—through Hormuz.

The accuracy and logistics of that claim were questioned, but its political meaning was more important than the number. The American president was boasting that Washington had moved vast oil supplies through the world's most sensitive maritime chokepoint without Iran being able

to prevent it.

The IRGC had already issued a map identifying an Iranian-approved navigation route, while Iran repeatedly maintained that a future Hormuz management system should be negotiated principally with Oman and other relevant Gulf states.

If the United States genuinely believed Iran's proposed route was unsafe, discriminatory or inconsistent with international navigation rights, Washington had every opportunity to raise those objections during negotiations.

It could have demanded a single internationally published navigation map, proposed joint Iran-Oman coordination, requested international maritime observers or insisted that no tolls be imposed during the interim period. It could also have sought independent verification of mines and other navigational hazards.

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Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Pakistan Calls for Stronger Global Action Against Conflict-Related Sexual Violence at UN

Pakistan has called for stronger international action and strict accountability to combat conflict-related sexual violence, urging the United Nations Security Council to ensure the full, faithful and non-selective implementation of its resolutions aimed at protecting civilians, particularly women and children, in conflict zones.

Speaking during a UN Security Council debate, Pakistan's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador Asim Ifkhar Ahmad, stressed that conflict-related sexual violence remains one of the gravest threats to international peace and security. He said Security Council resolutions place clear obligations on states and the international community to prevent such crimes, protect victims, investigate violations, prosecute perpetrators, and provide justice and reparations.

The debate, chaired by the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) as Security Council President for July, focused on the UN Secretary-General's latest report on conflict-related sexual violence. The report documented 9,788 verified cases in 2025, more than double the number recorded in 2024. UN Special Representative Pramila Patten warned that the actual number of victims is likely far higher, as many survivors never report the crimes due to fear, stigma and lack of access to support services.

Ambassador Asim said conflict-related sexual violence destroys individuals, tears apart families, traumatizes communities and leaves long-lasting psychological and social scars, including for children born as a result of wartime rape. He stressed that no conflict situation should be exempt from international scrutiny and called for the UN's listing mechanism for perpetrators to cover all situations of conflict and foreign occupation before the Security Council.

He urged the Council to strengthen sanctions against persistent offenders and ensure that justice systems are more victim-centred, trauma-informed and accessible. He also called for comprehensive support for survivors, including medical treatment, psychosocial care, legal assistance, livelihood opportunities and reparations.

The Pakistani envoy emphasized that prevention must remain the cornerstone of international efforts. He called for strict compliance with international humanitarian and human rights law, greater participation of women in peace processes, responsible arms control, sustained funding for protection programmes, and addressing the root causes of conflicts, including foreign occupation and the denial of the right to self-determination.

Opening the debate, DRC Prime Minister Judith Suminwa Tuluka described sexual violence as a deliberate weapon of war used to terrorize, humiliate and displace civilian populations. She highlighted her country's efforts to combat impunity through reparations, legal reforms and support services for survivors, while calling for greater international assistance to strengthen these initiatives.



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

Pakistan's Balancing Act in Gulf Security

In the shifting sands of Middle Eastern geopolitics, Pakistan's recent security Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Saudi Arabia represents more than a bilateral accord—it is a statement of intent. The agreement, which operationalizes the broader Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement, positions Islamabad as a trusted Gulf partner while simultaneously testing its diplomatic dexterity. For Pakistan, the challenge lies not only in deepening ties with Riyadh but also in maintaining equilibrium among Iran, China, and the United States.

The MoU strengthens Pakistan's standing as a reliable partner in Gulf security. Riyadh's choice to formalize cooperation underscores Islamabad's credibility as a military power with proven counterterrorism expertise and a track record of stabilizing missions. Yet, this partnership is not without complications.

Pakistan must reassure Iran that its cooperation with Saudi Arabia is defensive rather than offensive. Tehran has long viewed Riyadh's alliances with suspicion, interpreting them as encirclement strategies. Islamabad's diplomatic task is to emphasize that the MoU is aimed at interoperability, training, and technological preparedness—not confrontation. Careful messaging, through high-level visits and confidence-building measures, is essential to prevent the perception of Pakistan as a partisan actor in Middle Eastern rivalries.

Equally important is Pakistan's relationship with China. Beijing has invested heavily through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and views Islamabad as a strategic partner in its Belt and Road Initiative. Any tilt perceived as overly pro-Saudi must be balanced with assurances that Gulf commitments will not dilute Pakistan's alignment with Beijing's regional vision.

Finally, Pakistan must sustain constructive dialogue with the United States. Washington remains a key player in Gulf security, and while U.S.-Saudi relations have fluctuated, Pakistan's ability to act as a stabilizer could enhance its diplomatic relevance. By positioning itself as a bridge rather than a partisan, Islamabad can elevate its role as a regional security architect.

Grand defence pacts often falter when they remain abstract. The strength of the recent MoUs lies in their operational detail. By focusing on scientific collaboration, training programs, and police exchanges, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have created mechanisms that translate high-level commitments into institutional cooperation.

Joint training exercises build interoperability between armed forces, ensuring that Pakistani and Saudi personnel can operate seamlessly in counterterrorism or peacekeeping missions. Such exercises also foster trust, a commodity often more valuable than hardware.

Scientific collaboration enhances defence innovation. Pakistan's expertise in missile technology, cyber defence, and electronic warfare can complement Saudi Arabia's ambitions to modernize its military infrastructure. Collaborative research projects could yield indigenous solutions to shared challenges, reducing reliance on external suppliers.

Police exchanges strengthen internal security coordination. Both countries face threats from transnational crime, radicalization, and terrorism. By sharing best practices in policing, digital forensics, and counter-radicalization strategies, Islamabad and Riyadh can build resilient institutions capable of addressing twenty-first century challenges.

In essence, these MoUs transform the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement from a lofty declaration into a living framework of cooperation. They ensure that the pact is not confined

to diplomatic communiqués but embedded in the daily routines of soldiers, scientists, and police officers.

Perhaps the most forward-looking aspect of the MoUs is the inclusion of "scientific and research cooperation." This signals recognition that future threats will not be confined to conventional battlefields. Cyber intrusions, digital radicalization, and transnational crime are already reshaping the security landscape.

For Pakistan, this cooperation offers an opportunity to elevate its defence posture into the realm of digital sovereignty. By pooling expertise with Saudi Arabia, Islamabad can develop frameworks for cyber security, AI-enabled policing, and shared digital forensics. Such collaboration is not merely technical—it is strategic. It positions both countries to anticipate and counter next-generation threats before they metastasize.

Consider the challenge of cyber intrusions. State and non-state actors increasingly exploit digital vulnerabilities to disrupt economies and destabilize societies. Joint cyber security frameworks can help Pakistan and Saudi Arabia protect critical infrastructure, financial systems, and defence networks.

AI-enabled policing represents another frontier. Algorithms capable of detecting radicalization patterns, identifying suspicious financial flows, or predicting crime hotspots can revolutionize internal security. By collaborating on AI research, Islamabad and Riyadh can harness technology to pre-empt threats rather than merely respond to them.

Shared digital forensics enhances the ability to investigate transnational crime. Whether tracking terror financing, dismantling online propaganda networks, or prosecuting cyber criminals, joint forensic capabilities can provide both countries with a competitive edge.

This scientific and research cooperation elevates the partnership beyond traditional defence. It signals a shift from hardware-centric

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Analysis

Sultan M. Hali

Burhan Wani: Ten Years On, The Voice That Recast Kashmir's Struggle

July 8, 2016 remains a date etched in memory. Burhan-ud-Din Muzaffar Wani, only 21, died in Kokernag. He was laid to rest in Tral, yet his presence did not fade. Ten years later, his name still stirs debate, emotion and reflection far beyond Kashmir.

Burhan Wani altered the grammar of resistance. He did not follow the old script. He chose visibility over obscurity. In an age shaped by screens and instant connection, he stepped forward and spoke directly to people. That choice changed everything. Kashmir was no longer a distant headline. It became immediate, human and impossible to ignore.

A generation saw itself in him. His words carried familiarity. His images traveled across borders. What once remained confined to local discourse entered global space. This was not a minor shift. It was a decisive turn. He recast the freedom struggle into a form the world could see and respond to.

Then came July 8. His death did not close a chapter. It opened one. Streets filled with grief and anger. Voices grew louder. For many, that moment deepened the meaning of the struggle. It was no longer framed only through politics. It became rooted in dignity, identity and the demand to be heard.

Even internationally, the ripple effects were visible. Kashmir, often sidelined in global discussions, began to reappear in political conversations. During the 2016 United States presidential campaign, Donald Trump mentioned Kashmir in his remarks. Such references were rare in that arena. Yet the issue had

found its way into global political language. This renewed visibility did not emerge in isolation. It was tied to the shift that Burhan Wani had set in motion.

His legacy also invites a legal reading. India describes such acts as terrorism. Another interpretation exists. That view places the struggle within the framework of self-determination, a principle grounded in international law. The United Nations Security Council addressed Kashmir early on. Resolution 47 of 1948 called for a plebiscite so the people of Jammu and Kashmir could decide their future. Resolution 91 of 1951 and Resolution 122 of 1957 reaffirmed that position. These were not symbolic texts. They recognized a political dispute and linked its resolution to the will of the people.

Self-determination is not an abstract idea. It is embedded in the United Nations Charter. It appears again in the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. These instruments affirm that peoples have the right to determine their political status. Within this legal frame, the Kashmiri struggle is often read as a quest for a recognized right rather than a deviation from law.

Burhan Wani became a focal point for that debate. His life highlighted the gap between commitments made at the international level and realities experienced on the ground. He did not create the dispute. He forced it back into view. That is why his name continues to surface in discussions that extend far beyond Kashmir.

Ten years later, his imprint endures. Walk through Kashmir and his memory remains

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Analysis

Mehr un Nisa

LIVOLTEK Drives Pakistan's Shift to Smart Renewable Energy Solutions

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan faces rising electricity costs and growing demand, LIVOLTEK, the renewable energy brand of Hexing Group, is positioning itself at the forefront of the country's clean energy transition with complete smart energy ecosystems for homes, businesses and industries.

LIVOLTEK offers one of the industry's most comprehensive portfolios. For residential users: Hybrid Inverters 1.5kW-60kW, IP66 Outdoor Hybrids 6kW-12kW, Residential Lithium Batteries 1.28kWh-35kWh, High-Voltage Systems up to 240kWh, and All-in-One ESS 3kWh-6kWh. For commercial and industrial clients: On-Grid Inverters 2.5kW-150kW

and C&I BESS up to 125kW/261kWh for peak shaving, load shifting and grid stabilization. The company also provides EV Chargers from 7kW AC to 240kW DC Fast Chargers to support Pakistan's growing e-mobility infrastructure.

For homeowners, LIVOLTEK's hybrid inverter + battery systems ensure backup during load shedding, cut bills, and offer remote

cloud monitoring. Commercial users like hospitals, malls and hotels benefit from three-phase inverters and energy management to reduce peak charges and ensure continuity. Industries can cut diesel reliance and operating costs with scalable BESS solutions.

All products feature MPPT technology, intelligent battery management, high efficiency, IP-rated



weather resistance, scalable design, and cloud monitoring suited to Pakistan's climate.

Mr. Max Ma, Director Sales LIVOLTEK Pakistan, said the

company is committed to delivering reliable, locally supported solutions to help Pakistan achieve energy independence and a sustainable future.



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, has established the IU Centre for Excellence in Islamic

FinTech (IU CEIF) at Iqra University to advance research, innovation and capacity-building at the intersection of Islamic finance and financial technology.

The Centre was inaugurated at Iqra

University's EDC Defence Campus by Chief Guest Mr. Saleem Ullah, Deputy Governor, State Bank of Pakistan, who commended the collaboration and reaffirmed SBP's support for initiatives that

Meezan Bank and Iqra University Launch Centre for Excellence in Islamic FinTech

strengthen Islamic finance, promote responsible innovation, and expand financial inclusion.

Hosted by Prof. Dr. Nassar Ikram, Vice Chancellor, Iqra University, and Mr. Muhammad Farhan Ul Haq Usmani, Honorary Director, IU CEIF, the ceremony brought together international

guests from CIBAFI Bahrain, IFAAS UK, and INCEIF Malaysia, along with bank presidents, CEOs, Meezan Bank Shariah Board members including Dr. Muhammad Imran Ashraf Usmani and

Sheikh Esam Mohamed Ishaq, SBP officials, academia, and FinTech professionals. Ms. Imaan Hunaid Lakhani also attended, expressing support for the University's innovation vision.

Dr. Ikram said the Centre reflects Iqra's commitment to connecting academia with industry and preparing future-ready talent. Dr. Syed Amir Ali, President & CEO Meezan Bank, in his keynote, outlined the Bank's vision for Shariah-compliant innovation, skills development and financial inclusion,

stressing the need for a robust Islamic FinTech ecosystem.

Mr. Usmani presented the Centre's objectives: research, training, industry engagement and innovation. A panel discussion covered regulation, financial inclusion, talent development and digital transformation. The event concluded with a ribbon-cutting and tour of the new FinTech Lounge. Through IU CEIF, Meezan Bank and Iqra University aim to build a platform that drives Pakistan's Islamic finance and FinTech growth.

AIOU Holds Capacity-Building Workshop on Special Needs Assessment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) organized a three-day capacity-building workshop on "Assessment of Special Needs" in collaboration with EPIC Trainings. The concluding ceremony was held yesterday and was presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood.

The workshop was designed to enhance participants' knowledge and practical skills in the timely and accurate assessment of children with special needs. It also focused on strengthening the professional competencies of teachers and practitioners by introducing modern assessment approaches and evidence-based practices in special education.

A total of 43 teachers, specialists and professionals from Islamabad and Rawalpindi participated in the training programme. Participants represented the Autism Resource Centre, Directorate of Special Education Punjab, Directorate General of Special Educa-



tion Islamabad, Bahria Special Education School and College, Fauji Foundation Institute of Special Education, Umeed-e-Noor Special Education School and several other institutions working in the field of special education.

Addressing the concluding ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that timely and accurate assessment of children with special needs is fundamental to providing quality education and appropriate educational support. He emphasized that continuous professional development of teachers and specialists is

essential for improving educational outcomes and promoting inclusive education.

He reaffirmed AIOU's commitment to advancing special education through quality training, research and academic collaborations. He also appreciated the efforts of the Department of Special Education and EPIC Trainings for successfully organizing the workshop and expressed hope that the knowledge and skills gained by the participants would contribute to strengthening special education services across the country.

Dutch Ambassador Visits FCEPL, Highlights Dairy Sector Growth and Talent Potential

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Dutch Ambassador to Pakistan H. E. Robert-Jan Seigert visited FrieslandCampina Engro Pakistan Limited (FCEPL) Head Office for discussions with company leadership on the progress of Pakistan's dairy sector, investment opportunities, and talent development.

FCEPL leadership briefed the Ambassador on company performance, ongoing initiatives, and future growth potential. Talks covered sector modernization, expansion capacity, and the importance of skills development and local talent in strengthening the dairy value chain. Potential areas for future investment with a focus on sustainable growth were also explored.

Ambassador Seigert noted that Pakistan's dairy sector offers "meaningful opportunities for development" supported by a capable workforce and growing adoption of modern practices. He emphasized the need for safe dairy access, especially for children, and for shifting consumers away from loose milk to improve public health. He



commended FCEPL's contribution to these efforts and to long-term sector sustainability.

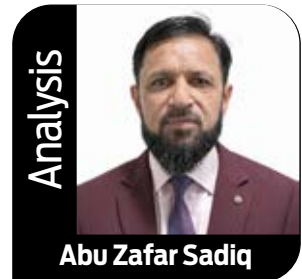
Kashan Hasan, Managing Director FCEPL, said it was an honor to host the Ambassador and reaffirmed dairy's role as a source of nutrition and livelihoods for millions. He expressed commitment to working with the Ambassador's office and government stakeholders to make safe, high-quality and nutritious dairy

products more accessible, in line with RFC's vision of "Nourishing by Nature."

The Ambassador also addressed employees at a townhall, discussing the potential of Pakistani talent and their role in shaping the industry's future.

The visit concluded with a shared commitment to continued stakeholder engagement to develop Pakistan's dairy industry and ensure safe, nutritious milk for future generations.

Unlocking Halal Tourism



Abu Zafar Sadiq

The global tourism industry is undergoing a significant transformation, with halal tourism emerging as one of its fastest-growing segments. Driven by a growing Muslim middle class, rising disposable incomes, and greater international connectivity, Muslim-friendly travel is creating new opportunities for destinations that can cater to the needs of faith-conscious travellers. For Pakistan—a country blessed with spectacular natural beauty, rich Islamic heritage, and diverse cultures—this represents an enormous yet underutilized opportunity.

Muslim travellers are expected to spend well over US\$200 billion annually by the end of this decade, making this one of the world's most lucrative tourism markets. Importantly, halal tourism extends far beyond religious pilgrimages. It includes leisure, adventure, wellness, business, family holidays, and cultural tourism, provided visitors have access to services that accommodate their religious values.

Halal tourism is often misunderstood as merely offering halal food. In reality, it encompasses prayer facilities, family-friendly environments, privacy-conscious recreational options, modest

hospitality services, and easy access to information on nearby mosques. These features enhance comfort for Muslim travellers while remaining inclusive for visitors of all backgrounds.

Recognizing this growing market, many countries have adapted their tourism industries accordingly. Interestingly, several leading Muslim-friendly destinations are not Muslim-majority nations. Japan, South Korea, Singapore, Thailand, and the United Kingdom have invested in halal-certified restaurants, prayer facilities at airports and shopping centres, Muslim-friendly hotels, and targeted marketing campaigns to attract visitors from Muslim-majority countries.

Meanwhile, Malaysia and Türkiye continue to lead the global halal tourism landscape. Their success stems from combining high-quality infrastructure, efficient transport, professional hospitality, and strong international branding with services that respect Islamic values. Their experience demonstrates that halal tourism is both commercially viable and internationally competitive.

Several emerging trends are shaping the future of Muslim travel. Younger travellers increasingly seek authentic local experiences, adventure tourism, cultural immersion, eco-tourism, and community-based activities rather than traditional sightseeing alone. Digital platforms, travel influencers, and halal travel apps now play a decisive role in destination selection. Sustainability has also become a growing priority, with travellers favouring environmentally responsible and culturally respectful tourism.

Pakistan is exceptionally well positioned to capitalize on these trends. Few countries combine snow-capped

mountains, pristine valleys, deserts, forests, archaeological treasures, Islamic heritage, and vibrant cultural diversity within a single destination. From Hunza, Skardu, and Gilgit to Swat, Chitral, and Kaghan, Pakistan offers breathtaking landscapes that rival the world's leading mountain destinations.

The country's tourism appeal extends beyond natural beauty. Historic mosques, Sufi shrines, centres of Islamic scholarship, and religious heritage sites



offer significant potential for faith-based tourism. At the same time, Pakistan's Gandhara civilization and Buddhist heritage sites attract visitors from East Asia, enabling the country to diversify its tourism portfolio.

Despite these advantages, Pakistan attracts only a small share of the expanding Muslim travel market. Limited international marketing, inconsistent infrastructure, inadequate hospitality standards, weak destination

branding, and concerns regarding visitor services continue to constrain growth.

To unlock its tourism potential, Pakistan requires a comprehensive national strategy focused on quality, branding, and visitor experience.

The first priority should be developing a strong international brand that positions Pakistan as a safe, welcoming, and Muslim-friendly destination. Modern tourism is highly competitive, and destinations that fail to market themselves

effectively often remain overlooked despite possessing exceptional attractions. Strategic digital campaigns, partnerships with airlines and tour operators, and participation in international travel exhibitions can significantly improve Pakistan's visibility.

Improving visitor experience is equally important. Clean tourist facilities, reliable transport, multilingual information centres, trained guides, digital payment systems, quality accommodation, and

professional customer service are essential for attracting repeat visitors. Introducing internationally recognized halal tourism certification for hotels, restaurants, and tour operators would further strengthen Pakistan's credibility in global markets.

The Gulf region presents a particularly attractive opportunity. Travellers from Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar, Kuwait, Bahrain, and Oman increasingly seek cooler destinations during the summer months. Pakistan's northern regions provide an ideal alternative, offering pleasant weather, stunning scenery, and comparatively affordable luxury experiences. Investments in high-quality resorts, eco-lodges, and wellness retreats could attract these high-spending visitors.

Tourism development should also benefit local communities. Supporting small businesses, traditional handicrafts, local cuisine, women entrepreneurs, and community-managed guesthouses can ensure that tourism creates employment while preserving cultural heritage. Community participation not only spreads economic benefits but also provides visitors with authentic experiences increasingly valued in global tourism.

Digital transformation must become an integral part of Pakistan's tourism strategy. Today's travellers rely heavily on online reviews, mobile applications, and social media when choosing destinations. Pakistan should invest in multilingual tourism portals, virtual tours, online booking platforms, AI-powered travel assistance, and collaborations with international travel influencers to reshape global perceptions.

Equally important is environmental

sustainability. Tourism growth must not come at the expense of fragile ecosystems or cultural heritage. Responsible waste management, eco-friendly infrastructure, conservation initiatives, and sustainable destination planning will help preserve Pakistan's natural assets for future generations.

Finally, effective coordination between federal and provincial governments, tourism authorities, airlines, private investors, and local communities is essential. A coherent public-private partnership framework, supported by investor-friendly policies and streamlined regulations, can accelerate tourism development while maintaining international service standards.

Pakistan already possesses many of the ingredients required to become a leading destination for Muslim travellers. Its natural beauty, Islamic heritage, hospitality, and strategic location offer a competitive advantage that few countries can match. What remains is to convert these strengths into a globally recognized tourism brand through consistent policy, improved infrastructure, professional services, and sustained international marketing.

Halal tourism is no longer a niche market—it is a major driver of global tourism growth. If Pakistan acts strategically, it can capture a significant share of this expanding market, generating foreign exchange, creating employment, promoting regional development, and enhancing the country's international image. With the right vision and commitment, halal tourism can become not only an economic opportunity but also a powerful instrument of cultural diplomacy and sustainable national development.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
181,259.67	181,629.36
Day's High	Day's Low
182,276.81	179,411.35
Index Value	Change
30,179,890,354	-369.69
Percentage	Time
-0.2%	9 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,472.45	-16.59
Percentage	Time
-0.16%	9 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,501.91	+153.52
Percentage	Time
+0.29%	9 Jul, 12:52 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
67,743.85	+924.80
Percentage	Time
+1.38%	9 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.58	197.95
Bahrain Dinar	740.56	750.85
Canadian Dollar	196.94	199.95
China Yuan	38	38.75
Danish Krone	42.56	43.25
Euro	319.28	323.40
Hong Kong Dollar	35.22	36.23
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.15
Japanese Yen	1.7031	1.8010
Kuwaiti Dinar	889.43	899.90
Malaysian Ringgit	67.15	67.95
New Zealand \$	157.78	160.45
Norwegians Krone	27.99	28.29
Omani Riyal	725.33	735.58
Qatari Riyal	75.39	76.45
Saudi Riyal	74.55	75.10
Singapore Dollar	214.18	217.95
Swedish Korona	28.25	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.59	348.25
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	76.20	76.90
UK Pound Sterling	374.53	377.92
US Dollar	278.95	279.10

Governor Punjab to Inaugurate Solar & Storage Pakistan Expo 2026 in Lahore

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan will inaugurate the three-day Solar & Storage Pakistan Expo 2026 at the Expo Centre Lahore on Friday, bringing together key stakeholders from Pakistan's rapidly growing renewable energy sector.

The international exhibition will serve as a major platform for policymakers, investors, manufacturers, technology providers, distributors, and industry professionals to explore the latest innovations in solar photovoltaic (PV) systems, battery energy storage, inverters, smart energy solutions, and electric mobility technologies.

The inaugural ceremony will also be attended by United Business Group (UBG) Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer, FPCCI Regional President Zaki Ijaz, and other prominent business leaders, reflecting the country's commitment to promoting renewable energy and encouraging private sector investment.

More than 100 local and international companies will showcase cutting-edge products and



services during the exhibition. Leading exhibitors include Nippon Energy, Nizam Energy, AE Power, Narada SES, DIWAN, Solis, MAX Power, LONGi, and Nimir Energy.

The expo will provide opportunities for business networking, investment, strategic partnerships, and knowledge sharing across the renewable energy value chain. Industry stakeholders, financial institutions, project developers, consultants, and policymakers will discuss emerging trends and the future of Pakistan's clean energy sector. The Pakistan Solar Association (PSA) will also participate through a dedicated pavilion, offering research publications, market insights, and policy recommendations to promote sustainable solar energy development.

Open daily from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m., the exhibition is expected to attract thousands of visitors and reinforce collaboration between the public and private sectors. Organizers say the event comes at a time of unprecedented growth in rooftop solar installations and rising demand for battery energy storage solutions, making it one of Pakistan's most significant renewable energy exhibitions.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding a meeting with Pakistan's newly appointed High Commissioner to the United Kingdom, Mr. Tipu Usman, to discuss Pakistan-UK economic and financial cooperation on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Government Should Take Immediate Notice of Unjustified LPG Price Hike

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chairman of the Karachi LPG Distributors Alliance, Imran Farooqi, has raised serious concern over a sudden spike in LPG prices nationwide.

He said retail prices that were around Rs. 300 per kilogram yesterday have now crossed Rs. 400 per kilogram. According to the LPG sector, importers and some plant owners are citing the current situation in Iran to justify the hike, passing the burden directly to consumers.

Farooqi warned that if authorities do not intervene, prices could reach Rs. 450-500 per kilogram in the next 2-3 days. Such an increase would severely impact households, the



hotel industry, small businesses, and commercial users.

He urged the federal government, Ministry of Petroleum, OGRA, and other authorities to take immediate notice, conduct a transparent investigation, and take legal action against profiteering, artificial shortages, or illegal practices. He stressed that ensuring affordable and uninterrupted LPG supply is the government's responsibility.

Karandaaz, DigiKhata Launch Pakistan's First Embedded Finance Facility for Small Retailers

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Karandaaz Pakistan and DigiKhata Financial Services (DKFS) have launched Pakistan's first Embedded Finance Facility (EFF), a pioneering initiative designed to improve access to formal credit for small retailers by linking financing with digital payment transactions.

The strategic partnership aims to address two major challenges facing Pakistan's retail sector: low digital payment adoption and limited access to formal financing. Under the new model, every digital transaction contributes to building a merchant's credit profile, enabling lenders to assess creditworthiness more accurately and offer progressively larger financing as merchants expand their digital footprint.

Karandaaz Chief Executive Officer Waqas ul Hasan said the initiative creates a self-reinforcing cycle in which merchants adopt digital payments to access financing, while the financing helps them grow their businesses, formalize operations, and participate more actively in the digital economy.



DigiKhata CEO and Founder Adnan Aslam said the partnership combines the lending infrastructure of financial institutions with DigiKhata's extensive merchant network and transaction data, making embedded finance accessible to small businesses at the grassroots level.

Designed as a scalable model, the Embedded Finance Facility is expected to

promote financial inclusion, support the growth of micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs), and provide a blueprint for expanding digital financial services across Pakistan. Karandaaz said the initiative reflects its continued commitment to strengthening Pakistan's financial and digital ecosystem through innovation and strategic partnerships.

Stock Market Investor Accounts Record Historic 48% Growth

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's capital market achieved a historic milestone during Financial Year 2025-26, as stock market investor accounts increased by 48%, the highest-ever annual growth recorded in the country's capital market.

The number of stock market investors increased from 392,775 on July 1, 2025, to 583,052 as of June 30, 2026, with the addition of 190,277 new investors. The growth reflects increasing public confidence, improved market access and rising interest in investment opportunities.

The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), in

collaboration with Capital Market Infrastructure Institutions (CMIIs) including the National Clearing Company of Pakistan (NCCPL), Central Depository Company (CDC) and Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX), introduced several reforms to make account opening easier and promote financial inclusion.

Key reforms include increasing the Sahulat Account limit from Rs. 1 million to Rs. 3 million, removing duplicate requirements for investors opening accounts through banks, digital banks and Electronic Money Institutions (EMIs), introducing IBAN-based verification, and launching Minor Trading Accounts that enable individuals below 18 years



of age to invest through their guardians.

During the year, Karachi recorded the highest share of new investor accounts at 25%, followed by Lahore (16%), Islamabad and Rawalpindi (13%), Faisalabad (4%) and Multan (3%), showing increasing participation from major cities across Pakistan.

Young investors played a significant role in this growth, with 45% of new UINs registered by individuals aged 18 to 30 years during January-June 2026. Investors aged 31 to 45 years contributed another 41% of new accounts, highlighting growing participation of young and working-age investors in the capital market.

SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said that increasing retail

participation, particularly among young investors, is a key priority for SECP. He said the Commission, together with market institutions, is introducing technology-driven solutions, including a mobile application for digital onboarding, to make investing simpler, faster and more accessible.

"Pakistan's capital market can play an important role in economic growth by channeling savings into productive investments. Our focus is to simplify access, strengthen investor confidence and encourage more citizens, especially youth, to participate in wealth creation and the country's economic development," Dr. Sidhu said.

Bank Alfalah Raises PKR 20 Billion in Pakistan's Largest TFC Issuance



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah has successfully raised PKR 20 billion through a AAA-rated Tier 2 Term Finance Certificate (TFC), marking the largest TFC issuance in Pakistan's banking industry and the bank's first AAA-rated TFC.

Issued under the Basel III framework with State Bank of Pakistan approval, the offering saw strong institutional participation, reflecting confidence in the bank's financial strength, governance and growth strategy.

The capital will support Bank Alfalah's expansion, particularly in SME, ESG initiatives and the consumer segment, and enhance core profitability and long-term shareholder returns.

As of Dec 31, 2025, the bank reported profit after tax of PKR 28.34 billion, deposits of PKR 2.49 trillion, gross advances of PKR 1.15 trillion, and a Capital Adequacy Ratio of 15.87%. It serves over 9.7 million customers through 1,200 branches in 245+ cities. PACRA has also maintained its AAA long-term and A1+ short-term ratings with Stable outlook.

Bank officials said the issuance marks a milestone and will boost capacity to support customers and economic growth.

D-8 Chief urges stronger Halal Economic Integration at First Halal Expo Indonesia 2026

Spokesman Report

JAKARTA: D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood has called for deeper economic integration among D-8 member states to unlock the full potential of the global halal economy, while addressing the inaugural D-8 Halal Expo Indonesia 2026 through a special video message.

The five-day expo, held under the theme "Strengthening D-8 Halal Economy Through International Collaboration," brings together ministers, business leaders, investors, entrepreneurs, and industry stakeholders to promote trade, investment, innovation, and strategic partnerships in the halal sector.

The Secretary-General congratulated Indonesia for hosting the first-ever D-8 Halal Expo and welcomed its proposal to institutionalize the event as an annual flagship initiative, along with the establishment of a D-8 Halal Economy Cooperation Secretariat.

Highlighting that the D-8 represents over 1.28 billion people with a combined GDP exceeding US\$5 trillion, Ambassador Mahmood said member countries possess the capacity to become a globally competitive hub



for halal production, trade, investment, and innovation. He stressed that stronger regional cooperation is essential to increase the bloc's share in global halal value chains and achieve the D-8 target of US\$500 billion in intra-member trade by 2030.

To strengthen collaboration, he proposed creating an integrated D-8 Halal Trade Corridor through harmonized certification standards, a Digital Halal Marketplace and Investment Platform, and greater joint invest-

ment in research, technology, halal industrial parks, artificial intelligence, biotechnology, and sustainable logistics.

The Secretary-General reaffirmed the D-8 Secretariat's commitment to working with member states and international partners to transform these proposals into practical initiatives that promote economic growth, investment, SME development, food security, and sustainable development.



The expo also features international exhibitions, business forums, investment sessions, and discus-

sions on halal food, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, Islamic finance, tourism, digital services, and emerging tech-

nologies, marking a significant step toward strengthening the global halal economy.

Secretary Sports Sindh vows full support for promotion of Sepaktakraw

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Sindh Munawar Ali Mahesar has reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to extending every possible support for the promotion of Sepaktakraw, saying the sport is gaining rapid popularity across the province.

He expressed these views during a visit to a Sepaktakraw training camp in Hyderabad, organized by the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association to promote the game and enhance the skills of young athletes.

The training camp is being conducted under the supervision of District Sports Officer (DSO) Hyderabad Maryam Kerrio with the objective of providing modern training to talented players and creating better opportunities for them at the national and international levels.

Secretary General of the Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation Noushad Ahmed Khan, Secretary Sindh Olympic Association Ahmed Ali Rajput, Chairman of the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association Dr Arif Hafeez, President Shabbir Ahmed, Senior Vice President



Deen Muhammad Kerrio and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the participants, Munawar Ali Mahesar said such training programmes not only promoted sports among the youth but also encouraged healthy activities. He appreciated DSO Hyderabad Maryam Kerrio for organising the training camp and assured full support for the promotion of Sepaktakraw.

Speaking on the occasion, Noushad Ahmed Khan, Dr Arif Hafeez and Shabbir Ahmed said Sepaktakraw was rapidly gaining popularity across Pakistan. They said the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association, in collaboration with the Government of Sindh, would continue its efforts for the development of the sport, training of players and identification of new talent.

They also thanked Secretary Sports

Sindh Munawar Ali Mahesar for his continued support.

Senior Vice President of the Sindh Sepaktakraw Association Deen Muhammad Kerrio thanked the secretary for visiting the training camp.

Later, Pakistan Sepaktakraw team captain Muhammad Khalid and vice-captain Sarfaraz Rehman briefed the guests on the basic rules and features of the game.

NAB Multan and MCCI Join Forces to Promote Transparent Business Environment



Quratulain Asim

MILTAN: A meeting was held between National Accountability Bureau (NAB), Multan and Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (MCCI). Mr. Rafiullah, Director NAB Multan, Mr. Tauseef Hanif, Additional Director NAB Multan, Mr. Bakhtawar Tanvir Sheikh, President, Mr. Muhammad Azhar Baloch, Vice President, and Mr. Muhammad Shafiq, Secretary General MCCI were in attendance. In line with the Chairman NAB's vision, NAB reiterated to facilitate the business community, address their grievances and engage the business community to foster a transparent business environment and to develop an environment with shared responsibilities for a corruption free Pakistan. During the session, the President of MCCI highlighted the routine challenges faced by businesses, emphasized the need for a regulatory environment that supports commerce, and commended NAB's proactive outreach. To streamline future cooperation, it was agreed upon to continue cooperation after setting modalities. Mr. Rafiullah acknowledged the business community's vital contribution to economic growth and gave assurance of assistance of NAB for a business friendly environment.

Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan..... A great legend and

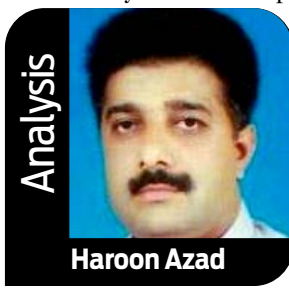
Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan belonged to this land which the world knows as Kashmir. At that time, the collective opinion of Kashmiris was that the state of Jammu and Kashmir should be annexed to Pakistan on the basis of religious, cultural and geographical sharing. If Maharaja Hari Singh was being persecuted for this demand. Time was passing and other rulers were not paying attention to the demand for annexation to Pakistan. To increase this pressure, a rally was held on the peak of Nila But, to persuade demanding Dogra Rulers should be annexed Pakistan. Dogra Maharaja Hari Singh was victim of persecution to comply with this demand. A 22-year-old armed youth was very active in the rally. The enthusiastic youth was not only responsible for maintaining peace and order but also found a niche in art by electrifying the rally with slogans and speeches. Another police clash ended A 20-year-old armed youth active in the movement identified as Sardar Mohammad Abdul Qayyum Muja-

hid.e Awwal. The role of the young man in this struggle against other rulers became widespread. Abdul Qayyum Khan was the first Azad Kashmir Battalion. Mujahid e Awwal took the path of politics and chose the path of a brave general here as well as the military front. He stood with Quaid Kashmir Rais-ul-Harar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas (late) in every difficult time. In 1952, he held the post of Minister in the Azad Kashmir Government. He was arrested and imprisoned in 1956 during Kashmir liberation movement. He was elected as President of Azad Kashmir for the first time. In 1971, he was re-elected on the basis of adult suffrage. He was also the Prime Minister and was elected as the Chairman of the National Kashmir Committee of Pakistan. In 1979, Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan was elected a member of the World Organization of Muslims, Rabita-Alim

e-Islami, which influenced the circle and spread to the Arabs. Further efforts for political reconciliation between the alliance and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. Unless he stopped the blood. And the country seemed Marshal Law. During the martial law period, Mujahid e Awwal was first imprisoned for a while but later his relations with General Zia-ul-Haq became good and General Zia-ul-Haq held various political positions in Azad Kashmir. Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan had eleven books in several languages including English and Arabic. He wrote dozens of books in several volumes. Mujahid e Awwal Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan was a powerful personality who knew how to convince the audience of his words. The foreign ambassadors were not without influence. They were closely associated with Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan Tasawwuf, who founded the Azad Kashmir Educa-

tional Revolution and spread a network of educational institutions along the length of Azad Kashmir. In his constituency he was becoming a spiritual leader who was always trying to bring people together. Muslim Conference workers who started the great struggle for construction development in the state are still continuing under the leadership of Quaid Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan. The existence of these great personalities, who have been born in the centuries, is considered a symbol of prestige and good fortune of any nation. These people are not limited to any particular region, nation or country. Instead of being proud of the entire human carriage, all Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and especially the people of Azad Kashmir are fortunate in that they have almost annual and took advantage of unprecedented leadership. Allah Almighty gave us this crooked paradise. The independent poet says about the same personalities

Matt easily takes a look at us. Humans emerge from the veil of fever dust.



Analysis

Haroon Azad

Burhan Wani: Ten Years On, The Voice That Recast Kashmir's Struggle

Continued from Page 4

active. It is carried in conversations, in quiet reflection and in public discourse. For many, he represents resolve. For others, he represents a moment of rupture. Yet no serious account can deny his impact. He changed how the struggle was perceived both inside and outside the region.

His resting place in Tral stands as more than a grave. It is a reminder of a life that redirected attention. Each anniversary renews that attention. It draws focus to unresolved questions. What does justice mean in this context? How can a political dispute persist despite decades of international acknowledgment? Why do voices from the ground struggle to

find consistent global hearing? These questions remain open. They demand engagement rather than dismissal. Burhan Wani's story compels that engagement. It resists silence. It pushes the conversation into spaces where it was once absent.

His influence also underscores the role of youth in shaping political discourse. At 21, he reached audiences that traditional channels often fail to engage. He spoke in a direct tone. He relied on tools that were accessible. That combination gave his message reach and durability.

Ten years is a long span, yet his voice has not receded. It continues to travel across discussions on law, politics and human rights. That endurance explains his significance. He did not merely

participate in a struggle. He altered its trajectory. He gave it a new international identity and placed it firmly within global awareness.

As this anniversary is marked, remembrance alone is insufficient. Reflection is essential. Reflection on law, on commitments and on the distance between principle and practice. His life and death did not resolve the Kashmir question. They ensured that it could not be set aside. That is why, ten years later, the voice of Burhan Wani still demands to be heard.

The author is the head of the research and human rights department of Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR). She can be reached at: mehr_dua@yahoo.com and on X @MIHRSAJ

How America Backstabbed Iran at Hormuz - I

Continued from Page 4

What Washington did not need to do was support a rival passage that, in practice, could bypass the Iranian mechanism under an American military umbrella. Yet this is precisely how Tehran interpreted the U.S.-Omani arrangement.

The strategic consequence was obvious: if commercial ships could safely travel through an American-protected corridor closer to Oman, shipping companies would have little reason to negotiate with Iran or recognise Tehran's desired role in the future management of Hormuz.

The MoU had secured Iranian

restraint, but the alternative route threatened to transform that temporary restraint into a permanent strategic defeat. Washington appeared to be taking the benefit of the agreement while hollowing out Iran's bargaining position. To Tehran, this was not genuine diplomacy but a carefully designed attempt to neutralise Iran's last significant leverage without compensating it through a negotiated settlement.

Iranian suspicion was further intensified because influential voices in the United States were openly discussing Hormuz in the language of control, seizure and financial gain. President Trump himself spoke of

the Strait in openly transactional terms, while Republican hardliners including Senators Ted Cruz and Lindsey Graham adopted increasingly uncompromising positions towards Iran and the settlement. American political debate increasingly treated Hormuz not merely as an international navigation issue but as a strategic space in which U.S. military power should determine the outcome. To be continued...

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

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani meeting Dr. Gordan Grlić Radman, Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Acting President Gilani invites Croatian President to visit Pakistan, calls for stronger economic partnership

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday invited Croatian President Zoran Milanović to undertake an official visit to Pakistan while reaffirming Islamabad's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations with Croatia through enhanced political dialogue, trade, investment, and parliamentary cooperation.

During a meeting at Aiwan-e-Sadr with Croatian Minister for Foreign

and European Affairs Dr. Gordan Grlić Radman, the Acting President described the first-ever visit of a Croatian foreign minister to Pakistan as a historic milestone that would open a new chapter in bilateral ties. He said Pakistan values its longstanding friendship with Croatia and seeks to expand cooperation both bilaterally and within the broader framework of Pakistan's engagement with the European Union.

Gilani stressed the importance of regular high-level

exchanges and proposed the establishment of Pakistan-Croatia Parliamentary Friendship Groups to strengthen legislative cooperation. He also highlighted the need to increase bilateral trade and investment, noting that the current trade volume falls short of the potential of both countries.

Inviting Croatian businesses to invest in Pakistan, the Acting President identified opportunities in information technology, renewable energy, agriculture, livestock,

food processing, tourism, hospitality, urban development, and water and waste management. He said the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) offers an efficient platform to support foreign investors.

Gilani also emphasized greater cooperation in labour mobility, encouraging the employment of skilled Pakistani professionals in Croatia, particularly in construction, transport, and hospitality. He proposed enhanced collaboration between Karachi Port

and Croatian ports to boost trade with European markets and called for stronger partnerships in education, sports, and IT.

The Croatian Foreign Minister thanked Pakistan for its warm hospitality and reaffirmed Croatia's commitment to expanding political, parliamentary, and economic cooperation. Both sides agreed to maintain regular high-level engagement and work together to fully realize the potential of Pakistan-Croatia relations.

Pakistan, Croatia Agree to Boost Political, Economic and Trade Cooperation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Croatia have agreed to inject fresh momentum into their bilateral political and economic relations by expanding cooperation in trade, investment, infrastructure, visa facilitation, education, defence, climate change, tourism, information technology, agriculture, labour mobility, and maritime connectivity. The understanding was reached during delegation-level talks between Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Croatian Minister of Foreign Affairs and European Affairs Dr. Gordan Grlić Radman during his first-ever official visit to Pakistan.



Addressing a joint press

stakeout, Senator Dar said both countries reviewed the full spec-

trum of bilateral ties and agreed to strengthen political dialogue and economic engagement. Recognising that bilateral trade remains below its potential, the two sides decided to

encourage business-to-business (B2B) exchanges and explore the possibility of organising a joint trade forum to enhance commercial partnerships.

Croatian Foreign Minister Radman welcomed Pakistan's active role in the United Nations Security Council and praised its diplomatic efforts, particularly the Islamabad Memorandum of Understanding that helped ease tensions between the United States and Iran. He also appreciated Pakistan's participation in the EU GSP Plus scheme and encouraged greater Pakistani investment in Croatia, highlighting opportunities in pharmaceuticals, healthcare, IT, tourism, energy, and logistics.

Raza Ali Khan Sworn in as New Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Senior Judge Supreme Court Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Raza Ali Khan took oath as Chief Justice of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Supreme Court Justice Khalid Yousuf Chaudhry administered the oath. Chief Justice Azad Jammu and Kashmir appointed Senior Judge Supreme Court Justice Raza Ali Khan as Chief Justice in accordance with the Interim Constitution of Azad Jammu and Kashmir during the ex Paki-



stan leave of Justice Raja Saeed Akram Khan. The oath taking ceremony was held at Supreme Court Building, Muzaffara-

bad where Chief Justice Azad Jammu and Kashmir High Court Justice Sardar Liaquat Hussain, Senior High Court

Judge Justice Syed Shahid Bahar, Judge Khalid Rashed Chaudhry, Chief Election Commissioner Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, former Supreme Court Judge Khawaja Muhammad Naseem, former Chief Justice High Court Justice Sadaqat Hussain Raja, former Justice of the Judge High Court Sardar Muhammad Habib Zia, Ombudsman of Azad Kashmir Raja Muhammad Arif Rathore, Chairman Income Tax Tribunal Sheikh Rashid Majid, Chairman Environment Tribunal

Raja Rashid Naseem, Advocate General Service Tribunal Muhammad Nadeem Khan, Vice Chairman Bar Council Haroon Riaz Mughal, President Supreme Court Bar Association Raja Aftab, President High Court Bar Jehangir Akram, President Central Bar Association Raja Zigham Iftikhar, Senior Advocates Secretary Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Muhammad Idris Abbasi read out the notification of appointment of Chief Justice.

Pakistan desires to strengthen multiple ties with Croatia including trade, investment: PM



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said Pakistan desired to further strengthen bilateral cooperation with Croatia, particularly through enhanced trade and investment, information technology, connectivity, agriculture, tourism, and skilled manpower.

The prime minister, in a "warm and cordial" meeting with Minister for Foreign and European Affairs of the Republic of Croatia Dr. Gordan Grlić Radman, who called on him here, said that Pakistan enjoyed friendly relations with Croatia,

marked by cordiality, mutual respect, and shared interest.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch were also present during the meeting.

Welcoming the Croatian foreign minister and his delegation to Pakistan, the prime minister conveyed his warm regards and good wishes to President Zoran Milanovic and Prime Minister Andrej Plenkovic, and extended a cordial invitation to both leaders to undertake official visits to Pakistan, at their convenience.

Govt seeks deeper economic and financial ties with UK



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

ISLAMABAD: Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said the government is focused on strengthening Pakistan's economic and financial engagement with the United Kingdom through increased investment, capital market cooperation, higher remittances, and a broader economic diplomacy agenda.

In a meeting with Pakistan's newly appointed High Commissioner to the UK, Tipu Usman, Aurangzeb said the envoy's experience would help advance bilateral economic objectives. Both sides discussed ways

to expand Pakistan-UK cooperation in finance, investment, and capital markets.

The minister highlighted efforts to diversify financing sources, improve access to international capital markets, and strengthen Pakistan's financial architecture. He noted London's role as a global financial hub could support Pakistan's financing goals. Talks also covered digital finance, blockchain, virtual assets, and tokenization as part of Pakistan's digital transformation.

The High Commissioner reiterated Pakistan's commitment to deepening the long-standing UK partnership across all sectors.

Fazl, Mengal Say Pakistan Reeling from Current 'Hybrid System'



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and BNP chief Sardar Akhtar Jan Mengal met in Islamabad to discuss the country's political situation and the deteriorating law and order in Balochistan.

Mengal, accompanied by a delegation, called on Fazl at his residence. According to JUI-F spokesperson Aslam Ghauri, the talks focused on the prevailing political landscape and security challenges in Balochistan.

Both leaders expressed deep concern over the worsening condi-

tions in the province and agreed that the current security situation was not encouraging for the country's future.

They stated that Pakistan's economy and law and order had suffered significantly under what they termed the existing "hybrid system." JUI-F leaders Senator Kamran Murtaza, Maulana Salahuddin Ayubi, Maulana Obaidur Rehman, and Aslam Ghauri also attended.

The two sides reaffirmed the need to address political and security challenges through dialogue and constitutional means to ensure stability and national progress.