



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم سے محمد بن یوسف نے بیان کیا،
انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم نے یحییٰ بن سعید سے بیان
کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ مجھ سے یحییٰ بن سعید
نے بیان کیا، ان سے ابن شہاب نے بیان کیا، انہیں
عروہ نے قری اور انہیں ام ابیہ بن عثمان عاصم
نے کہ جب رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم اپنے
توہنیاں انہوں پر پھونکتے اور مہواڑ پڑھتے
اور دونوں ہاتھ پٹے جسم پر چبھتے تھے۔
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Sindh CM Murad directs foolproof security, civic arrangements for 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal

Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah chaired a meeting with religious scholars from different schools of thought and senior officials to review preparations for 12 Rabi-ul-Awwal, directing authorities to ensure fool-proof security and uninterrupted civic services across the province.



Indian media acknowledges benefits of Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye pact

Indian media has acknowledged the potential defence benefits for Pakistan from the growing defence cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. India Today described the Pakistan-Saudi-Türkiye defence agreement as a significant development for Pakistan, saying defence integration, joint military exercises and technology transfers could enhance the country's defence capabilities.

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Celebration Mark Joint Defence Agreement

ISLAMABAD: digital billboard displays portraits of Saudi Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, Pakistan's Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Asim Munir, and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, following the signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

15 Fitna Al Khawarij militants killed in Balochistan operations: ISPR

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least 15 militants were killed in raids carried out by security forces across Balochistan under Operation Radd-ul-Fasad 3, the military's media wing said on Sunday.

A large quantity of weapons and ammunition was recovered from militants who belonged to the Fitna Al Khawarij group.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operations were carried out in several areas, including Mastung, Bolan, Washuk and Awaran.

Security forces also conducted operations in Sibi, Khuzdar, Harnai and Nushki,



the ISPR said.

A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered during these operations.

Security sources said the operations inflicted heavy losses on the militants and restricted their movement in the affected areas.

The security forces reiterated their resolve to continue operations without interruption until terrorism is completely eliminated from the country.

Makkah Accord a Matter of Pride for Muslim Ummah: Atta Tarar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar has described the Makkah Accord between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye as a historic achievement and a matter of immense pride for Pakistan and the wider Muslim Ummah.

Speaking to the media, Tarar expressed gratitude to Almighty Allah for the agreement, calling the trilateral partnership among the three brotherly nations a special blessing for the Muslim world. He said the Pakistani nation was celebrating the accord with great enthusiasm, with the flags of

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye displayed across the country.

The minister praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their important role and dedicated efforts in making the agreement possible. He said the pact had given Pakistan a prestigious position it had long aspired to achieve.

Tarar further said Pakistan had been blessed with the honour and responsibility of protecting the Harmain Sharifain. He congratulated the nation and expressed confidence that the three countries would move forward together in accordance with the landmark agreement.

Makkah Accord Culmination of Years of Coordination, Aims to Advance Regional Peace: Dar

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar has described the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, as the culmination of years of consultations and coordination aimed at strengthening strategic cooperation and promoting regional peace, stability and prosperity.

In a statement, Dar clarified that the accord, signed in Makkah on August 7, is purely



defensive in nature and is consistent with Article 51 of the UN Charter, which recog-

nizes the right to individual and collective self-defence. He stressed that the agreement is

not directed against any country and does not replace or abrogate existing bilateral or multilateral agreements.

Dar said the agreement reflects the strong relations among the three countries and establishes a framework for cooperation in addressing evolving peace and security challenges. Under the accord, an external armed attack against any one of the three countries would be considered an attack against all, in accordance with international law.

The deputy prime minister

emphasized that the accord seeks to build sustainable defence capabilities and strengthen solidarity while supporting peaceful conflict resolution. He added that the agreement remains open to other regional countries willing to uphold its principles and resolve differences through mutual respect and peaceful means.

Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working with brotherly countries to promote lasting peace, stability, security and prosperity across the region.

Fazlur Rehman Calls Makkah Defence Agreement Step Towards Muslim Unity

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has described the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye as an important step towards collective security and unity of the Muslim world.

Speaking after meeting veteran politician Makhdoom Javed Hashmi at his residence in Multan, Fazlur Rehman said the estab-



lishment of a joint defence mechanism for Muslim countries had long been part of

JUI-F's manifesto and ideology. He urged other Islamic countries to join the agreement to strengthen collective security and cooperation.

The JUI-F chief said Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had the potential to play a leading role in the Muslim Ummah, while the trilateral agreement would further strengthen brotherly relations among the three countries. He termed the pact a pillar of solidarity and collective security, reflecting common interests among Muslim nations.

Fazlur Rehman said the agreement would promote closer cooperation and demonstrate a shared determination to protect the dignity and security of Islamic sanctities. He highlighted Saudi Arabia's special significance as custodian of the Two Holy Mosques and said Pakistanis regarded their protection as an honour and sacred responsibility.

He congratulated the leadership of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye on the agreement.

Mohsin Naqvi Orders Faster Immigration Process During Surprise Lahore Airport Visit

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi conducted a surprise visit to Allama Iqbal International Airport and inspected immigration arrangements for passengers. During his visit, he spoke with immigration staff and passengers about process-

ing times and facilities.

Passengers informed the minister that immigration had taken around 30 minutes and called for faster arrangements. Taking immediate notice, Naqvi directed airport authorities to keep all immigration counters operational to reduce waiting times and facilitate travellers.

A passenger also complained



that an agent had taken money

from him. The minister referred the matter to the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) director and ordered the agent's arrest.

Naqvi further directed FIA officials to prevent travel on incomplete or fake documents and said action against those attempting to travel with fraudulent documents should

be strengthened. However, he emphasized that passengers possessing complete and valid travel documents should not face unnecessary hurdles.

The minister said modern technology had made immigration procedures easier and stressed the need for efficient, transparent and passenger-friendly services at airports.

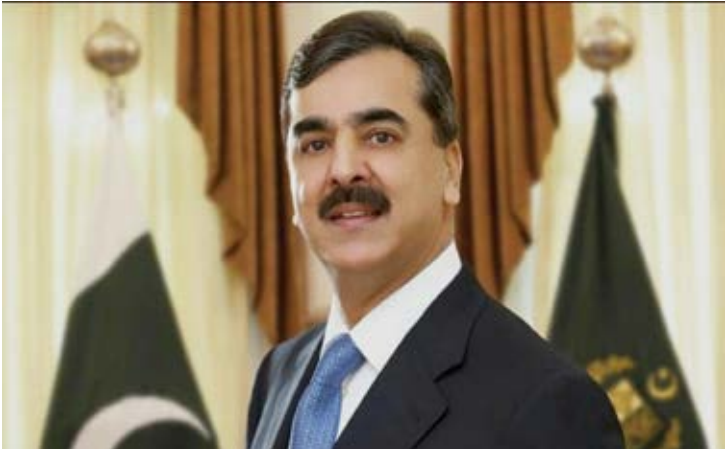
Strong Parliament, Constitutional Supremacy Vital for Pakistan’s Progress, says Gillani

 **Kiran Asim**

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gillani said the first session of the Constituent Assembly on August 10, 1947, marked the beginning of Pakistan’s parliamentary journey and reflected the democratic aspirations of the nation’s founding leadership.

He said democracy, constitutional supremacy, rule of law and strong parliamentary institutions are essential for national unity, political stability, sustainable development and public prosperity.

Gillani said Parliament is the true forum for representing people’s aspirations through legislation, dialogue and democratic debate. He highlighted the



Senate’s role in strengthening the federation by ensuring equal representation of federating units and promoting national cohesion, and called on all

political forces to uphold parliamentary traditions of tolerance, mutual respect, dialogue and consensus in the national interest.

He reaffirmed the Senate’s commitment to strengthening democracy, constitutional governance and effective parliamentary institutions, stressing the importance of engaging youth with Pakistan’s democratic journey and leveraging modern technology to make Parliament more accessible and responsive.

“A strong Parliament is the foundation of a strong federation and a stable, prosperous Pakistan. Our collective responsibility is to protect and strengthen our democratic legacy for future generations,” the Chairman Senate said.

Firework

ISLAMABAD: People watch a firework on the sky during celebration following signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkey in front of the new blue area in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

DFP Condemns House Arrest of Mirwaiz, Calls for International Action

 **Bureau Report**

SRINAGAR: The Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (DFP) has strongly condemned the continued house arrest of Mirwaiz-e-Kashmir Dr. Mouli Mohammad Umar Farooq and restrictions preventing him from delivering the Friday sermon and leading prayers at Srinagar’s historic Jamia Masjid. DFP spokesperson Advocate Arshad Iqbal termed the measures serious violations of fundamental human rights, religious freedom, freedom of expression and peaceful assembly.

He said restrictions on religious gatherings, detention of political and religious leaders, and interference in worship were contrary to democratic values, human dignity and the rule



of law. He described Mirwaiz Umar Farooq as a respected religious leader

and prominent voice of the Kashmir freedom movement.

The spokesperson maintained that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains internationally recognized and called for protection of the political, civil and religious rights of its people. He urged the United Nations, OIC, international human rights organizations and religious freedom groups to take urgent notice of the situation.

The DFP demanded an immediate end to Mirwaiz’s house arrest, removal of restrictions on religious activities, restoration of fundamental freedoms and a peaceful settlement of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Deputy Commissioner Attock reviews facilities and administrative arrangements at Gymkhana Club

 **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah visited the Attock Gymkhana Club to review facilities, administrative arrangements and service delivery for club members.

He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (Municipal Services) Anil Saeed, Assistant Commissioner Attock, Additional Deputy Commissioner (Revenue), Director Gymkhana, Sector Gymkhana and other relevant officers.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner inspected various sections of the club and reviewed available facilities, administrative affairs and the functioning of different departments. Concerned officers



briefed him on ongoing arrangements and departmental performance. Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah directed officials to ensure that all sections

remained fully functional and that the quality of facilities provided to members was further improved. He stressed that available resources should be utilized efficiently to make services more standardized, organized and effective.

He also called for regular monitoring of the club’s arrangements and directed officials to identify shortcomings promptly and take practical measures for their resolution.

The Deputy Commissioner emphasized effective coordination, diligent performance and continuous monitoring to improve services. The concerned officers assured him that all necessary steps would be taken to enhance facilities and ensure quality services for Gymkhana Club members.

MEPCO’s Excellent FY2025-26 Performance Credited to Joint Efforts of Staff



 **Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Chairman MEPCO Board of Directors Engineer Amir Zia said the company’s excellent performance in FY2025-26, which made it the country’s number one power distribution company, resulted from the joint efforts of its officers and employees. Honorary shields were distributed to top performers, and bonuses announced for all staff.

Zia noted that PM Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Minister for Energy Sardar Owais Ahmed Khan Leghari had appreciated MEPCO’s exceptional performance, including its loss reduction and target achievement. He urged adopting a “Pakistan First” approach, prioritizing national interest, and emphasized that maintaining and improving on the top position remains the real challenge ahead.

Board member Engineer Tahir Basharat Cheema credited the Board’s policies and continuous monitoring for the achievement, stressing efficiency, transparency and financial management as key priorities under ongoing power sector reforms.

CEO Engineer Gul Muhammad Zahid praised the hard work of MEPCO’s staff and highlighted key initiatives, including customer facilitation centers and Pakistan’s first ISO 9001-certified transformer reclamation workshop in Multan, which other DISCOs are studying. He said APMS is being introduced to modernize the power system and improve loss control and supply reliability.

The ceremony concluded with honorary shields distributed to senior officers and engineers for their contributions to MEPCO’s achievement.

Former Cantonment Board Members Discuss Public Issues with Zahid Bakhtawari



 **City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: A delegation of former Rawalpindi Cantonment Board members met Vice President Zahid Bakhtawari and discussed various public and business community concerns, particularly increases in reservancy charges, water charges and other fees.

The delegation included former Vice President Malik Munir Ahmed and former members Rasheed Ahmed Khan, Malik Amjad Hussain, Chaudhry Abdul Shakoor, Malik Tahir Ayub, Arshad Mehmood, Haji Tariq Mehmood and Malik Saghir Ahmed.

The former members briefed Zahid Bakhtawari on issues affecting residents and the business community and sought measures for their resolution. Zahid Bakhtawari assured them that a working group would be constituted to examine the issues in consultation with former members. He said legitimate concerns would be presented before the relevant forums on a priority basis.

He stressed that the Cantonment belonged to everyone and that its development required collective efforts, mutual consultation and dialogue within the framework of law.

Zahid Bakhtawari also emphasized the need to eliminate bribery and corruption, assuring that legitimate public matters would be addressed transparently, efficiently and promptly. He warned against attempts to obtain unlawful benefits through corrupt practices.

The delegation expressed confidence in his leadership and pledged continued cooperation for the development of the Cantonment and resolution of public issues.

Defence Pact to Strengthen Regional Peace and Stability: Ch. Muhammad Naeem

 **Maryam Siddiqua**

ISLAMABAD: Chief Executive Saviour Foods Ch. Muhammad Naeem has welcomed the defence cooperation agreement among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a significant development that would strengthen regional peace, stability and security.

He said enhanced defence ties among the three brotherly Muslim countries would help safeguard their common security interests and contribute to a balanced and stable regional environment. He stressed that greater cooperation among Muslim countries was particularly important amid the prevailing regional and international challenges.

Ch. Muhammad Naeem said the agreement would further deepen Pakistan’s relations with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. He also appreciated the government and military leadership for maintaining unity on matters of national interest, saying close coordination between political and military leadership was essential for protecting Pakistan’s interests.

He praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for his role in national and foreign affairs, saying Pakistan had effectively projected its position internationally. He reaffirmed Pakistan’s commitment to promoting lasting peace and stability in the region.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:53 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 5:02 pm
Maghrib 7:01 pm
Isha 8:33 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883

Defence pact aims to strengthen security, stability of three countries: Tahir Ashrafi

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council Allama Tahir Ashrafi has said the primary objective of the defence agreement between Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia is to strengthen the defence and stability of the three countries and promote mutual cooperation.

He said the agreement clearly stipulated that an attack on any one of the three countries would be considered an attack on all three.

Speaking on behalf of the International Council for the Honour of the Two Holy Mosques, Allama Ashrafi said that, in view of the prevailing global situation, Saudi Arabia had demonstrated remarkable patience and restraint.

He said Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir had, from the outset, worked to prevent the US-Israel conflict with Iran from turning into a broader confrontation involving the Arab world, the Muslim Ummah and Iran.

He said Israel had sought to provoke a confrontation between the Arab countries and Iran, but the three leaders had played an important role in preventing such a conflict.

CM Punjab says drainage projects have improved monsoon situation

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said drainage projects have brought marked improvement during the monsoon, with rainwater that once remained stagnant for days or weeks now draining within hours.

She said this spirit of public service was inherited from Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, adding that the Vehari-Multan Road construction fulfilled a long-standing right of the area's residents.

She noted that farmers in south Punjab are benefiting from the Kisan Card, while students are gaining from laptops and



Honhaar Scholarships.

The remarks came during a meeting with Vehari's MPAs — Muhammad Yousaf Kaseela, Malik Nosheer Anjum Langrial, Mian Muhammad Saqib Khurshid and Muhammad Naeem Akhtar Khan Bhabbha — where development projects and welfare schemes were discussed.

The MPAs thanked the CM for transforming the decades-old Vehari-Multan

Road into a modern dual-carriageway expressway, calling it a game-changing project with excellent public feedback. They also praised the launch of the electric bus service connecting Vehari to Burewala and Tibba Sultanpur, highlighting free travel for students, women and senior citizens.

They noted mega projects worth around Rs21 billion had been launched for the first time in Burewala, Mailsi and

Vehari tehsils, and said the beautification of Vehari Rail Bazaar had modernized the city's urban culture, with millions of passengers benefiting daily from the Multan-Vehari road.

CM Maryam Nawaz reiterated that the Punjab Development Programme has, for the first time, introduced uniform development across the province, crediting drainage projects for the improved monsoon situation this year.

Seen off

LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari being seen off at Lahore Airport by Acting Governor Punjab Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan and Federal Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control Mohsin Naqvi.



Photo: PID

Punjab Revives Quality Family Theatre with “Friends of 70s” at Alhamra

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari has said the provincial government is reviving decent, quality and purposeful family theatre to provide the public with meaningful entertainment while promoting cultural values.

The Government of Punjab presented the play “Friends of 70s” at Lahore Arts Council, Alhamra, where its opening performance received an enthusiastic response, with a full house and sustained



applause from audiences. Written by Syed Anjum and directed by Waseem Abbas, the play portrays family life, human relationships and social

values of the 1970s.

Azma Bokhari said the production would introduce younger generations to the social and cultural character

of a bygone era while demonstrating that theatre could entertain audiences without compromising dignity and quality. She said the initiative was in line with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision of providing refined and purposeful entertainment.

The play features Honey Albela, Qaiser Piya, Ashraf Khan, Mehr Chaudhry and other performers. “Friends of 70s” will continue at Alhamra Hall 1 until August 14, offering families an opportunity to enjoy meaningful theatrical entertainment.

CM Maryam Nawaz thanks security forces for success in anti-terror operation in Balochistan

Bureau Report

LAHORE,: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has expressed gratitude over the continued success of an operation against terrorists in Balochistan.

The chief minister paid tribute to the professional capabilities of the security forces for killing 15 terrorists and recovering a large quantity of weapons.

PMLF to Celebrate Independence Day with National Spirit

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Milli Labour Federation (PMLF) will celebrate Independence Day across the country with national spirit and enthusiasm, with various rallies, seminars and programmes planned in different cities. The main ceremony will be held in Lahore on August 14 and is expected to be attended by a large number of workers, government and semi-government employees and representatives of labour organizations.

PMLF President Rana Shamshad said independence was a precious national achievement that could be protected through unity, social justice, constitutional supremacy and respect for the rule of law.

He highlighted the vital contribution of workers in industry, agriculture, construction, transport and other sectors to Pakistan's economic development. He stressed that a strong and prosperous country required fair wages, safe working conditions, social security and protection of workers' fundamental rights.

Rana Shamshad said Independence Day provided an opportunity to renew the commitment to building a stable, prosperous and socially just Pakistan. He reaffirmed PMLF's peaceful and democratic struggle for workers' rights and urged the working class to participate actively in Independence Day celebrations.

AIOU to hold first-ever job fair on August 20

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) will organize its first-ever Job Fair on August 20 at the University's Science Block, aiming to connect students and graduates directly with leading public and private sector organizations and provide opportunities for employment, internships, training and professional development.

The event will be held from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will be inaugurated by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood at 9 a.m. Students and graduates from AIOU as well as other universities across the country will be eligible to participate.

Prominent national and international companies, government departments, financial institutions and organizations from IT, telecommunications, banking, education, healthcare, industry and services will establish stalls.

Participants will be able to explore jobs, internships, graduate trainee programmes and career counselling while interacting directly with organizational representatives.

Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said developing professional skills and preparing students for practical challenges remained among the university's key priorities. Dean Faculty of Sciences Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad said the fair would strengthen academia-industry linkages.

The administration advised participants to bring updated CVs.

Crackdown on Vehicles with Illegal LPG Cylinders Launched in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK, AUG. 9: On the directives of Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah, authorities have launched a district-wide crackdown against public vehicles fitted with illegally installed LPG cylinders in violation of safety regulations.

The Regional Transport Authority (RTA), in collaboration with relevant departments, conducted inspections at various locations and impounded around 20 vehicles. Illegal LPG cylinders were removed with the assistance of Civil Defence officials, who ensured necessary safety precautions during the operation.

The administration warned that unsafe LPG installations in public transport posed a serious threat to passengers and citizens. Strict legal action will continue against violators without discrimination.

Deputy Commissioner Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah said protecting citizens' lives and property was the administration's top priority and no negligence would be tolerated. He directed departments to intensify the operation and ensure strict compliance with safety regulations in public transport. He further ordered the uninterrupted continuation of the crackdown and said no concession would be given to those endangering public safety.

UBG President Welcomes Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Defence Agreement

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President of the United Business Group (UBG) Zubair Tufail has welcomed the joint defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as a significant step towards strengthening defence, diplomatic and strategic cooperation among the three brotherly Islamic countries.

In a statement, he said the agreement was a source of hope and satisfaction for the Muslim world and could contribute to regional peace and stability. He noted that the three countries already shared strong historical, religious and cultural ties, while enhanced defence cooperation could further deepen mutual trust and unity.

Zubair Tufail expressed hope that



the pact would promote defence-sector cooperation, technology and experience sharing, joint training programmes and stronger defence capabilities.

He stressed that cooperation should also be expanded in trade, investment, industry, energy and other economic sectors. He called for joint ventures, greater private-sector investment and regular trade and investment forums to strengthen business linkages.

The UBG president said the agreement should not be viewed as being directed against any country but as an initiative for collective security, peace and stability. He expressed hope that the Makkah agreement would further strengthen relations and solidarity among the three countries and the wider Muslim Ummah.

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A Small but Telling Sign of Pakistan’s Economic Diplomacy

Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh’s recent engagements across Chicagoland — a breakfast meeting with the Pak American Chicagoland Chamber of Commerce, discussions with Miracle Salt Works Collective, and a visit to Phoenix Instruments in Naperville — may not generate the same headlines as a summit in Makkah or a trillion-rupee recovery announcement. But taken together, they illustrate something Pakistan’s economic strategy has often lacked: sustained, granular, sector-specific engagement with the diaspora business community that actually moves capital.

The \$200 million joint venture between Miracle Salt Works Collective and the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation is a useful case study. Pink rock salt is not a glamorous export category, but it is precisely the kind of value-added, locally processed product Pakistan has historically struggled to scale — extracting raw resources cheaply while exporting the profitable processing and branding stages elsewhere. A joint venture that keeps crushing, packaging and export development anchored in Pakistan, rather than shipping raw salt for someone else to finish and brand, represents exactly the shift in the value chain that the mineral sector needs if it is to become more than a footnote in the economy.

The visit to Phoenix Instruments points to a similar opportunity in surgical instrument manufacturing, a sector where Pakistan — particularly Sialkot — already has decades of manufacturing credibility but has struggled to move up the value chain into higher-margin, technology-intensive segments. The Ambassador’s call for investment in advanced manufacturing technology and specialized workforce training identifies the real bottleneck accurately: Pakistan doesn’t lack manufacturing capacity in this space, it lacks the technical upgrading that would let it compete for higher-value contracts rather than remaining a low-cost finishing hub.

What deserves particular note is the format of this outreach. Ambassadorial engagement that goes beyond formal government-to-government channels and speaks directly to diaspora entrepreneurs and mid-sized American businesses tends to produce more durable commercial relationships than headline-grabbing summit announcements. The diaspora business community, in cities like Chicago, often has the local market knowledge, capital access and long-term commitment that large-scale institutional investors lack.

That said, one visit does not build an industry, and enthusiasm expressed at a breakfast meeting is not the same as capital deployed. The real test will be whether these engagements are followed by consistent institutional support back home — regulatory clarity, reliable customs processes, and a mineral development framework that gives investors like MSCI confidence their \$200 million commitment will be matched by predictable government partnership.

If Pakistan’s missions abroad can sustain this kind of sector-specific, relationship-driven diplomacy rather than treating it as occasional, symbolic outreach, ventures like the PMDC salt project and Phoenix Instruments’ expansion could become templates rather than exceptions — proof that patient, targeted economic diplomacy can deliver results that summit declarations alone cannot.

The Mecca Defence Pact: The Threats Behind the Alliance

The Mecca Joint Defence Agreement signed by Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan is being described as a Muslim version of NATO. Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan himself said its collective-defence clause is technically similar to NATO’s Article 5: an armed attack on one member will be treated as an attack on all. Yet most commentary has concentrated on the pact’s wording, its possible expansion and whether it is aimed at Iran or Israel. The more important question has received less attention: what threat does each signatory actually perceive?

Without answering that question, analysis of the agreement remains incomplete. Alliances do not acquire meaning merely from ceremonial signatures. Their real character is determined by the dangers their members fear, the capabilities they contribute and the circumstances in which they are prepared to act.

For Saudi Arabia, the immediate security environment is deeply paradoxical. The kingdom has long relied upon the United States, but the presence of American forces and facilities across the Gulf can also attract retaliation whenever Washington uses regional territory or infrastructure in military operations against Iran.

Tehran has repeatedly maintained that its quarrel is not with Gulf societies as such, but with military threats launched from or supported through their territories. Whether one accepts Iran’s justifi-

cation or not, the underlying dilemma is real: foreign protection can simultaneously become a source of exposure.

This raises a difficult question. If foreign bases had not facilitated attacks against Iran, would Tehran have attacked Gulf countries on the same scale? The answer cannot be proven, but the question exposes Saudi Arabia’s strategic vulnerability. Riyadh wants protec-

tion without remaining permanently hostage to decisions made by an external guarantor. Threats from the Houthis in Yemen and Iran-aligned armed groups in Iraq remain serious, particularly for oil facilities, desalination plants, shipping and civilian infrastructure. Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia has spent heavily on modern aircraft, missiles, surveillance systems and air defence. These dangers alone do not fully explain the need for an Article 5-style pact with Türkiye and nuclear-armed Pakistan.

The wider concern is Israel’s expanding military reach and the fear that no regional state can assume it will remain permanently outside Israeli calculations. The “Greater Israel” project is not merely a slogan invented by Israel’s critics. It is a documented ideological and political current rooted in expansionist interpretations of biblical territory, including the most extreme vision of land stretching

from the Nile to the Euphrates, and in revisionist Zionist ideas of sovereignty on both sides of the Jordan River.

Israel’s wars and military operations across Gaza, Lebanon, Syria and elsewhere have intensified regional fears that its use of force and territorial ambitions are becoming geographically unconstrained. Because the most expansive interpretation of Greater Israel encompasses territory belonging to several Arab states, including Saudi Arabia, Riyadh has legitimate reasons to treat this ideology and Israel’s growing regional reach as a long-term strategic threat.

The Mecca agreement therefore creates strategic depth, reduces Saudi Arabia’s exclusive dependence on Washington and strengthens the kingdom’s leadership position in the Muslim world.

Türkiye enters the pact with a different threat map. It possesses NATO’s second-largest army, an increasingly sophisticated defence industry, formidable drone capabilities, warship and helicopter production, and substantial operational experience in Syria, Iraq and the eastern Mediterranean.

Kurdish militancy and instability along Türkiye’s southern borders remain persistent threats, but Ankara is largely capable of managing these challenges without Pakistani or Saudi military inter-

vention.

The more consequential concern is Israel. Turkish and Israeli rhetoric has become increasingly hostile, while their strategic interests collide in Syria, Gaza and the broader eastern Mediterranean. Türkiye’s conventional size gives it considerable strength, but Israel is widely understood to possess nuclear weapons, while Türkiye does not. This creates a dangerous asymmetry at the highest level of escalation.

Pakistan’s participation therefore adds deterrent weight, but it is essential not to overstate what has formally been agreed. The published language does not establish an explicit Pakistani nuclear umbrella over Türkiye or Saudi Arabia. Nor does it automatically commit Islamabad to nuclear retaliation.

Its value at this stage lies in strategic ambiguity. Any adversary contemplating extreme escalation must now consider the possibility of a broader response involving a nuclear-armed partner. That uncertainty itself can reinforce deterrence, provided consultation mechanisms, command arrangements and red lines are eventually clarified.

Pakistan’s principal state-based threat remains India. Its other challenges—including attacks linked to the Pakistani Taliban, militancy operating from Afghan territory and insurgency in Balochistan—are grave but fall mainly within the domain of counterterrorism and internal security.

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

The AJK Unrest

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

electricity and flour prices, abolishing refugee ministries, reducing the number of ministers, halving the property transfer tax, completing the Rathwa Hariyam Bridge, withdrawing FIRs and legal cases, compensating the families of those killed and 56 injured people, providing a government job to Azhar’s brother, approving a Rs. 5.5 billion PC-1 for MRI facilities, approving a Rs. 9 billion PC-1 to improve the power transmission system, applying to make Azad Kashmir Bank a scheduled bank, restoring the health card, establishing two new education boards, including the Mansehra, Muzaffarabad, and

Mangla expressways in CPEC, announcing Mirpur Airport and beginning feasibility work, abolishing the quota system, merging government departments, approving e-tendering for electricity meters, and approving a 30 KVA electricity supply for schools and colleges. The remaining demand for four tunnels and bridges is acknowledged, but immediate implementation is impossible because one tunnel alone is estimated to cost around Rs. 10 billion while the total development budget of Azad Kashmir is less than Rs. 40 billion, requiring long-term planning, feasibility studies, environmental assessments, and substantial financial resources.

After the approval of numerous demands, continued insistence on the remaining demand and the blockade of the region is questioned as unreasonable. The banned Joint Action Committee is involved in abandoning peaceful protest and preparing for violent confrontation by positioning armed teams with SMG guns and military-grade binoculars to monitor security forces, while one of its leaders reportedly acknowledged the supply of US-made M4 rifles to troublemakers. The group is further involved in spreading fake and AI-generated videos and posts to manipulate public opinion and manufacture support. Its activities are responsible

for disrupting businesses, closing schools, creating insecurity, and using the Rawalakot sit-in stage to deliver speeches against Pakistan, the state, the Pakistan Army, and public institutions. Rather than participating in elections and pursuing legislative change through democratic means, the banned JAAC is involved in rejecting the electoral process and embracing violence, while the people of AJK are participating in election campaigns and democratic politics, with strong voter turnout has been seen as support for constitutional democracy and rejection of confrontation, violence, and disorder.

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

The banned JAAC is doing violence in AJK and has made an environment of fear and distrust in AJK, turning neighbor against neighbor and destroying the social fabric of the community. The banned JAAC has transformed into a security risk for the State and the country, a threat that must be dealt with decisively to protect the territorial integrity and national security of Pakistan. They have weapons, and they

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Pakistan: Rising in Global Standing Amidst Economic Hardship

Nations are often judged by the size of their economies, their military budgets, or the strength of their currency. Yet true influence in international affairs is not measured solely in gold or arms. It is measured in trust, in diplomatic skill, and in the quiet ability to step forward when others step back. Pakistan’s recent role on the world stage offers a striking example of this truth. Here is a nation facing well-documented economic challenges, yet one whose global standing has risen notably in recent times. It is a paradox that defies standard textbooks — and a story worth telling.

Pakistan has long faced unfair and one-sided accusations on the international stage. Some have painted the country with a broad brush, labelling it in ways that ignore its immense sacrifices and its consistent struggle against forces that threaten regional and global peace. In a firm yet measured manner, Islamabad has corrected this narrative. It has pointed out that Pakistan itself has been among the first and worst victims of the very challenges it has been accused of spreading. This is not defiance — it is clarity. It sends a powerful message: lasting peace comes through mutual respect and shared effort, not through blame or bias.

Consider the critical situation in the Strait of Hormuz, one of the world’s most vital shipping lanes. At a time when global trade was gripped by uncertainty, when vessels hesitated to sail, and when major powers remained hesitant to guarantee safe passage — Pakistan stood firm. Ships sailing under Pakistani protection moved

through those troubled waters safely. In that moment, the world saw something important: that reliability is more valuable than wealth. Pakistan demonstrated that trust is the currency that never loses its value, even when markets fluctuate.

In international relations, a promise kept is worth more than a loan given. When Pakistan reassured the United Arab Emirates regarding the repayment of three billion dollars in financial support, it was about far more than meeting a financial obligation. It was a demonstration of character. In a world where agreements are too often broken or renegotiated when convenient, Pakistan showed that honour and commitment remain the foundation of true friendship between nations.

Perhaps most notably, Pakistan’s diplomatic engagement secured a vital two-week window for de-escalation from the highest levels in Washington. This was no small achievement. It required clear reasoning, steady nerves, and the courage to speak truth to power — and to be heard. It proved that influence is not granted by status alone, but is earned through credibility and the consistent pursuit of peace.

In another landmark achievement, Pakistan has successfully forged a landmark defence agreement between itself, Turkey, and Saudi Arabia — a partnership that stands as one of the most significant diplomatic milestones in recent times. This historic accord brings together three major nations with shared interests in regional security, stability, and mutual defence. Its benefits are far-reaching:

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ICCI President lauds Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh as ‘Asset to the Nation’

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mahmood, has praised Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh for his longstanding services to Pakistan's business community, describing him as a credible, honest and dependable figure.

Speaking in an interview, Mahmood recalled Sheikh's engagement with the business community during his time on the Standing Committee on Finance, noting that he personally visited protesting business representatives, listened to their grievances, and encouraged resolution through dialogue and institutional forums.

Mahmood particularly highlighted Sheikh's efforts on FBR-related issues, saying he accompanied business representatives to meetings with FBR chairmen to raise their concerns. He said Sheikh's contributions are recognized not just in Islamabad and Rawalpindi but across Pakistan.

He also appreciated the Board of Investment's ongoing policy reforms,



calling them aligned with the Prime Minister's vision of promoting ease of doing business.

Describing Sheikh as "an asset to the nation," Mahmood said his dual expe-

rience as a businessman and public representative gives him a strong understanding of private sector challenges. He praised Sheikh's accessibility, integrity and credibility across polit-

ical and business circles, adding that his continued engagement with the private sector enables him to meaningfully contribute to Pakistan's economic progress.

Makkah Defence Pact important step towards unity of Muslim Ummah: Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Chairman SM Group of Industries, renowned industrialist and Member National Export Development Board and Board of Investment, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, has welcomed the historic defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, describing it as an important step towards unity of the Muslim Ummah, regional peace and stability.

In a statement, he said the agreement reflected the commitment of the three countries to strengthen collective security and expand defence cooper-



ation. He termed the provision that aggression against one country would be considered aggression against all three as particularly significant.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar stressed that lasting regional peace required all countries, including Iran and Yemen, to enjoy sovereignty, dignity and peaceful coexistence. He said regional disputes should be resolved through dialogue, mutual respect and diplomatic efforts rather than prolonged tension and instability.

He observed that peace and stability would create greater opportunities for trade, investment, industry and

employment, ultimately strengthening the economies of Pakistan and other regional countries.

He said Pakistan's longstanding brotherly relations with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye would be further strengthened through the agreement. He added that the pact reflected mutual trust, solidarity and shared responsibility.

The industrialist expressed hope that the Makkah agreement would promote peace and security while opening new avenues for stronger economic and bilateral cooperation across the region.

Pakistan Must Integrate Ports with Economic Zones and Transport Networks: Iftikhar Malik

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Former SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry President Iftikhar Ali Malik has stressed the need to integrate Pakistan's ports with special economic zones, road and rail networks, and warehousing facilities to create an efficient logistics ecosystem.

In a statement, he said modern seaports could reduce logistics costs, boost export competitiveness, attract foreign investment and generate employment. He noted that ports have evolved beyond cargo handling into integrated logistics and industrial hubs that support international trade and



economic growth.

Malik urged policymakers to promote public-private partnerships for maritime infrastructure modernization and adopt advanced technologies, including automation, artificial intelligence and smart cargo management systems. He also called for sustainable port development, environmental protection and digital transformation.

He said Pakistan's strategic location offers significant potential to become a regional trade and transit hub. Upgrading ports, customs systems and multimodal transport networks, he added, could help Pakistan expand exports and strengthen its role in global commerce.

Pakistan's Mineral Wealth Can Boost Exports, Technology and Employment: Saif Ur Rehman



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman has said Pakistan's mineral wealth offers significant potential to attract advanced technologies, diversify exports and create employment, provided these resources are managed as long-term national assets.

Speaking to a delegation of traders, he stressed that future agreements involving critical minerals must undergo rigorous legal, financial and technical scrutiny, with transparency as the guiding principle. He said contract terms, fiscal implications and obligations should be presented before Parliament to ensure political legitimacy and reduce the risk of future disputes.

Saif Ur Rehman emphasized that local communities in mineral-rich but underdeveloped areas must benefit through employment, skills training, infrastructure, social investment and economic opportunities.

He also cautioned the government against rushing into agreements solely due to US interest in Pakistan's critical minerals. He urged authorities to actively attract Chinese investors as well, saying competition between US and Chinese firms could secure better commercial terms, technology transfer and greater domestic value addition.

Pakistan, New Zealand hold key political, trade talks in Wellington

ISLAMABAD: The 5th round of Pakistan-New Zealand Political Consultations and the 3rd round of the Pakistan-New Zealand Joint Trade Committee (JTC) meetings were held in Wellington, marking a significant step in deepening bilateral engagement between the two countries.

The Political Consultations were co-chaired by Ambassador Dr. Syed Ali Asad Gillani, Additional Foreign Secretary (Asia Pacific) of Pakistan, and Grahame Morton, Deputy Secretary of the Americas and Asia Group at New Zealand's Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), the Foreign Office Spokesperson, Saturday, said in a press release.

During the meeting, both sides conducted a comprehensive review of bilateral relations and explored avenues to strengthen cooperation across a wide spectrum of areas of mutual interest, including high-level exchanges, economic development, science and technology, education, counterterrorism, transnational crime, and people-to-people ties.

The delegations also exchanged views on regional and international developments and agreed to enhance coordination within multilateral forums.

Ambassador Gillani briefed the New Zealand side on Pakistan's efforts to de-escalate tensions in the Middle East, as well as the regional situation in South Asia, including the situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) and India's continued violations of the Indus Waters Treaty.

Deputy Secretary Morton acknowledged Pakistan's constructive role in the Middle East peace process.

Separately, the 3rd round of the Pakistan-New Zealand Joint Trade Committee meeting was also held. The Pakistani delegation was led by Jawad Paul Khawaja, Secretary of the Ministry of Commerce, while the New Zealand delegation was again headed by Grahame Morton.

Discussions under the JTC focused on bolstering bilateral trade and investment, with particular emphasis on agriculture, livestock, information technology, education, and services.

Both sides deliberated on improving market access and enhancing cooperation in sustainable agriculture, including exploring technical collaboration in wool production and plant protection. Institutional mechanisms to further economic cooperation were also discussed.

"A key outcome of the meetings was the signing of the Education Cooperation Arrangement between Pakistan and New Zealand, which is expected to significantly deepen collaboration in the education sector," it was further added.

The spokesperson said the overall discussions provided an opportunity to assess progress in bilateral ties, identify new areas for partnership, and reaffirm the shared commitment to a forward-looking and mutually beneficial relationship.



Impacts of Technological Advancement on Primary Education

Primary education lays the foundation for a child's intellectual, emotional, and social development.

It is during these formative years that children acquire basic literacy, numeracy, communication skills, and values that shape their future learning. In recent years, technological advancement has transformed the educational landscape, introducing innovative tools and teaching methods that have changed how knowledge is delivered and acquired. Digital devices, artificial intelligence, educational applications, interactive learning platforms, and online resources are increasingly becoming part of classroom instruction. For Pakistan, where improving the quality of primary education remains a national priority, technology offers both remarkable opportunities and significant challenges.

Traditionally, primary education depended largely on textbooks, blackboards, and teacher-centered instruction. Although these methods continue to be relevant, modern technology has expanded the possibilities of classroom learning. Smart boards, multimedia presentations, educational videos, and interactive software have made lessons more engaging and easier for young learners to understand. Visual and audio learning resources capture children's attention and help explain

complex concepts through simple demonstrations, making education more enjoyable and effective.

One of the greatest contributions of technology is its ability to create interactive learning environments. Young children naturally learn through observation, exploration, and participation. Educational games, digital quizzes, animations, and virtual activities encourage active involvement rather than passive memorization. Students become participants in the learning process, improving their curiosity, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Such approaches are particularly valuable at the primary level, where maintaining students' interest is essential for effective learning.

Technology also supports personalized learning. Every child has unique abilities, learning styles, and academic needs. Some students learn quickly, while others require additional practice and guidance. Modern educational platforms use adaptive learning systems that adjust lessons according to students' performance and progress. This enables teachers to identify learning gaps and provide timely support, ensuring that no child is left behind.

Artificial intelligence is further enhancing primary education by assisting teachers in lesson planning, classroom assessment, and student

progress monitoring. AI-powered educational tools can generate worksheets, quizzes, reading materials, and personalized activities within minutes. Teachers can spend less time on repetitive administrative tasks and more time interacting with students, mentoring them, and addressing individual learning needs. However, AI should complement, not replace, the professional judgment and human connection that teachers provide.

Technology has also expanded access to educational resources. Students and teachers can explore digital libraries, online encyclopedias, educational websites, and virtual classrooms that provide information far beyond traditional textbooks. This access broadens children's knowledge and encourages independent learning. During emergencies such as the COVID-19 pandemic, online education demonstrated how technology could ensure continuity of learning despite school closures.

Technology has improved communication between schools and parents through mobile applications and online platforms. Regular updates on students' progress and attendance

encourage greater parental involvement and strengthen support for children's learning.

Despite these benefits, technological advancement also presents several challenges. One of the most significant issues is unequal access to digital resources. Many schools in rural Pakistan lack reliable electricity, internet connectivity, computers, and digital learning devices. Students from economically disadvantaged families often cannot afford smartphones, tablets, or laptops. This digital divide creates educational inequalities that must be addressed through inclusive policies and infrastructure development.

Another concern is excessive dependence on technology. While digital learning offers numerous advantages, excessive screen time may negatively affect children's physical health, eyesight, attention span, and social interaction. Young learners require balanced educational experiences that include physical activities, outdoor play, creative arts, and face-to-face communication. Technology should support, not dominate, the learning process.

Teachers also face challenges in adapting to rapidly changing tech-

nologies. Some educators may lack adequate digital literacy or confidence in using modern educational tools. Without proper training, even the best technological resources may remain underutilized. Therefore, regular teacher training and technical support are essential for successful technology integration.

Cybersecurity and online safety have become increasingly important concerns. Children using digital platforms may encounter inappropriate content, cyberbullying, misinformation, or privacy risks. Schools and parents must work together to educate children about responsible internet use, digital citizenship, and online ethics. Safe learning environments should extend beyond physical classrooms into digital spaces.

Another challenge is maintaining the human dimension of education. Primary education is not solely about academic learning; it also involves emotional support, character building, moral education, and social development. Teachers play irreplaceable roles as mentors, role models, and caregivers. No technological system can fully replicate empathy, encouragement, and personal interaction. Therefore, technology should always serve as a teaching aid rather than a substitute for meaningful teacher-student relationships.

To maximize the benefits of techno-

logical advancement, Pakistan needs comprehensive educational policies that promote equitable access to digital learning. Investment in school infrastructure, affordable internet services, teacher training, and locally developed educational content should become national priorities. Public-private partnerships can further accelerate digital transformation in primary education while ensuring that technological innovations remain accessible to all learners.

In conclusion, technological advancement has profoundly influenced primary education by making learning more interactive, personalized, and accessible. It has empowered teachers with innovative tools, expanded educational opportunities, and strengthened communication between schools and families. At the same time, challenges such as unequal access, digital literacy, cybersecurity, and excessive screen time require careful attention. The future of primary education lies in achieving a balanced integration of technology with human-centered teaching. For Pakistan, embracing educational technology while preserving the essential role of teachers can create an inclusive, innovative, and future-ready education system that prepares young learners to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

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Dr. T. M. Malik

IS Intellectual Perspectives

Katchery Bazaar Beautification Program

How One Officer’s Vision Turned a Neglected Marketplace into Faisalabad’s Proud New Landmark



Professor Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif

For decades, Faisalabad’s historic Katchery Bazaar stood as a fading memory of what it once was. This was never merely a market-place — it was a living symbol of the city’s intellectual, literary, social, and cultural heritage, a place where commerce and community intertwined, where generations of Faisalabad’s citizens gathered, traded, and built the social fabric of everyday life. Yet years of neglect had dimmed its character, its narrow lanes crowded, its infrastructure aging, and its once-proud identity slowly fading into the background of a rapidly expanding city. Today, that story has been rewritten. Completed at a cost of Rs 310 million, the Katchery Bazaar Beautification Program has emerged as a defining example of urban renewal, cultural revival, and forward-looking city planning — and, more importantly, as a testament to what determined, hands-on leadership can achieve when vision is matched with execution.

What makes this transformation particularly remarkable is the speed and precision with which it was carried out. Large-scale urban renewal projects in Pakistan are often plagued by delays, cost overruns, and half-finished work that lingers for years. Katchery Bazaar’s revival broke that pattern entirely, offering a rare example of a public project completed on time, within budget, and to a standard that has drawn favorable comparisons to some of the world’s most celebrated marketplaces.

Executed in just four months, the project delivered a modern security system, comprehensive infrastructure upgrades, restored drainage networks, new electrification works, lush green belts, elegant landscaping, colorfully illuminated fountains, and uniformly redesigned shopfronts that gave the bazaar a cohesive, dignified identity. Rare ornamental plants and carefully chosen greenery now frame the market-place, while at night, its vibrant lighting evokes the grandeur of Istanbul’s famed Grand Bazaar and Peshawar’s iconic Sadar Squares — a striking transformation for a market that had long been overlooked.

Shopkeepers who once operated out of mismatched, deteriorating storefronts now trade beneath a unified architectural facade that lends the bazaar a sense of order and pride. Visitors arriving in the evening find a market-place transformed: strings of colored lights reflecting off fountains, walkways free of the clutter and disrepair that once defined the area, and a general atmosphere that feels less like a neglected

commercial strip and more like a destination in its own right. For a city long associated primarily with its textile industry, Katchery Bazaar now offers Faisalabad something it has needed for years — a public space that residents can be genuinely proud to walk through.

Katchery Bazaar was once one of the city’s most distinguished cultural, social, and literary hubs. The iconic Jeloz Hotel, Jhanday Ka Hotel, and Cosmos Hotel were not merely commercial establishments; they served as renowned meeting places for writers, poets, intellectuals, businessmen, and people of refined literary and cultural taste. This heritage forms an integral part of Katchery Bazaar’s cultural memory, and its revival is inseparable from the revival of that intellectual and literary life the market once nurtured.

The scope of investment extended well beyond Katchery Bazaar. Main Bazaar Dijkot, Mochi Bazaar, Chak Jhumrah, and 66 Futta Bazaar, Mansoorabad collectively received development funding, bringing the total spent across these beautification and urban development projects to Rs 920 million — a figure that reflects the Punjab government’s broader commitment to urban development across the province.

The recent beautification, restoration, and urban transformation of Katchery Bazaar have elevated it to a standard comparable with the cele-



Mr. Imran Hamid Sheikh, Commissioner Faisalabad

brated historic shopping streets and café districts of Europe and the United States. Much as the great historic markets of the world’s leading cities have retained their old-world charm while embracing modern comfort, Katchery Bazaar now carries that same spirit — a historic marketplace made new without losing what made it meaningful.

Under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government has placed urban aesthetics and civic facilitation firmly among its top priorities. The Katchery Bazaar Beautification Program stands as clear evidence that historic city centers can be modernized to meet contemporary needs without sacrificing the traditional identity that makes them meaningful to the people who use them every day.

The Man Behind the Master Plan

Every great transformation has an architect, and for Katchery Bazaar, that architect was former Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad, Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir. It was he who, as the Principal Architect of the Katchery Bazaar Beautification Program, conceived and prepared the project’s comprehensive master plan — and then, crucially, saw it through to successful completion on the ground. This was not simply adminis-



Mr. Nauman Siddique, Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad

trative oversight; it was hands-on vision translated into brick, light, and green space.

Under Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir’s effective and determined leadership, the project became the first landmark achievement of its kind under the Faisalabad Vision for urban beautification and redevelopment — a success story that has since set a benchmark for other cities to follow. His foresight did not stop at Katchery Bazaar. The same planning discipline and hands-on execution extended to the beautification of Mochi Bazaar and Main Bazaar Dijkot, both of which now form part of the city’s broader cultural and aesthetic revival.

What distinguishes Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir’s contribution is not simply that a master plan was drawn up on paper, but that it was carried through, phase by phase, to real and visible completion. Many urban beautification schemes falter precisely at this stage — plans are approved, funds are allocated, and yet execution stalls amid bureaucratic delay or shifting priorities. Katchery Bazaar avoided that fate because its Principal Architect remained personally invested in the details: the placement of every fountain, the uniformity of every shopfront, the timing of every phase of construction. It



Mr. Raja Jehangir Anwar, Former Commissioner Faisalabad

is this combination of design vision and disciplined execution that transformed Katchery Bazaar from a proposal into a landmark, and it is this same combination that other officers across Punjab would do well to study and replicate.

This success, however, was not achieved in isolation. It was built on the strong institutional backing of former Commissioner Faisalabad, Raja Jehangir Anwar, whose visionary patronage created the space in which Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir’s technical expertise and practical leadership could flourish. Together, the two officers — one providing strategic direction from the top, the other delivering disciplined execution on the ground — breathed new life into these historic marketplaces. Their partnership stands as a model of what capable, committed public administration can accomplish when vision at the top is matched by execution on the ground.

Carrying the Vision Forward

Today, that same spirit of purposeful leadership continues under the current Commissioner Faisalabad, Imran Hamid Sheikh, and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique. Both officers have taken up the mantle of Faisalabad’s development vision, working not only to sustain the projects handed down to them but to expand this momentum to markets across the city. Their commitment is visible in the field itself — both officers are regularly seen personally monitoring beautification and restoration work, ensuring that development projects move forward on a war footing rather than remaining bound to paperwork and delay.

This kind of field presence matters more than it might first appear. Public trust in development projects is often eroded not by a lack of funding but by a lack of visible, accountable oversight — citizens see announcements made and ribbons cut, but rarely see the officers responsible actually walking the site, checking on progress, and holding contractors to account. By making themselves visible in the very markets they are working to restore, Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique are sending a clear signal that Faisalabad’s development agenda is not a one-time announcement but an ongoing commitment.

This continuity of leadership — from Raja Jehangir Anwar’s founding vision, through Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir’s master planning and execution, to the present efforts of Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique — reflects something Faisalabad has needed for a long time: administrative consistency in pursuit of civic improvement. Each phase has built upon the last, rather than starting over, and the results across the city’s bazaars speak for themselves.

It is worth noting how rare this kind of continuity is in public administration, where officers are frequently transferred before projects reach maturity, and successors often abandon or redesign their predecessors’ plans rather than build upon them. Faisalabad’s bazaar



Cap R Nadeem Nasir, Former Deputy Commissioner Faisalabad

beautification story stands out precisely because it has avoided this trap. Rather than treating each change in leadership as a reason to start over, successive officers have chosen to honor and extend the groundwork laid before them — a quiet but significant achievement in a system where institutional memory is too often lost with every transfer order.

A Respectful Appeal: Beyond the Bazaars

I would like to make a respectful appeal to Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique. The same passion and precision being directed toward the city’s bazaars deserves to be extended to Faisalabad’s historic parks, gardens, and green belts. Kaleem Shaheed Park, the green spaces surrounding the Ghanta Ghar (Clock Tower), Bagh-e-Jinnah, and the city’s various green belts were once equally defining features of Faisalabad’s identity and beauty. Today, they wait quietly for the same attention and restoration that has transformed the bazaars.

These green spaces are not incidental to the city’s character — they are, in many ways, its lungs. As Faisalabad continues to grow and its commercial districts expand, the pressure on its remaining parks and gardens only increases. A city that beautifies its markets while allowing

its parks to decline risks solving one problem while quietly creating another. The same administrative energy, the same field-based monitoring, and the same commitment to visible, timely completion that defined the Katchery Bazaar project could, if applied to these green spaces, restore an equally important dimension of Faisalabad’s civic life.

Should this renewal extend to the city’s parks, gardens, and green belts alongside its markets, Faisalabad stands to become not only a cleaner, greener, and more modern city, but one that plays a meaningful role in environmental preservation and overall civic beauty — a gift worth leaving for generations of Faisalabad’s citizens still to come.

A Further Appeal: The Case for a Lyallpur Tea House

Alongside this appeal for the city’s green spaces, I would also respectfully urge Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique to consider establishing a “Lyallpur Tea House” adjacent to the Lyallpur Museum, the District Council, and the Central Library. Such an institution would serve as a vibrant literary and cultural centre, providing writers, poets, scholars, young authors, artists, and intellectuals with a dignified forum for dialogue, creativity, and cultural engagement — a modern successor to the role once played by the Jeloz, Jhanday Ka, and Cosmos Hotels in the city’s intellectual life.

A dedicated space of this kind, situated alongside the Lyallpur Museum, the District Council, and the Central Library, would help preserve and promote Faisalabad’s rich historical and cultural heritage while providing a meeting place for writers, scholars, students, artists, and the wider community — closing the circle between the city’s physical renewal and its historic identity as a home for its thinkers and writers.

A Legacy Built on Continuity

Tradition endures, and it is through that continuity that lives and cities are transformed. The true architects of the Katchery Bazaar Beautification Program were former Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jehangir Anwar and Principal Architect Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir, who together prepared the project’s comprehensive master plan. What followed — the effective, on-ground implementation of that plan — was carried out under the determined leadership of former Deputy Commissioner Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir himself. Together, this partnership produced the first landmark project of its kind under the Faisalabad Vision, establishing a model that other cities across Punjab would do well to emulate.

Today, as Commissioner Imran Hamid Sheikh and Deputy Commissioner Nauman Siddique carry that vision forward, expanding beautification and restoration efforts to markets across the city, their active, field-based leadership offers reassurance that Faisalabad’s development story is far from finished. If that same energy is now turned toward the city’s parks and green spaces — and toward the revival of its literary and cultural institutions — Faisalabad will not just reclaim its past beauty — it will secure a greener, more graceful, and more intellectually vibrant future for all who call it home.

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Artificial Intelligence and the Philosophy of Electric Thirst

The afternoon of Tammuz had reached its incandescent zenith. The sun hung above the horizon like a question written in fire upon the forehead of the heavens, while across the Indus Valley waves of heat appeared to rise from the very earth. Within the cities, thousands upon thousands of air-conditioning units drew incessantly upon the national electricity grid, as though invisible hands were tightening their grip upon its already overstrained arteries. The transmission towers stood in mute composure, yet the current passing through them seemed to carry the inaudible murmur of an approaching anxiety.

"Have you ever reflected," one asked, gazing towards the blazing sky, "upon the strange paradox that man, having subjected electricity to his command, still finds himself vulnerable before the very force he has harnessed?"

"Perhaps," came the reply, "because we have learned to understand power, but have failed to understand the architecture of the system through which power must be ordered."

"Do you mean, then, that power and system are two different realities?"

"They are distinct, yet inseparable. Once power is severed from order, a blessing may become an ordeal."

"Then tell me: what, precisely, confronts us today? Is it heat? Is it an insufficiency of electricity? Or is it the inexorable expansion of demand?"

"None of these, taken in isolation, reaches the heart of the matter. The deeper question is not merely how much electricity can be generated, but when it is required, where it is required, and what kind of demand is seeking to consume it."

"Can a nation, then, possess considerable generating capacity and yet remain incapable of supplying electricity reliably?"

"Certainly."

"How can such a contradiction exist?"

"Because aggregate national generation and dependable electricity at a particular place and at a particular hour are not synonymous realities. Transmission capacity, substation capability, power quality, geographical distribution, temporal fluctuations in demand all these determine whether electricity exists merely as a statistical quantity or as an actually deliverable resource."

"Then is two thousand megawatts merely a number?"

"Separated from the architecture of

the system, yes."

"And when regarded within that architecture?"

"It becomes a question."

"What question?"

"When shall those two thousand megawatts be required? Where shall they be consumed? What forms of computation shall demand them? And what shall occur when the national grid, already under severe seasonal pressure, is confronted with this additional and potentially persistent burden?"

"So the real question is not whether Pakistan can nominally allocate two thousand megawatts to artificial intelligence and Bitcoin mining, but whether it possesses the wisdom to integrate this emergent demand into its electrical system without destabilising the system itself"

"Now you have begun to approach the substance of the matter."

"But are all data centres alike?"

"If you suppose that every computational activity possesses an identical electrical temperament, then you have encountered the problem only at its surface."

"What distinction lies beneath it?"

"There are digital services for which even a momentary interruption may prove intolerable. Financial platforms, instantaneous communications, and numerous artificial-intelligence applications operating directly before end-users require continuity and reliability of supply. Their electrical demand cannot simply be extinguished whenever the grid approaches a condition of stress."

"And the remainder?"

"The remainder is more subtle. The training of artificial-intelligence models, extensive forms of data processing, and certain other computational workloads may possess temporal flexibility. They can, under appropriate technological arrangements, be transferred towards periods of lower grid demand, distributed geographically, or temporarily suspended at predetermined stages."

"Then electricity demand itself can be governed?"

"That is precisely where prudence begins."

"What have we traditionally done?"

"We have generally treated demand as an immutable destiny and generation as its sole conceivable answer."

"And you maintain that demand itself can be disciplined?"

"Yes. That is one of the cardinal principles of a mature energy strategy."

"Has any country attempted such a

discipline?"

"Look towards Ireland."

"Why Ireland?"

"Because Ireland offers a warning written not in theory but in experience. Data centres there expanded to such an extent that their electricity consumption reached approximately twenty-three per cent of national usage—an amount approaching the combined consumption of the country's residential households."

"And what followed?"

"Recognition. It became evident that large data centres were not merely investment projects but powerful, enduring consumers entering directly into the anatomy of the national energy system. Consequently, new connections increasingly came to be evaluated in relation to demand flexibility and the capacity of operators to manage their electrical requirements."

"Then Pakistan could learn from that experience?"

"If we possess the wisdom to employ foresight before crisis, rather than wisdom born only after catastrophe, certainly."

"Do we possess the institutional foundations necessary for such an undertaking?"

"We do."

"Which foundations?"

"A framework of cloud governance and accreditation already exists, and the relevant institutional authorities possess the capacity to prescribe standards and compliance requirements."

"Then where lies the deficiency?"

"At the point where the existing framework ceases to look beyond conventional digital concerns."

"Meaning?"

"Cybersecurity, service availability, and infrastructural resilience receive attention; yet the deeper questions of energy efficiency, water consumption, environmental performance, and integration with the wider power system have not yet acquired the comprehensive centrality they shall inevitably require."

"And has this deficiency itself been acknowledged?"

"Yes. The Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunications has identified the gap and proposed the development of a national sustainability framework."

"Then what ought to be done?"



Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

"The concept must be liberated from the realm of paper and transformed into an enforceable architecture of policy."

"By what means?"

"Large data-centre projects should be required to submit credible projections of their electricity and water requirements. Their approval should not depend merely upon aggregate national generation capacity but upon the actual capability of the local grid, transmission network, and substations to accommodate them. Electricity tariffs should not be reduced merely because the consumer is larger; rather, they should recognise demonstrable efficiency, flexibility of demand, and responsible consumption."

"Would such regulation not discourage investors?"

"Does the serious investor seek only inexpensive electricity?"

"Then what does the serious investor seek?"

"Reliability. Predictability. Long-term energy security. Adequate cooling infrastructure. Environmental compliance. Regulatory stability. In short, an ecosystem in which capital may remain secure because the infrastructure upon which it depends is itself sustainable."

"Then sound regulation is not necessarily hostile to investment?"

"No. When transparent, proportionate, predictable, and universally applicable, regulation does not repel serious investment; it protects it."

"But why must all this be undertaken now? Could it not be corrected later?"

The other paused before answering. "That," he said at length, "is precisely the illusion by which nations are often compelled to purchase, at exorbitant cost, the lessons they might have obtained through foresight."

"You mean that time itself is a national resource?"

"More than that. Timely prudence is a form of national capital."

"And what happens if we make the wrong decisions today?"

"Then tomorrow's correction will not consist merely in altering a paragraph of policy. By then, buildings will have been erected, grid connections established, investments committed, and flawed arrangements transformed into precedents. What is temporary in policy may become permanent in infrastructure."

"Then why is the first generation of

artificial-intelligence infrastructure so consequential?"

"Because the first generation establishes the grammar by which subsequent generations shall speak. Today's location becomes tomorrow's geographical precedent; today's efficiency standard becomes tomorrow's norm; today's grid connection becomes tomorrow's constraint."

"So we must not merely make artificial intelligence intelligent; we must make the system into which it enters intelligent as well."

"Now you have grasped the heart of the matter."

"And if the system itself lacks intelligence?"

"Then even the most sophisticated algorithm will remain imprisoned within the limitations of the system that sustains it."

"Then what, ultimately, is development? More electricity? More data? More computational capacity?"

"No."

"What, then?"

"Development is the establishment of a just equilibrium between resources, necessity, and the future."

"Equilibrium?"

"Yes—the equilibrium evoked in the Qur'anic conception of *mīzān*: 'And the heaven He raised, and established the balance, that you transgress not in the balance; The order of creation is not sustained by force alone. It is sustained by proportion.'"

Silence followed.

After a while, the question returned, more quietly this time.

"Then is Pakistan's real problem today two thousand megawatts?"

"No."

"What, then, is the problem?"

"Whether we shall regard electricity merely as a numerical quantity, or understand it as a living system whose elements must remain in equilibrium."

"And artificial intelligence?"

"It is a new trial imposed upon that system."

"And success?"

"Success does not consist in constructing the greatest number of data centres. Nor does it consist merely in generating the greatest quantity of electricity. Success consists in enabling digital expansion to proceed without paralysing the electrical system upon which that expansion depends and, ideally, in making the system itself more disciplined, efficient, resilient, and sustainable."

"Then what is the ultimate question?"

The other lifted his eyes towards the sun. The heavens remained ablaze, yet the meaning of that radiance had subtly changed.

"It is not how much electricity we possess."

"Then what?"

"How much wisdom we possess."

"And wherein does wisdom consist?"

"In foreseeing the consequences of power before power has become a crisis; in subjecting new capacity to proportion, purpose, prudence, and the common good; and in transforming an emerging burden into an ordered component of national development."

"And if we fail?"

"Then artificial intelligence will cease to be merely an emblem of technological advancement. It will become the mirror in which our institutional weaknesses, our failures of foresight, and our deficiencies of governance are reflected with merciless clarity."

"Then what is the most urgent task before us?"

"Not merely to prepare the electrical grid for artificial intelligence."

"What, then?"

"To elevate our national intelligence to such a degree that, when artificial intelligence enters the grid, our institutions possess not only the capacity to bear its electrical burden but the wisdom to convert its immense computational power into enduring public benefit."

The conversation had thus travelled beyond the arithmetic of megawatts and entered the deeper province of political philosophy. Numbers had reached the boundary beyond which they could no longer answer; there, prudence began to speak.

For nations do not become powerful merely by producing resources. They become powerful when they acquire the wisdom to discern where, when, in what measure, and for what purpose those resources ought to be employed.

The age of artificial intelligence, therefore, is not ultimately an age in which machines are being taught to think. It is an age in which humanity itself is being compelled to demonstrate whether it possesses sufficient intelligence to govern the powers it has created.

And perhaps this is the most profound paradox of the new technological epoch: the supreme test of artificial intelligence may not be whether machines can become intelligent, but whether human beings can become wise enough to govern intelligence.

The National Champions Cup 2026-27 is set to Take Place from 11 to 18 August at the Multan Cricket Stadium: PCB Says

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The National Champions Cup 2026-27 is set to take place from 11 to 18 August at the Multan Cricket Stadium. The players and officials of the four teams arrived in Multan on Saturday, 8 August. On 9 and 10 August the teams will train at the Inzamam-ul-Haq High Performance Centre and Multan Cricket Stadium.

Note: Only PCB-accredited media persons are invited for the coverage of the event. For all accreditation related

queries please contact Shafqat Shabbir at +92 345 1734588. Below is the training schedule and media opportunities for Sunday and Monday:

9 August: Pakistan Greens and Pakistan Whites will train from 3pm onwards at the Inzamam-ul-Haq High Performance Centre. Pakistan Blues and Pakistan Gold will begin their training from 7:30pm onwards at the Multan Cricket Stadium. Both are vision-only opportunities.

10 August: All four captains will take part in trophy unveiling ceremony

and brief media conference from 11am onwards at far end level 2.

Pakistan Blues and Pakistan Gold will train at the Inzamam-ul-Haq High Performance Centre from 3pm onwards, while Pakistan Greens and Pakistan Whites will train at the Multan Cricket Stadium from 7:30pm onwards. Both are vision-only opportunities.

11 August—The National Champions Cup will get underway Pakistan Greens and Pakistan Whites taking on each other with the toss scheduled to take place at 2.30pm at the Multan Cricket Stadium.

The AJK Unrest

Continued from Page 4

attack and target the LEAs and public properties, engaging in acts of arson, destruction, and murder that are the hallmarks of a terrorist organization. The real intention of the banned JAAC is to get dead bodies to ignite the fire in AJK and to motivate people against the State, a tactic of provocation that is designed to create a cycle of violence that will destabilize the entire region.

The people of AJK are not with the banned JAAC, and they have made their position clear through their actions and their silence, for people are with Pakistan and the Pak Army, the institutions that have always stood with them in their times of need. People love

Pakistan, the Pak Army, and institutions, and they have a deep and abiding affection for the state that has provided them with security, development, and a democratic identity. The people of AJK love peace, and they yearn for a return to normalcy, whereas a group of violent riots intends to destroy the peace of AJK, to plunge it into chaos for their own selfish political gains. The dirty intentions of the banned JAAC have opened the eyes of the people of AJK, and the people are now fully aware of the malevolent forces that are at work, seeking to exploit their grievances and lead them down a path of destruction. The banned JAAC is also involved in getting Indian support, a treasonous act that is completely

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

Pakistan: Rising in Global Standing Amidst Economic Hardship

Continued from Page 4

it strengthens collective security, fosters joint defence production and technological cooperation, creates deeper strategic alignment, and opens new avenues for economic and industrial collaboration. It sends a clear message that Pakistan is not only a guardian of its own borders but a bridge between nations, uniting friends for the common good. This agreement is a testament to Pakistan's growing influence and its ability to bring powerful nations together in shared purpose.

None of this would have been possible without the tireless efforts, shared vision, and seamless coordination of Pakistan's leadership.

Field Marshal General Asim Munir has served with distinction, wisdom, and unshakeable dedication to the nation's security, sovereignty, and global standing. His statesmanship, foresight, and principled approach have been central to steering Pakistan through these testing times with honour and resolve. Alongside him, Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif has worked tirelessly, day and night, to steer the country through economic difficulty while pursuing a foreign policy rooted in respect, dialogue, and national interest. Together, their combined strength, wisdom, and dedication have been pivotal in restoring Pakistan's voice and its rightful place

on the world stage.

At the United Nations, Pakistan took a principled stand regarding the Bahrain agreement at a time when many nations chose silence over courage. It stood for fairness and for dialogue, refusing to be swept along by prevailing winds. In the same spirit, the acknowledgment of Iran's ancient civilisation and historical heritage opened a necessary path toward understanding. Pakistan has consistently argued that respect and conversation are the only sustainable ways to resolve conflict — not threats, and certainly not war.

Even amid all this global activity, life within Pakistan continued with

remarkable composure. People worked from home, fulfilled their responsibilities, and watched their national cricket league with enthusiasm. To outside observers, this might appear contradictory — a nation facing hardship yet carrying on with such calm confidence. But that is precisely the point. This resilience is Pakistan's greatest strength. It shows a people who do not panic in a crisis, who do not lose hope, and who refuse to let hardship steal their joy or their unity.

Economists and political analysts may struggle to explain Pakistan. By conventional measures, the currency is under pressure, debts are substantial, and the budget faces significant deficits.

Yet by every measure that truly matters — respect, influence, trust, and moral standing — Pakistan is rising. This is the great paradox: a nation that appears fragile on paper, yet stands tall in the councils of the world. Any other country in similar circumstances might have bowed to pressure or chosen sides for short-term gain. Pakistan did neither. It faced its own difficulties and helped save the world from wider conflict — all at the same time.

There is an old wisdom in this part of the world: that when all else fails, faith, patience, and principle will sustain a nation. Pakistan has proven that this is no mere saying — it is a reality. It has shown that a nation can ask for help

without losing its dignity, can face hardship without losing hope, and can remain true to its friends and its values when others falter.

In the end, Pakistan offers the world a powerful lesson: that greatness is not found in ease or luxury. It is found in standing tall when the ground beneath you is shaking. It is found in keeping your word when it costs you dearly. And it is found in reaching out to help others, even when you yourself are in need. That is the true measure of Pakistan's diplomacy — and its enduring legacy.

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The Mecca Defence Pact: The Threats Behind the Alliance

Continued from Page 4

Islamabad has also alleged external support for certain militant networks, including from India and Israel other hostile actors, therefore the possibility of hybrid warfare designed to weaken Pakistan cannot be ignored.

The real test for the pact would come during a future India-Pakistan war. Saudi Arabia enjoys extensive economic and political relations with India, while Türkiye also has interests that extend beyond its partnership with Islamabad. Would Riyadh provide intelligence, logistics, financing, air defence or diplo-

matic support? Would it risk its relationship with New Delhi?

The treaty's collective-defence formula is powerful, but it does not necessarily mean that every member must respond identically or automatically declare war. Even NATO's Article 5 requires each ally to take such action as it considers necessary. The Mecca pact's credibility will similarly depend on agreed procedures, operational planning, military integration and, above all, political will.

Nor should the alliance be framed as an anti-Iranian "Sunni bloc." That description is analytically shallow and politically dangerous. It imports a

sectarian narrative into an agreement whose signatories explicitly maintain that it is not directed against Iran or any other particular country.

Western and regional media extensively are using the Sunni label as convenient shorthand, but repeating it can deepen the very divisions that have repeatedly weakened the Muslim world. It risks presenting Sunni and Shia states as natural enemies, even though they share geography, economic interests, religious bonds and responsibility for regional stability.

Iran has demonstrated formidable missile, drone and asymmetric capabilities and has

proven ability to impose severe costs on the combined military might of both the United States and Israel and their alliance in the Middle East and elsewhere in the entire world.

A confrontation between Iran and the combined forces of Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia would devastate the region, rupture trade and energy routes, inflame sectarian tensions and serve none of the four countries.

The rational objective of the Mecca alliance should therefore be deterrence, collective security and strategic autonomy—not the creation of another front in the Iran war.

The wiser long-term course is

to keep the pact open and eventually build a structured security dialogue with Iran. Immediate Iranian membership may be politically unrealistic while war and mistrust persist, but inclusion should remain a strategic objective.

Egypt and other regional countries could also participate in a broader security architecture based on non-aggression, collective consultation, protected shipping lanes, economic connectivity and respect for sovereignty.

The three signatories must also wage an intelligent information campaign. Through official statements, diplomatic

outreach, legacy media, social platforms and other forms of communication, they should consistently reject the description of the agreement as a "Sunni NATO."

They should explain that the pact is intended to protect its members from aggression regardless of the aggressor's religious, sectarian or national identity. It must not be allowed to become an instrument for turning Muslim countries against one another.

The Mecca agreement will become historic only if it does more than redistribute fear. Properly developed, it can reduce dependence on outside

powers, deter Israeli or other aggression, give Pakistan additional diplomatic weight and create the nucleus of an inclusive regional security system.

Mishandled as a sectarian coalition, however, it could produce precisely the confrontation it claims to prevent. Its success will therefore be measured not by how many enemies it names, but by how many wars it prevents.

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.

Flags of the three allied nations

ISLAMABAD: A view of Pakistani, Saudi Arabia and Turkey national flags displays on a Bridge at Faizabad interchange following the signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Pakistan played key mediatory role in easing US-Iran tension, says SVC

Monitoring Desk

ISLAMABAD: South Asian Voices (SVC) has acknowledged that Pakistan played an important mediatory role in reducing tensions between the United States and Iran and bringing the two countries to the negotiating table.

In an analytical report, SVC stated that senior officials from the two countries held direct talks in Islamabad, describing them as the highest-level direct contact between the United States and Iran since 1979.

The report said Pakistan facilitated communication between Washington



and Tehran at a time when tensions had escalated significantly and both sides had suffered losses.

Pakistan's geographical position and its relations with both Washington and Tehran

gave it a unique position for effective mediation.

According to South Asian Voices, American and Iranian representatives held more than 20 hours of talks in Islamabad.

Pakistan's diplomatic efforts subsequently helped Washington and Tehran announce a ceasefire and opened the way for direct negotiations.

The analysis described Pakistan's role as a diplomatic achievement comparable to its role in facilitating then-US Secretary of State Henry Kissinger's secret visit to China in 1971.

The report noted that major powers, including China, France, Germany, India, and the United Kingdom, were also unable to play a similar diplomatic role.

SVC said the complexities of the US-Iran conflict primarily stem from deep differences

between the two countries rather than Pakistan's mediation. Although both sides continued accusing each other of violating the ceasefire, the negotiating process was not completely abandoned.

The report further suggested that if tensions between the United States and Iran rise again, both sides could once again turn to Islamabad for negotiations.

South Asian Voices described Pakistan as a middle power capable of playing an effective mediatory role in international conflicts through its geographical importance, diplomatic access, and the trust of the parties involved.

Makkah agreement a milestone for Pakistan, reflects mutual trust: Daniyal Chaudhry

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Daniyal Chaudhry has described the Makkah Agreement as a milestone for Pakistan, saying the pact reflected not only the strength of Saudi Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan but also their brotherly ties and mutual trust.

He said every Pakistani could take pride in the achievement made under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Daniyal Chaudhry said the agree-



ment would go beyond defence cooperation and open avenues for the three countries to support one another in times of difficulty.

He said the agreement would contribute to stability across the region and help improve the balance of power.

The parliamentary secretary said the pact would also pave the way for a joint strategy and effective measures against terrorism, instability and elements contributing to insecurity in the region. He expressed the hope that enhanced cooperation among the three countries would strengthen regional peace, security and stability.

Makkah Defence Agreement Lays Foundation for Lasting Regional Peace: Tariq Fazal

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary has said the historic defence agreement signed in Makkah between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye has laid the foundation for lasting peace and stability in the region.

Talking to the media, he congratulated the nation on

the landmark accord and praised Pakistan's armed forces for their professional role in making the agreement possible under the leadership of Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir.

Dr Tariq also appreciated the political efforts led by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Pakistan's diplomatic achievements that contributed to the agree-



ment. He said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye already enjoyed close and brotherly relations, which would be further strengthened through the pact.

He explained that under the agreement, aggression

against any one of the three countries would be considered aggression against all. The minister said the accord would enhance defence cooperation and strategic coordination among the three nations.

He expressed confidence that the agreement would promote regional peace and stability while also strengthening connectivity, coordination and broader relations among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi decorated to mark Pakistan-Turkey-Saudi defence pact

Spokesman Report

Islamabad and the provincial capitals, including Lahore and Karachi, have been decorated with national flags, lights and LED screens to mark a historic achievement in defence cooperation between Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

In Islamabad, the national flags of Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia have been displayed along Constitution Avenue.

Major roads and important public locations across the capital have also

been specially decorated, attracting the attention of residents.

Parliament House and other important government buildings have been illuminated with electric lights and given special decorations as part of the celebrations.

Similar arrangements, including decorative lighting, national flags and LED screens, have been made in several cities. The displays were organised to highlight the significance of the joint defence agreement and the growing cooperation between Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia.

ISPR releases Balochi patriotic song 'Pak Ay Watan' for Independence Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) has released a new Balochi patriotic song, "Pak Ay Watan", on the occasion of Independence Day, with renowned Balochi singer Akhtar Chanal expressing love for Pakistan through his traditional style and passionate Balochi lyrics.

The song brings together Balochi culture and patriotism, with the colours, music and words of Balochistan reflecting a strong spirit of love for Pakistan and its security and survival. Akhtar Chanal's traditional performance gives the patriotic song a distinct Balochi character.

"Pak Ay Watan" also expresses the resolve that Pakistan is not merely a geographical territory but an identity for its people, for which they are willing to make sacrifices.



The patriotic song carries a message of unity, solidarity and brotherhood, spreading the spirit of love for Pakistan across the country.

Akhtar Chanal's captivating and passionate style further highlights the idea that love for Pakistan can be found across every region, language and community while bringing the cultural and musical traditions of Balochistan into the Independence Day celebrations.

PM appreciates new song from Balochistan on Independence Day



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Sunday appreciated the newly released song from Balochistan to mark the Independence Day of Pakistan.

While posting the patriotic song on his X account, he said, "As Independence Day approaches, my heart

is filled with pride to see this beautiful and patriotic song coming from Balochistan."

"My heartfelt appreciation and sincere gratitude to the singers, performers, producers and everyone behind this wonderful effort. You have beautifully captured the spirit of love for our beloved homeland. Pakistan Zindabad!" he added.

Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye defence pact to benefit entire Muslim Ummah: Amir Muqam

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam has said the defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye would benefit not only the three signatory countries but also provide an opportunity for the entire Muslim Ummah to benefit from the pact.

He said the agreement, reached through the efforts of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, would have a positive impact on the situation in the three countries as well as the wider region.

The minister expressed the hope



that the agreement would further strengthen cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye and contribute to regional peace, security and stability.