



General Aamer Raza awarded Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military)

General Syed Aamer Raza has been honoured with the Nishan-i-Imtiaz (Military) as President Asif Ali Zardari approved the prestigious award for the newly appointed Commander National Strategic Command. The recognition comes shortly after General Raza's promotion to the rank of four-star general and his appointment to lead the strategic command.



Dr Muhammad Mushtaq Khan re-elected JI AJK chief for second term

The General Council of Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit has re-elected Dr Muhammad Mushtaq Khan as the party's Ameer for a second consecutive term. Dr Khan secured a majority of votes during a meeting of the General Council and was elected to lead Jamaat-e-Islami Azad Kashmir for the 2026-2029 term.

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of World Bank led by Country Director Ms Bolormaa Amgaabazar called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz sets up high-level committee to review World Bank's Fiscal Federalism Report

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to reforms and said the country's constitutional federal structure, provincial autonomy, and federation-province cooperation are vital for development and stability. He made the remarks during a meeting with a World Bank delegation led by Country Director Bolormaa Amgaabazar. The PM appreciated the Bank's long-standing support for Pakistan's socio-economic development. The World Bank presented its report "Strengthening Fiscal Federalism in Pakistan", covering fiscal relations

post-18th Amendment and 7th NFC Award, along with recommendations on revenues, expenditures, resource utilization, and federal-provincial coordination. Termining the analysis commendable, PM Shehbaz directed the formation of a high-level committee to comprehensively review the report in consultation with provinces and stakeholders. The committee will examine recommendations in light of Pakistan's constitutional framework and propose workable measures in the public interest. Deputy PM Ishaq Dar, Ministers Ahad Khan Cheema, Ahsan Iqbal, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani and senior officials also attended.

PM Orders Comprehensive OGRA Reforms to Enhance Transparency in Petroleum Sector



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday directed the implementation of wide-ranging reforms in the Oil and Gas Regulatory Authority (OGRA), emphasizing greater transparency, stronger oversight, and enhanced institutional capacity to improve governance in the petroleum sector.

Chairing a high-level meeting on OGRA's restructuring and digitization, the prime minister instructed authorities to develop a nation-

wide fuel monitoring system based on the Federal Board of Revenue's digital tracking model. He also called for the use of advanced technology to monitor the entire petroleum supply chain—from ports and refineries to fuel depots and petrol pumps—to curb hoarding, profiteering, and other irregularities.

The prime minister ordered the recruitment of qualified private-sector experts through a transparent, merit-based process to strengthen OGRA's institutional capacity. Stressing

Continued on Page 7

Good governance essential for national development, stability: DG ISPR

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said on Friday that good governance is the demand of the entire nation and is essential for Pakistan's development, stability and effective administration.

Addressing a press briefing in Islamabad, the military spokesperson said the country's problems could be addressed through the Constitution, law and democratic processes.

He said political leaders should consider measures aimed at improving governance and administrative structures,

particularly as Pakistan's popula-

"Things cannot improve

said.

He noted that Pakistan's population had increased three to four times while the country continued to have four provinces. He said the governance system could not remain stagnant and must evolve in line with changing demographic, technological and administrative needs.

The DG ISPR said public opinion should be taken into account while addressing governance-related issues. If people were satisfied with the existing administrative system, it could continue, but if they were dissatisfied, decisions should be taken in accordance with the Constitution, he added.

He said there was broad

agreement among political parties on the 14-point National Action Plan, stressing that good governance remained a guarantee of national progress and stability.

Turning to Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the DG ISPR said Pakistan and Kashmir were inseparable and that the Kashmir dispute remained an unfinished agenda of the partition of the subcontinent.

He described Kashmir as Pakistan's "most beloved child" and said the region received a significant share of national resources. He added that more than 100,000 Kashmiris were serving in the Pakistan Army.

Continued on Page 7



tion, technological capacity and state requirements had changed considerably over time.

without good governance, and practical steps will have to be taken to ensure it," the DG ISPR

Pakistan Welcomes Removal From Lloyd's War Risk List



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Friday welcomed the Lloyd's Market Association Joint War Committee's decision to remove Pakistan from its list of areas subject to war risk insurance.

Dar called it an important milestone achieved through joint government efforts and effective coordination by the Pakistan High Commission in London. He said the move reflects growing international confidence in Pakistan and thanked Lloyd's for its constructive engagement.

Pakistan's removal from the Listed Areas is expected to reduce additional war risk insurance premiums and lower shipping costs for vessels operating to and from Pakistani ports.

The government anticipates the decision will facilitate trade, improve commercial competitiveness, and support economic growth.

"This decision is expected to lower shipping and insurance costs, facilitate trade and support our economic growth," Dar said, adding, "Alhamdulillah."

Pakistan Bar Council Backs Mohsin Naqvi's Proposal for New Administrative Units

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council has announced its support for Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's proposal to create new administrative units or additional provinces, calling it an important step toward institutional reforms and improved governance.

Speaking to media Vice Chairman Pir Masood Chishti said administrative reforms are an urgent necessity given current circumstances. He emphasized that equitable distribution of powers is the true spirit of democracy and that restructuring is essential for better public service delivery.

Chishti noted that Naqvi has a close understanding of the country's ground realities, and his proposal is practical and real-

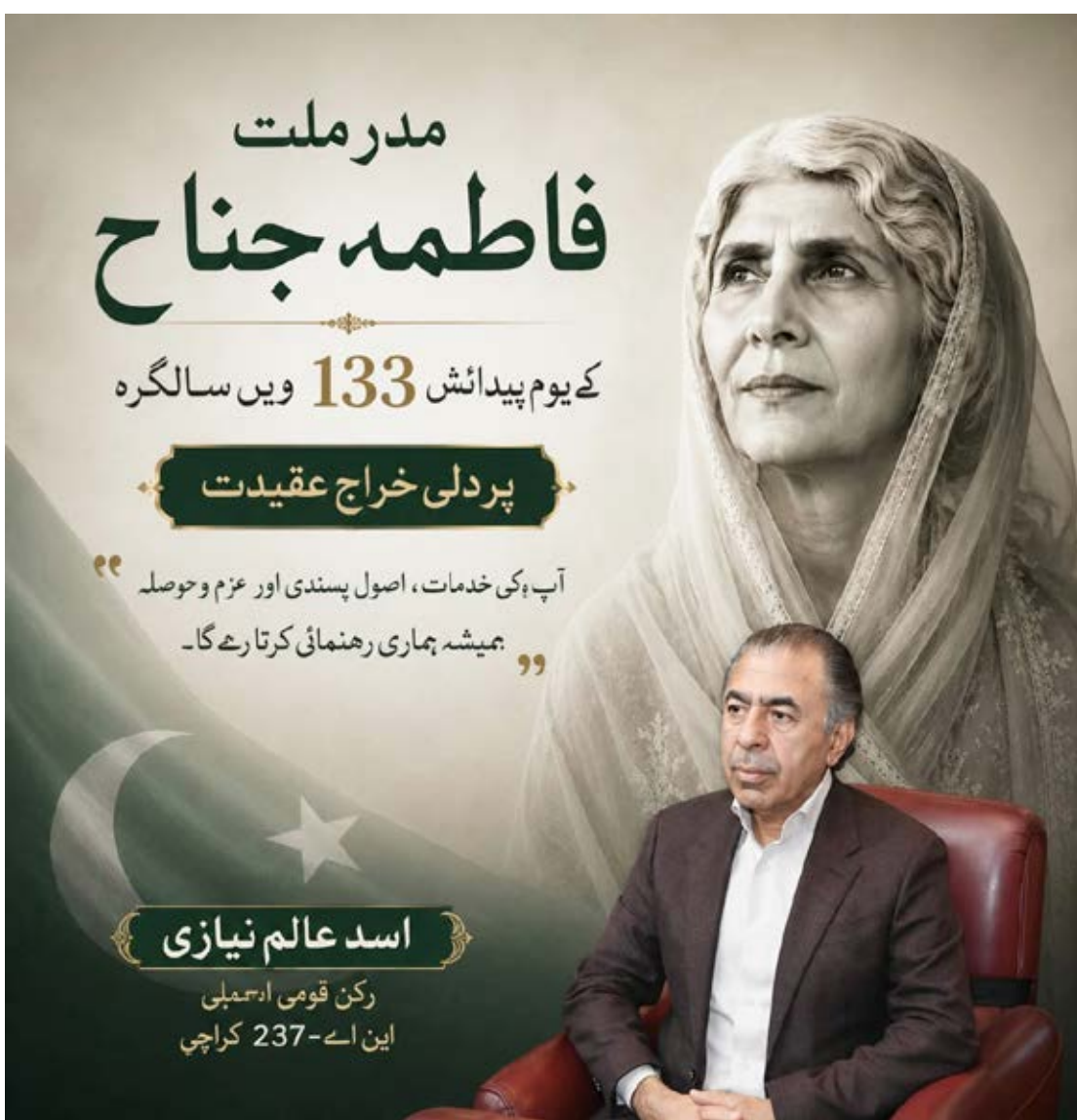
istic and deserves serious consideration.

He added that new administrative units would help resolve public issues, strengthen governance, improve oversight, and enhance service delivery. A



stronger structure would also aid in addressing internal challenges including terrorism.

Reaffirming the Bar Council's commitment, Chishti said it supports all reform-oriented initiatives in the national interest and stressed the need for a comprehensive review so citizens can access justice and services at their doorstep.



AJK election chief warns polling in Rawalakot may be delayed

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, said on Friday that elections in Rawalakot could be postponed if the security situation does not improve, while stressing that polling in other parts of the Poonch Division would go ahead as planned.

Speaking to media in Muzaffarabad, Mughal said the AJK Legislative Assembly could not be considered complete without representation from the Poonch Division.

He said the Election Commission of AJK remained committed to holding elections in the constituencies of Abbaspur, Hajira, Bagh and Haveli.

He urged voters to participate actively in the second phase of the elections, saying people should leave their homes and cast their ballots.

He added that public issues could not be resolved through rallies,



demonstrations or protests if citizens chose not to exercise their right to vote.

The CEC also defended the independence of the Election Commission, stating that it did not work

under anyone's instructions or political direction and remained an autonomous institution.

He said defeated candidates often alleged electoral rigging and described the current election as one of the most

challenging in the history of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

According to Mughal, two constituencies in Muzaffarabad—LA-31 Khawara and LA-28 Lachhrat—have been identified as highly sensitive.

Reiterating his earlier remarks, Mughal said that while the absence of the Poonch Division would leave the Assembly incomplete, it was too early to comment on the formation of the next government.

He added that if the security situation remained unchanged, polling in Rawalakot could be rescheduled. However, elections in Abbaspur, Hajira, Bagh and Haveli were expected to proceed, and the Election Commission was determined to ensure they were held.

The Chief Election Commissioner's remarks came a day after Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari alleged electoral rigging during a public gathering in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan Must Sustain Role as Credible Mediator for Regional Peace: Masood Khan

 **Spokesman Report**



ISLAMABAD: Former AJK President and ex-Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan said Pakistan must continue playing a balanced and credible role to facilitate Iran-US dialogue and safeguard regional stability.

Speaking in a TV interview on the evolving Iran-United States conflict, Khan noted that recent military strikes have widened hostilities and raised the risk of prolonged confrontation. Despite repeated breakdowns in talks, he stressed that "lasting peace can only be achieved through sustained diplomacy and negotiations," adding that history shows even destructive conflicts end at the negotiating table.

He highlighted mediation efforts by Pakistan, Qatar, Oman and Iraq, including initiatives on the Strait of Hormuz, and warned that renewed operations undermine confidence. Khan said the conflict is no longer confined to the Gulf, with attacks on maritime routes and energy infrastructure affecting global trade and energy markets.

On Pakistan's position, he said Islamabad must balance ties with Iran and Saudi Arabia while honoring defense commitments to Riyadh. He urged continued principled mediation, dialogue, and regional cooperation, expressing confidence that Pakistan's credibility positions it to help restore stability.

Premium Technologies Secures Three ISO Certifications, Reinforcing Responsible AI and Global Standards

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Premium Technologies, a Pakistan-based company specializing in AI, enterprise software, cloud, cybersecurity, and digital transformation, has achieved three internationally recognized ISO certifications:

- ISO 9001:2015 – Quality Management System
- ISO/IEC 27001:2022 – Information Security Management System
- ISO/IEC 42001:2023 – Artificial Intelligence Management System

The certifications highlight the company's commitment to quality, information security, and responsible AI governance. ISO/IEC 42001:2023 is the world's first AI Management System standard, providing a framework for the responsible development, deployment, and operation of AI systems.

Ayaan Raza, Founder & CEO, said: "These certifications reflect our commitment to building trustworthy technology that meets international expectations. As a Pakistani company, we believe innovation, global standards, and talent investment are essential to strengthening Pakistan's position in the global digital economy."

Premium Technologies delivers AI-powered solutions and SaaS platforms for domestic and international clients. The company said broader adoption of global standards will help position Pakistan as a trusted technology partner and accelerate growth in the digital economy.

Population Welfare Staff to Take Additional Govt Roles for Better Service Delivery: ADCG

 **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Attock Anil Saeed has announced that employees of the Population Welfare Department will be assigned responsibilities in other government departments to better utilize their capabilities and improve public service delivery. He made the remarks while chairing a review meeting on the department's performance at the DC Office, Attock. The meeting assessed ongoing programmes, key challenges, and future strategy. ADCG Saeed said that stronger inter-departmental coordination and efficient use of human resources are essential for effective implementation of government policies. He stressed that providing quality public services in line with Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision remains the government's top priority. He directed officers to involve Population Welfare field staff in other government initiatives and welfare programmes to enhance community service. The meeting was attended by CEO Health Dr. Asad Ismail, Population Welfare officers, and representatives of other departments. Participants discussed family welfare programmes, awareness campaigns, and measures to strengthen collaboration. Concluding, the ADCG instructed officers to strengthen field activities and ensure coordinated awareness efforts so government benefits reach every citizen.

Attock Administration Vows Strict Price Control, Action Against Profiteers



 **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Attock, Anil Saeed, has said that, in line with the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration will ensure price stability of essential commodities across the district by utilizing all available resources.

Chairing a meeting of Price Control Magistrates at the DC Office Attock, he made it clear that artificial inflation, hoarding, and profiteering would not be tolerated under any circumstances. He warned that strict legal action would be taken against violators in accordance with the law.

The meeting reviewed in detail the prices of essential food items, ongoing price control measures, field inspections, enforcement actions against overcharging, and the future strategy for maintaining market stability. All Price Control Magistrates from across the district attended the meeting.

The Additional Deputy Commissioner directed all Price Control Magistrates to conduct daily inspections of markets, bazaars, fruit and vegetable markets, and grocery stores, ensuring strict implementation of the government-notified price lists.

He emphasized that ensuring the availability of essential commodities at official prices is the foremost responsibility of the district administration, adding that no negligence or laxity in this regard would be tolerated.

Water flow

ISLAMABAD: Men watching the water flow in Korang nullah during recent monsoon spell, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ghazi-e-Millat Remembered for Enduring Legacy and Commitment to Kashmir Cause

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: A commemorative ceremony was held at the Kashmir Resource Centre under the auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell to mark the death anniversary of the Founding President of the Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Ghazi-e-Millat Sardar Muhammad Ibrahim Khan.

The event brought together leaders of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC), government representatives, political figures, civil society members and officials of the Jammu and

Kashmir Liberation Cell. Speakers paid tribute to Sardar Ibrahim Khan's historical, political and constitutional contributions, describing him as a visionary statesman and a prominent leader of the Kashmir movement.

They highlighted his lifelong struggle for the rights, dignity and self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir, recalling that he served as President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir on four occasions. The speakers also noted his leadership in the adoption of the historic Resolution for the Accession of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan on July 19, 1947.

Participants praised his role in

strengthening democratic institutions, promoting the rule of law and safeguarding constitutional traditions. They said his integrity, principled leadership and dedication to public service continue to inspire future generations.

The gathering reaffirmed its commitment to carrying forward his vision through peaceful and democratic means while calling on the international community, the United Nations and human rights organizations to address the human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and support the implementation of relevant UN



resolutions on the right to self-determination.

The ceremony concluded with special prayers for Ghazi-e-Millat, the martyrs of Kashmir, peace and stability in Pakistan, and the prosperity of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



 **Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's "Safe Punjab" vision,

the District Civil Defence Office Toba Tek Singh organized an awareness and training seminar for the Punjab Civil Defence Resilience Corps.

Deputy Commissioner and

Civil Defence Resilience Corps Seminar Held in Toba Tek Singh

Controller Civil Defence Maham Asif Malik attended as chief guest. Also present were ADC-G Dr. Tariq Usman, District Emergency Officer, Deputy Director Colleges, CEO Education, heads of educational institutions, teachers, students and volunteers.

The event began with a welcome address by District Civil Defence Officer Mahmood Hussain Gill, followed by a guard of honour by Civil Defence wardens. The DC inspected the Bomb Disposal Unit's equipment

and latest emergency response gear.

Gill briefed that after last year's floods, over 6,000 volunteers were registered in Toba Tek Singh and 4,000+ people received practical Civil Defence training.

Addressing the gathering, DC Maham Asif Malik said youth in the Corps reflect a spirit of national service and a step toward a safer, more responsible society. She distributed certificates to newly registered volunteers and appreciated the Civil Defence team's efforts.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:43 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:07 pm
Maghrib 7:09 pm
Isha 8:44 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

Patience, Gratitude and Good Character Are the Core Message of Islam, Says Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Addressing a religious gathering hosted by Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim and attended by a large number of religious scholars, he said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad (peace be upon him) set unparalleled examples of forgiveness, mercy and tolerance during the Treaty of Hudaibiyyah and the Conquest of Makkah.

Speaking at the religious and intellectual session, Allama Shah said that abuse, ridicule and character assassination, despite differences of opinion, are contrary to Islamic teachings. He expressed concern over the growing trend of offensive language on social media and urged people to uphold truth without compromising their morals or ethics.

Highlighting the scholarly, spiritual and moral legacy of Hazrat Ali (RA), he said that true spiritual development is achieved through patience, remembrance of Allah, self-purification and noble character. He also urged participants to draw lessons of steadfastness and patience from the tragedy of Karbala.

The gathering concluded with special prayers for the peace and prosperity of Pakistan, unity of the Muslim Ummah, and adherence to Islamic teachings.

CM Punjab seeks Province-wide Safe Drinking Water Plan Within Five Days

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has reaffirmed her commitment to ensuring the supply of safe drinking water to every household across Punjab following the Suthra Punjab initiative, and has sought a foolproof province-wide plan within five days.

Chairing a meeting of the Punjab Saaf Pani Authority, the chief minister directed that efforts to provide safe drinking water to citizens be expedited.

The meeting agreed to hire an international consultancy for the initiative, while the latest Japanese and Chinese technologies would be introduced for water purification.

The meeting was informed that the Punjab Saaf Pani Authority would be restructured and upgraded on modern lines, similar to the Suthra Punjab programme. It was further decided that the authority would be fully empowered administratively and technically, and equipped with modern technology, human resources and

transport facilities.

The chief minister directed that all 5,734 water filtration plants be repaired and properly maintained, and ordered the installation of additional plants wherever required. She also directed that the authority's jurisdiction be expanded to all districts and tehsils of Punjab.

The meeting was informed that the supply of safe drinking water through mobile bottling plants had already begun in remote areas, with operational bottling plants benefiting more



than 2,400 families daily. It was also decided that all trucks and plants of the authority would be monitored.

CM Punjab said the Punjab

Saaf Pani Authority would be made active and organised on the pattern of Suthra Punjab.

"The Safe Drinking Water Project is very close to my heart.

Negligence or complacency will not be tolerated. Alongside development projects, the provision of clean drinking water to citizens is my top priority," she said.

Group photograph

LAHORE: DGPR Sheikh Fareed Ahmad poses for a group photograph with participants at the closing ceremony of the five-day Women's Media Center training workshop.



CM Murad Ali Shah Attends Shah Latif Urs, Calls for Peace, Unity and Fair AJK Elections

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

BHIT SHAH: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah attended the closing ceremony of the 283rd annual Urs of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai, offering Fateha and prayers for peace, prosperity and national stability. He laid a floral wreath, listened to _Shah Jo Raag_, recorded remarks in the visitors' book, and distributed gifts among deserving women.

Speaking to media, CM Shah said Sindh's Sufi heritage promotes love, tolerance and brotherhood, and Bhittai's poetry continues to inspire peace and coexistence.

On Kashmir, he said PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has consistently raised the Kashmiri cause, and stressed that AJK elections scheduled for Aug 2 and Aug 10 must be free, fair and transparent.



Rejecting proposals for new provinces, he called the idea "outdated," saying Sindhis are united in protecting provincial interests.

He also urged PTI to abandon boycott

politics, affirmed commitment to youth education and public employees' rights, and said payments and inquiries related to the motorway project were being addressed.

CM Maryam Nawaz expresses grief over loss of lives in Quetta coal mine blast

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives in a blast at a coal mine in the Quetta area.

The Chief Minister prayed for the safety and well-being of the miners trapped inside the mine and expressed sympathy and condolences to the bereaved families.

Three GCWUF Projects Shortlisted for Divisional Level Punjab Youth Innovation & Incubation Competition 2026



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Three innovative projects by students of Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) have been shortlisted for the Divisional Level of the Punjab Youth Innovation & Incubation Competition 2026.

The selected projects are Home Automation System by Hamna Tahir (Computer Science), Hospital Sanitizing Robot by Khansa Maryum (Computer Science), and Vitarise by Saba Parveen (Nutritional Sciences), developed under the supervision of the University's Business Incubation Center.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (Tamgha-i-Imtiaz) congratulated Dr. Ayesha Imtiaz, the students, and their faculty members on this achievement. She said the success reflects GCWUF's commitment to promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, and research, while expressing confidence that the students will continue to excel in the upcoming stages of the competition.

Encroachment Mafia Swallows Footpaths; New Shah Shams Residents Demand MDA Action

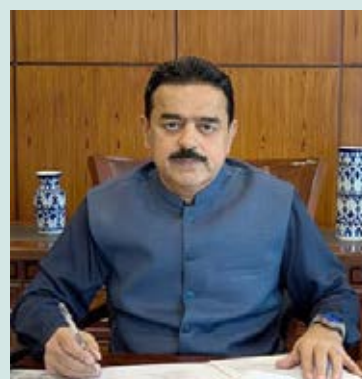
Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Residents of New Shah Shams Colony have urged MDA Director General Rashid Irshad to immediately restore footpaths along the colony's main roads, saying pedestrians, women, children, elderly and worshippers face severe daily hardships, worsened during the rainy season.

In a joint statement, prominent residents including Chaudhry Rashid, Dr. Shahid, Dr. Hanif, Qari Zafar Iqbal and others said multiple written applications were submitted to MDA. They recalled raising the issue during road carpeting years ago with then-SDO Manzoor Chaudhry, but no action was taken.

An MDA response on Jan 15, 2024 via Pakistan Citizen Portal admitted the demand was justified and blamed an Election Commission ban for delays, promising work post-elections. Residents say elections have passed but the commitment remains unfulfilled, while illegal encroachments have now occupied the footpaths, forcing people onto busy roads.

They demanded immediate restoration of footpaths and removal of encroachments. Warning of further steps, they said if work doesn't start in two weeks, they will meet the Commissioner Multan, complain to the CM Punjab, and pursue legal action including the courts.



Serena Hotels Hosts Panel on Wellbeing as a New Leadership Imperative

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Serena Hotels, through its Raabta public diplomacy initiative, hosted a panel discussion titled "Leading Beyond Performance: Wellbeing as the New Leadership Imperative." Moderated by journalist Sidra Iqbal, the session explored how wellbeing is reshaping effective, compassionate, and sustainable leadership, focusing on emotional intelligence, resilience, psychological safety, and inclusive leadership amid today's complex professional environment.

The panel featured four experts offering diverse perspectives. Abida Malik, President of the Behbud Association, spoke on empathy and purpose-driven leadership in building resilient organizations. Dr. Mowadat Hussain



Rana, a psychiatry and behavioural sciences professor, emphasized mental

health and psychological resilience as central to leadership success. Dr.

Ammara Saad Hashmi, founder of Pakistan's first wellness and longevity clinic, discussed preventive wellbeing and holistic, human-centered leadership approaches. Miral Shareef, Country Head of Yango Pakistan, addressed authentic leadership and building inclusive cultures that drive innovation and engagement.

Serena Hotels reiterated its commitment to fostering platforms for dialogue on social and developmental issues through Raabta, aiming to inspire positive change and strengthen communities. This latest session reaffirmed the company's dedication to thought leadership, encouraging organizations and individuals to redefine leadership through empathy, wellbeing, and human-centered values.

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On Track Together: Pakistan and Türkiye Chart a New Railway Partnership

Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi’s meeting with the Turkish Contractors Association during his two-day visit to Türkiye is more than a diplomatic courtesy call. It signals a serious attempt to bring credible international capacity into a railway system that has, for decades, run on outdated infrastructure, thin investment and unmet potential.

Pakistan Railways has no shortage of ambition. Between the long-awaited upgrade of Main Line-1, the modernization of Main Line-3, and plans to revive the Islamabad–Tehran–İstanbul freight corridor, the network is being asked to do far more than move passengers between cities. It is being positioned as a backbone for regional trade, linking Pakistan westward to Iran and Türkiye and eastward, through the proposed Uzbekistan–Afghanistan–Pakistan corridor, into Central Asia. These are not modest goals. They require money, engineering expertise and a delivery culture that Pakistan Railways has historically struggled to sustain on its own.

This is where Turkish involvement makes practical sense. Turkish contractors have built a global reputation for delivering complex infrastructure on time and at scale, from highways to metro systems across Asia, Africa and the Gulf. Inviting them to explore Public-Private Partnership, Build-Operate-Transfer and EPC models is a pragmatic acknowledgment that Pakistan’s public sector cannot shoulder this modernization alone. Equally encouraging is the emphasis on technology transfer and local manufacturing of coaches, wagons and railway components. Done right, this could build domestic industrial capacity rather than simply outsourcing the problem.

Still, ambition on paper is not the same as delivery on the ground. Pakistan has seen memoranda of understanding evaporate before construction ever begins, and freight corridors announced with fanfare only to stall over financing, security concerns or bureaucratic inertia. The ITI corridor itself has been revived and shelved more than once since it was first conceived. For this renewed push to matter, it will need firm timelines, transparent contracting, and protection from the political churn that has undermined previous railway initiatives.

The meeting in Ankara is a starting point, not an achievement. What follows — binding agreements, financing structures, and visible progress on ML-1 — will determine whether this partnership becomes a genuine turning point for Pakistan Railways or another entry in a long list of unrealized plans. Given the stakes for regional connectivity and trade, Pakistan can ill afford the latter.

Iran and Türkiye: The Powers Destined to Reshape the Middle East

The war against Iran may ultimately be remembered not as the conflict that restored American and Israeli dominance, but as the turning point that accelerated its decline. Retired U.S. Army Colonel Douglas Macgregor has advanced a compelling theory: when the present conflict ends, Iran and Türkiye will emerge as the two principal powers shaping the Middle East for decades.

Macgregor’s argument is not based merely on military inventories, economic statistics or temporary diplomatic alignments. It rests on a broader historical judgment: the period during which Western powers could enter a region, deploy overwhelming force and compel weaker countries to surrender is ending. Military technology has proliferated, ancient civilizational states have recovered their confidence, and countries once treated as subordinate actors can now impose intolerable costs on even the strongest military powers. Iran’s survival and Türkiye’s resurgence provide the clearest evidence of this transition.

Iran has faced an extraordinary concentration of military, economic and political pressure. The United States and Israel have attacked its military installations, missile sites, air defences, command centres and infrastructure. Sanctions have restricted its trade and weakened its economy. Washington has demanded limitations on its nuclear programme, ballistic missiles, regional influence and control over the Strait of

Hormuz.

Israel has treated Iran as its principal strategic enemy, while Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Kuwait and the United Arab Emirates have opposed different aspects of Tehran’s regional policies. American military bases surrounding Iran have provided operational support for the campaign against it. Yet Iran has refused to surrender.

Its government continues functioning. Its armed forces retain the ability to launch missiles and drones. Its underground installations have protected essential capabilities. Its leadership continues negotiating from a position of sovereignty rather than submission. Even after sustained attacks, Tehran has not accepted externally imposed terms from Washington, Tel Aviv or the Gulf monarchies.

That resistance is itself a demonstration of power. A country does not need to destroy a superpower’s military to defeat its political objective. It succeeds when it prevents that superpower from imposing its will. Iran has therefore converted endurance into deterrence.

Iran’s strength is rooted partly in its geography, its missile forces, command systems and industrial capacities which are dispersed across numerous locations, including deeply fortified underground facilities. Its greatest strength, however,

may be national resilience. Iranians who may oppose particular state policies do not necessarily support the destruction of their country or the imposition of foreign authority.

Iran demonstrated that a determined nation can absorb severe punishment without surrendering its independence. That lesson will influence every government in the region.

By demonstrating that it can restrict, regulate or threaten passage through Hormuz, Iran has acquired leverage that aircraft and bombs alone cannot eliminate. This changes the balance between conventional military strength and strategic influence.

Consequently, Gulf governments cannot indefinitely treat Iran merely as a state to be contained. They must eventually negotiate with it as an indispensable regional power. Macgregor’s central contention is that the age of Western military bullying is over. Iran has provided the evidence.

The United States can destroy installations, sanction companies, deploy aircraft carriers and launch precision weapons. What it can no longer guarantee is political obedience. The enormous gap in military expenditure has not produced an equivalent gap in political results.

Iran’s comparatively inexpensive missiles and drones have forced the

United States and its allies to expend costly interceptors. American bases, once viewed as instruments of protection, have become potential targets that expose their host countries to retaliation. The longer the conflict continues, the more difficult it becomes to distinguish between an asset that projects American power and a liability that attracts Iranian fire.

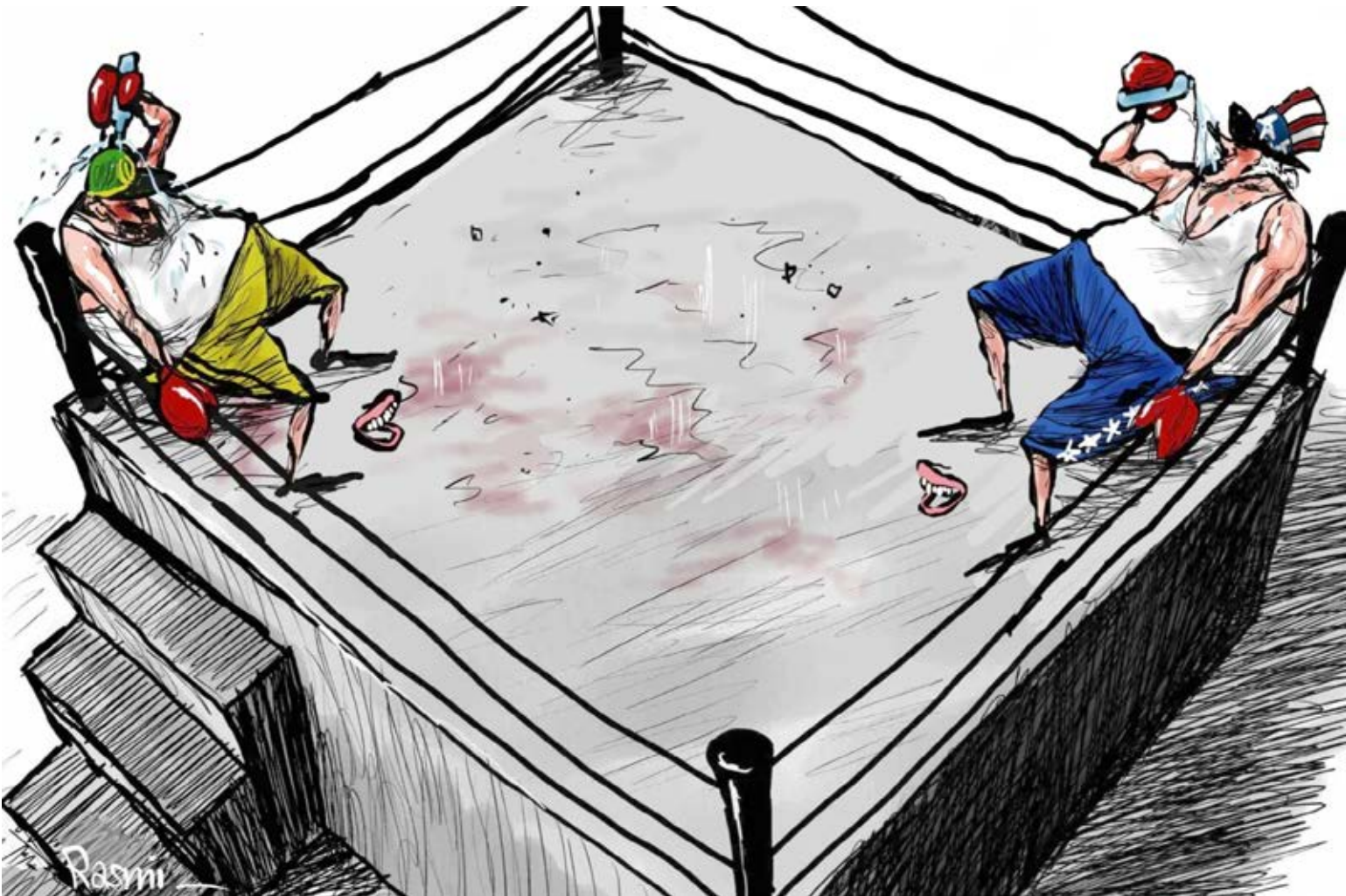
The war has therefore weakened the psychological foundation of hegemony: the belief that resistance is futile. Iran has shown that resistance is not only possible but can produce leverage. Other countries will study that experience and conclude that military and technological preparation can protect political independence.

The second pillar of Macgregor’s theory is Türkiye. Türkiye possesses the population, geography, military tradition, industrial capacity and historical consciousness required for regional leadership. The Ottoman Empire once governed the Levant, Arabian Peninsula, Egypt, North Africa, the Balkans and significant parts of the wider Islamic world.

Modern Türkiye is not recreating that empire territorially, but its strategic outlook remains informed by centuries of statecraft and regional engagement.

Türkiye fields one of NATO’s largest armies and has developed an increasingly independent defence industry. Its drones, naval vessels, missiles, armoured vehicles and electronic-warfare systems

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

A Neglected Story

Throughout Pakistan’s political history, some slogans generate temporary enthusiasm only to fade with time, while others continue to resonate years later with even greater clarity. “Save the State, Not Politics” was one such slogan. When it was introduced on 23 December 2012, it sparked a new national debate. At the time, many dismissed it as merely another political campaign or protest. However, the central question behind the slogan was far more fundamental: Is Pakistan’s crisis simply about changing governments, or is it rooted in the weakness of the state itself? Today, after numerous national tragedies and recurring crises, that question appears more relevant than ever. Yet despite these painful experiences, the nation’s collective political consciousness still has much room to awaken.

Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri argued that if the electoral system lacks transparency, the Constitution is not implemented in its true spirit, accountability remains weak, corruption becomes embedded in public institutions, and the rule of law exists only on paper, then merely changing the faces in government cannot transform the destiny of the people. In his view, the real problem was not individuals but the system itself. Unless fundamental institutional reforms were introduced, Pakistan would continue to experience political instability, economic crises, and growing public frustration.

This perspective differed significantly from Pakistan’s traditional political culture, where politics has often revolved around forming or toppling governments rather than strengthening the foundations of the state. Institutional reforms, electoral transparency, constitutional supremacy, and the independence of

public institutions have historically received comparatively less attention. For this reason, “Save the State, Not Politics” evolved from a political slogan into a broader intellectual and constitutional discourse.

In pursuit of this vision, a five-day sit-in was organized in Islamabad in January 2013, which remains one of the most significant peaceful protests in Pakistan’s political history. Despite freezing temperatures, heavy rain, and difficult weather conditions, millions of participants from across the country gathered peacefully, attracting widespread national and international media attention. The protest concluded with a written agreement between the Government of Pakistan and Minhaj-ul-Quran International. The agreement included commitments regarding electoral reforms, scrutiny of election candidates, the conduct of elections in accordance with constitutional requirements, and measures aimed at making the electoral process more transparent. It demonstrated that constitutional and electoral reforms could become part of the national agenda through peaceful public engagement.

Although not all provisions of the agreement were fully implemented, it undeniably brought electoral reform into mainstream national discourse. In the years that followed, political parties, parliamentary committees, and election authorities increasingly focused on issues such as electoral transparency, voter registration, campaign financing, candidate eligibility, and reforms to election laws. In this sense, the movement succeeded in highlighting several issues that later became central to Pakistan’s political agenda.

The Inqilab March (Revolution March) of 2014 further expanded this debate. Once again, demands for transparent elections,

accountability, the elimination of corruption, and improved governance were brought to the forefront. While different political actors interpreted the movement through their own perspectives, it undeniably stimulated renewed discussion regarding public protest, constitutional reform, and institutional accountability in Pakistan.

The same year witnessed the tragic Model Town incident, which became one of the most painful episodes in Pakistan’s political and legal history. The incident resulted in multiple deaths and injuries, raising serious questions regarding justice, transparent investigations, the use of state authority, and the rule of law. It reinforced the principle that state power must always be exercised within constitutional and legal limits. The legal and judicial dimensions of the tragedy have continued to be debated, and it remains an important reference point in Pakistan’s political history.

Supporters of Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri have consistently maintained that many of the issues he highlighted years earlier became increasingly prominent over time. According to them, electoral reforms, meritocracy, anti-corruption measures, constitutional supremacy, improved standards of public representation, institutional reforms, and effective accountability were eventually adopted at least in principle by most major political parties. They argue that had these proposals been implemented in a timely manner, Pakistan might have avoided several political and constitutional crises.

Critics, however, questioned Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri’s political strategy, his alliances with various political actors, and certain decisions made during different phases of his movement. In their view, some political initiatives failed to achieve their intended objectives and, in certain instances, contributed to further political complexity. Such differences of opinion are natural in any democratic society. Therefore, any political movement or leader

Continued on Page 7

Unchecked Inflation: A Growing Burden on the People

Pakistan is currently facing several serious economic challenges with inflation emerging as one of the most pressing and sensitive issues. The continuous rise in the prices of essential commodities, frequent increases in petroleum prices, higher electricity and gas tariffs and the imposition of new taxes have made life extremely difficult for ordinary citizens. The middle and lower-income segments of society are the worst affected and for many families, even arranging two meals a day has become a daunting task.

Whenever the government increases the prices of petroleum products, the impact is felt throughout the economy. Transportation costs rise, production expenses for industries increase and consequently, the prices of almost all consumer goods climb. Flour, sugar, cooking oil, pulses, vegetables, fruits and other daily necessities are gradually moving beyond the purchasing power of the common man. As a result, laborers, farmers, daily wage earners and low-income employees bear the heaviest burden of inflation.

Inflation is not merely an economic issue, it is also a serious social challenge. When household incomes remain stagnant while living expenses continue to rise, frustration, anxiety and uncertainty begin to spread throughout society. Young people become increasingly concerned about their future due to unemployment and the rising cost of living, while parents struggle to meet the educational, healthcare and basic needs of their children. If this situation continues, its social consequences could become even more severe. It is true that global economic conditions, fluctuations in international oil prices and other external factors also influence Pakistan’s economy. Nevertheless, it remains the government’s responsibility to reduce the burden on citi-

zens through sound economic planning, effective policymaking and strict market oversight. Strong action against hoarding, profiteering, and artificial price hikes is essential to ensure that the public receives genuine relief. The government should carefully consider the impact on ordinary people before increasing petroleum prices. Special relief packages for low- and middle-income families, subsidies on essential commodities, rational taxation and the creation of employment opportunities are the need of the hour. Likewise, an effective price control mechanism should be enforced to prevent traders from exploiting consumers through excessive profiteering. Those in power must remember that the strength of a nation is closely linked to the well-being of its people. When citizens are overwhelmed by economic hardships, public confidence in the government inevitably declines. On the other hand, providing meaningful relief, controlling inflation and implementing fair and people-centered economic policies can strengthen trust between the government and the public. Today, it is imperative for the government, relevant institutions, the business community and all segments of society to work together to combat inflation effectively. Practical measures should be taken to ensure the availability of affordable flour, sugar, cooking oil, pulses, electricity, gas and fuel so that ordinary citizens can live with dignity and peace of mind. Instead of repeatedly burdening the people with rising prices, the government must prioritize public welfare by introducing sustainable economic reforms and relief measures. Timely and effective decisions can not only help control inflation but also restore public confidence and hope for a more stable and prosperous future.

(The Writer is Correspondent of the Daily The Spokesman from District Toba Tek Singh.)

PM Shehbaz reaffirms Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen Azerbaijan ties

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering commitment to further strengthening the brotherly ties with Azerbaijan, recalling the high-level exchanges between the two countries over the past two and a half years.

The prime minister, talking to Azerbaijan's Ambassador to Pakistan Khazar Farhadov, who paid a farewell call on him, expressed confidence that the strong foundation laid during the envoy's tenure would continue to guide the trajectory of bilateral ties in the years ahead.

The prime minister warmly acknowledged Ambassador Farhadov's dedicated efforts to strengthen the deep-rooted, brotherly relations between Pakistan and Azerbaijan during his tenure.

He commended the Ambassador's contributions in expanding bilateral cooperation across political, trade, economic, defence, culture and people-to-people domains, including the launch of direct flights between the two countries.

Conveying his warm regards to President Ilham Aliyev, Prime Minister Shehbaz fondly recalled his numerous visits to Azerbaijan over the past two and a half years, as well as the

visit of President Aliyev to Pakistan in July 2024.

He also wished Ambassador Farhadov continued success in his future assignments.

Ambassador Farhadov thanked the prime minister for the warmth, hospitality, and support extended to him by the Government and people of Pakistan throughout his diplomatic assignment, describing his tenure in Pakistan as a cherished chapter of his diplomatic career.

He reaffirmed Azerbaijan's continued commitment to deepening its strategic partnership with Pakistan. He also presented the prime minister with a book based on his fami-



ly's experiences of living in Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator

Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Secretary Ambassador Amna Baloch also attended the meeting.



Pakistan Embassy in Brussels Opens Kashmir Photo Exhibition Ahead of Youm-e-Istehsal

Spokesman Report

BRUSSELS: The Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels on Friday inaugurated a week-long photo exhibition to mark Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir (August 5), highlighting the human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and reaffirming Pakistan's solidarity with the Kashmiri people.

The exhibition showcases photographs and documentary material depicting the hardships faced by Kashmiris over the decades, with particular focus on developments following August 5, 2019. It aims to raise awareness among visitors about the humanitarian challenges, restrictions, and human rights concerns in IIOJK while emphasizing the need for a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Speaking at the inauguration, Pakistan's Ambassador to Belgium, Rahim Hayat Qureshi, described Youm-e-Istehsal Kashmir as a day of remembrance



and solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, as recognized by the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The ambassador stressed that lasting peace and stability in South Asia would remain unattainable without a just settlement of the Kashmir dispute based on international law and the wishes of

the Kashmiri people. He urged the international community to continue supporting efforts aimed at protecting human rights and promoting a peaceful resolution of the longstanding dispute.

The exhibition will remain open to visitors for one week at the Embassy of Pakistan in Brussels, serving as a reminder of the resilience of the Kashmiri people and Pakistan's continued diplomatic support for their cause.

Seminar Highlights Need for Awareness, Early Detection to Eliminate Hepatitis

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Pakistan Association for Eastern Medicine (PAEM), in collaboration with Hamdard Foundation Pakistan (HFP), organised a scientific seminar titled "Tazkar-e-Hikmat" at Naimat Begum Hamdard University Hospital to mark World Hepatitis Day, urging stronger public awareness and preventive measures against hepatitis.

Addressing the seminar, Associate Professor Dr Hakim Syed Zahoor-ul-Hasan Zaidi described hepatitis as a "silent but dangerous disease" and stressed that early diagnosis, vaccination, effective treatment and public awareness are essential to controlling its spread. He explained that hepatitis A and E are mainly transmitted through contaminated food and water, while hepatitis B, C and D spread through infected blood, unsafe injections and unsterilised medical equipment.

Citing World Health Organization (WHO) data, he noted that millions worldwide remain unaware they are infected and reiterated the global goal of eliminating hepatitis by 2030. He said Pakistan continues to face a heavy burden of hepatitis B and C, largely due to unsafe medical practices, poor hygiene



and inadequate public awareness. He emphasised that safe injections, screened blood transfusions, sterilised medical equipment, clean drinking water and sustained awareness campaigns can significantly reduce infections.

Dr Zaidi also highlighted the hepatoprotective potential of Unani medicine, calling for stronger clinical research and evidence-based studies to enhance its international recognition. He added that trained Unani practitioners could play a vital role in disease prevention,

early diagnosis and primary healthcare, particularly in underserved rural areas.

PAEM President Professor Dr Hakim Abdul Hanan said the organisation is committed to promoting prevention, research, education and public awareness alongside treatment. He reaffirmed Hamdard Pakistan's resolve to continue organising scientific seminars and awareness programmes aimed at encouraging healthier lifestyles and strengthening public health across the country.

Morocco Celebrates Throne Day in Islamabad, Reaffirms Strong Partnership with Pakistan

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Morocco. He hoped that these relations would be further cemented in the days to come.

He addressed the gathering as chief guest during Morocco's National Day, hosted by the Embassy of the Kingdom of Morocco. Hamid Asghar Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to Morocco and Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa), was the guest of honour. The Dean of the Diplomatic Corps in Pakistan,

Ambassador of Turkmenistan H. E. Atadjan Movlammov, and Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh, Federal Minister, Board of Investment, were also present.

Earlier, H. E. Mr. Mohamed Karmoune, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco to Pakistan, and his team extended a warm welcome to guests. The event, held at a Serena hotel, brought together diplomats, senior government officials, parliamentarians, members of the business community, academics, media representatives, and distinguished guests to commemorate the anniversary of His Majesty King Mohammed VI's accession to the throne.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief guest congratulated the Government and people of Morocco on their National Day and conveyed warm greetings on behalf of the Government of Pakistan. He praised the excellent relations between the two brotherly countries and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation.

The chief guest noted that Pakistan highly values its friendship with Morocco and appreciates the constructive role both countries play in promoting peace, stability, and cooperation in the Muslim world and beyond. He said the two nations share common perspectives on many international issues and continue to support each other in multilateral forums.

Addressing the gathering, the Ambassador of the Kingdom of Morocco highlighted the importance of Throne Day as a symbol of Morocco's national identity and development. The ambassador paid tribute to the visionary leadership of King Mohammed VI and outlined Morocco's achievements in economic development, infrastructure, renewable energy, education, social welfare, and regional cooperation.

The ambassador also underscored the longstanding diplomatic relations between Morocco and Pakistan, noting that the two countries have enjoyed cordial and friendly ties since the establishment of diplomatic relations in 1958. He said the relationship is rooted in mutual respect, shared values, and common positions on regional and international issues.

Highlighting bilateral cooperation, the ambassador said Morocco and Pakistan continue to strengthen collaboration in diverse sectors, including trade, agriculture, education, tourism, culture, renewable energy, investment, and people-to-people exchanges. He expressed confidence that the existing partnership would continue to expand through enhanced economic engagement and regular exchanges between government institutions, business communities, and academic organizations.

Throne Day is one of Morocco's most significant national occasions and is observed annually on July 30. The day symbolizes national unity, stability, and the country's continued progress under the leadership of King Mohammed VI. Across Morocco and at Moroccan



diplomatic missions worldwide, the occasion is marked with ceremonies celebrating the nation's achievements and its commitment to international cooperation.

The reception in Islamabad began with the national anthems of Morocco and Pakistan, reflecting the mutual respect and longstanding friendship between

the two countries. A ceremonial cake-cutting ceremony followed, adding a festive touch to the celebrations.

As the ceremony concluded, guests extended their congratulations to the Moroccan ambassador and expressed their best wishes to His Majesty King Mohammed VI and the people of Morocco for

continued peace, prosperity, and progress. The celebration reaffirmed the enduring friendship between Pakistan and Morocco and highlighted the determination of both countries to build on decades of close diplomatic ties through greater cooperation in economic, cultural, and strategic fields.

Photos by Sultan Bashir

Solo Travel Finding Its Footing in Pakistan

The image of travel in Pakistan is changing. At bus terminals in Rawalpindi, at Islamabad International Airport, and on travels in Hunza, a growing number of travellers are moving with just one thing in common — they are alone.

Solo travel, once seen as unusual, is now a quiet but visible trend among Pakistanis. Industry data and tour operators say bookings by single travellers have risen steadily over the last two years, driven by social media, remote

work, and a desire for independence.

For decades, Pakistani travel meant family trips to Murree, Nathiagali, or Swat, or group tours arranged through agencies. That model is shifting.

Nevertheless, reasons are practical and personal. Let's say, no need to coordinate leave or budgets with others, or time to navigate new places on one's own terms.

These days, hostels, cafés, and trekking groups in places like Karimabad and Skardu have become meeting points for solo travellers.

However, safety remains the top concern, especially for women. That is pushing both travellers and the industry to adapt.

Hotels in major tourist towns now offer female-only dorms. Ride-hailing apps provide trip sharing. Also, the Ministry of Tourism has started listing registered guesthouses and guides on its website.



Analysis

Munaza Kazmi

for weekend culture trips, history, and food walks.

Internationally, Pakistanis traveling

alone are choosing Turkey, Malaysia, and Saudi Arabia for Umrah-plus-tourism packages. Portugal and Japan are also rising for first-time solo travellers abroad due to safety and transit systems. But I would say Sri Lanka is the must go.

For traveling solo, One of the biggest challenge is price. Single rooms and 'single supplements' on tours can add 20-30% to costs. However, to counter this, some operators are launching "solo-friendly" departures — group tours where you get your own room but share activities.

To combat this, solo travellers usually travel in shoulder months and spend more on local experiences — guides, food, and home-stays.

I am a travelwriter, who travels solo weather traveled domestically or internationally, my advise is basic precautions, let say, safe hotels, air travel, authentic agents and no home stays, since for my travel I only prefer top notch hotels, always get the travel plan from reputable travel agencies, and travel with the guide from company. Also, I avoid night life.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
176,094.11	175,547.98
Day's High	Day's Low
177,108.66	175,934.99
Index Value	Change
14,489,801,593	+546.13
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	31 Jul, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,868.05	−29.22
Percentage	Time
0.27%	31 Jul, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,472.32	+264.26
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	31 Jul, 1:19 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
64,362.02	+2,494.59
Percentage	Time
+2,494.59	31 Jul, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.44	198.25
Bahrain Dinar	742.21	752.68
Canadian Dollar	197.73	201.53
China Yuan	38.17	38.92
Danish Krone	42.70	43.37
Euro	319.25	323.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	892.35	902.75
Malaysian Ringgit	67	68.15
NewZealand \$	161.48	163.95
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	727.71	737.95
Qatari Riyal	75.88	76.35
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.30
Singapore Dollar	216.03	219.05
Swedish Korona	28.35	28.95
Swiss Franc	342.17	346.37
Thai Bhat	8.60	8.95
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	373.65	379.47
US Dollar	278.75	278.95

IPAK Group
announces
strategic
expansion into
Europe



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: International Packaging Films Limited (the "Company"), one of Pakistan's leading manufacturers of flexible packaging films, has announced its planned expansion into Europe through the establishment of a wholly owned subsidiary in Portugal.

The proposed subsidiary will be incorporated by IPAK Connect Packaging Materials Trading FZCO ("IPAK Connect"), the Group's wholly owned subsidiary based in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. Following incorporation, the Portuguese entity will become part of the IPAK Group and will serve as its commercial platform within the European Union.

This expansion marks a key milestone in IPAK Group's international growth strategy. By establishing a subsidiary in Portugal, the Group strengthens its position within the European Union and brings operations closer to existing and prospective customers across the region.

The Portuguese entity will serve as a dedicated hub for IPAK Group's European activities, supporting closer collaboration with customers, converters, distributors, and other industry partners. This local presence will enable faster commercial coordination and more direct engagement on product development, order planning, and after-sales support. Being on the ground will also sharpen the Group's market intelligence deepening its understanding of evolving packaging technologies, sustainability requirements, regulatory changes, and customer preferences, and ensuring its products and commercial strategy stay aligned with the European market.

Minister calls for
collective efforts
to accelerate
Pakistan's
development

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Friday emphasized the need for collective efforts to ensure rapid progress and prosperity for the people of Pakistan.

Speaking to a news channel program, the minister said that all political parties, including

the opposition, have a shared responsibility to work together for the country's development and to improve the living standards of the common people. He urged the opposition, particularly the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), to move beyond political differences and engage in constructive dialogue on the key challenges faced by the nation.

Commenting on the proposal for creating



new provinces or administrative units, he said such reforms could strengthen governance, improve administrative efficiency, and enhance the delivery of public services across the country. He reiterated that national development required cooperation among all stakeholders

and stressed the importance of prioritizing the public interest over political divisions.

In reply to a question, he said the government under the leadership and dynamic vision of the prime minister Shehbaz Sharif was working to increase foreign investment in the country.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain meets FAO Deputy Regional Representative Robert Simpson on Friday.



Photo: PID

Zong Celebrates Pakistan's CAVA Men's
Volleyball Championship Triumph

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading technology services enterprise and the official title partner of the CAVA Men's Volleyball Championship 2026, celebrated Pakistan's historic victory in the regional tournament after the national team defeated Bangladesh 3-0 in the final.

The six-nation championship, held from July 22 to 29, featured teams from Bangladesh, Kazakhstan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Uzbekistan, and host Pakistan. The tournament provided a platform for emerging volleyball talent to compete internationally, earn world-ranking points, and promote regional sporting cooperation.

At the closing ceremony, Zong's Head of Marketing, Sajid Munir, joined officials of the Central Asian Volleyball Association (CAVA) and the Pakistan Volleyball Federation (PVF) in presenting the championship trophy to the winning Pakistan team.

Munir said Zong's partnership reflected the company's commitment to promoting volleyball and supporting sports that inspire Pakistan's youth. He highlighted the role of Zong's 5G technology in enhancing the fan experience through real-time connectivity and digital engage-



ment, adding that the company remains committed to building an AI-powered and digitally connected Pakistan.

Pakistan Volleyball Federation Chairman Chaudhry Mohammad Yaqoob appreciated Zong's support, saying its title sponsorship played a key role in making the championship a successful regional sporting event. He said the partnership

promoted youth development, sporting excellence, and regional collaboration while showcasing Pakistan's ability to host international competitions.

Zong said it would continue supporting initiatives that empower young talent, strengthen regional cooperation, and contribute to the vision of a Digital Pakistan.

Karachi Mayor Unveils
Rs2bn SITE Area Revamp
to Boost Infrastructure

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mayor Karachi Barrister Murtaza Wahab visited the S. I. T. E. Association of Industry and stressed better coordination between the Association, Mayor Office, and Commissioner Karachi to resolve industrial issues. Commissioner Karachi Syed Hassan Naqvi also attended.

A presentation was given on the ongoing 3-phase Grant-

in-Aid project being executed by S. I. T. E. Association. The Mayor urged timely completion to secure more government funds for the industrial area.

He announced that the 35 MGD secondary treated water project at TP-1 is ready, with test runs in 10 days. Water TDS will be 1800. A 1-MGD pilot tertiary treatment plant to bring TDS to 500 will be ready by end-Au-

gust. By year-end, 100 MGD of treated water will be available for industries, helping with environmental compliance and water shortages.

The Mayor proposed monthly coordination meetings and supported the proposal for a S. I. T. E. Development & Management Company on the pattern of other industrial DMCs.

SITE President Abdul Rehman Fudda and Patron-



in-Chief Zubair Motiwala raised issues including encroachments, tax collec-

tion, fire staff shortage, and need for a Karachi bypass. The Mayor and Commis-

sioner later inaugurated infrastructure work at SIEMENS roundabout.

MG Pakistan
Launches the All-New
MG ZS SUV

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: MG Pakistan has officially launched the All-New MG ZS, a modern B-SUV aimed at upgrading sedan and compact SUV buyers with global standards in safety, technology, and efficiency.

The ZS will be offered in three variants: Vibe Petrol at PKR 6,599,000, Hybrid+ Excite at PKR 7,099,000, and Hybrid+ Essence at PKR 7,499,000. Bookings are open nationwide with a starting booking amount of PKR 1,200,000.

The Vibe Petrol comes with a 1.5L naturally aspirated engine and CVT. The Hybrid+ Excite and Essence feature MG's 1.5L Hybrid+ system with a 3-speed hybrid transmission, delivering 158 kW and 465 Nm torque for an electric-first driving experience and strong efficiency.

Design highlights include a bold grille, LED lighting,

alloy wheels, and on the top trim a powered tailgate and segment-first electronic panoramic sunroof. The cabin offers a 443L boot, expandable to 1,457L.

Safety is standard across



trims with 6 airbags, Bosch ESP 9.3, L2 ADAS, and 81% high-strength steel body.

CEO Jianqiang Shao said the ZS brings world-class mobility, blending SUV practicality with hybrid performance and premium ownership experience.

Bank Alfalah
Reports 39% Rise
in Half Year 2026
Profit after Tax

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Board of Directors of Bank Alfalah Limited (BAFL) approved the Bank's financial results for the half-year ended June 30, 2026. The Board of the Bank also declared a second interim cash dividend of PKR 1.5 per share (30%) cumulatively bringing the cash dividend payout for the six months' period to PKR 3.0 per share (60%) [HY 2025: PKR 2.5 per share (50%)].

Profit after tax increased by 39.6% to PKR 21.32 billion for the outgoing half year period, with earnings per share of PKR 6.76, up from PKR 4.84 in the same

period last year. The increase in profitability was primarily driven by capital gains, supplemented by improved net interest income and efficient management of operating cost while continuing to support core strategic objectives.

On the balance sheet front, total deposits increased to PKR 2.66 trillion, while current deposits increased to PKR 1.15 trillion—a reflection of the Bank's ongoing strategy to strengthen its non-remunerative deposit mix. Gross advances totaled to PKR 1.16 trillion, with broad-based growth across the Consumer, SME, and Agriculture financing segments.

Senate Chairman, British High Commissioner Visit Eidgah Sharif, Stress Unity and Harmony

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, accompanied by British High Commissioner to Pakistan Jane Marriott, Federal Minister for Education Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, and Prime Minister's Adviser on Cryptocurrency Bilal Bin Saqib, visited Eidgah Sharif in Rawalpindi on Thursday, where they were received by the shrine's custodian, Pir Syed Muhammad Hassan Haseeb-ur-Rehman.

During the visit, Pir Hassan Haseeb-ur-Rehman briefed the delegation on the 150-year spiritual legacy of Eidgah Sharif, highlighting its role in religious education, Sufi traditions, and social welfare. Gilani paid tribute to the shrine's contributions in promoting Islamic values of peace, tolerance, compassion, brotherhood, and service to humanity, emphasizing that terrorism, extremism, and hatred have no place in Islam.

Referring to the country's political and economic situation, the Senate chairman stressed the need for national unity, political stability, constitutional supremacy, and stronger democratic values. He urged political stakeholders to prioritize national interests over partisan considerations and reaffirmed



Parliament's commitment to promoting dialogue and national consensus. Gilani also underscored the importance of economic stability, investment promotion, export growth, job creation, and public relief as key national

priorities. He said collective efforts and institutional coordination were essential to overcoming challenges such as terrorism, poverty, and unemployment. He expressed confidence that Pakistan's democratic institutions and national

cohesion would enable the country to achieve sustainable development, while emphasizing the continued role of spiritual institutions like Eidgah Sharif in fostering religious harmony, interfaith respect, and national unity.

PPP Warns of Nationwide Protests Over Alleged Rigging in AJK Polls



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) South Punjab Senior Vice President Khawaja Rizwan Alam on Thursday warned that the party would launch nationwide protests if the federal government and the Election Commission attempted to rig the second phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections scheduled for August 2.

He made the remarks while addressing a meeting held to review polling arrangements for PPP candidate Asim Sharif Butt in LA-42 Valley-3. The meeting was attended

by several PPP leaders and office-bearers from South Punjab. Rizwan Alam expressed confidence that Asim Sharif Butt would emerge victorious, claiming voters were dissatisfied with the performance of the PML-N governments at the federal and Punjab levels. He alleged that inflation, unemployment, and governance issues had eroded public confidence in the ruling party.

PPP leaders also criticized the Punjab government's performance, alleging shortcomings in public services, healthcare, sanitation, and support for farmers. They accused

the government of making exaggerated development claims and urged it to address public concerns. The speakers praised PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's stance on the Kashmir issue, saying he had consistently advocated the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination in line with United Nations Security Council resolutions. They reiterated the PPP's commitment to extending political, diplomatic, and moral support to the people of Kashmir while emphasizing that the party would strongly oppose any attempt to undermine the transparency of the upcoming AJK elections.

11,000 women die annually in Pakistan due to pregnancy complications: Syed Mustafa Kamal

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal said that about 6.7 million children are born in Pakistan every year, while around 11,000 women lose their lives annually due to complications during pregnancy, childbirth and related medical issues. He added that under-five child deaths also remain a major challenge.

Speaking at the inauguration of the School of Nursing and Allied Health Sciences at Multan University of Science and Technology, Kamal praised the university's world-class facilities, modern technology and research environment. He said institutions like MUST eliminate despair and instill hope in youth.

The Minister stressed that healthcare's purpose is not just building hospitals but also preventing illness. He urged students to become experts and professionals, not just degree holders, to contribute to national development.

On medicine prices, he said reduction is not directly in the minister's authority and proposals are sent to the cabinet. He also backed Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's call for creating new administrative units in the country.



Iran and Türkiye: The Powers Destined to Reshape the Middle East

Continued from Page 4

have strengthened its capacity to act without complete dependence on foreign suppliers.

Its geography is unmatched. Türkiye connects Europe with Asia, the Black Sea with the Mediterranean and the Caucasus with the Middle East. It can influence Syria, Iraq, Lebanon, Libya, Central Asia and the Eastern Mediterranean simultaneously.

Türkiye has also demonstrated that it will not permanently subordinate its national interests to Washington, Brussels or Tel Aviv. It cooperates with NATO while maintaining relations with Russia. It trades with Iran, engages the Gulf, supports the Palestinian cause and asserts its position in Syria and

the Mediterranean. This strategic flexibility enables Türkiye to operate across divisions that restrict other regional powers.

Iran and Türkiye are not identical and will not agree on every regional question. They represent different peoples, religious traditions, political systems and historical experiences. But these differences do not invalidate Macgregor's theory. They strengthen it.

Iran's power derives from resilience, missiles, energy, strategic geography and its demonstrated willingness to resist Western pressure.

Türkiye's power comes from its conventional military, industrial base, diplomatic reach, geographic position and historical connections throughout the former Ottoman space.

Iran dominates the strategic environment surrounding the Persian Gulf and Hormuz. Türkiye commands the crossroads linking the Middle East to Europe, the Caucasus, the Black Sea and Central Asia. Together, their influence extends across nearly every critical arena of Western Asia.

Israel and the Gulf monarchies will remain important, but they will increasingly be required to adjust to decisions taken in Tehran and Ankara. Financial wealth and foreign military protection cannot substitute permanently for population, geography, indigenous military capacity and civilizational depth.

Macgregor's theory is therefore not a romantic return to history. It is a recognition of the emerging balance of power.

Iran has already demonstrated that it cannot be bullied into submission. Türkiye has already established itself as an independent military and diplomatic actor.

The future Middle East will not be dictated solely from Washington, Tel Aviv or the wealthy Gulf capitals. It will increasingly be shaped by Iran and Türkiye—two resilient civilizational powers reclaiming the strategic influence that history, geography and their own national strength have prepared them to exercise.

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AKU-IED and Sindh Government Sign Landmark Deal for Inclusive Education



City Desk

KARACHI: The Sindh Cabinet has approved a five-year partnership between the Department of Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities (DEPD) and Aga Khan University's Institute for Educational Development (AKU-IED) to expand education for children with disabilities. The MoU was signed today at Chief Minister House, Karachi.

Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah called it "a solemn commitment to every child with disabilities in Sindh that their dreams matter."

The partnership will establish an Inclusion and SEN Unit at AKU-IED with sensory rooms, therapy spaces, and resource centers. It aims to train over 2,000 educators and reach an estimated 500,000 school children in five years.

AKU-IED will offer modular courses, Training-of-Trainers programs, and a B. Ed specialization in inclusive education with stipends. The initiative also includes baseline assessments, policy commissions, biennial SEN conferences, and public awareness campaigns.

With 96% of children with disabilities in Pakistan out of school, officials said the project targets Sindh's 7.4 million out-of-school children.

DEPD Secretary Tuaha Ahmed Faruqi and AKU-IED Dean Prof. Farid Panjwani pledged to build a system that "sees, hears, and empowers" every child.

Good governance essential for national development, stability: DG ISPR

Continued from Page 1

The military spokesperson questioned whether certain narratives being promoted in the name of rights were influenced by the position associated with former Dogra ruler Hari Singh.

He said a campaign had been launched in the name of rights, but its actual objectives were different and had now become evident. He also referred to demands that Kashmiris who had migrated from Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir should not be given representation.

The DG ISPR said the affairs of Azad Kashmir were being managed by the Azad Kashmir Police and reiterated that all political and administrative matters must be handled through constitutional, legal and democratic mechanisms.

He also highlighted Pakistan's special relationship with Saudi Arabia and referred to

the deep religious and strategic bonds between the two countries, particularly their shared commitment to the protection and sanctity of the two holy mosques.

Speaking about the armed forces, the DG ISPR rejected attempts to portray military service as being motivated merely by financial considerations.

"Can anyone believe that a person would sacrifice his life only for money?" he asked, adding that a soldier deployed on duty placed his life at risk to protect the nation.

He said the Pakistan Army was guided by the philosophy of sacrifice and martyrdom, and criticised remarks about martyrs that, in his view, supported India's narrative.

The DG ISPR said attempts were being made to repeat arguments promoted by India against Pakistan and its armed forces.

"By wearing the uniform, we have decided to sacrifice our today for your tomorrow," he said.

PM Orders Comprehensive OGRA Reforms to Enhance Transparency in Petroleum Sector

Continued from Page 1

accountability, he said taxpayers' money must be protected and warned that exploitation of consumers would not be tolerated.

Officials informed the meeting that OGRA has introduced several digital systems, including the National Monitoring Dashboard,

Tanker Track and Trace System, Depot Tank Telemetry, Rahguzar Mobile Application, Digital Sales Entry System, and a Central Monitoring Cell to oversee petroleum movement nationwide. A July 2026 enforcement campaign detected cases of hoarding and supply disruptions, leading to legal action against violators.

A Neglected Story

Continued from Page 4

should be evaluated not through emotion or political preference, but through documented evidence, constitutional principles, logical arguments, and measurable outcomes.

Today, as Pakistan continues to experience recurring political tensions, constitutional disputes, economic challenges, and institutional uncertainty, the question raised by "Save the State, Not Politics" once again appears highly relevant. Is Pakistan's real challenge merely the

transfer of political power, or does it require a system capable of ensuring transparent elections, impartial accountability, equal application of the law, strong institutions, effective local government, and governance centered on public service? This is not simply a question concerning one political party or one individual it concerns the future of the entire state.

The experience of successful nations demonstrates that strong states are built upon strong institutions rather than powerful personalities. Where

the rule of law applies equally to all, accountability is impartial, elections are transparent, the judiciary is independent, and state institutions function within constitutional boundaries, political disagreements can be resolved democratically. Weak institutions, by contrast, repeatedly produce political crises and undermine national stability.

Pakistan's youth, who constitute the largest segment of the country's population, are increasingly seeking practical results rather than traditional

political slogans. They aspire to employment opportunities, quality education, justice, merit-based governance, economic stability, and transparent public administration. For them, the fundamental question is not who occupies political office but whether the state can provide equal opportunities, security, and hope for a better future.

Freedom of opinion is both a constitutional and democratic right, and it remains one of democracy's greatest strengths. However, political movements, leaders, and ideologies should

be judged not by their slogans or personalities alone, but by their arguments, objectives, constitutional legitimacy, public impact, and practical achievements. Mature societies embrace this approach because personalities are temporary, whereas states are enduring institutions. When political rivalry takes precedence over the national interest, the entire nation bears the consequences. Conversely, when the interests of the state become the highest priority, political differences need not become obstacles to national development.

Perhaps this was the fundamental message conveyed more than a decade ago through the slogan "Save the State, Not Politics." Agreeing or disagreeing with that message remains the right of every citizen. Nevertheless, one reality is undeniable: Pakistan continues to grapple with the very same fundamental issues transparent elections, constitutional supremacy, the rule of law, strong institutions, effective accountability, and public welfare. Until durable solutions are found to these structural challenges,

governments may continue to change, but the hardships faced by the people and the challenges confronting the state are unlikely to disappear. States are strengthened not merely through changes in political leadership, but through robust institutions, constitutional governance, effective reforms, and national unity. That, ultimately, should remain the destination of every conscious and responsible nation.

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Preparations of Independence day

ISLAMABAD: National flags hang on poles at Constitutional Avenue, in the Federal Capital, in connection with Independence Day; will be celebrated with traditional zeal and enthusiasm on August 14.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Amir Muqam urges PPP to respect AJK election results

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Friday urged the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) to respect the outcome of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections instead of questioning the public mandate.

Addressing a public rally in Khawra in support of PML-N candidate for LA-31, Saqib Majeed Raja, Muqam said the high voter turnout reflected the political maturity of the

Kashmiri people and the strength of the democratic process. He maintained that instead of alleging irregularities, the PPP should examine the reasons behind its electoral defeat, claiming the party already had influence within the AJK government and administrative structure.

The minister said political parties should avoid creating unnecessary controversies and respect the people's verdict. He added that although the PML-N also had reservations about results in some constituencies, it remained committed to the democratic



process. Expressing confidence in the party's prospects, he said PML-N's organ-

izational efforts over the past two years had strengthened public support across AJK.

Muqam also announced that the Khawra-Charkpora Link Road would be completed on a priority basis and said the federal government was constructing five Daanish Schools in AJK, with efforts to establish one in Khawra as well. He further stated that work on the Mansehra-Muzaffarabad-Mirpur Expressway was progressing and tenders would be issued soon, while reaffirming the government's commitment to development projects, subsidies, and public welfare initiatives in Azad Kashmir.

Advisor to Finance Minister Highlights Pakistan's Economic Turnaround, Reform Momentum and Growth Outlook

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the Finance Minister, Khuram Schehzad, said Pakistan has shifted from macroeconomic stabilization to sustainable, private sector-led growth, backed by structural reforms and improving investor confidence. Speaking at a BankIslami seminar titled "Pakistan Economic Outlook: Fiscal Year 2027 and Beyond," he

noted real GDP growth has risen to 3.7 percent, driven by gains in agriculture, manufacturing, and services.

Schehzad pointed to growing capital market activity, including rising corporate IPOs and expanding financial inclusion initiatives. On reforms, he cited progress across privatization, energy, tax administration, and digital initiatives, including 28



privatization transactions and the \$1.2 billion PIA bidding process. He noted improving industrial recovery, credit growth, and business confidence as signs of broad-based recovery.

The seminar also featured SBP Deputy Governor Muhammad Amin Khan Lodhi, Ali Khizer, Dr. Ali Hasnain, and Khurram Husain, and was attended by bankers, investors, and business representatives.

Polling for AJK's LA-34 Jammu-I constituency to be held in Lahore on Sunday

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Polling for the LA-34 Jammu-I constituency in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir General Election 2026 will be held in Lahore on Sunday, August 2.

A total of 15 polling stations have been established across the city to facilitate Kashmiri refugees registered as voters in the constituency.

According to election arrangements, 5,965 voters are registered in Lahore, including 3,175 men and 2,790 women.

Thirty polling booths have been set up at the designated stations, with 15 booths reserved for male voters and 15 for female voters.

Polling will begin at 8am and continue without interruption until 5pm.

Public weighs in on Mohsin Naqvi's 'System Change' proposal

Bureaus/Faisalabad/Gujranwala

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's remarks calling for change to Pakistan's administrative system have sparked widespread public debate, with citizens across the country expressing mixed but largely supportive views.

The discussion gained momentum after Mohsin Naqvi called for improvements to Pakistan's governance system and proposed the creation of new administrative units to make public services more effective.

His remarks quickly gained attention on social media and prompted reactions from people in several cities, including Karachi, Faisalabad and Gujranwala.

In Faisalabad, several residents supported the interior minister's remarks, arguing that Pakistan's governance system requires urgent

reforms. Many said inflation has reached an unbearable level and that improvements to the administrative structure are essential to address the growing economic difficulties faced by ordinary citizens.

In Gujranwala, many residents



backed Mohsin Naqvi's proposal to create new administrative units, saying smaller regions could improve governance, create jobs for young people, and make enhance public services.

The business community also voiced support for Mohsin Naqvi's statement.

Traders said the minister had highlighted concerns shared by many Pakistanis, describing the current system as ineffective in dealing with inflation and economic uncertainty.

Doctors also welcomed the minister's comments, saying his remarks reflected concerns that have existed for years. According to members of the medical community, reforms within the administrative system are necessary to strengthen governance and improve public institutions.

Lawyers similarly backed the proposal, describing structural reforms as essential for better governance. Many

members of the legal community also supported the idea of establishing smaller administrative units, arguing that decentralization could improve public service delivery and make government institutions more accessible.

34 miners killed in Quetta coalmine blast, rescue operation underway



Bureau Report

QUETTA: At least 34 miners were killed in a methane gas explosion at the Soranje coalmine in Spin Karez area near Quetta, the PDMA confirmed on Friday. Rescue teams are still searching for more trapped workers.

According to officials, more than 42 miners were working inside the private mine when the blast triggered a collapse. Three workers were safely evacuated on Thursday. The PDMA said a joint rescue operation is ongoing to locate remaining miners trapped under debris and in gas-filled

sections.

Balochistan Minister for Mines Mir Shoaib Noshervani said all available resources are being used. CM Mir Sarfaraz Bugti has directed the chief inspector of mines and senior PDMA officials to supervise. The provincial government announced Rs0.5 million compensation for families of each deceased miner.

Toxic gases, unstable passages and debris are complicating efforts. President and Prime Minister expressed deep grief and sorrow.

Mining accidents remain common in Balochistan, with labour groups urging stronger safety enforcement.

President Zardari, PM Shehbaz Grieve Over Quetta Coalmine Explosion



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif expressed deep grief over the loss of lives in a coalmine explosion in the Soranje area of Quetta, where several workers were killed.

In separate statements, both leaders directed relevant authorities to rescue all trapped workers and ensure the best possible medical treatment for the injured. They offered heartfelt condolences to the bereaved families and prayed for the

departed souls and for strength for the grieving families.

PM Shehbaz directed PDMA and other departments to continue rescue operations effectively and expeditiously until all affected workers are rescued and given relief. He stressed that workers are a valuable national asset and called for permanent safety measures in coal mines to safeguard lives.

Both leaders emphasized the strict implementation of mine safety standards to protect workers and prevent such incidents in the future.

Creating New Provinces Key to Strengthening Democracy, says Abdul Aleem Khan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has reiterated that the creation of new administrative provinces is essential to strengthen democracy, revitalize the economy, and ensure effective governance in Pakistan.

Responding to Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's recent call for structural reforms, Aleem Khan said he has long advocated for new administrative units to address Pakistan's growing population and complex governance challenges.

He reaffirmed his proposal to reorganize the existing four provinces — Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Balochistan — into three administrative units each,

named North, Central, and South. He stressed that this model would preserve historic and cultural identities without changing provincial names, while solving long-standing public grievances.

Aleem Khan noted citizens currently travel hundreds of kilometers to provincial capitals for basic matters. Decentralization would bring Chief Secretary offices, IGPs, and High Courts closer to people, ensuring faster and accountable service delivery.

