

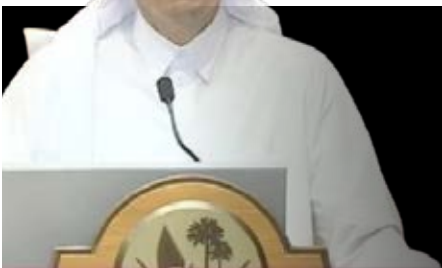


A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم ابن عربیہ نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ
مجھے میدے نے خبر دی، کہا کہ مجھ سے ابو عقیل
زہر میں معبد نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے اپنے
داؤد اللہ بن ہشام رضی اللہ عنہ سے سنا،
انہوں نے بیان کیا کہ ہم نبی کریم صلی اللہ
علیہ وسلم کے ساتھ تھے اور نبی کریم صلی اللہ
علیہ وسلم عمر بن خطاب رضی اللہ عنہ کا ہاتھ
پکڑے ہوئے تھے۔
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6264)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

Daily The Spokesman



Qatar reaffirms its support for efforts to de-escalate tensions in Gulf region

Qatari Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Jassim Al Thani held separate phone calls with the foreign ministers of Saudi Arabia, Jordan and Kuwait to discuss ongoing regional tensions.



UAE eases visit visas for Pakistanis after months of uncertainty

The United Arab Emirates has resumed issuing visit visas to Pakistani citizens applying through registered travel agencies, according to travel industry representatives and a UAE Embassy official on Saturday. The move eases months of uncertainty that had affected travel to one of Pakistan's most important overseas destinations.

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Inspection

MINGORA: Police officials inspect the scene of the suicide bomb attack.

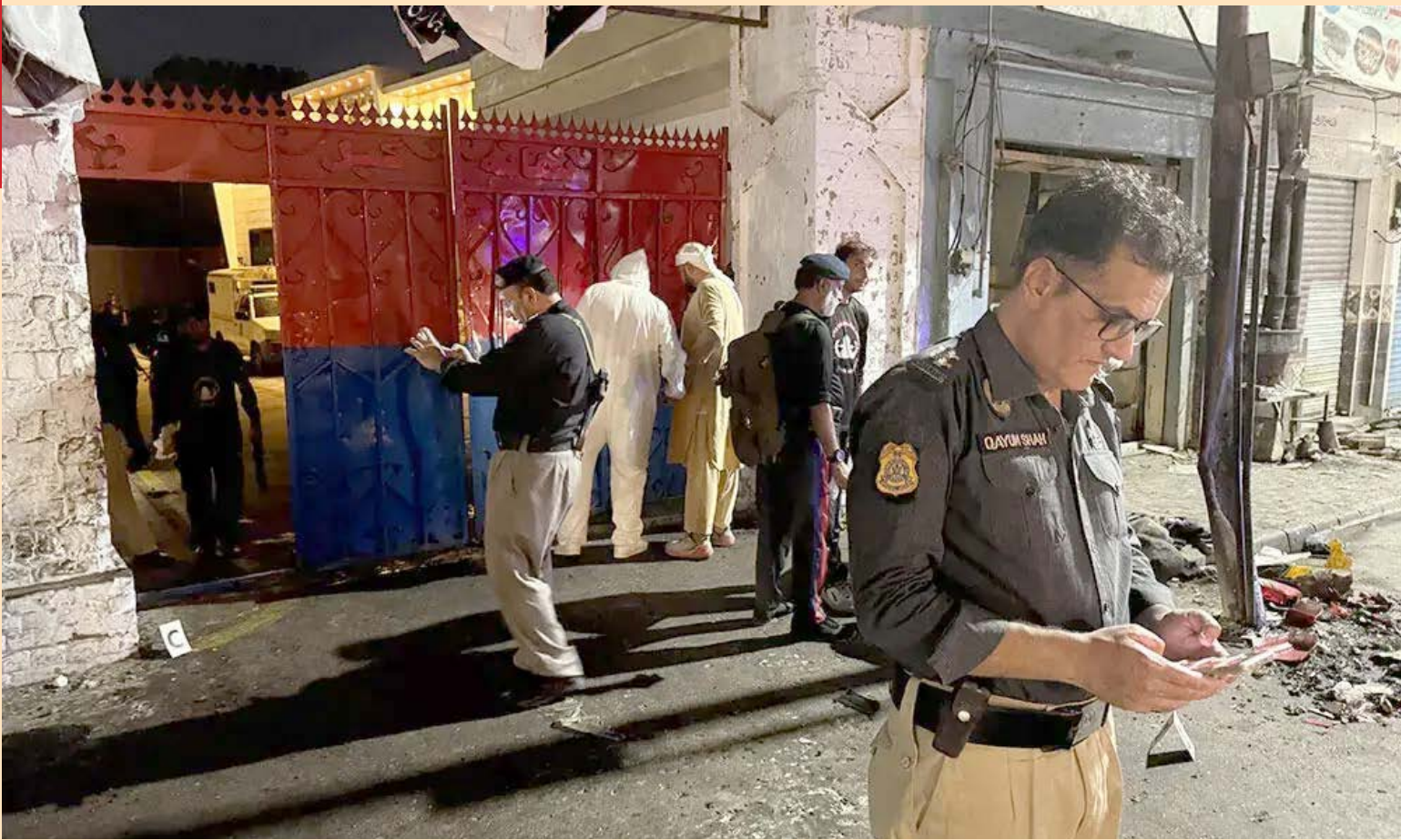


Photo: AFP

14 killed, 25 injured in suicide blast near police station in Swat

Fazal ul Haq

SWAT: The blast occurred on Sunday at the main gate of the Kabal police station, martyring 14 people, including police personnel and more than 25 others were injured in a suicide blast during a peaceful demonstration by a local peace committee near the Kabal police station in Swat district, according to police officials.

The injured were shifted to Saidu Sharif Hospital for treatment.

District Police Officer

(DPO) Swat Muhammad Umar Gandapur said the suicide bomber attempted to enter the Kabal police station but was stopped by police personnel on duty before detonating explosives near the gate. He said a human head had been recovered from the blast site and could belong to the suspected suicide bomber.

DIG Malakand Syed Fida Hussain said local youths were holding a protest at the time of the explosion, resulting in a large gathering at the site.

According to rescue officials, rescue operations have

been completed, while law enforcement agencies have cordoned off the area and begun collecting evidence. Authorities are investigating the nature of the incident and the identity of the attacker.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif condemned the attack, expressed condolences to the families of those killed and prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi also condemned the suicide attack and expressed sympathy with the families of the victims.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi condemned the blast, sought a report on the incident and said anti-peace elements would not be allowed to succeed in their intentions. He directed that the injured receive medical treatment and expressed condolences to the families of the victims.

A spokesperson for Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) also condemned the bombing during the Swat peace protest, prayed for those killed and called for immediate medical treatment for the injured.

President condemns suicide blast in Kabal, Swat

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari Sunday strongly condemned the suicide blast in Kabal area of Swat.

In a statement, he expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives in the suicide attack and prayed for the elevation of the martyrs' ranks and for patience for the bereaved families.

He also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the blast and directed the concerned institutions to provide the best medical facilities to the injured.

Terrorists will never succeed in their nefarious attempts to harm peace, national unity and state writ, he said adding the sacrifices of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police and law enforcement agencies are a source of pride for the entire nation.

"A comprehensive investigation into the incident should be conducted and the elements responsible for terrorism should be brought to justice," he added.



PM Shehbaz expresses grief over blast in Kabal area of Swat



City Desk

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Sunday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the suicide blast in Kabal area of Swat that claimed precious lives.

The prime minister extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives in the blast.

He prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the deceased and for patience and fortitude for the bereaved families.

The prime minister also prayed for the speedy recovery of those injured in the blast and directed the relevant authorities to ensure the provision of the best possible medical treatment to them.

Shehbaz Sharif said the struggle against the scourge of terrorism would continue until its complete eradication.

Raja Pervez Ashraf alleges rigging in AJK polls, seeks independent investigation

Waseem Khokhar

ISLAMABAD: Former prime minister and senior Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Raja Pervez Ashraf on Sunday alleged widespread irregularities in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections and called for an independent investigation into the electoral process.

Addressing a press conference, Ashraf claimed PPP supporters had been deprived of their right to vote and said the party had submitted evidence of alleged rigging, particularly in the Mirpur division, to a government delegation during negotiations. He criticised what he described as delays in addressing the complaints, warning that public confidence in democracy would suffer if elections were not free, fair and transparent.

He also condemned incidents of election-related violence, alleging that a PPP



worker was killed and three others injured in Muzafarabad, while acting AJK PPP president Latif Akbar was assaulted during unrest. Ashraf demanded an independent medical board to investigate the death of party worker Mushtaq Shah.

The PPP leader further questioned the postponement of polling in certain constituencies and alleged that intimidation occurred outside polling stations. At the time of filing the report, neither the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) nor the AJK Election Commission had publicly responded to the allegations.

Bilawal to launch Sindh Youth Card later this month



Bureau Report

KARACHI: On the special instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Sindh government has completed the process of issuing Sindh Youth Card for the youth, reported 24NewsHD TV channel on Sunday.

According to Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Sindh Sardar Muhammad Bakhsh Mehr, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will inaugurate the Sindh Youth Card in the last week of August this month.

In the first phase, various facilities will be provided to 100,000 youth aged 15 to 29 from 30 districts of the province through the Youth Card.

Under the Sindh Youth Card, educational scholarships, interest-free loans and financial assistance will be provided to the youth for higher education in universities.

The Sindh Youth Card will be issued through Jazz Bank.

DG ISPR engages students on national security, countering misinformation

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Director General Inter-Services Public Relations (DG ISPR) held a special interactive session with students participating in the ISPR Summer Internship 2026, where detailed discussions were held on national security, terrorism and the responsible use of social media.

During the session, the DG ISPR responded to students' questions with detailed and well-reasoned answers, addressing a wide range of issues related to national security and information awareness.

Participants said the session provided effective guidance on identifying and avoiding misinformation, disinformation, propaganda and unverified news. They added that the comprehensive and informative discussion helped clear

several misconceptions and ambiguities regarding matters of national security.

The students further stated that detailed briefings on the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Indian propaganda and Pakistan's stance helped them better understand the ground realities. They noted that the DG ISPR's fact-based position on Fitna al-Hindustan and Fitna al-Khawarij addressed their concerns and removed existing confusion.

Participants of the Summer Internship 2026 also expressed their commitment to promoting accurate information and effectively countering anti-state propaganda.

More than 6,000 students from across Pakistan are participating in the ISPR Summer Internship 2026, which is being conducted at 21 different stations nationwide.



Sanaullah dismisses Bilawal’s Kashmir election fraud claims as exaggerated

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister’s Advisor on Political Affairs Sanaullah rejects Bilawal Bhutto allegations of fraud in Azad Kashmir elections and claimed that Bilawal Bhutto have provided wrong information, exaggerated a few incidents that occurred during the election process, the people of Azad Kashmir exercised their right to vote in a massive manner.

Speaking at a press conference in Islamabad, Rana Sanaullah said that wrong statements are being made by kidnapping Bilawal Bhutto Zardari. Chaudhry Latif Akbar cast his vote at his polling station, Chaudhry Latif Akbar has a dispute with the Sadat family, someone hit us, there was a fire, we are responsible.

The Federal Adviser mentioned an earlier incident in Khawra where MNA Salahuddin Junijo was with Sindh Police in Khawra. I opened fire, allegedly others also opened fire, it was said that MNA was going to be shot but it was not confirmed,



Bilawal Bhutto ask them why MNA was there? Which MNA polling station did you visit, what is the response near you? The third incident happened on L. A. 31.

The PML-N leader further said that a democratic party started saying that there was fraud since 10.30 am. The allegations made, should have been established taking into account the facts relating to the election and without evidence the allegations were made in violation of the electoral process and democratic traditions. Allegations of fraud on the part of a few political parties to make the electoral process of participation a success are distortions of facts.

AJK elections

KARACHI: A woman casts her vote at a polling station during the second phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

AJK Election Commission Postpones Polling in Parts of LA-28 Due to Landslides

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has postponed polling in selected areas of Constituency LA-28 Muzaffarabad-II after adverse weather and landslides blocked roads, preventing election staff and polling materials from reaching several polling stations.

According to the Election Commission, polling has been deferred in the Patwar Circles of Nauseri Nausada, Panjgran, Deoliyan and Panjkot. Voting in these areas will now be held on August 4, 2026, from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., under the normal



polling schedule.

The affected polling stations include Nos. 55–67 in Nauseri Nausada, 107–118 in Panjgran, 119–130 in Deoliyan and 159–173 in Panjkot.

The decision was taken on the recommendation of the Returning Officer for LA-28 Muzaffarabad-II, who reported that landslides had made access to the affected polling stations impossible.

To safeguard the electoral process, the Returning Officer has taken custody of the sealed polling bags from the Presiding Officers against proper receipt. The Election Commission said the polling materials would remain secure until voting is conducted on the revised date

Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan Gilani Commends Security Forces and Staff for Smooth Electoral Operations

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Member of the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan Gilani, visited various polling stations in Constituency LA-29 Muzaffarabad-III to review the polling process, voter facilitation arrangements, and security measures.

During the visit, the Election Commission Member conducted a detailed assessment of polling operations and expressed satisfaction with the peaceful conduct



of polling and the security arrangements in place. He directed the election staff to ensure that the polling process remained transparent, impartial, and well organized throughout the day.

He also inspected the facilities provided for voters

at the polling stations and emphasized that the conduct of free, fair, and transparent elections remains the Election Commission’s foremost priority.

Polling continued in a peaceful atmosphere, with voters exercising their democratic right in an orderly manner. Syed Nazir-ul-Hassan Gilani commended the efforts of the security agencies and election officials for their professionalism and dedication in ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process.

Railways police recover 32 tonnes of stolen railway material, arrest six in Karachi

ISLAMABAD: Acting on the directives of Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi, Pakistan Railways Police carried out a major operation in Karachi, recovering around 32 tonnes of stolen railway material worth millions of rupees and arresting six suspects.

According to a statement issued on Sunday, Railway Police first arrested four suspects near Orangi Railway Station while they were allegedly stealing railway tracks. Officers also recovered tools used to cut the tracks.

During interrogation, the suspects led investigators to a warehouse in Haroonabad, where police recovered stolen railway material hidden beneath machinery and other equipment.

Qamar Zaman Kaira Alleges Irregularities in AJK Elections, Questions Credibility

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Senior PPP leader Qamar Zaman Kaira has alleged irregularities in the second phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections, claiming the electoral mandate had been “taken away” from his party.

Addressing a press conference in Muzaffarabad, Kaira said the AJK polls were marred by electoral malpractice. “If victory is to be achieved through violence and bloodshed, then it cannot be regarded as a genuine election,” he stated.

He criticized PML-N, alleging its pursuit of power had worsened law and order. Kaira claimed PML-N workers interfered with polling, took election staff into custody, and stamped ballot papers. He added that any government formed through such a process would face questions over its credibility. _These allegations have not been independently verified.

Kaira said PPP had opposed phased polling and requested a postponement, but accepted it due to security concerns. He also said any decision to defer elections should be based on transparent and broadly acceptable reasons.



Election Postponed in AJK’s LA-27 After Overnight Landslides Disrupt Roads

 **City Desk**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has announced the postponement of polling in Constituency LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I due to severe weather conditions and the resulting disruption to transportation routes.

According to a press release issued by the AJK Election Commission, polling was scheduled today, August 2, 2026, for the 12 Legislative Assembly seats reserved for Jammu and Kashmir refugees residing in Pakistan and 9 Legislative Assembly seats of Muzaffarabad Division.

However, heavy rainfall overnight in the upper and mountainous areas of LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I, coupled with landslides and fallen trees, led to the closure of several key roads, preventing the timely transportation of polling staff and election materials to a number of polling stations.

The district administration and other relevant authorities made extensive efforts throughout the night to restore road access. Despite these efforts, the affected routes could not be fully reopened in time to facilitate the polling process.

In view of these exceptional circumstances, the Election Commission decided to postpone polling in LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I. The Commission stated that the revised polling date would be announced at 2:00 p.m. today.

Peaceful Polling in Neelum: Second Phase of AJK Elections Held in Secure Atmosphere

 **Bureau Report**

NEELUM: Polling for the second phase of the 2026 General Elections to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly continued peacefully across Neelum District, with voters exercising their democratic right in an orderly and secure environment.

Deputy Commissioner Chaudhry Iqbal Hassan, District Returning Officer Syed Waseem Gilani, Commanding Officer Raja Waqas, and Superintendent of Police Raja Nadeem Arif, accompanied by members of the media and security personnel, visited various polling stations to review polling arrangements, security measures, and the overall voting process.

The officials expressed satisfaction with the arrangements and commended the security forces and polling staff for their professionalism and dedicated efforts in ensuring the smooth conduct of the electoral process. Speaking to the media and members of the public during the visit, the officials encouraged voters to exercise their right to vote without fear or hesitation. They reaffirmed that the district administration was taking all necessary measures to ensure that the elections were conducted in a free, fair, transparent, and peaceful manner.

The officials further stated that the law and order situation across the district remained fully under control, enabling the electoral process to proceed in a safe and orderly atmosphere.

Takht Bhai Contractors Allege Corruption in TMA Contracts Worth Billions

 **Tariq Khan Yousafzai**

TAKHT BHAI: TMA Takht Bhai contractors have accused TMA engineering staff and the TMO of collusion, corruption, and favoritism in awarding development contracts, warning they may resort to self-immolation outside the TMA office if denied justice.

At a press conference at the Takht Bhai Press Club, contractors including Haji Shah Zameen, Murad Ali Shah, and others alleged that PKR 4.5 billion in tenders issued on January 1 were ignored. Instead, PKR 7.6 billion in projects linked to MNA Ali Muhammad Khan and MPAs Iftikhar Ali Mashwani, Eltesham Khan, and Abdul Salam Afridi were allegedly awarded to a single contractor, Abdul Qadir, who submitted applications under different names.

They claimed PKR 1.5 billion was shown as spent on paper with little work done, calling many projects “ghost projects.” They said they offered to do the PKR 7.5 billion work at a 40% discount, but it was given at just 2%, causing millions in losses to the treasury. _These allegations have not been independently verified.

Contractors said complaints were filed with the Chief Minister KP, NAB, Anti-Corruption, and the court. They demanded a high-level inquiry, legal action, and fresh tendering on merit.

Pakistan Army Sets Up Free Mobile Medical Camps in Rawalakot Amid Sit-in

 **City Desk**

RAWALAKOT: Due to limited healthcare access caused by the ongoing sit-in in Rawalakot, the Pakistan Army, with support from law enforcement agencies, established two mobile free medical camps to serve local residents. The camps were set up at Munir Chowk and 15 Chowk, where 101 patients received treatment, including 21 men, 39 women, 32 children, and 9 elderly citizens. Medical teams provided OPD consultations, free examinations, blood pressure and glucose testing, vital signs assessment, free medicines, and health counseling. A total of 3,247 medicines were distributed free of cost. Seven patients needing specialized care were referred to CMH Rawalakot for further treatment. Officials said the initiative aimed to ensure timely and quality healthcare amid the prevailing situation. Local residents welcomed the camps, appreciated the free consultations and medicines, and expressed hope that such healthcare interventions would continue to meet the community’s basic medical needs.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:45 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:07 pm
Isha 8:42 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

*Ayaz condemns
Swat bomb blast,
expresses grief
over loss of lives*



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Sunday strongly condemned the bomb blast near the gate of Kabal Police Station in Swat, expressing deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives.

In a statement, the Speaker extended his heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the families of those who lost their lives in the attack and prayed for the eternal peace of the departed souls.

He termed the targeting of innocent civilians and law enforcement personnel a "shameful and cowardly act," saying that terrorists were enemies of humanity as well as the country.

Ayaz Sadiq said that those involved in acts of terrorism deserved no leniency and reaffirmed that such cowardly attacks could not weaken the nation's resolve to eradicate terrorism. The Speaker said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the country's security forces and law enforcement agencies in the fight against terrorism.

Pakistan Influencer Awards Set to Redefine Influence in the Country's Creator Economy

News Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Influencer Awards was officially launched in Karachi,

CM Maryam Nawaz pays tribute at Data Darbar Urs, inaugurates Nestlé Green Energy Project

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday paid

tribute to Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh Ali Hajveri (RA) on the occasion of his 983rd annual Urs and reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment



to ensuring the comfort and safety of devotees attending the three-day celebrations.

Extending greetings to pilgrims, the chief minister directed the authorities to make comprehensive arrangements for the Urs, including smooth traffic management around Data Darbar, adequate security and uninterrupted facilities. She stressed the importance of maintaining the tradition of hospitality by ensuring the provision of Langar and Sabeel, saying devotees were valued guests who should not face any inconvenience. She also prayed that Allah

Almighty grant everyone the ability to follow the teachings of the great saints.

Separately, Maryam Nawaz digitally inaugurated Nestlé Pakistan's state-of-the-art biomass steam plant in Sheikhupura, calling it a major milestone in promoting environmental sustainability, renewable energy and the circular economy.

Built with an investment of about \$4.5 million, the facility will use approximately 72,000 tonnes of agricultural residue annually as fuel, generating 30 tonnes of steam per hour while reducing crop residue burning. Officials said the

project is expected to save around \$2.15 million in annual fuel costs and cut nearly 24,345 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions each year, contributing to improved air quality.

The chief minister praised Nestlé Pakistan's environmental initiatives, saying the project aligns with the Punjab government's priorities of cleaner air, climate protection and sustainable industrial development. She reaffirmed the government's support for organisations investing in environmentally friendly technologies and sustainable growth.

Awarded

Saad Shabbir Abbasi, a resident of village Malot, Islamabad, was awarded the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree during the University Of Bedfordshire, UK's Summer Graduation Ceremony 2026 after successfully completing his law studies.



Iran-Pakistan Friendship Stronger Than Ever, Says Iranian Envoy

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Iran has reaffirmed the strength of its long-standing relationship with Pakistan, describing the bilateral partnership as one rooted in centuries of shared history, culture, faith and mutual respect. In a statement, the Iranian side said the friendship between the two countries had entered a new era, strengthened by growing political, diplomatic and parliamentary cooperation.

The statement noted that Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan, while Pakistan was the first to recognise the Islamic Republic of Iran, reflecting the unique nature of their ties. It highlighted close parliamentary cooperation, recalling Pakistan's resolution in support of Iran during the Israeli aggression and expressions of gratitude by Iranian



lawmakers and citizens.

The statement also referred to frequent high-level exchanges over the past two years, including visits by Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian to Pakistan, Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif's visits to Iran, and meetings involving senior military and government officials. President Pezeshkian's June 2026 visit to Islamabad was described as a symbol of mutual appreciation and solidarity.

Emphasising that no

external factor could weaken bilateral relations, the statement said the friendship between Iran and Pakistan stood as high as the peaks of Damavand and K2, expressing hope for greater regional peace, cooperation and prosperity.

Satrang Gallery's 'The Unfolding II' Spotlights 40 Emerging Pakistani Artists

City Desk

Satrang Gallery and Serene Arts, an initiative of Serena Hotels, has opened 'The Unfolding II' — a dynamic showcase featuring works of 40 exceptionally promising young artists from across Pakistan. Director Asma Rashid Khan said the exhibition celebrates fresh perspectives, bold experimentation and the vibrant energy of the next generation. "Representing diverse regions and practices, each artist brings a unique approach yet shares a spirit of curiosity and fearless exploration," she noted. The exhibition highlights wide-ranging themes and mediums. Abdul Rafeh's Skin of Fear uses tonal cowhide to make invisible fears visible. Aisha Yousaf merges textiles with monoprinting, while Bakht-awar Naqvi examines borders and identity through miniature techniques. Bhawana Kumari reimagines Renaissance figures in playful scenes, and Muhammad Bilal uses sand-casting to reflect land and memory. Others explore memory, mental health, nature, domestic life and social issues. Satrang Gallery, dedicated to supporting Pakistani artists and artisans, invites audiences to engage with these narratives and witness the evolving voices shaping contemporary art in Pakistan.



New Office Bearers of Professional Photographers Association Take Oath in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The oath-taking ceremony of the Professional Photographers Association, Registered Faisalabad (PPAF) was held at Hameed Palace Hotel.

Renowned photographer Farzand Ali attended as chief guest and administered the oath to the new office bearers. Welcoming them with flower petals, garlands, and drums, the Association inducted Vice Chairman Shahbaz Bhatti and Vice Presidents Rana Muhammad Javed (Marine) and Muhammad Nadeem. Cabinet members Rao Mubashir and Abdul Majid also took oath as Media Secretary and Information Secretary respectively.

President Muhammad Ahmed highlighted PPAF's performance. Chairman Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi and board members including Mian Muhammad Shahid, Muhammad Shafiq, Muhammad Yasin, Muhammad Irfan, and Khizr Hayat were present. Pastor Ravi Daniel offered prayers for the Christian community, while Sheikh Qasoor Munir Goreja (Advocate) served as stage secretary.

Addressing the gathering, Farzand Ali said photography is not just a profession but a great art, and called for priority resolution of the community's problems. The event concluded with group photos and dinner.



PSCA Deploys AI Surveillance, Drones for Data Darbar Urs and Election Security

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has implemented comprehensive security arrangements for the annual Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) and ongoing electoral activities by deploying artificial intelligence-based surveillance, smart drones and an integrated command-and-control system.

According to a PSCA spokesperson, advanced surveillance cameras are monitoring entry and exit points of Data Darbar, surrounding sensitive locations and key roads across Lahore. AI-enabled systems are being used to detect suspicious individuals, unusual activities and potential security threats, allowing authorities to respond promptly.

The PSCA's Central Control Room is overseeing security operations round the clock while coordinating closely with police and other law enforcement agencies to ensure an effective emergency response.

Drone surveillance has also been deployed to monitor traffic and security around the shrine and major election routes. Meanwhile, Safe City Radio FM 88.6 is providing motorists with real-time traffic updates, alternate routes and travel advisories.

The authority urged citizens to report any suspicious activity or emergency through the 15 helpline, reaffirming its commitment to protecting lives and property, maintaining public order and ensuring smooth traffic flow during the Urs and election period.



influence.

Speaking at the launch, Talha Aslam, Chief Curator, Pakistan Influencer Awards said: "Our ambition is to elevate the entire ecosystem by advocating credibility, transparency, and responsible influence, while setting benchmarks that creators, brands, and audiences can trust."

The evening featured keynote discussions with advisory board members including Fouad Husain, CEO Starcrest Communications; Hasan Rizvi, CEO BBPR Pakistan; and Jerjees Seja, CEO ARY Digital Network, along with insights from Abdul Sattar Babar, CEO Ipsos Pakistan. The brand identity and trophy

were also unveiled, followed by a panel with creators Asad Memon, Bilal Munir, Junaid Akram, and Natasha Lakhani.

Backed by leading industry partners, the Pakistan Influencer Awards aims to strengthen trust and accountability, and position Pakistan's creator economy for global recognition.

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Behind the Silence: Kashmir's Youth Deserve a Future, Not Just a Struggle

Every August 5th brings renewed attention to Jammu and Kashmir, but beyond the political rhetoric and diplomatic statements lies a quieter, more enduring tragedy: an entire generation of young people whose ambitions are being slowly suffocated by circumstance. This is the story that deserves our attention — not as an abstraction, but as a human reality unfolding in classrooms across the valley.

The images are striking in their ordinariness. A teenage girl tracing chemistry equations. A boy imagining himself as an engineer. A student memorizing medical terminology, dreaming of healing others. These are not unusual aspirations — they are the universal hopes of youth everywhere. What makes them tragic is the context in which they exist: a valley marked, as this report describes, by “graveyard silence,” where education continues but opportunity does not reliably follow.

Since the constitutional changes of August 5, 2019, Kashmiri youth have grown up navigating a particularly cruel paradox. They are told, as all young people are, that education is the pathway to a better future. Yet many find that pathway obstructed — not by lack of effort or ambition, but by structural uncertainty over identity, rights, and opportunity that no amount of academic dedication can resolve alone.

The voices gathered here are worth sitting with. A student who says the road to her dreams “remains uncertain” the moment she steps outside her classroom. Another who describes carrying “dreams, degrees, and hopes” while still struggling to find a secure future. These are not complaints of entitlement; they are the reasonable expectations of any young person, anywhere, who has done the work asked of them and now seeks the chance to build a life.

What should trouble us most is not simply the hardship itself, but its cumulative, generational nature. When half-widows raise children amid unresolved grief, when families absorb decades of instability, the emotional inheritance passed to the young is one of unresolved trauma layered atop ordinary adolescent uncertainty. This is a heavier burden than any curriculum should demand.

The international community, and institutions like the OIC, have a role to play in keeping this issue visible — not merely as a diplomatic talking point, but as a humanitarian one. Statistics and statements matter less than sustained, practical engagement that translates into real opportunity.

Kashmir's youth do not need to be spoken for. As one student put it, they are seeking not only employment, but “the freedom to speak, create and participate in shaping their future.” That is not too much to ask. It is the very least any generation deserves.

The AJK Unrest

Distrust in Azad Jammu and Kashmir is linked to a small but organized group that allegedly used social media manipulation, propaganda, and genuine public grievances to create an impression of widespread support that did not reflect reality, deepening divisions within society and straining relations between the state and its citizens. The Rawalakot protests involved only a small fraction of AJK's population of about four million, with fewer than 40,000 participants at peak attendance and around 10,000–15,000 overall, while more than five times that number reportedly traveled from Rawalakot to Rawalpindi on June 6 and 7. Many families moved weddings to Rawalpindi and Islamabad, sick people and schoolchildren left the town, and hundreds of families delayed school and college admissions until August because of the disruption. Most residents stayed away from the protests to protect their families, forming a “silent majority,” while around 99 percent of people in other districts are seen not to support the protesters' agenda. Large political rallies in Muzaffarabad, Kotli, Dhirkot, and Bhimbar are regarded as demonstrating stronger support for the constitutional political process than for the Rawalakot sit-in. Around 10,000–15,000 protesters are responsible for disrupting daily life, damaging the economy, creating fear and uncertainty, and causing disorder over an issue considered resolvable through legislation, dialogue, and democratic institutions. The movement is also involved in using manipulated images, fake news, emotional appeals, and support from a few journalists acting

as propagandists to create the impression that all of Azad Kashmir supports it, even though the participants are said to account for less than 10 percent of Rawalakot's population. The government has addressed numerous demands by reducing electricity and flour prices, abolishing refugee ministries, reducing the number of ministers, halving the property transfer tax, completing the Rathwa Hariyam Bridge, withdrawing FIRs and legal cases, compensating the families of those killed and 56 injured people, providing a government job to Azhar's brother, approving a Rs. 5.5 billion PC-1 for MRI facilities, approving a Rs. 9 billion PC-1 to improve the power transmission system, applying to make Azad Kashmir Bank a scheduled bank, restoring the health card, establishing two new education boards, including the Mansehra, Muzaffarabad, and Mangla expressways in CPEC, announcing Mirpur Airport and beginning feasibility work, abolishing the quota system, merging government departments, approving e-tendering for electricity meters, and approving a 30 KVA electricity supply for schools and colleges. The remaining demand for four tunnels and bridges is acknowledged, but immediate implementation is impossible because one tunnel alone is estimated to cost around Rs. 10 billion while the total development budget of Azad Kashmir is less than Rs. 40 billion, requiring long-term planning, feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and substantial

financial resources.

After the approval of numerous demands, continued insistence on the remaining demand and the blockade of the region is questioned as unreasonable. The banned Joint Action Committee is involved in abandoning peaceful protest and preparing for violent confrontation by positioning armed teams with SMG guns and military-grade binoculars to monitor security forces, while one of its leaders reportedly acknowledged the supply of US-made M4 rifles to troublemakers. The group is further involved in spreading fake and AI-generated videos and posts to manipulate public opinion and manufacture support. Its activities are responsible for disrupting businesses, closing schools, creating insecurity, and using the Rawalakot sit-in stage to deliver speeches against Pakistan, the state, the Pakistan Army, and public institutions. Rather than participating in elections and pursuing legislative change through democratic means, the banned JAAC is involved in rejecting the electoral process and embracing violence, while the people of AJK are participating in election campaigns and democratic politics, with strong voter turnout has been seen as support for constitutional democracy and rejection of confrontation, violence, and disorder.

The banned JAAC wants to sabotage the elections and the will of the people of AJK, because they know that a free and fair election would expose their complete lack of popular support and their irrel-

evance in the political landscape. The issue of refugees and 12 seats is purely a constitutional matter, a complex legal question that should be resolved through the proper constitutional channels, and the banned JAAC has spread distrust in AJK just for a constitutional issue that could have been easily addressed through dialogue and parliamentary debate. To speak against the State, Pakistan, the Pak Army, and Institutions and to kill the LEAs is not a movement for people's rights, it is insurgency and rebellion, a direct attack on the authority of the state and its ability to maintain law and order. Even the majority of people of the Poonch district are not with this violent movement, and the false claim that the entire district is behind the protestors is a blatant lie designed to create an illusion of unity where none exists.

The banned JAAC is doing violence in AJK and has made an environment of fear and distrust in AJK, turning neighbor against neighbor and destroying the social fabric of the community. The banned JAAC has transformed into a security risk for the State and the country, a threat that must be dealt with decisively to protect the territorial integrity and national security of Pakistan. They have weapons, and they attack and target the LEAs and public properties, engaging in acts of arson, destruction, and murder that are the hallmarks of a terrorist organization. The real intention of the banned JAAC is to get dead bodies to ignite the fire in AJK and to motivate people against the State, a tactic of provocation that is designed to create a cycle of violence that will destabilize the entire region.

Continued on Page 7



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

Adoption of AI Chatbots to Revolutionize Student Support in Universities

The rapid advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming every sector of society, and higher education is no exception. Universities across the world are increasingly adopting AI-powered chatbots to improve student services, simplify administrative processes, and enhance the overall learning experience. These intelligent virtual assistants are capable of answering questions, providing academic guidance, offering administrative support, and assisting students around the clock. For Pakistan, where universities often struggle with increasing student enrollment, limited administrative resources, and growing expectations for quality services, AI chatbots present a timely opportunity to revolutionize student support.

Traditionally, Pakistani university students rely on administrative offices for information related to admissions, registration, examinations, fee structures, course selection, scholarships, hostel accommodation, and academic regulations. During admission seasons or examination periods, these offices often experience overwhelming workloads, resulting in long queues, delayed responses, and student frustration. AI chatbots can address these challenges by providing instant, accurate, and consistent information at any time of the day. Students no longer need to wait for office hours or visit multiple departments to obtain routine information.

One of the greatest advantages of AI chatbots is their twenty-four-hour availability. Unlike human staff, chatbots remain operational throughout the day and night, allowing students to receive assistance whenever they

need it. This feature is particularly valuable for distance learners, part-time students, and international students living in different time zones. Universities offering online and blended education can greatly benefit from continuous digital support that ensures uninterrupted communication with learners.

Beyond answering frequently asked questions, AI chatbots can provide personalized academic support. By integrating with university learning management systems, chatbots can remind students about assignment deadlines, examination schedules, class timetables, and upcoming academic activities. They can recommend relevant learning resources, guide students to appropriate departments, and provide step-by-step instructions for completing administrative procedures. Such personalized assistance helps students remain organized and improves their academic performance.

AI chatbots can also strengthen the student onboarding process. New students often face difficulties navigating university procedures, understanding institutional policies, locating classrooms, or accessing online portals. Virtual assistants can guide students through orientation, explain university regulations, provide campus maps, and answer common questions during the initial weeks of university life. This reduces anxiety and enables new students to adjust more quickly to the academic environment.

For university administrators, AI chatbots improve operational efficiency. Administrative staff spend considerable time responding to repetitive inquiries through telephone calls, emails, and office visits. Automating routine communication allows staff members to focus

on more complex tasks requiring human judgment and decision-making. This not only reduces workload but also improves service quality and institutional productivity.

The adoption of AI chatbots can significantly enhance distance education, an area in which Pakistan has made considerable progress. Students studying remotely often require immediate guidance regarding course registration, assignment submission, examination procedures, and technical support. AI-powered virtual assistants provide continuous communication, ensuring that distance learners remain connected with their institutions regardless of geographical location.

Another important advantage is multilingual communication. Pakistan is a linguistically diverse country where students come from various educational backgrounds. AI chatbots capable of communicating in English, Urdu, and regional languages can improve accessibility and ensure that information reaches a broader student population. Such multilingual support promotes inclusion and reduces communication barriers within universities.

Despite these benefits, the successful implementation of AI chatbots requires careful planning. Universities must ensure that chatbot responses remain accurate, updated, and aligned with institutional policies. Regular monitoring and continuous improvement are essential to maintain reliability. Poorly designed chatbots providing incorrect information can create confusion rather than convenience.

Data privacy and cybersecurity represent another significant concern. Universities collect sensitive student information, including academic records, financial data, and personal details. AI systems handling such information must comply with strong security standards and privacy regulations. Students should be

Continued on Page 7

Rebuilding Better: Climate-Resilient Health Facilities Restore Hope in Flood-Hit Umerkot

The devastating floods of 2022 left an indelible mark on Pakistan, exposing the country's vulnerability to climate-induced disasters. Across Sindh, swollen rivers and torrential rains destroyed homes, schools, roads, water supply systems and healthcare facilities, disrupting the lives of millions. In District Umerkot, where scattered rural settlements already faced limited access to essential services, the floods dealt a severe blow to primary healthcare, forcing many families to travel long distances for medical treatment.

Nearly four years later, signs of recovery are emerging. More importantly, the focus has shifted from merely rebuilding damaged infrastructure to creating facilities that are stronger, more sustainable and better equipped to withstand future climate shocks. This approach often described as “building back better” is transforming the way disaster recovery is undertaken in vulnerable regions. One such example can be found in Umerkot, where the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), through its Rehabilitation of Social Services & Climate Resilience (RSS&CR) Project, has supported the restoration and upgradation of four Government Dispensaries. Implemented by the Association for Water, Applied Education & Renewable Energy (AWARE) in collaboration with the Sindh Health Department, the initiative has restored quality primary healthcare services for more than 31,000 people living in remote rural communities. Although Umerkot is widely recognized as the gateway to the Thar Desert, the district is also highly vulnerable to flooding. Much of its land lies in low-lying areas where seasonal rain-

water accumulates during the monsoon. The floods of 2022 damaged public infrastructure on a massive scale, including schools, healthcare facilities, water supply schemes and community assets, leaving already underserved communities with even fewer essential services.

The district faces another challenge that often receives less attention. Nearly 56 per cent of Umerkot's geographical area falls within the Thar Desert, where scattered settlements, extreme temperatures and long travel distances make infrastructure development costly and difficult. Rehabilitating damaged public facilities across

such a vast landscape requires substantial financial resources, technical expertise and close coordination among government institutions and development partners. Recognizing these realities, PPAF designed the RSS&CR Project not only to restore damaged infrastructure but also to improve its resilience against future disasters. Rather than reconstructing facilities exactly as they were before, the project integrated climate-resilient features that improve service delivery while reducing vulnerability to climate-related risks.

Under the initiative, Government Dispensaries at Babu Fakir Karna Mori, Ghamori Kori Paro, Ghulam Hussain Mangrio and Noor Muhammad Palli have been transformed into safer and more efficient healthcare facilities. Each dispensary now benefits from solar-powered electricity systems, safe drinking water facilities, improved sanitation infrastructure, upgraded medical furniture, proper clinical waste management systems and other essential improvements designed to enhance healthcare services. These investments may appear simple, but they have

Continued on Page 7

Ishaq Dar inaugurates 983rd Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA)

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar inaugurated the 983rd annual Urs of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) by performing the traditional Chadar Poshi ceremony and launching the ceremonial Sabeel-e-Doodh at Data Darbar. On the occasion, he also unveiled the Punjab Auqaf and Religious Affairs Department's special publication, Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) – Kamalaan Raa Rahnuma. Dar said Pakistan was founded on Islamic principles and the sovereignty of Almighty Allah, adding that the teachings of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA)—based on compassion, tolerance, justice and service to humanity—continue to promote peace, unity and social harmony. The deputy prime minister praised the Punjab government's arrangements for the three-day Urs, including security, sanitation, healthcare, traffic management and public facilitation, describing service to millions of devotees as a religious responsibility and privilege. Advisor to the Chief Minister Ali Dar said all available resources had



been mobilised under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif to ensure a safe and spiritually fulfilling experience for pilgrims. The inaugural ceremony featured

Qur'anic recitation, Naat and Manqabat presentations, special prayers, floral tributes and the launch of the Data Darbar Expansion Project briefing. Thousands

of devotees from across Pakistan attended the first day of the Urs, while the celebrations will continue with traditional Mehafil-e-Samaa on August 3.

NUST Conference Highlights Roadmap for Pakistan's EV Transition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) hosted a national conference on accelerating Pakistan's transition to electric vehicles (EVs), bringing together representatives from government, industry, academia, financial institutions and civil society. Organised by the US-Pakistan Center for Advanced Studies in Energy (USPCAS-E NUST) in collaboration with the Indus Consortium, the conference focused on policy coordination, grid readiness and green financing for electric mobility. Participants included officials from the Planning Commission, State Bank of Pakistan, NEECA, FPCCI, leading EV manufacturers and universities.



An exhibition showcased locally developed electric vehicles, high-efficiency motorcycles, fast-charging stations, battery-swapping systems, battery management technologies, drive motors and EV research prototypes.

NUST Principal Dr. Adeel Waqas highlighted the importance of electric mobility for strengthening energy security, reducing carbon emissions and promoting sustainable economic growth. Three panel discussions examined EV manufacturing and infrastructure, financing and economic opportunities, and policy and regulatory reforms needed to accelerate adoption. Concluding the conference, Dr. Majid Ali stressed the need for stronger policy coordination, industry collaboration, sustainable financing and infrastructure development to support Pakistan's transition to electric mobility.

NDMA warns of floods during August 2-4

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has issued a flood alert warning of a significant rise in water levels in major rivers across the country from August 2 to 4 due to ongoing monsoon rains. According to the NDMA, high-level flooding has been recorded at River Lehri near Head Gogi, while medium-level flooding is being reported in Nullah Palkhu at Wazirabad. Low-level flooding continues at Kalabagh, Chashma, Guddu and Sukkur on the Indus River as well as at Head Nari on the Nari River. The authority has also forecast high-level flows at Marala and low to medium-level flows at Khanki and Qadirabad on the Chenab River. Water levels are also expected to rise in the Jhelum, Ravi, Kabul and their tributaries, with medium to high flows likely in adjoining hill torrents. NDMA has warned of flash flooding in the hill torrents of Dera Ghazi Khan, Rajanpur, central and southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and northern Balochistan. Meanwhile, urban flooding and waterlogging are expected in Rawalpindi, Jhelum, Gujranwala, Lahore, Faisalabad, Peshawar, Mardan, Nowshera, Hyderabad, Badin, Thatta and other low-lying areas of Sindh. The authority has advised the public to avoid unnecessary travel to flood-affected areas and stay away from fast-flowing streams and follow official advisories. Travellers have also been urged to check weather forecasts and road conditions before setting out and carry emergency essentials during the ongoing monsoon season.

Senate delegation to represent Pakistan at UNITE Global Summit 2026 in Philippines

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary delegation of the Senate of Pakistan will participate in the UNITE Global Summit 2026, to be held in Manila, Philippines, from 3-4 August 2026. The summit, convened under the theme of advancing equitable, resilient, and sustainable global health systems through parliamentary leadership and international cooperation, will bring together parliamentarians, policymakers, international organisations, and global health experts from across the world. The Senate delegation comprises Senator Khalida Ateeb, Senator Husna Bano, Senator Rahat Jamali, Senator Nadeem Ahmed Bhutto, Misbah Khar, Advisor to the Chairman, Senate, and Ms. Shahana Ifthikhar, Director General. The composition of the delegation reflects the Senate of Pakistan's commitment to inclusive representation by ensuring meaningful participation of senators from different political parties in the Senate at international policymaking forums. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has always advocated strengthening Pakistan's parliamentary diplomacy through active engagement in global platforms while promoting the role of women and minorities in addressing international policy challenges. During the two-day summit, the Pakistani delegation will participate in high-level plenary sessions, parliamentary dialogues, leadership forums, policy workshops, and panel discussions focusing on innovative and sustainable health financing, universal immunisation, mental health and wellbeing, climate-resilient health systems, pandemic preparedness, digital health governance, and strengthening regional and global partnerships for public health security. The delegation will also engage with fellow parliamentarians, government representatives, development partners, and international organizations to exchange experiences, promote evidence-based legislative approaches, and explore collaborative solutions to emerging global health challenges. Pakistan will share its parliamentary perspectives and reaffirm its commitment to advancing inclusive, people-centered health policies aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals. The participation of the Senate delegation underscores Pakistan's continued commitment to promoting parliamentary diplomacy and contributing constructively to international efforts aimed at building resilient, equitable, and sustainable health systems. It further reflects the Senate's resolve to strengthen cooperation with regional and global partners in support of improved public health outcomes and sustainable development. The UNITE Global Summit is the flagship annual event of the UNITE Parliamentarians Network for Global Health, serving as a premier international platform where legislators and decision-makers engage with leading experts and global institutions to shape policy responses to the world's most pressing health challenges.

A Geopolitical, Economic, and Strategic Assessment

The Efficacy of Existing and Proposed Oil Pipelines and Canals as Alternatives to the Strait of Hormuz

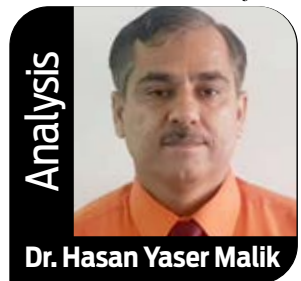
Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik / Rabail Zareen
The Strait of Hormuz remains the world's most critical energy chokepoint, connecting the Persian Gulf with the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea. Approximately 20.9 million barrels of oil per day around 20% of global petroleum consumption and nearly 25% of global seaborne oil trade transit through the strait. Despite decades of investment in pipelines and alternative export routes, no existing infrastructure can fully replace Hormuz. This paper evaluates the effectiveness of all major oil pipelines and canals that either bypass or complement the Strait of Hormuz by examining their technical capacity, geopolitical significance, economic feasibility, religious dimensions, security concerns, and operational constraints. Any disruption whether military, political, or accidental would have immediate consequences for global energy security and financial markets. Although several pipelines and canals have been developed to reduce dependence on the strait, their cumulative capacity remains substantially below normal Hormuz throughput.

Existing Pipelines

Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline extends from Abqaiq in the Eastern Province to Yanbu on the Red Sea. With a capacity of up to 7 million b/d under favourable conditions, which in practice is about 4.5 million b/d

due to terminal and logistical constraints. This pipeline represents the world's most significant alternative to Hormuz because it enables direct exports through the Red Sea without entering the Persian Gulf. Nevertheless, even at maximum throughput it can replace only 10 to 15 % of the oil normally passing through Hormuz.

Abu Dhabi Crude Oil Pipeline. The UAE's Habshan-Fujairah pipeline transports crude oil approximately 400 km from inland Abu Dhabi to Fujairah



on the Gulf of Oman, entirely bypassing the Strait of Hormuz. The pipeline currently has an operational capacity of roughly 1.8 million b/d, while normal exports utilize about 1.1 million b/d, leaving spare capacity during emergencies. Fujairah has consequently emerged as one of the world's most important oil storage and bunkering hubs. Iran's Goreh-Jask Pipeline. Iran has constructed the Goreh-Jask pipeline to export crude directly to the Gulf of Oman without traversing Hormuz. Strategically, it reduces Iran's own vulnerability to maritime blockades. However, limited export

infrastructure and sanctions have restricted its utilization, preventing it from significantly altering global supply dynamics.

The Kirkuk-Ceyhan pipeline connects northern Iraqi oil fields to Turkey's Mediterranean coast. While its theoretical capacity exceeds 1 million b/d, political disputes, sabotage, and operational interruptions have frequently reduced actual throughput. Moreover, it primarily serves northern Iraqi production and cannot fully accommodate exports from



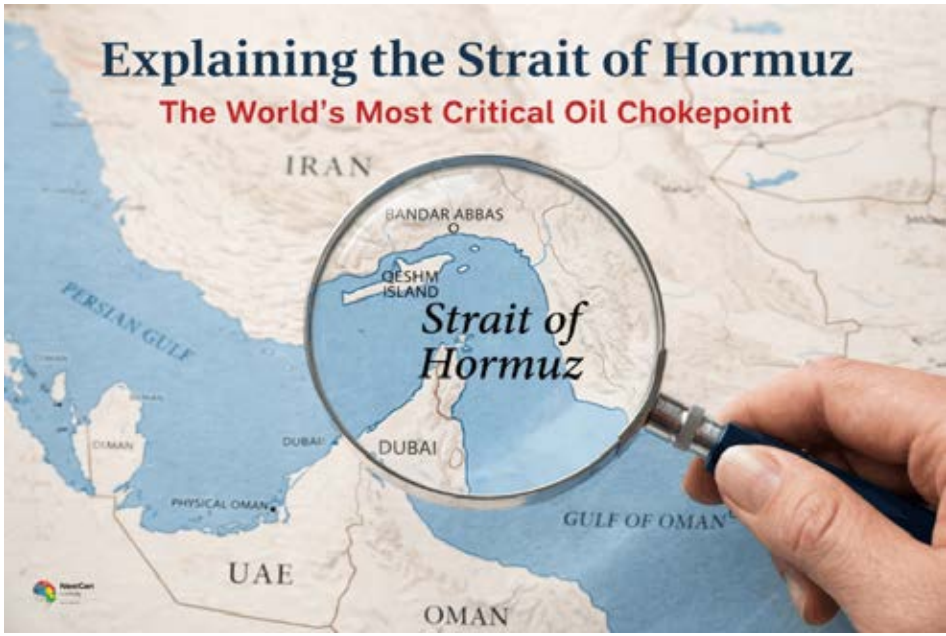
southern Basra fields, where most Iraqi oil is produced. Egypt's SUMED (Suez-Mediterranean) Pipeline is frequently misunderstood as an alternative to Hormuz. In reality, it bypasses the Suez Canal, not the Strait of Hormuz. Oil must first pass through Hormuz before reaching the Red Sea and entering the SUMED system. Consequently, SUMED enhances global transportation efficiency but cannot solve a Hormuz closure. Combined Suez Canal and SUMED flows averaged approximately 4.9 million b/d during the first half of 2025.

Proposed Future Projects

Several ambitious projects have been proposed, including the Iraq-Jordan pipeline to Aqaba, an Iraq-Oman export corridor to Duqm, and even a Gulf-to-Sea of Oman canal through the Hajar Mountains. While strategically attractive, these projects face enormous financial costs, engineering complexity, regional instability, and uncertain political commitment. None is currently capable of replacing Hormuz in the near future. It relevant to know that all such projects will have a cost as well up to the tune of 212 USD, more over such ventures would take considerable time to operational.

Contemporary Geopolitical Considerations

Hormuz remains central to the strategic competition among Iran, the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), the United States, China, India, Japan, and European importers. Approximately 80% of oil shipped through Hormuz is destined for Asian markets, making China, India, Japan, and South Korea especially vulnerable. Any disruption would likely trigger naval deployments, strategic petroleum reserve releases, and diplomatic intervention by major powers. The existence of bypass pipelines reduces risk but does not eliminate dependence on maritime security. Pipeline transportation generally costs less than marine transport over long periods and reduces exposure to insurance premiums associated



with conflict zones. However, constructing large-diameter pipelines requires investments reaching tens of billions of dollars, with payback periods extending over decades. Even more importantly, bypass infrastructure cannot currently accommodate all Gulf exports. According to the International Energy Agency, operational bypass capacity is estimated at only 3.5 to 5.5 million b/d, leaving a substantial shortfall compared with normal Hormuz flows exceeding 20 million b/d. Religious factors indirectly influence pipeline security and regional diplomacy. The Sunni-majority Gulf monarchies and Shia-majority Iran have historically competed for regional influence, shaping infrastructure investment and security policies. While pipelines themselves are secular infrastructure, sectarian rivalries, proxy conflicts, and political mistrust affect cross-border cooperation, particularly for projects involving Iraq, Syria, or Iran. These dynamics often delay multinational energy corridors despite clear economic benefits. Pipelines provide faster,

continuous transportation than tanker rerouting during emergencies. However, switching export systems is not instantaneous. Export terminals, pumping stations, storage facilities, tanker availability, and contractual obligations all create delays. Moreover, pipelines themselves are vulnerable to missile attacks, drones, sabotage, and cyberattacks, as demonstrated by multiple incidents targeting Middle Eastern energy infrastructure in recent years. Therefore, alternative routes improve resilience but cannot guarantee uninterrupted exports. Comparative Effectiveness Among all alternatives, Saudi Arabia's East-West Pipeline offers the greatest strategic value because of its high capacity and direct access to the Red Sea. The UAE's ADCOP provides additional resilience but serves only Abu Dhabi production. Iran's Goreh-Jask pipeline primarily benefits Iran, while the Iraq-Turkey pipeline remains constrained by political instability. SUMED and the Suez Canal are complementary transit routes rather than genuine substitutes for Hormuz. Collec-

tively, these systems significantly reduce regional vulnerability but remain incapable of replacing the strategic importance of the Strait. The Strait of Hormuz remains indispensable to the global energy system. Existing pipelines and canals enhance resilience, diversify export routes, and reduce dependence on a single maritime chokepoint, but they cannot absorb more than a fraction of current Hormuz traffic. Future infrastructure projects may gradually improve flexibility; however, geopolitical tensions, security threats, financing challenges, and engineering limitations will continue to constrain their effectiveness. Consequently, global energy security will remain closely tied to the uninterrupted operation of the Strait of Hormuz for the foreseeable future. It is noteworthy that the threat to closure Adan will not only close the Red Sea but will make many oil pipelines like Saudi East to West irrelevant hence making Hormuz more significant.

Dr. Hasan Yaser Malik, Maritime Centre of Excellence. Ms. Rabail Zareen, Assistant Editor The Environ Monitor

 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

Rural Development

Key to Pakistan's

Food Security:

FPCCI



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran, has stressed that strengthening rural economies is essential to ensuring Pakistan's food security and agricultural self-sufficiency.

Speaking to a delegation of farmers, he said food security begins in rural areas and warned that neglecting rural communities threatens the country's agricultural future. He called on the government to improve rural infrastructure and provide farmers with access to modern technology, quality seeds, affordable farm inputs, efficient irrigation systems and better market opportunities.

Shahid Imran said inadequate infrastructure, limited financing, post-harvest losses and weak marketing systems continue to reduce agricultural productivity and farmers' incomes. He urged policymakers to adopt long-term, farmer-friendly strategies to boost domestic agricultural production and reduce reliance on food imports.

He also emphasized investment in rural roads, storage facilities, cold chains, agricultural research, education and healthcare, saying these measures would improve livelihoods, create employment and support sustainable economic growth while strengthening Pakistan's food security.

Pak-Saudi ties

vital for regional

peace and energy

security, says

Iftikhar Ali Malik

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik on Sunday said strong bond between Pak-Saudi always stood atop in test of time with each other during challenging situations as Saudi Arabia is red line for Pakistan.

In a press statement here today he said

Pakistan always highly values its strategic partnership with Saudi Arabia, a vital partner in promoting durable regional peace, stability and economic development.

He said Saudi Arabia, a red line for Pakistan holds immense importance for Pakistan's energy security, particularly its role as a major source of oil and petroleum products. He said uninterrupted and affordable



energy supplies are essential for sustaining industrial growth, boosting exports, creating employment opportunities and maintaining macroeconomic stability.

He said Saudi investors should be offered attractive and transparent opportunities in Pakistan, while Pakistani entrepreneurs must be facilitated in establishing stronger commercial links with their Saudi counterparts.

He added that enhanced bilateral economic

engagement would create new opportunities for businesses in both countries and contribute to sustainable development.

Pakistan deeply appreciates Saudi Arabia's consistent support and goodwill, adding that the historic relationship between the two brotherly countries should be translated into an even stronger economic partnership and hoped that bilateral trade and investment would witness substantial growth in the coming years, he concluded.

Daily Wager

RAWALPINDI: A vendor is holding umbrella and use traditional hand fan due to hot weather as selling secondhand items at a Sunday weekly bazaar in the city.



Photo: Online

MEPCO Achieves 100.84%

Recovery, Collects Rs568 Billion in

FY2025-26



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) surpassed its recovery target during the 2025-26 fiscal year, collecting Rs568 billion against a billing of Rs563 billion, achieving an overall recovery rate of 100.84%, according to Chief Executive Officer Engineer Gul Muhammad Zahid.

The company said the recovery exceeded 100% due to the collection of outstanding

arrears from chronic defaulters. Domestic consumers recorded a recovery rate of 100.37%, industrial consumers 101.96%, tube-well consumers 100.65%, general services 101.71%, while commercial consumers achieved 99.26%.

MEPCO collected Rs530.36 billion from private-sector consumers and Rs38 billion from government institutions. In June 2026 alone, the company recovered Rs67 billion, posting an overall recovery



rate of 110.60%.

Chairman of the MEPCO Board Engineer Amir Zia credited the achievement to teamwork, financial discipline and effective monitoring, while CEO Engineer Gul Muhammad Zahid said recovery would remain a top priority in FY2026-27. He said special operations against defaulters were underway across MEPCO's 15 districts to strengthen the company's financial position and improve customer services.

Malik Khuda Baksh

Elected New Chairman

of Pakistan Petroleum

Dealers Association



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Executive Committee of the Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has elected senior leader Malik Khuda Baksh as the new Chairman with an 85% majority. The meeting, held on Sunday under Vice Chairman Anwar Kamal, was attended by 25 of 30 PPDA members physically and online. The election was held as long-serving

leader Abdul Sami Khan, 94, stepped back from day-to-day affairs. The committee acknowledged Khuda Baksh's 50 years of service and declared him the most suitable person for the role. 24 members, including the Vice Chairman and Senior Vice Chairman, voted in his favor. In recognition of his contributions, Abdul Sami Khan was unanimously appointed Chief Patron of PPDA. The committee also unanimously nominated Baber Ali Chaudhry as Secretary Information. PPDA expressed confidence that under Khuda Baksh's leadership, the Association will continue to work for the rights, welfare, and interests of petroleum dealers across Pakistan.

modern grain silos essential

to cut post-harvest losses:

Saif Ur Rehman



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman has called for the establishment of a nationwide network of modern hi-tech grain silos to reduce post-harvest losses, strengthen food security and improve Pakistan's agricultural supply chain.

Speaking to a delegation of growers, he said Pakistan could no longer afford the wastage of agricultural produce caused by inadequate storage facilities, poor handling and outdated preservation methods. He urged the government to treat investment in modern grain storage as a national

priority to protect farmers, stabilise food supplies and prevent distress sales.

Saif Ur Rehman said advanced silos equipped with temperature and humidity controls, automated monitoring and modern fumigation systems would help preserve the quality of wheat, rice, maize and other crops for longer periods.

He also called for a comprehensive public-private partnership framework to attract local and foreign investment in the storage sector, while urging banks and financial institutions to provide affordable long-term financing. He said reducing post-harvest losses

Pakistan Urged to Build AI Capacity, Not Just

Access: Mian Kashif



Commerce Desk

LAHORE:--Chief Executive Officer

Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq on Sunday hinted that geopolitics of tech is shifting

and global AI race is underway.

Chairing here today a board of directors meeting he said for Pakistan and developing countries the promise of "AI for all" will ultimately depend on not access alone but on their ability to build, adapt and govern artificial intelligence as an active participants in its future.

He highly lauded the announcement of Chinese President Xi Jinping made at the opening of the world Artificial Intelligence Conference (Waico) held in Shanghai on July 17 that China has sought to position itself as a partner in addressing the AI imbalances and pledged support for developing

countries including Pakistan in strengthening AI innovation, application and governance. He said this Chinese approach lies not only in access to technology but also in the accompanying investment in skills and institutional capacity.

He said strategic considerations are inseparable from these initiatives. China's outreach coincides with parallel US efforts to build international technology partnerships and secure AI related supply chain.

He said Pakistan's National Artificial Intelligence Policy must align with many of the priorities highlighted through Waico particu-

larly in expanding in AI infrastructure, mobilising investment and strengthening human capital.

Mian Kashif said Pakistan must identify practical areas of cooperation with China and other Waico members including research partnerships, workforce development, computing infrastructure and technology transfer.

He said equally important is that Pakistan should use its membership to advocate for international AI governance frameworks that reflect the needs and developmental realities of emerging economies rather than reinforcing existing technological inequalities.

Raja Pervez Ashraf meets Senate Chairman Gilani, stresses democratic values and national unity

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Former Prime Minister and senior PPP leader Raja Pervez Ashraf called on Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani at the Chairman's residence in Islamabad. The two leaders held detailed discussions on the country's overall political situation, parliamentary affairs, and important national issues. Matters of mutual interest also came under discussion. Both emphasized the need to strengthen democratic values, parliamentary institutions, the supremacy of the Constitution, and promote national unity. They agreed that positive and constructive dialogue among all political

forces is essential to address national problems and current challenges. Chairman Gilani said Parliament is the axis of the democratic system and plays a key role in building consensus on national issues. He expressed determination to promote consultation and cooperation with all parties to further strengthen the Senate as an effective, active and inclusive house. Raja Pervez Ashraf appreciated Gilani's efforts for parliamentary traditions and political harmony. He said strong democratic institutions are the guarantee of political and economic development and stressed that national interest must always be prioritized over political differences.



Women's University Multan Signs Historic MoU with Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital for Discounted Healthcare

Iram Asim

MULTAN: The Women's University Multan and Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital signed a Memorandum of Understanding on Sunday to provide discounted medical facilities and expand professional opportunities for the university community. The MoU was signed by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Syeda Shahida Batool and Mian Faisal Mukhtar, Chairman of Mukhtar A. Sheikh Hospital and CEO of Fatima Group. Under the agreement, female students, faculty, staff and their immediate families will receive special discounts on various medical services at the hospital. The partnership also covers research collaboration, joint educational projects, internships, study tours, training courses and employment opportunities for female



students. "This agreement is an important milestone towards a healthy, safe and student-friendly environment," Dr. Batool said. She added that the hospital's modern facilities and experienced

doctors will improve access to quality care while opening new doors for practical training and research. The ceremony was attended by senior officials including Dr. Muhammad Shaukht Malik, CEO Dr. Rana Altaf

Ahmed, and Prof. Dr. Syeda Azra Batool. Participants termed the partnership a strong example of cooperation between education and healthcare, with direct benefits for women's health, welfare and career development.

PMDC Workers Warn Warcha Lease Dispute Risks \$200 Million Investment



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The CBA of Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC) has warned that the dispute over the Warcha rock salt mining lease could jeopardise a proposed \$200 million foreign investment, threaten thousands of jobs, and hurt investor confidence in Pakistan's mining sector. At a news conference, CBA Secretary General Rai Mazhar Iqbal Kharal said PMDC's lease was legally renewed until March 2032. He called the Punjab government's cancellation and plan to auction the same area to a private company legally and commercially disputed. The case is pending in Lahore High Court. Union leaders said the planned investment would bring modern technology, value-added exports, jobs, and foreign exchange. Warcha union leader Mian Aftab ul Hasan stressed that regulatory certainty is key to attracting investment and protecting worker livelihoods. The CBA stated PMDC has operated Warcha for decades, generating revenue and expertise, and had offered better financial returns than the auction. It urged authorities to safeguard employment, contractual stability, and national mineral assets while supporting PMDC's legal challenge.

NKATI President endorses DG ISPR, calls for good governance and new provinces

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Faisal Moez Khan, President of the North Karachi Association of Trade and Industry (NKATI), has endorsed the DG ISPR's statement, saying a comprehensive national strategy is essential to counter the renewed wave of terrorism. He noted that the DG ISPR rightly pointed out that military action alone cannot eliminate terrorism and that strong governance, effective institutions, and public confidence are equally critical. Moez Khan stressed that good governance — transparency, rule of law, accountability, and efficient public service delivery — is the cornerstone of sustainable peace, economic stability, and national development. He urged federal and provincial governments to prioritize institutional reforms and public welfare. He also said loyalty to the state is every citizen's responsibility and called for unity across political, business, and civil society lines to strengthen security and economic resilience. The NKATI President further suggested serious consideration for the creation of new provinces, arguing that Pakistan's population has grown several-fold while provinces remain unchanged. He said new provinces would improve governance, administrative efficiency, and service delivery.



Adoption of AI Chatbots to Revolutionize Student Support in Universities

Continued from Page 4

informed about how their data are collected, stored, and protected to build trust in digital services. Educational policymakers also have an important role in promoting responsible AI integration. National higher education strategies should encourage digital transformation while ensuring ethical standards, transparency, and accountability. Universities should establish clear guidelines regarding AI usage, data governance, and quality assurance.

At the same time, research on AI applications in higher education should be encouraged to develop locally relevant and culturally appropriate solutions. The future of higher education will increasingly depend on intelligent digital technologies that enhance teaching, learning, and student services. AI chatbots are not intended to replace university staff but to complement their work by improving efficiency, accessibility, and responsiveness. Human interaction, empathy, and academic

mentorship will always remain central to university education, while AI serves as a valuable technological partner. In conclusion, the adoption of AI chatbots has the potential to revolutionize student support in Pakistani universities. By providing instant assistance, personalized guidance, multilingual communication, and continuous access to information, these intelligent systems can significantly improve the student experience while reducing administrative burdens. Nevertheless,

successful implementation requires robust digital infrastructure, skilled personnel, strong cybersecurity measures, and ethical governance. If introduced thoughtfully and responsibly, AI chatbots can become a cornerstone of modern higher education, enabling Pakistani universities to deliver more efficient, inclusive, and student-centered services in an increasingly digital world. *The writer holds a PhD in Media Sciences, Rawalpindi. Email: maliktariq.media@gmail.com*

The AJK Unrest

Continued from Page 4

The people of AJK are not with the banned JAAC, and they have made their position clear through their actions and their silence, for people are with Pakistan and the Pak Army, the institutions that have always stood with them in their times of need. People love Pakistan, the Pak Army, and institutions, and they have a deep and abiding affection for the state that has provided them with security, development, and a democratic identity. The people of AJK love peace, and they yearn for a return to normalcy, whereas a group of violent riots intends to destroy the peace of AJK, to plunge it into chaos for their own selfish political gains. The dirty intentions of the banned JAAC have opened the eyes of the people of AJK, and the people are now fully aware of the malevolent forces that are at work, seeking to exploit

their grievances and lead them down a path of destruction. The banned JAAC is also involved in getting Indian support, a treasonous act that is completely against the national interest, and even analysts and people say that the banned JAAC has got support from terrorist groups like TTP and Fitna al Khwarij, a serious allegation that links them to the worst enemies of Pakistan. The people of AJK are now looking towards the government to make normalcy in AJK immediately and to get rid of the peace of AJK from a group of riots, and they have complete faith that the government will take all necessary measures to restore peace, to bring the perpetrators of violence to justice, and to ensure that the voice of the silent majority is heard and respected, and that the constitutional and democratic process will be allowed to flourish, unhindered by the threat of violence and intimidation.

Rebuilding Better: Climate-Resilient Health Facilities Restore Hope in Flood-Hit Umerkot

Continued from Page 4

a profound impact on the daily lives of patients and healthcare workers. In many rural health facilities, unreliable electricity has long interrupted medical services, particularly during the scorching summer months. Solar energy now provides a dependable source of power, ensuring that essential healthcare services can continue even during electricity outages. Similarly, improved water supply and sanitation facilities contribute to infection prevention and create a cleaner environment for patients, healthcare providers and visitors. Proper clinical waste management also reduces environmental contamination and improves overall public health standards. For thousands of villagers, the rehabilitated dispensaries mean shorter travel distances,

reduced transportation costs and quicker access to treatment. Pregnant women, children, elderly patients and people suffering from common illnesses can now receive timely medical care closer to their homes. The project also reflects a broader understanding that climate resilience extends beyond constructing stronger buildings. It involves ensuring that public services continue functioning during emergencies, protecting vulnerable populations and strengthening the capacity of institutions to respond effectively to future disasters. Pakistan remains among the countries most vulnerable to climate change. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, prolonged droughts and increasingly frequent floods continue to threaten livelihoods, infrastructure and public services. Rural

districts such as Umerkot, where poverty and limited infrastructure already pose significant development challenges, are particularly exposed to these risks. Against this backdrop, climate-resilient public infrastructure is becoming an essential investment rather than an optional one. Every reconstructed school, healthcare facility or water supply scheme provides an opportunity to reduce future disaster risks while improving the quality of life for local communities. The RSS&CR Project also contributes directly to Pakistan's commitment towards achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). By strengthening healthcare services, promoting clean water and sanitation, expanding renewable energy solutions, supporting climate adaptation and encouraging partnerships.

Mr. Rajab Ali of AWARE said the project demonstrates how resilient infrastructure can respond to the priorities of local communities while addressing the growing impacts of climate change. "The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund deserves appreciation for designing a programme that not only restores damaged public facilities but also strengthens their capacity to withstand future climate challenges," he said. He added that PPAF's continued confidence in indigenous organizations has enabled institutions like AWARE to implement sustainable, community-driven interventions that respond to local needs. "Under the leadership of Mr. Nadir Gul Bareh, PPAF's support for local civil society organizations is helping build stronger, more resilient communities across

Pakistan. The successful rehabilitation of these health facilities shows what can be achieved when government institutions, development partners and local organizations work together with a shared commitment to improving people's lives," he said. Collectively, these investments are helping restore essential public services while preparing communities to face future environmental challenges with greater confidence. The story of these four dispensaries is about much more than renovated buildings. It is about restoring dignity to communities that endured one of Pakistan's worst natural disasters. It is about ensuring that mothers can safely access healthcare, children can receive treatment close to home and frontline health workers can serve their communities in safer and better-equipped facilities.

As climate change continues to reshape Pakistan's development landscape, rebuilding cannot simply mean replacing what has been lost. It must mean creating stronger institutions, safer infrastructure and more resilient communities. The restored health facilities in Umerkot demonstrate that with thoughtful planning, strong partnerships and sustained investment, disaster recovery can become an opportunity to build a healthier and more secure future. Dr. Muhammad Ali, District Health Officer Umerkot, appreciated the initiative and said that the rehabilitation of Government Health Facilities by AWARE, with financial support from the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), has significantly improved the quality of healthcare services in remote rural areas. The renovation of these health

facilities has created a safer and more functional environment for both patients and healthcare providers, he said. The upgraded infrastructure, improved sanitation, access to safe drinking water, solar energy systems, and better medical facilities have strengthened the capacity of our primary healthcare system. We are grateful to PPAF and AWARE for their valuable partnership in helping restore essential health services and improving the well-being of thousands of people in District Umerkot. The journey from flood devastation to climate resilience is far from over, but for thousands of families in rural Umerkot, these health facilities stand as a powerful reminder that recovery is not only possible it can lay the foundation for a stronger tomorrow. *The writer is a social development professional*

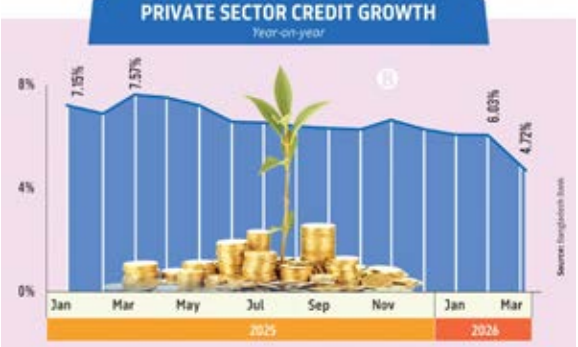
Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy shipping containers placed along a road for roads blocking around Markazi Asna Ashri Imambargah G-6/2, ahead of Chehlum procession marks the Chehlum after Ashura, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Private Sector Credit grows nearly 15% in FY26 – strongest expansion in four years



PRIVATE SECTOR CREDIT GROWTH
Year-on-year

Month	Growth (%)
Jan 2025	7.25%
Mar 2025	7.25%
May 2025	7.25%
Jul 2025	7.25%
Sep 2025	7.25%
Nov 2025	7.25%
Jan 2026	7.25%
Mar 2026	4.77%

confidence, rising private investment, and the positive impact of macroeconomic stability, easing financial conditions, and ongoing structural reforms.

Observers emphasized that the composition of credit growth is as significant as its overall size, noting that financing is increasingly flowing toward productive sectors that expand capacity, strengthen competitiveness, and support Pakistan's transition toward a private sector-led, investment-driven, export-oriented, and sustainable growth model.

increase in private-sector business credit was concentrated in three key sectors: manufacturing (56 percent), wholesale and retail trade (18 percent), and agriculture (15 percent). Manufacturing alone attracted Rs 657 billion in new credit, pointing to broad-based industrial expansion, while robust financing to trade and agriculture signals rising production, commerce, and investment across the economy.

Analysts note that private-sector credit growth serves as one of the clearest leading indicators of economic expansion, as businesses typically borrow to invest, expand capacity, modernize operations, and prepare for future demand rather than simply sustain existing operations.

The broad-based increase in financing across Pakistan's productive sectors reflects strengthening business

ISLAMABAD: Private sector credit in Pakistan expanded by Rs 1.46 trillion, or 14.8 percent, during FY26, reaching Rs 11.38 trillion—marking the strongest annual increase in four years, according to the latest data.

Business credit accounted for the bulk of this growth, increasing by Rs 1.18 trillion (14.0 percent) and representing over 80 percent of the overall rise in private sector credit, reflecting expanding financing for productive economic activity.

Nearly 89 percent of the

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi feels ecstatic to find changed NADRA's Shimla Pahari Center



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi on Sunday paid a surprise visit to the NADRA center at Shimla Pahari Lahore and was delighted to see citizens comfortably seated and air-conditioners functional, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

The minister mingled with the people who had come to obtain their computerized national identity cards (CNICs) and other documents and inquired from them the facilities being offered at the Center.

He went to different counters and met with the people as well as the NADRA employees. Expressing their satisfaction, the visitors said that they had to wait hardly for five minutes and their work was done.

Naqvi, on the occasion, ordered the office staff to immediately resolve the issues of two persons who had come for obtaining Family Registration Certificates (FRCs).

Some citizens complained to him about excessive parking fee being charged outside the office.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said he had visited the center before. "But the feedback I received today made me feel delighted," he said, and added that any organization's success could be gauged from people's satisfaction and their trust in it. "NADRA chairman and his entire team's performance is praiseworthy."

AJK PM orders action after alleged attack on President Latif Akbar



Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has ordered immediate action following the alleged attack on AJK President Chaudhry Latif Akbar, directing the Chief Secretary and Inspector General of Police to ensure those responsible are brought to justice.

The AJK premier also expressed strong displeasure over what he described as inadequate security arrangements. He alleged that miscreants affiliated with the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) carried out the attack on the AJK president.

Separately, PPP Parliamentarians Secretary General Nayyar Bukhari condemned the alleged attack, saying it reflected growing desperation among political opponents in the Muzaffarabad Division.

Bukhari described the incident as an attack on a constitutional office of the state and demanded the immediate arrest of those responsible. He said the Pakistan Peoples Party would not be intimidated by pressure or coercion.

He also alleged that obstacles were being created to prevent voters from reaching polling stations in Muzaffarabad and said the Election Commission was responsible for ensuring citizens could exercise their right to vote without fear. Bukhari added that the PPP had already submitted dozens of complaints to the Azad Kashmir Election Commission regarding the electoral process.



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Kabal area of Swat.

Expressing profound grief over the loss of innocent civilian lives, the chief minister extended her heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families.

She also prayed for the early recovery of those injured in the attack.

PML-N's Marriyum Aurangzeb says "performance, not complaints, win elections"



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz leader Marriyum Aurangzeb on Sunday criticised a rival political party for "crying after defeat," saying elections are decided by performance, not allegations.

Speaking during polling, Aurangzeb said complaints may sometimes gain sympathy, but "threats and accusations do not win elections." She urged opponents to contest with courage instead of grievances.

"You cannot fight an election by crying. You have to demonstrate your performance to the people," she said.

Aurangzeb claimed a visible surge of activity in PML-N camps across Punjab, including Muzaffarabad, and said party supporters were actively participating in voting.

"The PML-N voter is turning out across Punjab, and the voters are in charge today. The whole of Pakistan is watching," she added.

Expressing confidence, the PML-N leader predicted that after Mirpur, the party would also emerge victorious in Muzaffarabad and across Punjab.

Her remarks came as polling continued, with parties expressing confidence in their electoral prospects.

Danyal Chaudhry thanks Rawalpindi and Kashmiri refugees for PML-N's victory on refugee seats



City Desk

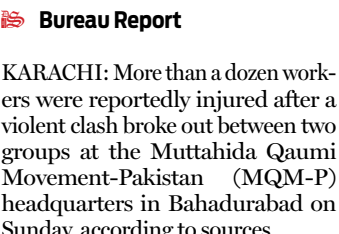
RAWALPINDI: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting, Barrister Danyal Chaudhry, has expressed gratitude to the people of Rawalpindi, Kashmiri refugees, and party workers for Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) historic victory on all three refugee seats in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections.

In a statement issued here on Sunday, Barrister Danyal said the election results are a clear endorsement of the leadership and narrative of PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He said the people of Rawalpindi and Kashmiri refugees have once again placed their trust in PML-N by electing its candidates on all three seats, reaffirming the party's strong connection with the Kashmiri community.

The Parliamentary Secretary said the mandate has proven that PML-N is the true representative of Kashmiri refugees.

MQM-P workers clash at Bahadurabad headquarters, over a dozen injured



Bureau Report

KARACHI: More than a dozen workers were reportedly injured after a violent clash broke out between two groups at the Muttahida Qaumi Movement-Pakistan (MQM-P) headquarters in Bahadurabad on Sunday, according to sources.

Sources said the workers had gathered at the party headquarters in connection with Independence Day celebrations when an altercation erupted, which quickly escalated into a physical scuffle.

According to the sources, tensions were not limited to the workers, as senior party leaders also reportedly argued among themselves inside the party's liaison committee room.

The situation worsened as workers belonging to the rival groups allegedly opened fire at each other, creating panic inside and around the party headquarters.

Police have not yet issued an official statement regarding the reported firing, the number of injured or the circumstances leading to the clash. Authorities are expected to investigate the incident, while the MQM-P leadership has also not issued an official response at the time of filing this report.

CM Maryam Nawaz condemns terrorist attack in Swat's Kabal



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Sunday strongly condemned the terrorist attack in Kabal area of Swat.

Expressing profound grief over the loss of innocent civilian lives, the chief minister extended her heartfelt condolences and sympathies to the bereaved families.

She also prayed for the early recovery of those injured in the attack.

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