

Pakistan to Observe Kashmir Exploitation Day on August 5

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam has condemned India's 5 August 2019 constitutional changes, announcing that the day will again be marked as Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir across Pakistan. He said a peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute is vital for regional stability.

Briefing media at the Jammu and Kashmir Council Secretariat, the Minister said a solidarity walk will be held in Islamabad, alongside seminars, resolutions and programmes in the National Assembly, Senate, provincial assemblies, AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan. Missions abroad will also observe the day, with a one-minute silence for conflict victims.

Muqam called India's 2019 action unilateral and unconstitutional, reaf-



firming Pakistan's stance that the dispute must be settled per UN Security Council resolutions and Kashmiri aspirations. He alleged continued human rights violations and demographic changes in the territory.

He said Pakistanis across political lines stand with Kashmiris, and the government will keep raising the issue internationally.

APHC Convener Ghulam Muhammad Safi thanked Pakistan

for its backing, calling for a UN-supervised plebiscite and urging global attention to Indian-administered Kashmir. Both leaders vowed continued political and diplomatic advocacy for the Kashmir cause.

Acting AJK President Calls 5 August "Darkest Day" for Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar, in his message on Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir, described 5 August 2019 as one of the darkest days in Kashmir's history, saying revocation of Articles 370 and 35A was imposed against the people's wishes to alter the region's demographic and cultural identity.



He claimed that despite India's actions, its objectives remain unmet, citing heavy security deployment as evidence of local rejection of the move.

Akbar alleged worsening repression since 2019, including extrajudicial killings, prolonged detentions, and restrictions on civil liberties, employment, education and travel, along with efforts to change the region's demographic makeup through outside settlement.

He said Kashmiris continue their peaceful struggle for self-determination under UN Security Council resolutions and would not accept any division of the territory.

The Acting President called on the global community to highlight human rights conditions in Indian-administered Kashmir and the treatment of minorities in India, urging renewed efforts toward a peaceful resolution.

Concluding, Akbar termed 5 August a defining date for Kashmiris and reaffirmed support for the cause through political, diplomatic and peaceful means.

Chief Secretary Reviews Polling Arrangements in LA-27



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Secretary, Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Khushhal Khan, visited multiple polling stations in Constituency LA-27 to review the polling process and assess administrative and security arrangements.

During the visit, he examined facilities provided to voters and checked compliance with the Election Code of Conduct. He also interacted with polling staff for updates on arrangements and briefly spoke with voters about facilities and the overall electoral environment.

The Chief Secretary directed officials to ensure the polling process remains impartial, transparent and lawful. He stressed strict enforcement of security measures, maintenance of public order, and full adherence to the Election Code of Conduct throughout polling.

He was accompanied by Secretary, Services and General Administration Department, Chaudhry Imtiaz Ahmed; Commissioner, Muzaffarabad Division, Badr Munir; Deputy Inspector General of Police, Muzaffarabad Region, Raja Shehryar Sikandar; and Deputy Commissioner, Muzaffarabad, Munir Ahmed Qureshi.

Polling in LA-27 Kotla and four Patwar Circles of LA-28 Lachhrat had been postponed on 2 August 2026 due to bad weather. The rescheduled polling is taking place today and will continue until 5:00 p.m.

Kashmir Global Council Offers to Mediate AJK Crisis

Abdul Majeed Tahir

NEW YORK/MUZAFFARABAD: The Kashmir Global Council (KGC) has offered diplomatic assistance to facilitate immediate talks among the Government of Pakistan, state institutions, political leadership and protest leaders amid the ongoing tense situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The Council said only meaningful political dialogue, diplomacy and constitutional mechanisms can resolve the crisis, expressing deep concern over violence and civilian deaths in Rawalakot, Kotla and Muzaffarabad.

Citing its international diplomatic engagement on Kashmir, KGC said it is ready to help build trust and support peaceful resolution, urging authorities to exercise restraint, avoid force, and begin serious negotiations on public demands.

The Council noted Pakistan's global advocacy for Kashmiri rights should extend domestically, including protection of fundamental freedoms and the right to peaceful dissent.

KGC demanded an independent probe into the Rawalakot incidents, protection of arrested protesters' legal rights, and their release where legally possible.

It also called for full restoration of communication services to ensure normal life resumes.

The Council urged global bodies and human rights organizations to monitor the situation and press all sides toward restraint, dialogue and a peaceful political process.



Right to vote

MUZAFFARABAD: Chief Election Commissioner Azad Jammu and Kashmir Justice (R) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal casting his vote in his native area of Balgran, LA-27, Constituency 1, Kotla.



Photo: Spokesman

AJK PM's Message on Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control, along with overseas Kashmiris and Pakistanis, are observing Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir to protest India's actions of 5 August 2019, calling them unconstitutional, unlawful and unjustified.

He said India's 2019 move revoked the special status of Indian-adminis-

tered Jammu and Kashmir, alleging it aimed to alter the region's demographic composition by granting residency rights to non-residents.

Rathore alleged continued restrictions on civil and political rights, including curbs on expression and property rights, along with detentions of leaders, journalists and youth in the territory.

He said demographic and cultural changes in the region violate the UN Charter and international human

rights law, reiterating that Kashmir remains a UN-recognized disputed territory. He urged the international community to press for implementation of UN resolutions through a free and fair plebiscite.

The Prime Minister thanked countries, organizations and media highlighting the situation in Indian-administered Kashmir.

Concluding, Rathore praised the Kashmiri people's resilience and reaffirmed AJK government's support for



their struggle through peaceful, diplomatic means.

Punjab Health Connect

Saira Akram

Good healthcare is one of the most important needs of every society.

When people have access to qualified doctors, modern treatment, and well-equipped hospitals, they enjoy healthier and more productive lives. To improve healthcare services across the province, the Government of Punjab has launched the Punjab Health Connect Programme under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

This initiative aims to bring experienced overseas Pakistani and foreign doctors to public hospitals so that people can receive high-quality medical care free of cost. The Punjab

Health Connect Programme is a major step towards improving the standard of healthcare in government hospitals. Through this programme, highly qualified doctors and surgeons from different countries will visit Punjab and provide treatment to patients suffering from serious and complicated diseases. Many people cannot afford expensive private hospitals or overseas treatment.

This initiative will give them the opportunity to receive expert medical care in government hospitals without any financial burden. One of the biggest strengths of this programme is that it focuses not only on treating patients but also on improving the skills of local doctors.

The visiting specialists will work closely with doctors,

surgeons, nurses, and medical staff in Punjab. They will share their knowledge, demonstrate modern medical procedures, and introduce the latest treatment methods being used around the world. As a result, local healthcare professionals will gain valuable experience that will continue to benefit patients even after the international doctors return to their countries.

Pakistan has long faced a shortage of specialist doctors, especially in public hospitals. Because of this shortage, many patients have to wait for weeks or even months to receive proper treatment. Some are forced to travel to major cities, while others spend large amounts of money on private healthcare.

The Punjab Health Connect Programme is expected to reduce

this gap by bringing international medical experts directly to government hospitals, allowing more patients to receive timely and specialized treatment. The programme also highlights the important role of overseas Pakistanis in the country's development. Pakistani doctors working in countries such as the United Kingdom, the United States, Canada, Australia, and the Gulf have earned an excellent reputation for their professional skills.

Their willingness to serve their homeland reflects a strong sense of responsibility and commitment. By sharing their experience with local doctors, they will help strengthen Punjab's healthcare system for many years to come. Another positive aspect of this initiative is that it encourages the exchange of ideas and medical

knowledge.

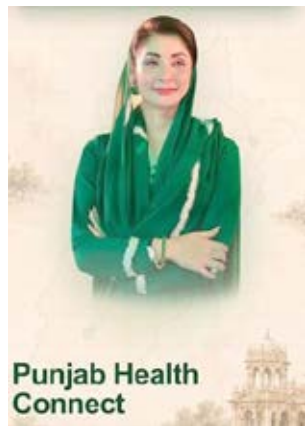
Healthcare is constantly changing as new technologies, medicines, and treatment methods are introduced. Learning from internationally experienced doctors will help hospitals in Punjab adopt better clinical practices and improve the overall quality of patient care. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has stated that providing healthcare services according to international standards is one of her government's main priorities. She believes that every citizen deserves access to quality medical treatment regardless of their financial condition.

The Punjab Health Connect Programme reflects this vision by making advanced healthcare services available to ordinary people through government

hospitals. If this programme continues successfully, it can have a lasting impact on the healthcare system of Punjab. Patients will receive better treatment, local doctors will gain advanced knowledge, and public confidence in government hospitals will continue to grow.

In the future, this initiative may also open the door to more international partnerships in medical education, research, and healthcare development. In conclusion, the Punjab Health Connect Programme is a positive and forward-looking initiative that has the potential to improve healthcare services across Punjab.

By bringing together international medical experts and local healthcare professionals, the programme promotes better treatment, professional learning,



and stronger public health institutions. It is an important step towards building a healthier future for the people of Punjab and ensuring that quality healthcare becomes accessible to everyone.

The writer is student of BS Political Science at Govt. Islamiya Graduate College for Women, Cooper Road, Lahore



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:47 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:05 pm
Maghrib 7:06 pm
Isha 8:40 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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

Jamaat-e-Islami Youth Holds Rally Against Fuel Price Hike, Petroleum Levy

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Youth organised a motorcycle rally from D Ground to Satyana Road as part of its campaign against rising petroleum prices and the petroleum levy tax.

The rally was led by Provincial Deputy General Secretary Basim Saeed, District President Noman Ahsan Malik and Secretary Adnan Yousaf. Addressing participants, District Ameer Professor Mehboob-uz-Zaman Butt said youth had always played a leading role in political movements and announced that nationwide motorcycle rallies would be held on August 7 to press the government to withdraw the petroleum levy.

He criticised the government's economic policies, alleging that rising fuel prices, taxes on electricity bills and inflation had placed an unbearable burden on the public. He also claimed the government's policies, influenced by IMF commitments, had undermined public welfare and national interests, urging authorities to provide relief to citizens facing increasing economic hardships.

CM Maryam Honors Police Martyrs, Reviews Khushab Development

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif paid tribute to

police martyrs on Police Martyrs' Day, describing their sacrifices in the fight against terrorism, extremism and crime as unforgettable and instrumental in



making Punjab safer.

In her message, she praised the courage and dedication of Punjab Police personnel and assured continued government support for the families of martyrs through quality education, healthcare, housing and other welfare initiatives. She said the Safe City Project, combined with the sacrifices of police officers, had helped make Lahore one of the world's

safer cities, with improved rankings in the Numbeo Crime and Safety Index. She added that the police were being equipped with modern weapons, protective gear, communication systems and bulletproof vehicles to strengthen law enforcement.

Separately, the chief minister met Khushab MPAs Asif Malik and Zafar Abbas Khan to discuss development

projects and constituency issues. She assured them that public concerns would be addressed. The lawmakers appreciated the launch of the electric bus service in Khushab and praised the government's development initiatives, while Maryam Nawaz said Punjab was leading the country in governance, development and law and order under the leadership of PML-N.

Painting Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Austria to Pakistan, Wolfgang Oliver Kutschera with artist during the painting exhibition "The Unfolding II" by emerging artist at Satrang Galeery in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Attock Reviews Monsoon Sanitation Preparedness

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General Attock and Managing Director of the Suthra Punjab Agency, Anil Saeed, chaired a meeting to review sanitation arrangements and monsoon preparedness across the district.

Officials assessed cleanliness operations, public complaint redressal, drainage management and the agency's overall performance. Participants were briefed on available machinery, workforce and measures taken at sensitive locations.

Anil Saeed directed all departments to ensure timely cleaning of drains, sewers and waterways to prevent rain-water accumulation during the monsoon. He instructed field teams to remain active



and keep machinery and staff on standby for emergency response.

Emphasising the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz

Sharif, he said maintaining high sanitation standards and providing a clean environment remained the administration's top priority. He also called for

stronger field monitoring and prompt resolution of public complaints through coordinated efforts of all departments.

Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani Honored with Global Hindu Award 2026 in Canada

PNN

ISLAMABAD / KARACHI: Dr. Ramesh Kumar Vankwani, senior parliamentarian and Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Hindu Council, has been conferred the Global Hindu Award 2026 at the Dhanteras Gala 2026 in Calgary, Alberta. He was the only Pakistani citizen honored for his fearless advocacy of minority rights, interfaith harmony, and global humanitarian service.

The gala was attended by Canadian PM Mark Carney, Alberta Premier Danielle Smith, Opposition Leader Pierre Poilievre, Calgary Mayor Jeremy Farkas, and other political leaders, diplomats and community representatives. Speakers praised the Hindu community's contributions to Canada's social, cultural and economic life.

Accepting the award, Dr. Vankwani dedicated it to Pakistan's Hindu community and all who supported his mission. "This is recognition of the resilience and peaceful values of Pakistani Hindus," he said, reaffirming



his commitment to Seva, Karma, and Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam — selfless service, good deeds, and "the world is one family."

He highlighted Pakistan's significance to Hindu spirituality and invited

guests to visit Hinglaj Mata Mandir, Katas Raj, Teri Temple, and Prahlad Mandir Multan, calling them a chance for "spiritual homecoming" and interfaith friendship.

Dr. Vankwani also cited welfare work

through the Pakistan Hindu Council and Prem Nagar, a 150-acre model village in Tharparkar. He congratulated the Canadian Hindu Chamber of Commerce for celebrating global Hindu leadership.

Karachi's Development and Public Transport Have Now Become Material for Entertainment in TV Dramas: Azma Bokhari

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari, in a statement, made a satirical remark on the state of public transport in Karachi, saying, "One has to admit it." She said that Karachi's development and public transport have now become a source of entertainment in television dramas. She said, "Travelling on a Karachi bus has become a journey where every step is full of danger. What was once a garment is now in tatters, the passenger who was here ends up over there. The collar stays behind the neck, the tomato slips out of the shopping bag. God knows where the chicken has gone—only the feathers remain in one's hand." Azma Bokhari further said, "If there is one thing that is truly happening, it is travelling on a Karachi bus."

Punjab Reviews Flood Preparedness in Jalalpur Pirwala, Strengthens Safety Measures



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Punjab Health Minister and Chairman of the Cabinet Committee for Disaster Management Khawaja Salman Rafique visited Jalalpur Pirwala to review flood-prone areas, protective embankments and emergency preparedness on the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Accompanied by DG PDMA Saif Anwar Jappa, Commissioner Multan Aamir Karim Khan and other senior officials, the minister inspected flood protection bunds, rescue arrangements, evacuation plans and relief preparations. He directed all departments to remain on high alert, stressing that protecting lives and property remains the government's top priority.

Rafique said the Punjab government has strengthened flood management by providing modern rescue equipment, boats and machinery to Rescue 1122 and other agencies. He termed the construction of two safety embankments measuring 12.3 km and 7.2 km in Jalalpur Pirwala, at a cost of around Rs2 billion, a major achievement following last year's floods.

Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan said flood contingency and evacuation plans had been fully implemented, with dedicated relief camps, digital mapping of vulnerable areas, operational control rooms and rescue agencies fully prepared to respond to any emergency.

Quality Patient Care Top Priority at THQ Hospital Kamalia: Dr. Ghulam Abbas

Zafar Chishti

KAMALIA, AUG 4: Medical Superintendent of THQ Hospital Kamalia, Dr. Ghulam Abbas, has reaffirmed his commitment to providing quality, affordable and patient-centred healthcare, saying service to humanity remains his foremost priority.

In an interview, Dr. Abbas said the hospital is focused on improving healthcare standards through efficient emergency, outpatient, maternity, cardiology, laboratory, pharmacy and diagnostic services. He added that regular monitoring, availability of medicines and equipment, cleanliness, infection control and staff training are key to ensuring quality patient care.

A graduate of Nishtar Medical College, Multan, Dr. Abbas said doctors, nurses and staff have been directed to treat every patient with respect, compassion and professionalism while ensuring timely treatment and clear communication.

He highlighted improvements in hospital cleanliness, emergency response, patient management, staff discipline and reduced waiting times. Dr. Abbas assured the public that THQ Hospital Kamalia would continue to provide accessible healthcare services and urged patients to cooperate with medical staff for better treatment outcomes.



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Youm-e-Istehsal: A Day That Demands More Than Symbolism

Every year on 5 August, Pakistan pauses to observe Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir — a day meant not merely as ritual, but as a reminder to the world that an entire people continue to wait for justice. Seven years have now passed since India revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, and yet the passage of time has done little to resolve the fundamental question at the heart of the dispute: who has the right to decide the future of the Kashmiri people?

New Delhi’s actions of 2019 were presented as an internal constitutional matter. But an internationally disputed territory, recognized as such by the United Nations Security Council for over seven decades, cannot be unilaterally redefined by domestic legislation. That is the crux of Pakistan’s objection, and it is one grounded not in sentiment alone but in the architecture of international law itself. A dispute pending resolution through self-determination does not disappear because one party declares it settled.

What has changed since 2019, according to accounts from journalists, human rights organizations and residents themselves, is not the legal status of the region but the daily texture of life within it — continued restrictions on political expression, a media environment under close watch, and demographic policies that many Kashmiris view as designed to reshape the region’s identity rather than to serve its people. These are not abstractions; they are lived realities that deserve more sustained international attention than they currently receive.

Pakistan’s position — that lasting peace in South Asia cannot be built on coercion, and that the Kashmiri people’s aspirations must be central to any resolution — is not a new one. What is needed now is not repetition but momentum. The international community’s habit of issuing concern without consequence has allowed the status quo to calcify. If UN resolutions on Kashmir are to mean anything, they cannot remain permanently deferred.

None of this diminishes the complexity of the dispute or the genuine security anxieties that shape how both India and Pakistan approach it. But complexity is not an excuse for indefinite postponement. Youm-e-Istehsal should be more than a day of solidarity messages and official statements. It should be a prompt — for Islamabad, for the world, and for all who claim to value self-determination — to ask honestly why a dispute so thoroughly documented remains so thoroughly unresolved, and what it would actually take to change that.

How Iran Emerged as Fourth Center of Global Power

The Iran war began with the expectation that overwhelming American and Israeli firepower would bring Tehran to its knees within days. Instead, the conflict has entered its sixth month. While the United States and Israel continue to claim tactical victories, Iran appears to be winning strategically.

Political scientist Professor Robert Pape draws a clear distinction between tactical destruction and strategic success. He argues that Iran is winning because it retains decisive leverage over the Strait of Hormuz and has demonstrated its ability to threaten and disable American military installations throughout the region.

Pape’s most provocative assessment is that the war is transforming Iran into a potential “fourth center of global power,” alongside the United States, China and Russia. His argument rests not on the number of aircraft, ships or military bases Iran possesses, but on Tehran’s demonstrated ability to absorb massive attacks, preserve its political system, continue retaliating and deny a superpower the achievement of its declared objectives.

The underlying lesson is difficult to dismiss: a middle power has absorbed immense punishment while preventing the world’s most powerful military alliance from forcing it into submission. If Iran can withstand such pressure, the consequences for the credibility of American power become even more profound when one imagines a future confrontation with China, or with China and Russia acting together.

Ironically, as happened during an earlier phase when the United States reportedly faced shortages of critical weapons and ammunition, Washington has once again paused its attacks. Critics and analysts believe that this pause may not represent a genuine change of policy, but an attempt to gain time, replenish depleted stocks, complete military preparations and prepare for another escalation.

Iran, meanwhile, has made the United States largely irrelevant to the discussions currently taking place between Tehran and Muscat. Iran has characterized these negotiations as bilateral talks with Oman concerning a mechanism for managing maritime passage through the Strait of Hormuz. This places Tehran at the center of any workable arrangement, with Oman as its negotiating partner, while Washington remains outside the formal discussions and dependent upon regional mediators.

The Gulf governments have also discovered the limitations of relying upon American military bases for their security. Those bases were established to deter aggression, project American power and reassure their host governments. Instead, they became magnets for Iranian missiles and drones. After

witnessing their vulnerability, the Gulf states are now asking a disturbing question: if these American bases cannot defend themselves, how can they be expected to defend their host countries?

This vulnerability helps explain why Gulf leaders reportedly pressed President Donald Trump to postpone further attacks on Iran. They understood that American strikes against Iranian power

grids, desalination plants, oil installations and civilian infrastructure could invite retaliation against comparable facilities throughout the Arabian Peninsula.

Nevertheless, concerns remain about President Trump’s intentions. Russian security officials have warned that Washington and Israel may be contemplating a ground operation under the cover of ceasefire diplomacy. According to this assessment, negotiations could be used to keep Iran and the wider region relatively calm while the Pentagon completes its military buildup.

Widely circulated reports claim that more than 50,000 American troops, including approximately 2,500 Marines, over 1,200 personnel from the 82nd Airborne Division and specialized forces, have been positioned in the region. The same reports cite hundreds of military aircraft and more than 20 naval vessels deployed near Iran. These figures have

been presented by the analysts and outlets reporting the alleged preparations for a possible ground campaign.

Pape describes the resulting American dilemma as an “escalation trap.” If Washington continues fighting, it risks further casualties, regional retaliation, economic disruption and horizontal expansion of the conflict. If it withdraws without achieving its declared objectives, it must acknowledge that overwhelming military force failed to produce political submission. Pressure for a ground intervention may therefore increase precisely because the air campaign has not delivered a decisive strategic outcome.

The war has also reached American homes through economic disruption and, potentially, cyberspace. Federal investigators have examined cyberattacks against water systems in seven American states, with Iran reportedly among the suspected perpetrators.

Representative Seth Moulton, a retired Marine and member of the House Armed Services Committee, described such an attack—if Iranian responsibility is established—as “an escalation of war.” He argued that Iran’s cyber capabilities were predictable and that Washington should have protected critical American infrastructure before entering a war against a state capable of retaliating through unconventional means.

The verified domestic economic damage is already serious. A Reuters/Ipsos survey placed Trump’s approval

Continued on Page 7



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

India’s Abrogation of Article 370: A Legal and Humanitarian Crisis in Kashmir

The events of 5 August 2019 marked one of the most brutal and blackest day in the history of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. On that day, India unilaterally revoked Articles 370 and 35-A of its Constitution and reorganised the former State of Jammu and Kashmir into two Union Territories under the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. These measures were preceded by the deployment of tens of thousands of additional troops, followed by an unprecedented military lockdown, prolonged curfew, suspension of internet, telephone and media communications, arbitrary arrests of political leaders, lawyers, journalists, human rights defenders and even hospital services snatched.

The sweeping restrictions severely affected every aspect of Kashmiris life. Access to healthcare, education, justice, employment and freedom of movement was curtailed. Peaceful political activity was suppressed, while freedom of expression, assembly and association remained invisible. International human rights organisations and UN human rights experts have repeatedly expressed concern over arbitrary detention, excessive use of force, restrictions on civil liberties, media censorship, and the shrinking democratic space in the territory. India has consistently maintained that

the constitutional changes of 5 August 2019 are an internal matter. However, Pakistan and Kashmiris reject this position, arguing that Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognised disputed territory, the status of which remains subject to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. Those resolutions envisage that the final disposition of the territory should be determined through the free exercise of the right of self-determination by the people of Jammu and Kashmir under UN auspices.

From this perspective, the unilateral abrogation of Articles 370 and 35-A, together with the enactment of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019, exposed Indian moves to change and alter the legal and political status of a disputed territory. These are inconsistent with India’s international obligations under the UN Charter and incompatible with the principles governing the peaceful settlement of international disputes.

Serious legal concerns have also arisen regarding demographic changes introduced after August 2019. New domicile rules have enabled large numbers of non-residents to acquire domicile certificates, government employment, property rights and permanent settlement in the territory. These measures seek to alter the demographic composition of Jammu and Kashmir. Such policies have been incom-

patible with Article 49(6) of the Fourth Geneva Convention, which prohibits an occupying power from transferring parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.

The continued expansion of security laws, including the extensive use of the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), are against the international laws.

More than seven decades after the adoption of the relevant UN Security Council resolutions, the people of Jammu and Kashmir continue to await the implementation of their internationally recognised right to determine their political future. From the perspective of Pakistan and Kashmiris, India’s refusal to implement those resolutions undermines the authority of the United Nations, weakens the international rule of law, and hinders the peaceful settlement of the dispute in accordance with the purposes and principles of the UN Charter.

Despite decades of conflict, repression and political uncertainty, the people of Jammu and Kashmir remain steadfast in their aspiration to realise their right to self-determination through peaceful and lawful means. Lasting peace in South Asia requires respect for international law, protection of fundamental human rights, adherence to the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

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Analysis

Syed Faiz Naqshbandi

Statehood Denied: Seven Years of Union Territory Rule in Indian-Occupied Kashmir

Nearly two years after taking office, Chief Minister Omar Abdullah still lacks authority over key functions of governance in Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He cannot control the police, appoint senior bureaucrats, or decide the leadership of the Anti-Corruption Bureau without the approval of the Lieutenant Governor, who answers to New Delhi rather than the elected assembly. These restrictions are embedded in the legal framework governing the Union Territory. Following the revocation of Jammu and Kashmir’s special status on 5 August 2019, the Supreme Court upheld the decision in December 2023 but directed that assembly elections be held by September 2024 and recorded the Centre’s assurance that statehood would be restored “at the earliest.” Elections were held on schedule, and Omar Abdullah assumed office in October 2024. Yet statehood remains pending. While India cites credible elections and security concerns as justification, these do not explain why an elected government still lacks meaningful governing authority.

The reason is Section 53 of the Jammu and Kashmir Reorganisation Act, 2019. It establishes a Council of Ministers to aid and advise the Lieutenant Governor, but only on matters the assembly has power to legislate on. It then requires the Lieutenant Governor to act in his own discretion on any matter outside the assembly’s purview, any matter where discretion is required by law, and, explicitly, on all India Services and the Anti-Corruption Bureau. Since the assembly is separately barred from legislating on public order and police, those subjects fall automatically into the Lieutenant Governor’s domain too. The statute then closes the loop: if any ques-

tion arises over whether a matter is discretionary, the Lieutenant Governor’s own determination is final, and it cannot be challenged in court on the ground that he ought or ought not to have treated it as his to decide. In July 2024, months before a single newly elected MLA took a seat, the Home Ministry amended the territory’s business rules to tighten the Lieutenant Governor’s control over police postings, senior bureaucratic transfers and judicial appointments still further.

The Reorganisation Act invokes Article 239A, the same constitutional provision that governs Puducherry, as its model. The comparison is instructive precisely because it does not flatter Jammu and Kashmir. Puducherry’s founding statute, the Government of Union Territories Act of 1963, never names the bureaucracy or an anti-corruption body as the Administrator’s automatic preserve, and when Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi asserted sweeping authority over Puducherry’s administration in 2017, it took three years of litigation to settle the question. A single judge ruled in 2019 that she could not run a parallel government. A division bench then set that ruling aside in 2020, restoring much of her claimed authority, but only after the elected government had a real court fight to make its case. Section 53 forecloses even that. It writes the Lieutenant Governor’s supremacy into the statute itself and insulates his own judgment about its scope from review. Puducherry produced a contested case. HoJK produces a foregone conclusion.

The 2022 delimitation exercise reinforced the same pattern in the electoral arithmetic. The Delimitation Commission raised the assembly’s total seats from 83 to 90 and gave Jammu six of them against one for the Kashmir Valley, shifting the chamber’s

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Analysis

Muhammad Waleed Akhtar

UK Opens Fully Funded Scholarships and Startup Fellowships for Pakistan’s Next Generation of Leaders

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Applications are now open for three flagship UK programmes aimed at Pakistan’s emerging leaders, researchers and entrepreneurs: the Chevening Scholarships, the Chevening Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Fellowship, and the Commonwealth Startup Fellowship. The programmes offer fully funded opportunities to study,

research and build businesses in the UK. Chevening Scholarships provide fully funded one-year master’s degrees at UK universities for individuals who demonstrate leadership, influence and a clear vision for impact. The Chevening Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Fellowship supports mid-career academics and professionals to conduct independent research at Oxford. Commonwealth Startup

Fellowships support high-potential entrepreneurs to strengthen their businesses, learn from UK experts, and prepare to scale. British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott CMG OBE, said, “Pakistan has no shortage of talent, and these programmes help outstanding Pakistanis develop the skills, networks and ideas needed to lead institutions, grow businesses and tackle some of the

world’s biggest challenges.” All three programmes cover flights, course fees, visas and a stipend for living costs. Scholars will also build international networks, experience new cultures, and develop lasting connections with the UK and leaders worldwide. Applicants must use their own experiences and ideas. AI-generated answers are not permitted and may lead to disqualification.



More than 2,000 Chevening alumni in Pakistan work across public service, business, academia, media and civil society. Globally, Chevening alumni include more than 20 current or former heads of state or government.



President Tourism Association of Pakistan Welcomes UAE’s Easing of Visit Visas for Pakistanis

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Naveed Ahmad Khan, President of the Tourism Association of Pakistan, has welcomed the decision by the United Arab Emirates to ease visit visa restrictions for Pakistani nationals, calling it a positive development after months of uncertainty surrounding travel and visa processes between the two countries. In a statement, Khan said the move would bring significant relief to thousands of Pakistani travelers, businessmen, and families who had faced difficulties in

securing visit visas to the UAE in recent months. He noted that the easing of restrictions reflects the strength of the longstanding relationship between Pakistan and the UAE and reaffirms the confidence both nations continue to place in each other. He said the decision would provide a major boost to Pakistan’s tourism and travel industry, as the UAE remains one of the most popular destinations for Pakistani tourists, business travelers, and those visiting family members residing in the Emirates. He added that easier visa access would also encourage greater business

exchange, trade delegations, and people-to-people contact between the two countries. Khan further stated that the tourism and travel sector had been affected by the uncertainty surrounding UAE visa policies, with many travel agencies and tour operators experiencing a decline in bookings and inquiries. He expressed hope that the relaxed visa regime would help restore traveler confidence and revive demand for UAE-bound travel packages. He urged the relevant authorities in Pakistan to continue engaging with UAE counter-

parts to further simplify and streamline visa procedures, ensuring smoother travel experiences for Pakistani citizens. Khan also called upon travel industry stakeholders to take advantage of this positive development by promoting UAE travel packages and strengthening cooperation with UAE-based tourism partners. Concluding his statement, Khan expressed optimism that this development would open new avenues for tourism, trade, and stronger bilateral relations between Pakistan and the UAE in the coming months.

ISSI Launches Book on Hybrid Warfare and Pakistan’s National Security



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Arms Control and Disarmament Centre (ACDC) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) launched Dr. Muhammad Ali’s book, “India’s Hybrid Warfare: Implications for Pakistan’s National Security,” at a ceremony attended by diplomats, retired military officials and secu-

rity experts. Former Azad Jammu and Kashmir President Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan described the book as a valuable academic contribution, stressing the importance of national integration and preparedness against hybrid threats. Retired General Zubair Mehmood Hayat said hybrid warfare had evolved into a practical form of conflict,

highlighting the role of information, public confidence and national identity in modern security. ISSI Director General Ambassador Moin ul Haque termed the publication an important contribution to understanding multi-dimensional security challenges, while other speakers emphasised the need for stronger national coor-

dination, cyber resilience, effective governance and strategic communication to counter hybrid warfare. The event concluded with a call for a comprehensive national response to emerging security threats, while acknowledging the book’s evidence-based analysis and policy recommendations for strengthening Pakistan’s national security framework.

Chery Tops 20 Million Global Vehicle Sales, Sets New Export Record

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Master Auto Engineering (MAE), Chery’s official partner in Pakistan, has celebrated the Chinese automaker’s achievement of surpassing 20 million cumulative global vehicle sales and becoming the first Chinese manufacturer to export more than 200,000 vehicles in a single month. In July 2026, Chery sold 276,820 vehicles, up 23.3% year-on-year, while exports reached a record 202,533 units, a 70.1% increase. The company also recorded 129,067 new energy vehicle (NEV) sales, nearly doubling from a year earlier. From January to July, Chery sold 1.63 million vehicles, including 1.14 million exports. Chery Automobile also debuted independently on the 2026 Fortune Global 500 at No. 383, ranked first among Chinese companies in Return on Equity (ROE), and retained the top position in the automotive category of the 2026 Kantar BrandZ Chinese Global Brand Builders Top 50. MAE CEO Samir Malik said the milestones reflected Chery’s global leadership in innovation, quality and sustainable growth,



reaffirming the company’s commitment to bringing advanced technologies, local manufacturing and an expanded dealership network to Pakistani customers. He said MAE would continue supporting sustainable mobility and strengthening Chery’s presence across Pakistan.

Broad Peak Tragedy: And Challenge of Managing Mountain Risk

The tragic loss of climbers on Broad Peak has cast a deep shadow over Pakistan and the international mountaineering fraternity. The accident, in which an avalanche struck a climbing team during their ascent, leaving around ten climbers missing before rescue and recovery efforts confirmed multiple fatalities, has plunged the mountaineering community into mourning. For families, fellow climbers, guides and porters, the tragedy is a painful reminder that while mountains inspire humanity’s greatest adventures, they also command profound respect. Expressions of grief and solidarity have poured in from climbers and alpine organizations across the world, reflecting the close-knit nature of the global mountaineering community. Pakistan occupies a unique place in the world of mountaineering. Home to

five of the world’s fourteen peaks above 8,000 metres, including the legendary K2 and Broad Peak, the country attracts hundreds of climbers every year. Mountaineering has become far more than an adventure sport; it promotes tourism, sustains the livelihoods of local communities, showcases Pakistan’s breathtaking natural heritage and fosters international goodwill through shared exploration of the Karakoram. The Broad Peak tragedy, however, also serves as a reminder that success on the world’s highest mountains is never determined by skill alone. A question naturally arises after every avalanche: did climbers misjudge the snow conditions, or were they compelled to accept an unavoidable level of risk? The answer is rarely straightforward. Unlike many other sports, high-altitude mountaineering requires climbers to make difficult

decisions in an environment where weather, snow stability and ice conditions can change dramatically within minutes. Experienced climbers do not ignore avalanche danger; rather, they constantly assess and manage it, often crossing hazardous slopes because no safer alternative exists. Despite advances in weather forecasting, satellite communication, navigation systems and climbing equipment, some objective hazards remain beyond human prediction or control. In this sense, mountaineering is not the elimination of risk but the disciplined management of uncertainty. The response to the disaster deserves equal recognition. Despite the formidable challenges posed by altitude,

weather and terrain, the Alpine Club of Pakistan, Pakistan Army Aviation, local rescue teams, high-altitude porters, and other supporting stakeholders, including Green Tourism Pakistan, mounted an immediate search and rescue operation. Their professionalism, courage and unwavering commitment under extraordinarily difficult conditions reflected Pakistan’s growing capability to respond to emergencies in some of the world’s most inhospitable terrain. While nature ultimately limited what could be achieved, the dedication of the rescuers earned widespread appreciation. The Broad Peak disaster also echoes some of the darkest chapters in mountaineering history. The 2008 K2



tragedy, which claimed eleven climbers following the collapse of a serac, and the devastating Everest avalanches of 2014 and 2015 all illustrate a common reality: even the most experienced mountaineers, supported by the best available technology and meticulous planning, remain vulnerable to the immense and unpredictable forces of nature. Such accidents are seldom the result of a single mistake; rather, they arise from a complex interaction of weather, terrain, snow conditions and the inherent risks of climbing in the “death zone.” Can such disasters be prevented? The honest answer is that they can never be eliminated entirely. The mountains will always retain an element of unpredictability that no technology or human experience can fully overcome. Yet this does not diminish the value of improving safety. More accurate weather fore-

casting, continuous avalanche monitoring, rigorous expedition planning, stronger coordination among climbing teams, enhanced rescue preparedness and, above all, the discipline to turn back when conditions deteriorate can significantly reduce the likelihood of catastrophe. The Broad Peak tragedy should therefore be remembered not only as a heartbreaking loss of lives but also as a solemn lesson in humility. It reminds us that while courage, determination and preparation define successful mountaineering, the highest peaks ultimately demand respect above all else. Adventure will always draw climbers to the Karakoram, but every ascent must begin with the understanding that in the realm of the great mountains, risk can only be managed—never completely conquered.

The writer is Former President, Alpine Club of Pakistan

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
177,083.22	178,200.02
Day's High	Day's Low
178,768.83	177,043.10
Index Value	Change
17,369,433,782	-1116.80
Percentage	Time
-0.63%	4 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,879.38	+21.68
Percentage	Time
+0.20%	4 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
54,200.94	+1,022.53
Percentage	Time
+1.92%	4 Aug, 1:20 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
63,957.53	+202.63
Percentage	Time
+0.32%	4 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.45	197.75
Bahrain Dinar	734.94	745.63
Canadian Dollar	196.68	201.85
China Yuan	38.17	38.92
Danish Krone	42.70	43.37
Euro	319.40	323.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	888.35	898.65
Malaysian Ringgit	67	68.15
NewZealand \$	162.07	169.08
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	722.50	732.95
Qatari Riyal	75.08	76.65
Saudi Riyal	74.65	75.30
Singapore Dollar	216.03	219.05
Swedish Korona	28.35	28.95
Swiss Franc	342.17	346.37
Thai Bhat	8.60	8.95
U.A.E Dirham	76.10	77.05
UK Pound Sterling	373.01	381.02
US Dollar	278.50	278.80

Spotify Hits 300 Million Premium Subscribers in Q2 2026



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Spotify reported strong Second Quarter 2026 results, becoming the first audio streaming service to reach 300 million Premium Subscribers.

Premium Subscribers grew 9% year-over-year to 300 million, while Monthly Active Users rose 12% to 777 million. Total revenue increased 14% Y/Y to €4.8 billion, or 15% on a constant currency basis. Gross margin improved by 193 basis points to 33.4%, and Operating Income reached €655 million.

The quarter reflected accelerated growth and record margins as Spotify rolled out new features to help fans discover, create, and connect, while supporting artists, creators, authors, and partners.

Alex Norström, Co-CEO, said Spotify's scale allows it to be part of users' entire day. Gustav Söderström, Co-CEO, added the company is building the future through better engineering, faster product launches, and new engagement models, with a high bar for investments.

For full results and the webcast Q&A, visit Spotify's Investor Relations site.

FBR Chairman meets FPCCI and Pakistan Business Council's Delegations in Karachi on Prime Minister's Directives

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In pursuance of special directions from the Prime Minister, Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) met with a high-level delegation of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and Pakistan Business Council (PBC) today at Karachi to discuss and resolve key issues faced by the business community.

The meeting focused on strengthening business facilitation, addressing complaints of harassment, and ensuring highest level of integrity in dealing with taxpayers to create a more favorable economic environment. Business leaders highlighted the pressing issues faced by them.

Chairman FBR reaffirmed his commitment to streamlining tax processes, expediting pending refunds, and simplifying compliance to boost trade and industry.

Strict instructions were issued to tax offi-



cials regarding fair treatment of taxpayers, with assurances that harassment of legitimate busi-

nesses will not be tolerated. During the meeting, the issues raised by participants were heard, and

directions were issued on the spot.

Both sides agreed on enhancing transparency through increased interaction at senior level and ensuring continuous supervision by members operations and their senior officers at Karachi.

FBR and members of the Business Community agreed to establish a collaborative framework for continuous engagement to promptly address genuine grievances of the business fraternity. Committees comprising of senior FBR leadership and representatives of the business community to be constituted to streamline workflows and processes, expedite resolution of pending issues and ensure stakeholder consultation.

The FPCCI and PBC delegations appreciated the Prime Minister's proactive initiative and thanked the Chairman FBR for a constructive, solution-oriented discussion, expressing confidence that these measures will bolster business confidence and support national economic growth.

Daily Wager

ISLAMABAD: A vendor sit under the shade of umbrella as displaying fruits attraction for customers on his loading van alongside a road, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

UBL Wins 7 International Awards, Reinforces Leadership in Investment Banking for 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: United Bank Limited (UBL) has strengthened its position as Pakistan's leading financial institution by securing seven prestigious international awards since January 2026. The honors reflect UBL's commitment to excellence, innovation, and client-focused solutions across investment banking, Islamic finance, and sustainable financing.

Recognized by top global platforms, UBL's key wins include:

- Pakistan's Best Investment Bank - DCM at _Euro-money Awards for Excellence 2026 _;
- Best Islamic Project Finance Deal and Best Local Currency Deal at _Euromoney Islamic Finance Awards 2026 _;
- Best Lender - Pakistan at _FinanceAsia Awards 2026 _;
- Renewable Energy Deal of the Year - Waste to Energy and Best Acquisition Financing - Pakistan at _The Asset Triple A Awards 2026 _;
- and Syndicated Loan of the Year - Pakistan at _Asian Banking & Finance Awards 2026 _.

These awards highlight UBL's role in landmark transactions that strengthen Pakistan's capital markets and support economic growth.

UBL thanked its clients, partners, and teams for their trust and reaffirmed its commitment to driving innovation and setting new benchmarks in Pakistan's financial sector.

Competition Law Awareness Key to Sustainable Economic Growth: CCP Chairman

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP), Farid Ahmad Tarar, said greater awareness of competition law is vital for building a transparent, competitive and investment-friendly business environment in Pakistan.

Speaking at an awareness session organized by the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Mr. Tarar said effective competition drives economic growth, innovation and consumer welfare. He stressed that enforcement alone is not enough. "Awareness, education and stakeholder engagement are the most effective means of preventing violations before they occur," he said, adding that voluntary compliance is key to fair markets.

The CCP is expanding advocacy through academia, chambers and trade bodies. Mr. Tarar noted recent interventions in sugar, cement and consumer goods have curbed collusion and strengthened consumer protection. The Commission is also preparing to address competition challenges in digital markets and e-commerce.

ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to promoting competition law awareness and closer regulator-private sector collaboration.

Malik Muhammad Babar Ayyaz Takes Charge as President & CEO of Bank of AJ&K

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Malik Muhammad Babar Ayyaz has assumed charge as President & Chief Executive Officer of the Bank of Azad Jammu & Kashmir (BAJK) on Monday.

A banking professional with over 27 years of experience in Pakistan's financial sector, Mr. Ayyaz brings expertise in corporate banking, commercial banking, Islamic banking, SME finance, strategic planning, business transformation, and institutional leadership.

Prior to BAJK, he served for nearly 17 years at The Bank of Punjab, holding key leadership roles. At BOP, he led the restructuring of Corporate & Investment Banking and played a central role in building its SME and Commercial Banking businesses, contributing to the bank's growth and transformation. He



previously worked at other private banks

as well.

Mr. Ayyaz holds an Executive MBA from LUMS, where he graduated with distinction and made the Dean's Honour Roll.

Chief Secretary AJ&K / BAJK Chairman Khushkal Khan welcomed the appointment, saying: "We look forward to BAJK's enhanced role in financial inclusion and SME empowerment. This is an important first step toward a nationwide commercial banking license."

CEO Babar Ayyaz said BAJK has a strong reputation built on customer trust. "Together with the Board and team, we will strengthen financial performance, accelerate digital transformation, expand Islamic and SME banking, improve customer experience, and reinforce governance to create lasting value for AJ&K's economy."

SECP Forms Working Group to Develop Corporate Debt Market

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a significant move to deepen Pakistan's capital markets and expand long-term financing options for businesses, the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has constituted a high-level Working Group to undertake a comprehensive review of the regulatory framework of corporate debt market and recommend reforms.

SECP has taken this initiative on guidance of Honorable Finance Minister as he highlighted the development of vibrant corporate debt market as a strategic priority. He further emphasized that Pakistan must move towards a more

balanced financial system where corporations should have diversified sources of long-term financing while reducing reliance on conventional bank lending.

The Working Group, led by SECP Commissioner Ali Farid Khawaja, comprises representatives from the Ministry of Finance, SECP, capital market institutions, financial institutions, credit rating agency, legal experts, and other market participants.

With broad-based representation, the Working Group will formulate practical recommendations focusing on three key areas: reducing the complexity of the issuance process, lowering issuance costs, and standardizing legal

documentation to simplify debt issuances and reduce the time and cost involved.

The Group's recommendations will form the basis for future regulatory and policy reforms to strengthen the corporate debt market, improve market efficiency, enhance businesses' access to long-term capital.

Chairman SECP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said, "Deepening the corporate debt market is a strategic priority.

A stronger debt market will broaden long-term financing avenues for companies, attract institutional investment, and support infrastructure and industrial development."



IS Seven Years After Article 370

Modi’s Kashmir Gamble Came at the Cost of Democracy

IS Shazia Malik

On the morning of August 5, 2019, India awoke to one of the most cruel constitutional decisions ever made in India, since Independence. In a move that had been central to the Bharatiya Janata Party’s (BJP) political agenda for decades, and an election promise, Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government revoked Article 370, ending Jammu and Kashmir’s special constitutional status and reorganizing the state into two Union Territories.

Supporters hailed the decision as the final step toward India’s complete national integration, saying it would dismantle barriers to investment, curb separatism, strengthen security and bring Jammu and Kashmir under the same constitutional framework as the rest of the country.

As a highly controversial political decision in modern India’s history, constitutional experts, opposition leaders, human rights organizations, former civil servants, and academics have consistently argued that the manner in which Article 370 was revoked undermined India’s federal structure, weakened democratic institutions, and raised serious concerns about civil liberties.

Constitutional Questions

One of the strongest criticisms has focused not on whether Article 370 could eventually be amended, but on how it was revoked. Constitutional scholar A. G. Noorani, author of Article 370: A Constitutional History of Jammu and Kashmir, argued that the government bypassed the constitutional safeguards built into Article 370. He maintained that replacing the consent of the Jammu and Kashmir Constituent Assembly with the approval of Parliament—while the state was under President’s Rule—was constitutionally questionable.

Legal scholar, Gautam Bhatia, similarly argued that the government effectively used President’s Rule to alter the federal relationship between the Union and a state, creating a precedent whereby the Centre could substantially alter a state’s constitutional position while simultaneously

acting on behalf of that state. Constitutional expert, Faizan Mustafa, also questioned whether Parliament could legally substitute itself for an elected state legislature in matters involving the state’s constitutional autonomy.

Critics pointed out that the procedure adopted by the BJP government stretched constitutional provisions beyond their intended purpose, weakening India’s federal framework.

Federalism Under Strain

India’s Constitution establishes a federal system in which states possess defined constitutional powers. Critics argue that the revocation of Article 370 fundamentally altered this balance. Former Finance Minister, P. Chidambaram, described the move as a dangerous precedent, arguing that if the Centre could downgrade one state into a Union Territory without its consent, similar powers might theoretically be exercised elsewhere. He along with another Congress leader Kapil Sibal, and several constitutional lawyers warned that allowing the Union government to alter statehood without elected state approval could weaken constitutional protections available to all Indian states. Political scientist Christophe Jaffrelot, has argued that the decision reflected increasing centralization of political power under the Modi government.

Democratic Deficit

Another major criticism concerns the political circumstances surrounding the revocation. Before the announcement, thousands of additional troops were deployed across Kashmir. Political leaders including Farooq Abdullah, IOJ&K’s current chief minister Omar Abdullah, and Mehbooba Mufti were detained. Internet services were suspended, curfews imposed, and communication networks shut down for months. Critics argue that such sweeping restrictions prevented democratic debate over one of the most significant constitutional changes since India’s independence.

Former bureaucrats belonging to

the ‘Constitutional Conduct Group’, a collective of retired civil servants, questioned whether constitutional democracy could function effectively when elected representatives were detained during a constitutional transformation affecting their own state.

Human Rights Concerns

Human rights organizations have repeatedly criticized the restrictions imposed following the revocation. Amnesty International argued that prolonged communications blackouts, preventive detentions, and restrictions on peaceful assembly infringed upon fundamental human rights. Human Rights Watch, similarly documented concerns regarding arbitrary detention, limits on press freedom, and prolonged

Economic Promises Under Scrutiny

The government argued that removing Article 370 would unlock investment, create employment, reduce corruption, and integrate Jammu and Kashmir more fully with India’s economy. Critics acknowledge improvements in infrastructure and increased tourism but argue that economic gains have not matched the ambitious promises made in 2019. Economists and regional analysts point to persistent unemployment, limited private-sector investment, and continuing dependence on key government funding.

Business organizations have noted that security concerns and political uncertainty continue to influence investor confidence. Some critics

government. The government has maintained that full statehood would be restored at an appropriate time after delimitation and elections.

Supreme Court Judgment

The constitutional validity of the revocation was challenged before the Supreme Court of India. In December 2023, a five-judge Constitution Bench upheld the government’s decision, ruling that Article 370 had become a temporary provision and that the President possessed authority to issue the constitutional orders that facilitated its revocation.

The Court also directed the government to restore statehood to Jammu and Kashmir at the earliest opportunity and to conduct assembly elections. Although the judgment settled the legal challenge, many constitutional scholars continue to disagree with the Court’s reasoning, arguing that legality does not necessarily resolve broader debates about constitutional convention, democratic legitimacy, or federalism.

Continuing Debate

Seven years later, Article 370 remains one of India’s most talked about issue across the globe. Supporters of the Modi government point to declining militant violence in some areas, increased infrastructure spending, expanded welfare programs, and record tourist arrivals as evidence that the decision has strengthened national integration.

Critics, however, argue that constitutional procedures, democratic participation, and civil liberties were compromised in pursuit of political objectives. They contend that the revocation has fundamentally reshaped the relationship between the Union and the states, raising important questions about federalism, executive power, and constitutional safeguards. Whether viewed as a landmark act of national integration or a troubling departure from India’s constitutional traditions, the revocation of Article 370 is still driving political discourse.

Pakistan called revocation of Article 370 as an “illegal and unilateral”

attempt to change the internationally recognized disputed status of Jammu and Kashmir. Islamabad accused the Modi government of violating international law and warned that the move could further destabilize South Asia. Islamabad maintained that Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory under United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions and argued that no country could unilaterally alter its status pending a final settlement.

The Pakistani government responded by downgrading diplomatic relations with India, suspending bilateral trade, expelling the Indian High Commissioner, and recalling Pakistan’s envoy from New Delhi. It also launched an extensive diplomatic campaign at the United Nations, the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and other international forums, urging the international community to intervene over what it described as human rights violations and demographic changes in the region.

Pakistan’s Foreign Office repeatedly maintained that India’s actions violated the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Simla Agreement of 1972, and various UNSC resolutions concerning Kashmir. Islamabad also criticized the prolonged communications blackout, detention of Kashmiri political leaders, and restrictions on civil liberties imposed after the constitutional changes.

Successive Pakistani governments—including those led by Shehbaz Sharif—have continued to reject India’s decision, maintaining that lasting peace in South Asia depends on resolving the Kashmir dispute through dialogue in accordance with UNSC resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. India has consistently rejected Pakistan’s position, asserting that the constitutional changes were an internal matter and that Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India. New Delhi has also maintained that Article 370 hindered development and that its removal has strengthened governance, security and economic opportunities in the region.

As elections, legal debates, and discussions about restoring full statehood continue, the decision remains a defining chapter in the constitutional history of modern India.

The Menace of Encroachments in Multan

Encroachments have become one of the most visible symbols of administrative failure in Multan. Roads, footpaths, green belts, and public spaces are being occupied with alarming impunity, creating traffic congestion, safety hazards, and daily inconvenience for thousands of citizens. Despite the presence of three enforcement agencies the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA), the Multan Development Authority (MDA) Enforcement Wing, and the Multan Municipal Corporation’s Anti-Encroachment Department (Insdad-e-Tajawzat)—the menace continues to spread unchecked. Their repeated operations often produce temporary results, but the encroachments soon return, raising serious questions about coordination, accountability, and the commitment to protecting public property.

The situation reflects a deeper governance problem. The Multan administration appears unable—or, in the opinion of many residents,

insufficiently committed—to providing lasting relief to citizens. Anti-encroachment drives are launched with publicity, yet illegal occupations frequently re-emerge within days. This recurring pattern weakens public confidence and creates the perception that enforcement is selective rather than sustained.

A clear example is New Shah Shams Colony, where residents have repeatedly complained about encroachments around the main entrances, roads, footpaths, and public spaces. According to residents, complaints were submitted to the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Multan, the Director General of the Multan Development Authority (DG MDA), and PERA Incharge Multan,

Mubashir Qayyum. When no satisfactory action followed, residents also approached the Chief Minister of Punjab, seeking direct intervention. They maintain that despite these repeated appeals, they have yet to receive meaningful and permanent relief. Multan Needs an Empowered Officer to Lead the PERA. The issue is not merely about removing road-

side stalls or clearing pavements. Encroachments obstruct emergency access, endanger pedestrians, increase traffic congestion, damage the urban environment, and undermine the rule of law. When public land is gradually occupied without effective resistance, citizens begin to question whether laws are being applied equally to everyone.

The menace of encroachments in Multan cannot be blamed solely on PERA, the MDA Enforcement Wing, and the Multan City Corporation. The Traffic Police also bear a significant share of the responsibility. Illegal carts, roadside stalls, and vehicles parked haphazardly on major roads obstruct the smooth flow of traffic and create dangerous bottlenecks. In many cases, these obstructions remain in place for hours without any intervention, increasing the risk of road accidents and endangering motorists and pedestrians alike.

Many citizens believe that the traffic warden patrolling system has become ineffective. Instead of maintaining a continuous presence on busy roads to regulate traffic and ensure that roads remain free from illegal obstructions, wardens are often perceived as focusing primarily on issuing traffic challans. While enforcing traffic laws through fines is an important part of their duties, it should not come at the expense of traffic management and public safety.

The primary responsibility of the Traffic Police is to keep traffic moving safely and efficiently. Illegal carts and encroachments occupying roads should be removed promptly in coordination with the concerned enforcement agencies. A proactive patrolling system, regular monitoring of congestion hotspots, and close coordination with PERA, MDA Enforcement, and the Multan City Corporation are essential. Without such coor-

dination, the city will continue to suffer from chronic congestion, avoidable accidents, and inconvenience to the public.

Multan deserves a permanent and transparent anti-encroachment strategy rather than periodic campaigns. PERA, MDA Enforcement, and the Multan City Corporation must work as a coordinated force with clearly defined responsibilities, regular inspections, and strict monitoring. Encroachments removed today should not be allowed to reappear tomorrow. Officials responsible for negligence or failure to enforce the law should also be held accountable.

The Government of Punjab has repeatedly emphasized good governance and citizen-focused service delivery. Those objectives can only be achieved if local administrations implement policies with consistency and impartiality. Public complaints should not remain confined to files and official correspondence; they should result in visible action on the ground.

The residents of Multan are not asking for special treatment. They are

simply asking for what the law already guarantees: safe roads, accessible footpaths, protected public land, and an administration that enforces regulations fairly and without discrimination. Until that happens, encroachments will continue to represent not only an urban planning challenge but also a test of the state’s ability to uphold the rule of law and protect the rights of its citizens.

Residents of New Shah Shams Colony lodged a complaint with the Chief Minister of Punjab regarding illegal encroachments. Although the complaint prompted action, the operation appeared to be merely symbolic. Despite the involvement of two enforcement teams the MDA Enforcement Wing and the Para Force Enforcement Unit the encroachments remained largely intact, and the residents’ grievance was not effectively addressed. Ch. Rashid and others residents Expressing their disappointment, the residents asked, “If even the Chief Minister’s intervention fails to provide relief, where should we turn for justice?”

Statehood Denied: Seven Years of Union Territory Rule in Indian-Occupied Kashmir

IS Continued from Page 4

composition before a single vote was cast under the new boundaries, in a territory where the Valley had historically held the larger population share.

Nearly two years into Abdullah’s term, the pattern has produced a predictable politics. His government drafted new business rules in early 2025 seeking clearer lines with the

Lieutenant Governor; the file was returned unresolved. Home Minister Amit Shah has repeated, as recently as October 2025 and again this year, that statehood will come “at the appropriate time,” without naming one. On 20 July, the National Conference brought that unmet promise to Delhi’s streets, and a petition asking the Supreme Court to set an actual deadline is listed for hearing on 8 August, three days after

the seventh anniversary of the reorganisation that started the clock.

Seven years is longer than any previous period of direct central rule over the territory since independence. An assembly exists, and it was fairly elected. But an assembly that cannot direct its own police, choose its own senior officials, or oversee its own anti-corruption machinery is a legislature in name before it is one in func-

tion. India can point to the ballot box in Indian-Occupied Kashmir. It has not yet had to answer for what waits on the other side of it.

The author is a graduate in International Relations from the International Islamic University, Islamabad, and is currently serving as a researcher at the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Islamabad.

How Iran Emerged as Fourth Center of Global Power

IS Continued from Page 4

rating at 35 percent, near the lowest point of his presidency. American gasoline prices have risen by more than 25 percent since the war began, while Democrats have moved narrowly ahead of Republicans on the question of economic management.

The World Bank has reduced its projected global growth rate for 2026 from 2.9 percent to 2.5 percent, citing the Middle East conflict, rising energy prices, inflation and higher borrowing costs. The European Central

Bank has similarly reported that the war has depressed household confidence and consumption across the eurozone. Thus, countries that neither initiated nor participated in the conflict are nevertheless being forced to pay its economic price.

Washington must therefore confront the question it has repeatedly avoided: whose strategic objectives is America now serving?

Benjamin Netanyahu spent decades warning against Iran and pressing successive American administrations to

dismantle its nuclear, missile and regional capabilities. Israel initiated the confrontation that Washington subsequently embraced, yet the United States now carries much of its military, economic, diplomatic and political burden.

Meanwhile, Netanyahu’s government continues its operations in Gaza, entrenches Israeli control in the West Bank and pursues its objectives in southern Lebanon. As the United States remains consumed by the Iran war and the Strait of Hormuz crisis,

Israel continues advancing the territorial and ideological objectives associated by its critics with the project of a “Greater Israel.”

The International Criminal Court has issued arrest warrants alleging that Netanyahu and former Israeli defence minister Yoav Gallant bear criminal responsibility for war crimes and crimes against humanity. The warrants have intensified demands that Netanyahu be held legally accountable for Israel’s conduct in Gaza.

New York Mayor Zohran

Mamdani has acknowledged that his city lacks the independent legal authority to execute the ICC warrant. He has therefore called upon the federal government to arrest Netanyahu if the Israeli prime minister enters the United States.

Tucker Carlson has amplified Mamdani’s broader argument, declaring that Netanyahu has become a liability to both Israel and the United States and that Washington’s “blank cheque” policy must end. Carlson has urged other American politi-

cians to show similar courage and reconsider a relationship in which American taxpayers finance Israeli policies while the United States bears the military, diplomatic and economic consequences.

Mamdani’s intervention expresses a widening demand for accountability: an alliance must not mean immunity, and friendship must not require one country to inherit another government’s wars. In this interpretation, Netanyahu’s removal or prosecution would not by itself resolve every regional

dispute, but it could remove a major driver of continuing escalation.

America’s choice is no longer between victory and negotiation. It is between negotiated de-escalation and an expanding war in which every participant loses—even if Israel, at least for the moment, loses the least.

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

Day of Exploitation

ISLAMABAD: Motorists ride past banner at Constitution Avenue in the Federal Capital, on the eve of Youm-e-Istehsal (Day of Exploitation) to mark the anniversary of Indian government annulled Article 370 of its constitution, removing the special autonomous status of Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Chairman Senate Gilani Reaffirms Pakistan's "Unwavering Solidarity" with Kashmiris on Youm-e-Istehsal

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has reaffirmed Pakistan's unwavering, principled, and historic support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) in his special message on Youm-e-Istehsal.

He condemned India's unilateral and illegal actions of 5 August 2019, calling them a flagrant violation of UN Security Council resolutions, international law, and human rights. Gilani said the day is a solemn reminder of the suffering, sacrifices, and resilience of Kashmiris and a call for the international community to acknowledge the injustices in the occupied territory.

He noted that since 2019, India has intensified efforts



to alter IIOJK's demography, suppress political leadership, restrict freedoms, and commit widespread human rights violations. "No amount of coercion can extinguish the Kashmiri people's legitimate aspirations for freedom and self-determination," he stressed.

He urged the UN, human rights bodies, and global institutions to take notice and ensure India complies with international law. "The people of Pakistan stand shoulder to shoulder with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters until their inalienable right to self-determination is realized."

Tight Security Across Punjab and Beyond as Chehlum Processions Held

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Punjab Police remained on high alert as Chehlum of Hazrat Imam Hussain (RA) was observed across the province on Tues-

day, with extensive security arrangements in place for mourning processions and gatherings.

IG Punjab Police Abdul Karim said security had been finalized for 730 majalis and

over 400 processions province-wide, with more than 42,000 police personnel deployed. In Lahore alone, over 10,000 officers secured 44 majalis and 17 processions, supported by 390

walkthrough gates and 6,427 metal detectors. The Safe City Authority monitored events via 43 Smart Safe City centres and over 800 cameras, alongside drone surveillance. Snipers

were positioned on rooftops, and female personnel were assigned to frisk women mourners. Special arrangements were also made for the Urs of Data Ganj Bakhsh at

Continued on Page 7

Amir Muqam Reviews PML-N Campaign for Poonch Division



Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, chaired a meeting of PML-N election campaign coordinators for Poonch Division to review preparations ahead of the AJK Legislative Assembly elections' next phase on 10 August 2026.

The meeting included Regional Coordinator and Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, MNAs Babar Nawaz and Noor-

ul-Hassan Tanveer, party candidates, and newly elected AJK Assembly members Engineer Umair Naeem Advocate and Chaudhry Abdul Razzaq.

Participants reviewed campaign progress, public outreach and organizational arrangements, finalizing strategy for remaining constituencies and discussing plans for public meetings and campaign events.

Muqam congratulated coordinators and workers on PML-N's successful showing in Mirpur and

Muzaffarabad Divisions, crediting effective planning and organizational discipline. He expressed confidence the party would replicate this success in Poonch Division.

Coordinators were directed to strengthen coordination and public engagement to broaden the party's reach as polling approaches.

The meeting concluded with a pledge to mobilize organizational resources and maintain close engagement with workers and voters through the remaining campaign phase.

Aleem Khan Pays Tribute to Police Martyrs, Announces Major Road Expansion Projects



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan paid tribute to police martyrs at the Youm-e-Shuhada-e-Police ceremony at the Motorway Police Headquarters, honouring the sacrifices of fallen officers and announcing new initiatives to improve road safety and infrastructure.

Accompanied by Inspector General Motorway Police Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry, the minister laid a floral wreath at the Martyrs' Memorial and praised the courage of police personnel, including 59 Motorway Police martyrs.

Highlighting the National Highway Authority's performance, Aleem Khan said its revenue had risen from Rs66 billion in 2024 to over Rs127 billion in 2026, enabling major infrastructure projects through domestic resources.

He outlined plans to expand motorways and highways across the country, including the Murree-Muzaffarabad Expressway extension, the MNJC Motorway, the Sialkot-Kharian-Rawalpindi Highway, the M-6 Motorway, the Guru Nanak Expressway, and key projects in Sindh and Balochistan aimed at improving connectivity, trade and tourism.

IG Sultan Ahmad Chaudhry reaffirmed the Motorway Police's commitment to supporting the families of martyred personnel.

یوم استحصال کشمیر

05 اگست 2019

ہندوستان کے مقبوضہ جموں و کشمیر کی خصوصی حیثیت کے خاتمہ کے یکطرفہ غیر آئینی، غیر قانونی اور غیر اخلاقی اقدامات سے

مسئلہ کشمیر ختم نہیں ہو سکتا

تحریک آزادی کشمیر اس وقت تک جاری رہے گی جب تک کشمیریوں کو اقوام متحدہ کی قراردادوں کے مطابق استعصوب رائے کا حق نہیں مل جاتا

لائن آف کنٹرول کے دونوں اطراف اور دنیا بھر سے کشمیری عالمی اداروں بالخصوص اقوام متحدہ سلامتی کونسل سے مطالبہ کرتے ہیں کہ وہ ہندوستان کی جانب سے سلامتی کونسل کی قراردادوں کی سنگین خلاف ورزیوں کا نوٹس لے اور 05 اگست 2019 کے غیر آئینی، غیر قانونی اور غیر اخلاقی اقدامات کو واپس لیا جائے

محکمہ اطلاعات آزاد حکومت ریاست جموں و کشمیر

BOI Reaffirms Support for Export-Led Growth, Sustainable Industrial Development



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, AUG. 4: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment (BOI) Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh reaffirmed the government's commitment to promoting investment and export-led industrialisation during a meeting with a delegation from Sundar Green Special Economic Zone (SEZ).

The delegation, led by MNA Rana Muhammad Hayat and Sundar Green SEZ management, discussed the development of the

industrial zone and measures to strengthen Pakistan's investment climate. BOI Secretary Jamil Qureshi and senior officials also attended the meeting.

The minister praised the Sundar Green SEZ management for developing a modern, environmentally sustainable industrial zone, describing it as a model for other SEZs. He stressed that Pakistan's economic future depends on manufacturing, exports and industrial growth, citing successful international examples and

highlighting the importance of export-oriented industries.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said the government would continue facilitating investors through business-friendly policies, tax incentives and improved ease of doing business. Secretary Jamil Qureshi assured full institutional support, while both sides agreed to work together to promote Special Economic Zones as key drivers of sustainable economic growth and investment in Pakistan.