



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ابن عباس رضی اللہ عنہما سے روایت ہے کہ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم گزرتے تو تعبیر
کا ایک شخص اس طرح طواف کر رہا تھا کہ
دوسرا شخص اس کی ناک میں ری ہاندھ کر
اس کے آگے سے اس کی رہنمائی کر رہا تھا۔
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے دور کی اپنی ہاتھ
سے کاٹ دی، پھر محمدیاد کا ہاتھ سے اس کی
رہنمائی کرے
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6703)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

DPM Dar pays respects, offers prayer at Masjid-e-Nabawi

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday arrived in Madinah Munawara, where he paid his respects at Masjid-e-Nabawi (PBUH) and offered prayers. During his visit, the deputy prime minister prayed for the peace, progress, and prosperity of Pakistan and the well-being of the Muslim Ummah.



Petrol up Rs4.45, diesel down Rs2 under daily fuel pricing

The federal government has increased the price of petrol while reducing the price of high-speed diesel (HSD) under Pakistan's daily petroleum pricing mechanism. According to a notification the price of petrol has been increased by Rs4.45 per litre, taking the new ex-depot price to Rs333.01 per litre.

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Called on

RAWALPINDI: Somalia's Defence Minister Ambassador Ahmed Moallim Fiqi called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.



High-Level Somalia delegation discusses defence cooperation with Field Marshal Asim Munir

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: A high-level delegation from the Federal Republic of Somalia, led by Defence Minister H. E. Ambassador Ahmed Moallim Fiqi, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and measures to further enhance bilateral defence and security cooperation were

discussed. Both sides underscored the importance of deepening military-to-military ties and capacity building initiatives to counter common security challenges.

The visiting dignitary appreciated Pakistan's steadfast support and the professional role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability. The Field Marshal reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Somalia in strengthening its security apparatus and fostering enduring peace in the region.

Security forces kill 12 terrorists in Balochistan operations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces killed 12 terrorists linked to the Indian proxy Fitna al-Hindustan during two intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Balochistan's Washuk and Mastung districts on August 5 and 6, the military's media wing said on Thursday.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were conducted as part of the ongoing "Radd-ul-Fitna-3" campaign against terrorism.

The ISPR said that on August 5, security forces tracked the movement of six terrorists in Washuk district. Acting on intelligence, troops launched a successful operation and killed all six militants belonging to the Indian proxy Fitna al-Hindustan.

On August 6, security forces carried out another intelligence-based operation in Mastung district, killing six more terrorists linked to the same group. During the operation, forces also destroyed a terrorist hideout, the military said.

The ISPR said the two operations resulted in the elimination



of 12 terrorists over two days, describing them as successful intelligence-led actions against foreign-backed militants.

Sanitisation operations are continuing in the affected areas to eliminate any remaining terrorist presence and ensure the region is fully secured, the statement added.

The military said security forces, in coordination with law enforcement agencies, will continue operations under the national Azm-e-Istehkam vision to eradicate the menace of foreign-sponsored terrorism from the country.

PM arrives in Saudi Arabia for talks with Saudi Crown Prince

Spokesman Report

JEDDAH: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif arrived in Jeddah on Thursday on an official visit to Saudi Arabia at the invitation of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

Upon his arrival, the prime minister and the accompanying Pakistani delegation were warmly received by Deputy Governor of Makkah Prince Saud bin Mishal bin Abdulaziz, Saudi Minister of

Environment, Water and Agriculture Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadley, Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq, and senior diplomatic officials.

A high-level Pakistani delegation is accompanying the prime minister, including Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Defence Minister Khawaja Asif, Information Minister Attaulah

Tarar and Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Tariq Fatemi.

During the visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz is scheduled to meet Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to discuss ways to further strengthen the longstanding brotherly relations and strategic partnership between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

The two leaders are also expected to exchange views on regional developments and issues of mutual interest, with particular focus on expanding cooperation

in trade, investment and the economy.

According to the Foreign Office, the visit, which runs from August 6 to 8, is aimed at deepening bilateral cooperation and enhancing strategic coordination between the two countries.

Discussions are also expected to cover key developments in the Middle East, including the situation in Gaza, the occupied Palestinian territories, East Jerusalem, the Red Sea and the Bab el-Mandeb Strait.

During his stay in the kingdom, Prime Minister Shehbaz will also perform Umrah and visit Masjid-e-Nabawi in Madinah, where he will pay his respects at the Roza-e-Rasool (PBUH).

Earlier, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi described the visit as being of "exceptional importance", saying it would further strengthen the strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries and reinforce cooperation on regional peace, stability and economic development.

Pakistan Rejects India's Remarks on AJK Elections, Reaffirms Kashmir Stance

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has rejected India's comments on the ongoing Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly elections, calling them "baseless and politically motivated." At a weekly media briefing, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said the elections were being conducted peacefully and transparently under AJK's constitutional and legal framework. He reiterated Pakistan's longstanding position that



Jammu and Kashmir is an internationally recognized disput-

ed territory whose final status should be decided in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Addressing regional issues, Andrabi said Pakistan's engagement with Bangladesh continues through normal diplomatic channels and emphasized that Islamabad does not interfere in the internal affairs of other countries. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to cooperation with Bangladesh.

On the Middle East, Andrabi stressed that resolving tensions in the Strait of Hormuz was vital for broader regional stability, including renewed Iran-US engagement, and said Pakistan remained committed to diplomatic efforts for de-escalation.

He also highlighted Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Saudi Arabia, Pakistan's support for an independent Palestinian state, and reiterated concerns over the use of Afghan territory by militant groups targeting Pakistan.

Pakistan to Introduce China-Style Policing Reforms, Modern Investigation Centre

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is set to modernise its policing system through a series of reforms inspired by international best practices, including the establishment of a China-style Law Enforcement Investigation Centre in Islamabad, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi announced.

Speaking to Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) who recently completed specialised training in China and Türkiye, Naqvi said overseas training would become a permanent feature of police professional development to strengthen modern law enforcement capabilities.

The proposed investigation centre will integrate

detention, investigation and summary trial facilities under one roof, enabling faster disposal of minor cases and reducing procedural delays. Naqvi said Pakistan aims to adopt advanced policing models, surveillance systems and modern technologies to improve crime prevention and public safety.

The reform package also

includes induction of state-of-the-art drones into the Interior Ministry's Aviation Wing, establishment of specialised investigation rooms at the National Police Academy, and the introduction of interrogation as a dedicated subject in police training using internationally recognised techniques.

In addition, new police uniforms will be introduced to

better meet operational requirements. Officers who attended the overseas training shared insights on modern policing practices, digital tools and surveillance systems that could help strengthen Pakistan's law enforcement framework. Senior officials from the National Police Academy and the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) also attended the meeting.

Mirpur Administration Finalises Preparations for Independence Day Celebrations



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Deputy Commissioner Mirpur Chaudhry Sajid Aslam and SSP Khurram Iqbal chaired a high-level meeting to review arrangements for Pakistan's 79th Independence Day celebrations, directing all departments to ensure coordinated, secure and well-organised events.

The meeting discussed plans for

citywide decorations with national flags and lights, cleanliness drives, traffic management, foolproof security, public order and citizen facilitation. Officials stressed close coordination among government departments to ensure timely completion of all preparations.

Deputy Commissioner Sajid Aslam urged officers to discharge their duties with honesty, justice and dedication,

describing public service as a national, religious and moral responsibility. He directed all institutions to work together to strengthen public trust and provide maximum convenience to citizens.

SSP Khurram Iqbal said August 14 symbolises the sacrifices of the nation's founders and called for promoting unity, discipline and patriotism. He emphasized that maintaining law

and order, protecting citizens' lives and property, and ensuring smooth public services remained the police's top priorities during the celebrations.

The meeting, attended by senior officials from various departments, concluded with directives to complete all arrangements on schedule through effective coordination so that Independence Day is celebrated in a peaceful, secure and dignified manner.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law, Justice and Human Rights, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar, meets the Chargé d'Affaires of the U.S. Embassy, Ms. Natalie A. Baker, at his office in the Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights, Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Masood Khan urges turning Kashmir cause into Global Civil Rights Movement

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan has called for transforming the Kashmir cause into a sustained international civil rights movement, saying symbolic observances alone are insufficient.

Addressing gatherings at IPRI, IRS, and Foundation University, he stressed that Pakistan must move beyond token solidarity and pursue a



year-round diplomatic, legal and intellectual campaign to keep Kashmir on the global agenda. Engagement with international institutions, academia, media, civil society and policy forums is essential, he added.

Khan said India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019 violated UN Security Council resolutions and eroded the rights of people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir through demographic changes and

restrictive laws.

He noted Pakistan has consistently raised Kashmir at the UN and HRC, but must now reinforce this with stronger advocacy and strategic communication. Citing Pakistan's enhanced diplomatic credibility, he urged leveraging it to refocus global attention on Kashmir.

Khan also urged youth to pursue research and leadership to represent Pakistan's interests internationally.

Reception Held in Hyderabad to Honour Imran Ali Buriro on SC Enrollment

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: A reception was hosted in Hyderabad to honour Imran Ali Buriro on his enrollment as an Advocate of the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

The event was hosted by Nawab Rashid Ali Khan, Patron of the Hyderabad Institute of International Affairs and former Provincial Minister, at his residence.

Attendees included Abdul Wahab Munshi, Secretary General of the Hyderabad Institute of International Affairs and High Court advocate; senior advocate Pervez Qureshi; former Hyderabad Press Club President and senior journalist Nasir Sheikh; senior journalist Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi; along with members of the legal fraternity, journalists, civil society representatives and other dignitaries.

Speakers congratulated Buriro on the achievement, calling it a reflection



of his dedication, professional competence and commitment to law. They noted it was also a matter of pride for

Hyderabad's legal community.

Participants expressed confidence that Buriro would continue

to contribute to the rule of law and justice, and extended best wishes for his future success.

Prayer Ceremony held in Mirpur to honor police martyrs



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: A grand prayer ceremony was held at Police Lines Mirpur to pay tribute to police martyrs and pray for their eternal reward.

Commissioner Mirpur Raja Tahir Mumtaz Khan, DIG Mirpur Kamran Ali, DC Chaudhry Sajid Aslam, SSP Khurram Iqbal, Chamber President Umar Shahzad, district officials, police officers and families of martyrs attended.

Addressing the gathering, DIG Kamran Ali called police martyrs "proud assets and real heroes" who sacrificed their lives for peace, rule of law, and public safety. He said their sacrifices are a bright chapter in national history and a beacon for the police force, which will continue serving with honesty, courage and professionalism.

He paid tribute to martyrs' families for their patience and courage, pledging full support for their honor and welfare.

The ceremony concluded with special prayers for martyrs, their families, and for peace, stability and prosperity of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Allama Riaz Hussain Shah: Adherence to Qur'an and Sunnah Key to Ummah's Success

City Desk

RAWALPIND: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, said that firm adherence to the Holy Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) is the true path to the success, unity, and prosperity of the Muslim Ummah.

Addressing the weekly _Mahfil-e-Zikr_ and _Dars-e-Qur'an_ hosted by Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim, he cited the Prophetic saying: _"Hold firmly to my Sunnah and the Sunnah of the Rightly Guided Caliphs."_

He described the lives of Hazrat Abu Bakr Siddiq (RA), Hazrat Umar Farooq (RA), Hazrat Uthman Ghani (RA) and Hazrat Ali Al-Murtaza (RA) as models of unity, justice, and moderation. He added that love for Ahl al-Bayt is essential to faith, and teachings of righteous saints promote brotherhood and tolerance.

During the Qur'anic lesson on Surah As-Sajdah, he urged reflection on Qur'anic meanings and sincere worship. The gathering concluded with prayers for the unity of the Ummah and for peace and progress of Pakistan.



Attock Police arrest five drug peddlers, recover 3.42 kg hashish and 25 litres of liquor

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police continued its crackdown against drug trafficking and illegal liquor, arresting five suspects in separate operations and recovering a total of 3,420 grams of hashish and 25 litres of liquor.

According to the details, Sub-Inspector Iftikhar Ahmed of City Attock Police Station, along with his team, recovered 1,220 grams of hashish from Muhammad Yasir, son of Abdul Malik, a resident of Khalid Saeed Wali, Attock City, during a checking operation.

In another operation, Assistant Sub-Inspector Muhammad Meezan of City Hassan Abdul Police Station arrested Ziarat Khan, son of Alif Syed, a resident of Wah Cantt, and recovered 1,600 grams of hashish from his possession.

Similarly, Assistant Sub-Inspector Azhar Iqbal of Saddar Attock Police Station recovered 600 grams of hashish from Kamran Ali, son of Sharafat Ali, a resident of Mari Kanjur, Attock District.

In a separate action, Assistant Sub-Inspector Mumtaz Khan of Saddar Attock Police Station arrested Shad Ali Khan, son of Sanobar Khan, a resident of Nowshera, after recovering 10 litres of liquor from his possession.

Meanwhile, Assistant Sub-Inspector Jameel Akhtar of Basal Police Station carried out an effective operation and arrested Abdul Khaliq, son of Muhammad Riaz, a resident of Pind Fazal Khan, Tehsil Fateh Jang, after recovering 15 litres of liquor.

Police have registered separate cases against all the accused under the relevant provisions of the law and initiated further legal proceedings.

PACA Strengthens Law Enforcement Capacity Through Two-Day Discourse on FATF, UNCAC, and Financial Crimes

City Desk

The Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA), a training centre of NAB hosted a two-day intellectual discourse on August 4-5, 2026, for investigators and prosecutors from NAB and other law enforcement agencies. Guided by NAB Chairman Lt Gen (Retd) Nazir Ahmed and opened by PACA Director General Mr. Ghulam Safdar Shah, the program focused on enhancing institutional capacity to counter corruption, money laundering, and terrorist financing through international standards and inter-agency synergy.

The comprehensive curriculum focused on aligning domestic operations with FATF standards and UNCAC guidelines, covering advanced asset tracing, forensic tools, and international cooperation networks such as INTERPOL and the GloBE Network. Expert instruction was led by prominent specialists including Mr. Muhammad Tahir, Director General Special Investigation Division at NAB Headquarters; Mr. Ammar Javaid Siddiqui, Assistant Director at NACTA; and Mr. Shahzad Hussain, Additional Director at the Financial Monitoring Unit.

Key takeaways emphasized parallel financial investigations, beneficial-ownership transparency, early asset freezing, and the critical analytical role of Suspicious Transaction Reports handled by the FMU.

The program concluded with certificate distributions, with DG PACA reaffirming the academy's dedication to high-caliber professional training and sustained institutional collaboration across Pakistan's security and regulatory agencies.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:50 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:04 pm
Maghrib 7:04 pm
Isha 8:37 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
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Spotify Launches "Discover Your Inner Aadeez" Experience for Atif Aslam Fans

News Desk

KARACHI: Spotify has unveiled a new interactive in-app experience, "Discover Your Inner Aadeez", inspired by Atif Aslam's latest album _Subah Aye Na_.

The personalized feature celebrates the unique ways fans connect with one of Pakistan's most iconic artists. Available to both Free and Premium users, the experience invites listeners to choose their favorite track from _Subah Aye Na_. Bespoke animations then reveal one of four Aadeez personas.

The personas include Borderless Aadeez for global music collectors, Moonrise Aadeez for late-night listeners, The OG Aadeez for longtime fans, and The Early Discoverer Aadeez for those first to stream new releases.

After being matched, users receive a personalized share card to post on social media before returning to the album.

"Music means something different to every listener," said Talha Hashim, Spotify's Marketing Manager for Pakistan. "This experience turns those listening habits into something personal and shareable."

Fans can access it by tapping the "Discover Your Inner Aadeez" banner on the Spotify mobile app.

Punjab Cabinet Approves Security, Transport and Governance Reforms

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Cabinet, chaired by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, approved a wide range of security, governance, transport and development meas-

ures while congratulating the PML-N leadership on its victory in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections.

The cabinet approved Rs1.1 billion for weapons and protective equipment for police deployed in the Katcha area, along



with a hard-area allowance, a special recruitment package for local youth and expanded benefits for martyred police personnel. It was informed that kidnapping for ransom in the riverine belt had been eliminated for the first time in 30 years.

The meeting reviewed progress under the "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar" programme, under which 30,000 allotment letters have been issued from over

171,000 applications. It also approved recruitment of 900 Union Council secretaries, establishment of the Gujranwala Regional Command for Prisons, and merger of the Literacy Department with the School Education Department.

Reaffirming her commitment to public transport, the chief minister said 1,100 electric buses would be introduced across Punjab by December. The cabinet also reviewed the National Wheat Policy

2026-30 and formed a committee on the medical entry test.

Among other decisions, it approved over Rs12.5 billion for local government elections, land acquisition for Chiniot iron ore development and Quaid-i-Azam Business Park, establishment of the Punjab Water and Sanitation Authority Fund, amendments to various laws, recruitment in key departments, and several infrastructure, health and education initiatives.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi along with Ambassador of the Philippines to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Dr. Emmanuel R. Fernandez and Senator Talha Mehmood cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the 16th Annual Photo Exhibition of Rawalpindi/Islamabad Photojournalists Association (RIPJA) "Culture & Heritage of Pakistan-Our Identity, Our Pride" at Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA).



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

PMI Holds Annual General Meeting in Auburn, Elects New Executive Council

News Desk

AUBURN: Pakistan Mission International (PMI) held its Annual General Meeting (AGM) 2026 on Sunday, August 2nd in Auburn.

The meeting began with the presentation and adoption of the minutes from the previous AGM, followed by the fiscal report.

The President presented the Annual Report, highlighting PMI's key achievements and activities over the past year.

During the AGM, new office bearers were elected to the Executive Council for the upcoming term:

President: Shakil Ahmad,-
General Secretary: Huma Ashar, Joint Secretary: Nasir

Nawaz, Secretary Culture/
Info: Shahid Malik,- Treas-
urer: Irfana Qureshi

The newly elected council
expressed commitment to
further strengthening PMI's

mission and community
service initiatives in the year
ahead.



Rawalpindi Education Board, Matriculation Result New Siddique School 100% Results

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: In the annual matriculation examination 2026 under the Rawalpindi Education Board, the students of New Siddique Public Montessori and High School Satellite Town Rawalpindi increased the respect of teachers, parents and the people of the city with 100% overall result.

Public, social and educational circles have congratulated CEO Dr.

Hassan Zahoor Abbasi, Principal Tehmina Aslam and their teaching team for the exemplary performance of the students.

According to the Gazette, Barira Aziz stood first in the school with 1155/1200 marks, Waniya Ashraf stood second with 1141 marks and Aqsa Zahid stood third with 1138 marks.

In the boyar group, Fahad Mahmood stood first, second and third with 1093 marks, Muhammad



Absar stood first, second and third with 1084 marks and Muhammad

Ali Ashfaq stood third with 1073 marks.

Azma Bokhari calls for action against fake news and propaganda

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari said journalism is a sacred, responsible profession and those spreading lies on YouTube are content creators, not journalists.

Addressing a CPNE ceremony, she said curbing fake news and character assassination is urgent. She urged media bodies to identify "black sheep" and create internal disciplinary mechanisms for self-accountability.

Bokhari noted that anti-Pakistan propaganda from abroad and profit-driven falsehoods are damaging journalism's credibility. She added that Pakistan has greater digital media freedom than many countries, but it must be exercised responsibly.

She announced the government is reviewing the definition of journalist, accreditation, and media lists through a constituted committee. The Punjab government, she said, will continue supporting journalists' welfare and promoting responsible journalism.



Asma Butt Visits Rawal Hospital, Lauds Khakan Waheed Khawaja's Welfare Work



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ms. Asma Butt, Chief Executive Officer of Dolphin Communication, visited Rawal General & Dental Hospital and Rawal Institute of Health Sciences, where she met Chairman Khakan Waheed Khawaja.

Speaking on the occasion, Asma Butt said Pakistan is blessed with individuals dedicated to serving the nation and future generations. She called Khakan Waheed Khawaja a prominent example of humanitarian service, noting he has set a remarkable standard through practical action in welfare, social and public services, not just claims.

She added that Pakistan's progress is driven by such committed people and that Khakan Waheed Khawaja will contest the upcoming general elections through his political party's platform.

Asma Butt also appreciated the journalistic contributions of Media Coordinator and Senior Journalist Shakeel Awan, saying his skills would strengthen the institution's reputation.

Chairman Khakan Waheed Khawaja thanked Asma Butt for her visit and community work. Senior journalists, artists and other dignitaries were also present.

Call Renewed for Posthumous Nishan-e-Pakistan for Mahmud Ali

M. Fazal Elahi

ISLAMABAD: A renewed appeal has been made to the country's leadership to posthumously confer Pakistan's highest civilian award, the Nishan-e-Pakistan, on veteran statesman and freedom movement leader Mahmud Ali in recognition of his contributions to the nation.

The appeal highlights Mahmud Ali's lifelong commitment to Pakistan, describing him as a principled leader who represented the country with distinction at the 26th Session of the United Nations General Assembly in 1971, where he presented Pakistan's position on the East Pakistan crisis.

The writer argues that despite Mahmud Ali's significant political, diplomatic and national services, he has not received the recognition he deserves. It notes that efforts over the past six years—including representations to successive presidents, prime ministers and state institutions, as well as public awareness campaigns through print, electronic and social media—have sought official acknowledgment of his legacy.

The appeal urges Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, President Asif Ali Zardari and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to honour Mahmud Ali posthumously, stating that such recognition would correct a longstanding national oversight and inspire future generations through his example of patriotism, integrity and public service.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor:
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Almass Ayoub Sabir
Asim Nazir Ahmad
Naveed Ahmad Khan
Amjad Mehmood
Khurram Jaffrani
(jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Syed Afraz Ali Nazish
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone:+92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
Karachi Phone:021-33399390
Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Global Diplomats Tour NDMA’s Emergency Operations Centre, Applaud Pakistan’s Disaster Management Capabilities

A high-level multi-country diplomatic delegation, comprising representatives from Tajikistan, Myanmar, Sri Lanka, Oman, Spain, Bangladesh, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Jordan, Indonesia, Germany, Hungary, Japan, Thailand, Canada and Uzbekistan, visited the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC) at NDMA Headquarters in Islamabad. The delegation included Heads of Mission and senior diplomats accredited to Pakistan, while more than 34 Pakistani ambassadors and heads of mission abroad joined the session via Zoom.

Team NDMA presented a comprehensive overview of NEOC’s capabilities and Pakistan’s transformation toward proactive disaster management aimed at reducing recurring disaster risks. Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik outlined measures the authority has advanced for regional integration and a global disaster risk reduction (DRR) reset approach, showcasing NDMA’s recent standards of excellence and plans to adopt next-generation technologies for more reliable Disaster Early Warnings (DEW) and coordinated responder action.

The briefing detailed NDMA’s structured coordination with national and security leadership, its guidance framework for provincial and area governments, and its growing connectivity with global academia, humanitarian responders and support organizations. Delegates acknowledged the benefits of this multi-tiered coordination and resilient response readiness, with the strategic overview highlighting localized risk communication, anticipatory action planning, resource mobilization, and pre-arranged international coordination for disaster relief logistics.

During the session, “Disaster Lens 2026” was demonstrated to the delegation and the wider global audience, alongside sequences from Comprehensive International Simulation Exercises (CISE) showcasing Pakistan’s emergency response preparedness.

A representative of the National Disaster Risk Management Fund (NDRMF) attended in person, while representatives of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH), the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO), the Commonwealth and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) joined virtually. These organizations shared perspectives on strengthening regional cooperation, enhancing disaster risk reduction mechanisms, promoting knowledge exchange, and building collaborative resilience against climate-induced and complex disasters.

The visiting delegation praised NDMA’s disaster management methodology and technical capabilities, with several countries expressing interest in continued collaboration with Pakistan on disaster management and emergency response.

Both sides emphasized the importance of strengthening institutional linkages and deepening cooperation to address emerging risks linked to climate change and increasingly complex disaster scenarios, signaling continued momentum toward greater international engagement with Pakistan’s disaster management framework in the years ahead.

A Stronger Pakistan Through Better Governance

The progress, prosperity, and stability of any nation do not depend solely on abundant natural resources, a large population, or ambitious development projects. More importantly, they rely on the quality of governance, the strength of public institutions, and the effectiveness of the state’s administrative system. Strong, accountable institutions form the cornerstone of national development because they ensure the effective implementation of policies, equitable distribution of resources, the rule of law, and efficient public service delivery. When state institutions are weak, non-transparent, or ineffective, even vast natural wealth, substantial investments, and well-designed policies fail to produce the desired outcomes. Conversely, countries with limited resources but strong governance, accountable institutions, and transparent systems often achieve remarkable success. The experience of many developed nations confirms that sustainable progress is rooted not in the abundance of resources but in their sound management, institutional integrity, and adherence to the rule of law.

In Pakistan, every election is followed by promises of development and public welfare. Large development projects are announced, and governments pledge a brighter future. Yet many projects remain incomplete or fail to deliver their intended benefits because of weak implementation, institutional inefficiency, inconsistent policies, and inadequate accountability. Sustainable development therefore depends not merely on launching new initiatives but on strengthening institutions and improving governance.

An efficient administrative system is the backbone of an effective state. Transparent, responsive, and accountable public institutions ensure quality service delivery and timely implementation of government policies. Reducing bureaucratic delays, embracing digital technology, and focusing on citizens’ needs can significantly enhance public confidence and improve national productivity.

The judicial system is equally vital to national progress. Without the rule of law and timely justice, economic stability and social harmony cannot be achieved. Delayed legal proceedings discourage investment, prolong commercial disputes, and weaken confidence in public institutions. An independent and impartial judiciary not only protects citizens’ rights but also creates the legal certainty essential for sustainable economic growth. Education remains the most valuable investment for any nation. An education system focused only on examinations and degrees cannot prepare young people for the demands of a rapidly changing world. Pakistan needs an education policy that promotes critical thinking, innovation, research, digital literacy, and practical skills. Modern curricula, well-trained teachers, and improved educational facilities are essential for producing a skilled and competitive workforce.

Economic stability is another pillar of national development. A business-friendly environment, a fair tax system, easier access to finance, and policies that encourage investment are essential for sustainable growth. Modernising agriculture, strengthening industries, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and expanding exports can create a stronger and more resilient economy. At the

same time, vocational training, entrepreneurship programmes, and employment opportunities will enable young people to contribute more effectively to national development.

A strong healthcare system is also fundamental to national development. A healthy population is more productive and better equipped to contribute to economic and social progress. The government should strengthen primary healthcare, expand preventive health programmes, and ensure that affordable, quality medical services are accessible to every citizen. Investment in healthcare is ultimately an investment in human capital and long-term national prosperity.

An effective and impartial accountability system is a defining feature of good governance. Accountability is not limited to punishing corruption; it also promotes transparency, responsibility, and institutional efficiency. When public officials and institutions are answerable for their actions, misuse of authority and waste of public resources are significantly reduced, strengthening both public trust and state credibility.

Political interference, nepotism, and favoritism continue to undermine institutional performance. Appointments, promotions, and key administrative decisions should be based on merit rather than political influence or personal connections. Countries that consistently uphold merit, institutional independence, and equality before the law achieve stronger governance and better public service delivery. Pakistan can significantly improve its institutional performance by protecting public institutions from unnecessary political interference and ensuring merit-based decision-making.

A strong state is one in which every institution performs its responsibilities within its constitutional and legal mandate. Respect

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From Mamdani to El-Sayed: Reshaping America’s Politics

The political rise of Zohran Mamdani in New York City and Abdul El-Sayed in Michigan represents a significant development in American democracy. Their stories are not identical, and their political offices carry very different powers, but both have challenged the traditional assumption that Muslim candidates must soften their identities, dilute their convictions or seek approval from powerful political establishments before becoming electorally acceptable.

Mamdani has already completed the more difficult half of his journey. After winning New York City’s Democratic mayoral primary in 2025, defeating former Governor Andrew Cuomo, he won the general election on November 4, 2025, and became mayor on January 1, 2026. El-Sayed, by contrast, has won Michigan’s Democratic nomination for the United States Senate but must still defeat Republican Mike Rogers in the November 2026 general election. His primary victory was narrow—less than one percentage point—but politically remarkable because he overcame a nationally supported establishment candidate and tens of millions of dollars in outside spending.

Some factual distinctions are essential. New York City is not one of America’s 50 states. It is a city within New York State, governed through five boroughs: Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, the Bronx

and Staten Island. Nevertheless, its population, financial power, media influence and global diplomatic presence give its mayor an international profile unusual for a municipal official. The city hosts the headquarters of the United Nations and receives presidents, prime ministers and diplomats from across the world.

Mamdani was born in Kampala, Uganda, to filmmaker Mira Nair, who was born in India, and Mahmood Mamdani, a prominent Ugandan academic of Indian ancestry. He later became an American citizen. El-Sayed was born in Michigan and is the son of Egyptian immigrants. Therefore, Mamdani is himself an immigrant, while El-Sayed is a native-born American from an immigrant family. Both, however, embody the experience of Muslim families establishing themselves within American society.

Their professional beginnings were also different. Mamdani worked as a housing counsellor, helping homeowners facing foreclosure, and participated in electoral campaigns before winning a seat in the New York State Assembly in 2020. He defeated an established incumbent in the Democratic primary and was subsequently reelected. His political identity developed through tenant advocacy, public transportation campaigns

and democratic-socialist organizing.

El-Sayed followed a more academic and administrative path. He studied medicine and public health, became an epidemiologist and served as Detroit’s health director before later leading health and human-services work in Wayne County. His first major electoral campaign was an unsuccessful run for governor of Michigan in 2018.

Instead of disappearing after that defeat, he remained active through public-policy work, writing, broadcasting and grassroots organization. By the time he entered the 2026 Senate race, he had converted a previous defeat into statewide recognition and a more experienced political operation.

Both men have been notably open about their Muslim faith. However, sincerity of belief is ultimately personal and cannot be scientifically measured by journalists or political opponents. What can be examined is consistency. Neither candidate hid his Muslim identity when it became politically inconvenient. Both discussed how faith influenced their understanding of justice, economic inequality and public service. Their campaigns did not present Islam as a demand for special treatment; rather, they situated Muslim identity within the

broader American principles of equality, dignity and constitutional citizenship.

This openness became more important because both faced opposition connected to their criticism of Israeli government policies. Mamdani was attacked over his views on Palestinian rights, while El-Sayed called for ending American military assistance to Israel and described the destruction in Gaza as genocide. AIPAC and aligned organizations became deeply involved in the Michigan primary. Reports estimated that pro-Stevens and anti-El-Sayed outside spending reached tens of millions of dollars, making the contest one of the most expensive Democratic primaries in American history. Rather than retreating, El-Sayed used the intervention to argue that Michigan’s political choices should not be controlled by billionaires or outside lobbying organizations.

Nevertheless, it would be inaccurate to say that all Democrats and Republicans united against either candidate. Mamdani received substantial support from progressive Democrats, democratic socialists, trade-union members, young voters and immigrant communities. El-Sayed was endorsed by national progressive figures, including Bernie Sanders and Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez. Their victories were rebellions against particular party establishments, not victories achieved entirely without political allies.

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

Beyond the Scoreboard: Sports Diplomacy and the Future of India-Pakistan Relations

Sport Is Not Only a Hobby but also an Incredible Opportunity to Raise Diplomatic Work and International Communications. Sport Should Be Resorted to in Case Other Diplomatic Measures Fail to Produce an Adequate Result. There Are Examples of Sport-Political Interaction, for Instance, Table-Tennis Matches between Ambassadors of the US and China, Held in the Early Seventies, Also Known as Ping-Pong Diplomacy, Reopened the Relationships between the Two Countries, Thus, Relieving Political Tensions. Moreover, Following

the Example of Ping-Pong Diplomacy, in 1995 Mandela Used Rugby to Start the Reconciliation Process in South Africa. Moreover, the Matches between the Football Teams of the North and the South Korea Could Also Become Another Example of Sport-Political Interaction. Sport Is Unlikely to Solve All the Problems between Two or More Countries, but It Is an Incredible Catalyst for Further Steps, as Well as an Opportunity to Alleviate International Tensions.

The Sport Events between the Cricket Teams of India and Pakistan Could Become a Symbol of Friendship, as Well as an Opportunity to Promote Positive Attitudes between the Countries.

First, They Would Bring Together Millions of Fans Who Would Be Delighted to Watch the

Matches

Second, It Will Promote Positive Attitudes, as Well as Respect between the Countries. In Particular, the Matches Will Become Another Step Toward the Solution of the Long-Standing Political Deadlock between India and Pakistan,

as Well as an Opportunity to Show Friendliness and Goodwill. The Existing Political Stalemate Overshadows Sport Events so That They Have Not Started Yet, Being Politicized. This Is Due to the Complicated International Situation, and It Is Possible That the Matches Will Not Take Place in the Nearest Future. However,

Political Leaders of India and Pakistan Realize the Significance of the Matches in Terms of Promoting Positive Attitudes; However, They Do Not Dare to Take This Step, Which Is Unfair.

Thus, There Are Also Many Obstacles for India-Pakistan Matches in the Nearest Future. The Situation between India and Pakistan Is Indeed Complicated Enough, and the Countries Need Light-Hearted Matches Full of Optimism and Positive Attitudes, and Cricket Matches Can Bring This to the Nations and Their Populations. Not Only Will Sports Bring Positive Attitudes between Countries but Also Relieve Some of the Pressure from International Political Confrontations. Moreover, Since It Has Become

Continued on Page 7

FPCCI, ICCIMA Sign MoU to Boost Pakistan-Iran Trade

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and the Iran Chamber of Commerce, Industries, Mines and Agriculture (ICCIMA) signed a Memorandum of Understanding to enhance bilateral trade and economic cooperation, during the closing ceremony of the 10th session of the Pakistan-Iran Joint Trade Committee in Islamabad.

The MoU was signed by FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh and ICCIMA Vice President Hossein Pirmoazzen.

The Joint Trade Committee session was co-chaired by Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan and Iran's Minister for Industry, Mines and Trade Dr Mohammad Atabak, with both sides agreeing on a roadmap to address business community challenges.

The agreement aims to promote barter trade, strengthen business-to-business linkages, enhance industrial cooperation and investment, increase private sector engagement, and activate joint border markets.

The ceremony was attended by senior FPCCI and ICCIMA officials,



including Tariq Khan Jadoon, Karim Aziz Malik, and Iranian Ambassador Dr Reza Amiri Moghadam, among other business representatives.

Atif Ikram Sheikh termed the

session a historic milestone in Pakistan-Iran economic relations, reaffirming commitment to raising bilateral trade to ten billion dollars and expressing confidence that

stronger FPCCI-ICCIMA cooperation would boost trade, investment and industrial partnerships. Both ministers also signed agreed minutes from the two-day discussions.

Pakistan High Commission & its Consulates Observe Youm-e-Istehsal

Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: The High Commission for Pakistan in Ottawa, together with the Consulates General of Pakistan in Montreal, Toronto, and Vancouver, today observed Youm-e-Istehsal to mark the seventh anniversary of India's actions of 5 August 2019, when it revoked Articles 370 and 35-A of its Constitution and altered the constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir. The seventh anniversary event was held at the High Commission in Ottawa to express Pakistan's steadfast solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

Special messages from the President of Pakistan, the Prime Minister, and the Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister were read out on the occasion. A documentary was screened highlighting the humanitarian and human rights situation in IIOJK. A photographic exhibition depicting the impact of the conflict on the Kashmiri people was also held. The ceremony was attended by members of the Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora, academics, community representatives, and friends of Kashmir.



Addressing the gathering, High Commissioner Muhammad Saleem said that seven years after India's illegal actions of 5 August 2019, the promises of peace, stability, and development remain unfulfilled. He stated that the continuing restrictions on

fundamental freedoms, prolonged detentions, demographic changes and reports of human rights violations in IIOJK continue to raise serious concerns with the international community. The High Commissioner emphasized that the Jammu

and Kashmir remains an internationally recognized unresolved dispute, the peaceful settlement of which should be pursued in accordance with the relevant United Nations Security Council Resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Experts Call for Inclusive, Trusted Digital Ecosystem at Pakistan Digital Democracy Dialogue



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Experts from government, academia, media, technology, civil society and development organisations have called for coordinated national efforts to build a trusted, inclusive and democratic digital ecosystem that promotes responsible innovation, protects fundamental rights and strengthens information integrity.

Speaking at the Pakistan Digital Democracy Dialogue 2026, organised by Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) in collaboration with Accountability Lab and DDI South Asia, participants stressed the need for ethical artificial intelligence (AI), stronger cybersecurity, digital literacy and citizen-centric governance.

Presidential spokesperson Murtaza Solangi highlighted the importance of credible institutions, responsible media and informed citizens in countering misinformation and strengthening democratic resilience. PTA Cyber Vigilance Director General Brig Dr Muhammad Mukarram Khan underscored the need to enhance cyber preparedness against online threats, while NCAI Chairman Prof Dr Yasar Ayaz called for greater investment in indigenous AI research and ethical governance.

Speakers also emphasized digital public infrastructure, investigative journalism, entrepreneurship, women's participation and startup support as key drivers of inclusive digital transformation. They urged closer collaboration among government, academia, industry and civil society to improve public services and expand digital opportunities.

The dialogue concluded with recommendations for a multi-stakeholder framework on information integrity, responsible AI governance, enhanced digital literacy, cyber safety, protection of digital rights and sustained policy coordination to advance Pakistan's digital future.

AIOU Announces MS, MPhil & PhD Exam Schedule

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has announced the final examination schedule for its Spring 2026 semester MS, MPhil and PhD (Face-to-Face) programmes. The University has also released the admission deadlines and entry test schedule for Autumn 2026 admissions.

According to the announced schedule, examinations for the Faculty of Education have been underway since August 3, 2026 while examinations for the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies and the Faculty of Social Sciences will commence on August 10, 2026.

The University has set August 10, 2026 as the last date for admissions to Matric, FA, Associate Degree, BS, B. Ed., Postgraduate Diploma and Certificate programmes. The deadline for admissions to MS, MPhil and PhD programmes is August 17, 2026.

AIOU has clarified that no extension will be granted for admissions to MS, MPhil and PhD programmes as the entry test schedule has already been finalized.

According to the schedule, entry tests will be conducted as follows: Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies on August 21, Faculty of Education on August 24, Faculty of Social Sciences on August 27 and Faculty of Sciences on August 28, 2026. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood has advised prospective applicants to submit their admission forms well before the deadline instead of waiting until the last date. He urged candidates to obtain the prospectus, admission guidelines and detailed schedules from the University's official website.

17 Sudanese Engineers Complete Advanced Digital Skills Programme in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Seventeen Sudanese engineers have successfully completed an eight-week advanced training programme in cybersecurity, data analytics and cloud computing under a joint initiative of the OIC Standing Committee on Scientific and Technological Cooperation (COMSTECH) and the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (FAST-NUCES).

The programme, held from June 6 to August 6, concluded with a certificate distribution ceremony at the FAST-NUCES Islamabad campus. It equipped participants with practical skills in digital infrastructure security,

cloud technologies and data analysis.

Addressing the ceremony, COMSTECH Coordinator General Prof Dr Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary said human resource development and advanced technical training remained central to COMSTECH's mission of strengthening scientific and technological capacity across OIC member states. He appreciated FAST-NUCES for conducting the specialised programme and thanked the Embassy of Sudan and the Prime Institute of Health Sciences for their support.

Sudanese Ambassador Salih Mohamed Ahmed Mohamed Siddig praised Pakistan, COMSTECH and FAST-NUCES for extending educa-

tional and professional assistance to Sudan during a challenging period, describing the initiative as a practical example of cooperation among OIC countries. He called for expanding collaboration into additional scientific and technical fields.

FAST-NUCES Rector Dr Aftab Ahmad said the university was committed to future partnerships with COMSTECH in emerging technologies, including cybersecurity, semiconductor and chip design, and data sciences.

Speaking on behalf of the participants, Ahmed Mohamed Alhafiz Hassan Zainalabdin said the training had enhanced their technical expertise and would help strengthen



Sudan's digital and institutional development. The programme forms

part of COMSTECH's broader efforts to promote knowledge exchange and

capacity building across the Muslim world.

Pakistan Launches National Cultural Narrative to Promote Heritage and Sustainable Development

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has launched "Naqoosh-i-Watan: National Cultural Narrative" at the Pakistan National Council of the Arts (PNCA), aiming to preserve the country's cultural heritage while promoting tourism, the creative economy and inclusive development.

The launch ceremony brought together federal ministers, senior officials, development partners,

academia, civil society and private sector representatives to reaffirm a collective commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's cultural diversity and leveraging it for sustainable economic growth.

Addressing the session on "Culture, Tourism and Community Development," Hashoo Foundation CEO Sumeira Hashwani described Pakistan's cultural heritage as a vital asset for economic development and national identity. She stressed the need to

educate young people about the country's diverse civilizations, traditions, crafts and natural heritage.

Highlighting Hashoo Foundation's 38-year contribution, she said the organisation has worked in over 100 districts, connected more than one million youth with employment opportunities and supported over 25,000 enterprises through skills development, entrepreneurship and responsible tourism initiatives.

The National Cultural

Narrative seeks to strengthen collaboration among government, academia, development partners, civil society and the private sector to preserve heritage, expand sustainable tourism, empower youth and women, and create inclusive economic opportunities. The event concluded with the formal launch of the initiative, reaffirming a shared commitment to cultural preservation, community resilience and sustainable national development.



 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
181,776.59	180,014.93
Day's High	Day's Low
182,007.03	180,626.92
Index Value	Change
30,512,171,506	+ 1761.66
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	6 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,867.89	− 20.41
Percentage	Time
−0.19%	6 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT + 1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,904.42	− 444.70
Percentage	Time
−0.82%	6 Aug, 1:41 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
65,683.26	− 617.18
Percentage	Time
−0.93%	6 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.55	197.85
Bahrain Dinar	734.98	745.18
Canadian Dollar	196.65	201.80
China Yuan	38.15	38.90
Danish Krone	42.75	43.35
Euro	320.55	323.60
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	885.59	895.65
Malaysian Ringgit	67.05	68.25
NewZealand \$	162.01	165.08
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	721.80	732.95
Qatari Riyal	75.08	76.10
Saudi Riyal	74.10	75.20
Singapore Dollar	216.70	220.10
Swedish Korona	28.40	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.90	347.30
Thai Bhat	8.50	9.10
U.A.E Dirham	76.15	77.15
UK Pound Sterling	374.25	378.35
US Dollar	278.60	278.90

Zakaria Club of Inner Wheel District 340 Installed with Focus on Women's Empowerment

 **Quuratulain Asim**

MULTAN: The grand installation ceremony of the Zakaria Club of Inner Wheel District 340 was held here, with a renewed commitment to women's welfare under the annual theme Grow & Flourish.

Shaista Aman was elected President and Sahibzadi Khan as "Secretary" of Zakaria Club for the new term. Other office bearers including Treasurer "Anam Afaq" and Bulletin Editor "Amara Baloch" also took oath.

Addressing the ceremony, "District Chairman Shamila Shaukat" said District 340 is actively working on women's education, health, empowerment, environmental protection, tree plantation, clean water, and education for orphans and deserving children. She termed "Grow & Flourish" a mission to provide women skills and confidence to play a positive role in society.

"District Vice Chairman Samira Qayyum" and "District Secretary Dr. Manal Siddiqui" added that destitute women would be given skills and small business opportunities for respectable employment.

Former President "Mrs. Asifa Baig", "Farzana Shaukat", "Zahra Rizvi" and other members attended. Speakers expressed hope the year would be memorable for service and women's empowerment.

Gold prices jump by Rs11,300 per tola

ISLAMABAD: Gold prices witnessed a sharp increase in the local market on Thursday, with the price of 24-karat gold per tola rising by Rs11,300 to settle at Rs449,236, according to rates issued by the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewelers Association.

Similarly, the price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold increased by Rs9,688 to Rs385,147, while the price of 10 grams of 22-karat gold climbed by Rs8,881 to Rs353,064.

Mian Zahid Calls for District Economic Autonomy at Pakistan Economic Summit

 **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum (PBIF) President Mian Zahid Hussain has congratulated the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), the United Business Group (UBG) and participants on the successful organisation of the First Pakistan Economic Summit 2026, describing it as a landmark platform for building consensus on a national economic agenda.

He said the summit brought together traders, industrialists, exporters, investors, economists and business leaders from across Pakistan, providing an opportunity to discuss industrial growth, exports, investment and economic reforms.

Mian Zahid stressed that sustainable economic development required



district-level administrative and financial autonomy, arguing that empowering local governments and union councils would improve governance, public services, tax collection, infrastructure, education, health-

care and employment.

He proposed constitutional protection for district economic autonomy and recommended appointing a District Economic Commissioner in every district to prepare economic profiles, facilitate investment, promote exports and coordinate with federal and provincial governments.

He also urged institutional collaboration between FPCCI and district economic commissioners to promote locally manufactured products, strengthen exports, encourage innovation and support small businesses.

Mian Zahid said the summit had united the business community around economic recovery and called for translating its recommendations into a practical framework for national development through decentralised economic governance.

Memorial reference

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission Dr Raja Ali Raza Anwar, Mushahid Hussain Syed, Chairman Planning Commission Dr Akram Sheikh, Secretary General IPC Senator Sitara Ayaz and Hamid Meer sits on stage during special memorial reference in honor of Eminent Nuclear Engineer and former Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission Late Parvez Butt, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Kaspersky Exposes Mirage Kitten Cyber-Espionage Malware Targeting Pakistan's Aviation Sector

 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT) has uncovered a previously undocumented malware toolset used by the Mirage Kitten APT group, with aviation organizations in Pakistan among the victims of a campaign aimed at maintaining long-term network access and stealing sensitive data.

Victims were also identified across the Middle East and Africa, including entities in Egypt, Jordan, Tanzania, Ethiopia and Burkina Faso. The toolset includes NightLedger, a Windows backdoor enabling remote control, command execution, file access and screenshot capture, along with two tunneling tools, ArcBridge and BridgeHead, which route attacker traffic through compromised machines to evade network defenses.

Researchers observed BridgeHead deployed post-compromise at an aviation and aerospace organization in Pakistan,



following spear-phishing attempts using recruitment-themed lures and fake video-conferencing pages linking to malicious files.

Kaspersky's Omar Amin said Mirage Kitten continues evolving its malware arsenal for espionage operations, with tunneling tools helping bypass network controls and complicate detection, urging

organizations to strengthen their threat assessments accordingly.

Kaspersky recommended organizations adopt real-time protection solutions, managed security services like MDR and Incident Response, and Threat Intelligence tools to counter such evasive cyberattacks effectively.

UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026 Concludes at NIC Karachi, Highlights FinTech Talent

 **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: The UBL National Innovation Hackathon 2026 concluded at the National Incubation Center (NIC) Karachi after a three-day challenge showcasing Pakistan's emerging FinTech talent.

Organized by NIC Karachi, an Ignite-funded initiative under the Ministry of IT & Telecom, in collaboration with United Bank Limited (UBL), the event brought together 25 finalist teams selected from 1,281 applicants nationwide.

Teams competed across five themes: Artificial Intelligence in Banking, Blockchain & Digital Trust, UX/UI for Inclusive Financial Services, Open Banking APIs, and Emerging

FinTech Solutions. Over the course of the hackathon, they conducted user research, built prototypes, validated business models, and developed solutions for real banking and payments challenges.

Finalists presented functional prototypes with technical documentation, source code, live/cloud deployment, demo videos, and investor-ready pitch decks. Participants also received mentorship from industry experts.

The event ended with participation certificates for all finalists.

Organizers said the initiative reflects UBL and NIC Karachi's commitment to strengthening Pakistan's FinTech ecosystem and developing market-ready digital solutions.

SECP Registers Record 5,438 Companies in July, Highest-Ever Monthly Incorporations

 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) registered a record 5,438 new companies during July 2026, the highest number of company incorporations ever recorded in a single month in the Commission's history. The month also witnessed five international companies registering their places of business in Pakistan.

The record registrations reflect growing confidence among local and foreign investors in Pakistan's business environment, as entrepreneurs increasingly opt for formal corporate structures to benefit from legal protection, improved governance, and easier access to finance.

The five international companies registered their places of business in Pakistan include JEREH Oil & Gas Engineering (Malaysia) Sdn. Bhd., Polaris Natural Resource Development F. Z. E., Zhejiang Jinlun Electromechanic Co., Ltd., Jiangsu Ankura Intelligent Electric Co., Ltd., and Construction Company. Their registration reflects growing interest among foreign companies in establishing a business presence in Pakistan.

Private Companies led new registrations with 3,148 companies (57.9%), followed by 2,117 Single Member Companies (38.9%). The remaining registrations comprised 127 Limited Liability Partnerships (LLPs), 28 Section 42 (Non-Profit) Companies, and 18 Public Companies and other entities.

Punjab recorded the highest number of new company registrations with 2,756 (51%), followed by Islamabad (1,053), Sindh (864), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (450), Gilgit-Baltistan (180), and Balochistan (135).

The Information Technology sector led new company registrations with 1,008 companies, followed by Trading (845), Services (638), Construction (348), Food & Beverages (256), Tourism (207), E-Commerce (181), Education (165), Real Estate Development (162), and Corporate Agricultural Farming (145).

A total of 112 newly incorporated companies included foreign directors from China, the United States, Afghanistan, South Korea, Germany, Iran, and the United Kingdom, reflecting continued foreign investor interest in Pakistan.

NAB Multan Holds Awareness Study Tour for COMSATS Vehari Students

 **Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) Multan organized a study tour for students and faculty of COMSATS University, Vehari Campus, as part of its ongoing awareness campaign against corruption.

In line with the vision of the Chairman NAB and directives of the Director General NAB Multan, the "Awareness & Prevention Wing" hosted the delegation to promote transparency, accountability, and civic responsibility.

Mr. Muhammad Asghar

and Mr. Tauseef Hanif, Additional Directors, along with Mr. Ajmal Hameed, Deputy Director, briefed participants on NAB's establishment, legal mandate, organizational structure, and ongoing anti-corruption efforts.

Officers highlighted the social, economic, and institutional impacts of corruption and stressed the role of youth in building a corruption-free Pakistan through integrity, rule of law, and ethical values.

The objective of the tour was to foster a culture of transparency and equip students to become responsible citizens.

Faysal Bank Delivers Resilient Growth and Strong Results for the First Half of 2026

 **Commerce Desk**

Faysal Bank Limited (FBL) delivered a sound and resilient performance during the first half of 2026, reporting Profit Before Tax of PKR 20.5 billion and net profit of PKR 10 billion, with Earnings Per Share of PKR 6.60. The Bank declared a second-quarter cash dividend of PKR 1.5 per share.

Deposits grew by 9.5% to PKR 1.56 trillion, while current accounts increased by 21% to PKR 646 billion. The current account mix improved to 41.4% from 37.5% in December 2025, while CASA strengthened to

86.8% from 81.9%. The Advance-to-Deposit Ratio moderated to 51.7% from 61.1%, while asset quality remained strong with an infection ratio of 2.3%. The successful issuance of a PKR 7 billion Tier II Sukuk further reinforced the Bank's capital base.

Mr. Juma Abul, Group Chief Executive Officer, reaffirmed the Group's long-term commitment to Pakistan and said: "We are highly satisfied with Faysal Bank's strong progress and performance. Its successful transformation and expanding franchise demonstrate the strength of its

strategy and execution.

Mr. Mian Muhammad Younis, Chairman, Faysal Bank, said: "Alhamdulillah, these results reflect the growing maturity and strength of Faysal Bank's Islamic banking and network-led growth journey. They demonstrate the effectiveness of the Board's long-term strategic direction—expanding the Bank's network and steadily building a low-cost core deposit base.

Mr. Yousaf Hussain, President & CEO, Faysal Bank, added: "Looking ahead, Insha'Allah, Faysal Bank is strongly positioned to build upon its



comprehensive product offering and expanded network.

PID and MASRO Join Forces to Boost Climate Journalism Capacity in One-Day Training

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: The Press Information Department (PID), in collaboration with MASRO, on Thursday organized a one-day capacity-building workshop for media professionals aimed at strengthening climate change reporting and enhancing public awareness of climate-related challenges.

The workshop, titled “Strengthening Climate Change Journalism: Enhancing Media Capacity on Climate Adaptation, GLOF Risks, Flooding, Early Warning Systems and Disaster Risk Mitigation,” brought together journalists, reporters, anchorpersons and other media profes-

sionals from various organizations.

Addressing the participants, Principal Information Officer (PIO), Raisa Adil highlighted the media’s vital role in raising public awareness about the impacts of climate change and promoting informed reporting on environmental issues.

She said responsible and evidence-based journalism was essential to effectively communicate climate risks and support national efforts aimed at building resilience and strengthening disaster preparedness.

The PIO emphasized that Pakistan was among the countries most vulnerable to climate change and stressed the

need for accurate, timely and fact-based reporting on issues such as glacial lake outburst floods (GLOFs), flash floods, heatwaves and other climate-induced disasters.

Experts from relevant organizations delivered presentations on climate adaptation, flood risks, early warning systems and disaster risk reduction strategies.

They also discussed best practices for reporting on environmental emergencies and shared practical tools to help journalists communicate scientific information accurately and effectively.

Participants engaged in interactive discussions with the resource persons, exchanging views on the challenges faced

by the media in covering climate issues and exploring ways to strengthen collaboration between journalists and technical experts.

Journalists, reporters, anchorpersons and resource persons from different media organizations attended the workshop.

At the conclusion of the event, Principal Information Officer, Raisa Adil, Executive Director General of the Information Service Academy (ISA), Samina Farzin, and Director General, Home Publicity Wing, Ayesha Tassaduq distributed certificates among the participants in recognition of their successful completion of the training workshop.

Belgium, Netherlands Embassies Honour Pakistan Hockey Team Ahead of FIH World Cup 2026



 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Embassies of Belgium and the Netherlands hosted a reception in Islamabad to welcome the Pakistan National Field Hockey Team and celebrate the upcoming FIH Hockey World Cup 2026, which will be co-hosted by the two European countries.

The event brought together diplomats, sports officials and guests to celebrate the shared passion for hockey and

strengthen sporting ties between Pakistan, Belgium and the Netherlands. The reception was hosted by Hajo Provo Kluit, Chargé d’Affaires of the Netherlands, and Belgian Ambassador Idesbald van der Gracht, who praised Pakistan’s rich hockey legacy and wished the national team success in the tournament.

A key highlight was the presentation of hockey sticks by Pakistan’s national players to young athletes, symbolising

inspiration for the next generation and promoting the spirit of the game. The programme also included speeches, a penalty shoot-out activity and an opportunity for guests to interact with the players before their departure.

The FIH Hockey World Cup 2026 will bring together the world’s top teams in Belgium and the Netherlands, showcasing international hockey and strengthening global sporting cooperation.

DG Sports Punjab congratulates four teams for progressing to the second round of CM Punjab T20 Champions League

 **Sports Desk**

LAHORE: The CM Punjab T20 Champions League, organized by Sports Board Punjab has progressed to second round after successful completion of first round matches in Multan, Bahawalpur and Dera Ghazi Khan divisions.

After exhibiting exceptional performances in the first round matches, the four teams – Lahore Strikers, Faisalabad Hawks, Lahore Lions and Multan Mavericks booked their place in the second round of CM Punjab T20 Champions League. The competitions of second round will continue in Bahawalpur till August 8.

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi has congratulated Lahore Strikers, Faisalabad Hawks, Lahore Lions and Multan Mavericks teams for progressing to the second round of CM Punjab T20 Champions League.

Earlier, in the first round matches, Lahore Strikers toppled DG Khan Titans by 7 wickets at DG Khan Stadium. Bahawalpur Nawabs thrashed Sargodha Shaheens by 5 wickets. Lahore Tigers handed 7-wicket defeat to Gujranwala Stags. Sahiwal Stallions emerged winners by 20 runs against Pindi Panthers. Lahore Lions routed Bahawalpur Nawabs by 42 runs.



Abid Lashari meets Pakistan High Commissioner in Malaysia to boost humanitarian cooperation



 **News Desk**

KUALA LUMPUR: Malaysia – Mr. Abid Lashari, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz and President of the National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) Pakistan, met with Mr. Syed Ahsan Raza Shah, High Commissioner of Pakistan to Malaysia, at the Pakistan High Commission to discuss strengthening Pakistan–Malaysia collaboration on humanitarian action and disability inclusion.

The High Commissioner appreciated NDF Pakistan’s efforts in providing rehabilitation services to children with intellectual disabilities nationwide. He noted NDF’s work in physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech therapy, special education, and psychosocial support for vulnerable children and families.

Mr. Shah also recognized the humanitarian support of Iltizam Relief Society Malaysia and its partnership with NDF in WASH, shelter, food assistance, and emergency response. He assured support for deeper collaboration and suggested exploring partnerships through Pakistan–Malaysia business councils and other bilateral platforms.

Mr. Lashari thanked the High Commissioner and reaffirmed NDF’s commitment to international partnerships for disability inclusion and sustainable development.

Also present were Mr. Abdul Hafiz and Mr. Mohd Subari of Iltizam, and Mr. Hamza Naveed PMS of the High Commission.

Auqaf Department holds Kashmir Solidarity Walk, reaffirms support for Kashmiri Right to Self-Determination



 **News Desk**

LAHORE: The Punjab Auqaf Department organized a grand Kashmir Solidarity Walk in Lahore on Youm-e-Istehsal-e-Kashmir, led by Secretary and Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta. The walk, from Aiwan-e-Auqaf to GPO Chowk, was attended by religious scholars, Mashaikh, Auqaf officials, employees, and members of civil society. Similar rallies, seminars, prayer gatherings, and awareness events were held across Punjab in collaboration with district administrations.

Addressing participants, Dr. Bhutta said Kashmir remains Pakistan’s “jugular vein” and expressed confidence that the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people would ultimately lead to freedom. He described India’s actions of August 5, 2019, as a violation of UN resolutions, international law, and human rights, reaffirming Pakistan’s continued moral, political, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people’s right to self-determination.

Beyond the Scoreboard: Sports Diplomacy and the Future of India–Pakistan Relations

 **Continued from Page 4**

Hard for Political Figures to Meet Each Other, Sport Diplomacy Will Fill the Gaps, Especially between the Youth, Promoting International Communications. Furthermore, the Confrontation between Pakistan and India Has Already Had Adverse Effects on the Economies of the Countries Since Many Economic Ties Have Been Cut, and the Current Hostile Attitudes of the Countries to Each Other Need to Be Broken Through at Least Some Sporting Competitions So That People Remember That There Are Other Aspects of Life, Apart from Politics.

It Is Critical to Note that the Matches Will Not Necessarily Solve All the Problems; However, They Can at Least Become a Great Symbol of Promoting Positive Attitudes, Optimism, and Friendliness. It Is Vital to Organize Not Only the Youth Leagues, Women’s Leagues but Also to Develop the Matches

at the Level of Universities, as Well as to Involve the International Community, Governments, and Other Stakeholders in This Project. Moreover, It Is Worth Understanding, As It Was Mentioned Before, that, Whilst in Confrontation, It Is Normal that Political Figures Do Not Want to Participate in Sporting Events, but There Should Be No Demands for Them to Do So, Which Would Result in Unfair Concessions. Nonetheless, It Is Crucial to Recognize that Sports Diplomacy Should Not Be Viewed as Only a Method to Score Political Points by the Countries. Needless to Say, the Fact that the Countries Even Consider the Idea of Organizing Such Games Is Already a Step in the Right Direction, Filling People with Positivity and Optimism and Facilitating Further Political Steps. Sport and Politics Are Inextricably Linked, and, Although These Two Spheres of Society Cannot Be Viewed as Equal, This Interaction Should Encourage Political

Figures to Have Fun, Compete, and Play. Thus, It Is Up to the Political Figures to Take Advantage of the Opportunities That Sports Can Provide, and There Should Be No Restrictions Concerning the Match Format and Venue.

As Mentioned Above, Sport Is Not a Magic Wand to Be Waved to Make All the Political Confrontations Disappear; However, It Can Promote Positive Attitudes and Goodwill between Countries, as Well as Become a Powerful Symbol of a Solid Foundation for Further Diplomatic Steps. Needless to Say, Without Serious Political Actions, the Situation between India and Pakistan Will Remain the Same. However, It Is Essential to Create Diplomatic Opportunities and Promote Positive Attitudes and Goodwill between Nations. Thus, It Is of Paramount Importance That the Current Political Figures Take into Consideration the Above Mentioned Opportunities and Advantages of Sport Diplomacy.

Even More importantly, It Is Necessary to Remember the Importance of Sports in General and Realize That It Goes Far Beyond the Relations between Countries, Political Parties, or Even Nations. Sport Is an Incredible Concept Because It Benefits All the Spheres and Levels: Individuals, Communities, Countries, Economies, Politics, and Social Realities. Sport Does Not Require Any Efforts and Sacrifices, Except for Playing, and the Game, in Turn, Will Inspire People, Filling Them with Optimism and Making Them Realize that Life Can Be Brighter, and Instead of Bitter Confrontations, They Can Compete in Friendliness and Mutual Respect. The Sport Will Not Solve the Problem between India and Pakistan, but It Will Inspire and Promote Hope That Winning the Bitter Match Is Not Necessary.

The writer is student of International Relations in 8th Semester at University of Kotli, Azad Jammu & Kashmir

A Stronger Pakistan Through Better Governance

 **Continued from Page 4**

for institutional boundaries, constitutional supremacy, and the rule of law creates stability, improves governance, and enhances public confidence. Constructive coordination among institutions, while respecting their respective roles, is essential for political stability and sustainable national development.

Ultimately, national progress is not the responsibility of the government alone; it is the collective responsibility of the entire society. Governments must formulate transparent policies and ensure their effective implementation, while public institutions should remain firmly committed to the principles of law, merit, accountability, and public service. The media should promote responsible journalism,

public awareness, constructive discourse, and accountability. Educational institutions must cultivate competent, ethical, and responsible citizens, while the business community should contribute to economic growth, employment generation, and corporate social responsibility. Likewise, every citizen has a duty to respect the law, act with integrity, pay taxes honestly, protect the environment, and place the national interest above personal considerations. Only when institutions faithfully discharge their constitutional responsibilities and every segment of society fulfills its civic obligations can Pakistan realize the vision of strong institutions, effective governance, and sustainable national development.

The writer is Teacher, Educational Researcher & Columnist

From Mamdani to El-Sayed: Reshaping America’s Politics

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The strongest similarity between the two campaigns is their economic populism. Mamdani built his mayoral campaign around making New York affordable. His proposals included expanded child care, rent protections, affordable housing, improved buses, higher wages and publicly supported grocery initiatives. After taking office, his administration announced child-care funding, housing reforms designed to accelerate affordable construction, stronger action against irresponsible landlords and a grocery discount programme covering essential foods. His administration has also set a long-term goal of producing 200,000 affordable

homes over ten years.

These actions demonstrate both the possibilities and limitations of municipal power. A mayor can influence housing enforcement, city services, transportation, child care and business regulation. However, major tax changes, transit financing and many housing policies require cooperation from the New York governor, state legislature and city council. Mamdani is therefore discovering that winning an election is different from converting every campaign promise into law.

El-Sayed’s agenda is similarly focused on affordability but operates at the federal level. His stated priorities include removing private money from

politics, reducing household costs and passing Medicare for All. He also supports affordable or free child care, stronger taxation of billionaires, labour rights and an end to American military assistance for Israel.

As a senator, however, El-Sayed would not possess the direct executive authority available to a mayor. He could introduce legislation, vote on federal budgets, question administration officials, confirm judges and executive nominees, and use Senate committees to investigate health-care companies, military expenditure and corporate power. But Medicare for All or sweeping campaign-finance reform would require support from the House of Representatives, a Senate

majority and the president. His success would consequently depend on coalition-building, negotiation and the balance of power in Washington.

There are also important differences in political philosophy. Mamdani is publicly identified with democratic socialism and has emphasized public provision of essential services. El-Sayed is a progressive Democrat but is not generally presented as a formal member of the Democratic Socialists of America. His politics combine universal healthcare, anti-corporate populism, public-health expertise and institutional reform. Mamdani emerged primarily from urban grassroots activism; El-Sayed rose through academic

achievement, public administration and statewide campaigning.

Their electoral environments are equally different. New York City strongly favours Democrats, meaning that Mamdani’s greatest obstacle was the Democratic primary. Michigan is a genuine swing state. El-Sayed must win independents, union households, suburban voters, Arab and Muslim Americans, African Americans, young progressives and some moderate Democrats while facing an experienced Republican opponent. His primary victory was historic, but the general election will be the decisive test.

If elected, El-Sayed would become the first Muslim member of the United States

Senate. Mamdani has already become New York City’s first Muslim mayor. Their rise does not prove that prejudice has disappeared, nor does it guarantee that progressive economic programmes will succeed. It does show that American voters can support candidates who openly identify as Muslim, defend immigrants and challenge powerful financial and foreign-policy interests.

Mamdani broke an important barrier. El-Sayed has reached the threshold of another. Their shared message is that Muslim politicians need not choose between religious identity and American citizenship. They can declare both openly, submit their programmes to the voters and be

judged by their ability to improve ordinary lives.

Whether El-Sayed completes the journey will be decided in November. But his primary victory, following Mamdani’s breakthrough in New York, has already established a larger truth: a new generation of American Muslim leadership is no longer asking merely to be accepted. It is seeking—and increasingly winning—the authority to govern.

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

Calls on

ISLAMABAD : Ambassador of People's Republic of China to Pakistan H.E. Jiang Zaidong calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.



Photo: Online

PM, Chinese ambassador discuss political, parliamentary exchanges

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong on Thursday, underscoring the value of people-to-people contacts, as well as exchanges between the political parties and parliaments of both countries.

During the meeting, the ambassador handed over a letter from Pres-

ident Xi Jinping, conveying appreciation for the Prime Minister's letter on the occasion of the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, a PM's Office news release said.

The prime minister also highlighted the positive trajectory of the bilateral relationship, while matters related to bilateral cooperation and regional issues of mutual interest were also discussed.

10th Meeting of the Board of Approvals (BOA) for Special Economic Zones (SEZs)



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 10th meeting of the Board of Approvals (BOA) for Special Economic Zones (SEZs) was convened at the Board of Investment (BOI) to deliberate on legislative amendments, operational strategies, and key development decisions aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economic landscape.

The high-level meeting was co-chaired by the Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh; Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries & Production, Mr. Haroon Akhtar; and Minister of State for Finance, Mr. Bilal Azhar Kiyani. The session was attended by distin-

guished dignitaries and senior leadership, including Senator Saleem Mandviwala, Secretary BOI and SIFC Mr. Jamil Qureshi, Coordinator to the Prime Minister Mr. Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Secretary Law, as well as senior officials representing the Board of Investment (BOI), Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC), Ministry of Industries & Production, Ministry of Commerce, and Ministry of Law and Justice.

The meeting reflected the Government's continued commitment to enhancing the performance of SEZs and fostering a conducive environment for investment, industrial growth, and economic development in Pakistan.

Pakistan's stock market crosses 600,000 investors for the first time— official

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The number of investor accounts at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) has crossed 600,000 for the first time, a senior finance official said on Thursday, adding that it reflects growing confidence in the country's economic indicators.

The figure builds on the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan's (SECP) data showing 583,052 accounts at the close of the last fiscal year in June. Taking to social media platform X, Adviser to the Finance Minister Khurram Shehzad said July added



another 23,973 accounts, the second-highest monthly total on record after April, when more than 24,000 accounts were opened.

He said the investor base at the PSX has grown from

275,000 in June 2022, an increase of more than 332,000 accounts, or 121 percent in four years.

"The strongest signal in any capital market is not where the index stands— it's how many

people choose to participate," Schehzad wrote.

"Pakistan Stock Exchange has crossed 600,000 investors for the first time in history, reaching 607,025 in July 2026."

The acceleration follows measures the SECP announced last month to lower the barrier to entry. The regulator raised the investment ceiling on Sahulat accounts to Rs3 million (\$10,600) from Rs1 million. It removed duplicate documentation for investors onboarding through banks and digital financial institutions, introduced IBAN-based verification, and allowed trading accounts for

minors under guardian supervision.

Nearly 190,300 accounts were opened in the last fiscal year, a record annual rise of 48 percent, according to the regulator.

Schehzad said the average monthly investor additions to the PSX increased from 2,300 in FY23 to 2,200 in FY24. In FY25, investor additions to the PSX increased to 5,300 per month and in FY26, surged to 15,860.

"The latest wave is being led predominantly by GenZ and first-time retail investors, broadening ownership and strengthening Pakistan's investment culture," he added.

President, PM Laud Security Forces for Radd-ul-Fitna III Operations in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to security forces for successful intelligence-based operations under Radd-ul-Fitna III in Balochistan's Washuk and Mastung districts, in which 12 India-sponsored Fitna-al-Hindustan terrorists were killed.

In separate statements, both leaders commended the professionalism and courage

of the security forces in the two successful actions. President Zardari said the operations reflected the resolve and skill of Pakistan's forces, calling Fitna-al-Hindustan and its facilitators enemies of peace and progress whose designs would be defeated at all costs.

He reaffirmed the state's commitment to eliminating terrorism nationwide and expressed solidarity with the armed forces and law enforcement agencies. He prayed for eternal peace for those who laid down their lives and for



the recovery of the injured, seeking Allah's blessings for

peace and success for security forces across Pakistan.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also praised the forces for the operations, noting that under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam, security forces continue achieving significant success against terrorism. He reaffirmed the government's full commitment to eliminating terrorism in all its forms.

Both leaders expressed the nation's gratitude to security forces for their sacrifices, vowing that the fight against terrorism would continue until peace and stability are fully restored across the country.

Shaza Fatima Reviews Progress at Islamabad's IT Park, Calls it Flagship Youth Initiative

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, on Thursday visited the under-construction Islamabad Information Technology (IT) Park to review the progress of Pakistan's largest and most advanced IT facility.

During the visit, the minister inspected various floors and assessed the pace and quality of construction work. Officials briefed her on the project's timeline and key components.

Expressing satisfaction with the work, Shaza Fatima directed authorities to maintain the highest



construction and finishing standards to ensure timely completion.

Speaking on the occasion, she said the state-of-the-art IT Park is a

flagship initiative of the Prime Minister aimed at creating new opportunities for Pakistan's youth.

She added that the project would provide young professionals and entrepreneurs with world-class facilities to compete in the global digital economy, expand employment, and support economic growth and stability.

The minister said the IT Park would strengthen Pakistan's IT sector with international-standard infrastructure and create jobs for skilled professionals. The landmark project will be inaugurated by the Prime Minister upon completion.

CM Rejects Charges on Bottled Water, Expands Free Clean Water Supply Across Punjab



Bureau Report

LAHORE, AUG 6: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has rejected a proposal to charge for bottled drinking water, reaffirming that access to safe drinking water should remain a public service. Chairing a meeting on the Punjab Saaf Pani Authority, she reviewed progress on the bottled water pilot project and directed daily monitoring in four participating districts.

The chief minister instructed deputy commissioners in Bahawalpur, Rahim Yar Khan and Khushab to gather public feedback and assess local demand. She also ordered the early completion of 1,886 water filtration plants, while work is already underway on 864

plants and another 1,913 are set to begin soon.

Under the pilot project, 10,000 bottles of 19-litre drinking water are being supplied free of cost daily in four districts. Authorities also proposed establishing 670 bottled water plants and 4,020 distribution points across Punjab.

Maryam Nawaz directed an increase in water tanker fleets to ensure uninterrupted delivery, particularly in remote areas.

She emphasized that every citizen has the right to clean drinking water, describing the initiative as a commitment to protecting public health, dignity and easing the burden on communities forced to travel long distances for water.