



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
مردان! سلی رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا ایک لوگ
کیے بعد پھر سے اڑ جائیں گے اس کے بعد
جو کہ جو سے یا جو کے پڑے کی طرح پکھ
لوگ: یا نہیں، و جاہل کے جن کی اللہ پاک کو
پکھ ذرا بھی پروا نہ ہوگی۔ لام بناری رحمہ اللہ
نے کہا «خالد» اور «شاذ» « دو ٹوک کے
ایک مفتی ہیں۔
(پیشانی: حدیث نمبر 6434)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**



Federal govt approves civil awards for 78 individuals

The federal government has approved civil awards for 78 individuals in recognition of their sacrifices, courage and acts of extraordinary bravery in service of the country. The decision was taken at a special committee meeting on gallantry awards chaired by Interior Minister Mohnsin Naqvi.



Another minister throws his weight behind creation of new provinces

Another member of PM Shehbaz Sharif's cabinet has voiced his support for new provinces in the country. In a video message, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan said that the creation of new provinces was need of the hour, and that serious debate should be held in the parliament, media and at public level on the subject.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Safar 25, Sunday, August 9, 2026



www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 110 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Back to home

MADINAH: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif departed Madinah on Saturday upon completion of his visit to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Governor of Madinah, Prince Salman bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, bid farewell to the Prime Minister and the Pakistani delegation.



Photo: PID

DPM/FM Dar Reaffirms Pakistan's Support for ASEAN's Peace, Prosperity Efforts

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar said Pakistan remains committed to working closely with the bloc in advancing a shared vision of a peaceful, prosperous and integrated region. He congratulated ASEAN Secretary-General Dr. Kao Kim Hourn on his leadership in advancing regional cooperation and resilience.

Dar said ASEAN Day celebrates the enduring spirit of unity and cooperation among South-

east Asian nations, with Pakistan joining in reaffirming its friendship and partnership with the region. He described ASEAN as a remarkable model of regional integration, citing its achievements in economic development, social cohesion and diplomatic engagement.

He said Pakistan deeply appreciates ASEAN's role in advancing peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region, adding that the occasion also offers an

opportunity to celebrate South-east Asia's cultural diversity and historical heritage.

Dar noted that Pakistan's relations with ASEAN are anchored in shared principles of mutual respect, non-interference and constructive engagement. He said Pakistan has actively participated in ASEAN-led dialogue mechanisms and remains committed to deepening cooperation in trade, investment, education, culture and people-

to-people exchanges.

He added that Pakistan's engagement with ASEAN has been reinforced through active participation in the ASEAN Regional Forum, contributing to collective efforts for regional peace and security.

Amid growing global challenges, Dar commended ASEAN's unity and its steadfast commitment to dialogue, mutual understanding and peaceful cooperation.

AJK people have delivered verdict; PML-N set to form government: Amir Muqam

BAGH: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam has claimed that the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) have delivered a clear verdict in favour of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N), expressing confidence that the party will

form the next government.

Addressing a PML-N election rally in Bagh, Muqam rejected Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) allegations of electoral rigging, questioning how the election could have been manipulated when the AJK government, administration and police were under PPP

control. He urged the party to accept the people's decision and review its performance instead of making allegations.

Muqam said the large turnout at the PML-N rally demonstrated strong public support and reflected confidence in Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz. He highlighted the party's development record and commitment to AJK's welfare.

He called for political differences to be resolved through dialogue rather than protests that inconvenience citizens.

Muqam urged voters to participate actively in the August 10 polling and support PML-N candidates, particularly in Bagh and Haveli.

He reiterated that the PML-N supports democratic institutions, constitutional governance and completion of elected governments' terms.

Pakistan's Capitals Illuminated with Flags to Celebrate Trilateral Defence Cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad and provincial capitals across Pakistan have been decorated with the national flags of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye following the signing of a landmark mutual defence agreement in Mecca. Major roads, government

buildings and prominent public spaces have been illuminated in the colours of the three countries, while large banners featuring their leadership have also been displayed at key locations.

The decorations highlight the longstanding historical, fraternal and friendly ties between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye,



while underscoring the signifi-

cance attached to the new defence cooperation.

The display of the three national flags has also been described as a symbol of solidarity, mutual respect and shared commitment among the brotherly nations. The agreement has drawn attention to expanding strategic cooperation among the

three countries, particularly in the areas of defence and regional security.

The illuminated streets and public buildings across major Pakistani cities provide a visible expression of friendship and unity, reflecting positive sentiments surrounding closer bilateral and trilateral relations.

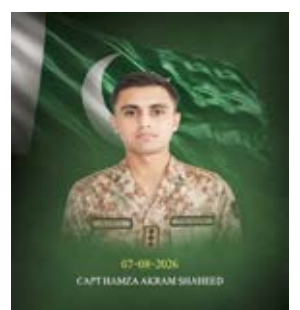
Seven terrorists killed in Hangu operation; Captain Hamza Akram embraces Shahadat: ISPR

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Security Forces conducted an intelligence-based operation in Hangu district on August 7 following reports of the presence of militants affiliated with Fitna Al Khwarij, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the operation, troops effectively engaged the militants, who took refuge inside a mosque during the exchange of fire. ISPR said seven militants were killed in the ensuing operation. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the slain militants, who were allegedly involved in terrorist activities targeting security forces, law enforcement agencies and civilians.

During the intense exchange of fire, Captain Hamza Akram, 27, a resident of Narowal, was martyred while leading his troops from the front and pursuing the militants. ISPR



paid tribute to the officer's courage and sacrifice.

A sanitisation operation is underway to search the area for any remaining militants. ISPR said the counter-terrorism campaign under Azm-e-Istehkam, approved by the Federal Apex Committee of the National Action Plan, would continue with full resolve.

The military reaffirmed its commitment to eliminating foreign-sponsored terrorism and safeguarding the country, saying the sacrifices of security personnel strengthen this resolve.

PM returns home after Saudi Arabia visit



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif returned home on Saturday afternoon after completing his official visit to Saudi Arabia.

During the visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, aimed at opening new avenues for defence cooperation and further strengthening the

fraternal relations among the three countries.

The agreement is expected to provide a new dimension to defence cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye and further consolidate their longstanding brotherly ties. During his stay in Saudi Arabia, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also performed Umrah.

He subsequently travelled to Madinah Munawwarah, where he paid his respects at Roza-e-Rasool (PBUH) at the Prophet's Mosque.

PM expresses deep grief over Captain Hamza's martyrdom in Hangu operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, expressed deep grief over the martyrdom of Captain Hamza Akram during a successful operation against Fitna al-Khwarij in District Hangu, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The prime minister paid tribute to the bravery, courage and devotion to duty of Captain Hamza Akram Shaheed, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

He also lauded the security forces for eliminating seven Khwarij terrorists, operating under the Indian patronage, during Hangu operation.

"Captain Hamza Akram

Shaheed embraced martyrdom while bravely confronting the terrorists. The nation will never forget the sacrifices of its brave sons," the press release, quoted the prime minister, as saying.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the ranks of the martyr in Jannah and grant patience and fortitude to his bereaved family.

The prime minister reiterated that operations against Fitna al-Khwarij would continue till complete elimination of terrorism.

"The sacrifices rendered by our brave armed forces and law-enforcement agencies for the defence, peace and security of the country and nation will not go in vain," he added.

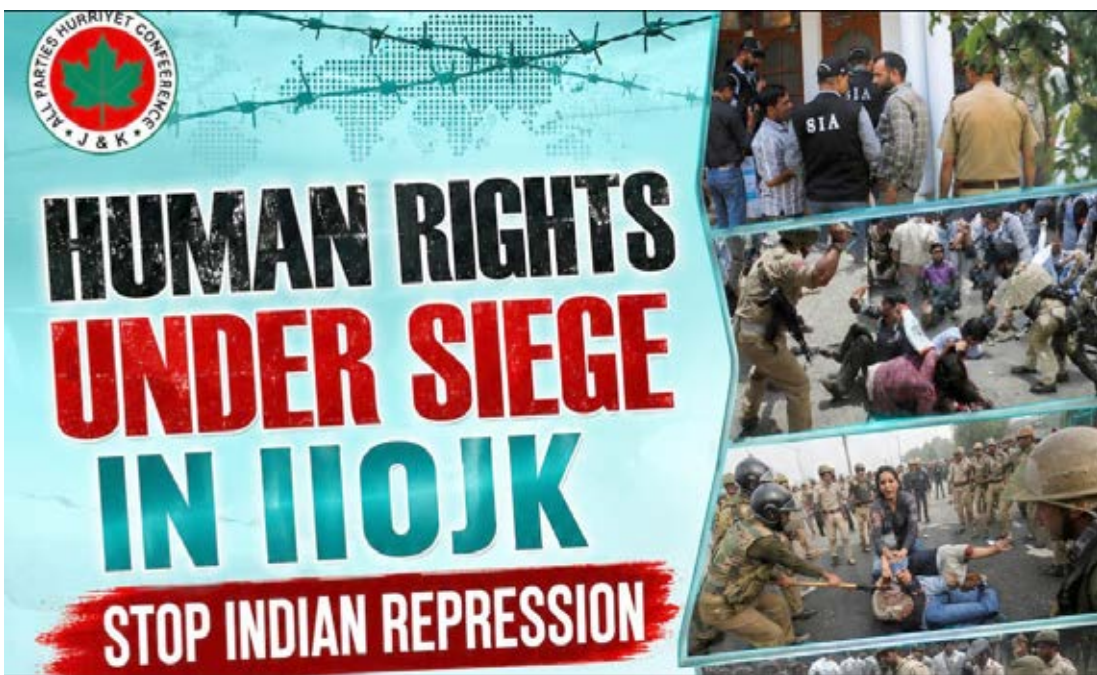
JKDFP Thanks Pakistan for Nationwide Solidarity on Youm-e-Istehsal

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Acting Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) Mahmood Ahmed Saghar has expressed gratitude to the government and people of Pakistan for observing Youm-e-Istehsal on August 5, 2026, in solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK).

He particularly appreciated messages by President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, reaffirming Pakistan's political, diplomatic and moral support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination. He also praised their rejection of India's actions of August 5, 2019, and support for resolving the Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

Saghar commended political parties, parliamentarians, civil society, lawyers, students, media organizations and citizens for holding rallies, seminars and awareness campaigns across Pakistan. He also appreciated



the Kashmiri and Pakistani diaspora in the UK, Europe, US, Middle East and other regions for highlighting the Kashmir issue internationally.

He urged Pakistan's government, Parliament, political leadership, armed forces, media and civil society to continue raising the dispute at inter-

national forums. He reaffirmed that Kashmiris would pursue their peaceful and democratic struggle for self-determination.

Annual Urs

MANDI BAHAUDDIN: Drummers perform during the annual Urs of sufi saint Baba Nadir at village Mong.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Kamalia Vegetable Market Delegation Visits Tajer Ethaad Office

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: A delegation of the Kamalia Vegetable Market Association, led by President Tariq and Chaudhry Shaukat Kamboh, visited the Kamalia Tajer Ethaad office, where its leadership warmly welcomed the guests. A meeting was held to discuss traders' issues, organisational matters, mutual coordination and future plans.

During the meeting, Chaudhry Shaukat Kamboh was unanimously elected Senior Vice President of Kamalia Tajer Ethaad. He thanked the leadership for expressing confidence in him and pledged to work with unity and



dedication to protect traders' legitimate rights and resolve their problems.

Patron-in-Chief Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat, President Syed Ali Raza Shah, Chairman Executive Council Haji Muhammad Imtiaz and General Secretary Sardar Rehan Dogar congratulated him, expressing hope that his inclusion would strengthen the organisation.

The participants stressed greater unity among traders and stronger coordination with government departments. Later, a reception dinner was hosted in honour of the visiting delegation, where traders discussed organisational matters and their collective concerns.

NDF Pakistan, Malaysian Relief Agency Explore Humanitarian Cooperation

KUALA LUMPUR: President of the National Disability & Development Forum (NDF) Pakistan, Mr. Abid Lashari, Tamgha-e-Imtiaz, held a meeting with representatives of the Malaysian Relief Agency (MRA) in Cheras, Kuala Lumpur, to explore opportunities for humanitarian collaboration in Pakistan.

The meeting focused on potential cooperation in emergency response, disability inclusion, rehabilitation and support for children with intellectual disabilities and other vulnerable commu-



nities. Mr. Lashari briefed the MRA team on NDF Pakistan's programmes, achievements and outreach in rural and urban areas, including rehabilitation services and humanitarian assistance during emergencies and disasters.

The MRA representatives appreciated NDF's community-based approach and efforts to reach underserved populations. Both sides emphasized the importance of ensuring that persons with disabilities and children with special needs are included in human-

itarian and development programmes.

Mr. Lashari said partnerships with experienced international humanitarian organisations could strengthen locally led humanitarian efforts in Pakistan. He expressed NDF's willingness to pursue joint initiatives in emergency response, rehabilitation and assistance for vulnerable families.

Both organisations agreed to maintain communication and explore practical opportunities for future cooperation in Pakistan.

From Slogans to Victory: The Prelude of Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan's Triumph



DHIRKOT: Sincere Muslim Conferences turned the course of history two days before the elections. Dhirkot's air echoed with the slogans of Murshid Zindabad. Off course The August 8 rally became a prelude to electoral victory. Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan practically broke the stalemate. During the day-long celebration in the central market of Dhirkot, the continuous hard work of sincere political comrades took color.

FDA to support restoration of Faisalabad Literary Hall, says Asif Chaudhry

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Director General Faisalabad Development Authority (FDA) Muhammad Asif Chaudhry has pledged full support for the renovation and restoration of the literary hall attached to the Punjab Council of Arts Faisalabad, stressing the need to promote literature, knowledge and creative talent.

During a visit to the Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Auditorium, the FDA chief reviewed the hall's condition and discussed plans to upgrade its facilities. He said philanthropists, businesspeople and literary circles would be mobilised to make the centre fully air-conditioned and equipped with comfortable furniture, modern lighting, an effective sound system and improved interior facilities.

Muhammad Asif Chaudhry said a civilized society must support poets, writers, researchers and intellectuals. He envisioned transforming the hall into an active literary centre hosting poetry sessions, intellectual dialogues, research discussions, book launches, writers' workshops and cultural programmes.

He said the FDA would continue supporting positive academic and cultural activities under its social responsibility. Literary figures welcomed the initiative, expressing hope that the restoration would give fresh momentum to Faisalabad's literary, academic and cultural activities.



Clean Environment Fundamental Right of Citizens, Says DC Multan

MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Multan Dr. Faissal Saleem has said providing a clean environment and better sanitation facilities is a fundamental right of citizens and a top priority of the district administration. Chairing a performance review meeting of the Suthara Punjab Agency, he directed officials to further improve sanitation operations and ensure zero waste across the city.

CEO Waste Management Company Usman Akram briefed the meeting on ongoing cleanliness operations and contractors' performance. The deputy commissioner gave contractors two weeks to significantly improve sanitation standards and ordered the addition of machinery and manpower wherever required.

Dr. Faissal Saleem warned that no compromise would be made on cleanliness standards and strict action would be taken against contractors failing to improve their performance. He also directed officials to install yellow dustbins and waste containers at markets and commercial areas to ensure proper collection and disposal of waste.

He said field monitoring would be strengthened under the Clean Punjab campaign, while all available resources would be utilized to provide citizens with a clean and healthy environment.



Underweight Chickens and Rude Staff: Attock Sajji Outlet Faces Triple Action

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Punjab Food Authority officials conducted a raid on Lala Ji Balochi Sajji, located opposite Quetta Hotel near Madni Chowk, following several complaints from citizens alleging that the food outlet was using allegedly underweight chickens for preparing sajji.

According to local residents, the outlet's staff also allegedly behaved rudely and used inappropriate language with customers, frequently engaging in arguments with them.

Following the complaints, the Punjab Food Authority inspected the sajji point and found that it was operating without a food licence. The authority issued a licence on the spot and warned the management to maintain proper cleanliness and hygiene standards in the kitchen.

Meanwhile, municipal authorities also took action against the sajji stall for allegedly falling within the category of illegal encroachments. The stall, skewers and the owner's identity card were taken into custody by the municipal staff. The management was issued a strict warning not to encroach upon public space again, failing which further action would be taken.

Officials of the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) also summoned the owners of the sajji outlet to their office in connection with the matter.

Timely Anti-Snake Venom Saves 10 Lives During Treatment At LGH

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The prompt availability of anti-snake venom and the timely efforts of doctors at Lahore General Hospital (LGH) have saved the lives of 10 people bitten by snakes during the first month of the rainy season.

According to details, 10 individuals from Okara, Kasur and the surrounding areas of Lahore were brought to the Emergency Department of LGH during one month after being bitten by snakes. Healthcare professionals immediately administered anti-venom injections based on the patients' condition. As a result, all patients were stabilised and are now recovering. The families of the patients expressed gratitude to the hospital administration and doctors for their prompt assistance and the provision of free medical facilities.

Postgraduate Medical Institute Principal Prof. Dr. Farooq Afzal and MS LGH Prof. Dr. Faryad Hussain said, in line with the directives of CM Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, LGH is providing free, quality medical and diagnostic facilities to patients. Staff across the emergency and all other departments remain on duty 24/7 to save lives in any emergency situation.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:52 am
Zohr 12:14 pm
Asr 5:03 pm
Maghrib 7:02 pm
Isha 8:35 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

NUTECH
Honors 84
Employees
with Excellence
Awards 2026

Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Technology (NUTECH) organized its first Excellence Awards 2026 ceremony to recognize employees for their exceptional dedication, professionalism and contributions to academic and institutional development. The ceremony was attended by university leadership, distinguished guests, faculty members and administrative staff.

A total of 84 employees from various academic and administrative departments received Excellence Awards for outstanding performance in teaching, research, administration and institutional services. The awards recognized their hard work, innovation and commitment to strengthening the university's capacity and supporting its continued growth.

Addressing the ceremony, Rector NUTECH Lt Gen Moazzam Ejaz (R), HI (M), congratulated the recipients and appreciated their efforts in maintaining high standards of professional excellence.

The ceremony concluded with the distribution of awards and certificates. As the university's first such initiative, the event marked an important milestone in promoting merit, rewarding performance, encouraging innovation and developing future professionals and leaders for national development.

CM Punjab Orders Improved Cleanliness Across Housing Societies, Commercial Areas

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif ordered cleanliness measures extended to cooperative and private housing societies, directing

authorities to improve the Suthra Punjab programme's performance provincewide during a special review meeting.

She ordered uniform dustbins and garbage bags in markets and commercial areas, fixed waste-removal timings,



washing of main roads at 5am, and cleaning of streets, neighbourhoods and vacant plots.

The CM directed Suthra Punjab workers be paid by the fifth of every month, sought monthly payment reports from companies, and ordered swift clearance of outstanding contractor dues along with immediate action on salary delays. She also ordered door-to-door waste collection and tasked Additional Deputy Commissioners (Social Services)

with monitoring cleanliness.

She directed cleanliness around educational institutions, hospitals, parks and green belts, as well as urban areas near railway tracks and city entry/exit points. Deputy commissioners were told to maintain regular contact with contractors and WASA officials, while uniform dress and branded motorcycles were ordered for monitoring officers.

CM Maryam Nawaz called for SOPs to assess performance at all levels, with

contractors given 24 hours to improve before fines are imposed, stressing "imposing fines is not our objective." She directed regular cleaning of Suthra Punjab vehicles and containers.

She praised Lahore, Khanewal, Okara, Attock, Kasur and Murree for better performance, while directing Faisalabad, Sialkot and Sheikhpura to improve. A follow-up review meeting was scheduled after seven days to assess progress.

Illuminations

LAHORE: Vehicles drive through a road during rain in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Major Initiative Launched to Revive Weightlifting in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A major initiative has been launched to revive weightlifting in Pakistan, strengthen international coordination and address challenges facing the sport. President of the Masters Weightlifting Federation Pakistan Arshad Khan Turk has been assigned a key role in leading efforts for the development and revival of the sport.

In this regard, Arshad Khan Turk held a meeting with Director General Pakistan Sports Board Yawar Hussain in Islamabad, where challenges facing weightlifting, federation affairs and a future development strategy were discussed. A three-member committee was also proposed to address key issues and improve coordination with international organizations.

Meanwhile, a Pakistani delegation led by Arshad



Khan Turk visited Tashkent, Uzbekistan, and met International Weightlifting Federation President Mohamed Jalood, Asian Weightlifting

Federation President Yousuf Al Mana and Secretary Saif Harbi. The officials appreciated Pakistan's revival efforts and assured full cooperation.

The Asian federation also pledged support for the Asian Masters Weightlifting Championship, scheduled to be held in Pakistan in October.

Azma Bokhari Hails Makkah Defence Agreement as Historic Step for Unity and Security

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has welcomed the Makkah Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a historic achievement and a source of pride for Pakistanis.

In a statement, she said future generations would remember the agreement as a glorious chapter of unity among the three countries. She praised Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for taking what she described as a historic step toward strengthening peace and security.

Azma Bokhari congratulated the Muslim Ummah on the agreement and expressed hope that the initiative would contribute to greater unity, stability and security in the region.

Renowned Medical Scientist Dr. Jan Alam Passes Away in Moscow

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Renowned medical scientist Dr. Jan Alam has passed away in Moscow, Russia, leaving the medical and scientific community in Pakistan and abroad mourning his death. According to a press release, Dr. Alam was recognized for his contributions to medical science and received several national and international honours during his career.

He was particularly remembered in Pakistan for his humanitarian efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic, when he reportedly developed a medicine for coronavirus and provided it free of cost to people in the country.

His mortal remains are being brought to Pakistan for burial. The Namaz-e-Janaza will be offered on Sunday, August 9, at 1:30pm after Zuhri prayers at Elahi Masjid, Sector D-12/1, Islamabad. The funeral prayer will be led by Sahibzada Dr. Peer Muhammad Sultan ul Arfeen.

Dr. Jan Alam will be laid to rest at H-11 Graveyard, Islamabad. His family and organizers have appealed to his friends, colleagues and admirers to attend the funeral prayer and pray for the departed soul.



Kingdom Tower Illuminated with Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye Flags After Defence Pact

News Desk

RIYADH: The iconic Kingdom Tower in Riyadh was illuminated with the national flags of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye, symbolizing strengthened strategic cooperation among the three countries following the announcement of a trilateral defence agreement.

The striking display across the Saudi capital's skyline highlighted what officials and observers described as a new chapter in defence and strategic relations. The agreement is viewed as an important step towards enhanced regional cooperation, collective security and defence modernization.

The presence of the three national flags on one of Riyadh's most prominent landmarks also reflected broader political and diplomatic goodwill among the three countries. The emerging partnership underscores their shared interest in regional stability and long-term strategic alignment.

Balochistan, LUMS Sign MoU to Improve Maternal and Child Health Through AI

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Balochistan and the National AI Hub for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), based at Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS), have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen maternal, newborn and child health services through artificial intelligence, digital

innovation and evidence-based decision-making.

The partnership aims to identify priority areas where AI-enabled solutions can improve healthcare delivery, strengthen health systems and support effective policy and planning across Balochistan. The collaboration will focus on joint research, capacity building, and the development of AI-based health solutions.

Potential areas include digital health, health information systems, predictive analytics, clinical decision support, and local-language health tools and responsible AI applications in public health.

Secretary Health Balochistan Mujeeb Ur Rehman said the initiative would help address challenges affecting maternal, newborn and child health,

while LUMS would provide technology and expertise. LUMS officials emphasized that solutions would be developed in consultation with local stakeholders and tailored to Balochistan's infrastructure, languages and healthcare needs.

The partnership seeks to create locally relevant innovations that can be responsibly scaled up and contribute to Pakistan's broader digital health agenda.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
(jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

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

Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples

Every year, the International Day of the World’s Indigenous Peoples arrives with a quiet reminder that easily gets lost in the noise of daily governance: that some of the most valuable knowledge a nation possesses was never written in a textbook or passed through a bureaucracy, but carried, generation after generation, through language, ritual and lived memory. President Zardari’s message on this occasion is a welcome acknowledgment of that fact, and it deserves to be more than a ceremonial gesture.

Pakistan’s cultural landscape, from the Kalash valleys to the mountain communities of the north, from Gilgit to Gwadar, from Cholistan to Thar, holds knowledge systems that have quietly sustained health, agriculture and community life for centuries, often without state support and sometimes despite state neglect. This year’s theme, honouring Indigenous midwives, is a particularly apt choice. In many remote parts of the country, formal healthcare infrastructure remains thin, and it is often traditional midwives who provide the only accessible, trusted care available to mothers and newborns. Their knowledge is not a relic to be nostalgically preserved; it is, in many cases, still the frontline of maternal healthcare.

This is where the gap between recognition and reality becomes important to name honestly. Pakistan has ratified the relevant UNESCO conventions on intangible cultural heritage and the diversity of cultural expressions, and the Constitution guarantees the right of citizens to preserve their distinct language and culture. These are meaningful commitments on paper. But indigenous and minority communities across Pakistan continue to report limited access to healthcare, education and economic opportunity, and their languages and knowledge systems often survive more through community effort than institutional support.

None of this diminishes the value of a presidential message marking the day. Symbolic recognition matters; it signals that these communities are seen, and that their contributions are not invisible to the state. But symbolic recognition works best when it is paired with practical follow-through: investment in maternal healthcare that respects and integrates traditional practice rather than displacing it, support for indigenous language preservation, and genuine consultation with these communities on policies that affect their land and livelihoods.

As Pakistan reflects on the resilience and wisdom of its indigenous communities this week, the most fitting tribute would be to treat their knowledge not as heritage to be admired from a distance, but as a resource still actively serving the country today — one that deserves investment, protection and a genuine seat at the table.

Does Pakistan Need More Provinces—or a Democratic Reset?

The latest restrictions imposed on international journalists in Pakistan have once again exposed a deeper crisis of governance. Under the new guidelines, foreign correspondents and even Pakistani journalists working for international media may require prior government permission before travelling outside a limited number of major cities for reporting assignments. In practical terms, breaking news may now have to wait for administrative approval.

The government describes these measures as an administrative mechanism rather than an attempt to suppress journalism. Critics, however, see them as an effort to control the flow of information, especially from sensitive regions where public unrest, political agitation, security operations or protests may be taking place. International media organizations are often relied upon to provide independent coverage when local journalists face pressure, censorship, intimidation or professional insecurity. Restricting their movement therefore raises serious questions about transparency, accountability and the public’s right to know.

This latest development cannot be viewed in isolation. It is part of a much broader pattern in which civilian institutions have steadily lost their independence and decision-making authority. Over the decades, Pakistan has gradually evolved into a system where the military institution exerts influence far beyond its constitutional responsibility for national defence.

During the tenure of General Pervez Musharraf, the idea of an “umbrella leadership” became deeply embedded in the structure of governance. Under this philosophy, the military was not merely responsible for security. It was expected to guide, supervise or influence almost every important sector, including administration, taxation, infrastructure, economic planning, development, law and order, communications and public policy.

Military officers were placed in civilian departments and assigned responsibilities for which they had not necessarily received professional training. A brigadier or general could be asked to supervise matters involving taxation, public finance, infrastructure, local government or economic development. Such officers naturally depended upon civilian experts for technical advice, yet the civilian officials understood that the final decision rested elsewhere.

As a result, many officers stopped offering independent professional opinions and instead provided advice that they believed would satisfy the expectations of the military leadership.

This arrangement weakened the civilian system from within. Bureaucrats became reluctant to take responsibility. Ministers lost authority. Professional expertise was subordinated to institutional preference. The civilian

machinery, which should have been the engine of national growth, administration and public service, became cautious, dependent and increasingly ineffective.

Although Musharraf eventually left power, the culture of military dominance did not disappear. It survived informally and continued to shape national life. The military remained influential in areas including major development projects, public administration, security policy, political management, strategic industries and national economic initiatives.

More seriously, the military establishment has repeatedly been accused of influencing the composition of parliament, the rise and fall of political governments, the selection of prime ministers, the formation of political alliances and the careers of civilian officers.

Whether every allegation is fully accurate or not, the widespread public perception of interference is itself damaging. A political system cannot command confidence when citizens believe that the final authority rests outside parliament.

Civilian governments created under such circumstances remain weak because their survival depends less upon public legitimacy and more upon institutional approval.

Ministers, advisers, bureaucrats and political leaders understand that their continuation in office may be linked to

support from powerful quarters. This weakens their willingness to resist pressure, challenge policy or defend civilian authority.

The contradiction becomes obvious during official press conferences. Military spokespersons may initially state that political and administrative matters belong to the civilian domain.

Yet the discussion often moves deeply into politics, governance, economic performance, internal administration and national policy. The military may publicly distance itself from civilian failures while simultaneously remaining heavily influential in the very system that produced those failures.

Pakistan is therefore trapped in a dangerous cycle. Civilian institutions are denied genuine independence, yet they are blamed for poor performance.

Politicians are weakened, but they are blamed for lacking strength. Bureaucrats are prevented from exercising professional authority, but they are blamed for administrative paralysis. The democratic system is not allowed to function freely, yet democracy is blamed for failing.

Against this background, a new narrative is now being promoted: that Pakistan’s problems can be solved by dividing the existing provinces and creating several new administrative units.

Supporters argue that population growth has made the current provincial structure too large and that smaller provinces would bring government closer to the people.

Continued on Page 7



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

A New Security Architecture for the Muslim World

“The true test of this new security triangle will not take place in Mecca, but rather in the capitals, where the political will to defend one another will have to demonstrate its muscle.”

Existing security arrangements and alliances in the region have largely been guarantor-based and bilateral in nature. The Saudi-Pakistan-Türkiye Mecca Agreement represents a qualitatively new security design, under which the three Muslim powers have agreed to provide security for one another, with each obliged to treat an attack on another as an attack on itself.

It is the context in which the agreement was concluded that makes it so significant. The relationships between Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye have been evolving over time: Pakistan has long-standing strategic defence ties with Saudi Arabia, as well as defence, diplomatic and strategic links with Türkiye, while Saudi Arabia has more recently developed strategic and defence ties with Türkiye. More importantly, the need for stronger regional partnerships has grown as the security environment has deteriorated amid missile defence developments, attacks on strategic installations, and intensifying geopolitical rivalries. Many countries in the region are upgrading their strategic defence capabilities to meet these new challenges.

A strategic partnership with Pakistan

and Türkiye will enable Saudi Arabia not only to strengthen its security but also to support its economic ambitions, as enhanced security is likely to attract greater investment. For Türkiye, partnership with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan expands its military potential, strategic depth, and political and soft-power presence in the region. For Pakistan, partnership with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye offers security assurance and strategic depth.

Each of the three countries brings distinct strengths to the table: Saudi Arabia offers economic power and regional reach; Pakistan brings military strength and strategic depth; and Türkiye contributes its substantial defence industry, military expertise, and NATO accreditation. A partnership uniting the economic, military and defence-industrial potential of these three countries could evolve into an alternative security arrangement for the region.

Still, the agreement’s relevance will ultimately be determined by the signatories’ ability to translate political will into concrete action — a question that deserves close scrutiny given the strategic obligations each side has now assumed.

The Mecca Agreement carries significance for both regional and international security. Iran is likely to monitor developments closely to assess their implications for the Gulf security equation, while Israel and other regional actors may need to reassess their own strategic doctrines in light of this new architec-

ture. The agreement does not present a direct challenge to established military alliances such as NATO, but it carries clear strategic implications for the Gulf region. All three signatories have been quick to emphasize that the pact is defensive in nature, and none views it as a direct challenge to existing alliances — though its long-term effect on regional military dynamics remains to be seen.

For Pakistan, positioned at the crossroads of competing strategic interests involving Saudi Arabia, China, Iran and the United States, the agreement offers considerable strategic value. It could serve as leverage to reshape the regional security equation in Pakistan’s favour, allowing Islamabad to strengthen its military and economic security and consolidate its standing as a regional power — provided it avoids becoming entangled in the broader rivalry among Saudi Arabia, China and the US.

The agreement also raises important questions for major powers observing from outside the region. For the United States, China and Russia, the Mecca pact signals that some regional actors are no longer content with the prevailing status quo — a development with strategic implications not only for Pakistan, but for Saudi Arabia and Türkiye as well.

In conclusion, the agreement marks a historic shift in the regional security landscape, as a new strategic triangle takes shape in the Middle East. Its ultimate significance — and its role in shaping the future security architecture of the region — will depend on how effectively Riyadh, Islamabad and Ankara deliver on the commitments they have made.

Traffic Lights Save Lives: A Lesson Pakistan Cannot Ignore

M Rashid Tabassum

Every year on August 5, the world observes International Traffic Light Day to highlight the importance of traffic signals in protecting lives and promoting road discipline. Traffic lights are far more than colored signals at busy intersections. They represent respect for the law, responsible driving, and the shared responsibility of keeping roads safe for everyone.

Rapid urbanization and rising vehicle ownership have placed unprecedented pressure on road networks across the world. As traffic continues to increase, effective traffic management has become more important than ever. The first traffic signal was tested in London in 1868 but failed due to technical problems. Later, on August 5, 1914, the first successful electric traffic signal was installed in Cleveland, USA, marking the beginning of modern traffic management.

Over the past century, traffic management has evolved dramatically. Many countries now use artificial intelligence, sensors, and cameras to monitor traffic flow and adjust signal timings automatically. These technologies help reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality. In Pakistan, institutions such as the Punjab Safe Cities Authority have also introduced modern traffic management systems to improve road safety and ensure better enforcement of traffic laws.

However, technology alone cannot prevent road accidents. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), approximately 1.16 million people die in road traffic crashes every year, while millions more suffer serious injuries or permanent disabilities. WHO research also shows that using a mobile phone while driving increases the risk of a crash by about four

times. Likewise, speeding, ignoring traffic signals, and failing to wear seat belts or helmets remain among the leading causes of fatal accidents.

Despite these technological advances, Pakistan continues to face a severe road safety crisis. According to the WHO, around 28,000 people lost their lives in road crashes in Pakistan in 2021. Meanwhile, Rescue 1122 reported that nearly 4,800 people died in road accidents across Punjab during 2025. These accidents also impose an economic burden of nearly US\$12 billion annually, equivalent to about 3 percent of Pakistan’s GDP. Officials estimate that, on average, one person is killed or seriously injured in a road accident every five minutes.

Even more concerning, motorcycles account for nearly 75 percent of road accidents in Pakistan, according to Rescue 1122. Common causes include speeding, helmet negligence, one-wheeling, driving against traffic, and crossing red lights. In addition, almost 41 percent of road fatalities involve pedestrians, highlighting the urgent need for safer crossings and improved urban planning.

Therefore, reducing road accidents requires more than stricter laws. Public awareness and responsible behavior are equally important. Stopping at red lights, following speed limits, staying within lanes, giving way to pedestrians, and avoiding mobile phone use while driving are simple actions that can save thousands of lives.

Finally, road safety education should begin at home and in schools. Parents, teachers, the media, and public institutions must work together to promote a culture of responsible driving. International Traffic Light Day reminds us that waiting a few extra seconds at a red light may seem insignificant, but those few seconds can save a life. Respecting traffic signals is not only about obeying the law—it is about respecting human life.

Indonesian Embassy Hosts Cultural and Community Event Ahead of 81st Independence Anniversary



ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of Indonesia in Islamabad organised a vibrant community event as part of celebrations leading up to Indonesia's 81st Independence Anniversary, bringing together Indonesian nationals, families, students, diplomats and Pakistani friends.

The event began with a community gym programme at the Embassy's Garuda Lawn, followed by traditional games, sports competitions, an Indonesian food bazaar and community activities. Indonesian Ambassador Chandra W. Sukotjo, accompanied

by his spouse Tamara Y. Sukotjo, welcomed participants and highlighted the strong people-to-people bonds between Indonesia and Pakistan.

The Ambassador said the gathering reflected the enduring friendship between the two brotherly



countries and celebrated Indonesia's Independence Day under the motto "Indonesia Sovereign, Just, and Prosperous." Participants

received red and white Batik-patterned shirts inspired by Kalimantan as a symbol of Indonesian cultural heritage and national

pride. The food bazaar offered a variety of Indonesian delicacies, including Nasi Padang, Siomay Ikan, Bakso

Kuah, Es Cendol, Peyek, Mendoan and Kacang Telur, allowing participants to experience the country's diverse culinary traditions.

Traditional games, including Balap Karung (Sack Race), Tarik Tambang (Tug of War) and Joget Tomat (Tomato Dance), provided entertainment for children and adults. Sports competitions featuring badminton, table tennis, volleyball and futsal promoted teamwork and camaraderie among the Indonesian community, Embassy officials and students.

Indonesian nationals and students said the celebration created a sense of home and belonging despite being away from their homeland. The event also highlighted Indonesia-Pakistan people-to-people ties, with participants from various professional and social backgrounds.

The Embassy thanked the organising committee, volunteers, participants and sponsors for contributing to the successful event.



Masnavi Peer Changi Launch Honors Journalist Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's Patriotic Legacy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan's former Ambassador to the United States and China, Sardar Masood Khan, has urged the younger generation to avoid despair and play an active role in making Pakistan stronger, more prosperous and developed through hard work, determination and a spirit of national service.

He expressed these views while addressing the launch ceremony of Masnavi Peer Changi, the final literary work of the late renowned journalist, scholar and diplomat Hassan Akhtar Gardezi.

The ceremony, presided over by Sardar Masood Khan, was hosted by Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman of the Pakistan Cultural Forum and Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG). Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar, Director General of Idara Farogh-e-Qaumi Zaban, attended as the Chief Guest.

Muhammad Afzal Butt, President of the Pakistan Federal Union of Journal-

ists (PFUJ); Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani; Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi; Musa Hasan Gardezi; and other distinguished guests also attended the ceremony.

In his presidential address, Sardar Masood Khan said that Masnavi Peer Changi reflects Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's spiritual thought, deep attachment to Islam and Pakistan, and unwavering commitment to national values.

Chief Guest Professor Dr. Muhammad Saleem Mazhar said that Masnavi Peer Changi represents the essence of Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's lifelong experience, intellectual insight and literary excellence. He said the book would serve as a valuable literary asset and source of inspiration for future generations.

Zafar Bakhtawari said that the Pakistan Cultural Forum aims to preserve Pakistan's national heritage, language, literature, history and cultural identity; highlight the contributions of writers and national personalities to the younger generation; and promote reading, dialogue, tolerance and intellectual awareness in society.

Paying tribute to Hassan Akhtar

Gardezi, Zafar Bakhtawari said that he was a courageous, principled and honest journalist who always stood for truth, gave priority to national dignity and upheld the highest standards of journalism.

He urged young journalists to follow Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's example of integrity, professionalism and commitment to principles. He added that unity, harmony and collective efforts are essential for Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

Muhammad Afzal Butt appreciated the efforts of Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi in making the publication of his late brother's final literary work possible. He said Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's writings would remain a valuable source of guidance for future generations, particularly in the areas of leadership, patriotism and public service.

Dr. Ijaz Shafi Gilani said that Hassan Akhtar Gardezi's personality was a practical reflection of his love for Pakistan and Kashmir. He said the late author drew intellectual and spiritual guidance from the philoso-



phies of Maulana Jalaluddin Rumi and Allama Muhammad Iqbal and always remained optimistic about Pakistan's bright future.

Syed Javed Hasan Gardezi paid tribute to his late brother and described him as an honest, dignified and patriotic person who demon-

strated unwavering loyalty to Pakistan throughout his life.

Musa Hasan Gardezi, grandson of the late author, thanked the participants and paid tribute to his grandfather's academic and literary contributions. On the occasion, he also recited a patriotic poem and prayed for the

fulfilment of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's vision of a strong, prosperous and developed Pakistan.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, prayers were offered for the departed souls of Hassan Akhtar Gardezi and Haji Ghulam Nabi Bakhtawari, a gold medalist of the Pakistan Movement.

PC Hospitality Opens Arena by Pearl-Continental DHA Multan

MULTAN, AUG 03: Pearl-Continental (PC), the hospitality division of Hashoo Group, has officially taken over and opened Arena by Pearl-Continental DHA Multan, a modern event and hospitality destination aimed at enhancing lifestyle and entertainment offerings in South Punjab.

The grand opening was attended by senior PC Hospitality executives, DHA Multan management and distinguished guests. The launch represents the second collaboration between PC Hospitality and DHA Multan, following the successful establishment of Rumanza by Pearl-Continental Multan, Pakistan's first five-star golf resort.

Arena by Pearl-Continental has joined PC Hospitality's PC Signature Collection as its third property, alongside Rumanza by Pearl-Continental Multan and Cecil by Pearl-Continental Murree. The collection was recently recognised as the Best Boutique Hotel Brand.

The new destination features modern facilities, including a mini cinema and curated event services, bringing hospitality, entertainment and lifestyle experiences together under one roof.



DHA Multan Project Director Brigadier Kashif Naeem Khan Burki welcomed the collaboration, saying such projects would contribute to improving the region's lifestyle infrastructure. Hashoo Group Hospitality Division CEO Bastien Blanc said the new property reflected

PC's commitment to distinctive guest experiences, regional tourism, economic growth and sustainable hospitality development.

PC Hospitality currently has more than 60 operating and upcoming hotels across its diverse portfolio.

Can AJK Hold Free and Fair Elections Amid Unrest?

Through the columns of your esteemed newspaper, I would like to draw attention to an issue of great importance: whether Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) can hold free and fair elections amid the current unrest. As a concerned student, I believe that elections are the foundation of democracy, but they can only be meaningful when citizens are able to vote freely, peacefully, and without fear.

The recent political tensions, protests, and security concerns in different parts of AJK have raised serious questions about the fairness of the electoral process. If



polling stations are affected by unrest, voter turnout may decline, and public confidence in the election results could be weakened. Political parties should be given equal opportunities to campaign, while law enforcement agencies must ensure a peaceful environment without interfering in the democratic process. Moreover, the Election Commission should act independently and transparently to guarantee that every vote is counted fairly.

To strengthen democracy in AJK, all stakeholders

must work together to reduce tensions, maintain law and order, and protect the rights of voters. A free and fair election is not only essential for political stability but also for preserving public trust in democratic institutions. I request you to publish this letter so that the concerned authorities and the public recognize the importance of ensuring credible and peaceful elections in AJK.

Wafa Zainab
National defence university,
Islamabad
wafazainab373@gmail.com

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
181,430.02	181,776.59
Day's High	Day's Low
181,647.27	180,620.08
Index Value	Change
24,623,189,830	−346.57
Percentage	Time
−0.19%	7 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,901.09	+33.20
Percentage	Time
+0.31%	7 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT +1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,982.97	+97.87
Percentage	Time
+0.18%	7 Aug, 1:41 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
65,606.71	−76.55
Percentage	Time
−0.12%	7 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

SECP Refers Blink Capital Case to FIA Over Alleged Rs446.6 Million Investment Fraud

 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has referred the case of Blink Capital Management (Private) Limited to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) for further investigation over alleged investor fraud involving Rs446.664 million.

SECP Chairman Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said the regulator would take strict action against market abusers and entities misusing their regulated status, stressing that protecting investors and maintaining capital market integrity remained a top priority.

Blink Capital Management, formerly a licensed futures broker and market maker of the Pakistan Mercantile Exchange Limited (PMEX), came under investigation following complaints that it had allegedly collected funds from investors by promising fixed returns and guaranteed repayment of principal.

According to the SECP investigation, 35 complainants submitted claims totaling



Rs446.664 million. A financial trail involving 29 complainants and Rs408.6 million showed that substantial funds were transferred to accounts belonging to Blink, its then CEO and director, as well as certain employees and associated persons. Investigators also identified significant cash withdrawals.

The investigation found that investors had entered agreements offering predetermined returns ranging from 3.7 percent per month to 48 percent annually, with post-dated cheques provided as security. Based on available evidence, the SECP concluded that Blink was allegedly operating a Ponzi-type fraudulent investment scheme, involving unauthorized deposit-taking and guaranteed returns beyond its licensed activities.

The regulator identified potential violations of the Companies Act 2017, Futures Market Act 2016 and relevant licensing regulations. The case was referred to the FIA under the SECP Act for further action. SECP also warned the public against unauthorized schemes offering guaranteed returns.

Mango Festival

High Commissioner H.E. Rabia Shafiq and Singapore's Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Mr. Zhulkarnain Abdul Rahim visit the stall showcasing Pakistan's world-renowned mangoes, including the renowned Chaunsa and Sensation varieties, at the Mango Festival on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Samsung, Spotify Partner to Offer Premium Listening Experience Across Pakistan



 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Samsung Electronics has partnered with Spotify to enhance music streaming across its connected devices in Pakistan and other markets in the Middle East, North Africa and Türkiye. The collaboration will enable eligible Pakistani customers purchasing selected Samsung products to receive three months of Spotify Premium.

The offer covers a range of devices, including Galaxy A-series smartphones and tablets, QLED, Mini LED and UHD TVs, sound devices, Galaxy Buds and Galaxy Watch. Users can seamlessly continue listening across Samsung devices, while controlling playback through connected wearables.

Spotify Premium provides ad-free listening, enhanced audio quality and offline downloads, while its Jam feature

allows users to create shared music queues with friends. Samsung said the partnership aims to combine its connected-device ecosystem with Spotify's audio services to deliver greater value to consumers.

Samsung and Spotify officials highlighted the growing role of music among younger audiences. According to Spotify, nearly seven in ten streams across MENA, Türkiye and Pakistan come from listeners aged 18 to 34.

Pakistan must accelerate digital economy by adopting Chinese best practices: PCJCCI

 **Tahir Amin Malik**

ISLAMABAD: Commercial Ambassador of the Pakistan-China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI) Adeel Munawar has called for accelerated digital transformation of Pakistan's economy by adopting successful Chinese models of digital infrastructure, innovation and data-driven industrial development.

Speaking at a PCJCCI think tank session, he said Pakistan needed to shift from a conventional industrial economy towards a technology-enabled digital economy to achieve sustainable growth, boost exports and improve global competitiveness. He stressed that integrated computing hubs and modern data centres could provide the foundation for artificial intelligence,

big data, cloud computing, blockchain and smart manufacturing.

Adeel Munawar cited China's national computing hubs as a successful model and suggested establishing similar digital infrastructure in major Pakistani cities and regions, including Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Peshawar, Quetta, Hyderabad, Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He said a nationwide computing network would improve data sharing, industrial efficiency and digital governance while supporting sectors such as finance, healthcare, education, e-commerce and logistics. He urged investment in energy-efficient data centres, 5G, broadband, fibre-optic networks and digital skills to create an innovation-driven economy.

Coca-Cola Pakistan Wins Consumers' Preferred Beverage of the Year Award



 **Commerce desk**

ISLAMABAD: Coca-Cola Pakistan has received the Consumers' Preferred Beverage of the Year Award at the 17th Consumers' Food Safety and Quality Conference & Awards, organized by the Consumers Association of Pakistan (CAP).

The award was presented following an evaluation of consumer sentiment and regulatory compliance, recognizing Coca-Cola Pakistan's commitment to quality, food safety, standards and corporate excellence. The event brought together regulators, senior government officials, trade association representatives and consumers.

Chairman of the Competition Commission of Pakistan Farid Ahmad Tarar presented the award and

stressed the importance of supporting fair and transparent businesses to strengthen their contribution to the national economy.

Coca-Cola Pakistan Senior Director Dr. Faisal Hashmi said the recognition reflected consumers' confidence in the company and its continued focus on quality, regulatory compliance and operational excellence, implemented through its bottling partners Coca-Cola Içecek.

CAP has traditionally recognized leading local and international companies for product integrity and consumer protection. The latest award further highlights Coca-Cola Pakistan's efforts toward quality management, corporate responsibility and consumer confidence.

Hub Water Crisis Threatens Industries, Agriculture and Jobs

 **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Industries in Hub are facing a severe water shortage despite the Hub Dam being almost full, prompting the Hub Chamber of Commerce & Industry to seek immediate intervention from Prime Minister Sheh-

baz Sharif. Former chamber president Ismail Suttar and President Yakoob H. Karim warned that prolonged shortages could force industrial units to suspend operations, putting thousands of jobs at risk.

The chamber leaders said Hub contributes more than Rs7 billion

annually to the national exchequer but is receiving an inadequate share of water. They noted that the existing allocation formula, under which Hub receives 36.7 percent and Karachi 62.3 percent, was developed in the 1980s when Hub had a population of only 20,000, five industrial units and around

1,000 acres of cultivated land.

They said Hub now has over one million residents, around 300 industrial units and more than 25,000 acres under cultivation, making the decades-old formula outdated.

The leaders urged the federal government to direct Wapda to

release additional water, review the allocation formula and establish a sustainable mechanism based on current population, agricultural and industrial needs. They warned that failure to act could trigger factory closures, unemployment, agricultural losses and a humanitarian crisis.

Squash legend Jahangir Khan inaugurates three new squash courts at Nishtar Park Sports Complex

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Squash legend and former world champion Jahangir Khan visited the state-of-the-art Squash Complex at Nishtar Park Sports Complex and inaugurated three newly constructed squash courts built by Punjab Sports Department.

Jahangir Khan formally inaugurated the courts by cutting the ribbon and playing a few shots. During the ceremony, the Punjab Sports Department also handed over the three courts to the Pakistan Squash Academy under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).

Director General Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi briefed about the facilities and development of the newly constructed Squash Complex. The legendary squash

player also visited the gymnasium and inspected the international, national and practice courts.

While talking to media on the occasion, Jahangir Khan appreciated the Punjab government and the Punjab Sports Department for developing the modern squash facility in Lahore. "The Punjab Sports Department has built a beautiful squash complex and this modern facility is a not less than a gift for Lahore and young squash players," Jahangir Khan said.

He thanked Chief Minister Punjab, Secretary Sports Punjab and his team for developing this excellent facility, adding that there were very few squash courts of such quality anywhere in the world. Recalling his own playing days, Jahangir Khan said he had also wished to play at such a modern facility.

Jahangir Khan stressed that there was no shortcut to success and that players had to work hard to achieve excellence. "Success does not come through shortcuts. We used to practice for eight hours every day," he said, adding that Pakistan had no shortage of talented players.

Jahangir Khan said he was particularly pleased to unveil the three new courts and expressed hope that the facility would help nurture the next generation of squash players.

Secretary Sports Punjab Fazal-ur-Rehman thanked Jahangir Khan for visiting the Squash Complex and appreciated his encouragement for the development of squash in Punjab. He said that young squash players would benefit from modern facilities and training opportunities at the complex.



President Pakistan Squash Academy Adnan Asad announced that a CM Punjab Squash Event carrying a prize purse of Rs10 million would also be organized in near future

to promote the sport and provide competitive opportunities to talented players.

DG Sports Punjab Muhammad Tariq Qureshi said the state-of-the-art

Squash Complex had been equipped with modern courts and facilities. "The complex has six practice courts, one international court and one national squash court," Qureshi said.

Pakistan clinch historic silver at ITF Masters World Team Championships

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan secured a historic silver medal at the ITF Masters World Team Championships in the 45+ age category after going down 2-1 to top seeds and tournament favourites Spain in a closely contested final at the Jamor Tennis Centre.

Pakistan clinch historic silver at ITF Masters World Team Championships. The runners-up finish marks Pakistan's best-ever performance at the ITF Masters World Team Championships and places the country among the leading nations in the 45+ category.

According to information made available here by Pakistan Tennis Federation, the decisive contest came in the second singles, where Pakistan's Aqeel Khan was beaten 6-4, 6-2 by Spain's Francisco Javier Martinez Baena in a clash between two of the tournament's leading players.

Aqeel had enjoyed an outstanding campaign, registering a series of impressive victories in both singles and doubles alongside former Pakistan No. 1 Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi. However, after several consecutive days of demanding and high-intensity matches, fatigue proved a decisive factor against a fresh and formidable Spanish side.



Pakistan's impressive journey to the final included victories over the United States, Canada, hosts Portugal and Sweden, earning the team a well-deserved place on the championship podium.

The medal ceremony was held at the Jamor Tennis Centre, where Pakistan received the silver medals and runners-up trophy from the President of the International Tennis Federation (ITF) and the President of the Portuguese Tennis Federation.

The ceremony was also attended by Paulo Domingues, Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, whose presence and support were warmly appreciated by the Pakistani contingent.

Competing against more than 30 nations and over 300 players, Pakistan emerged as the only Asian country to win a medal at the championship, underlining the growing strength and competitiveness of Pakistani players in international Masters tennis.

Following the medal ceremony, Aisam-ul-Haq Qureshi congratulated his teammates and thanked everyone who contributed to the team's memorable campaign.

"This has been an unforgettable week for Pakistan tennis. I want to congratulate my teammates Aqeel Khan, Shehryar Salamat and Hadi Hussain for their commitment, professionalism and outstanding teamwork throughout the championship," Aisam said.

"Every member of the squad played an important role in helping us reach the final."

Aisam also expressed his gratitude to the team's sponsors, Lama Retail, SICAS Schools, Tablevelics and Faizan Steel, saying their generous support had made Pakistan's participation possible.

He also appreciated the Pakistani media for following the tournament and keeping the public informed through regular match reports, photographs and video coverage.

"We are equally grateful to all our supporters in Pakistan and abroad whose encouragement meant so much to the team," he added.

Aisam extended special thanks to the Ambassador of Portugal to Pakistan, Paulo Domingues, for attending the closing medal ceremony and supporting the team during its stay in Portugal.

"Gestures like these strengthen the friendship between our two countries and meant a great deal to our team," he said.

Pakistan's historic silver medal is a fitting reward for a team that displayed resilience, sportsmanship, determination and unity throughout the championship.

Crop Production Faculty Clinches Victory in Tape-Ball Tournament held at SAU Tando Jam

Sports Desk

HYDERABAD: A Tape-Ball Cricket Tournament was organized at Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam, as part of the Independence Day celebrations under the auspices of the Directorate of Sports.

Vice Chancellor Engr. Prof. Dr. Altaf Ali Siyal inaugurated the tournament by striking the ball with a bat. The opening match was played between the teams of the Faculty of Crop Production, led by Altaf Hussain Sangi, and the Faculty of Crop Protection, led by Muzamil Hussain.

Batting first, the Faculty of Crop Protection team scored 105 runs in the allotted eight overs. In an exciting contest, the Faculty of Crop Production team successfully chased down the target in just seven overs to secure victory.

Javed Qambrani was the standout performer for the winning side, scoring an impressive 50 runs and playing a decisive role in his team's victory.

Speaking on the occasion, Vice Chancellor Dr. Altaf Ali Siyal congratulated the winning team and said that sports activities play an important role in fostering healthy competition, discipline, teamwork and leadership skills among students. He said the sports and other activities being organized as part of the Independence Day celebrations were aimed at promoting patriotism, unity and a positive outlook among the youth.

Earlier, both teams were introduced to the Vice Chancellor. Director Sports Shaukat Hussain Sangi welcomed the guests and participants.

Dean, Faculty of Crop Production, Dr. Inayatullah Rajpar; Dean, Faculty of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences, Dr. Ghiasuddin Shah Rashdi; Director Students Affairs, Dr. Piyar Ali Shar; faculty members, officers and a large number of students attended the event.



Pakistani students shine at Jeddah Nuclear Science Olympiad

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD:

Pakistan's team has won one gold and two silver medals at the International Nuclear Science Olympiad held in Jeddah from August 2 to 8, 24NewsHD TV reported on Saturday.

The competition brought together 120 students and experts from 19 countries, including China, Japan, Russia, Turkiye, Malaysia, Indonesia and Saudi Arabia.

The Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission team secured three medals in total.

Muhammad Ali from Government College University Lahore won the gold medal, while Muhammad Usman of FG Sir Syed College, Rawalpindi, and Seerat Fatima Bhatti of Nixor College, Karachi, won silver medals.

According to a statement issued by the Pakistan Atomic Energy Commission, Pakistan will host the fourth International Nuclear Science Olympiad in 2027.



Does Pakistan Need More Provinces—or a Democratic Reset?

Continued from Page 4

The argument may appear attractive at first glance, but it ignores the real causes of failure. Pakistan already has divisions, districts, tehsils, local administrations, commissioners, deputy commissioners and numerous departments intended to deliver services.

New districts have repeatedly been created. Yet governance has not improved because the central problem is not simply the size of the provinces. It is the collapse of accountability, political legitimacy, institutional independence and democratic authority.

Creating additional provinces

would also impose enormous financial costs. Each new province would require a governor, chief minister, cabinet, provincial assembly, secretariat, departments, residences, security arrangements, vehicles, staff and administrative infrastructure. Billions would be spent on buildings and bureaucracies rather than schools, hospitals, clean water, employment, agriculture and local development.

More provinces may also create more political offices to distribute, more budgets to control and more opportunities for institutional manipulation. Instead of empowering the people, such a structure

could strengthen centralized control by fragmenting political authority and making regional governments more dependent upon the establishment.

The proposal therefore risks becoming another narcissistic illusion: a belief that by redrawing the map, the system will automatically improve.

But a dysfunctional political order cannot be repaired through geography alone. If the same culture of interference, manipulation, censorship and administrative domination continues, ten provinces will fail just as four provinces have failed.

Pakistan does not primarily

need new provincial boundaries. It needs a new democratic understanding.

The solution is to allow the Constitution, parliament, judiciary, media, civil service and elected governments to function independently.

The people must be allowed to choose the representatives they genuinely trust, support and love—leaders whom they believe can rescue the country from its present political, economic and administrative quagmire.

Elections must be held fairly, transparently and without interference. Political parties must be allowed to compete on equal

terms. Popular leaders must not be removed through manipulation, coercion or manufactured political engineering. Governments must rise and fall through the ballot box, not through decisions made behind closed doors.

The army must return fully to its constitutional responsibility of defending the country. It should remain respected, professional and powerful within its legitimate domain, but it should not determine who governs, who enters parliament, who becomes prime minister, which political party survives or which civilian officer receives promotion.

Pakistan's people are not inca-

pable of choosing their leaders. They have repeatedly demonstrated political awareness, courage and commitment. What they require is not guardianship but freedom. They must be trusted to make their own decisions and, when necessary, correct those decisions through future elections.

Breaking the provinces will not heal Pakistan. Breaking the cycle of interference will.

The country can move toward progress and prosperity only when authority flows from the people, when institutions remain within constitutional limits and when elected representatives are

allowed to govern without fear or external control.

Pakistan's map does not need to be repeatedly redrawn. Its democratic contract needs to be restored. The real reset is not administrative fragmentation. The real reset is free elections, civilian supremacy, constitutional governance, press freedom and the unconditional right of the people to choose their own future.

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,

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah at his residence on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Speaker, Deputy Speaker National Assembly meet Chairman Senate Gillani

 **Kiran Asim**

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah called on Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at his residence, where the meeting focused on parliamentary affairs, matters of national importance, institutional relations, and strengthening cooperation between the Senate and the National Assembly.

Chairman Senate Gillani said close communication and mutual cooperation between the two houses were

indispensable for strong democratic traditions and an effective parliamentary system.

Speaker Ayaz Sadiq echoed similar views, emphasizing the need to further strengthen institutional cooperation for effective legislation and to meet public expectations.

The overall national situation was also discussed during the meeting, with the leaders agreeing to promote national interest, uphold the supremacy of the Constitution, ensure democratic stability, and maintain effective communication and mutual respect between parliamentary institutions.

Goods transporters’ issues to be resolved soon, says Abdul Aleem Khan



 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has assured goods transporters that their genuine concerns regarding axle load limits, relevant SROs and heavy vehicles on motorways will be addressed on a priority basis.

During a video-link meeting with representatives of the All Pakistan Goods Transporters Alliance, the minister invited a delegation to Islamabad on Monday for detailed discussions. He stressed that no overloaded vehicle would be allowed on motorways and said implementation of the axle load policy would begin immediately.

Abdul Aleem Khan urged trans-

porters to cooperate in protecting motorways and national highways, describing them as national assets. He also directed the Motorway Police leadership to eliminate corruption within one month, warning that officials involved in bribery would be dismissed and face criminal cases.

The minister assured Mazda operators and 10-wheelers that their genuine issues would also be resolved. He urged transporters to avoid extreme measures and resolve disputes through dialogue.

Federal and provincial communications officials and representatives of various transport organizations attended the meeting and endorsed the axle load policy.

JI announces nationwide sit-ins from August 16 over petrol hike



 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has announced nationwide sit-ins from August 16 against the petroleum levy and high petrol prices.

The decision was taken at a

special meeting chaired by JI amir Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, attended by senior party leaders and provincial and major-city chiefs through video link.

The meeting decided to postpone the sit-ins originally planned for August 9 so that Independence Day celebrations could be held across the country.

The protests will now begin simultaneously in all four provinces on August 16.

Hafiz Naeemur Rehman said a major sit-in would be held outside the Punjab Chief Minister's House in Lahore, while protests would take place outside the governor houses in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan.

Naqvi Sets September 30 Deadline for Completion of Islamabad Safe City Expansion

ISLAMABAD:Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, accompanied by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, visited the Islamabad Safe City Headquarters on Friday and chaired a special meeting to review progress on the Safe City Expansion Project, directing officials to complete the ambitious initiative by September 30.

During the briefing, officials informed the minister that overall work on the expansion project has reached 85 percent completion. Installation of the new surveillance network is also 85 percent complete, while 415 kilometres of optical fibre have been laid to support the upgraded system. Work on the data centre, cyber archi-

itecture, and cybersecurity infrastructure has also reached approximately 80 percent completion.

Expressing satisfaction over the pace of work, Naqvi stressed that the remaining tasks must be completed within the stipulated timeframe.

He said the government's vision is to transform the Islamabad Safe City into a modern, smart, and world-class institution comparable to those in developed countries.

The interior minister said the technologically advanced Safe City system would significantly strengthen public safety through enhanced surveillance, effective monitoring, and rapid emergency response capabilities.

CCoP reviews privatization progress of IESCO, FESCO and GEPCO

 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP) in Islamabad on Saturday, where progress on the privatization of three power distribution companies was reviewed.

Dar arrived in Islamabad earlier on Saturday after returning from Saudi Arabia, where he had accompanied Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on an official visit.

The meeting reviewed progress on the proposed privatization of Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO), Faisalabad Electric Supply Company (FESCO) and Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO).

The Cabinet Committee directed the Privatization Commission to complete the consultation process with the Power Division by the begin-



ning of next week so that a decision on the privatization of the three distribution companies can be taken by the CCoP.

The committee also considered proposals for including additional institutions in the

government's privatization programme and approved the proposals of the Privatization Division with amendments.

The budget of the Privatization Commission was also presented before the meeting

and approved with amendments.

The CCoP approved the annual privatization programme, while the committee also reviewed the future action plan and directed

the Privatization Commission to expedite the process.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar directed all concerned authorities to ensure coordinated and timely measures and further accelerate the privatization process.

He stressed the need to maintain progress on the government's broader structural reform agenda and directed authorities to improve the performance and efficiency of public-sector institutions.

Ishaq Dar also called for further strengthening economic management and governance and directed the relevant authorities to ensure effective implementation of the government's reform measures.

The meeting was attended by the Minister for Energy, Adviser on Privatization, Special Assistant, Secretary Power, Secretary Privatization Division, Secretary Privatization Commission, Secretary Commerce and Secretary Cabinet.

Rana Sanaullah Says PPP Will Continue Working with Govt ‘On the Same Salary’

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: PML-N leader and Prime Minister's adviser on political affairs Rana Sanaullah said the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) will continue working with the federal government despite political differences, alleging the party accuses others of rigging whenever it loses an election.

Speaking to media after addressing an election rally in Haveli, he said the PPP

would continue working with the government "on the same salary," referring to the existing political arrangement between the two parties.

Addressing a separate rally in Bagh, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sanaullah said Pakistan was incomplete without Kashmir and no power could weaken the bond between the two. He said PML-N needed six more seats to secure a two-thirds majority in the AJK Legis-



lative Assembly, expressing confidence that four more party candidates would win

in the upcoming elections. He said Kashmiris were an important part of Pakistan's

social and economic life, working across the country, and were being given their rights within Pakistan.

Commenting on the Kashmir Action Committee, he said many members were "brothers and patriots," though he alleged some individuals were working on someone else's agenda. He added that issues facing Azad Kashmir would be addressed on a priority basis once the new government is formed.

FO says authorities making efforts for safe release of Pakistani hostages from Somali pirates

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The release of the Pakistani and foreign crew members of the vessel Honor 25, who have been held hostage by Somali pirates has not been secured yet, the Foreign Office said.

Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi said it is "extremely unfortunate" that the detained individuals had not yet been released. He said Pakistan had been unable to ensure the safe release of the hostages and an inter-ministerial process was currently underway to address the matter.

According to the spokesperson, the Ministry of Human Rights, Ministry of Maritime Affairs and other relevant institutions are involved in the process and are continuously monitoring the situation.

Andrabi said the main challenge was that the crew members were being held



in a self-governing region of Somalia, making the operational steps required for their release particularly complex

and difficult.

FO spokesman said that negotiations with those pirates were another

major challenge. The situation has been further complicated by Somalia's tribal system and the involvement of influential local figures, including the pirates who seized the vessel.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said Pakistan remained hopeful of achieving better results and was in continuous contact with the Somali government, Somali authorities and relevant international organisations.

Expressing sympathy with the families and relatives of the detained crew members, Andrabi said Pakistan fully understood their pain and concerns.

He said that the matter remained among Pakistan's ongoing priorities and under continuous monitoring and all possible efforts were being made in coordination with relevant ministries and institutions, to secure the crew's release and facilitate their earliest possible return home.