



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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آپ ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ اللہ تعالیٰ نے رحمت کو جس دین بنا دیا اس کے سوا کچھ کے اور اپنے پاس ان میں سے ناسے رکھے۔ اس کے بعد تمام مخلوق کے لیے صرف ایک حصد رحمت کا کتبیلہ پس اگر کافر کو وہ تمام رحمت معلوم ہو جائے تو اللہ کے پاس سے تو وہ رحمت سے ناسیدہ ہو اور اگر مومن کو وہ تمام رحمت اب معلوم ہو جائیں تو اللہ کے پاس میں تو دور نہ ہے کبھی بے خوف نہ ہو۔
(بخاری و صحیح مسلم 6469)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Modi regime responsible for IIOJK terrorism: Farooq Abdullah

In a scathing critique of the Indian government, former puppet Chief Minister of Indian-Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) Farooq Abdullah held the Modi regime directly responsible for the ongoing terrorism and security failures in the region following the killing of innocent laborers in Kulgam.



Pakistan to observe one-minute silence on Aug 5 in solidarity with Kashmiris

A one-minute silence will be observed across Pakistan at 9am on August 5 to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people on Youm-e-Istehsal. The Cabinet Division issued a notification after receiving approval from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Pakistan observes August 5 as Youm-e-Istehsal to condemn India's actions in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

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Meeting on investments

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on promotion of Private Equity to boost investments on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM directs early roadmap for Private Equity Fund to boost investment

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, directed the relevant authorities to finalize at the earliest a roadmap for establishing a Private Equity Fund aimed at promoting investment in Pakistan and supporting small and medium-sized businesses. Chairing a meeting on promoting private investment

and sustainable economic growth, the prime minister also called for a comprehensive roadmap to develop the country's public equity market and private equity funds to ensure greater availability of investment capital and facilitate foreign investment.

He stressed promoting private investment, saying 'it is essential for the country's economic development'.

He also opined that private equity funds could serve as an effective catalyst for investment, business expansion and job creation.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to the PM Haroon Akhtar and senior officials of relevant institutions attended the meeting,

PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister identified minerals, agriculture, livestock, energy, information technology and other sectors as having significant potential to become key drivers of Pakistan's economic growth.

He further observed that the public equity market could provide an important avenue for investment in these sectors.

Noting that investment by the banking sector remained limited, the prime minister stressed the need to promote alternative sources of financing and investment.

He said the government was prioritizing measures to strengthen Pakistan's economy on sustainable foundations by promoting private-sector-led investment, industrial development and exports.

PML-N Set to Form AJK Government After Securing Simple Majority

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: PM's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah announced that PML-N is set to form the government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir after winning 23 seats overall in the legislative assembly elections, including 13 in Mirpur Division and seven in Muzaffarabad Division, while leading on refugee seats.

Speaking alongside Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam, Sanaullah accused the PPP of attempting to create a rigging narrative after its defeat, claiming the party's allegations shrank from 13



constituencies to just two when evidence was requested.

He asserted the elections were free and fair and said PML-N would begin government formation talks once results are officially announced.

Muqam described the elections as a victory for democracy, crediting PML-N's success to coordinated campaigning. Both leaders urged political parties to respect the public mandate and ensure a peaceful democratic process.

Sanaullah rejected rigging allegations, while Muqam called on stakeholders to focus on earning public trust rather than making accusations, urging all parties to accept results with political maturity. He also referenced PML-N's acceptance of Gilgit-Baltistan election results despite differences, expressing hope other parties would show similar democratic spirit regarding the AJK outcome.

PPP Rejects AJK Election Results, Alleges 'Form 47 Plus' Rigging

Bureau Report

KARACHI: The PPP has rejected the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) election results, with senior leader Sharjeel Inam Memon alleging widespread rigging in a "Form 47 Plus" operation involving the PML-N, federal and Punjab governments, and the Election Commission.

Speaking in Islamabad, Memon claimed the poll undermined the Kashmiri mandate and that institutions colluded to defeat PPP. He accused the Election Commission of acting as a PML-N facilitator, citing delayed polling materials and the postponement of LA-27 despite clear weather.

Memon alleged violence during voting, including the killing of a PPP worker, gunfire at a PPP MNA, and attacks on the AJK president with no arrests. He also claimed pre-stamped ballots were shown by Nayyar Bukhari and that papers were stamped in Lahore and Sialkot. Chaudhry Yasin alleged polling agents were locked in, assaulted, and that nearly 90% turnout was recorded at 40% of stations — calling it "highly unusual."

PPP vowed to challenge the results "until the last stage." PML-N and the Election Commission had not responded at the time of filing.

Atta Tarar urges parties to accept AJK election results gracefully



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Monday said the PML-N's victory in the second phase of AJK elections reflects public trust in the party's performance, and urged opponents to accept the outcome gracefully.

Speaking to media, Tarar said PML-N secured a simple majority due to a strong campaign led by Nawaz Sharif and the party leadership. He credited the win to focus on public service, development and regional prosperity, calling Punjab a successful model

during campaigning. Recalling PM Shehbaz Sharif's congratulatory message to PPP after GB polls, Tarar expressed hope PPP would show similar political maturity. He rejected allegations from Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, saying results were based on voter choice, not fraud.

Tarar criticized the PPP for weak ground presence in AJK, noting the polls were held under an outgoing PPP-led AJK administration. He urged PPP leaders to move forward, avoid baseless claims about Form 47, and focus on advancing politics in AJK.

PM Shehbaz felicitates PML-N on lead in second phase of AJK Elections

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated PML-N Quaid Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the party's successful candidates for securing a lead in the second phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly elections.

In a statement, the PM said he extends "heartfelt congratulations to all the successful candidates of Muslim League (N)." He credited the continued success to the hard work of the PML-N Quaid

and the entire PML-N team, noting that under Nawaz Sharif's leadership the party ran a "highly successful election campaign" in AJK. PM Shehbaz said the victory reflects the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir's confidence in PML-N policies.

He added that development, prosperity, and welfare of AJK people remain among the party's foremost priorities. He also said the active participation of political parties in the second phase will further strengthen the democratic process in Azad Kashmir.

PML-N Secures Simple Majority in AJK Elections After Second Phase



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The PML-N has secured a simple majority in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly after the second phase of polling, positioning it to form the next government without a coalition.

According to unofficial, provisional results, PML-N has won 23 seats so far, compared to 7 seats for PPP. Breakdown: - Muzaffarabad Division (7

declared): PML-N 4, PPP 3 - Refugee constituencies (12): PML-N 10, PPP 2 - Mirpur Division (13, first phase): PML-N 9, PPP 4 With 27 seats required to form government in the 53-member AJK Assembly, PML-N's 23 seats put it in a commanding position. The third and final phase will be held on August 10 for 11 constituencies in Poonch Division, which will finalize the new assembly composition.

Baldia Factory Case Acquittee Rehman Bhola arrested over alleged MQM-P headquarters firing

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Rehman alias Bhola, a former MQM-London worker recently acquitted in the Baldia Town factory fire case, has been arrested again in connection with alleged firing during clashes at MQM-Pakistan's Bahadurabad headquarters, police sources said Monday.

According to sources, Bhola was taken into custody from North Nazimabad, with CCTV footage circulating on social media showing police escorting him after the arrest. He was detained over alleged involvement in gunfire that erupted during Sunday's confrontation between



two MQM-P worker factions at the party's headquarters.

The clash broke out after Anees Qaimkhani arrived at the party headquarters with supporters while a meeting led by MQM-P Chairman Dr Khalid Maqbool

Siddiqui was underway. Reports indicate a heated exchange escalated into a physical altercation after Siddiqui left the venue, with gunfire reported amid the unrest.

During the incident, a cameraman from a private TV channel was allegedly detained inside the party office, assaulted, and stripped of his camera after filming the firing, before being released with an alleged warning against releasing the footage. Party sources also claimed Sindh Assembly member Hafiz Ejazul Haq and National Assembly member Sabeen Ghori faced abusive behavior prior to the shooting, which caused panic in the area late into the night.

AJK government rejects BBC report on Rawalakot situation, blames proscribed JAAC for violence

Abdul Majeed Tahir.

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Information, Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muhammad Rashid Hanif, has rejected as factually inaccurate a report broadcast by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) regarding the recent situation in Azad Kashmir, alleging it was published without verification or seeking the official version from relevant government institutions, including police and civil administration.

Addressing a press conference, Hanif said allegations made by the proscribed Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) regarding incidents in Rawalakot and adjoining areas between 27 and 31 July were false, misleading, and part of a coordinated disinformation campaign aimed at undermining public order and challenging the writ of the state.

He said armed activities attributed to the proscribed JAAC resulted in the martyrdom of seven law enforcement personnel and injuries to more than 45 others, with police and Rangers' vehicles also set ablaze. He noted evidence of weapons possession by the group had been presented earlier by the AJK Police spokesperson on 27 July.

Hanif said such violence was not new, citing 2025 incidents that killed three personnel and injured 52 seriously, plus over 350 with minor injuries, and a 2024 incident that killed one official and injured around 60 others. He added that two alleged operatives had confessed to being promised Rs. 10 million for killing a Rangers official, raising concerns over the group's funding sources.

The Secretary Information rejected allegations of unprovoked firing, retention of dead bodies, or torture by security forces, stating no government institution currently holds any dead body. He also cited evidence of road blockades and burning of vehicles carrying essential supplies by the organization, saying authorities had worked to maintain uninterrupted movement of goods and the public.



Referring to a 5 June incident, he said it followed an armed attack by the organization, prompting its proscription under the Anti-Terrorism Act to safeguard public order. He said the government's official position and statistics are available via the AJK Police's official X account.

AJK Election Commission Sets New Polling Date for Constituency LA-24

City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: According to a press release issued by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Election Commission, the election proceedings in Constituency LA-24 Poonch & Sudhnoti-7 (Baloch) had earlier been terminated under Section 45 of the Elections Act, 2020, on the basis of the Returning Officer's report following the demise of an independent candidate, Mr. Zahid Yaseen.



Subsequently, with the approval of the Election Commission, a revised election schedule was issued. However, the date for polling had not been specified at that time.

The Election Commission has now announced the polling date for the constituency in continuation of the revised election schedule. Accordingly, polling in LA-24 Poonch & Sudhnoti-7 (Baloch) will be held on 10 August 2026, alongside polling in the other constituencies of Poonch Division.

Public holiday announced in Muzaffarabad constituencies for August 4 elections

City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: A public holiday will be observed on 4 August 2026 in the areas falling within LA-27 Muzaffarabad-I and LA-28 Muzaffarabad-II constituencies of District Muzaffarabad.

According to an official notification issued by the Deputy Commissioner, Muzaffarabad, the holiday has been declared in view of the General Elections to the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly scheduled to be held on 4 August 2026 in the aforementioned constituencies.

Punjab Fast-Tracks Rs463 million Multan heritage project; citizens urge rule of law

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: The Punjab government, under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, is accelerating a major initiative to restore Multan's historical heritage, with work on Qila Kohna Fort and surrounding sites progressing rapidly under the Walled City Authority.



During a meeting chaired by Deputy Commissioner Dr. Faisal Saleem, officials reviewed restoration of Qila Kohna, Damdama, Langar Khana, the historic library, a heritage café, and the Food Street project.

Dr. Saleem said restoring these sites will preserve Multan's centuries-old civilization, improve cultural facilities for citizens, and boost tourism and the local economy. He directed departments to maintain quality and ensure timely completion.

Project costs include: Langar Khana Rs188 million, library Rs43 million, heritage café Rs39 million, Food Street Rs129 million, and fort wall upgradation Rs463 million.

Welcoming the initiative, educated community members stressed that development must go with effective rule of law across Multan. They said preserving landmarks and ensuring transparent governance are both vital for sustainable development.

JKDFP urges Pakistan to take immediate diplomatic action on IIOJK crackdown

City Desk

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: JKDFP Acting Chairman Mahmood Ahmed Saghar has written separate letters to President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy PM/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, expressing grave concern over the worsening human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Saghar highlighted a large-scale crackdown by Indian authorities, including the arbitrary detention of over 3,000 Kashmiri youth, demolition of homes and private properties, and a continued policy of collective punishment against civilians.

He urged the Government of Pakistan to intensify diplomatic efforts and raise these violations at the UN, OIC, UN Human Rights Council, EU, and other international forums. He called for immediate international intervention to protect Kashmiris and hold India accountable under international law.

Saghar said arbitrary arrests and house demolitions violate international law and escalate regional tensions. JKDFP appealed to Pakistan's leadership to continue political, diplomatic and moral support for Kashmiris, and urged the UN, OIC, and world powers to help end repression and facilitate a resolution in line with UN Security Council resolutions and Kashmiri aspirations..

Protest

KARACHI: Activists of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan women Wing stage a protest rally against petroleum levy, in the Provincial Capital.



Dialogue and Democratic Continuity Key to AJK Stability: Sardar Masood Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former AJK President and ex-Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan said lasting stability in Azad Jammu and Kashmir can only be achieved through dialogue, constitutional mechanisms, and political maturity.

Commenting on the second phase of AJK Legislative Assembly elections, he said the Election Commission's decision to proceed, despite challenges, was vital to preserve



constitutional continuity and democratic governance.

He expressed concern over sharp exchanges between the two major parties, noting the intensity had further complicated an already sensitive situation.

On voter turnout and allegations of irregularities, Khan stressed that official election data must remain the reference until disputes are examined through the Election Commission's legal channels.

He urged all stakeholders to resolve differences through dialogue and institutional

engagement, not public confrontation. Citing talks with the Joint Awami Action Committee ongoing since 2023, he said engagement with the Governments of AJK and Pakistan must continue with sincerity.

Khan called on leaders to rise above partisanship to safeguard democratic institutions, constitutional order, and social harmony, expressing confidence that dialogue and responsible conduct will restore public confidence.

AJK Chief Election Commissioner Announces Results of Seven Muzaffarabad Division Constituencies

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal, accompanied by Senior Member Election Commission Khawaja Muhammad Ahsan and Secretary Election Commission Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan, announced results for seven Legislative Assembly constituencies of Muzaffarabad Division during a press conference.

According to official results, PML-N's Shah Ghulam Qadir won LA-25 Neelum-I with 19,201 votes, while PPP's Mian Abdul Waheed won LA-26 Neelum-II with 16,524 votes. PPP's Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed secured LA-29 Muzaffarabad-III

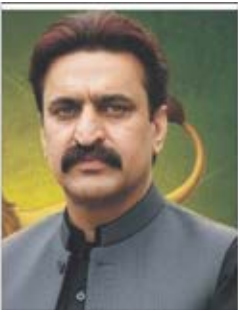


with 20,045 votes. PML-N candidates won three seats: Dr. Mustafa Bashir in LA-30 with 17,895 votes, Saqib Majeed Raja in LA-31 with 32,511 votes, and Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan in LA-32 with



21,613 votes. PPP's Diwan Ali Khan won LA-33 Muzaffarabad-VII with 26,357 votes.

The Commissioner said polling in LA-27 Kotla and LA-28 Lachhrot was postponed after polling material failed to reach 54 stations due to adverse weather, with voting



rescheduled for the following day. He noted comprehensive security arrangements involving the Army, Rangers, and Police, with additional personnel deployed at sensitive stations.

Polling in Bagh's three constituencies, along with Haveli and Abbaspur,



is scheduled for 10 August 2026, with polling in Baloch and Palandri constituencies also under consideration for the same date given security conditions.

Voter turnout stood at 46.3 percent in Mirpur Division and 53 percent in Muzaffarabad Division,



which the Commissioner described as encouraging. He emphasized the Election Commission's independence and impartiality, noting that despite challenging circumstances, people had chosen the ballot over violence. He thanked all stakeholders for their cooperation in the electoral process.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:46 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:06 pm
Maghrib 7:07 pm
Isha 8:41 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 9261170-9
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

54th CTP Trainee Officers visit Toba Tek Singh DC Office

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Trainee officers of the 54th Common Training Programme (CTP) visited the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Toba Tek Singh, where DC Maham Asif Malik welcomed the delegation and briefed them on the district's administrative structure, governance system, and functions of government departments. She said the administration is working in line with Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision for transparent governance and quality public service delivery. Key priorities include revenue management, law and order, health and education, timely completion of development projects, disaster management, and e-governance. She stressed that prompt resolution of public grievances and improving institutional performance remain top priorities. In an interactive session, trainees asked about field challenges and service delivery. DC Malik urged them to uphold integrity, transparency, merit, and professionalism. The delegation also toured the District Control Room, Public Facilitation Centers, and other sections, receiving briefings on modern systems and monitoring. DC Malik distributed commemorative shields to the officers, who praised the district's governance and reforms as commendable.

Services Hospital earns WSO/Angels Diamond Award for stroke care

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz on Monday said the international recognition received by Services Hospital Lahore for excellence in stroke care reflected the provincial government's efforts to improve the healthcare sector.

The Neurology Department of Services Hospital has been honoured with the prestigious Diamond Award by the WSO/Angels Initiative for its stroke care services, making it the first public sector hospital in Pakistan to receive the highest distinction from the internationally recognised programme.

The Angels Initiative, a collaborative

programme of the World Stroke Organization (WSO) and the European Stroke Organisation (ESO), evaluates hospitals across the world on internationally accepted standards for the timely diagnosis and treatment of stroke patients.

The chief minister congratulated Principal SIMS Prof Dr Zahra Khanam, Head of the Neurology Department Prof Dr Muhammad Adnan Aslam and the entire team on the achievement.

The award recognised Services Hospital's Stroke Emergency Centre for providing prompt, effective and world-class treatment to stroke patients. The hospital was also acknowledged for achieving outstanding performance in



door-to-needle time for thrombolysis, a key international benchmark in emergency stroke management.

CM Punjab said the Diamond Award was "not merely a certificate for the Punjab Stroke Programme but an acknowledgement of the thousands of lives saved through timely treatment and

modern medical facilities."

She said the inclusion of Services Hospital among the world's leading stroke centres was a matter of gratitude and described the award as a historic milestone for the institution.

The chief minister said the recognition would pave the way for innovation

and further advancement in neurology services across Punjab, adding that the provincial government remained committed to providing patients suffering from stroke with healthcare facilities meeting international standards and to taking stroke care in the province to new heights.

Chehlum

ISLAMABAD: Mourners participate in the Chehlum procession of martyrs of Karbala taken out from Imambargah Asna Ashari in G-6/2, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Azma Bokhari: People of Kashmir Voted for Punjab-Like Development and Performance

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari said the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir voted for public service, development, and performance, expressing confidence in Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's governance model. Addressing a press conference at DGPR, she said PML-N secured over 100,000 votes in Azad Kashmir compared to just over 2,000 for the PPP, with PPP's Qamar Zaman Kaira winning only 457 votes in his constituency.

Bokhari said voters across various constituencies had clearly favored Punjab-



style development, citing social media videos of voters expressing this preference.

She praised women's enthusiastic participation, noting many traveled from remote

areas to vote. She criticized the PPP for having "nothing to show" after 18 years in power, alleging the party had to advertise its performance during campaigning.

Responding to "Form-47 government" allegations, Bokhari questioned why critics don't seek to remove it if they believe the claim, while also criticizing electoral conditions in interior Sindh. She said Bilawal's remark "We will keep Kashmir like Kashmir" reflected poorly on Sindh's governance, unlike PML-N's aspiration to develop Kashmir like Punjab. She concluded that Punjab's political situation remains stable under Maryam Nawaz's leadership.

Multan Police Seize 16kg Drugs, Arrest 3 Peddlers in Shah Shams Operation

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Multan Police have arrested 3 drug peddlers, including 2 men and 1 woman, and recovered over 16kg of drugs worth more than Rs1.3 million in an operation against drug trafficking.

The arrested suspects are Aminullah son of Din Muhammad Qaum Baloch of Chagai, Adam Khan, and Rukhsana Bibi. Police recovered 10kg of hashish and 6kg of heroin from them. Officials said the suspects are part of a large drug trafficking network supplying drugs across Punjab.

The arrests were made in Civil Garden, Muzaffargarh Road, and Ashiqabad areas of Shah Shams Police Station. Cases have been registered and legal action has begun.

The operation was carried out under the supervision of SP Cantt Division Dr. Khadija Umar and SHO Shah Shams Muhammad Bilal. SI Muhammad Saleem and other personnel played a key role.

At a press conference, CPO Multan Sadiq Ali Dogar with SSP Operations Haider Ali said the police are committed to dismantling the entire drug supply chain and that such operations will continue.

Shahida Shehgi calls Nek Alam a "Brave Hero" of Gilgit-Baltistan, seeks gov't recognition

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Shahida Shehgi Pirzada, Vice Chairperson of Pakistan United Workers Federation South Punjab and President Domestic Workers Union Multan, has hailed Nek Alam as the



"Brave and Real Hero of Gilgit-Baltistan" for his selfless rescue work.

In a statement, she said Nek Alam recently recovered the body of Barkat, a youth from Swat and Shangla, from the Jaglot drain where rescue teams had failed. She noted this is not his first act of bravery. A year ago in Astore, he risked his life in icy, dangerous river water to retrieve several bodies after a coaster accident.

Despite public appreciation, Shehgi said Nek Alam only received a temporary rescue order and even lost his contract job in the Forest Department.

She called it "sad" that real heroes are ignored. She appealed to GB Chief Minister Amjad Advocate and elected representatives to give Nek Alam a permanent place in government and recommend him for a Presidential Award, saying nations progress by honoring their real heroes.

Attock District Coordination Committee Reviews Security and Administrative Measures

Raza Naqvi

ATTOK: The District Coordination Committee on Law & Order met at the Deputy Commissioner's Office under DC Dr. Mudassar Ahmed Shah to review law and order and administrative matters in Attock.

ADC (General) Anil Saeed briefed on traffic, anti-encroachment, electricity theft, illegal petrol pumps and LPG, professional beggary, seminary registration, and illegal foreign nationals. Representatives from police, CTD, Civil Defence, IESCO, Social Welfare, and other departments attended.

Dr. Shah stressed inter-departmental coordination to protect citizens and enforce government directives, directing indiscriminate action against violators and prompt complaint resolution.

Traffic police issued 14,479 challans and collected Rs. 18.867 million. 42 illegal petrol pumps were sealed with Rs. 585,000 in fines. 33 LPG violations led to 68 locations sealed and Rs. 156,000 in fines. Anti-encroachment drives removed 3 permanent and 1,097 temporary encroachments, with Rs. 571,000 in fines. 27 illegal electricity connections were found; 16 cases registered, 14 arrested, and Rs. 1.2733 million recovered. Police checked 15,265 suspicious vehicles, registering 8 cases.

On seminars, 502 exist — 201 registered, 301 unregistered — with 28 geo-tagged. 30 beggars were taken into custody. Of 406 Overseas Pakistanis complaints, 345 were resolved. 30,492 illegal foreigners have been repatriated; 30 remain in the holding centre. The Information Department also updated on its awareness campaign.

In closing, Dr. Shah ordered stronger operations to maintain order, curb crime, improve traffic, and address public issues for a safer Attock.

23rd Annual Environment Conference and Awards 2026 to Be Held August 6th in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan's environmental leadership will gather in Karachi on 6 August as the National Forum for Environment & Health (NFEH) hosts the 23rd Annual Environment Conference and Excellence Awards 2026, themed "Reclaiming Pakistan's Livable Future: From Collateral Damage to Collective Ownership."

NFEH President Muhammad Naeem Qureshi will deliver the welcome address, followed by keynotes from Dr Zainab Naeem (SDPI), DIG Traffic Sindh Peer Muhammad Shah,



and Younus Dagha, focusing on policy responses and institutional leadership on environmental challenges.

A key highlight will be a panel

discussion moderated by Yasir Husain of the Climate Action Centre, featuring experts including clean energy specialist Engr Irfan Ahmad,

Mondelez Pakistan's Kashif Rasheed, urban planner Muhammad Toheed, meteorologist Ameer Hyder Laghari, and a Karachi Water & Sewerage Corporation representative, discussing climate-resilient urban solutions.

The event concludes with the Environment Excellence Awards, honoring organizations demonstrating leadership in environmental protection and sustainability. Over two decades, NFEH's conference has become a leading platform fostering collaboration among government, industry, academia, and civil society toward a more sustainable Pakistan.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
 Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
 Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
 Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
 (jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
 (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
 spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
 Karachi Phone: 021-33399390
 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town.
 spokesmanlahore@gmail.com
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

A Nation's Debt to Those Who Guard Its Peace: Reflections on Police Martyrs Day

Every year, on the 4th of August, Pakistan pauses to honor a debt that can never truly be repaid — the debt owed to the police officers who gave their lives so that ordinary citizens could live in safety. The President's message on Police Martyrs Day rightly reminds us that behind every headline about a foiled terrorist plot or a disrupted criminal network stands an officer who walked into danger so that others would not have to.

This year's tribute carries particular weight given the sacrifices rendered by police personnel in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, regions that continue to bear the brunt of terrorism and cross-border militancy. These officers operate in some of the most hostile environments imaginable, confronting not merely criminals but organized extremist networks backed by hostile actors. Their courage in these encounters deserves more than ceremonial recognition — it demands sustained institutional investment.

This is where the President's remarks touch on something essential: the need to strengthen and modernize police institutions through better training and technology. Words of tribute, however heartfelt, ring hollow if they are not accompanied by concrete improvements in the tools, resources, and protections afforded to those on the front lines. An officer's bravery should not have to compensate for inadequate equipment or insufficient institutional support.

Equally important is the message's attention to the families left behind. Martyrdom does not end with the individual sacrifice; it extends into the lives of spouses, children, and parents who must rebuild their futures in the shadow of loss. Their welfare and socio-economic security are, as the President notes, a collective national responsibility — not a matter of charity, but of honor.

Beyond the battles against terrorism, it is worth remembering that police work is fundamentally about trust. Officers are not merely enforcers of law; they are custodians of the social contract that allows communities to function, businesses to operate, and families to feel secure in their daily lives. This quieter, everyday service — often unglamorous and unrecognized — deserves acknowledgment alongside the more visible acts of valor in conflict zones.

As Pakistan observes this solemn day, the truest tribute we can offer is not merely words of gratitude, but a renewed national commitment: to equip our police adequately, to support the families of the fallen meaningfully, and to ensure that the sacrifices made are never taken for granted. A nation's security is built on such sacrifices — and it is incumbent upon all of us to honor that foundation with more than remembrance alone.

The Global Price of the Iran War

By any historical measure, modern wars are rarely confined to the battlefield. They reshape economies, redirect national priorities, disrupt global trade, and impose costs on countries far removed from the front lines. The Iran war is proving to be no exception. While headlines have understandably focused on military operations and diplomatic tensions, a quieter story has unfolded in financial markets, shipping lanes, energy supplies, and national budgets across the world.

As of 1 August 2026, available official figures and independent economic analyses suggest that the financial consequences of the conflict have spread well beyond the principal participants. The most striking feature is that the cumulative economic burden appears to have fallen not only on the combatants but also on governments, businesses, and consumers around the globe.

Estimates compiled by international research organizations indicate that the global economic impact may already range between US\$1.5 trillion and US\$2.2 trillion, although these remain estimates rather than official totals.

It is important to distinguish between official figures, which have been released by governments, and independent estimates, which attempt to quantify broader economic consequences. This distinction is essential because many governments have not published comprehensive wartime expenditure reports, and indirect economic losses are inherently more difficult to measure than direct military spending.

Among the countries directly involved, the United States is the only nation that

has publicly disclosed a substantial official estimate of its military expenditure. According to the U. S. Department of Defense, direct military operations connected with the conflict had cost approximately US\$37.5 billion by late July 2026. This figure reflects operational expenses, deployment costs, munitions, logistics, and related military activities. It does not include broader economic effects such as inflation, higher energy prices, or lost economic output.

Independent economic analysts estimate that when these wider effects are considered, the overall economic impact on the United States could reach between US\$140 billion and US\$240 billion.

These estimates incorporate increased defense appropriations, disruptions to energy markets, higher transportation costs, and slower economic growth. While these figures are not official government statistics, they are broadly consistent with assessments published by defence economists and international policy institutes.

For Iran, the financial picture is far less transparent. Tehran has not released an official estimate of its direct military expenditure during the conflict. However, Iranian officials have publicly claimed that the country's overall economic losses—including infrastructure damage, reduced oil exports, sanctions, currency depreciation, and broader economic disruption—amount to approximately US\$270 billion.

Independent verification of this figure remains limited, and analysts caution that it should be treated as a government estimate rather than an independently audited assessment. Nevertheless, there is broad agreement that Iran has suffered severe economic damage extending well beyond military expenditure alone.

Israel's financial costs have also attracted considerable attention. Unlike the United States, Israel has not published a comprehensive official estimate covering the total cost of the war. Independent analyses and Israeli media reports generally place direct military expenditure between

US\$11 billion and US\$15 billion, while estimates of the wider economic impact range between US\$31 billion and US\$55 billion.

These estimates include reserve mobilization, disruptions to commercial activity, tourism losses, and increased security expenditure.

The comparison between these figures has generated debate among economists and geopolitical analysts. Based on current public estimates, Israel's total economic burden appears smaller than the estimated costs borne by Iran and substantially below the broader global economic losses associated with the conflict.

However, this observation should not be interpreted as a definitive conclusion about which country has been "least affected." Different governments report wartime costs differently, methodologies vary, and many long-term costs—

including reconstruction, investment losses, and demographic impacts—cannot yet be accurately quantified.

Perhaps the most significant economic consequences have been felt beyond the countries directly engaged in the conflict. The Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states have experienced considerable financial disruption despite not being primary combatants. Higher insurance premiums, interruptions to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz, increased defence spending, and reduced investor confidence have affected the region's economies.

Current estimates suggest combined GCC economic losses of approximately US\$150 billion to US\$200 billion, with Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates accounting for the largest share.

The Strait of Hormuz remains central to understanding why the conflict has had such widespread consequences. As one of the world's most strategically important maritime routes for oil and liquefied natural gas exports, even limited disruption has reverberated through international energy markets. Higher freight charges, increased marine insurance premiums, and uncertainty in commodity markets have translated into higher fuel costs and inflation across multiple continents. Businesses have faced rising production expenses, while consumers have borne the impact through more expensive transportation, electricity, and imported goods.

Europe has likewise experienced significant economic pressure, primarily through higher energy prices, increased defence commitments, and slower industrial growth. Asian economies,

Continued on Page 7



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

The New Provinces Formula: Will It Change Pakistan's Political Map or Its Economic Destiny?

The debate over the creation of new provinces and administrative units in Pakistan is not a new one. Since the country's independence, proposals to restructure its administrative system have surfaced at different points in time. At times, there have been calls for increasing the number of provinces; at others, proposals for creating new provinces, granting divisional units provincial status, or dividing existing provinces along linguistic, administrative or geographical lines have come under discussion.

Today, the debate appears to be gaining renewed momentum. Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi's proposal for the creation of additional provinces, growing political unease in various circles, the influence of powerful political families, and discussions about the need for institutional reforms have once again brought a fundamental question to the national spotlight.

Does Pakistan need a major restructuring of its existing administrative system?

This is not merely a political question. At its core, it is an economic question as well.

Pakistan has experimented with different administrative arrangements in the past. During Ayub Khan's rule, the One Unit system was introduced. Later, during General Yahya Khan's rule, One Unit was abolished and the provinces of West Pakistan were restored. However, changes in the administrative map have not always provided permanent solutions

to the country's problems. One major reason is that the backwardness of a region does not automatically disappear simply because it is granted provincial status.

The real issues are governance, resource distribution, employment, education, healthcare, infrastructure and investment.

A sense of deprivation in the urban areas of Sindh gave rise to a major political movement in the past. The demand for a separate province in Hazara Division of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa has also surfaced repeatedly at the political and social levels. In Balochistan, there

have been calls for a separate administrative identity for Pashtun-majority areas, while South Punjab has remained the centre of a long-standing demand for a separate province.

This means that the question of administrative restructuring in Pakistan is not simply about drawing new lines on a map. Behind it lie deeper questions of identity, resources, political power and participation in development.

Smaller Provinces, Bigger Questions

The strongest argument in favour of new provinces is administrative convenience. This argument has considerable merit. For an ordinary citizen, it would certainly be better if access to basic public services did not require travelling hundreds of kilometres to a distant provincial capital.

If smaller administrative units are established effectively, access to government institutions could improve, the judicial system could

become more accessible, healthcare and education facilities could be distributed more efficiently, and development projects could be implemented more rapidly at the local level.

But this raises a fundamental question: Will increasing the number of provinces also strengthen the economy?

If new provinces merely mean more governor houses, chief minister houses, secretariats, assemblies, government departments and official vehicles, then this would not constitute reform. It would simply create another major increase in government expenditure.

Pakistan is already under severe fiscal pressure. Debt servicing, defence expenditure, pensions, losses of state-owned enterprises and problems in the energy sector place a heavy burden on the national budget. Under such circumstances, every proposal to create new provinces must also answer a critical question: Who will pay for the financial cost of creating them.

A proposed map of Pakistan has also been circulating on social media, showing Punjab divided into six, Sindh into three, Balochistan into five and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa into four administrative units. However, no formal government status has been attached to this map, and it would therefore be premature to regard it as a final or official plan.

Nevertheless, the idea has triggered an important debate.

If Pakistan is to seriously consider creating more administrative units in the future, the criteria should not be political interests but economic viability.

Continued on Page 7

Seven Years After Article 370: Integration Without Peace

“Occupation is the denial of freedom,” Noam Chomsky. Seven years after the abrogation of Article 370, Noam Chomsky's observation provides a powerful lens through which to examine the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). On 5 August 2019, the Government of India revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status and divided the former state into two Union Territories under direct federal administration. The decision was promoted as a historic reform that would bring peace, development, investment, employment and an end to decades of conflict. Yet seven years later, the promised transformation remains elusive. Instead of political reconciliation, Kashmir has witnessed deeper centralization of authority, shrinking democratic space, continuing militarization and growing alienation among large sections of the population.

The events of 5 August 2019 represented far more than a constitutional amendment. They fundamentally altered the political relationship between Kashmir and the Indian Union. The region's limited constitutional autonomy was removed without the consent of its elected legislature, which had already been dissolved. Statehood was downgraded to Union Territory status, placing key administrative and security decisions under New Delhi's direct control. This was not an act of democratic integration but the

unilateral restructuring of their political future.

The years that followed have been characterized by an unprecedented expansion of central authority. New domicile regulations widened eligibility for permanent residence, while amendments to land laws opened greater opportunities for land ownership by non-residents. Electoral constituencies were redrawn through the delimitation process and governance increasingly shifted from locally accountable institutions to centrally appointed administrators. Although presented as administrative reforms, these measures have generated

widespread concerns about demographic change, political marginalization and the gradual erosion of Kashmir's distinct identity.

Perhaps the most visible outcome of the post-2019 framework has been the narrowing of democratic space. Political leaders across the ideological spectrum were detained immediately after the constitutional changes, while prolonged restrictions were imposed on political activity. Journalists, lawyers, civil society organizations and human rights defenders have repeatedly reported increased legal pressure, surveillance and restrictions on freedom of expression. The continued use of security legislation, including the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), has reinforced concerns about preventive detention, prolonged incarceration and limited judicial safeguards. A political dispute cannot be

Continued on Page 7

Analysis



Muhammad Sarfaraz Alam

Analysis



Atika Ameer

Gaza death toll reaches 73,375 as Israeli attacks continue despite “Ceasefire”: Palestinian government report

News Desk

RAMALLAH: The Government Communication Center at the Palestinian Prime Minister's Office reported that Israeli occupation forces killed 1,222 Palestinians in Gaza on the 297th day since the so-called “ceasefire,” bringing the total death toll to 73,375 since the conflict began. The report documents continued military attacks, civilian casualties, and severe restrictions on humanitarian access despite the ceasefire agreement.

According to the report, Israeli strikes this week hit multiple locations including Deir al-Balah, Nuseirat refugee camp, Gaza City's Al-Rimal neighborhood, Al-Mawasi, Al-Bureij,



and Jabalia, killing several Palestinians including children and injuring dozens more. A strike also destroyed

a medical warehouse near Al-Aqsa Martyrs Hospital, damaging critical supplies amid severe shortages.

Médecins Sans Frontières described the situation as “structural violence under a different name,” stating that killings, confinement, and humanitarian restrictions continue despite the ceasefire. The Palestinian Ministry of Health warned Gaza's healthcare system faces an unprecedented catastrophe due to repeated attacks and supply shortages.

Separately, OHCHR reported settler attacks in the West Bank averaging 190 monthly in early 2026, displacing nearly 700 Palestinians, while military checkpoints increased 43 percent compared to previous decades, further restricting Palestinian access to essential services and livelihoods.

983rd Urs of Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) Celebrated with Devotion and Spiritual Gatherings

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Adviser to the Punjab Chief Minister Ali Dar said the teachings of Hazrat Ali Hajveri (RA), popularly known as Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA), continue to inspire peace, tolerance, compassion and service to humanity across generations.



Addressing a Mehfil-e-Samaa held as part of the three-day celebrations of the 983rd Annual Urs of the revered Sufi saint, Ali Dar described Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA) as a symbol of Islamic scholarship and spiritual enlightenment whose message of love and brotherhood remains relevant today.

The ceremony was attended by Secretary Auqaf and Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, senior Auqaf officials and a large number of devotees, while renowned Qawwals presented devotional performances.

Dr. Bhutta highlighted the enduring significance of Kashf-ul-Mahjub and reaffirmed the Auqaf Department's commitment to providing facilities and security for pilgrims while promoting the values of peace and harmony.

He announced that the concluding day of the Urs would feature Qur'an Khawani, scholarly sessions, Qira'at, Mehfil-e-Naat and a special programme on Kashf-ul-Mahjub. The celebrations will conclude with collective prayers for Pakistan's peace, stability, unity and prosperity, attended by hundreds of thousands of devotees.



Ethiopian Embassy Holds Plantation Drive under Green Legacy Initiative

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The citizens of Pakistan maintained their tradition of joining the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in its historic, single-day tree-planting campaign under the Green Legacy Initiative of Prime Minister H. E. Dr. Abiy Ahmed.

The participants from various walks of life including the diplomatic corps, business leaders, media personnel, and civil society participated in the plantation drive organized by the Ethiopian Embassy Islamabad in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority.

The event in Pakistan was held in solidarity with Ethiopia's monumental domestic goal to plant 800 million seedlings in a single day.

Addressing the attendees, Mr. Melaw Getachew, Chargé d'Affaires of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, briefed the participants on the impact of the Green Legacy Initiative. Under this flagship program, Ethiopia has already planted more than 48 billion seedlings, he said.

“The purpose of today's drive is to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia in their goal of planting 800 million seedlings today,” he remarked. He emphasized Ethiopia's global

leadership in climate resilience, pointing to Addis Ababa's upcoming role as the host city for the COP32 climate summit.

Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of the Clean and Green Movement Islamabad and former President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, commended Ethiopia's massive reforestation efforts.

“The Green Legacy Initiative is completely aligned with the shared goals of our own Clean and Green Movement here in Islamabad,” Mr. Bakhtawari noted, highlighting the importance of united, global action against climate change.

WHO Launches First Public-Private Council with Pakistani Business Leaders to Accelerate Health Agenda

City Desk

KARACHI: The World Health Organization (WHO), the Government of Pakistan, and 20 prominent business leaders launched the first WHO Council for Partnership with the Public and Private Sectors, aimed at improving public health, strengthening national health systems, and advancing progress toward health-related Sustainable Development Goals.

The launch ceremony was led by WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean Region, Dr. Hanan Balkhy, alongside Council Chair Aziz Memon, Federal Secretary for Health and Co-Chair Muhammad Aslam Ghauri, WHO Representative in Pakistan Dr. Luo Dapeng, and 20 founding members from business and academia.

Dr. Balkhy said the Council would unite business and philanthropic leaders to build a healthier, more



prosperous future, consolidating strengths in financing, technology, logistics, and expertise for a durable partnership. Memon emphasized that the Council brings Pakistan's prosperity and health agendas together, enabling business leadership to

promote public health with WHO as a trusted partner.

Ghauri affirmed the government's commitment to universal health coverage under Pakistan's National Health Strategy 2026-2035, noting the Council arrives at a crit-

ical moment requiring cross-sector collaboration. Dr. Dapeng highlighted that the Council's greatest contribution would be advocacy from business leaders across boardrooms and industries, stressing that a healthier nation is also a more pros-

perous one.

WHO has maintained a permanent presence in Pakistan since establishing its country office in 1960, working across more than 150 locations globally with over 190 Member States to promote health worldwide.

Alastair Crook and the Great Game

Few figures embody the long arc of British strategic engagement in Asia and the Middle East as vividly as Alastair Warren Crook, a veteran diplomat and intelligence officer whose career spanned three decades within the Secret Intelligence Service (MI6). His life's work, from the rugged passes of Afghanistan to the shadowed corridors of diplomacy, reflects the persistence of what historians have called the Great Game—the centuriesold contest for influence between Britain and Russia across Eurasia.

Crook's career unfolded during the waning years of empire, yet the logic of imperial rivalry remained intact. In the 1980s, as the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan, Crook helped coordinate British support for the Mujahideen, the guerrilla fighters resisting Moscow's occupation. The mission was not merely tactical; it was ideological—a continuation of Britain's nineteenthcentury policy of containing Russian expansion toward the Indian subcontinent. The Afghan mountains became the new chessboard of empire, and Crook, like many of his generation,

played his part in a struggle that would shape global geopolitics for decades.

Educated in the traditions of British diplomacy, Crook entered MI6 at a time when the Cold War had transformed intelligence into the principal instrument of statecraft. His postings in Asia and the Middle East placed him at the intersection of espionage and diplomacy, where covert operations were inseparable from political negotiation. Though diminished in global reach after 1945, British intelligence retained its instinct—to influence events indirectly, through alliances, insurgencies, and information.

Crook's work in Afghanistan exemplified this approach. Britain, alongside the United States, Saudi Arabia, and Pakistan, supported the Mujahideen not only to bleed the Soviet military but to reaffirm Western dominance in the ideological contest between communism and capitalism. The eventual Soviet withdrawal in 1989 marked a victory for the West, yet the fragmentation of Afghanistan sowed the seeds of future instability. Crook's reflections reveal a deep awareness of the paradoxes of power—how shortterm victories can

yield longterm disorder.

In recent years, Crook has emerged as a trenchant critic of Western policy toward Russia and Eastern Europe. His remarks, widely circulated online, warn of a dangerous escalation between Moscow and the West.

“I foresee an escalation by Russia against America's closest ally, against Europe,” he cautioned, arguing that European militarization and U. S. encouragement are pushing the continent toward confrontation. His analogy is vivid:

comparing the bombing of Russian commercial infrastructure, such as the Wildberries retail network, to the hypothetical destruction of Amazon warehouses by Russia. “What the hell? Is that even sane?” he asks, exposing the moral and strategic absurdity of targeting civilian economic assets. For Crook, the underlying motive remains unchanged since the nineteenth century: the desire to fragment Russia and seize its vast natural resources. He identifies three historical

attempts to subdue Russia—the Napoleonic invasion, the Nazi campaign, and Cold War containment—and suggests the current conflict represents a fourth iteration of the same imperial impulse.

Crook situates the present confrontation within the continuum of the Great Game. Coined in the 1830s, the term described Britain's rivalry with Tsarist Russia for control of Central Asia. Today, the terrain has shifted—from the passes of the Hindu Kush to the digital and economic frontiers of Eurasia—but the strategic logic endures. The West's pursuit of influence through sanctions, proxy wars, and information campaigns mirrors the imperial tactics of the past.

The tragedy, in Crook's view, lies in the failure to learn from history. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 was interpreted in Western capitals as the final victory of liberal democracy. Yet triumphalism blinded policymakers to the resentment and inse-

curity that would later fuel Russia's resurgence. NATO's eastward expansion, the militarization of Ukraine, and the weaponization of economic interdependence have revived the very dynamics the Great Game sought to manage—competition for dominance across the Eurasian heartland.

Crook's reflections carry the authority of experience. Having served in both intelligence and diplomacy, he understands that sustainable peace cannot be achieved through coercion alone. His critique of Western strategy is rooted in realism: every empire, however sophisticated, must eventually confront the limits of its reach.

He advocates a return to genuine diplomacy—dialogue grounded in mutual respect rather than ideological triumphalism. For Crook, the lesson of Afghanistan is instructive: external powers can ignite conflicts, but they rarely control their outcomes. The same principle applies to Ukraine and the broader confrontation with Russia. Escalation, he warns, will not yield stability; it will perpetuate the cycle of intervention and retaliation that has defined Eurasian politics for two centuries.

Alastair Crook's career invites reflection on the moral dimensions of intelligence work. His service in MI6 was shaped by loyalty to Britain's strategic interests, yet his later writings reveal a conscience tempered by historical awareness. He represents a generation of operatives who witnessed the transformation of empire into globalized interventionism—a shift that replaced territorial conquest with ideological and economic dominance.

In the twilight of his career, Crook's voice resonates as that of a seasoned observer urging restraint. His warnings about the West's confrontation with Russia are not nostalgic defences of old alliances but sober assessments of geopolitical reality. The Great Game, he implies, never truly ended; it merely changed its instruments.

As Europe and America navigate the perilous landscape of twenty-firstcentury geopolitics, Crook's insights remind us that history is not a museum of past mistakes—it is a mirror reflecting present ambitions. The torch of intelligence he once carried now illuminates a deeper truth: that power without wisdom is the surest path to perpetual conflict.



Analysis

S. M. Hali

Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
178,200.02	176,094.11
Day's High	Day's Low
178,985.94	177,759.88
Index Value	Change
21,882,977,508	+ 2105.91
Percentage	Time
+ 1.2%	3 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,857.70	− 10.35
Percentage	Time
− 0.095%	3 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT + 1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,048.96	+ 563.93
Percentage	Time
+ 1.07%	Aug, 1:36 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
63,754.90	− 607.12
Percentage	Time
− 0.94%	3 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT + 9
Open Market Forex Rates	

Recurrent urban flooding declared economic emergency; Govt urged to adopt preventive climate policies

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, Chairman National Business Group Pakistan, Chairman FPCCI Policy Advisory Board and former Provincial Minister, has warned that recurrent urban flooding has become a serious economic emergency and can no longer be treated as a routine seasonal issue.

Expressing grief over lives lost in recent monsoon rains, he said intense rainfall and climate change are bringing urban life to a standstill. Commercial and industrial production is disrupted in both large and small cities, markets close, transport and electricity are hit,



and movement of goods to ports and domestic markets is suspended.

Citing past losses, Hussain noted that Karachi's 2025 urban floods caused Rs14–15 billion in business losses in just two days, with over 1,000 shops and warehouses affected. The 2020 floods caused an estimated Rs10–12 billion loss in Karachi alone. The 2022 nationwide floods killed 1,739 people and caused Rs800 billion in direct damage and Rs1.986 trillion in economic losses to agriculture, food, livestock and fisheries. Crops made up 82% of that, about Rs2.285 trillion, with 4.4 million acres affected and 800,000 livestock lost. Cotton, dates, sugarcane and rice suffered extensive damage.

To address this, Hussain urged the govern-

ment to shift from post-disaster relief to preventive climate-resilience policies. His demands include: a transparent Monsoon Economic Damage Dashboard; independent audits and de-silting of drainage systems; removal of encroachments; enhanced pumping capacity; action against construction on waterways; flood-response and business-continuity plans for industrial estates and markets; emergency working capital for SMEs; and expanded crop, livestock and business insurance.

He said negligence and weak infrastructure repeatedly shift disaster costs to the public, taxpayers and exporters. Pakistan must prioritize prevention and preparedness to protect lives, food security, exports and economic stability.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema chairs a meeting on Operationalization of National Agri-Trade and Food Safety Agency (NAFSA) on Monday.



Photo: PID

BingX Appoints Kevin Lee as Chief Strategy Officer



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: BingX, a leading crypto exchange and Web3-AI company, has appointed Kevin Lee as Chief Strategy Officer to drive its shift toward a unified multi-asset trading platform. Lee will lead long-term strategy across platform development, business growth, and ecosystem expansion. He brings 20+ years in institutional finance and digital assets, with past roles at JPMor-

gan Chase, Macquarie, BNP Paribas, and senior positions in crypto since 2013. BingX is expanding beyond crypto to connect digital assets and traditional markets, focusing on an intelligent, user-centric experience.

“The next era of trading will be defined by how seamlessly users can discover opportunities across asset classes,” Lee said. Founded in 2018, BingX serves 40M+ users and partners with Chelsea FC and Scuderia Ferrari HP.

foodpanda Opens Pakistan’s First Flagship Rider Rest Station in Lahore



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: foodpanda Pakistan has launched its first-ever Flagship Rider Rest Station at Gold Crest Mall, Lahore — a first-of-its-kind facility for delivery partners in the country.

The station is designed to support riders facing extreme heat, rush hours, and unpredictable weather. Facilities include air-con-

ditioned comfort, dedicated seating, clean drinking water, and high-speed device charging to keep phones powered during shifts.

“Our riders serve communities daily with resilience. They deserve spaces built for their comfort,” said Muntaga Peracha, CEO foodpanda Pakistan. He added that this is just the beginning of a broader push to elevate standards for last-mile workers nationwide.

Hasaan Pardesi, CEO Gold Crest Mall, called the partnership a step toward real social impact, ensuring riders get the respect and facilities they deserve.

foodpanda is now seeking partnerships with malls, fuel stations, developers, and municipal bodies to scale Rider Rest Stations across major urban centers as part of its long-term vision for a nationwide network.

AI Seekho 2026 Showcases Pakistan’s Emerging AI Talent

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: AI Seekho 2026, organised by Google in collaboration with the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication (MoITT), Telenor Pakistan and Innovista, concluded as one of Pakistan's largest artificial intelligence developer initiatives, highlighting the country's growing AI ecosystem.

The programme engaged more than 50,000 developers, received

over 17,000 registrations, and attracted 1,500 AI-powered project submissions built using Google AI Studio and Google Antigravity. Teams competed for a Rs2.5 million prize pool, with the national champions receiving Rs1 million.

Team Struggle from Karachi won the top prize for developing an AI-powered adaptive gaming platform.

Team Nurture secured second

place with Hazir, an AI-driven service marketplace, while Team Viberonix from Sahiwal finished third for creating Wasila, an intelligent gig-services platform.

The initiative also reflected growing diversity, with professionals making up 40 percent of participants and women accounting for 25 percent.

Google said the programme aims to expand access to AI tools, promote grassroots innovation and



prepare Pakistan's next generation of AI builders. AI Seekho Builders

Days will be held in Islamabad and Karachi on August 8-9.

HESCO’s System Collapses with Every Storm: HCSTSI President

News Desk

HYDERABAD: Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry President Muhammad Saleem Memon has expressed serious reservations over the situation of HESCO's power system after the recent rain and strong winds, saying that the paralysis of the vast power system due to minor weather conditions is a serious question mark. Electricity is a basic need of industry, trade, daily life and economic activities in the present era, but HESCO's system seems to be failing to cope with the severity of the weather time and again.

DWP Group MEP Division Awarded HVAC Contract for Airlink Production Facility in Lahore!

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: DWP Group's MEP Division has been awarded the HVAC contract for the upcoming Airlink Communication Ltd. Production Facility located in Sundar Green Special Economic Zone, Lahore. Under the scope of work, DWP Group's MEP Division will supply and install a high-efficiency GREE VRF System, designed to deliver optimal climate control, energy performance and long-term operational reliability for the state-of-the-art industrial facility.

Speaking on the achievement, Mr. Malik Tariq Mehmood, COO MEP Division said “We are proud to support Airlink's upcoming production facility with high-efficiency HVAC solutions designed for performance, reliability and energy efficiency. For DWP Group, this project is another example of how our engineering capability contributes to modern industrial infrastructure.

It connects directly with our larger purpose of Powering Pakistan's Future by supporting projects that enable growth, productivity and national development.”

Regional Cricket Association Karachi's General Body Meeting Elections for the Posts of Vice President, Joint Secretary and Executive Committee held

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The First Annual General Body Meeting of the Regional Cricket Association Karachi (RCAK) was held under the Chairmanship of Nadeem Omar President at RCAK Secretariat here on Saturday in which Secretary Ali Hussain, Zonal Presidents, Muhammad Khurram Ashraf, Nusrat Mehboob, Afzal Qureshi, Syed Musarrat Raza, Muhammad Majid Khan, Saim Ahmed, Abdul Rauf, Secretaries Umar Tauseef, Rashid Ahmed, Zamin Ali, Naushad Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Saeed Jabbar, Tufail Khan, Saifullah, Treasurers Hanzala Khan, Saghir Ahmed, Akhtar Faheem, Imran Anjum Sheikh, Muhammad Kamran and Zaib Iqbal,

The Meeting began with the recitation of the Holy Quran by Umar Touseef after which proceedings were started according to the agenda. In the Meeting Elections for Vice President, Joint Secretary and Two Executive Committee Members was held and Mr. Junaid Khalil Naini Talwala was elected as Vice President, Muhammad Tauseef Siddiqui as Joint Secretary, while Muhammad Majid Khan and Saim Ahmed were elected unanimously as members of the Executive Committee. The General Body also approved the appointment of Najam ul Islam Jafri as Finance Manager, Furthermore, for further strengthening transparency, accountability and best governance in financial matters, Namdar & Company, Chartered Accountants was also approved to be appointed as the External Auditor of Regional Cricket

Association Karachi. On this occasion, President Nadeem Omar, while congratulating the newly elected office bearers, said that the strength, transparency and unity of Regional Cricket Association Karachi are the foundation of the development of Karachi Cricket. He said that he is confident that the newly elected office bearers will play an important role in taking Karachi cricket to new heights through their abilities, honesty and team work. According to him, the association's top priority is the promotion of club cricket, providing better opportunities to young talent and establishing a strong system based on merit, transparency and professional principles. President Nadeem Omar further said that Regional Cricket Association Karachi, with the cooperation of



all Zones, Cubs and relevant stakeholders, will continue its efforts to further improve the standard of cricket in the City and create more opportunities for young players. Secretary Ali Hussain, in his address, said that the steps taken for the devel-

opment and stability of Karachi cricket during the last three years under the leadership of President Nadeem Omar are commendable. He said that as a result of his continuous struggle for the rights of Karachi cricket and effective leadership, the inclusion of Kara-

chi's team in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy became possible, which is an important milestone in the history of Karachi Cricket. At the conclusion of the meeting, the newly elected office bearers, while expressing gratitude for the confidence of the General Body, reiterated the resolve that they will utilize all their abilities for the development of Karachi cricket, promotion of club cricket, establishment of transparent governance and enhancement of the prestige of Regional Cricket Association Karachi. On this occasion, Khalid Nafees, Syed Muhammad Ahmed, Muhammad Imran Khan, S. M. Asim, Rehan Siddiqui, Ejaz Pachi, S. A. Faheem, Javed Iqbal, Azam Khan also congratulated the newly elected office bearers.

JI Faisalabad Leaders Announce Women's Rally Against Petroleum Levy

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: District Nazim of Jamaat-e-Islami Sadia Rehman has announced a women's rally on August 6 at Al-Markazul-Islami, Chiniot Bazaar, to protest rising petroleum prices and the "cruel" petroleum levy. Addressing a press conference with Deputy Nazim Maimuna Latif, Najma Khanum, Bushra Sadiqa, and Dr. Fehmida Ilyas, JI leaders accused the government of extorting people through petroleum levy and daily price changes, calling OGRA's new



pricing authority "fraud and deception." They claimed petrol could be under Rs. 200 per liter if the levy was abolished. The leaders also condemned fixed taxes in electricity bills and expensive IPP contracts, saying they are destroying the economy and increasing household burdens. They demanded immediate abolition of the petroleum levy, an end to load shedding, and rollback of food prices to pre Iran-US war levels. The public was urged to join the protest to record their dissent.

AIOU Hosts Workshop on Education and Career Opportunities in Japan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has organized a "Japan Education and Career Awareness Workshop" to familiarize students with educational, professional and employment opportunities in Japan, while encouraging them to develop globally competitive skills and pursue international career pathways. Addressing the workshop, the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Nasser Mahmood said the University is committed to equipping its students with quality education, foreign language proficiency and professional skills that meet international standards. He noted that the Japan Pakistan Advancement Center, along with the Turkish



and Russian language and cultural centers is preparing students for global education, research, scholarships and employment opportunities. The workshop's resource person, Mayumi Takashima, delivered a comprehensive presentation on higher education, employment prospects, legal

visa pathways and career planning in Japan. She highlighted the importance of learning the Japanese language and shared practical guidance on pursuing academic and professional opportunities through legal and safe channels. She also responded to participants' questions.

The Global Price of the Iran War

Continued from Page 4

heavily dependent on imported energy and maritime trade, have encountered similar challenges. Airlines have been forced to reroute flights, shipping companies have absorbed higher operational costs, and manufacturers have contended with renewed supply-chain disruptions. The cumulative impact illustrates how regional conflicts can rapidly evolve into global economic events. Several international economic analyses estimate that disruptions to trade, higher energy costs, inflation, increased defence expenditure, aviation losses, and weaker global growth together account for the estimated US\$1.5 trillion to US\$2.2 trillion impact on the world economy. These figures are necessarily approximate and depend upon assumptions regarding the duration of the conflict, future energy prices, and broader macroeconomic conditions. Nevertheless, they underscore

the scale of the indirect costs that extend far beyond military budgets. The Iran war therefore highlights an increasingly important feature of twenty-first-century conflicts: the economic burden is distributed internationally rather than remaining confined to the countries at war. Financial markets, multinational supply chains, energy infrastructure, and global commerce ensure that military confrontations now have worldwide economic repercussions. Nations with no direct military involvement may nevertheless experience slower growth, higher inflation, and increased fiscal pressure. This reality should encourage policymakers and observers alike to evaluate conflicts not only through military or diplomatic lenses but also through their wider economic consequences. The available evidence suggests that the true cost of modern warfare cannot be measured solely by missiles launched or territory gained. It must also account for lost economic

opportunities, weakened investment, disrupted trade, higher living costs, and diminished global growth. As additional official data become available over the coming months and years, current estimates will undoubtedly be revised. Until then, careful distinction between verified official figures and informed economic estimates remains essential. What is already clear, however, is that the financial consequences of the Iran war extend far beyond the battlefield. Whether measured in billions spent on military operations or trillions lost through economic disruption, the conflict has become a reminder that in an interconnected global economy, the costs of war are seldom borne by the combatants alone. *The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Michigan, USA*

Seven Years After Article 370: Integration Without Peace

Continued from Page 4

sustainably managed when institutions for peaceful dissent and democratic participation become increasingly constrained. Heavy security deployment continues to define everyday life across much of the region. The persistence of violence demonstrates that constitutional restructuring has not addressed the deeper political drivers of the conflict. Stability maintained primarily through extensive security measures should not be mistaken for durable peace. The implications extend beyond Kashmir itself. The constitutional changes of August 2019 further strained already fragile relations between India and Pakistan, both nuclear-armed neighbours with competing claims over the disputed territory. Although the 2021 ceasefire

understanding reduced hostilities along the Line of Control, meaningful political dialogue between the two countries has remained limited. The dispute therefore continues to shape regional security while leaving the aspirations of Kashmiris largely absent from diplomatic engagement. Seven years after Article 370's abrogation, the gap between official narratives and political realities remains striking. The promises of peace, prosperity and normalcy were accompanied by expectations that constitutional integration would resolve one of South Asia's longest-running conflicts. Instead, administrative integration has been accompanied by deeper political centralization, continuing debates over civil liberties and persistent questions about democratic legitimacy. The conflict has not disappeared; it has entered a different phase in which constitutional change has been

followed by administrative consolidation rather than political reconciliation. History demonstrates that enduring peace cannot be built through constitutional restructuring alone. It requires dialogue, democratic participation, accountability and the confidence of the people whose lives are directly shaped by state policy. Until political grievances are addressed alongside economic development and security concerns, claims of normalcy will remain contested. Seven years after 5 August 2019, Kashmir continues to remind the world that genuine peace is measured not by the extent of administrative control, but by the degree to which justice, political agency and human dignity are protected. *The writer is a student at National Defense University and currently serving as a research associate at Kashmir Institute of International Relations.*

The New Provinces Formula: Will It Change Pakistan's Political Map or Its Economic Destiny?

Continued from Page 4

For every proposed province, several questions must be examined: How much revenue can it generate on its own? What is its tax base? What is its potential in agriculture, industry and services? How many employment opportunities can it create? What is the existing state of its infrastructure? And what would be its share in federally collected revenues? Creating a province merely on the basis of population and geography is not enough. Another political argument in favour of new provinces is that the existing large provinces are dominated by powerful political families, and that smaller provinces or administrative units could weaken this political monopoly. This argument, however, is not entirely convincing. Powerful political families exist in almost every part of Pakistan. From South Punjab to Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, local political elites continue to exercise considerable

influence. If existing provinces are divided into smaller units, it does not necessarily mean that powerful families will disappear. In fact, it could make access to political power even easier for them. Instead of becoming the chief minister of a large province, an influential family could simply become the chief minister of a smaller one. Therefore, the real reform should not be limited to changing the administrative map. It should focus on transforming the political and institutional system. If the restructuring of provinces proves difficult under the existing political system, the idea of holding a referendum may also emerge. Pakistan has experience with referendums, but the most important requirement for any such process would be clarity regarding its constitutional, legal and political status. If a major restructuring of the provincial system is genuinely considered in the future, political parties, Parliament, provincial assemblies, economists, consti-

tutional experts and civil society will all need to be included in the debate. A national consensus cannot be created through an administrative decision alone. This situation raises the question of whether Pakistan is entering a phase of major political or administrative decisions. However, instead of treating political speculation as established fact, these developments should be judged on the basis of their practical consequences. It is also worth noting that some circles are linking the current debate with the possibility of a national government or a broader political arrangement. But the success of any political system will not be determined by how many political parties participate in it. It will ultimately be judged by the direction in which it takes the economy. The Real Crisis Is the Power Crisis. The crisis Pakistan is currently facing is not merely political. The electricity crisis, high energy prices, disruption in industrial production, unemployment,

inflation, weak exports, a narrow tax base and losses of state-owned enterprises are among the fundamental problems confronting the economy. If the creation of new provinces is accompanied by a strategy to address these problems, then the debate deserves serious consideration. For example, if new administrative units are assigned specific industrial corridors, industries are developed on the basis of local resources, agricultural production is linked with value addition, energy generation is connected to local industrial requirements, and clear economic targets are established for each administrative unit, provincial restructuring could become a vehicle for economic development. But if the objective is merely to create new offices, new assemblies and new political elites, the national economy may not be able to bear the burden of such an experiment for very long. Pakistan's younger generation is perhaps the most important stakeholder in this debate.

Young people are asking: Where will I find employment? How will I obtain quality education? Where will I access healthcare? Where will I find the capital to start a business? The state must create an environment that provides young Pakistanis with employment, skills, education, healthcare, entrepreneurship and investment opportunities—an environment in which they prefer building their future at home rather than leaving the country. This is precisely where the debate over new provinces must be connected with broader economic reforms. Ultimately, the most important question is what investors think. For an investor, the number of provinces matters far less than political stability, policy continuity, affordable and reliable energy, a simple tax system, the rule of law and guarantees for the protection of capital. If administrative restructuring brings government closer to citizens, improves electricity and gas supplies, establishes industrial

zones, simplifies taxation and speeds up business decisions, investors are likely to regard it as a positive development. But if the division of provinces leads to political confrontation, constitutional disputes, institutional instability and higher government expenditure, investors will see it as a warning sign. Pakistan needs an administrative system that brings the state closer to its citizens, distributes resources more fairly and creates new centres of economic activity. But new provinces, by themselves, are not an economic miracle. We must decide whether we are creating new provinces or a new economy. If new provinces come with new industrial centres, better education, modern healthcare, affordable energy, employment opportunities, strong local governments and effective accountability, the experiment could potentially change Pakistan's economic direction. But if only the political map changes, the number of centres

of power increases and government expenditure rises, nothing meaningful will change for the ordinary citizen. Pakistan's real problem is not how many provinces appear on the map. The real issue is how many people have access to state resources, how many jobs the economy can generate, and how effectively the government can provide services to ordinary citizens. Therefore, the debate over new provinces must be taken beyond political slogans and evaluated on the basis of economic feasibility, constitutional requirements, fiscal sustainability and public welfare. Ultimately, the decision on new provinces should not be made by the map alone. It is the economy that must have the final say. *The writer and analyst holds an MSc in Economics from the University of Karachi and is a journalist. His articles and analytical pieces are regularly published in newspapers and magazines.*

Patrolling

ISLAMABAD: Security personnel patrolling during the Chehlum procession of martyrs of Karbala taken out from Imam-bargah Asna Ashari in G-6/2, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PM Shehbaz Sharif directs timely completion of privatization programme

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the completion of all stages of the privatization initiative within prescribed timelines, stressing close coordination among ministries and institutions to achieve government targets.

Chairing a meeting to review progress on the privatization of state-owned enterprises, the prime minister said all milestones under the programme must be implemented according to schedule. The meeting was attended by Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema,



Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant to PM Haroon Akhtar, and other senior officials.

The prime minister directed authorities to ensure the privatization of Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) safeguards its core mandate of supporting agriculture, emphasizing continued focus on agricultural credit and financial services for small and medium-sized farmers post-privatization, calling improved access to finance essential for farm productivity and food security.

Ministry of Privatization officials briefed the meeting on the programme's progress, noting 27 state-owned enterprises are included across three phases. The financial closing processes for Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and First Women Bank have been completed, with PIA's first financial closing and management transfer finalized on

June 29.

The meeting reviewed progress on privatizing IESCO, FESCO, and GEPCO, with investor document submission deadlines set for August 7, August 21, and September 7 respectively. International firms have shown interest, with investor roadshows underway. The transaction structure for ZTBL is being designed to preserve its agricultural lending mandate.

Officials also briefed the PM on plans to privatize Islamabad International Airport, Jinnah International Airport Karachi, and Allama Iqbal International Airport Lahore. The prime minister directed authorities to closely monitor all ongoing initiatives to ensure implementation within stipulated timeframes.

Goods transporters announce nationwide strike from August 8

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Goods Transport Alliance on Monday announced a nationwide strike from August 8 in protest against rising fuel prices and what it described as unsustainable operating costs.

Speaking at a press conference in Karachi, representatives of various transport associations warned that the movement of goods across the country will come to a

complete halt if their demands were not met.

Speaking on the occasion, transport alliance president Malik Shahzad Awan said transporters would suspend the transportation of goods nationwide from August 8 to protest against rising fuel prices and "unsustainable operating costs."

He said transporters could no longer continue their business due to the increasing prices of diesel and petrol, and



demanded that the government abolish the daily fuel price adjustment mechanism and revert to fixing petroleum

product prices on a monthly basis.

Awan also called on the government to reverse the recent increases in petrol and diesel prices, restore toll tax rates to their June 2024 level, and abolish the 7% withholding tax imposed on the goods transport sector.

The alliance warned that freight operations across Pakistan would remain suspended until their concerns were addressed.

No extra toll tax on non-M-Tag vehicles until next hearing, rules IHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has extended its temporary order, restraining authorities from collecting an additional 50% toll tax from vehicles without an M-Tag or those with insufficient balance in their M-Tag accounts until the next hearing.

During the proceedings, the National Highway Authority (NHA) submitted its written reply to the court.

The petitioner's counsel requested additional time to review the response, following which the court postponed the hearing.

The petition challenges the NHA's policy of imposing a 50% additional toll tax on vehicles that are not registered with the M-Tag system.

The matter will now be taken up at the next hearing.

Federal Ombudsman stresses timely resolution of public complaints

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Federal Ombudsman Naveed Kamran Baloch on Monday reviewed regional office performance and directed officials to ensure timely and effective disposal of public complaints.

Chairing a meeting in Karachi, Baloch was briefed that Sui Southern Gas Company accounted for 50% of complaints, followed by K-Electric 41% and NADRA 9%.

Key figures shared:

- 25,591 complaints disposed in the first six months of 2026
- 37,802 complaints resolved in 2025
- 627 disputes settled via Informal Dispute Resolution since Jan 2026, higher than last year
- 82% implementation rate of investigation findings: 4,148 of 6,024 decisions implemented

Baloch was told offices receive 4,000+ cases monthly and staffing is sufficient. He appreciated new regional/local offices for better access and said recruitment at the Karachi office was done strictly on merit.



The meeting also discussed employee promotions and acquiring land from Sindh govt for new offices. Procedures for promotions and incentives for deserving staff will be further improved.

Khawaja Asif calls Mohsin Naqvi government's 'most powerful minister'



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has called Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi as the 'most powerful minister' in the federal government, claiming that in several matters he is not even answerable to the prime minister.

Speaking during a television interview, Asif said Naqvi, despite serving as interior minister, does not appear to be fully integrated into the cabinet system. He claimed he had seen Naqvi attend only two or three cabinet meetings.

The defence minister also said Naqvi had attended Parliament only a handful of times, adding that if the interior minister himself was

expressing dissatisfaction with the current system, "then perhaps we should all go home."

Asif's remarks came in response to Naqvi's recent comments that Pakistan's governance system had become too weak to effectively address the country's challenges. The interior minister had warned that if the existing structure remained unchanged, the country could still be facing the same problems a decade from now.

Naqvi also argued that creating new administrative units or provinces had become essential for improving governance and ensuring the country's long-term development, saying the current system had outlived its effectiveness.

Top Islamabad police officers transferred, posted

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: High-ranking police officers in Islamabad were transferred and posted on Monday after the approval from the inspector general of police.

According to a notification issued in this regard, Abdul Haque Umrani,

who was currently serving as AIG Logistics, has been transferred as posted as AIG Operations in the federal capital.

SSP Investigation Usman Tariq Butt was also transferred and posted as AIG Logistics.

The notification was issued by the IG Secretariat Islamabad.

Ex-Senator Mushtaq Ahmed sent on 3-day physical remand in Islamabad protest case



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An Anti-Terrorism Court (ATC) in Islamabad granted police a 3-day physical remand of former senator Mushtaq Ahmed and co-accused Daniyal for further investigation into an Islamabad protest case. According to the FIR registered at Shalimar Police Station, 400-500

protesters gathered in Sector F-10, allegedly blocking roads, disrupting traffic, forcing shops to close, and refusing to disperse. Police alleged the demonstrators vandalized a media vehicle, damaged government property, and pelted stones at officers, injuring several.

The case is registered against Mushtaq Ahmed, Akhunzada Hussain Yousafzai, and others under anti-terrorism laws and the Peaceful Assembly and Public Order Act. Prosecution requested a 30-day remand to recover a vehicle and weapons linked to the incident. After hearing both sides, Duty Judge Rukhshanda Shaheen approved three days of physical remand for investigation.

PM visits Punjab deputy speaker's residence to condole his father's demise



BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of Deputy Speaker of Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channar and his brother Malik Munir Iqbal Channar here to offer condolences on the passing of their father, veteran politician and Member of the National Assembly Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar.

During the visit, the prime minister met with the bereaved family members and offered Fateha for the departed soul, praying for the elevation of his ranks in paradise and for strength to the family to bear the loss.

He paid rich tributes to late Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar,

highlighting his invaluable services as an MNA and former provincial minister dedicated to public welfare, besides appreciating his steadfast loyalty and notable political role within the party.

The prime minister was accompanied by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, and members of the National and Punjab assemblies from Bahawalpur.