



A Leading National Daily



Daily The Spokesman

فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن من نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ مجھ سے میرے والد نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا کہ ہم سے سعید بن ابی سعید نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ میں نے رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے سنا، نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ جسے اپنے آپ کو اس کی روزی میں فراموش کرے۔ کی عمر واری جائے تو وہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کی عمر واری ہے۔
(صحیح بخاری: حدیث نمبر 5985)
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UN appoints Major General Jawwad Qazi as new Force Commander of MINURSO

UN Secretary General António Guterres has appointed Major General Jawwad Ahmed Qazi of Pakistan as the new Force Commander of the UN Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara (MINURSO). According to a details shared by Permanent Mission of Pakistan to the UN on its social media handle X.



PM awards Shaza Fatima certificate for role in youth employment policy

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif awarded Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja a certificate of appreciation for her role in preparing the National Youth Employment Policy and for her services to the sector. Shaza Fatima played a key role in securing approval for the country's first National Youth Employment Policy, which has now come into effect.

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PM Shehbaz invites Norwegian investment in oil & gas sector, calls for enhanced bilateral trade

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday invited Norwegian companies to invest in Pakistan's oil and gas exploration sector, while calling for enhanced bilateral trade between the two nations. During a meeting with the Foreign Minister of Norway, Espen Barth Eide, here at the Prime Minister House, PM Shehbaz welcomed the visiting dignitary and expressed satisfaction over the warm and cordial ties between Pakistan and Norway, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. He appreciated Norway's bilateral cooperation with Pakistan, particularly in the areas of education, skilled labour, climate resilience and technology, while reiterating Pakistan's strong desire to further expand trade relations between the two countries.



During discussions on the regional and global situation, the prime minister appreciated Norway's principled stand in support of Palestine and thanked the country for its consistent support to Pakistan's regional peace efforts in the Gulf. The Norwegian foreign minister thanked the prime minister for the

warm reception and conveyed the good wishes of Norwegian Prime Minister, Jonas Gahr Store. He praised Pakistan's significant role in regional peace efforts and reaffirmed Norway's interest in further strengthening bilateral ties across diverse sectors, particularly appreciating the positive contribution

Pakistan, Norway agree to expand defence, security relations

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation from the Kingdom of Norway, led by Minister of Foreign Affairs Espen Barth Eide called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ) in Rawalpindi on Thursday. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security and bilateral



relations between Pakistan and Kingdom of Norway were discussed. Field Marshal Asim Munir highlighted Paki-

stan's perspective on global peace and regional stability underscoring the importance of cooperation and collaborative efforts to address common security challenges. The visiting dignitary appreciated professional role played by the Pakistan Armed Forces in promoting regional peace and stability. Both sides reiterated their resolve to further strengthen bilateral ties and expand engagements in defence and security domains.

Finance Minister, PDA Chairperson Discuss Digital Finance and Data Integration

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has stressed the need to accelerate the digital transformation of

Pakistan's financial and regulatory systems, with greater access to digital finance, improved data interoperability and support for emerging business models. He expressed these views Continued on Page 7

Yadgar-e-Fatah Inaugurated in Islamabad on Eve of Independence Day

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday inaugurated Yadgar-e-Fatah in Islamabad, a monument built to

honour the sacrifices of Pakistan's martyrs and commemorate the country's victory in Marka-e-Haq. The inauguration ceremony was attended by Chief of Defence Forces and Chief Continued on Page 7



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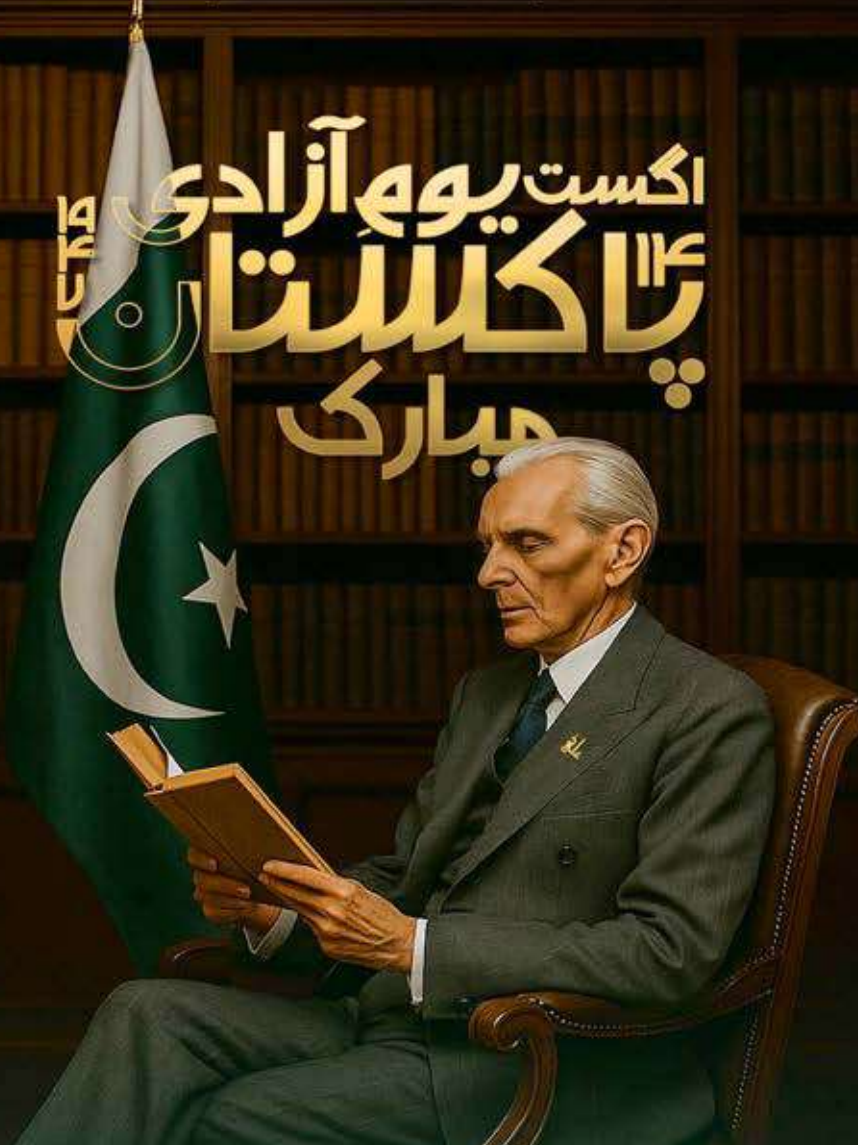
ان شاء اللہ وہ دن دور نہیں جب ساری ریاست جموں و کشمیر آزاد ہو کر مملکت

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IS PASKIBRA Oath-Taking Ceremony

Marks Indonesian Youth’s Commitment to Nation ahead of Independence Day

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Embassy of the Republic of Indonesia in Islamabad held an Oath-Taking Ceremony for its Flag-Hoisting Squad (PASKIBRA), comprising Indonesian students in Pakistan, ahead of Indonesia’s 81st Independence Day on August 17, 2026. The ceremony, led by Defence Attaché Colonel Henru H. Susanto, was attended by Indonesian diplomats, Embassy staff and students.

The annual PASKIBRA tradition, observed across Indonesian institutions worldwide, aims to nurture national pride among youth. Squad members swore commitment to Indonesia’s four national pillars—Pancasila, the

Unitary State, the 1945 Constitution and Unity in Diversity.

Colonel Susanto called training civilian students abroad challenging but praised their enthusiasm and discipline. He noted this year’s squad is predominantly female, highlighting Indonesian women’s equal role in nation-building regardless of gender.

Mawiya, a squad member from Lahore Grammar School, expressed pride and nervous excitement about participating in the Embassy’s Independence Day celebrations. Dinda, from the International Islamic University Islamabad, described a month of daily training from 10am to 4pm, calling it tiring but rewarding.

The squad underwent roughly



one month of intensive training focused on formations, coordination and flag-handling procedures to ensure precision during the ceremony. The

event concluded with a reception featuring traditional Indonesian cuisine, celebrating the country’s culinary heritage alongside the diplomatic occasion.



Pakistan Youth Carnival Kicks Off at UMT

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The two-day Pakistan Youth Carnival 2026 began at the University of Management and Technology (UMT), organized by Volunteers Leading Governance (VLG) with the Sitara-e-Hilal Foundation. Former Minister and VLG Founder Ibrahim Murad chaired the inaugural ceremony, joined by CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana, CEO Huawei FSI Pakistan Kanwal Cheema, and CEO Almarah Foundation Mahnoor Lila.

Murad said 66% of Pakistan’s population is young, making education, skills and empowerment a national priority, and called for collaboration between institutions and civil society. He described AI as an opportunity rather than a threat, urging youth to adopt future-oriented skills.

Cheema stressed continuously updating skills to match AI-driven changes across sectors. Rana highlighted self-confidence as key to leadership, urging hard work and consistency. Lila encouraged youth to identify and channel their potential positively.

The carnival featured a panel on youth’s role in nation-building, alongside workshops, career sessions, cultural events and competitions, with awards given for outstanding performances.



Babur’s Legacy Can Bridge Uzbekistan, Pakistan, Says Uzbek Ambassador

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Uzbek Ambassador Alisher Tukhtaev said Mughal Emperor Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur was a statesman, poet and thinker whose legacy continues connecting Central and South Asia. Speaking at a roundtable titled “Zahiruddin Muhammad Babur: A Shared Civilizational Legacy and a Bridge for Pak-Uzbek Relations,” organized by the Baburi Forum, he called Babur’s autobiography, Baburnama, one of the medieval Muslim world’s most valuable historical works.

The event was attended by Parliamentary Secretary Farah Naz Akbar, Deputy Chairman of the Babur International Public Foundation Rustam Mamasoliev, Baburi Forum President Ramzan Mughal, and scholars from



both countries. Tukhtaev said Babur represents a shared civilizational

legacy influencing architecture, literature, governance and culture across South Asia, describing the connection as broader than one dynasty.

He noted Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations, rooted in centuries of exchange, are entering a dynamic new stage under President Shavkat Mirziyoyev and PM Shehbaz Sharif, with the strategic partnership reflecting deepening trust. He called shared heritage “an important asset for the future,” offering opportunities for academic cooperation, tourism and cultural exchange.

Ramzan Mughal said the forum aims to narrow cultural gaps between the nations and introduce youth to shared literature and history. The conference concluded with renewed commitment to strengthening scholarly and cultural ties.

PTCL and WWF Join Hands for ‘Plant for Pakistan’ Tree Plantation Drive

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: As part of its Independence Day campaign ‘Pakistan Jitna Jawan’, Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) in collaboration with the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF-Pakistan) organized a tree plantation drive under the banner ‘Plant for Pakistan’ at the PTCL Training Academy.

PTCL CEO Nadeem Khan and WWF-Pakistan Senior Director Programmes Rab Nawaz, along with executive management and PTCL staff, participated in the activity. The drive brought together employees and leadership in a joint effort to promote a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable Pakistan.

The ‘Plant for Pakistan’ initiative reflects PTCL’s broader commitment to reducing its environmental impact and achieving net-zero carbon emissions. It supports efforts toward a climate-resilient future.

Through ‘Pakistan Jitna Jawan’,



PTCL aims to celebrate Pakistan’s spirit and resilience by highlighting actions for a connected, empowered,

and sustainable nation. The drive reinforces that a better Pakistan is built not only through progress and

innovation, but also through shared responsibility to protect the environment.

PMML Continues Nationwide Independence Day Celebrations

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) continued its nationwide Independence Day celebrations for the third consecutive day, organizing rallies, caravans, conferences and flag-hoisting ceremonies under the slogan “Azadi ka paigham: La ilaha illallah, Muhammad ur Rasulullah ka nizam.”

In Lahore, PMML leaders and workers participated in a flag-hoisting ceremony at Regal Chowk and reaffirmed their commitment to Pakistan’s sovereignty, stability and prosperity. The Pak-Kashmir Lawyers Forum also held an Independence Day event highlighting constitutional values, national unity and the rule of law.

In Faisalabad, the Muslim Women League organized a rally attended by women and children, while similar activities were held in several other cities. Youth rallies, student programmes and Independence caravans were also organized in Islamabad, Karachi, Gujranwala, Sialkot, Gujrat and other areas.

All-Parties Conferences in Sialkot and Gujranwala brought together political and religious representatives to emphasize national unity and Pakistan’s stability.

Independence Day is a day of national unity and renewed commitment: Chaudhry Mazhar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Foreign Delegation Committee of the Islamabad Estate Agents Association, Chaudhry Mazhar, congratulated the nation on Pakistan’s Independence Day and said that August 14 reminds us of the unforgettable sacrifices and struggles of our forefathers. Pakistan is a great blessing from Allah Almighty, and we must all play our role in ensuring its development, prosperity and stability. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah (RA) and the workers of the Pakistan Movement made unparalleled sacrifices for the achievement of an independent homeland. Chaudhry Mazhar said that in the present era, economic stability, national unity, peace and security are the fundamental needs of the country. The government, business community and the people should work together to strengthen the national economy and put Pakistan on the path of progress.



Independence Day Opportunity to Renew Commitment to Unity, Progress: Riaz Pirzada

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Housing and Works Mian Riaz Hussain Pirzada has said August 14 is an occasion to celebrate Pakistan’s independence and renew the national commitment to unity, stability and progress.



Addressing the 4th Annual Shah Shams Tabrez Conference and flag-hoisting ceremony at the Royal Institute of Medical Sciences, he appreciated the services of the Pakistan Army and other national institutions for safeguarding the country’s sovereignty and security.

The minister congratulated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and paid tribute to the armed forces and personnel for their services to the nation.

He said Independence Day was an opportunity to remember the sacrifices of national heroes, martyrs and veterans and reaffirm the resolve to make Pakistan stronger, prosperous and stable.

Regarding the creation of new provinces, Pirzada said decisions should be based on public needs and national interest rather than merely increasing the number of provinces. He stressed the importance of an effective local government system for better governance and delivery of basic services.

The minister also planted a sapling, highlighting the importance of environmental conservation.

IRI holds seminar on National Security and Social Cohesion at IIUI

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamic Research Institute (IRI) of the International Islamic University Islamabad (IIUI) organised a seminar on “National Security and Social Cohesion,” followed by a flag-hoisting ceremony as part of Independence Day celebrations.



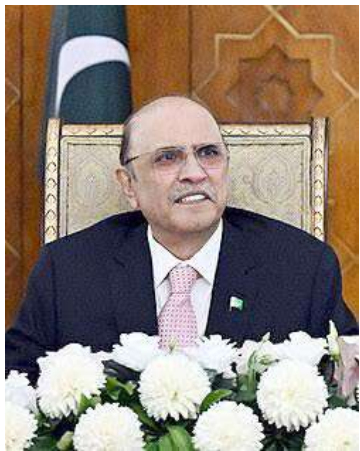
Vice President (Administration and Finance) IIUI Prof. Dr. Abdul Rashid, who was chief guest, highlighted the significance of Independence Day and paid tribute to those who sacrificed for Pakistan’s creation. He urged the nation to reflect on its achievements, shortcomings and future direction while following Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah’s principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline.

President Zardari Calls for Unity, Reforms and Youth Empowerment on 79th Independence Day

President Asif Ali Zardari, in his message on Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, extended greetings to Pakistanis at home and abroad and paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, leaders of the Pakistan Movement, and those who sacrificed their homes and livelihoods for the creation of Pakistan.

The President said independence was not only a historic achievement but also a responsibility for every generation to build a stronger, safer and more prosperous country. He paid tribute to the armed forces, law-enforcement agencies and police personnel, as well as their families, for their sacrifices in defending Pakistan against external aggression and terrorism.

He said Pakistan believed in resolving disputes through dialogue



and diplomacy and would continue supporting regional peace, stability and de-escalation efforts.

President Zardari stressed the

need for economic, governance and social reforms, improved education and skills, stronger institutions and greater opportunities for young people. He described Pakistan's youth as the country's greatest strength and urged greater investment in their potential.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and called for a peaceful settlement in accordance with UN resolutions and their aspirations.

The President also urged Afghanistan to prevent its territory from being used against Pakistan, warning that the country's armed forces were capable of defending national interests.

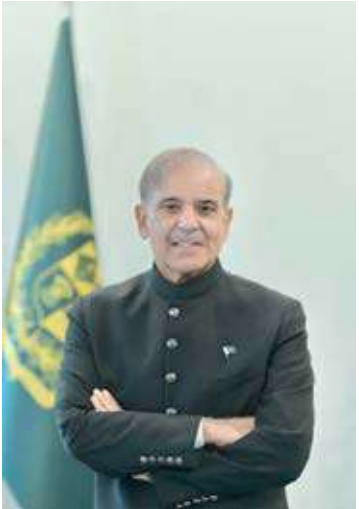
He called upon all Pakistanis to contribute to national progress and prayed for peace, prosperity and a brighter future for the country.

PM Shehbaz Felicitates Nation on 79th Independence Day, Reaffirms Kashmir, Palestine Support

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has felicitated the nation on Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and other leaders whose vision and sacrifices led to the creation of Pakistan.

In his message, the prime minister reaffirmed the constitutional guarantee of equal rights and freedom for all citizens without discrimination. He said Pakistan had overcome difficult economic challenges and was moving towards development, citing an increase of \$11.3 billion in overseas remittances over the past two years as a sign of confidence in government policies.

He identified modern informa-



tion technology, innovation-driven industrial and agricultural devel-

opment, employment generation, education and skills development as key national priorities.

PM Shehbaz also paid tribute to the armed forces and law-enforcement personnel for their sacrifices in defending the country. He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to protecting national interests and promoting regional and global peace.

The prime minister reiterated Pakistan's support for the people of Kashmir and Palestine, stressing that the Kashmir dispute should be resolved diplomatically in accordance with UN resolutions, international law and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. He urged all political and social segments to promote national unity and work collectively for Pakistan's progress and prosperity.

Russian Ambassador extends warm greetings to Pakistan on Independence Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador to Pakistan Albert P. Khorev has extended warm and heartfelt felicitations to the people of Pakistan on the occasion of Independence Day, praising their courage, determination and strong spirit.

In his congratulatory message, the ambassador said the national day reflected the Pakistani people's commitment to their country and the ideals of its founding fathers. He noted that Pakistan had followed its own path of development over the decades.



Highlighting Pakistan-Russia relations, Ambassador Khorev described the ties between the two countries as traditionally friendly and based on mutual respect. He said Russia and Pakistan shared a long history of cooperation and maintained constructive contacts across

various fields.

The ambassador expressed confidence that both countries would continue working together to strengthen mutual understanding and expand bilateral cooperation for the benefit of their peoples. On the occasion, he wished Pakistan peace, stability and prosperity and prayed for the health, success and well-being of its people.

Concluding his message, Ambassador Khorev extended his greetings to Pakistan and its hardworking people, saying: "Pakistan Zindabad! Rus-Pak Dosti Paindabad!"

AJK PM Links Independence Day with Makkah Defence Agreement, Reaffirms Support for Kashmir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said Pakistan's Independence Day carries added significance this year following the Makkah Defence Agreement signed by Pakistan, Türkiye and Saudi Arabia on August 7, 2026.

In his Independence Day message, he said the agreement would strengthen joint

defence, mutual security and coordinated deterrence among the three countries, with an attack on one being treated as an attack on all. Rathore paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and the Muslims of the subcontinent whose sacrifices led to the creation of Pakistan on August 14, 1947. He said the country's independence fulfilled the aspi-

rations of Muslims for a separate homeland based on their distinct identity and values.

The AJK premier also expressed solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, saying Pakistan would continue providing political, moral and diplomatic support to their struggle. He expressed confidence that the Kashmiri people would ultimately achieve freedom from Indian control.



79
YEARS
جشن آزادی

سرسبز وشاداب
پاکستان
SARSARZ O SHADAB
PAKISTAN

پاکستان یوم آزادی مبارک!

14 اگست کے پر مسرت موقع پر مسین تمام اہل وطن کو دل کی گہرا نیوں سے یوم آزادی کی مبارکباد پیش کرتا ہوں۔

اللہ تعالیٰ ہمارے پیارے پاکستان کو ہمیشہ امن، ترقی، خوشحالی اور استحکام عطا فرمائے اور ہمیں اپنے وطن کی خدمت، اتحاد اور بھائی چارے کے جذبے کے ساتھ آگے بڑھنے کی توفیق دے۔

پاکستان زندہ باد!

ملک جاويد اختر
چیئر مین مہرپہ ٹاؤن

Long live Pakistan!

Happy Independence Day
یوم آزادی مبارک

Rector
Prof. Dr. Rashid Masood

On Independence Day, let us unite through education, innovation, integrity, and hard work to build a prosperous, peaceful, and technologically advanced Pakistan.

National Textile University (Federally Chartered) Weaving Excellence into Pakistan's Textile Future. For more than six decades, National Textile University (NTU), Faisalabad, has remained at the forefront of textile education, research, innovation, and industry development in Pakistan. Established through the vision of textile industrialists and the Government of Punjab, NTU has evolved from the Institute of Textile Technology, established in 1959, into a federally chartered multidisciplinary university. Its mission is to create socio-economic impact through quality education, impactful research, sustainable innovation, and strong academia-industry linkages. Today, NTU offers undergraduate, master's, and doctoral programmes spanning textile and polymer engineering, textile technology, apparel and clothing, fashion and textile design, artificial intelligence, computer science, business, management, and related disciplines. Its specialized research facilities support work in nonwovens, nanomaterials, composites, analytical testing, comfort, sustainability, and emerging textile technologies. A major milestone is the Pak-Korea Technical Textile Center (PKTC), supported by US\$13.93 million in KOICA funding, aimed at strengthening value addition in textiles across 12 areas, with completion targeted for June 2027. Alongside this initiative, NTU promotes technology transfer, entrepreneurship, industry support, and commercialization through platforms and research centres such as the Pakistan Textile Portal and Business Incubation Centre. Collaboration is a defining strength of NTU. The University maintains extensive partnerships with leading Pakistani universities, textile industries, and international institutions across Germany, Japan, the UK, China, Korea, Turkey, France, the Czech Republic, and other countries. These collaborations support joint research, student and faculty development, internships, training, technology transfer, and international knowledge exchange. Pakistan's textile and apparel sector remains the backbone of the national export economy, contributing approximately 55-60% of merchandise exports. Textile and apparel exports reached approximately US\$17.89 billion in FY2024-25. NTU contributes to this sector by producing engineers, technologists, designers, managers, and researchers who support productivity, quality, innovation, sustainability, compliance, and value addition across the textile value chain. Looking ahead, NTU is committed to positioning Pakistan at the forefront of high-value, sustainable, technical, digital, and innovative textiles. Through education, research, international collaboration, industry engagement, and technology transfer, the University continues to serve as a strategic national institution. NTU is not only educating the professionals who will lead Pakistan's textile industry—it is helping to weave a stronger, more competitive, sustainable, and innovation-driven future for Pakistan.

National Textile University Faisalabad

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Independence Day: A Celebration and a Responsibility

Pakistan will celebrate its 79th Independence Day tomorrow with traditional zeal, national enthusiasm and renewed commitment to the ideals that inspired the Pakistan Movement. Across the country, flag-hoisting ceremonies, prayers, seminars, cultural programmes and other activities will mark the historic occasion. From Islamabad to provincial and district headquarters, streets and buildings have been decorated with national flags, reflecting the patriotic spirit of the nation.

Independence Day, however, should be more than a ceremonial occasion. It provides an opportunity to reflect on the journey Pakistan has undertaken since August 14, 1947, and to consider whether we are fulfilling the vision of the country's founders. The sacrifices of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Allama Muhammad Iqbal and countless workers of the Pakistan Movement created the foundation of an independent homeland. It is now the responsibility of every citizen to strengthen that foundation.

The real meaning of independence lies in building a country where citizens enjoy justice, equality, security and opportunities for a better life. Political differences should not be allowed to weaken national unity or divert attention from the challenges facing the country. Pakistan needs political stability, strong institutions, economic discipline and good governance to move forward.

Economic progress must remain at the heart of the national agenda. A stronger economy requires investment in local industry, agriculture, exports, technology and human resources. Young Pakistanis, who represent a major portion of the population, need quality education, technical skills and meaningful employment opportunities. Their energy and talent can transform the country's economic and technological future if provided with the right opportunities.

The occasion also calls for greater social responsibility. Citizens can contribute to national development by respecting laws, paying taxes honestly, protecting public property, keeping their surroundings clean and rejecting intolerance and division. Patriotism should be demonstrated through responsible conduct and hard work, not merely through slogans and celebrations.

The people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will also observe Independence Day with patriotic enthusiasm, reaffirming their connection with Pakistan and remembering the sacrifices made for freedom. The Kashmir issue remains an important national concern, and Pakistan must continue its diplomatic and political efforts for a peaceful resolution in accordance with international commitments.

As the national flag rises tomorrow, Pakistanis should renew their pledge to build a peaceful, prosperous and united country. The best tribute to the founders and martyrs of Pakistan is to work sincerely for its progress.

Independence is our heritage; safeguarding and strengthening Pakistan is our collective responsibility.

Inside America’s Sham-Marriage Industry

America’s enduring attraction has created both lawful immigration and lucrative criminal markets—but the exposure of an alleged 1,000-marriage network reveals the scale, sophistication and international complications of exploiting the American dream.

The United States remains one of the world’s most desirable destinations. Its economic opportunities, constitutional protections, respected universities and comparatively open society attract people from virtually every region. For those living with poverty, unemployment, political repression or limited educational opportunities, America represents not merely another country but the possibility of rebuilding an entire life.

Most immigrants pursue that aspiration lawfully through employment, family sponsorship, humanitarian protection, investment or diversity programs. Others enter without authorization, overstay visas or manipulate legal channels. Among the most serious abuses is marriage fraud: entering a marriage solely to evade immigration law and secure permanent residence.

The scale of that underground business was exposed on August 12, 2026, when the Justice Department unsealed an indictment in the Southern District of New York charging 11 people with operating what prosecutors called one of the largest marriage-fraud conspiracies in American history.

According to the indictment, the network arranged more than 1,000 sham marriages—primarily between Chinese nationals and U.S. citizens—from at least 2016 through July 2026.

The charges remain allegations, and all

defendants are presumed innocent until proven guilty. Nevertheless, the indictment provides an extraordinary picture of how organized immigration fraud can transform marriage—a deeply personal and legally protected institution—into a multimillion-dollar commodity.

According to prosecutors, foreign nationals paid facilitators as much as \$100,000 for a marriage and assistance in obtaining lawful permanent residence. Participating Americans allegedly received up to \$30,000, usually in installments tied to milestones such as marriage, application submission, immigration interview and green-card approval. Recruiters could earn approximately \$5,000 for every U.S. citizen enlisted.

The difference between the customer’s payment and the citizen spouse’s compensation reportedly financed a sophisticated supporting network. Prosecutors say facilitators, recruiters, assistants, marriage officiants, attorneys, tax preparers, insurance providers and other service providers helped manufacture the appearance of genuine married life.

This was allegedly not a casual exchange between two individuals. The network operated across New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, Kentucky, Tennessee, Georgia and Florida—and internationally in China and Vanuatu. Prosecutors believe the enterprise collected tens of millions of dollars over approximately a decade.

Some couples allegedly met for the first time immediately before obtaining their marriage licences. They then

participated in staged ceremonies, wore wedding clothes and posed for photographs designed to create a convincing romantic history. Joint bank accounts, utility services, insurance policies and tax returns were reportedly established to manufacture documentary evidence of a shared household.

When USCIS interviews were required, participants were allegedly coached on how to answer questions and conceal the true nature of their relationships. Prenuptial agreements reportedly waived claims involving property, inheritance, child support and other marital rights—allowing participants to remain financially and personally separate while presenting themselves to the government as genuine couples.

Marriage to an American citizen does not automatically guarantee citizenship. The foreign spouse must submit documentation, undergo security checks and establish that the marriage is genuine. If the marriage is less than two years old when residence is approved, the immigrant generally receives conditional permanent residence and must later petition to remove those conditions.

The route is nevertheless attractive because spouses of U.S. citizens are classified as “immediate relatives” and are not restricted by the annual numerical limits governing many other family-preference categories. Criminal organizations consequently see marriage as a valuable immigration channel worth infiltrating.

Marriage fraud can carry up to five years’ imprisonment and a \$250,000

fine. The defendants also face a charge of conspiring to encourage unlawful residence, carrying a maximum sentence of 10 years. Fraudulently obtained permanent residence can be revoked, while citizenship secured through concealed fraud may potentially be challenged.

The consequences could extend far beyond the 11 defendants. The Justice Department says at least hundreds of allegedly fraudulent green-card applications were submitted. Investigators must now examine more than 1,000 marriages, including cases involving people who may already possess permanent residence or citizenship.

Enforcement, however, must remain evidence-based. The prosecution of one allegedly fraudulent network must not stigmatize legitimate Chinese immigrants or international couples. Most marriage-based immigration applications are genuine, while Chinese immigrants have contributed substantially to American science, medicine, education, technology and commerce.

The willingness to pay as much as \$100,000 demonstrates the continuing financial and psychological power of the American dream. Some customers may draw upon family savings, sell property or accumulate debt because they calculate that lawful employment and long-term residence in the United States will eventually repay their investment.

Other Chinese migrants have taken the dangerous zouxian, or “walking the line,” route through Latin America and the U. S.-Mexico border. More than 37,000 Chinese nationals were encountered at the southwest border in fiscal year 2023—a dramatic rise from earlier years. Social-media instructions, transit

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

From the Dawn of Freedom to the Frontiers of the Future

Pakistan’s Independence Day is not merely an annual ritual of flags and parades; it is a reaffirmation of a promise, the promise that this nation will remain Secure, Sovereign and Second to None in the defence of its skies and its destiny. In our era, that promise finds its sharpest expression in Pakistan Air Force, whose ascendancy under the visionary leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaher Ahmed Baber Sidhu has transformed the green and white of the national flag into living realities

of Strength, Sacrifice and Strategic maturity. Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah envisioned Pakistan Air Force as “an efficient Air Force, Second to None,” a Force rooted in Discipline, Character and Professionalism rather than mere numbers or spectacle. From the early struggles of a fledgling Service to its storied heroics in 1965 and beyond, PAF has treated the Quaid’s words not as a slogan, but as an oath, a guiding principle that every generation of “Men in Blue” must earn afresh in the crucible of operations. On Independence Day, when the Pakistani flag ascends the mast, that oath is renewed and today it is embodied with exceptional clarity in the leadership philosophy of ACM Sidhu. His assumption of command in 2021 was not a routine transition, but the beginning of a doctrinal and technological renaissance. In a volatile regional environment, he charted a deliberate strategic choice: PAF would no longer chase prestige platforms for headlines; it would build war-winning capabilities, integrated across Land, Air, Space, Cyber and the Electromagnetic Spectrum. Under his leadership, the Force shifted from platform-centric thinking to Kill Chain-centric

doctrine, the ability to Find, Fix, Track, Target, Engage and Assess across multiple domains with Speed, Precision and Coherence. Radars, AEW&C platforms, fighter aircraft, UAVs, UCAVs, ground-based air defences and long-range strike assets have been fused into a single, intelligent system designed to See First, Decide First and Strike First. The leadership renaissance did not merely modernize hardware; it recalibrated mindset, making PAF a Multi-Domain Air Force that understands the character of 21st century warfare and is prepared to stay ahead of it.

Today, Pakistan commands a formidable fleet of modern combat aircraft including JF-17 Thunder III, F-16 variants and the newly inducted J-10C fighters, backed by advanced munitions including long-range Air-to-Air missiles, hypersonic weapons and precision strike warheads. In the near future PAF is poised to operate multiple fifth-generation platforms including the indigenous stealth program, PFX, ushering in an era of doctrinal flexibility and stealth-enabled deterrence. Yet, numbers alone do not define dominance. PAF has invested heavily in Force Multipliers, specialized Electronic Warfare platforms, space and cyber capabilities binding Air, Ground, Naval and digital battle space into a unified Kill Chain. The integration of UAVs and UCAVs including MALE/HALE systems, loitering munitions and Manned-Unmanned teaming concepts has expanded the battlespace, enabling persistent ISR, standoff strikes and saturation of hostile defences. Through entities such as National Aerospace Science and Technology Parks, PAF has nurtured an ecosystem where radars, EW suites, AI systems, drones and avionics

are conceived, tested and fielded on Pakistani soil. NASTP has shifted Pakistan from import dependency to innovation-driven autonomy, ensuring that sanctions, embargoes or shifting allegiances cannot derail the nation’s aerospace trajectory. The green of our flag now finds tangible expression in indigenous capability, while the white symbolizes a technologically inclusive Pakistan, ready to partner but determined to stand on its own feet.

PAF’s operational maturity was visible in Operation Swift Retort, when enemy provocation was met with calibrated, precise aerial responses that restored deterrence without reckless escalation. The engagements signalled a Force that would impose heavy costs on the enemy, shape the narrative and remain professionally restrained in the face of provocation. The crucible, however, came in May 2025 when a numerically superior adversary launched its military campaign targeting innocent civilians, confident in the supposed invincibility of platforms like Rafale and S-400 Air Defence Systems, PAF faced not just aircraft, but a doctrine of coercion. What followed has been described by international analysts as one of the longest and most intense Beyond-Visual-Range air battles of the 21st century. Engaging through a fully integrated Kill Chain, PAF J-10C and JF-17 Block III fighters networked with AEW&C platforms and supported by ground and space-based sensors, established structured dominance over the battlespace, executing Kinetic Operations that resulted in the downing of 04 x Rafales, 01 x MiG-29, 01 x Mirage 2000, 01 x Su-30MKI and a multi million dollar UAV, all without sustaining own losses. Simultaneously, the neutralization of critical components of the adversary’s S-400 system, particularly its fire-control radars, underscored the vulnerability of even advanced

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Multan Chamber Polls Heat Up as Industrialist Backs Friends Group

The Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry elections are scheduled to be held in September. These elections are not merely about choosing office-bearers; they will also determine the direction of Multan’s industry, trade, exports and investment in the years ahead. A strong and respected chamber is not only the voice of its members but can also influence regional economic development, government policymaking and the overall business environment. The Multan Chamber currently has two categories of voters. There are 361 registered voters in the Corporate Class and 696 in the Associate Class. These members will decide the institution’s future leadership, making transparency in the electoral process and accuracy of the voter list critically important.

The recent preliminary scrutiny at the Multan Chamber, during which 49 companies were declared fake and removed from the voter list, is a serious matter. The action suggests that weaknesses existed within the electoral system that allowed ineligible entities to become part of the process. It raises several fundamental questions: Who registered these companies? Who was responsible for verifying them? On what basis were they granted voting rights? And why did these irregularities remain undetected for so long?

The issue is not limited to a few allegedly fake companies; it concerns the chamber’s credibility, transparency and the confidence of the

business community. If any attempt was made at any stage to influence the elections through bogus votes, it would not merely constitute a violation of rules and regulations but would also cast a shadow over the integrity of the entire democratic process.

Although the initial action is a positive development, simply removing a few companies from the voter list is not enough. A comprehensive forensic audit, independent and impartial investigation, identification of those responsible and action in accordance with the law are necessary. Institutional confidence can only be restored when accountability is impartial and the rules are applied equally to everyone.

It is also important to recognise that a chamber of commerce is far more than an electoral institution. It is the principal representative body of the business community. Its responsibilities include protecting the interests of industrialists, traders and exporters; effectively raising business concerns before the government; creating a favourable environment for investment; promoting exports and access to new markets; facilitating trade delegations; guiding investors; assisting in the resolution of business disputes; providing policy recommendations to the government; promoting economic research and skills development; and helping local industries compete according to international standards.

Successful chambers around the world are not merely institutions that lodge complaints.

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Awareness, Responsible Citizenship Vital for Safe Homeland: Speakers

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan's security and progress depend not only on strong defence but also on an aware, united and responsible citizenry, speakers said at a Hamdard Naunehal Assembly session titled "An Aware Nation, a Safe Homeland."

Director Karachi Garrison Education System Brig (r) Ahmed Farrukh, speaking as chief guest, said Pakistan was blessed with abundant natural resources, fertile agricultural land, beautiful landscapes and talented people. He urged young people to use modern technology, the internet and social media positively to expand their knowledge and abilities.

Hamdard Foundation Pakistan President Ms Sadia Rashid, who presided over the session, said children's education and character-building were essential for a safe, strong and prosperous Pakistan. She stressed that responsible citizens should respect law, truth, discipline, others' rights and the environment while prioritising national interests.

She said Hamdard Naunehal Assembly was continuing Shaheed Hakim Mohammed Said's mission by developing children's public speaking, leadership, tolerance and democratic



Young speakers also called for unity, discipline, responsible voting, respect for democratic institutions and verification of information before accepting it as truth.

Two NTU Students Secure Top 10 Positions in PM's Youth Excellence Award



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Two female students of the National Textile University (NTU) have secured positions among the Top 10 recipients of the Prime Minister's Youth Excellence Award 2026, bringing distinction to the university.

Amina Nadeem of Faisalabad Business School and Maira Sheikh of the School of Engineering and Technology received the honour at a ceremony held at the Convention Centre, Islamabad, presided over by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

The students were selected from more than 600 nominees representing 250 universities across Pakistan. Their selection was facilitated

by the NTU Advisor Students Office under the supervision of Rector Prof. Dr. Rashid Masood.

Speaking on the occasion, Prof. Dr. Rashid Masood congratulated the awardees, their families and respective departments. He said the achievement reflected NTU's academic excellence and commitment to students' holistic development.

The Prime Minister also announced the National Youth Employment Policy at the ceremony, aimed at creating greater opportunities for young Pakistanis.

The NTU community welcomed the achievement as a source of pride, saying the two students would inspire and represent the potential of Pakistan's youth.

Faisalabad Photographers hold Independence Day Rally

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A Pakistan Independence Day rally was organized in Faisalabad under the auspices of the Professional Photographers Association and Lyallpur Photographers Association to celebrate the country's 79th Independence Day.

The rally, led by Chairman Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi and other office-bearers, started from Hameed Palace Hotel and passed through D Ground before concluding at the same venue. A large number of photographers and association



members participated in the event. An Independence Day cake was also cut during the ceremony. Speaking on the occasion, Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi said Pakistan's defence achievements, growing diplomatic importance and expanding international relations were opening new opportunities for the country.

The participants expressed solidarity with Pakistan and prayed for the security, stability and prosperity of the country. Special prayers were also offered for the Pakistan Armed Forces and the Muslim Ummah.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Turkiye to Emerge as Global Guardians of Muslims: Zafar Bakhtawari

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Addressing an Independence Day ceremony at the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said Pakistan was created not only as an independent homeland but also to protect Muslims worldwide, support the oppressed, and establish a strong, sovereign Islamic state.

He cited Pakistan's progress from becoming a nuclear power to the Makkah Agreement as steps toward this responsibility. Under Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and PM Shehbaz



Sharif, he said Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Turkiye would emerge as protectors of Muslims globally.

Bakhtawari called Pakistan an ideology and centre of hope, stressing that youth, education, and character are key to national development. He praised nursing as a noble profession and urged students to combine expertise with ethics and service.

Speakers including ICCI VP Irfan Chaudhry and Principal Zeenat Islam highlighted youth, education, and patriotism. Students presented cultural performances and patriotic songs, reflecting national unity and love for Pakistan.

Freedom can be safeguarded through unity, rule of law and economic stability, Zahid Bakhtawari

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Zahid Bakhtawari, Vice President of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board, said that August 14 reminds the nation of the sacrifices of the Pakistan Movement and the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

In his Independence Day message, he said that safeguarding freedom requires national unity, respect for the Constitution and law, institutional stability, political tolerance and economic strength. He stressed prioritizing national interests over personal and group interests and promoting trust between citizens and state institutions.

Zahid Bakhtawari said that a strong economy, business and industrial growth, investment, employment opportunities and support for the business community are essential for Pakistan's progress. He also called for greater focus on education, healthcare, technology and youth skills.

He urged citizens to demonstrate patriotism through cleanliness, civic discipline, environmental protection and compliance with laws, reaffirming that Pakistan's sovereignty, security and freedom must never be compromised. "Pakistan is our identity and the future of our generations. Every citizen must play a role in its development, stability and prosperity."

Pakistan Zindabad!



Awaam Pakistan Leaders Urge National Unity and Youth Empowerment on Independence Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Awaam Pakistan Party Central Vice President Chaudhry Inam Zafar and Additional General Secretary Hafiz Usman Abbasi congratulated the nation on Independence Day, saying August 14 reminds us of the sacrifices for Pakistan and the struggle of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

They called freedom a great blessing and a collective responsibility, stressing the need for national unity, democracy, rule of law, merit, transparency, and economic stability to build a strong and prosperous Pakistan.

The leaders emphasized empowering youth through education, jobs, and decision-making roles, and said national interests must come before political differences. They reaffirmed commitment to positive, welfare-focused politics for a stable, democratic Pakistan. Pakistan Zindabad!



Auqaf Punjab vows to restore Data Darbar Hospital as Leading Eye Care Centre



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta announced that state-of-the-art eye-care facilities will be introduced at Data Darbar Eye & General Hospital to restore its reputation as a leading ophthalmic centre and provide modern healthcare close to home.

He was speaking at the inauguration of the "Independence Day Free Medical Camp", organized jointly by the Auqaf Department Punjab, Dr. Riaz Bhutta Welfare Society, and Family Medicine Education Centre.

Dr. Bhutta said Pakistan was achieved through the sacrifices of leaders like Quaid-e-Azam, Allama Iqbal, and the Ali brothers, and the martyrs of the Pakistan Army. He stressed that citizens must perform their duties with honesty and dedication to ensure progress and prosperity.

He noted that since the hospital's handover to Auqaf, the closed General Ward was reopened and a new Maternity & Child Care Ward was made operational. The hospital will be upgraded into a comprehensive healthcare institution, with staff urged to show professionalism and compassion.

He later reviewed the camp and prayed for Pakistan's security and prosperity.

ADC Directs Enhanced Monitoring to Improve Cleanliness in Attock



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (Municipal Services) and Managing Director Suthra Punjab Agency Attock Anil Saeed reviewed cleanliness arrangements across Attock city and directed officials to strengthen field monitoring.

During his visit to various areas, he inspected sanitation conditions, checked staff attendance and reviewed facilities and machinery being used for cleanliness operations. He also met sanitation workers, heard their concerns and assured them of steps to address their genuine problems.

Later, he chaired a meeting to review ongoing sanitation operations, manpower, machinery and administrative matters across the district. He directed officers to regularly monitor field activities and assess the performance of sanitation staff and equipment.

Anil Saeed also inspected cleanliness vehicles, checked their logbooks, utilization and condition, and ordered that all machinery remain fully functional to avoid disruption.

He said providing citizens with a clean and healthy environment was a key government priority and warned that negligence in sanitation operations would not be tolerated.



Transport Strike Threatens Economy, Dialogue Needed to Resolve Issues: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Business leader Mian Zahid Hussain has expressed concern over the nationwide goods transporters' strike, warning that it is turning into a major economic crisis affecting importers, exporters, industries, traders and consumers across Pakistan.

He said the strike, ongoing since August 8, has disrupted the movement of over 400,000 goods vehicles, with transporters protesting issues including withholding tax, toll taxes, axle-load regulations, customs matters and frequent diesel price changes. He urged the government and transporters to engage in immediate negotiations, stressing that prolonged disruption is increasing economic losses.



According to Mian Zahid, importers are facing severe difficulties as container movement from Karachi Port and Port Qasim remains affected, while demurrage, storage and handling charges continue to rise. He called for

a complete waiver of such charges for importers and exporters during the strike period.

He noted that export containers worth around \$500 million are reportedly stranded, causing shipment delays, additional costs and the risk of losing international buyers. Industries, particularly the textile sector, are also facing shortages of raw materials and transportation bottlenecks.

Mian Zahid further warned that a planned petroleum dealers' strike could worsen supply chain disruptions and inflation. He urged the government to form a high-level negotiating committee and appealed to transporters and petroleum dealers to resolve their concerns through dialogue rather than strikes.

Wounds of Partition

At midnight on August 14, 1947, freedom was announced. By morning, millions had lost the address of their loved ones.

79 years later, the politics of Partition are in textbooks. The human part lives in silences at dinner tables, in old letters with no reply, in names whispered once a year.

This was not just a line drawn on a map. It was a line drawn through homes, piercing hearts.

Yesterday he was our neighbour, our beloved friend and today seemed as enemy!!!

In August 1947, trains crossed the new border of India and Pakistan. Some arrived full. Some arrived empty. Some never arrived at all.

Meanwhile, families were left with few hours to decide, who would go, who would stay, what could be carried. Rings was sewn into clothes, with promises of love. House keys were kept in pockets "for when we return."

The separation was instant. A brother in Lahore. A sister in Amritsar. 30 kilometres apart, now two countries. Letters took months. Phone lines didn't exist. Many never found out what happened



Analysis
Munaza Kazmi

to the others.

For decades, the only proof of survival was a name on a refugee list, or a rumour passed by someone on another train.

However, the biggest pain was not only loss of property. It was loss of people.

In camps in Lahore, Delhi, and Karachi, people wrote names on walls, hoping someone would see them: "Looking for Fatima, last seen Jalandhar." Most walls were painted over. The names weren't.

Even today, elderly survivors keep small things, let's say a photograph, a bangle, a school certificate. Not because of value. Because it's the last thing connecting them to someone.

Similarly, at our own home, we have collection of teapots, sarees & jewelled boxes of my Grandma's, all came from Bombay.

Later, doctors and social workers in the 1950s called it "Partition trauma". Sudden crying at train whistles. An inability to throw away old things.

That grief was passed down. Children born in the 60s and 70s grew up hearing, "Don't waste food, we didn't have any on the road" or "Be careful with strangers."

However, the stories were rarely told in full. They came out in pieces — during Eid, during Diwali, when a Bollywood

song played, when someone mentioned "the old house."

The internet has changed one thing: searching. Facebook groups and WhatsApp forwards now say "My grandfather was from Ludhiana, surname XYZ. Does anyone know?"

Sometimes, after 70 years, a reply comes. "That was my nana's cousin." A photo is shared. People cry on video calls with strangers who have the same eyes.

Initiatives like the Kartarpur Corridor and cross-border oral history projects don't erase the past. They give people one more chance to say a name out loud without fear.

Borders are still guarded. Visas are still hard. But the wound that hasn't healed is personal.

Partition didn't just divide land. It divided festivities, funerals, the simple act of visiting. It divided people.

Some Nasreen Bibi, of Rawalpindi reaching 89, still keeps her mother's dupatta. "It smells of nothing now," she says. "But I hold it when I miss her. She stayed behind."

Uday Singh of Chandigarh, who can't remember his street lane, but remembers the Lassi-wala who lives next to his home in Sargoda.

Freedom came. So did absence.

And that is the wound that time has not closed — the space where a loved one should have been.

Inside America's Sham-Marriage Industry

Continued from Page 4

countries and smuggling networks helped facilitate the journey.

China officially opposes irregular migration and says it will accept people verified as Chinese nationals. Its practical cooperation, however, has been inconsistent. Beijing accepted five U. S. charter flights carrying hundreds of deportees during 2024 and initially received approximately 3,000 returnees, but its cooperation subsequently slowed.

By May 2026, more than 100,000 Chinese nationals were estimated to be living in the United States without lawful status. More than 30,000 had final removal orders, while approximately 1,500 remained in immigration detention. Washington consequently considered visa restrictions under Section 243(d) of the Immigration and Nationality Act to pressure Beijing into accepting more verified returnees.

Identity verification and missing travel documents may explain some delays. Wider U. S.-China disagreements over tariffs, technology restric-

tions and Taiwan may also affect cooperation. China has additionally prioritized the return of selected corruption suspects and fugitives through programs such as Operation Fox Hunt while moving more slowly on ordinary immigration cases.

China's National Immigration Administration declares that illegally crossing borders, organizing unlawful migration and transporting people across national boundaries are criminal offences. Police and immigration agencies have been directed to punish migrants where legally applicable while concentrating on planners, smugglers and criminal organizers.

Beijing has also conducted operations against "snakehead" networks operating along China's southwestern frontier and in neighbouring countries. Chinese authorities report dismantling groups involved in illegally transporting citizens as well as telecommunications fraud, online gambling, narcotics trafficking and other transnational offences.

China's strategy is consequently multilayered: criminalize unauthorized crossings, prosecute smugglers, scru-

tinize suspicious departures, disrupt international transit corridors and selectively accept repatriated citizens. Its effectiveness, however, will remain limited unless Beijing consistently receives verified nationals ordered to leave the United States.

America must simultaneously protect legitimate immigration and genuine international marriages while targeting organizations that commercialize them. The answer is neither collective suspicion of Chinese migrants nor tolerance of organized fraud. Where China is preventing unlawful departures and accepts verified returnees; the United States must dismantle fraudulent networks while preserving due process; and transit countries must close smuggling corridors.

Only coordinated enforcement at the source, along the route and at the destination can prevent the American dream from being sold through a staged wedding for \$100,000.

Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Michigan, USA

Ghanaian Delegation Explores Academic Cooperation with Riphah International University



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level Ghanaian delegation visited Riphah International University, Islamabad, to explore new opportunities for academic collaboration, research partnerships and institutional linkages between Pakistan and Ghana.

During the visit, the delegation held discussions with university leadership on cooperation in higher education, health-care education, faculty engagement, student exchanges, joint research and capacity building. The visiting representatives also toured Riphah's academic departments, campuses and healthcare facilities to gain insight into its educational infrastructure, professional programmes and research activities. Both sides expressed interest in developing sustainable mechanisms for cooperation that could create opportunities for students, faculty members and researchers. Areas discussed included academic exchange programmes, collaborative research, sharing of institutional expertise and development of joint academic initiatives.

An official dinner was hosted by Riphah International University Chancellor Hassan Muhammad Khan in honour of the delegation. Senior academic and administrative officials attended the event, which provided an opportunity for further dialogue.

University officials emphasized that international partnerships were essential for promoting innovation, knowledge exchange and quality higher education. The engagement is expected to pave the way for future cooperation and strengthen people-to-people and educational ties between Pakistan and Ghana.

Yadgar-e-Fatah Inaugurated in Islamabad on Eve of Independence Day

Continued from Page 1

of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Air Staff Air Marshal Zaheer Ahmad Babar Sidhu and Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf. Senior civil and military officials, federal ministers, governors, chief ministers and foreign diplomats also participated.

Contingents of the armed forces, civil armed forces and police from

all provinces, as well as Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, presented a guard of honour while the national anthem was played.

The monument features five archways representing the five pillars of Islam and five pillars of Pakistan—government, military, media, people and national ideology. It also incorporates references to the armed forces, cyber defence and space warfare.

A documentary on Pakistan's mili-

tary history was screened, followed by a light and sound show depicting important episodes from the country's history and military achievements, including visuals related to the May 2025 conflict with India.

The monument's permanent projection-mapping system combines light, music and moving visuals with its architecture, making it a prominent national landmark on the eve of Independence Day.

PM Faisal Rathore Extends Ministerial Tenure of Naqvi and Chughtai Until New Government Formed

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, in exercise of the powers conferred under Article 15(2) of the Interim Constitution of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 1974, has approved the continuation of Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi and Dewan Ali Khan Chughtai as Ministers with effect from August 3, 2026, until the formation of the new government. The Services & General Administration Department has issued a notification to this effect.

PM Shehbaz invites Norwegian investment ...

Continued from Page 1

of the Pakistani diaspora in Norway.

Prime Minister Shehbaz extended an invitation to the Norwegian prime minister to undertake an official visit to Pakistan.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator

Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, Minister for Climate Change, Dr. Musadik Malik, Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister, Tariq Fatemi, and other senior officials were also present during the meeting.

Finance Minister, PDA Chairperson Discuss Digital Finance and Data Integration

Continued from Page 1

during a meeting with Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA) Chairperson Dr. Sohaib Munir, where the two sides reviewed measures to advance digital transformation across the economy.

The discussions covered digital finance, electronic transactions, financial-data integration, capital-market access, artificial intelligence and digital infrastructure. The Finance Minister emphasized that regulatory frameworks must evolve alongside technological advancements and facilitate wider adoption of digital processes.

The meeting also discussed simplifying customer onboarding,

strengthening data-sharing mechanisms and improving integration between banks and capital markets to increase investor participation.

Aurangzeb highlighted the importance of connecting government data systems to improve policymaking, planning and decision-making through technology and AI. The participants also considered digital assets and tokenization, including potential applications in real estate and investment assets.

The minister appreciated PDA's efforts and called for practical, scalable initiatives through continued coordination among stakeholders to strengthen Pakistan's digital economy.

From the Dawn of Freedom to the Frontiers of the Future

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air defence networks when confronted with a coherent, indigenous operational architecture. The defining feature of the conflict, however, lay beyond attrition metrics, reflecting a mature application of Multi-Domain warfare in which Kinetic and Non-Kinetic effects were seamlessly synchronized across Land, Air, Space, Cyber and the Electromagnetic Spectrum. Through the integration of drones, Electronic Warfare,

AI-enabled decision support, Network-Centric Command & Control and precision strike capabilities, PAF compressed the OODA loop, achieving decision superiority and imposing operational paralysis on the adversary. Secure, indigenous C2 systems enabled real-time data fusion and centralized orchestration, ensuring Disciplined, Lawful and Precise Application of

Force, ultimately demonstrating that modern warfare is decided not by numerical strength alone but by the synergy of Cognition, Integration and Strategie Resolve.

Perhaps most striking was PAF's moral posture. Despite its ability to extend the conflict and inflict deeper damage, the PAF leadership chose calibrated responses, restoring deterrence, safeguarding sovereignty and then creating space for de-escalation. The balance between operational aggressiveness and strategic restraint is the hallmark of professional militaries and the foundation of Pakistan's reputation as a responsible, stabilizing actor in South Asia.

On every Independence Day, when the green and white flag rises against the August sky, it does so over a Pakistan that is still tested, still contested, but increasingly sure of its guardians.

Under ACM Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Pakistan Air Force has evolved into a technologically resurgent, doctrinally sophisticated and morally anchored force that has redefined airpower in the region. Quaid's vision of an Air Force "Second to None" is no longer a distant aspiration; it is a lived reality reflected in indigenization drives like NASTP, in a diversified aircraft & UAV fleet, in integrated Kill Chains & compressed OODA loops and in the capacity to impose strategic paralysis on a numerically superior foe across Land, Air, Space, Cyber and the Electromagnetic Spectrum. As the nation renews its pledge to the ideals of Unity, Faith and Discipline, PAF stands as the sharp edge of that pledge, a Force that will not allow an inch of Pakistan to be violated, that will continue to innovate and adapt and that will remain, in spirit and in capability, Second to None.

Multan Chamber Polls Heat Up as Industrialist Backs Friends Group

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They serve as centres for economic planning, investment promotion, innovation, research, the digital economy, green industry, SME development and the training of young entrepreneurs. The Multan Chamber must move in the same direction. Effective representation requires leadership that understands the business environment, industrial requirements and the needs of the national economy. A successful leader must not only understand the problems of industrialists and traders but also possess the ability to engage effectively with federal and provincial

governments, ministries, regulatory bodies and international trade organisations to find solutions.

The first requirement of leadership is integrity, transparency and an unblemished reputation. Such leadership not only earns the confidence of the business community but also enhances the prestige of the institution. Alongside integrity, visionary leadership is essential to develop long-term strategies for industry, trade, exports and investment while steering the chamber in line with changing global economic trends. An effective leader must rise above personal or group interests and make the

development of the wider industrial and commercial sector the priority. Such leadership should take practical measures to attract new investment, increase productivity, create employment, expand exports and promote technology transfer, research and innovation, artificial intelligence, e-commerce and the digital economy. Similarly, successful chamber leadership builds strong links among the business community, media, educational institutions, government departments and the public. It does not merely identify problems; it presents practical and realistic solutions. This is the kind of leadership that

strengthens institutions and contributes to economic stability.

A historic, agricultural, industrial and commercial city like Multan needs leadership with a vision that goes beyond winning elections and focuses on laying strong economic foundations for future generations. In today's world, success cannot depend solely on conventional trade. It requires modern industry, value addition, exports, digital technology, renewable energy, research and innovation. The chamber must play a leading role in all these areas.

If the Multan Chamber of Commerce is to become a truly

strong, autonomous, transparent and effective institution, clean elections, accountability, merit-based governance and leadership that genuinely represents industry and trade are indispensable. Such leadership can put Multan on the path towards new investment, stronger industry, higher exports, greater economic and sustainable economic growth. The future chamber must be built on transparency, accountability, merit, vision and the national interest.

The current Multan Chamber elections are particularly significant for another reason. A clear contest has emerged between the

Friends Group and the Founders Group, creating a competitive electoral atmosphere in the chamber after several years. According to records published by Daily Times and Customs Today, the 2018-19 elections were also highly controversial. Chaudhry Zulfikar Ali Anjum was among the prominent leaders of the Friends Group at the time. Subsequently, the Secretary Commerce Division declared the 2018-19 elections null and void following objections concerning voter eligibility and complaints of electoral irregularities.

The Multan Chamber of

Commerce elections are generating greater excitement this year, particularly with prominent industrialist Chaudhry Zulfikar Ali Anjum throwing his weight behind the Friends Group. His support has added further momentum and intensity to what is shaping up to be a closely watched contest.

Ultimately, the real test is not which group wins the election, but whether the chamber emerges as a stronger, more transparent and more effective institution capable of representing Multan's business community and advancing its economic interests.

Meating

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a meeting with Chinese Delegation led by Mr. Liu Daxiu on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan-China Friendship Enduring Bond of Brotherhood: Gillani

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani has described Pakistan-China relations as an enduring bond of brotherhood based on mutual trust, respect and unwavering support, saying the two countries have consistently stood by each other during difficult times.

Addressing a seminar

in Islamabad attended by Chinese Ambassador Jiang Zaidong, a visiting delegation of the Communist Party of China (CPC) and representatives of Pakistani political parties, Gillani said Pakistan-China ties had evolved beyond traditional diplomacy into a comprehensive strategic partnership.

He conveyed President Asif Ali Zardari's message welcoming the Chinese dele-

gation and highlighting the importance of party-to-party exchanges in governance, institutional development and state administration.

Gillani said China's remarkable progress offered valuable lessons for developing countries in governance, economic development, poverty alleviation, human resource development and technological advancement.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's

commitment to the One-China policy and appreciated China's continued support for Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity and development.

The Chairman Senate stressed that sustained political, parliamentary and institutional engagement was essential for strengthening bilateral relations and people-to-people contacts.

He also congratulated the Chinese leadership and people

on the 105th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China, expressing confidence that increased party-level cooperation would create new opportunities for mutual learning and institutional development.

Earlier, the Chinese delegation called on Gillani, who welcomed the growing exchanges between the CPC and Pakistani political parties and institutions.

Pakistan, Kazakhstan Turn Agricultural Potential into Trade Opportunity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan have agreed to accelerate implementation of existing agricultural agreements and MoUs, transforming them into concrete trade and investment opportunities. The understanding was reached in a meeting between Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain and Kazakh Ambassador Yerzhan Kistafin, covering agricultural trade, food security, connectivity and mech-



anization.

Hussain called for a result-oriented approach focused on commercially viable projects. Both sides agreed to convene the next Pakistan-Kazakhstan Joint Working Group on Agriculture in Kazakhstan. Kazakhstan expressed interest in supplying wheat to Pakistan, which agreed to examine the proposal based on price and quality.

Rail and regional connectivity linking Central Asia with Pakistan were discussed

as key to reducing freight costs. Pakistan showcased export potential in mangoes, guava, dates, bananas, potatoes and onions, seeking greater Central Asian market access.

Agricultural mechanization, particularly affordable machinery for small farmers, emerged as another cooperation area. Both sides reaffirmed commitment to deepening practical agricultural cooperation as part of broader bilateral engagement.

Ishaq Dar, Shah Ghulam Qadir Discuss AJK Political Situation and Development



Abdul Majeed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar held a meeting with President of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Shah Ghulam Qadir, during which the prevailing political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir was discussed in detail.

The meeting also covered matters relating to development and progress in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and measures for resolving

issues faced by the people.

Shah Ghulam Qadir briefed Senator Ishaq Dar on the PML-N's performance and success in the recent Azad Jammu and Kashmir elections.

Senator Ishaq Dar appreciated the electoral performance of the PML-N under the leadership of Shah Ghulam Qadir, describing it as commendable.

Shah Ghulam Qadir said that the PML-N's success in the recent elections reflected the people's confidence in the party and its leadership.

Freedom, Great Blessing from Allah Almighty: Aleem Khan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has felicitated the nation on the 79th Independence Day, describing freedom as a great blessing from Allah Almighty and its protection as a collective national responsibility.

In his message, he said Pakistan's creation was the result of a historic struggle, sacrifices and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's leadership. He urged the nation to reaffirm its commitment to the principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline.

Aleem Khan paid tribute to the martyrs, Ghazis and families of the Armed Forces for defending the country's borders and sovereignty. He expressed confidence in Pakistan's future and called upon citizens to utilise their abilities to build a strong, prosperous, developed and stable country.

Iranian Ambassador Felicitates Pakistan on 79th Independence Day

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan Reza Amiri Moghadam has extended warm greetings to the government and people of Pakistan on the country's 79th Independence Day.

In his message, the ambassador paid tribute to Pakistan's resilience, unity and achievements, describing the occasion as a moment of national pride. He said Iran deeply valued the longstanding bonds of friendship, mutual respect and cooperation between the two neighbouring countries.

Ambassador Moghadam said determined efforts by the leadership and people of both countries had opened a new era of hope and optimism in Iran-Pakistan relations, marking a historic turning point in bilateral ties.

He expressed his wishes for Pakistan's continued peace, prosperity, security and progress, and prayed for further strengthening of friendship between the two nations.



EMBASSY OF THE
STATE OF PALESTINE
ISLAMABAD

“
May our two brotherly
nations continue to stand
together for peace, justice
and the dignity of all
peoples.
”

14TH
AUGUST
HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY
Pakistan

The Embassy of the State of Palestine
extends its warmest felicitations to the people and
Government of Pakistan on the occasion of
14 August – Independence Day.

We celebrate this day in the spirit of friendship,
solidarity and shared aspirations for a just and
peaceful future.

LONG LIVE PAKISTAN
PAKISTAN - PALESTINE BROTHERHOOD FOREVER

With Respect and Best Wishes,
EMBASSY OF THE STATE OF PALESTINE
ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN



14 AUGUST
HAPPY
INDEPENDENCE DAY
TO THE PEOPLE OF
PAKISTAN

Independence is not merely a day of
celebration; it is a commitment to build
our own future.

Today, Pakistan needs a strong economy,
local industry, employment opportunities,
exports, and hard work more than
political slogans.

As an industrialist, my commitment
is to Make in Pakistan, create jobs, and
make Pakistan proud on the global stage.

Let us pledge this Independence Day
that we will not merely love Pakistan,
but also play our part in its progress
and prosperity.

“STRONG INDUSTRY, STRONG ECONOMY, STRONG PAKISTAN!”

Pakistan Zindabad!
پاکستان زندہ باد

From:
Chaudhry Zulfikar Ali Anjum
Chairman, SM Group of Industries


QUALITY IS OUR TRADITION
TRUST IS OUR STRENGTH

 Member, National Export
Development Board

 Member, Board of Investment

