



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
ہم سے قیام بن سید نے بیان کیا کہ انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم سے سفیان بن عیینہ نے بیان کیا، ان سے عمرو بن دینار نے بیان کیا، ان سے سعید بن جبیر نے بیان کیا، ان سے عبد اللہ بن عباس نے بیان کیا کہ میں نے نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے سنا کہ آپ منبر پر خطبہ میں فرمادے تھے کہ تم اللہ تعالیٰ سے اس حال میں ملو گے کہ تم چاہو، جسے ہم اور بغیر ختم ہو گے۔
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DPM/FM, Saudi FM discuss cooperation, regional developments

DPM/FM Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Monday, discussed matters of mutual interest, including multilateral cooperation and regional developments. The DPM/FM spoke with the Saudi foreign minister, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.



DPM/FM, Saudi FM discuss cooperation, regional developments

DPM/FM Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia, Prince Faisal bin Farhan, Monday, discussed matters of mutual interest, including multilateral cooperation and regional developments. The DPM/FM spoke with the Saudi foreign minister, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release. They also underscored the importance of continued close coordination and cooperation, both bilaterally and at multilateral forums.

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Review Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a review meeting regarding FBR on Monday.



Photo: PID

Five Fitna Al Hindustan militants killed in Panjgur operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: At least five Fitna Al Hindustan militants, including a key commander, were killed in an intelligence-based operation in the Sarkani and Chedgi areas of Panjgur, Balochistan, security sources said on Monday.

The operation was conducted as part of Operation Radd-ul-Fitna III, under which security forces are continuing targeted operations against militants across Balochistan.

According to security sources, the five militants, including the group's commander Wazir, son of Jamal, were killed during the

operation in Panjgur.

Four motorcycles, machine guns, heavy weapons and ammunition were also recovered from their possession.

The slain militants were involved in robberies, extortion, kidnappings and terrorist activities targeting local traders and other residents in Panjgur, the sources said.

A clearance operation is underway to eliminate any remaining Fitna Al Hindustan terrorists in the vicinity, the security sources said.

Security forces remain committed to eliminating militants associated with Fitna Al Hindustan from Balochistan, the sources added.

DPM Dar, Kuwaiti FM Jarrah discuss bilateral, regional matters

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar spoke with Kuwaiti Foreign Minister Sheikh Jarrah Jaber Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, during which they discussed bilateral and regional matters of mutual interest.

During the conversation late Sunday night, Foreign Minister Jarrah felicitated the Deputy Prime Minister Dar on the recent signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.



The two leaders also exchanged views on the regional situation, including Occupied East Jerusalem, besides agreeing to remain closely engaged.

They discussed Pakistan-Kuwait bilateral relations and other matters of mutual interest, including follow-up to Foreign Minister Jarrah's recent visit to Pakistan and further enhancing cooperation and investment in key sectors.

Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye Defence Pact Step Towards Regional Peace: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday termed the Pakistan-Saudi-Turkiye Defence Agreement a significant step towards regional peace, stability and progress, stressing that the accord was purely defensive in nature and was not directed against any country.

Chairing a meeting of the federal cabinet, the prime minister said the agreement was

important not only for Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye but also for the wider Muslim Ummah. He said the accord was signed in Makkah on Friday by himself, Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on behalf of their respective countries.

The prime minister recalled that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia had already signed a bilateral defence agreement last year,

while Pakistan and Türkiye had maintained defence cooperation for decades. He appreciated Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir for their efforts in finalising the agreement after negotiations spanning several years.

Shehbaz Sharif also paid tribute to security personnel who lost their lives in recent terrorist incidents in Hangu and Swat. He mentioned Major Hafiz Ehsan

Ilahi, Captain Hamza Akram and DSP Dayar Khan and sought prayers for the martyrs.

The prime minister also expressed grief over the death of veteran PML-N leader Iqbal Channar of Bahawalpur and asked Federal Minister Sardar Ayaz Sadiq to lead prayers for the deceased.

On the Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections, he said polling had concluded in Mirpur and Muzaffarabad divisions, while

voting was continuing in two districts of Poonch. He said the PML-N had received substantial support and was close to securing a majority, describing the outcome as a vote of confidence in Nawaz Sharif's leadership.

The prime minister stressed that disputes should be resolved through dialogue and said preparations were underway for Independence Day celebrations on August 14.

Finance Minister Reviews Progress on Access to Finance Plan 2026-2028

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday chaired the second meeting of the Access to Finance Steering Committee, reviewing progress on the Prime Minister's Access to Finance Plan 2026-2028.

The meeting examined initiatives to expand financing for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), agriculture and affordable housing, while discussing measures to streamline legal and financial data requirements and accelerate lending.

The committee reviewed a proposed wholesale financing framework, dashboards for

weekly monitoring and efforts to strengthen agricultural lending. It also discussed enhancing the Crop Loan Insurance Scheme towards area-yield insurance to improve farmers' access to insurance payouts.

On housing finance, the committee noted that around Rs34.27 billion had been disbursed under the Wazir-e-



Azam Apna Ghar Programme—Ghar Ho To Apna up to July, while banks had approved over Rs220.68 billion in loans awaiting disbursement. Measures to digitize land records and improve property and title verification were also discussed.

The meeting reviewed progress under the Pakistan Accelerated

Vehicle Electrification (PAVE) Programme, noting that more than 1,200 electric bikes had been delivered.

Senator Aurangzeb stressed close coordination among relevant institutions to ensure effective implementation of the plan and maintain momentum towards its objectives.

Preliminary postmortem links Lahore custody deaths to cardiac arrest

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A preliminary postmortem report has described the deaths of two women who died in Lahore police custody as natural, with police sources saying both suffered cardiac arrest.

The women, identified as 17-and-a-half-year-old Amina and 22-year-old Anmol, were arrested on August 4 in a

theft and fraud case and died at a police station the same day.

According to police sources, the preliminary report found no visible signs of torture and attributed the deaths to cardiac arrest.

However, the families have alleged that the women died after being subjected to violence in custody. They disputed police claims that the women

were drug addicts and that an overdose may have caused their deaths.

Following the conflicting claims, a judicial inquiry was launched on the orders of the district and sessions judge in Lahore.

Under the law, a judicial inquiry is mandatory when an accused person dies in police custody.

Police officials have said strict legal



action would be taken against anyone found responsible if the judicial inquiry or forensic reports establish that the women were subjected to torture.

The families have also complained that they have not yet been formally provided copies of the postmortem reports.

Interior Minister hails security forces for killing five militants in Panjgur Operation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the security forces for successfully conducting an intelligence-based operation in the Panjgur area of Balochistan under Operation Radd-ul-Fitna 3, in which five militants, including their ringleader, were killed.

Paying tribute to the professionalism and operational capabilities of the security forces, Naqvi said the successful action had thwarted the nefarious designs of the militants and dealt a major blow to their activities in the region.

The interior minister praised the bravery and determination of the security personnel who took part in the operation, describing them as a source of pride for the entire nation. He said the courageous sons of the soil were continuing their efforts to eliminate terrorism from Balochistan and were making significant sacrifices to protect the country and its people.

Haji 2027 process fully digitized, applications and payments to be completed online

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf has announced that the entire Haji 2027 process has been digitized end-to-end on the special directives of the prime minister.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said pilgrims would be able to complete their applications and payments within minutes from home through the Pak Haji app and digital portal.

He said around 400,000 pre-registered pilgrims had entered the final stage of the Haji application process, adding that the digital system would save pilgrims from long queues, unnecessary travel and additional expenses.

According to the minister, three digital payment channels have been introduced to enable pilgrims to pay their Haji dues from home. Under the government's Haji scheme 2027, 107,526 seats have been allocated, while the 40-day long Haji package has been fixed at Rs1.2 million.

PML-N expected to secure two-thirds majority in AJK Assembly: Amir Muqam, Rana Sanaullah

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engr. Amir Muqam and Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan on Monday said the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) had actively participated in the electoral process and reaffirmed their confidence in the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N).

Addressing a joint press conference at the AJK Council, the leaders said the PML-N was expected to secure a two-thirds majority in the AJK Legislative Assembly. They said the formation of a new government would begin after completion of the remaining electoral process, ushering in a new phase of development and prosperity in the region.

Amir Muqam thanked the people



of AJK for supporting the PML-N and rejected allegations of electoral rigging, saying the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had so far failed to present concrete evidence. He said polling in Bagh and Haveli was generally peaceful, with security personnel promptly responding to

minor incidents reported at some polling stations.

He urged political parties to review their weaknesses instead of questioning the voters' decision and said the people's mandate should be respected. He also called for resolving ongoing protests through

negotiations and democratic means.

Rana Sanaullah said the governments of Pakistan and AJK had given protesters sufficient time and urged them to end their protest so that polling on remaining seats could be completed. He said legitimate demands would be addressed by the elected government through constitutional and democratic channels.

He maintained that only a small number of polling stations had reported problems and such incidents should not be used to undermine the overall electoral process.

Rana Sanaullah said the PML-N expected to win two of the four seats in the latest phase and secure around six to seven seats from Poonch Division. Including reserved seats, he said, the party was expected to have the support of around 30 members in the Legislative Assembly.

Annual Urs

MANDI BAHAUDDIN: Devotees arrive at the shrine of sufi saint Baba Nadir Shah during the last day of his annual Urs of at village Mong.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Gojra hosts ceremony to mark Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye Defence and Peace Agreement



 **Special Correspondent**

GOJRA: A dignified ceremony was held at Jinnah Hall of the Municipal Committee Gojra to commemorate the mutual defence and peace agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

Students, teachers and citizens from various educational institutions attended the event. Assistant Commissioner Gojra Muhammad Riaz, DSP Gojra Alam Din Malghani and Chief Officer Municipal Committee Syeda Yasir Ali participated as guests of honour.

School and college students delivered enthusiastic and impressive speeches highlighting mutual peace, defence cooperation and the strengthening of relations among the brotherly countries. Their speeches were warmly appreciated by the participants, who applauded the students for their performances.

Addressing the ceremony, the guests of honour welcomed the

agreement on mutual peace and defence cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. They said enhanced defence cooperation among brotherly Muslim countries could play an important role in promoting peace, stability and solidarity in the region.

The speakers said it was a matter of great pride and honour for the Pakistani nation that the country's armed forces had the opportunity to contribute to the protection of the sacred land of the Two Holy Mosques, particularly Makkah. They stressed the need to further strengthen mutual cooperation, unity and solidarity among the brotherly nations.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a special cake decorated with the national flags of Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye was cut. Special prayers were also offered for the security and prosperity of Pakistan, unity of the Muslim Ummah and lasting peace in the region.

District Administration Launches Crackdown on Violations of Dengue SOPs: Dr. Faisal Saleem



 **Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: The District Administration of Multan has decided to launch a mega crackdown on the violation of dengue SOPs. In this regard, a meeting was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Dr. Faisal Saleem regarding the anti-dengue campaign, in which measures for dengue prevention, larva eradication and field surveillance were reviewed. It was decided in the meeting that anti-dengue teams will conduct special checks of restaurants, hotels and commercial buildings and strict action will be taken against those violating dengue SOPs. Deputy Commissioner Dr. Faisal Saleem said that implementation of dengue SOPs is being ensured in public places, while strict action will be taken against institutions that are negligent in the destruction of dengue larvae. He said that the process of spraying and surveillance has been further intensified at sensitive places to prevent dengue. Ordering the health department to submit field reports on a daily basis, the Deputy Commissioner said that no negligence will be tolerated in anti-dengue activities. He appealed to citizens to follow precautionary measures and not allow water to accumulate in homes, offices and other places.

PMML's Four-Day Independence Day Celebrations Enter Final Phase

 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Preparations for Pakistan Markazi Muslim League's (PMML) four-day nationwide Independence Day celebrations have entered the final phase under the theme "Azadi ka paigham: La ilaha illallah, Muhammad ur Rasulullah ka nizam."

PMML President Khalid Masood Sandhu urged citizens to participate actively in the programmes and reaffirm their commitment to Pakistan. The celebrations will begin with district-level All-Parties Conferences (APCs) today, where political and religious leaders will address participants.

On August 12 and 13, women, student and other party wings will organize rallies and conferences across the country. On August 14, religious scholars will highlight the Ideology of Pakistan in Friday sermons.

Meanwhile, a children's Independence Walk was held in Islamabad, with participants carrying national flags and cards bearing patriotic messages.

IRSA releases 282,600 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD: Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Monday released 282,600 cusecs of water from various rim stations with an inflow of 343,700 cusecs.

According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1550.00 feet, which was 148.00 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 199,100 cusecs and 169,300 cusecs, respectively.

The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1206.90 feet, which was 156.90 feet higher than its dead level of 1,050 feet. The inflow and outflow of water were recorded as 38,300 cusecs and 7,000 cusecs, respectively.

The release of water at Kalabagh, Taunsa, Guddu, and Sukkur was recorded as 265,200, 309,000, 233,300, and 128,100 cusecs, respectively.

Similarly, from River Kabul, a total of 36,200 cusecs of water was released at Nowshera, and 56,200 cusecs were released from River Chenab at Marala



Defence Agreement in Makkah, A New Hope for Muslim Unity, Peace and Economic Cooperation

The joint defence agreement concluded in Makkah between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye is an important and welcome development toward strengthening defence, diplomatic and strategic cooperation among the three brotherly Muslim countries. The agreement comes at a time when global and regional security, political stability and economic security are facing a variety of challenges. For the Muslim world, the agreement is particularly significant because three major Islamic countries have taken a step toward further strengthening mutual cooperation, trust and shared interests. In my view, this development should not be confined merely to the defence domain; rather, it should be transformed into a broader vision of Muslim cooperation, economic development and regional peace.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye have enjoyed brotherly, religious, cultural and historic relations spanning several decades. The three countries have supported one another on various occasions and have demonstrated mutual cooperation during difficult times. Pakistan-Saudi relations are characterised not only by religious affinity but also by strong defence, economic and people-to-

people ties, while Pakistan's long-standing brotherly relationship with Türkiye also holds a unique position in the Muslim world. If cooperation among these three countries is further strengthened on an institutional basis, it could have positive implications for the entire region.

In the prevailing global environment, mutual trust, unity and cooperation among Islamic countries have become more important than ever. The global balance of power is changing rapidly, and countries around the world are establishing new partnerships to safeguard their national security, economic sovereignty and future interests. In such an environment, closer cooperation among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye could prove to be a positive and far-reaching initiative. However, the fundamental objective of this cooperation should not be confrontation against any country; rather, it should be the promotion of peace, stability, sovereignty and collective security.

The joint defence cooperation can create new opportunities for the three countries to exchange defence expertise, technology, training and skills. Pakistan possesses considerable capabilities in defence production, training and professional military experience; Türkiye has made significant progress

in defence technology and advanced industry; while Saudi Arabia has substantial financial resources, investment capacity and extensive experience in large-scale development projects. If the capabilities of these three countries are effectively integrated, joint projects in the defence sector could generate not only strategic benefits but also new opportunities for employment, research and industrial development.

However, the scope of this agreement should not remain limited to defence. There is enormous potential for increasing trade and investment among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. Alongside defence cooperation, the three countries should develop a joint economic cooperation framework covering trade, investment, energy, infrastructure, technology, agriculture, minerals, banking.

For this purpose, a permanent business council comprising representatives of the private sectors of all three countries could be established to continuously identify investment opportunities, address obstacles and work on joint ventures.

One of my key proposals is that

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye should organise a Trilateral Annual Economic and Investment Conference. The conference should bring together not only government institutions but also investors, industrialists, banks, exporters, technology companies and young entrepreneurs. Through such a platform, Pakistan could further improve access to the Saudi and Turkish markets for its export products, particularly textiles, rice, leather, sporting goods, pharmaceuticals, engineering products and IT services.

Similarly, Saudi and Turkish investors should be provided special facilities to invest in Pakistan's Special Economic Zones, minerals, renewable energy, agriculture, information technology and industrial sectors. The most important requirements for attracting investment to Pakistan are policy continuity, removal of regulatory hurdles, one-window facilities and timely decision-making for investors. If practical reforms are introduced in these areas, the defence partnership could also evolve into a broader economic partnership.



Analysis

Malik Muhammad Bostan

The three countries should also formulate a joint strategy in the energy sector. Pakistan needs investment in renewable energy, solar, wind and hydropower to meet its growing energy requirements. If Saudi Arabia's financial resources and Türkiye's industrial and technological expertise are aligned with Pakistan's energy needs, large-scale joint projects could be launched. In addition, cooperation in agriculture, food processing and cold-chain infrastructure could play an important role in increasing Pakistan's exports.

The partnership should also be made productive in the fields of education, research and opportunities for young people. Cooperation among universities, technical institutions and research centres in the three countries should be expanded through scholarships, joint research programmes and skills-development initiatives. In particular, joint research in artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, defence technology, engineering, medical sciences and green technology could prove extremely important for the economies of the future.

At the same time, diplomatic cooperation among the three countries should also be made more effective. Greater consultation at international forums and mutual support on issues of shared interest could enable

the voice of the Muslim world to be presented more effectively. However, moderation, diplomacy and the peaceful resolution of disputes should remain the fundamental principles of such cooperation.

This agreement should not be viewed as being directed against any country. Instead, it should serve as a positive instrument for promoting the collective security, peace and stability of the Muslim Ummah. If Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye adopt an integrated strategy encompassing economic development, trade, investment, education, technology and diplomacy alongside defence cooperation, this partnership could emerge as a new model of cooperation.

The development taking place in Makkah provides a historic opportunity to take relations among the three brotherly countries to new heights while strengthening unity, solidarity and mutual trust across the Muslim world. The need of the hour is to ensure that this opportunity does not remain confined to a single agreement but is transformed into a comprehensive programme encompassing peace, defence, trade and shared economic prosperity. This would be the true measure of the agreement's success and could lay the foundation for a brighter future for the Muslim world.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 3:54 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 5:02 pm
Maghrib 7:00 pm
Isha 8:32 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
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 9261070-79
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

Language, cultural exchange key to strengthening Pak-China ties: Khichi

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Monday said language and cultural exchange were vital to strengthening people-to-people contacts and further deepening the enduring friendship between Pakistan and China.

Addressing the opening ceremony of the Chinese Language and Chinese Culture Experience Course at the Department of Archaeology and Museums (DoAM), he said Pakistan and China enjoyed an all-weather strategic cooperative partnership and a friendship "higher than the mountains, deeper than the oceans, and sweeter than honey."

The course was being organized under the initiative "The Language of the Eastern Silk Road – Bridging China and Pakistan, Celebrating Shared Cultural Splendor" by the China Cultural Center in Pakistan and DoAM, with the Pakistan-China Cultural and Economic Promotion Association as co-organizer.

Language, cultural exchange key to strengthening Pak-China ties: Khichi

The federal minister said while political, economic and infrastructural cooperation, including collaboration under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), remained strong, the true foundation of the bilateral relationship laid in people-to-people contacts and cultural exchange.



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister

Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday reiterated her commitment to ensuring access to clean drinking water for every individ-

CM Maryam Nawaz vows to ensure clean drinking water for every person

ual and household across the province under the government's drinking water supply programme.

Chairing a special meeting to review ongoing clean drinking water projects in various districts, the chief minister approved a pilot project for supplying potable water through pipelines in six selected districts of Punjab.

The districts include Rajanpur, Lahore, Faisalabad, Chakwal, Rawalpindi and Murree/Kotli Sattian. The meeting was informed that clean drinking water was currently being provided through filtration plants, bottled-water facilities and water bowers.

Maryam Nawaz directed the authorities to consult deputy commissioners, WASA officials and Public Health Engineering Department experts before implementing the piped-water pilot project. She ordered that low-income households and areas lacking safe water sources be given priority.

The chief minister also directed authorities to arrange water tankers and bowers for areas facing shortages or contamination. During the meeting, she contacted Rajanpur Deputy Commissioner Imran Ranjha and Chakwal Deputy Commissioner Sarah Hayat to inquire about the availability of clean drinking water in

their districts.

Various options, including public-private partnerships, were discussed for implementing drinking water projects. Maryam Nawaz directed that the bottled-water plant be operated at full capacity.

She expressed satisfaction over the supply of bottled drinking water to remote areas of Koh-e-Suleman and appreciated the authorities for the initiative.

The chief minister stressed that all possible measures should be taken to ensure safe drinking water, particularly for communities deprived of reliable clean-water sources.

Illumination

ISLAMABAD: An illuminated view of Parliament House building decorated with red and green lights marking the Makka Joint Defence Pact.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AIOU begins textbook dispatch alongside admissions for Autumn 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) has started dispatching textbooks to students enrolled in Semester Autumn 2026 alongside the ongoing admissions process, introducing the initiative for the first time in the university's history.

On the special instructions of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, the university has initiated the supply of academic materials at the beginning of the students' educational journey to facilitate distance learning and prevent delays.

The Vice Chancellor directed relevant authorities to ensure that every student receives a complete set of textbooks according to enrolled courses within the prescribed schedule. Referring to complaints of incomplete text-



book sets during the previous semester, he instructed officials to carefully prepare complete packages and ensure timely delivery.

Director Admissions Syed Zia-ul-Hasnain said textbooks were initially being dispatched to students enrolled in Asso-

ciate Degree in Arts and Associate Degree in Commerce programmes. Materials for other programmes would be dispatched in phases.

He said textbook dispatch for all students enrolled in Autumn 2026 would be completed by November 15,

2026.

The university said the integrated process would enable students to receive study materials from the start of academic activities, helping them plan their studies effectively and strengthening student-centred academic services.

PPP had to field three women to criticize Punjab's performance: Azma Bokhari

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari, reacting to the press conference of PPP leaders, said, "Oh God! They had to send three women to take on me and criticize the performance of Punjab."

Azma Bokhari said the women belong to the same province where they are unable to handle the double-dealing in the Mir Raza case.

Addressing the PPP leaders sarcastically, the Punjab Information and Culture Minister said: "You simply won't be able to do it."

Hazrat Hussain-ud-Din Shah Was Beacon of Knowledge and Practice: Riaz Hussain Shah

City Desk



RAWALPINDI: Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleem-e-Islamia, Khayaban-e-Sir Syed, Allama Pir Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, has expressed deep grief over the passing of Sheikh-ul-Hadith wal-Tafseer Hazrat Allama Pir Syed Hussain-ud-Din Shah (RA), describing him as a distinguished scholar and spiritual guide and one of the last great representatives of the Islamic scholarly tradition.

In a condolence statement, Allama Riaz Hussain Shah said the deceased devoted his life to the service of Islam, education, social reform

and the moral and spiritual training of younger generations.

He said Hazrat Hussain-ud-Din Shah's scholarly and educational contributions would remain a source of guidance for his students and followers. His teachings, he added, should be preserved and carried forward as a lasting tribute to his services.

Allama Riaz Hussain Shah extended condolences to the deceased's sons, family members, students and associates.

He prayed to Allah Almighty to elevate the departed soul's ranks and grant him the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous, while giving patience and strength to the bereaved family.

OICCI Members Invest Over \$23 Billion in Pakistan Over Decade

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Companies belonging to the Overseas Investors Chamber of Commerce and Industry (OICCI) have invested more than \$23 billion in Pakistan over the past decade, exceeding the country's cumulative net foreign direct investment (FDI) inflows of \$21 billion during the same period, according to the OICCI's "Members' Contribution to the Economy 2025" report released Monday.

The report said OICCI member companies remained significant contributors to Pakistan's economy during FY2025, collectively generating Rs13.1 trillion in gross revenue, maintaining total assets of Rs42 trillion, investing Rs615 billion in capital expenditure and contributing Rs3.2 trillion in government levies.

It highlighted the resilience of 51 OICCI member companies listed on the Pakistan Stock Exchange. Their profit before tax recorded a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 26 percent in rupee terms during 2021-25, while it grew 11 percent in dollar terms.

The report showed a broad sectoral contribution, with oil, gas and energy companies accounting for 36 percent of government levies, while banking, insurance, finance and leasing represented 75.6 percent of total assets. Telecommunications companies contributed 33 percent of total capital expenditure.

OICCI Secretary General M. Abdul Aleem said the investment figures reflected continued foreign investor confidence in Pakistan.

He urged greater policy consistency, regulatory predictability and an enabling business environment to attract further investment, boost exports, promote innovation and create employment opportunities.



Waris Shah Heritage Gallery Inaugurated at Jandiala Sher Khan

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta on Monday inaugurated the newly established Waris Shah Heritage and Cultural Gallery at historic Jandiala Sher Khan, describing it as an important initiative to preserve and promote the literary and cultural legacy of great Punjabi Sufi poet Hazrat Syed Waris Shah (RA).

Speaking at the inauguration, Dr. Bhutta said Hazrat Waris Shah's timeless masterpiece "Heer" conveyed universal messages of love, humanity, tolerance, morality, spirituality, peace and compassion that remained highly relevant in the contemporary world.

He said the gallery presented the life, personality, intellectual vision and literary contributions of Hazrat Waris



Shah, while showcasing important characters from "Heer", historical scenes, rare artefacts and traditional objects reflecting Punjab's social and cultural heritage.

Two documentaries focusing on the history and culture of Sheikhpura and the life and literary services of Hazrat Waris Shah would also be screened at the gallery through multimedia displays.

Dr. Bhutta said efforts would be made to connect younger generations with Punjabi language, literature, history and cultural identity through research, educational activities and cultural programmes.

He added that the Tourism Development Corporation of Punjab would bring 50 tourists from Lahore to Jandiala Sher Khan through its recreational bus service.

The Secretary Auqaf said the shrine and heritage associated with Hazrat Waris Shah would continue to receive attention regarding preservation, cleanliness, beautification, security and visitor facilities.

He said the gallery would serve as a destination for tourists, students, researchers and literature and culture enthusiasts.

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A Nation Defined by Its Diversity

Every year on 11 August, Pakistan pauses to observe National Minorities Day — not merely as a symbolic gesture, but as a reaffirmation of the founding vision that shaped this country. It was on this very day in 1947 that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah stood before the Constituent Assembly and declared that citizens were free to worship as they chose, regardless of religion, caste, or creed, and that such matters had nothing to do with the business of the State. Nearly eight decades later, that pledge remains the moral compass by which Pakistan must measure its progress.

Minorities are not peripheral to Pakistan’s story; they are woven into its very fabric. From the struggle for independence to the nation-building efforts that followed, minority communities have contributed meaningfully to the country’s economic, educational, cultural, and political life. Their presence enriches the diversity that gives Pakistan its distinct social character.

Encouragingly, this year’s commemoration comes at a moment of renewed institutional commitment. The National Commission for Minorities Act, 2025 marks a significant step forward, paving the way for an independent commission tasked with redressing grievances, safeguarding constitutional protections, and monitoring issues ranging from places of worship to employment quotas. Complementing this is the Interfaith Harmony Policy 2025, which seeks to deepen dialogue between communities and guard against discrimination, alongside the National Policy for Countering Violent Extremism 2024 and the newly introduced National Action Plan for Human Rights 2026 — each designed to translate constitutional guarantees into lived reality.

Yet policy frameworks, however well-intentioned, are only as effective as their implementation. The true test lies not in the number of laws enacted but in whether minority citizens genuinely feel secure, represented, and equal in their daily lives — in workplaces, schools, courts, and places of worship. Legislation must be matched by consistent enforcement, swift redressal of grievances, and a societal culture that treats pluralism as a strength rather than a challenge to be managed.

National Minorities Day should therefore serve as more than a ceremonial observance. It is an occasion for honest reflection on the distance between constitutional promise and everyday practice. The government’s collaboration with provincial administrations and civil society is a welcome sign, but sustained political will is what will ultimately determine whether these frameworks deliver justice.

Jinnah’s words were not a courtesy extended to minorities; they were a founding principle of the state itself. Honouring them fully means ensuring that every citizen — irrespective of faith — can claim an equal stake in Pakistan’s present and future.

Trump Called His Critics Traitors

There is a disturbing irony at the heart of America’s war with Iran. President Donald Trump, accused by retired generals and political opponents of disregarding constitutional restraints, is now using the language of treason against Americans who have reportedly exposed dangerous shortages in the country’s military stockpiles. Thus, a president whose conduct has raised questions about loyalty to the Constitution is branding whistle-blowers, officials or “leakers” as disloyal to the nation.

This is not merely a quarrel over words. It concerns the difference between loyalty to a president and loyalty to the United States. It also raises a fundamental question: Is revealing a threat to America’s military readiness an act of treason—or is concealing that danger the greater betrayal?

On August 6, Trump rejected reports that the Iran war had severely depleted American weapons. He claimed that the United States possessed “massive amounts” of munitions and that defense companies were rapidly expanding production. He then declared that the sources of what he called “treasonous statements” were being hunted down and that lengthy prison sentences would be sought.

Yet the reports did not originate from hostile governments. The American officials with direct knowledge of the military inventory said the United States had consumed nearly all its global stockpile of certain long-range precision missiles, including virtually all available Army Tactical Missile Systems and Precision Strike Missiles.

The reported condition of defensive weapons is equally alarming. Estimates cited by CBS suggested that the United States entered the conflict with approximately 2,330 Patriot interceptors but had only 759 to 827 remaining by the end of July. Its stock of THAAD interceptors reportedly declined from roughly 452 to between 234 and 278. Rebuilding both inventories to their prewar levels could take until at least 2029.

If these assessments are accurate, the Iran war has not merely consumed billions of dollars. It has weakened America’s ability to respond to another emergency in Europe, East Asia or elsewhere. A nation cannot fire years of missile production in five months and pretend that industrial assurances will immediately refill empty launchers.

This is precisely why criticism of the administration cannot simply be dismissed as treason. The Constitution does not define treason as embarrassing a president, contradicting an official narrative or informing the public about a dangerous policy failure.

It defines treason narrowly—levying war against the United States or adhering to its enemies and giving them aid and comfort. Disclosing classified information may, depending on the circumstances, violate other laws, but presidents should not casually stretch the word “treason” to cover politically inconvenient reporting.

That distinction becomes especially important when viewed against the warnings of former Chairman of

the Joint Chiefs of Staff General Mark Milley during his retirement address. Milley said American service members do not swear allegiance to a king, queen, tyrant, dictator or “wannabe dictator.” They swear allegiance to the Constitution and to the American idea. His remarks were widely understood as a warning about Trump, although Milley did not name him.

The statement identified the essential difference between a constitutional military and a personal army. American troops are not the private instruments of a president. They are governed by law, accountable to civilian authority and bound to refuse unlawful orders. Their oath is not a ceremonial phrase; it is the barrier separating a republic from authoritarian rule.

Trump’s critics argue that he has repeatedly tested that barrier by treating the military as a political back-drop, demanding personal loyalty and condemning officials who challenge his assertions.

Retired General Barry McCaffrey has likewise criticized Trump’s partisan rhetoric before uniformed personnel, warning that an officer who behaved similarly could face serious disciplinary consequences. The president is entitled to command the armed forces, but commander-in-chief is a constitutional office—not a license to convert the military into an extension of a political movement.

The Iran war has magnified these concerns. It reportedly began without

specific congressional authorization, without broad domestic support and without a coherent explanation of its ultimate objective. Regime change, elimination of Iran’s nuclear program, destruction of its missile forces, liberation of the Iranian people and reopening the Strait of Hormuz have all been presented as rationales.

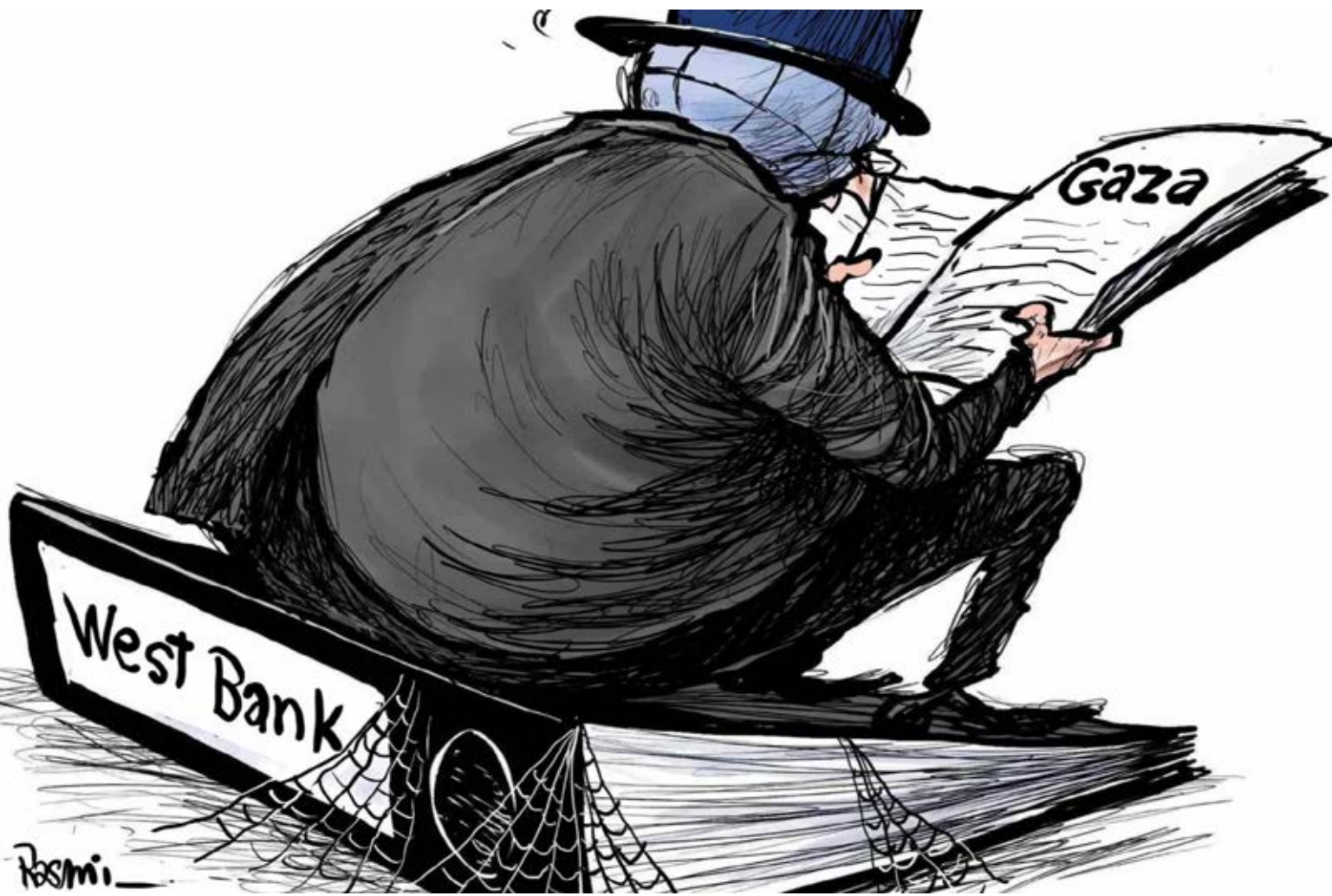
By the administration’s own declared standards, however, success remains elusive. Iran’s former leadership may have been removed, but a younger, more uncompromising generation of revolutionary figures appears to have replaced it.

Iran reportedly retains missiles, drones, mobile launchers and the capacity to rebuild. Its knowledge of uranium enrichment cannot be destroyed by bombing, while concerns remain about enriched material and nuclear assets potentially concealed in hardened mountain facilities.

Most dramatically, the Strait of Hormuz—open and toll-free before the war—has become Iran’s principal bargaining weapon. Reports of negotiations involving Iran and Oman indicate that Tehran is seeking oversight of shipping movements, restrictions on American and Israeli vessels and compensation from countries it considers hostile. Even if the final arrangements remain unsettled, Iran has transformed the waterway from an international passage into a negotiating instrument.

Meanwhile, Americans are paying the price through military casualties, higher fuel costs, more expensive fertilizer, pressure on food prices and tens of billions of dollars in additional war spending.

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

Pakistan’s Rising Stature: A New Chapter of Strength, Diplomacy and Regional Leadership

Pakistan is passing through a moment that many observers are calling one of the most consequential in its recent history — a period marked not by crisis, but by opportunity, confidence and growing international stature. From the signing of the historic Makkah Joint Defence Agreement with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye to Pakistan’s continued role as a trusted mediator in regional tensions, the country is steadily positioning itself as a serious, capable and respected player on the world stage.

At the heart of this transformation lies a renewed sense of national purpose, built on strong institutions working in tandem with a proactive diplomatic corps. Pakistan’s armed forces, under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, have played a central and unmistakable role in this journey. His leadership has been widely credited with strengthening Pakistan’s deterrence capabilities, deepening strategic partnerships abroad, and reinforcing the operational readiness that underpins the country’s growing credibility on security matters.

The Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, signed in the holy city alongside Saudi Arabia’s Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and Türkiye’s President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, stands as a powerful symbol of this new chapter. It reflects not only decades of trust between three historically allied Muslim nations, but also Pakistan’s emergence as an indispensable security partner in a region navigating considerable turbulence. That Field Marshal Munir personally accompanied the Prime Minister to Saudi Arabia, performing Umrah before the summit and playing a visible role in the accompanying discussions, underscored the weight Pakistan’s military leadership now carries in shaping the country’s foreign and security policy in close

coordination with its civilian government.

This is not an isolated achievement. Pakistan’s forces have, in recent times, demonstrated remarkable operational successes against internal security threats, including coordinated intelligence-based operations under Radd-ul-Fitna III that have significantly degraded the capacity of India-sponsored militant networks in Balochistan. These successes, achieved through professionalism and precision, have earned tributes from the President and Prime Minister alike, and have reinforced public confidence in the institution’s ability to safeguard the nation’s territorial integrity.

Beyond the battlefield and the negotiating table, Pakistan’s broader diplomatic engagement has been equally energetic. The country has actively used platforms ranging from the United Nations to ASEAN, the OIC, and bilateral channels with nations across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Gulf to advocate for peaceful conflict resolution, economic cooperation and shared prosperity. Pakistan’s mediation efforts to help de-escalate tensions between the United States and Iran have won quiet praise from multiple quarters, reflecting the kind of measured, constructive diplomacy that has increasingly become a hallmark of Islamabad’s foreign policy approach.

On the economic front too, there are genuine reasons for optimism. Recent months have seen a wave of high-profile investment agreements — from the USD 200 million Barite-Lead-Zinc mining project in Khuzdar facilitated by the Special Investment Facilitation Council, to expanding technology partnerships with Chinese firms in sovereign AI and fintech, to renewed momentum in Pakistan-US trade negotiations. These developments suggest a country working methodically to convert diplomatic goodwill into tangible economic outcomes.

What makes this moment particularly encour-

aging is the sense of institutional alignment behind it. Civilian leadership, military institutions and diplomatic missions appear to be moving in coordinated fashion, each reinforcing the other’s efforts. Field Marshal Munir’s growing international profile — evident in his presence at major summits, his engagement with foreign delegations, and his role in cementing new defence partnerships — reflects a broader institutional confidence that Pakistan is capable not just of defending itself, but of shaping the security architecture of its wider region.

For ordinary Pakistanis, these developments translate into something more than headlines. A stronger defence posture brings greater national security. Expanding trade and investment ties bring the promise of economic opportunity. And a more assertive, respected voice in international forums brings a renewed sense of national dignity — the feeling that Pakistan’s perspective matters and is being heard.

Challenges undoubtedly remain, as they do for any nation navigating a complex regional and global environment. But the trajectory of recent months — marked by strengthened alliances, decisive security successes, active diplomacy and growing economic engagement — offers a genuinely hopeful picture. Pakistan is demonstrating, through action rather than rhetoric, that it can be both a resilient guardian of its own security and a constructive partner in building peace and prosperity across the wider Muslim world and beyond.

As the country continues to navigate this new chapter, the coordinated efforts of its civilian leadership and military institutions, including the steady hand of Field Marshal Asim Munir, will remain central to sustaining this positive momentum — turning moments of achievement into a lasting foundation for Pakistan’s future.

The writer is Founder President of *TurpCCI Association of Pakistan and Convener FPCCI standing committee on Heritage & Hospitality. He can be reached at navedahmadkhan75@aol.com*

276th Corps Commanders Conference Highlights Unified Resolve Under the Field Marshal’s Leadership

The 276th Corps Commanders’ Conference, chaired by Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, brought together Pakistan Army corps commanders to review national security, sovereignty, and the evolving geopolitical and internal security environment. The conference began with a Fateha for the Shuhada of the Armed Forces, Law Enforcement Agencies, and civilians who lost their lives in the fight against terrorism, paying tribute to their sacrifices and acknowledging the contributions of their families. Led by Field Marshal Munir in his capacity as Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, the conference highlighted ongoing efforts to strengthen Pakistan’s security against internal and external threats, noting appreciation from the military, political leadership, and international figures for his role in national security, counterterrorism, regional diplomacy, and promoting peace and stability.

A major focus of the conference was the review of the security situation, including concerns that territory under the control of the Afghan Taliban is being used by groups described as Indian-sponsored proxies, including Fitna al Khawarij and Fitna al Hindustan, to launch attacks inside Pakistan. The forum stated that preventing the use of Afghan territory for such attacks

is essential for regional peace, emphasized the Afghan Taliban’s responsibility to prevent this, reaffirmed Pakistan’s right to defend itself, and announced that intelligence-based operations under Operation Ghazab-lil-Haq would continue with greater intensity. The commanders also stressed that counterterrorism requires effective governance, public services, socioeconomic development, swift justice, and dismantling links between terrorism and organized crime, alongside military action. They further expressed concern over externally supported hybrid warfare, including disinformation, propaganda, financing of proxies, social media manipulation, and efforts to incite ethnic and sectarian divisions, stating that such threats would be countered through strategic, institutional, cyber, and information measures while strengthening public awareness and national resilience.

Another cornerstone and extremely vital component of the conference’s broad deliberations was the critical issue of water security, specifically regarding the Indus Waters Treaty that governs the sharing of water resources between Pakistan and India. Taking serious and careful note of India’s recent aggressive rhetoric and threatening statements surrounding the treaty, the Corps Commanders expressed a resolute, unconditional, and unwavering commitment to

Continued on Page 7

Minorities’ Contribution to Pakistan’s Progress Indelible, says Gillani

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has said that the contribution of minority communities to the construction, progress and development of Pakistan is indelible, stressing that ensuring their dignity, protection, equal rights and opportunities is the State’s responsibility.

Addressing a ceremony at Parliament House to mark National Minorities Day, he said minorities were an integral part of Pakistan’s social fabric and national identity. He recalled that August 11 was declared National Minorities Day in 2009 during his tenure as prime minister to recognize the equal status and rights of minority communities.

Gillani highlighted measures taken at the time, including establishing a federal ministry for minority affairs, allocating a five per cent quota for minorities in federal government jobs and enhancing their representation in the Senate.

He paid tribute to minority leaders and personalities who contributed



to Pakistan, including Justice A. R. Cornelius, Justice Dorab Patel, Justice Rana Bhagwandas, Group Captain Cecil Chaudhry and Dr Ruth Pfau.

He said the Constitution’s princi-

ples of equality, religious freedom and human dignity, along with the Charter of Madina, provided a strong foundation for peaceful coexistence.

Gillani called for greater national

unity, interfaith harmony and tolerance, assuring minority communities that their protection and equal opportunities remained the State’s responsibility.

Misbah Qaisar Honoured with Shield of Honour at International Excellence Awards 2026

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

MANCHESTER: Prominent Pakistani community figure Misbah Qaisar has been honoured with a Shield of Honour at the International Excellence Awards 2026 in recognition of her community services in Manchester and wider contributions to social and public life in the United Kingdom.



The award was presented at a ceremony attended by community representatives and distinguished guests. The recognition acknowledged Misbah’s longstanding involvement in community affairs as well as her professional, business and social contributions.

Expressing gratitude after the ceremony, Misbah thanked Shehzad Qureshi and his team for inviting her and presenting the prestigious award.

Misbah has a diverse professional background, having previously served in bureaucracy and the banking sector in Pakistan before moving to the UK. After settling in Britain, she entered the business sector and established herself as an entrepreneur associated with the restaurant industry.

She has also held various political and organizational positions, including former Deputy Additional Secretary of PTI UK, Chairperson of the Overseas Pakistan Commission (OPC) North of the UK and Secretary of Social Media for West Punjab.

Community representatives and friends congratulated Misbah on the recognition, describing it as an acknowledgement of her commitment to community service. They expressed hope that she would continue contributing to community development and promoting a positive image of Pakistan internationally.

Kyrgyzstan Highlights Regional Connectivity, Cooperation after Cholpon-Ata Summit

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Charge d’Affaires of the Kyrgyz Republic to Pakistan Aibek Tilebaliev on Monday briefed the media on the outcomes of the informal Consultative Meeting of the Heads of State of Central Asia and Azerbaijan, held on July 31 in Cholpon-Ata, Kyrgyzstan.

He said the summit marked a historic development as Azerbaijan joined the consultative format as a full participant, strengthening regional cooperation and expanding the platform beyond its traditional Central Asian framework.

Tilebaliev said the meeting reflected growing trust and cooperation among regional

states, particularly following the resolution of Kyrgyzstan’s longstanding border issues with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan. The leaders adopted the Cholpon-Ata Declaration at the conclusion of the summit.

Highlighting regional connectivity, he said the leaders discussed the China-Kyrgyzstan-Uzbekistan (CKU) railway and the Kambarata-1 hydropower project. The 532-kilometre railway will connect Kashgar in China with Andijan in Uzbekistan through Kyrgyzstan, while Kambarata-1 is planned to generate 1,860 megawatts of electricity through four turbines.

The Kyrgyz diplomat said

President Sadyr Japarov also proposed a unified tourist visa for visitors to Central Asian countries to promote tourism and regional integration.

He noted that Kyrgyzstan had been elected a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council for 2027-2028 and expressed gratitude to Pakistan for supporting its candidacy.

Tilebaliev said Kyrgyzstan would promote peacebuilding, disarmament, food and energy security, and stability in Afghanistan during its UN Security Council tenure.

He added that Kyrgyzstan was ready to contribute to the Eighth Consultative Meeting, scheduled for October 8



in Turkmenistan. He said recent alliance agreements with Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan further demonstrated Kyrgyzstan’s commitment to regional friendship, connectivity and strategic cooperation.



PM Youth Programme, COMSTECH Agree to Expand Cooperation on Digital Skills

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister’s Youth Programme (PMYP) and OIC-COMSTECH on Monday agreed to strengthen cooperation in youth empowerment, digital skills and entrepreneurship, with a joint committee proposed to coordinate initiatives for young people in Pakistan and other OIC member states.

The understanding was reached during a meeting between PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan and OIC-COMSTECH Coordinator General Prof. Dr. M. Iqbal

Choudhary at the COMSTECH Secretariat. Senior officials from both sides also attended.

The meeting discussed jointly organizing the Kazan Youth Forum, launching a Digital Youth Programme with a focus on training 500 young women in digital skills, and exploring expansion of the Prime Minister’s Digital Youth Hub to OIC member states.

The two sides also considered connecting PMYP with youth organizations across OIC countries to promote networking, knowledge exchange, entrepreneurship and skills

development.

Rana Mashhood appreciated COMSTECH’s initiatives in science, technology, innovation and capacity building, saying enhanced cooperation would help project Pakistan’s positive image through knowledge and youth development.

Prof. Iqbal Choudhary said the OIC’s large youth population represented significant potential for economic and technological development and called for greater investment in education, digital skills, science, innovation and entrepreneurship.

Ukrainian Historian Slams German Journalist’s Question to Zelensky About ‘Killing More Russians’

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A widely shared social media post by Ukrainian historian Marta Havryshko has sparked debate after she criticized a question posed to President Volodymyr Zelensky by German journalist Michael Martens, in which he asked what Europeans could concretely do to help Ukraine ‘kill more Russians.’

In a lengthy post on X, Havryshko argued that Martens overstepped the bounds of journalism by speaking as a private individual

rather than a reporter, and objected to him presenting himself as a spokesperson for “us Europeans” without any mandate to do so.

Writing as a Ukrainian woman whose own family members were killed or went missing after forced mobilization, Havryshko said war does not produce Russian casualties in isolation, arguing that every Russian soldier killed in battle comes at a cost paid in Ukrainian blood as well. She said Europeans who celebrate rising Russian casualty figures often overlook the parallel toll on Ukrainian soldiers —

killed, wounded, maimed or missing — and on their families.

Havryshko went further, accusing some European commentators of channeling an “obsessive hatred of Russians” through Ukrainian suffering, describing this as the instrumentalization of Ukrainians rather than genuine solidarity with them. She said Ukrainian soldiers should not be reduced to instruments for satisfying others’ moral outrage while their own losses — missing fathers, widowed wives, and children growing up without parents — are ignored.



The post concluded by urging those who publicly call for “more Russians” to be killed to consider the corresponding Ukrainian losses that would accompany such demands, and questioned

whether such commentators truly value Ukrainian lives or merely see Ukrainians as a means to an end.

The thread has generated significant engagement online, with reactions

divided between those who share Havryshko’s criticism of the framing and others defending the original question as reflecting legitimate support for Ukraine’s war effort.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
181,310.28	181,430.02
Day's High	Day's Low
182,347.50	180,820.22
Index Value	Change
31,747,859,349	-119.74
Percentage	Time
-0.07%	10 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,862.50	-38.59
Percentage	Time
-0.35%	10 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,898.62	-138.31
Percentage	Time
-0.26%	10 Aug, 1:55 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,970.22	+1,363.51
Percentage	Time
+2.08%	10 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.41	197.89
Bahrain Dinar	734.98	745.18
Canadian Dollar	197.01	201.95
China Yuan	38.15	38.90
Danish Krone	42.75	43.35
Euro	321.09	324.85
Hong Kong Dollar	35.26	36.26
Indian Rupee	2.75	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.6999	1.7976
Kuwaiti Dinar	885.59	895.65
Malaysian Ringgit	67.05	68.25
NewZealand \$	162.01	165.08
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	721.80	732.95
Qatari Riyal	75.08	76.10
Saudi Riyal	74.10	75.20
Singapore Dollar	216.70	220.10
Swedish Korona	28.40	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.90	347.30
Thai Bhat	8.50	9.10
U.A.E Dirham	76.15	77.15
UK Pound Sterling	374.25	378.35
US Dollar	278.50	278.75

Google Shares
Tips for Smart
Shopping
Through Search



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Google has shared practical tips to help consumers shop smarter during major sale events by using digital search tools to find suitable products, compare prices and make more informed purchasing decisions.

According to Google, AI Mode in Search can help shoppers handle detailed fashion-related queries by providing information on products, local stores, delivery options and customer ratings. Consumers can use natural-language searches to compare options without browsing multiple websites.

Google Lens can also be used to compare prices by taking a photo or uploading a screenshot of a product. The tool searches for visual matches across the web, helping users check prices and availability.

The company said Circle to Search allows users to identify clothing and other products directly from images on their screens by circling or tapping an item. Shoppers can then find similar products and refine searches through follow-up queries.

Google also encouraged consumers to focus on quality and product longevity. It recommended using Search and Lens to research fabric composition, production practices and sustainability certifications.

The company said informed shopping could help consumers build durable wardrobes while reducing unnecessary purchases and contributing to lower textile waste.

Meezan Bank Crosses PKR 3
Billion in Disbursements Under
Government's Ghar Ho Tu Apna
Housing Programme

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's premier Islamic bank, has surpassed PKR 3.05 billion in cumulative disbursements under the federal government's flagship affordable housing initiative, the Wazir-e-Azam Apna Ghar Programme – Ghar Ho Tu Apna (GHTA), the bank announced.

Through its Easy Home financing product, the bank has enabled 490 families to become homeowners via fully Shariah-compliant financing, in line with the government's broader push for affordable housing and financial inclusion.

The bank said the milestone reflects growing customer preference for its Islamic housing finance solutions, supported by its extensive branch network and dedicated housing finance teams across the country.

Beyond disbursements already made, Meezan Bank has approved more than



3,000 housing finance applications under the GHTA programme, with a cumulative approved value exceeding PKR 22.557 billion. The bank noted that this strong approval

pipeline points to rising demand for Shariah-compliant home financing and sets the stage for substantially higher disbursements as customers complete their property trans-

actions.

Commenting on the development, Ahmed Ali Siddiqui, Group Head – Consumer Finance & Digital Banking at Meezan Bank, said affordable home ownership remains one of the bank's key strategic priorities. He noted that crossing PKR 3 billion in disbursements under the programme reflects customer trust and the bank's commitment to genuine Shariah-compliant housing finance, adding that with over 3,000 approved applications in the pipeline, the bank intends to keep supporting the government's affordable housing agenda and help more Pakistani families own homes through Islamic financing.

As Pakistan's leading Islamic bank, Meezan Bank said it remains focused on expanding access to affordable housing through Shariah-compliant financial solutions, aiming to strengthen its housing finance portfolio while contributing to the growth of Pakistan's housing sector and wider economy.

MOU signing ceremony

Lahore: MoU Signed at the Federal Ministry of National Health Services to Establish Modern 10-Bed Children's Emergency Unit at Sheikh Zayed Hospital on Monday.



Bank Alfalah, WWF-Pakistan Hold
Mangrove Plantation Drive

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Bank Alfalah, in collaboration with WWF-Pakistan, organized a mangrove plantation drive at the WWF-Pakistan Wetland Centre in Karachi to mark Pakistan's Independence Day.

The activity was held under Alfa Forest, Bank Alfalah's digital initiative through the Alfa App, which enables customers to contribute to tree plantation through their banking transactions. Bank Alfalah employees, WWF-Pakistan representatives, environmental experts and volunteers participated in the plantation activity.

According to the bank, more than one million of its 1.4 million active Alfa App customers have participated in the initiative, enabling the plantation of a mangrove tree on their behalf.

Speaking on the occasion, Bank Alfalah Chief Digital Officer Muhammad Yahya



Khan said technology could play an important role in driving positive environmental change. He said the partnership with WWF-Pakistan was helping translate customers' collective participation into practical conservation efforts.

WWF-Pakistan Senior Director-Programmes Rab Nawaz said mangroves helped protect coastlines, capture carbon and support livelihoods, appreciating the bank's commitment

Pakistan Must Adopt
Chinese Digital Models
to Boost Economy:
PCJCCI

Commerce Desk

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

Speaking at a think tank session at PCJCCI, he said Pakistan needed to transition from a conventional industrial economy to a technology-enabled digital economy to achieve sustainable growth, increase exports and enhance global competitiveness.

He stressed that integrated computing hubs and

modern data centers could provide the foundation for artificial intelligence, big data analytics, cloud computing, blockchain and smart manufacturing.

Adeel Munawar highlighted China's national computing hubs and suggested that Pakistan establish similar digital infrastructure in major commercial and industrial centers, including Lahore, Karachi, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Peshawar, Quetta, Hyderabad, Islamabad and Gilgit-Baltistan.

He urged prioritizing energy-efficient data centers, regional digital clusters, high-speed broadband, 5G, fiber-optic networks and digital skills to create jobs and promote innovation.

foodpanda
Collaborates with itel
Pakistan to Enhance
Rider Connectivity and
Digital Access

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a shared commitment to digital inclusion and rider welfare, foodpanda has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with itel Pakistan to equip eligible delivery riders with smartphones at zero cost. This strategic collaboration is designed to provide foodpanda's rider network with accessible digital tools, making their daily shifts smoother and more efficient.

Engineered specifically for the unique demands of life on the road, itel Pakistan has introduced the itel Power 80, a smartphone designed with special cushioned corners, shockproof

cage frame durability and long-lasting performance in mind. Featuring IP68 & IP69, enabling the phone to be waterproof and dust-proof, and 2-metre drop resistant along with other features built to support riders through demanding work environments.

This partnership stands as another significant step forward in foodpanda's ongoing effort to uplift and support the rider community. By collaborating with forward-thinking technology brands like itel Pakistan, foodpanda continues to invest in practical solutions that bridge the digital gap and directly enhance the everyday experience of its delivery partners.

Lucky Investments
Awarded Highest Asset
Manager Rating AM1

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Lucky Investments Limited has been awarded AM1, the highest Asset Manager Rating by the Pakistan Credit Rating Agency Limited (PACRA), less than one and a half years after commencing operations in April 2025.

The rating reflects PACRA's highest assessment of an asset

manager's governance, investment and risk management, operational excellence, internal controls, financial strength and institutional capabilities.

Since its launch, Lucky Investments has emerged as a rapidly growing Islamic asset management company, crossing Rs126 billion in assets under management (AUM). The company has also launched a

diversified range of mutual and pension funds, introduced the Lucky Funds mobile application, expanded its nationwide presence and developed strategic partnerships to promote Shariah-compliant investment solutions.

Lucky Investments CEO Mohammad Shoaib, CFA, described the AM1 rating as an extraordinary milestone and said it reflected the



trust of investors and stakeholders.

He said the company remained committed to strong governance, fiduciary responsibility, investment excellence and Shariah compliance.

Shoaib added that Lucky Investments would continue expanding its digital services and branch network while contributing to Pakistan's Islamic capital markets, financial inclusion, savings and investment growth.

Auto Tariff Policy Must Balance Consumer Interest, Local Industry: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance Mian Zahid Hussain on Monday called for a balanced automobile tariff policy, warning that abrupt reductions in duties on completely built-up (CBU) vehicles could weaken local manufacturing, discourage investment and accelerate deindustrialisation.

He said tariff reforms should promote competition and affordable vehicles while encouraging localisation, technology transfer, exports and industrial growth rather than increasing depend-

ence on imported finished vehicles.

Mian Zahid said the proposed Automobile Policy 2026-31 should link tariff incentives with measurable targets for localisation, exports, technological upgrading, fuel efficiency and vehicle safety. He noted that passenger-car sales rose from 112,203 units in FY2024-25 to 155,631 units in FY2025-26, but the industry was still operating below its estimated installed capacity of around 500,000 vehicles annually.

He said the automobile sector supported thousands of parts manufacturers and provided significant employment, adding that dismantling domestic



supply chains could take years to rebuild.

The business leader also expressed concern over rising used-vehicle imports and urged stronger regulatory oversight to protect consumers from prolonged delivery periods, arbitrary price increases and “on-money” practices.

He called for immediate finalisation of the delayed Automobile Industry Development and Export Policy 2026-31 after consultations with industry, consumers and economic experts.

He stressed that Pakistan should move beyond vehicle assembly towards engineering, component manufacturing, electric-vehicle technology and regional exports.

Shaheen, Shadab, Saim, Sahibzada set to fight out for National Cricket Champions Cup Glory from 11 August On Tuesday. PCB Official

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Al Batal Presents University of Lahore National Cricket Champions Cup 2026-27 is set to commence from Tuesday 11 August with Pakistan Greens, Gold, Whites and Blues locking horns across seven 50-over contests at the Multan Cricket Stadium. Shaheen Shah Afridi, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub and Shadab Khan will be in charge of the four teams with set playing XIs and three reserves each.

On the opening Day On 11 August Pakistan Greens and Pakistan Whites will be up against each other. The matches will begin at 3pm with the toss taking place at 2.30pm. The tournament will be broadcast live on PTV Sports, live-streamed on Tapmad, Tamasha in Pakistan and on PCB YouTube channel outside of Pakistan.

Former Test cricketer Salman Butt, former Pakistan women's player Aiman Anwar, renowned Urdu commentator Tariq Saeed will call the action in the tournament along with Ali Younis and Raja Asad.

Teams and officials arrived in Multan on 8 August and took part in day and night practice sessions at the Inzam-ul-Haq High Performance centre and Multan Cricket Stadium. Former Test cricketer Ijaz Ahmed Jnr is Shadab's Pakistan Greens' head coach, former Test captain Mishbah-ul-Haq is Shaheen's Pakistan Gold's head coach.

Among other head coaches are Iqbal Imam (Pakistan Whites, captain Saim Ayub) and Aizaz Cheema (Pakistan Blues, captain Sahibzada Farhan). Pakistan white-ball head coach Mike Hesson, who will also observe the matches in the tournament, held a meeting with the coaching staff of all teams on Sunday and briefed them on Pakistan's preparation plan for the ICC Cricket World Cup 2027.

A prize pot of PKR 8.15 million has been set aside for the Domestic cricket season 2026-27 opener. The winner of the tournament will be awarded PKR 5 million, while the runners-up will get PKR 2.5 million. Player of the tournament, best batter, best bowler and best wicketkeeper will get PKR 100,000.

The four captains took part in trophy unveil and pre-series press conference on Monday. Faheem Ashraf stood in for Shadab Khan for media duties and trophy unveil.

Shaheen Shah Afridi, Captain Pakistan Gold

Most of the players are coming on the back of a two-month white-ball camp in National Cricket Academy so I feel they are good preparation wise and in terms of their fitness. The purpose of arranging



this tournament is to unearth multiple options for various roles before the ODI World Cup.

We want to have backups identified and ready by the time the mega event inches closer. Players have their roles set with the bat and ball in the tournament so that we can test their skills in different situations.

Saim Ayub, Captain Pakistan Whites

“I’m excited to lead Pakistan Whites in the tournament. All players in the team are important for me and in the end, we will try to win the tournament. You need to be patient in the 50-overs format, sometimes you have to shift gears quickly as momentum shifts.”

Sahibzada Farhan, Captain Pakistan Blues

“I’ve gained experience of leadership in a few previous domestic seasons. Our team comprises of exciting young players and have done well as various levels. Myself and Hasan Ali will bring in the experience and it is going to be exciting to take the field alongside some of the highly talented players.

Faheem Ashraf, Pakistan Greens

It is good to see the best pool of players playing together in this event. It will help develop good communication between players when they take the field. Pakistan Greens are a balanced with all the aspects being covered, hopefully we will perform better.

Given below are the teams along with their support staff and tournament schedule:

Squads in alphabetical order

Pakistan Greens

Shadab Khan (captain), Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Farhan Yousuf, Mehran Mumtaz, Mohammad Hasnain, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Omair Bin Yousuf, Saad Baig (wicket-keeper) and Sameer Minhas

Reserves: Arshad Iqbal, Mohammad Amir Khan and Mohammad Suleman

Support staff

Ijaz Ahmed Jnr (head coach), Rehan Riaz (bowling coach), Khurram Shahzad (batting coach), Fahad Iqbal (fielding coach)

Pakistan Whites

Saim Ayub (captain), Ali Raza, Haris Rauf, Hasan Nawaz, Khushdil Shah, Mohsin Riaz, Mohammad Wasim Jnr, Saad Masood, Shah Nawaz Dahani, Shahzaib Khan and Usman Khan (wicket-keeper)

Reserves: Saqib Khan, Danish Aziz and Haseebullah Khan

Support staff

Iqbal Imam (head coach), Samiullah Niazi (bowling coach), Faisal Athar (batting coach), Saqib Faqir (fielding coach)

Pakistan Blues

Sahibzada Farhan (captain), Ahmed Daniyal, Akif Javed, Arafat Minhas, Hasan Ali, Maaz Sadagat, Mohammad Irfan Khan, Rohail Nazir (wicket-keeper), Sufyan Moqim, Taimur Khan (wicket-keeper) and Tayyab Tahir

Reserves: Muhammad Salman,

Mubasir Khan and Muhammad Faiq

Support staff

Aizaz Cheema (head coach), Fahad Masood (bowling coach), Naveed Latif (batting coach), Hussain Khosa (fielding coach)

Pakistan Gold

Shaheen Shah Afridi (captain), Abdul Samad, Abdul Subhan, Faisal Akram, Haider Ali, Kamran Ghulam, Mohammad Nawaz, Muhammad Akhlaq (wicket-keeper) Muhammad Imran, Saad Khan and Shamyul Hussain

Reserves: Razaullah, Muhammad Imran Jnr and Khawaja Muhammad Nafay

Support staff

Mishbah-ul-Haq (head coach), Waqas Ahmed (bowling coach), Riffatullah Mohmand (batting coach), Atiq-ur-Rehman (fielding coach)

Tournament schedule: (All matches at Multan Cricket Stadium; All matches to begin at 3pm)

11 August – Pakistan Greens v Pakistan Whites

12 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Gold

13 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Whites

14 August – Pakistan Gold v Pakistan Greens

15 August – Pakistan Blues v Pakistan Greens

16 August – Pakistan Gold v Pakistan Whites

18 August – Final (Top two teams)

Experts Call for Data-Driven Reform as Pakistan’s Population Crosses 240 Million



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Policymakers, health experts and researchers on Monday called for urgent, evidence-based reforms in Pakistan's population policies, saying the country's demographic realities required coordinated action across health, education, economic planning and human development.

Speaking at a seminar titled “Population Growth and Policy Coherence in Pakistan: Challenges and Pathways” organized by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI), experts highlighted institutional gaps, regional implementation challenges and inadequate long-term financing.

Keynote speaker Prof. Dr. Shezad Ali Khan, Executive Director of the Health Services Academy, said population dynamics could not be addressed through healthcare alone. He noted that a significant proportion of pregnancies were unwanted and warned of the health consequences associated with unsafe abortions.

He also highlighted Pakistan's high stillbirth and neonatal mortality rates and said unmet family planning needs were largely linked to structural resource shortages rather than community resistance.

Dr. Khan called for an indigenous “population welfare” narrative, with greater emphasis on maternal nutrition, birth spacing and breastfeeding, alongside education and economic planning.

NIPSS's Rabia Zafar urged a shift from reactive planning towards projection-based policies and targeted investment in human capital, health and skills.

UNFPA's Farah Ashraf stressed unified data governance and stronger coordination between federal and provincial institutions.

SDPI Deputy Executive Director (Policy) Dr. Shafqat Munir said Pakistan's reproductive-age women and working-age population were projected to increase substantially by 2050, requiring sustained investment and stronger institutional coordination.

He urged policymakers to move from dialogue to implementation through evidence-based, multi-sectoral strategies.

Pakistan hockey team reaches Netherlands for World Cup 2026

LAHORE: Pakistan national hockey team reached Netherlands to take part in the FIH Men's Hockey World Cup 2026 to be hosted jointly by Netherlands and Belgium from August 15 to August 30.

Pakistan Men's team was warmly received at the airport by the Pakistan embassy in Netherlands. Earlier on Sunday, Pakistan team departed for the Netherlands from Lahore's Allama Iqbal International Airport. Prior to departure, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has already transferred a total of PKR 20 million as foreign daily allowance to the bank accounts of the players and coaching staff in advance. “The federation's objective is to free the players from financial concerns and provide them with the opportunity to focus their full attention on their performance on the field,” said a press release by the PHF.

Trump Called His Critics Traitors

Continued from Page 4

The administration is reportedly seeking still more funding even after repeatedly claiming that Iran's armed forces and nuclear capabilities had been destroyed.

This contradiction lies at the center of the crisis. If Iran was defeated within the opening weeks, why has the war continued for more than 140 days? If its military was rendered ineffective, why are American forces still intercepting Iranian missiles and drones? If its nuclear capability was obliterated, why is further war funding necessary to prevent Iran from obtaining a weapon? And if American stockpiles remain plentiful, why do multiple reports describe severe shortages and years-long replacement schedules?

A democratic government answers such questions with evidence, congressional scrutiny and public accountability. It does not answer them by threatening reporters or hunting officials who reveal uncomfortable information.

Calling critics traitors may intimidate dissenters, but it cannot manufacture Patriot interceptors, reopen the Strait of Hormuz or transform strategic failure into victory. Nor can patriotic language conceal the deepest irony of this war: those warning that America has been weakened are being accused of betraying America by the very leader whose decisions may have produced that weakness.

The real test of loyalty is not obedience to Donald Trump—or to any president. It is fidelity to the Constitution, protection of American lives and honest stewardship of national power. A president who confuses personal loyalty with patriotism risks becoming the danger against which the constitutional oath was designed to protect the republic.

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276th Corps Commanders Conference Highlights Unified Resolve Under the Field Marshal’s Leadership

Continued from Page 4

undertake all measures necessary to ensure the availability and protection of Pakistan's rightful share of water. The forum reaffirmed the clear guidance given in the National Security Committee's directive of April 24, 2025, making it absolutely clear that this is a top-tier national priority that transcends political differences. The military leadership pledged, in the strongest possible terms, to implement all measures directed by the civilian government, in full alignment with the deep aspirations and emotional sentiments of the Pakistani people. They vowed to safeguard this critical national lifeline, which is essential for agriculture, industry, and the daily lives of millions of citizens. This

strong and unprecedented stance on water rights highlights the military's expanded role in protecting not just the country's geographical borders but also its vital national resources. The declaration that Pakistan will secure its legitimate water share by all means necessary is one of the strongest warnings yet issued on this issue. It underscores the seriousness and urgency with which the military views any form of threat to the country's water supply, recognizing it as a matter of existential importance for the nation's survival and long-term prosperity.

Reaffirming Pakistan's longstanding, principled, and unwavering position on the Kashmir dispute, the forum described the territory as the country's “jugular vein,” a metaphor that under-

scores its critical importance to Pakistan's national identity and security. The commanders rejected and strongly condemned the ongoing, systematic human rights violations and the unilateral demographic engineering that is being carried out in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. They reiterated Pakistan's unyielding diplomatic, political, and moral support for the brave Kashmiri people who are struggling for their legitimate rights. The forum emphasized that true and durable regional stability hinges entirely on granting the Kashmiri people their inalienable right to self-determination, in accordance with the numerous United Nations Security Council resolutions that have been passed on this matter.

This unwavering support for the Kashmir cause demonstrates that the military remains absolutely steadfast in its commitment to this core national issue, viewing it as integral to Pakistan's raison d'être and its vision for regional peace. The conference's firm and unambiguous reiteration of this position serves as a clear and direct message to India and the international community that Pakistan will not waver, dilute, or compromise its support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination, regardless of international pressure or changing geopolitical dynamics.

In his concluding and highly inspirational remarks, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir directed the commanders to follow up expeditiously and

with utmost dedication on the multi-domain transformation plan. This comprehensive plan is aimed at fundamentally modernizing the armed forces to meet the evolving and increasingly complex character of modern warfare, which now encompasses a dangerous blend of conventional military conflicts, sub-conventional insurgencies, hybrid information wars, cyber-attacks, and economic coercion. He called upon the commanders to maintain the absolute highest standards of vigilance, operational readiness, and professional excellence across all ranks. The strong emphasis on a multi-domain transformation signifies a forward-looking, proactive, and future-ready approach,

ensuring that Pakistan's military remains a cutting-edge, technologically advanced, and formidable force. Such a force is capable of not only deterring any potential adversary but also decisively defeating any aggression, whether it comes in the form of a conventional military assault or a subversive covert operation. The conference, therefore, was not just a periodic review of current threats and challenges. It was a comprehensive and detailed strategic planning session that set the course for the armed forces for the coming years. It ensured that the military remains prepared for any eventuality, from high-intensity conventional warfare to low-intensity asymmetric conflict.

The 276th Corps

Commanders' Conference, held under the dynamic, visionary, and resolute leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, thus stands as a powerful, enduring, and inspiring symbol of national unity, strategic foresight, and the indomitable, unbrokeable spirit of the Pakistani nation and its brave armed forces. The Pakistani nation's profound, deep-rooted, and abiding love for its army is a powerful testament to the remarkable, selfless, and heroic services that these brave men and women are performing daily. Under this visionary leader, they continue to ensure the country's sovereignty, integrity, and dignity against all odds, facing every challenge with unparalleled courage and unwavering dedication to the motherland.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, meeting with U.S. Chargé d'Affaires H.E. Ms. Natalie Baker at the Finance Division to discuss Pakistan–U.S. economic cooperation and investment.



Photo: PID

US Envoy, Finance Minister Discuss Bilateral Economic Cooperation, Investment

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday held a meeting with U. S. Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker to discuss Pakistan-US economic relations, investment opportunities and measures to further strengthen bilateral cooperation.

During the meeting at the Finance Division, the finance minister briefed the

U. S. diplomat on his recent visit to Washington, where he held discussions with the US Treasury Secretary, senior officials of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the US International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) and the US Export-Import Bank (EXIM).

He highlighted opportunities for enhanced financial cooperation, investment and financing for commercially viable projects in Pakistan.

The minister also briefed

Ms Baker on Pakistan's engagement with the Office of the US Trade Representative (USTR) regarding the Pakistan-US reciprocal trade framework. He said considerable progress had been achieved and expressed Pakistan's interest in advancing the framework through greater market access, increased exports and bilateral trade.

The two sides discussed expanding the participation of US financial institutions in

Pakistan, particularly through investment-ready projects and suitable financing structures.

They also exchanged views on ports and logistics, energy, telecommunications, digital technology and artificial intelligence. Senator Aurangzeb said the government was working to create a conducive environment for private-sector investment and welcomed growing interest from US companies.

Ms Baker appreciated

Pakistan's efforts to maintain economic stability amid regional challenges and rising energy prices. She reaffirmed US support for Pakistan's economic reform agenda and expressed continued interest in strengthening bilateral trade, investment and economic cooperation.

The finance minister reiterated the government's focus on fiscal discipline, export-led growth, structural reforms and strengthening foreign exchange reserves.

Four Parties Split Early Leads in Final Phase of AJK Elections

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Unofficial and unverified results from the third and final phase of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections on Monday showed candidates from four different political parties leading in the four constituencies where polling was held.

According to preliminary results, Awami Dast-o-Bazoo Party candidate Sajid Abbasi was leading in LA-14 Bagh, Jamaat-e-Islami's Muhammad Khan was ahead in LA-15 Bagh, Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidate Sardar Qamar was leading in LA-16 Bagh, while Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) candidate Mohsin Aziz was ahead in



LA-17 Haveli.

In LA-14, Abbasi had secured 11,819 votes from 67 polling

stations, while Muslim Conference candidate Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan had 4,317 votes.

In LA-15, Muhammad Khan was leading with 8,783 votes from 81 polling stations,

followed by PPP's Sardar Ziaul Qamar with 5,128 votes.

In LA-16, PPP's Sardar Qamar led with 2,626 votes from 17 polling stations, narrowly ahead of PML-N's Sardar Mir Akbar with 2,548 votes.

In LA-17, PML-N's Mohsin Aziz had 2,870 votes against PPP's Faisal Rathore with 2,530 votes.

Polling ended at 5pm and counting began immediately afterwards. Around 460,000 voters were eligible to vote, while 72 candidates contested the four seats.

The results remain unofficial and may change as counting continues and final results are announced by election authorities.

PPP rejects alleged rigging in AJK elections, vows to continue protest

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leaders on Monday rejected alleged rigging in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections and vowed to continue raising their voice against what they described as electoral irregularities.

Addressing a joint press conference in Islamabad, Senator Palwasha Khan, along with PPP leaders Shahla Raza and Sharmila Faruqi, alleged that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) was involved in electoral manipulation. Palwasha Khan claimed that the party had evidence to substantiate its allegations.

She alleged that government minis-



ters had announced electoral victories as early as noon, saying an attempt was being made to form an AJK govern-

ment through alleged rigging. She said the PPP would not remain silent and would continue its protest until

accountability was ensured.

Palwasha Khan also alleged that statements by ministers about having seats "in their pockets" had contributed to unrest in Kashmir. She criticised calls for President Asif Ali Zardari's resignation and urged political opponents to respect constitutional institutions.

Shahla Raza said elections were important as they provided voters an opportunity to exercise their constitutional right to choose representatives. She said respecting the vote also required exposing alleged electoral irregularities.

The PPP leaders maintained that the party would continue pursuing the matter through political and democratic means.

Ishaq Dar, Canadian FM discuss regional situation, Makkah Defence Agreement



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held a telephone conversation with Canadian Foreign Minister Anita Anand on Sunday, during which the two sides discussed regional and international developments as well as matters of mutual interest.

According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, the two foreign ministers discussed the recent Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye.

Ishaq Dar briefed his Canadian counterpart on the key aspects of the agreement and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve, along with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, to contribute towards

regional peace, stability and security.

The two sides also exchanged views on developments arising from the situation between the United States and Iran.

Dar also raised the situation in occupied East Jerusalem, particularly the recent ministerial meeting on Jerusalem held in Jordan.

The two foreign ministers appreciated the regular and continued contacts between Pakistan and Canada and discussed various issues of mutual interest.

Dar also thanked Anita Anand for her recent visit to Pakistan.

The two sides agreed to maintain close contact and continue consultations on matters of mutual interest and regional developments.

Railways strengthens freight, passenger services in KP, Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ministry of Railways has taken several measures to strengthen freight and passenger services in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, aiming to improve connectivity, facilitate trade and provide economical transportation.

An official told APP that a state-of-the-art dry port had been established at Azakhel in Peshawar Railway Division to support bulk transportation of goods between Peshawar and other parts of the country.

Brake and luggage vans attached to major trains are facilitating farmers and small traders in transporting vegetables, fruits, dairy products

and other consignments at affordable rates. Regular freight services from Balochistan are also transporting minerals, livestock feed and agricultural products to Karachi and other markets.

Currently, four Mail/Express trains operate from Peshawar, while two connect Quetta with Peshawar and Karachi.

The ministry plans to engage provincial governments to introduce additional passenger services. It aims to increase Pakistan Railways' market share from 8 to 30 percent through financial sustainability, private-sector participation, governance, technology and innovation. Revenue reached a record Rs94 billion in 2024-25.

Peaceful Polling Underway in Third Phase of AJK Elections: CEC

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Polling was continuing peacefully on Monday in four constituencies of Bagh and Haveli during the third phase of the 2026 Azad Jammu and Kashmir general elections, Chief Election Commissioner Justice (retd) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal said.

Talking to Dunya News, the chief election commissioner said voter turnout in Bagh and Haveli had crossed 50 percent, while complaints received from political parties and candidates were being addressed promptly through the relevant authorities.

He said polling arrangements in all four constituencies were being continuously monitored to ensure a smooth

and transparent electoral process.

Justice (retd) Mughal said one person died after suffering cardiac arrest outside a polling station in DhirKot. Necessary action was taken following the incident, he added.

In another incident in Haveli, a man allegedly attempted to flee from a polling station with election bags. Police arrested the suspect and recovered the bags, which were subsequently handed back to polling staff.

The chief election commissioner said polling resumed after the election material was returned to the relevant officials.

He said election authorities were maintaining close monitoring and security arrangements to ensure peaceful completion of polling in the remaining constituencies.

Constitution guarantees equal rights to minorities: Ayaz

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has paid tribute to the valuable contribution of minority communities to the development and progress of Pakistan, saying that minorities living in the country are rendering valuable services in all walks of life, including education, health, defence and trade.

Ayaz Sadiq said that under Article 25 of the Constitution of Pakistan, all citizens are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of law without discrimination on the basis of colour, race, sex or religion.

He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of National

Minorities' Day, observed across the country every year on August 11 with national spirit and enthusiasm.

Ayaz Sadiq said that National Minorities' Day provides an opportunity to reaffirm the collective resolve to promote mutual respect, tolerance, interfaith harmony and national unity.

He said that in his historic address to the Constituent Assembly on August 11, 1947, the Father of the Nation, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, had articulated the fundamental principle that every citizen was free to practice his or her religion, visit places of worship and live according to his or her faith.