



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم سے مسجد بنائے گیا کیا ہے  
لیکن سجدے کیا ان سے عقل ہے  
ان سے ان شہاب نے ان سے عروہ اور  
ان سے عاتر رضی اللہ عنہا نے کیا کر نبی  
کر محمد صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا میں کہاں کرتا  
ہوں کہ فلاں اور فلاں ہمارے دین کی کوئی  
بات نہیں جانتے ہیں۔ لیکن سجدے کیا  
کیا کر دونوں آدمی منافق تھے۔  
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6067)  
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## President announces Pakistan Civil Awards for citizens' exceptional achievements

President Asif Ali Zardari announced 372 Pakistan Civil Awards for conferment on citizens of Pakistan and foreign nationals for exceptional achievements, excellence, and courage in their respective fields. These awards shall be conferred in the investiture ceremony to be held on Pakistan Day, 23rd March, 2027.



## Natalie Baker congratulates Pakistanis on Independence Day

US Chargé d'Affaires in Pakistan Natalie A Baker and the US diplomatic mission have congratulated Pakistanis on Independence Day. In her Independence Day message, Baker, on behalf of the government and people of the United States, congratulated Pakistan on completing 79 years of independence and highlighted the longstanding partnership between the two countries.

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## Political developments

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari talking to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, who met him at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Friday.



Photo: PID

# President Zardari lauds efforts to strengthen Pakistan-Saudi Arabia-Türkiye strategic partnership

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has appreciated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal and Chief of Defence Forces Syed Asim Munir for their efforts to transform Pakistan's longstanding fraternal relations with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye into a stronger strategic partnership.

The president made these remarks during a meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif at Aiwan-e-Sadr, where the premier felicitated him on Independence Day. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar, Interior Minister Mohsin Raza Naqvi and other senior political figures were also present.

The prime minister briefed President Zardari on the historic

peace agreement reached among Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye in Makkah Mukarramah. The president expressed hope for its effective implementation, particularly in strengthening defence cooperation, regional peace, stability and security of the Muslim Ummah.

The meeting also reviewed internal and external affairs. The leadership praised the capabilities and sacrifices of Pakistan's

armed forces and law-enforcement agencies in countering terrorism and reaffirmed the commitment to eliminating the menace from the country.

President Zardari stressed the need for measures to provide relief to people facing economic difficulties, ensure uninterrupted supplies of essential commodities and keep prices affordable.

He also expressed confidence

that Pakistan's diplomatic initiatives for regional and global peace would enhance the country's international standing and produce positive economic benefits.

The meeting reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to regional peace, strategic cooperation with brotherly countries, national security and the protection of its interests amid changing regional and global circumstances.

## Naqvi: Afghan soil being used for terrorism against Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Norway have agreed to enhance cooperation in various areas, including counterterrorism, prevention of illegal immigration, police training and mutual legal assistance, the Ministry of Interior said in a statement on Friday.

The development came during a meeting between Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Norwegian Foreign Minister

Espen Barth Eide in Islamabad. Naqvi said Pakistan's effective measures have contributed to a 47% reduction in illegal immigration to Europe. He said Pakistan has adopted a zero-tolerance policy against illegal immigration. He said the European Union has also appreciated the country's measures in this regard.

The interior minister stressed that promoting legal immigration is essential for effectively curbing illegal migration. The situation in

Afghanistan and the activities of proscribed organisations operating from its soil were also discussed during the meeting.

"Afghan territory is continuously being used for terrorist activities against Pakistan.

"Pakistan stands as a wall between the world and terrorism," Naqvi said, stressing that everyone must work together for the complete eradication of terrorism.

Naqvi said the Norwegian Foreign Minister's visit would



prove to be an important milestone in further strengthening bilateral relations.

The Norwegian Foreign Minister appreciated Pakistan's constructive and active role in

helping de-escalate tensions between the United States and Iran. Minister of State Talal Chaudhry, Federal Secretary Interior and senior officials were also present on the occasion.

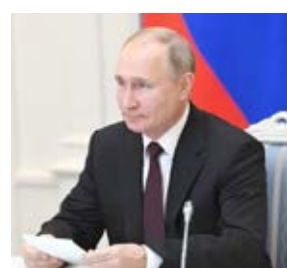
## Russia's President Putin congratulates Pakistani leadership on Independence Day

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President of Russia Vladimir Putin has extended warm felicitations to President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on the occasion of Pakistan's Independence Day.

In his messages to the president and the prime minister, President Putin conveyed his sincere congratulations to the leadership and people of Pakistan on their national day, the foreign office spokesperson said in a statement on Friday.

The Russian president noted that Russia-Pakistan relations were developing successfully, with Moscow and Islamabad maintaining productive cooperation in the political, trade, economic and humanitarian spheres, as well as on important regional and global issues.



President Putin expressed confidence that the two countries would continue their constructive joint efforts to further strengthen the entire spectrum of their partnership for the benefit of the friendly peoples of Russia and Pakistan and in the interests of enhancing international security and stability.

He also wished President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz good health and every success, and prayed for peace and prosperity for the people of Pakistan.

## Dar lauds positive momentum in Pakistan-UK relations amid meeting British HC



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar on Friday met UK High Commissioner, Jane Marriott here and appreciated the positive momentum in Pakistan-UK relations.

During the meeting, the deputy prime minister recalled his recent meeting with UK Foreign Secretary Ed Miliband on the sidelines of the ASEAN Regional Forum in Manila and highlighted the importance of sustained high-level contacts. They discussed key areas of

mutual interest and ways to further strengthening bilateral cooperation, a DPM's Office news release said.

However, recent regional and international developments also figured in the discussion. The DPM/FM stressed that the Islamabad MoU should be implemented by the parties in letter and spirit and reaffirmed that dialogue and diplomacy remain the only way forward to address outstanding issues.

The UK High Commissioner conveyed warm wishes on Pakistan's Independence Day.

## Finance Minister Chairs ECC, Approves Revision in Dealers' Margins on Petroleum Products

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, today chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet, held at the Finance Division.

The ECC considered a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division and deliberated on the matter regarding revision of dealers' margins on Motor Spirit (MS) and High-Speed Diesel (HSD).

The meeting was attended



by Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research, Mr. Rana Tanveer Hussain; Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr. Ali Pervaiz Malik; Federal Minister for Economic Affairs, Mr. Ahad Khan Cheema; along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries and divisions.

## Armed forces congratulate nation on 79th Independence Day

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The heads of Pakistan's armed forces have extended heartfelt felicitations to the nation on the country's 79th Independence Day, paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the founding fathers and all those whose sacrifices made Pakistan's independence possible.

In a message issued on the occasion, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff

and Chief of Defence Forces, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff, and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, conveyed their greetings on behalf of the Armed Forces of Pakistan.

The armed forces paid profound tribute to Quaid-e-Azam and the founding fathers, saying their vision, courage and resolve continued to guide the nation and inspire adherence to

the principles and ideals of Pakistan.

They also acknowledged the supreme sacrifices of the country's martyrs, the services of veterans, the dedication of law enforcement personnel and the contributions of every Pakistani who has served the nation.

"Their courage and selfless service have bolstered Pakistan's resilience and safeguarded its independence, security and national interests," the statement said.

As guardians of Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity, the armed forces reaffirmed their resolve to defend the country against all threats, uphold the Constitution and discharge the responsibility entrusted to them by the people.

The military leadership said the armed forces, together with the nation, would remain steadfast in preserving peace and stability while creating an environment conducive to national progress and prosperity.

The statement said Pakistan's strength lay in the unity and collective resolve of its people.

On Independence Day, the armed forces called for renewed commitment to the principles of faith, unity and discipline, while stressing the need to strengthen national cohesion, promote tolerance and work together for a secure, stable and prosperous Pakistan.



# Muzaffarabad: Independence Day Ceremony Highlights Pakistan-Kashmir Bond

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: A dignified Independence Day ceremony was held at the Parade Ground, Muzaffarabad, with Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar as the chief guest. Prime Minister AJK Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, senior civil and military officials, political and social leaders, students, lawyers, women and citizens attended the event. The ceremony began with Quranic recitation, followed by a siren and one-minute silence in memory of martyrs. The national flag was hoisted and a ceremonial salute was presented by the AJK Police. Girls Guides and Boy Scouts presented patriotic songs, while tributes were paid to the founders of Pakistan and martyrs of Pakistan and the Kashmir freedom movement. Addressing the gathering, Chaudhry

Latif Akbar extended Independence Day greetings to Pakistan and prayed for its strength, peace, stability and prosperity. He highlighted the historic ties between Pakistan and Kashmir, referring to the July 19, 1947 resolution supporting accession of Jammu and Kashmir to Pakistan. The Acting President described the unresolved Kashmir dispute as a major threat to regional peace and stressed the importance of a just settlement in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and relevant UN resolutions. He paid tribute to Kashmiris who had made sacrifices during the decades-long struggle and expressed gratitude for Pakistan's continued diplomatic and political support. He also praised Pakistan's national unity and defence preparedness, while stressing the importance of freedom, responsibility and national develop-



ment. Addressing youth, he urged them to focus on education, research, skills, public service and constructive activities. Chaudhry Latif Akbar reaffirmed

AJK's solidarity with the Hurriyat leadership and refugees and conveyed a special Independence Day message to Kashmiris across the Line of Control in the Kashmiri language.

## Happiness

ISLAMABAD: Horse dance being presented in Islamabad City Parade 2026 to mark 79th Independence Day at D-Chowk.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## PML-N AJK Women's Wing Leader Meets Federal Minister Amir Muqam

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Maryam Idrees, Central Vice President of the PML-N Women's Wing AJK and member of the Manifesto Committee, called on Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam in Islamabad. During the meeting, Maryam Idrees congratulated the Minister on PML-N's impressive success in the recent Azad

Jammu and Kashmir elections, where the party won a significant number of seats. She lauded Amir Muqam's effective strategy and vigorous election campaign, saying it played a key role in the party's strong electoral performance in AJK. To mark the occasion, Maryam Idrees also presented a bouquet of flowers to the Federal Minister as a gesture of



congratulations for the PML-N's victory in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The meeting highlighted the party's

focus on consolidating its electoral gains and strengthening organizational work in the region.

## Thousands Rally in Muzaffarabad for Independence, Reaffirming Kashmir's Bond with Pakistan

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: A grand Independence Day rally was held in the capital city of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Muzaffarabad, with a large number of citizens participating with great enthusiasm and patriotic spirit. The rally reflected the people's deep love for Pakistan, national unity and the strong emotional and ideological bond between the people of Kashmir and Pakistan. The rally commenced from Quaid-e-Azam Bridge, Domel, and proceeded through Naluchi Bridge, Chahla and Bank Road before culminating at the Hockey Stadium. Participants carried



the national flag, while vehicles and motorcycles were also decorated with

the green and white flags of Pakistan. Citizens warmly welcomed the rally

at various points along the route, while the atmosphere resonated with enthusiastic slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Kashmir Banega Pakistan." Hundreds of vehicles and motorcycles participated in the rally. The participants reaffirmed their commitment to the security, stability, progress and prosperity of Pakistan, as well as the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The celebrations concluded at the Hockey Stadium with a spectacular fireworks display. The colourful display further added to the festive atmosphere, with participants enjoying the celebrations and expressing their love and unwavering attachment to Pakistan.

## Sardar Attique Announces Key Appointments for Neela Butt Commemoration Events

 **City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, has announced various committees in connection with the 79th Youm-e-Neela Butt, scheduled to be observed on August 23, 2026. According to a notification issued by Muslim Conference Secretary General Ms. Mehr-un-Nisa, Sardar Abdul Rasheed Chughtai, Advocate, has been appointed Chairman of the Reception Committee, while Syed Amjad Gardezi, Advocate, will serve as its Secretary. Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan has been appointed Chairman of the Public Liaison Committee, with Raja Muhammad Munir Khan as Secretary. The Administration Committee will be headed by Dr. Sardar Abdul Shakoor Khan as Chairman and Sardar Usama Nair Abbasi as Secretary. Ms. Samia Sajid Raja has been appointed Chairperson of the Social Media Committee, while Humayun Arshad Chughtai will serve as Secretary. Haroon Azad has been appointed Chairman of the Media Committee, with Adnan Abbasi as Secretary. Raja Asif Syad and Zafar Ali Awan have also been included as members of the committee. The remaining names will be announced in the coming days. The Finance Committee will be headed by Sardar Iftikhar Abbasi as Chairman and Sardar Irfan Abbasi as Secretary, while Sardar Khurshed Abbasi will serve as a member.

## Sardar Attique cuts cake to mark Pakistan's Independence Day



 **City Desk.**

RAWALPINDI: President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, celebrated Pakistan's Independence Day by cutting a cake at Mujahid Manzil in Rawalpindi along with party workers. The gathering was held to mark August 14 and reaffirm the participants' commitment to the Kashmir-Pakistan relationship.

## Ali Ilyas Wins Lahore to Sahiwal I-Day Cycle Race



 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Ali Ilyas of SSGC won the CM Punjab Independence Day Cycling Race from Lahore to Sahiwal, covering the 160-km distance in 4 hours, 44 minutes, 33 seconds. Mansoor Ahmed of Balochistan finished second, followed by Moazzam Jr from Punjab in third. Other top finishers included Arslan (Army), Shakeel Jutt (Punjab), M Umer (Gujranwala), Qais Syed (GCC), M Shakeel (Sialkot), Sajid Zia (Railway), and Adeel (Sialkot). Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar flagged off the race and the Family Fun Race from Punjab Stadium. A total of 70 professional cyclists took part in the main race, while over 500 male and female cyclists of all ages joined the Family Fun Race. The prize distribution ceremony in Sahiwal was attended by chief guest Commissioner Sahiwal Dr. Asif Tufail, DC Samiullah Haroon, and DPO Usman. Senior officials including DG Sports Punjab M. Tariq Qureshi and PCF President Idris Haider Khawaja were also present. Minister Khokhar announced provincial-level cycling races across Punjab and congratulated all Pakistanis on Independence Day.

## Volka Food, SM Food Group Celebrate Independence Day with Patriotic Spirit

 **Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Volka Food International and SM Food Group of Companies organized a grand ceremony to celebrate Pakistan's Independence Day, featuring flag hoisting, the national anthem, cake cutting and prayers for the country's security, progress and prosperity. The ceremony began with recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by hoisting of the national flag and a salute. Employees and management participated enthusiastically, holding national flags and singing national songs. Senior officials, including Group General Manager Administration Abdul Waheed, Group General Manager Accounts Abdul Majeed, Group CFO Waseem Shahzad, Group GM Projects Iftikhar Ahmed and Mian Salahuddin of Gibbs & Gibbs Pasta, attended the event. Speaking to the media, company representatives paid tribute to Pakistan's armed forces and highlighted the significance of the Makkah Accord. They said the country's independence was achieved through immense sacrifices and stressed that national progress required industrial development, local production, employment generation, exports and economic self-reliance. A message from SM Group Chairman Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum emphasized that independence was not merely a celebration but a commitment to building Pakistan's future through manufacturing, job creation and exports. The ceremony concluded with cake cutting and special prayers for Pakistan's stability, prosperity and economic development.





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## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

|         |          |
|---------|----------|
| Fajr    | 3:58 am  |
| Zohr    | 12:12 pm |
| Asr     | 4:58 pm  |
| Maghrib | 6:55 pm  |
| Isha    | 8:25 pm  |

## EMERGENCY

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

## Women Police Stations

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| Islamabad  | 9222596    |
| Rawalpindi | 9270601-20 |

## ENQUIRY

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

## HOSPITALS

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

## DEPARTMENTS

|            |            |
|------------|------------|
| CDA        | 9221334-43 |
| CDA        | 9208301-04 |
| Met Office | 9250360-6  |
| RDA        | 5555864    |

## Rescue 1122 Faisalabad Holds Independence Day Ceremony



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Rescue 1122 Faisalabad organized a grand Independence Day ceremony at the Central Rescue Station under the leadership of District Emergency Officer Engineer Ehtesham Wahla.

A colorful Rescue 1122 squad presented a salute to the national flag, while officers and personnel participated enthusiastically in the celebrations and expressed their commitment to national service. Special prayers were offered for Pakistan's security, development, prosperity and stability.

The ceremony also featured a cake-cutting ceremony at the Central Rescue Station to mark the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Engineer Ehtesham Wahla said Rescue 1122 personnel remained committed to protecting the lives and property of citizens and were always ready to respond to emergencies.

He urged citizens to celebrate Independence Day responsibly and safely, particularly advising young people to avoid one-wheeling, over-speeding and aerial firing.

# Punjab to Become South Asia's Most Advanced and AI-Enabled Province: Ali Dar

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The two-day Pakistan Youth Carnival 2026 concluded at the University of Management and Technology (UMT), organized by Volunteers Leading Governance (VLG) in collaboration with the Sitara-o-Hilal Foundation.

Punjab Chief Minister's Advisor for AI and Special Initiatives Ali Dar attended as chief guest, while VLG Founder and former Provincial Minister Ibrahim Murad joined as special guest. A large

number of VLG members from across Punjab participated.

The ceremony featured discussions on artificial intelligence, emerging technologies, leadership, youth engagement, and future skills. Social services and volunteer activities by young people were also highlighted. On Independence Day, Ibrahim Murad and Ali Dar cut a flag-themed cake and offered prayers for Pakistan's security, prosperity, and stability.

Addressing the gathering, Ibrahim Murad congratulated the nation and



said around 16,000 young people from Punjab have joined VLG as volunteers. He noted their role in clean-up drives, plantation campaigns, welfare initiatives, and support for Rescue 1122 during floods and relief operations. He said the spirit of service among youth guarantees Pakistan's bright future and strengthens responsible leadership. He stressed that the younger

generation must carry forward the patriotic spirit of elders through education, service, hard work, and character.

Ali Dar said Punjab has world-class talent in AI and that the Chief Minister's vision is to make Punjab the most AI-enabled province in South Asia by 2029. He called AI a source of new opportunities in employment, entrepreneurship,

innovation, and economic growth, and emphasized the need to equip youth with modern and future-oriented skills. He praised Pakistan's young population as the country's most valuable asset.

The event concluded with awards and certificates for outstanding VLG members, presented by Ibrahim Murad and Ali Dar.

## Cultural performance

ISLAMABAD: Artists perform cultural dance during Islamabad City Parade 2026 to mark 79th Independence Day at D-Chowk.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Independence Day Ceremony held at Hamdard University Islamabad

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A grand Independence Day ceremony was held at Hamdard University Islamabad Campus, with Campus Director Professor Dr. Umar Shahbaz Khan as chief guest. The event began with flag-hoisting and the national anthem in the presence of faculty members, students and university administration.

Faculty members presented Milli Naghmay, while a quiz competition between faculty and administrative staff tested participants' knowledge of Pakistan's history, the Pakistan Movement and national



personalities.

Speaking on the occasion,

Professor Dr. Mumtaz Jaffery said independence was

achieved through countless sacrifices and urged youth to contribute to national development through education, skills and responsible citizenship. She also emphasized unity, tolerance and social responsibility.

Professor Dr. Umar Shahbaz Khan highlighted the significance of Independence Day and urged students and faculty to follow Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's principles of Unity, Faith and Discipline. The ceremony concluded with prayers for Pakistan's security, stability, prosperity and progress.

## Horse back Archery—A land Mark for Pakistan, Ali Fawad secure top position in horseback

## Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Ali Fawad secures top position in Pakistan's horseback archery ranking and becomes the athlete that has represented Pakistan in all formats of Horseback Archery.

He served as a captain of the Horse back archery competitions in USA, Russia and Indonesia.

He is the highest scorer of Pakistan in all the formats and scored the best Pakistani score in world championships.

Mr Ali along with his team brought medals for the country and striving to make Pakistan a centre of excellence for horseback archery and asian leader.

Recently he had organised the first 2 Record and Ranking International competition that Pakistan an opportunity to enter 15 athletes of Pakistan in the world ranking List.

He serves as Asian development head for International horseback archery Alliance and led many asian competitions in different countries.



## Dr. Shaista Hyder Judges Nationwide 'Pak Sar Zameen' Poster Competition



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A nationwide poster competition titled "Pak Sar Zameen" was held in Islamabad as part of Pakistan's Independence Day celebrations. Organized by the Department of Archaeology and Museums, the event provided artists an opportunity to showcase Pakistan's national identity, cultural heritage and values through visual art.

Syed Ahmad Masood, great-great-grandson of renowned educationist Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, attended the event as chief guest.

Dr. Shaista Hyder, an experienced figure in the arts and cultural field, served as a judge. She evaluated the artworks and appreciated the initiative for encouraging artistic expression nationwide.

Ghaniyah Saad won first position in the Junior Artists category, while Aleena Qayyum secured first position among Senior Artists. The competition celebrated creativity, cultural heritage and Pakistan's artistic talent.

## Independence Day ceremony held at Rehman Dialysis Center

## Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: President of Anjuman Tajran City Registered Faisalabad and Patron of Rehman Dialysis Center Khawaja Shahid Razzaq Sikka cut the cake. The ceremony was attended by Dr. Shahbaz Ahmed, Admin Rehman Dialysis Center Chaudhry Ijaz Ahmed, City General Secretary Sheikh Saeed Ahmed, Deputy General Secretary Mian Riaz Shahid, President All Faisalabad Kabbar Association and Vice President Anjuman Tajran City (Sikka Group) Mian Ashraf Matho, SM Ayub, Azeem Khokhar, staff and patients of Rehman Dialysis Center. Khawaja Shahid Razzaq Sikka also visited the patients undergoing treatment at Rehman Free Dialysis Center.



## Film, Theatre Can Promote Social Reform: Hamdard Shura

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The monthly meeting of Hamdard Shura was held at Hamdard Markaz Rawalpindi under the theme "Film, Theatre and Drama: Effective Means of Social Reform," proposed by National President Hamdard Foundation Pakistan Sadia Rashid. Speaker Imtiaz Haider chaired the meeting, while senior director, producer and playwright Asma Ismail Butt attended as special guest.

In her message, Sadia Rashid said films, theatre and dramas profoundly influence society's thinking, values and character. She stressed the need to promote national identity, moral values and positive social change through visual media, while avoiding content contrary to cultural and religious values.

Asma Ismail Butt and Imtiaz Haider said quality films, purposeful dramas and effective theatre could influence millions and contribute to character building. They recalled Shabed



Hakeem Muhammad Saeed's emphasis on moral and intellectual development as the foundation of a strong nation.

Members of Hamdard Shura also shared their views. The meeting concluded with the presentation of an

honorary shield to the special guest by Hamdard Foundation Rawalpindi Zonal Head Amanullah Niazi.



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## Yadgar-e-Fatah: A Symbol of National Pride and Unity

The inauguration of Yadgar-e-Fatah in Islamabad on the eve of Independence Day is a significant moment of national reflection and pride. Such monuments are more than structures of stone and steel; they serve as enduring reminders of the sacrifices, courage and determination that shaped Pakistan’s history. The memorial provides an opportunity for the nation to remember its achievements while renewing its commitment to the ideals on which the country was founded.

Independence was achieved through a historic political struggle and the sacrifices of countless individuals. The creation of Pakistan under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah reflected the aspirations of a people seeking political freedom, dignity and a secure future. Yadgar-e-Fatah can therefore become a powerful symbol of these aspirations, connecting present generations with the lessons of the past.

The timing of the inauguration is particularly meaningful. Independence Day is not merely an occasion for ceremonies, flag-hoisting and patriotic slogans. It should also encourage citizens to examine how effectively the country is progressing toward the principles of justice, equality, constitutional governance and social welfare. A national monument becomes truly meaningful when it inspires people to translate these ideals into practical action.

Pakistan today faces complex economic, social and institutional challenges. National unity and collective responsibility are essential for overcoming these difficulties. The message conveyed by Yadgar-e-Fatah should therefore extend beyond celebrating past victories. It should encourage young people to contribute positively to society, strengthen democratic institutions, respect diversity and work for economic development.

The memorial can also serve an educational purpose. Students and younger generations should be encouraged to learn about Pakistan’s history, the independence movement and the sacrifices made by previous generations. Public spaces dedicated to national history can help preserve collective memory and foster a deeper understanding of citizenship and responsibility.

At the same time, patriotism should be reflected in everyday conduct. Building a stronger Pakistan requires honesty, hard work, respect for law, protection of public property, quality education and opportunities for all citizens. National pride becomes meaningful when it is accompanied by a commitment to improving the lives of others.

The inauguration of Yadgar-e-Fatah should thus be viewed as both a celebration and a reminder. As the nation marks another Independence Day, the memorial can inspire renewed determination to build a peaceful, prosperous and united Pakistan. The greatest tribute to the country’s founders and those who sacrificed for independence is to ensure that future generations inherit a stronger and more inclusive nation.

# The Hormuz Paradox: The War Behind the War

The Strait of Hormuz presents a puzzle that cannot be resolved through official statements alone. Iran claims that no vessel can use the waterway without its authorization. The United States simultaneously says that its naval “wall of steel” is preventing ships from entering or leaving Iranian ports.

If both claims were completely accurate, the consequences should have become catastrophic. Iranian oil would be trapped by the United States, while petroleum belonging to Washington’s Gulf allies would be blocked by Iran. The resulting pincer movement should have removed an enormous volume of oil and gas from international markets.

After almost six months of war, however, the anticipated worldwide collapse has not occurred. Brent crude remains around \$87 rather than \$150 or \$200. Transportation and insurance costs have increased, but most countries have not declared that their fuel reserves are exhausted. There are no universal gasoline lines, comprehensive rationing programs or widespread refinery closures.

The contradiction demands an explanation. Iran has demonstrated that its restrictions are not merely rhetorical. The United Arab Emirates says at least 15 vessels connected with ADNOC have been attacked since the war began. Several attacks occurred during August alone, producing deaths, injuries and

operational disruption.

Saudi Arabia faces pressure at both ends of its export system. Iranian power threatens shipping through Hormuz, while the Houthis have declared a maritime embargo against Saudi-linked vessels around the Red Sea. Qatari LNG operations and tankers have also suffered disruption.

The United States, meanwhile, is preventing ships from entering and leaving Iranian ports. CENTCOM has intercepted or redirected Iran-linked vessels and says the blockade can be maintained indefinitely.

The EIA estimates that petroleum flows declined from approximately 21.6 million barrels per day before the conflict to 4.9 million during the second quarter of 2026. Recent private estimates range between 1.74 million and 6.98 million barrels daily. The reduction is therefore real and historically significant.

That produces another puzzle. If a Chinese tanker receives Iranian permission to transport Saudi or Emirati oil, the Gulf producer still exports its petroleum and receives revenue. The cargo also remains available to the world market. Iran would be controlling the destination—not blockading the oil itself.

Strategic and commercial stocks provide part of the answer. The Inter-

national Energy Agency reports that observed worldwide oil inventories have declined by approximately 410 million barrels since the war began—an average depletion of 2.7 million barrels per day.

The global numbers are revealing. Supply has fallen by about 4.3 million barrels per day, while high prices and economic weakness have reduced demand by approximately 1.6 million. The remaining deficit is around 2.7 million barrels daily—almost exactly

the reported rate at which inventories are declining.

This explains why the shortage has not yet produced universal rationing. But inventories cannot explain the whole system. Stored petroleum cannot indefinitely replace the enormous quantity historically transported through Hormuz.

Attention must therefore shift outside the Persian Gulf. The IEA estimates that production from the Americas has increased by approximately 1.4 million barrels per day during 2026. The United States is producing around 13.8 million barrels daily, while Canada, Brazil, Guyana and Argentina are expanding output.

Brazil, Guyana and Venezuela have collectively delivered the largest increase in petroleum exports from any producing region during 2026. Venezuela exported

approximately 1.16 million barrels daily in July, including about 786,000 barrels per day to the United States—the highest American-bound volume since early 2019.

Russia remains another important supplier. Despite attacks on its refineries, it continues sending crude to China and India. Damage to Russian refining capacity can paradoxically increase crude exports because oil that cannot be processed domestically becomes available for foreign shipment.

Nigeria and Angola are supplying additional African crude. Nigeria’s Dangote refinery has increased gasoline and fertilizer exports to African countries deprived of traditional Middle Eastern supplies. India has become an essential refining bridge. It buys Russian, Brazilian, Venezuelan, Nigerian and Angolan crude, processes it domestically, and exports diesel, gasoline and aviation fuel to Asia and Europe.

Qatari LNG losses are being replaced partly by the United States, Australia, Nigeria, Angola and Oman. Saudi Arabia moves crude through its East-West pipeline to Yanbu, while the UAE exports through Fujairah and uses shuttle tankers and ship-to-ship transfers outside Hormuz.

The functioning market is therefore not evidence that nothing has changed. It is evidence that the international energy system is being reconstructed while the war continues.

*Continued on Page 7*



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

## Jiang Zemin at 100: Architect of China’s Global Rise

As the world marks the centenary of Jiang Zemin’s birth, it is worth reflecting on the legacy of a leader who steered China through one of its most transformative eras. Jiang’s tenure combined pragmatism with vision, reform with stability, and nationalism with global engagement. He was neither a revolutionary firebrand nor a mere caretaker; he was the architect of China’s confident stride into the twenty-first century.

### Economic Transformation

At the 14th National Congress of the Communist Party of China in 1992, Jiang introduced a phrase that would define his era: the “socialist market economy.” This formulation blended socialist principles with market mechanisms, accelerating reforms while maintaining ideological continuity. Under his leadership, the “iron rice bowl” of lifetime job guarantees was broken, ushering in efficiency and competitiveness. Special Economic Zones expanded, drawing foreign investment and technology. State-owned enterprises were restructured, reshaping China’s industrial landscape. Massive infrastructure projects—from highways to power grids—laid the foundation for rapid growth. These reforms did not merely modernize the economy; they lifted millions out of poverty and positioned China as the world’s manufacturing hub.

### Science, Education, and Innovation

Jiang understood that economic strength must rest on intellectual capital. He prohibited the military from engaging in business ventures, professionalizing the armed forces. His policy of “revitalizing the country through science and education” launched landmark initiatives such as Project 211 and Project 985, elevating Chinese universities to global standards. At the same time, he strengthened China’s space program, paving the way for manned missions and

lunar exploration. These measures reflected his conviction that national power in the modern age derives not only from factories and armies but from laboratories, classrooms, and innovation.

### Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Guided by Deng Xiaoping’s maxim “Hide your strength, bide your time,” Jiang pursued cooperative diplomacy while steadily expanding China’s influence. He stabilized ties with Russia after the Soviet Union’s collapse, laying the groundwork for strategic partnership. He managed a complex but constructive relationship with the United States, balancing competition with dialogue. In 2001, he oversaw the founding of the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, a multilateral body that became a cornerstone of regional security and economic collaboration. That same year, China joined the World Trade Organization, integrating into global trade rules and accelerating modernization. These diplomatic achievements ensured that China’s rise was not isolated but embedded in international institutions.

### Return of Hong Kong and Macau

Jiang also presided over two of the most symbolic moments in modern Chinese history: the peaceful reunification of Hong Kong in 1997 and Macau in 1999. These events were not merely territorial adjustments; they were demonstrations of China’s diplomatic maturity and its ability to honour international agreements while safeguarding sovereignty. For Jiang, they represented both the fulfillment of national aspirations and the projection of China’s confidence on the world stage.

### Intellectual Contributions: The Three Represents

Beyond policy, Jiang left an enduring ideological imprint. In 2000, he introduced the Theory of Three Represents, later enshrined in the Party and State constitutions. This doctrine expanded the Party’s base to include entrepreneurs and the emerging middle class, aligning socialism with modernization. It repositioned the Communist Party as the vanguard not only

of workers and peasants but of the “overwhelming majority of the people.” Though controversial among hardline leftists, the theory ensured that the Party remained relevant in a rapidly changing society. It was Jiang’s way of reconciling tradition with transformation.

### Interest in Pakistan

Jiang Zemin also nurtured a special interest in Pakistan, recognizing it as a trusted partner in China’s regional vision. He encouraged industrial cooperation, defence collaboration, and cultural exchanges, laying the groundwork for the enduring China-Pakistan friendship. His emphasis on mutual respect and shared development goals strengthened ties that continue to flourish under the banner of “iron brothers.”

### A Personal Encounter

I had the privilege of meeting President Jiang during the 18th Party Congress. Though retired, his presence was commanding. His fluency in Russian and English reflected his cosmopolitan outlook, and his words carried the weight of experience and continuity. That encounter impressed upon me that true leadership is not only about the present moment but about shaping legacies that endure. Jiang embodied that principle: a leader whose decisions continue to reverberate long after his tenure.

### Legacy and Reflection

In sum, Jiang Zemin’s era was one of consolidation and transformation. He blended reform with stability, pragmatism with vision, nationalism with global engagement. His contributions—economic modernization, educational uplift, diplomatic foresight, and ideological innovation—remain embedded in China’s trajectory today. As China navigates the complexities of the twenty-first century, Jiang’s legacy serves as both a foundation and a compass. As the Chinese proverb reminds us: “A single spark can start a prairie fire.” Jiang’s spark ignited reforms and relationships that continue to shape China’s destiny. On his 100th birth anniversary, we remember not only the leader who guided China through transition but the architect who illuminated its path to modernity.

## Pakistan at 79: A Journey of Hope, Progress and Possibility

Seventy-nine years after independence, Pakistan stands at an important moment in its national journey; not merely looking back at the past, but confidently preparing for a future full of possibility. The story of Pakistan is ultimately a story of resilience: a nation that has continued to move forward through changing circumstances, talent and aspirations of its people.

Today, Pakistan is home to more than 241 million people and possesses one of the world’s youngest populations. This youthful energy is perhaps the country’s greatest national advantage, and it is increasingly visible in the numbers. Pakistan’s information technology and telecom sector, once a modest contributor to the national economy, closed the 2025–26 fiscal year with record export remittances of \$4.6 billion, a growth of over 20 percent over the previous year, according to the State Bank of Pakistan. Broadband subscribers have crossed 161 million, and the approval of a national Artificial Intelligence Policy in 2025 signals that Pakistan intends to compete seriously in the digital economy rather than simply watch it from the sidelines.

Remittances from the roughly 11 million overseas Pakistanis working in the Gulf, Europe, North America and

beyond reached a record \$38.3 billion in FY2025, exceeding the country’s total merchandise exports and underlining just how central the diaspora has become to national economic stability.

Pakistan’s geographical location adds another powerful dimension to its potential. Positioned at the crossroads of South Asia, Central Asia, China and the Middle East, the country has a natural opportunity to emerge as a regional centre for trade, connectivity and investment. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor has further strengthened this potential by expanding infrastructure and connectivity, with modern highways, ports and economic networks creating new possibilities for commerce and regional cooperation.

Pakistan’s contribution extends beyond economic development. For decades, its armed forces have served with distinction in United Nations peacekeeping missions worldwide, reflecting the country’s commitment to international peace and willingness to contribute constructively to the global community. The country’s cultural heritage is another source of pride: Nankana Sahib and Kartarpur Sahib stand as symbols of spiritual connection and interfaith harmony; Taxila recalls Pakistan’s historic contribution

*Continued on Page 7*



# DGPR Dept Holds Ceremony to Mark Pakistan’s 79th Independence Day

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A ceremony was held at the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) Department on Friday to mark Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, at the direction of Information and Culture Minister Azma Bukhari. Director General Sheikh Farid Ahmed was the chief guest at the ceremony, which was attended by officers and employees of the department. He also hoisted the national flag on the occasion.

Addressing the gathering, Farid Ahmed congratulated the nation on the 79th Independence Day, saying Pakistan was the result of the exemplary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the countless sacrifices rendered by the nation's forefathers.

He said the people had endured immense hardships during the struggle for independence, including the arduous journey of migration.

"Pakistan is not merely a piece of land; it represents our dreams, hopes and the future of our coming genera-

tions," he said, adding that the country had given its people a unique identity and a distinct place in the world — a matter of pride for every citizen.

He noted that Pakistan was now a nuclear power and held an important and dignified position in the Muslim world.

Farid Ahmed said freedom was a great blessing from Allah Almighty, and that safeguarding it was the collective responsibility of every citizen.

Farid Ahmed also lauded the measures being taken for public welfare, balanced development and improved governance under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Paying tribute to the armed forces, Farid Ahmed praised the soldiers guarding the country's borders day and night, saying the martyrs had safeguarded the country's freedom, defence and security with their blood.

"The role of the armed forces in defending the country and protecting its security has always been a matter of great pride and respect," he said.

Farid Ahmed expressed his resolve



that developing Pakistan was the nation's responsibility, serving Pakistan was its duty, and ensuring the country's prosperity and dignity was its ultimate goal.

The ceremony concluded with a special prayer for the security, welfare, prosperity, and progress of Pakistan.



## Pakistan High Commission, London celebrates 80th Independence Day of Pakistan

Spokesman Report

LONDON: Pakistan High Commission, London celebrated 80th Independence Day with traditional zeal and enthusiasm. Chairman Kashmir Committee, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon attended the ceremony as guest-of-honour. The event was attended by a large number of members of the Pakistani community, friends of Pakistan, media personnel, and the officials of Pakistan High Commission with families.

High Commissioner of Pakistan to UK, Tipu Usman hoisted Pakistan flag to the tune of National Anthem. The

special ceremony commenced with the recitation of the Holy Quran. Messages of the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister / Foreign Minister of Pakistan were read. High Commissioner Tipu Usman, in his address, commemorated the vision and sacrifices of the nation's founders. He paid tributes to Quaid-e-Azam's leadership and the courage of all the men and women whose unwavering solidarity, struggle and resilience made independence of Pakistan possible.

The High Commissioner reiterated that Pakistani diaspora in UK are the real ambassadors and appreciated their hard work, dedication & passion

who are playing an important role in bridging Pakistan and the UK. Tipu Usman reaffirmed Pakistan's moral, political and diplomatic support to the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK) in their just struggle for the right to self determination as per UN Security Council resolutions.

National songs, music performances by British-Pakistani Soprano Ms. Saira Peter and participation of children made the Independence Day celebrations more zealous and vibrant. Later, the High Commissioner, along with guests performed cake cutting to celebrate Independence Day of Pakistan.

## AIOU Celebrates Independence Day, Highlights Youth’s Role in Nation Building

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) celebrated Pakistan's 79th Independence Day with national spirit and enthusiasm, reaffirming its commitment to the country's progress. At the main ceremony, Dean Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies Prof. Dr. Shah Mohiuddin Hashmi, representing the Vice Chancellor, hoisted the national flag. A guard of honour was presented, the national anthem played and prayers offered for Pakistan's security, prosperity and stability.

As part of the celebrations, the Directorate of Students Advisory and Counselling Services, in collaboration with the Department of History, organized a seminar titled "August 14: A Day of Renewing Our Commitment." The event focused on the objectives behind Pakistan's creation, the importance of independence and citizens' responsibilities in nation building.

Speakers stressed the importance of unity, tolerance, harmony and collective responsibility. They emphasized

that youth are Pakistan's most valuable asset and should contribute through education, research, skills and positive activities.

Faculty deans, senior university officials, students and employees attended the event. Speakers urged young people to work with dedication, honesty and sincerity to build a peaceful, educated, prosperous and stable Pakistan.

The ceremony concluded with the cutting of an Independence Day cake and prayers for the country's continued progress and security.



## Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum Leads Independence Day Celebrations at Silver Foods

Zain Khan Malghani

HARIPUR: An Independence Day ceremony was held at Silver Foods, Haripur Industrial Estate, under the supervision of Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, Founder and Patron of Volka Foods and Chairman of SM Group of Industries. The event was attended by company management, staff and a large

Zain Khan Malghani

number of factory workers, who expressed their patriotism and reaffirmed their commitment to Pakistan's progress.

The ceremony began with the recitation of the Holy Quran, followed by the hoisting of the national flag and the national anthem. As part of the celebrations, participants planted trees and cut a cake to mark Independence Day.

Addressing the gathering, speakers highlighted the sacrifices and historic struggle that led to the creation of Pakistan under the leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. They stressed that protecting freedom, ensuring national unity and promoting stability and development were collective responsibilities. The Makkah Agreement was also appreciated as an important

step toward regional cooperation and collective security.

The speakers emphasized the importance of industrial growth in strengthening Pakistan's economy, pledging to improve production, quality and institutional development while creating more employment opportunities. Participants also paid tribute to Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum for promoting invest-

ment and industrial activity in Pakistan, particularly in the food sector.

The ceremony concluded with special prayers for Pakistan's security, stability, prosperity and economic strength, as well as for the organization's success. Fateha was offered for the martyrs of Pakistan. The participants ended the event by raising enthusiastic slogans of "Pakistan Zindabad."

## PRCS Marks 80th Independence Day with Patriotic Celebrations and Ambulance Fleet March

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Red Crescent Society (PRCS) celebrated Pakistan's 80th Independence Day with a vibrant ceremony at its National Headquarters in Islamabad, bringing together staff, volunteers and Movement partners in a display of patriotism, solidarity and national pride.

Held at the Fatimah Jinnah Auditorium, the ceremony was attended by PRCS Chairperson Mrs. Farzana Naek, Secretary General Mr. Muhammad Abaid-

ullah Khan, Heads of Delegations and representatives of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), Turkish Red Crescent (Kızılay), Norwegian Red Cross, German Red Cross, PRCS staff, Movement partners and a large number of volunteers.

The celebrations included the cutting of the Independence Day cake by the Honorable Chairperson, while participants joined in singing national songs,

creating a spirited atmosphere reflecting the joy and pride associated with the country's Independence Day.

Speaking on the occasion, PRCS Chairperson Mrs. Farzana Naek said, "Independence is not only a moment to celebrate our past, but also an opportunity to reflect on the Pakistan we want to build for the generations ahead. At the Pakistan Red Crescent, we express our love for the country through service, compassion and by standing with people when they need help the

most. Our staff and volunteers are present in communities across Pakistan, turning this spirit of service into meaningful action every day."

Adding a prominent visual element to the celebrations, PRCS organised an Ambulance Fleet March through Islamabad. Ambulances carrying the national flag and PRCS flags departed from the National Headquarters and travelled along major routes of the capital before returning to NHQ. The fleet march drew appreciation from citizens along



the routes and offered a striking display of Pakistan's national colors across the capital.



Bull & Bears  
PSX 100-Share  
Index Fluctuation

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index |                         |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Current                       | Prev. Close             |
| 180,104.61                    | 180,311.21              |
| Day's High                    | Day's Low               |
| 181,433.85                    | 180,035.92              |
| Index Value                   | Change                  |
| 21,949,326,716                | −206.60                 |
| Percentage                    | Time                    |
| −0.11%                        | 13 Aug, 2026<br>4:30 pm |

| Europe: FTSE 100 Index |                           |
|------------------------|---------------------------|
| Index Value            | Change                    |
| 10,772.67              | −60.48                    |
| Percentage             | Time                      |
| −0.56%                 | 13 Aug, 4:35 pm<br>GMT +1 |

| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average |                          |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value                       | Change                   |
| 53,755.92                         | −14.35                   |
| Percentage                        | Time                     |
| −0.027%                           | 13 Aug, 1:28 pm<br>GMT-4 |

| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average |                          |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value                         | Change                   |
| 68,308.59                           | +784.53                  |
| Percentage                          | Time                     |
| +784.53                             | 13 Aug, 3:45 pm<br>GMT+9 |

| Open Market Forex Rates |        |         |
|-------------------------|--------|---------|
| Currency                | Buying | Selling |
| Australian Dollar       | 194.61 | 198.25  |
| Bahrain Dinar           | 735.25 | 745.35  |
| Canadian Dollar         | 198.17 | 202.70  |
| China Yuan              | 38.15  | 38.90   |
| Danish Krone            | 42.75  | 43.35   |
| Euro                    | 320.05 | 325.55  |
| Hong Kong Dollar        | 34.97  | 35.97   |
| Indian Rupee            | 2.65   | 3.25    |
| Japanese Yen            | 1.7339 | 1.8337  |
| Kuwaiti Dinar           | 883.59 | 893.65  |
| Malaysian Ringgit       | 68.00  | 68.85   |
| NewZealand \$           | 162.60 | 165.78  |
| Norwegians Krone        | 28.15  | 28.50   |
| Omani Riyal             | 719.80 | 730.35  |
| Qatari Riyal            | 75.08  | 76.25   |
| Saudi Riyal             | 74.05  | 74.70   |
| Singapore Dollar        | 216.01 | 224.04  |
| Swedish Korona          | 28.40  | 28.90   |
| Swiss Franc             | 343.16 | 347.93  |
| Thai Bhat               | 8.75   | 9.40    |
| U.A.E Dirham            | 76.15  | 77.15   |
| UK Pound Sterling       | 374.89 | 380.84  |
| US Dollar               | 278.50 | 278.70  |

Independence Day  
at Sahiwal Power  
Plant: A celebration  
of patriotism,  
Pak-China friendship

ISLAMABAD: Independence Day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at the 1320 MW Sahiwal Coal-Fired Power Plant, where Pakistani and Chinese employees came together to mark the national occasion in an atmosphere of patriotism, camaraderie and mutual respect.

The celebrations reflected not only the spirit of Pakistan's Independence Day but also the strong bond between the Pakistani and Chinese workforce at the power plant, said a press release.

Independence Day at Sahiwal Power Plant: A celebration of patriotism, Pak-China friendship

Chinese management participated actively alongside their Pakistani colleagues throughout the celebrations, presenting a beautiful example of the friendship and cooperation that characterizes the Pak-China relationship.

The day's activities began with a walking activity, in which employees from different departments participated together.

The morning walk provided a healthy and refreshing start to the celebrations while also giving colleagues an opportunity to interact outside their regular work environment.

At a power plant where employees routinely work in demanding operational and technical environments, such activities provide an opportunity to promote health, teamwork and a positive workplace culture.

The participation of Chinese management alongside Pakistani employees further strengthened the sense of unity and togetherness.

The celebrations then moved to the Sports Centre where an energetic basketball match was held.

Employees enthusiastically participated in the sporting activity, creating an atmosphere filled with excitement, friendly competition and team spirit.

The basketball match was particularly symbolic of the close working relationship that has developed between the Pakistani and Chinese workforce.

On the basketball court, professional designations and cultural differences took a back seat, with teamwork and sporting spirit bringing everyone together.

Weekly inflation rises  
0.15 percent in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Weekly inflation in Pakistan increased by 0.15% during the week, while the overall annual inflation rate rose to 9.11%, according to the latest report released by the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS).

The report said prices of 20 essential commodities increased during the week, while nine items became cheaper and prices of 22 items remained unchanged.

The data highlights that the Major Increase is observed in the prices of Onions (24.68%), Pulse Gram (3.35%), Chicken (2.45%), LPG (0.67%), Tea Lipton (0.63%), Mustard Oil (0.45%), Curd (0.34%), Pulse Masoor (0.24%), Garlic (0.22%) and Washing Soap (0.11%).

On the other hand, major decrease is observed in the prices of Petrol (2.35%), Tomatoes (1.26%), Potatoes (0.73%), Bananas



(0.36%), Pulse Moong (0.35%), Diesel (0.29%), Pulse Mash (0.27%), Eggs (0.19%), Sugar (0.11%) and Gur (0.10%).

During the week, out of 51 items, prices of 20

(39.22%) items increased, 09 (17.65%) items decreased and 22 (43.13%) items remained stable.

On an annual basis, the SPI showed a year-

on-year (YoY) increase of 9.11%.

Major increase is observed in the prices of Tomatoes (143.77%), Onions (125.75%), Wheat Flour (77.41%), LPG (55.41%), Diesel (34.05%), Petrol (23.02%), Bananas (17.65%), Gents Sponge Chappal (16.69%), Chilies Powder (16.37%), Mutton (15.98%), Beef (13.42%) and Bread Plain (9.37%),

However, major decrease is observed in the prices of Potatoes (30.00%), Sugar (17.93%), Chicken (17.45%), Pulse Gram (14.39%), Salt Powder (13.96%), Pulse Masoor (12.56%), Eggs (11.70%) and Pulse Moong (5.89%).

The average price of Sona Urea stood at Rs 4,671 per 50 kg bag, which is 0.43% higher from last week's price, and up 6.02% compared to last year.

Meanwhile, the average Cement price is at Rs1,561 per 50 kg bag, which is 0.11% higher than the previous week, and 10.53% higher than prices last year.

Cake Cutting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja cuts cake to celebrate independence day at national CERT on Friday.



Photo: PID

Romania Business Council  
Delegation Meets IGP Sindh



KARACHI: A high-level delegation from the Pakistan–Romania Business Council (PRBC) met with IGP Sindh Mr. Javed Alam Odho at the Central Police Office to discuss the role of modern policing in boosting bilateral trade and investor confidence.

The delegation included H. E. Asad Ur Rehman Khan, Honorary Consul General of the Commonwealth of the Bahamas; H. E. Atif Farooqi, Honorary Consul General

Designate of Romania in Sindh & PRBC Advisor; and Mr. Sohail Shamim Firpo, Chairman PRBC.

Speakers noted that negative international media coverage of Pakistan's security hurts trade. Mr. Farooqi said direct updates from police leadership “from the horse's mouth” reassure overseas investors.

Mr. Khan highlighted Sindh Police's modernization — Safe City, S-4 Smart Surveillance, digital forensics, drones, and cybercrime

units — as confidence-building measures.

IGP Odho reaffirmed Sindh Police's commitment to a safe business environment, citing tech-based reforms that have improved law and order. DIG Mazhar Nawaz Shaikh stressed continued dialogue with business and diplomatic forums.

Both sides agreed on regular interaction to strengthen investor confidence. IG Odho also lauded Farooqi's 26 years of efforts to promote Pakistan-Romania trade.

Big Tobacco, Tiny Targets: Profits  
Built on Young Lives

The tobacco industry remains one of the world's most profitable sectors despite the severe health consequences associated with its products.

According to the World Health Organ-

ization (WHO), tobacco causes more than 8 million deaths annually, including around 1.3 million non-smokers who die due to exposure to second-hand smoke.

Major tobacco and nicotine companies manufacture and market cigarettes, heated tobacco products, e-cigarettes, the nicotine pouches and other products, generating enormous revenues while contributing to a global health crisis.

The article argues that young people are particularly important to the industry's long-term survival. As millions of smokers quit or die from tobacco-related illnesses, companies need new consumers to sustain their businesses. Since most smokers begin using tobacco before the age of 18, children and adolescents become a critical target market. The industry's efforts to attract

young consumers increasingly extend beyond traditional advertising. Modern marketing can involve attractive packaging, appealing flavours, sleek devices, social media trends, influencers, entertainment and lifestyle-oriented messaging. These strategies can make nicotine products appear fashionable or harmless while concealing the risks of addiction and long-term health damage.

Pakistan faces a serious challenge in this regard. Tobacco is estimated to cause around 165,000 deaths annually in the country and imposes an economic burden of approximately US\$6.6 billion through healthcare costs and lost productivity. The article stresses that while tobacco companies benefit financially, families, communities and the national economy bear much of the resulting social and economic cost.

The Global Youth Tobacco Survey Pakistan 2022 found that 6.8% of students aged 13–15 were current tobacco users, while 3.1% used electronic cigarettes. The survey also showed substantial exposure

to tobacco promotion at points of sale, while many underage students attempting to purchase cigarettes were not refused because of their age. These findings highlight weaknesses in enforcement and youth protection.

However, Pakistan has also made progress. The Global Adult Tobacco Survey 2024 reported a 15.7% decline in tobacco use over the previous decade, demonstrating that effective public-health policies can produce results. Nevertheless, the changing tobacco and nicotine market requires continued vigilance, particularly as companies increasingly promote newer products through digital platforms and other modern channels.

The article concludes that protecting young people from nicotine addiction is not merely a health-policy objective but an investment in Pakistan's future. Stronger enforcement of age restrictions, responsible regulation of marketing, public awareness and effective prevention measures are essential. No commercial interest should outweigh the right of children and young people to grow up free from addiction and its lifelong consequences.

The writer is student at Islamic International University Islamabad

NGC Marks 79th  
Independence Day  
with Nationwide  
Celebrations

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The National Grid Company of Pakistan (NGC) marked the nation's 79th Independence Day with flag hoisting ceremonies at all NGC installations and field offices across the country.

The central event was held at the TSG Training Centre, New Kot Lakhpat, Lahore. Chairman BoD Dr. Fiaz Ahmed Chaudhry and Managing Director Engr. Altaf Hussain Malik led the flag hoisting and cake cutting as chief guests.

Dr. Chaudhry paid tribute to the sacrifices for independence and urged citizens

to prioritize national interests, unity and peace. He called for renewed commitment to the principles behind Pakistan's creation.

Engr. Malik also honored the forefathers and said NGC is the “backbone of the power system”, committed to professional excellence and national service. He highlighted NGC's regional role through the CASA-1000 Project and connectivity with Iran.

The program included patriotic songs and tableau by employees' children. Guests planted saplings and inaugurated the renovated TSG hostel. Senior leadership and staff attended.

PSO Celebrates  
Pakistan's 79th  
Independence Day with  
Flag Hoisting Ceremony



KARACHI: Pakistan State Oil Proudly marking Pakistan's 79th Independence Day with a grand flag hoisting ceremony.

Led by CEO Jawad Ahmed Cheema, we reaffirmed our promise of opera-

tional excellence, innovation, and sustainability through our tree plantation drive.

The highlight: an inspiring performance by the students of Karachi Vocational Training Centre that truly touched every heart.

Petroleum Dealers'  
Strike Postponed  
After Margin Increase



KARACHI: The Pakistan Petroleum Dealers Association (PPDA) has postponed its planned strike after the government increased the dealers' margin by Rs. 1.34 per litre, raising the total margin to Rs. 10 per litre.

At an emergency press conference, PPDA Chairman Malik Khuda Bakhsh said the Petroleum Minister called after Islamabad negotiations to confirm Prime Minister's approval of the increase. A summary has also been sent to the ECC. He added that a new summary proposes reverting petroleum price revisions to every 7 or 15 days

instead of daily, citing reduced Middle East tensions.

PPDA had demanded an 8% margin. A joint committee has been formed to review this and will submit a report within 30 days. The association warned protests will continue until all demands are met.

Vice Chairman Tariq Hassan said about US\$50 million in dues remain outstanding due to no margin hike for 3 years. Vice Chairman Anwar Kamal noted OMCs must digitize all 14,000 petrol pumps by 23 March 2027; only 10% are digitized so far.



# Punjab Accelerates Education Reforms in Attock



**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Punjab Provincial Minister for Education Rana Sikandar Hayat has said the provincial government is taking practical measures to modernize the education sector under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, with a focus on equal opportunities for students from all backgrounds.

Addressing a ceremony in Attock where certificates and laptops were distributed among high-achieving students, he announced the upgradation of IT laboratories in 110 schools at a cost of Rs300 million. The facilities will provide training in Artificial Intelligence, freelancing, data analysis, robotics and other modern technologies.

The minister said Rs750 billion had been allocated for Punjab's school education sector, while initiatives including solar panels, rainwater harvesting and improved IT facilities were being introduced. He highlighted the Learn and Earn Programme and said more than 50,000 female students across Punjab were studying IT at matriculation level.



Rana Sikandar said over 100,000 students had benefited from the Honhaar Scholarship Programme and stressed merit, transparency and performance in the education department. He said the government was committed to expanding higher education opportunities for deserving students and preparing Punjab's youth for the demands of the modern world.

# IEEE Lahore Section Professional Meetup 2026 at UMT Lahore

LAHORE: IEEE Lahore Section held its Professional Meetup 2026 at the University of Management and Technology (UMT), gathering Branch Counsellors and IEEE representatives to strengthen Student Branch operations, membership, and technical collaboration.

The 3-hour program began with registration, Quran recitation, and the

National Anthem. Prof. Dr. Atif Alvi welcomed participants. Dr. Yasir Saleem stressed coordinated volunteer action and sustainable growth of IEEE activities.

Key sessions included: Rizwan Naqvi on Student Branch opportunities; Dr. Muhammad Qasim Mehmood on funding and proposal writing; Kashif Bashir on forming Society-based Tech-

nical Chapters; Shahid Zulfiqar on the 2026-2027 Membership Development Strategy; and Muhammad Hamza Ihtisham on IEEE's role in career growth and global exposure.

Discussions focused on industry-academia collaboration, volunteer recruitment, leadership development, and inter-branch cooperation. Participants

proposed a Branch Counsellors communication network for ongoing coordination.

The event concluded with remarks by Dr. Yasir Saleem and certificates. IEEE Lahore Section reaffirmed its commitment to building active, inclusive Student Branches that prepare students for engineering and technology.

# Rescue 1122 Attock Celebrates Independence Day with National Spirit

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The 79th Independence Day of Pakistan was celebrated across Attock with national enthusiasm and a renewed commitment to public service. Special illuminations were arranged at all Rescue 1122 stations, while rescuers participated in various Independence Day activities.

Under the supervision of District Emergency Officer Dr. Mian Muhammad Ashfaq, Rescue 1122 officers and personnel attended the main ceremony organized by the district administration. A smartly turned-out contingent presented a salute to the national flag and expressed devotion to the country.

Dr. Ashfaq congratulated the rescue staff and said Pakistan was achieved through the sacrifices, struggle and



determination of the nation's forefathers. He stressed that citizens should value freedom and consider service to the country a foremost responsibility.

He said Rescue 1122 personnel were performing their duties with honesty, responsibility and dedication to protect citizens' lives and property.

He added that Independence Day was an opportunity to renew the commitment to national development, peace, stability and public service.

# Pakistan at 79: A Journey of Hope, Progress and Possibility

**Continued from Page 4**

to learning and civilization; Mohenjodaro offers extraordinary evidence of one of the earliest urban societies and Lahore's Mughal monuments, alongside the country's rich Sufi heritage, illustrate the depth of Pakistan's cultural identity.

Punjab, Pakistan's largest province by population at around 128 million residents, contributes roughly 60 percent of national GDP and is translating this national potential into people-centred development. Its tax-free FY2025-26 budget of Rs5.335 trillion raised development spending by 47 percent, with Rs811.8 billion allocated to education and Rs631 billion to health. Under Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif,

the Maryam Nawaz Health Clinics initiative, launched with an outlay of Rs21 billion, has outsourced more than 2,500 Basic Health Units and over 100 Rural Health Centres to bring primary care closer to communities, while the Clinic-on-Wheels programme has already served more than 30 million patients. For 2026-27, Punjab's health allocation has climbed further to Rs500 billion, including funds for a new Nawaz Sharif Medical District, cardiac surgery units and stroke-care facilities — a sustained, budgeted commitment rather than a one-off announcement.

The province's investment in modern public transport, electric mobility and technology tells a similar story. The planned second IT City in Rawal-

pindi reflects an understanding that Pakistan's young population must be equipped for the digital economy, while continued attention to modern farming methods and support for farmers aims to strengthen rural communities and food security.

The true measure of progress, however, is ultimately found in its impact on people: a mother receiving healthcare closer to home, a student gaining digital skills, a farmer improving productivity through modern technology, or a young graduate finding a meaningful career. These are the achievements that give development its real human meaning, and they are the ones the budget figures above are ultimately meant to serve.

At 79, Pakistan has much to celebrate and even more to achieve. Its youthful population, strategic location, cultural richness and growing digital economy provide a strong foundation for the decades ahead. Pakistan's future is not simply something to await; it is something to build. As the nation marks its 79th year, Independence Day is a moment not only to remember the historic achievement of August 14, 1947, but also to renew our collective commitment to the Pakistan we aspire to build. The journey continues and the promise of Pakistan remains stronger than ever.

*(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratu@gmail.com)*

## UAJK Holds Flag-Hoisting Ceremony to Mark Independence Day



MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) observed Pakistan's Independence Day with a flag-hoisting ceremony at the Administration Block, Chehla Campus. The event was attended by deans, principal officers, faculty members, department heads, administrative officers and university employees.

Registrar UAJK Professor Dr Saadat Hanif Dar hoisted the national flag, while Dean Faculty of Sciences Professor Dr Muhammad Rafiq and Director City Campus Professor Dr Javed Iqbal hoisted the flags of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the university, respectively. A university security contingent presented a salute.

Special prayers were offered for Pakistan's security, prosperity and progress, as well as unity in AJK and success of the Kashmiri people's struggle for self-determination.

The ceremony was followed by an Independence Walk from the Administration Block to the Central Library. Participants expressed their commitment to freedom, unity, national solidarity and the development of Pakistan and AJK.

## Independence Day Ceremony Held at Rawalpindi Cantonment Board



RAWALPINDI: A dignified Independence Day ceremony was held at the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board under the supervision of Vice President Zahid Bakhtawari. The event was attended by Additional CEO Zia Hussain, Assistant Secretary Imran Habib, distinguished guests and staff members.

Zahid Bakhtawari, along with participants, hoisted the national flag and cut the Independence Day cake. Participants saluted the flag and offered prayers for Pakistan's security, stability, development and prosperity.

Speaking on the occasion, Zahid Bakhtawari said Independence Day was an opportunity to remember the sacrifices of the nation's forefathers and renew the commitment to Pakistan's progress. He urged citizens to work collectively for peace, stability and development.

The participants also expressed solidarity with the Pakistan Armed Forces, acknowledging the sacrifices of martyrs and veterans in defending the country. National slogans were raised during the ceremony, which concluded with prayers for Pakistan's peace, security and prosperity.

## Ribbon Cutting Ceremony WE FEST 2026

**Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: The Couple of Faisalabad Mr. Lal Muhammad Nasir & Mrs. Shagufta Nasir officially inaugurated their visit to WE FEST - Women Entrepreneurs Festival 2026 with a ceremonial ribbon-cutting, marking a special moment of celebration and support for women entrepreneurs. The ceremony was held in the presence of the esteemed FWCCI leadership, as they came together to celebrate women-led businesses, creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship. Their presence and encouragement added a special touch to the festival and further strengthened the spirit of community and collaboration at WE FEST 2026.

## PHF calls up national sr hockey team's training camp

ISLAMABAD: For the preparations of the "Four-Nation Invitational Hockey Tournament" to be held in Kazan, Russia, the Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) has called up the National Senior Hockey Team's training camp in Islamabad starting from August 15.

The training camp will be established at the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium, Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, starting on August 15. The Four-Nation Tournament will be played from August 27 to September 1, in Kazan, Russia, said a press release.

According to the notification issued on the recommendations of the Professional Development Committee and the National Selection Committee of the Pakistan Hockey Federation, all selected players have been directed to report by 5pm on August 15.

List of Called-Up Players: Goalkeepers: Faizan Janjua, Muhammad Awais, Muneeb-ur-Rehman, Awais Rasheed.

Defenders: Yasir Islam, Ehsan Khan, Usman Khan, Muhammad Zain, Asad Aziz, Bilal Aslam.

Midfielders/Half-Backs: Abdul Hamid, Ahsan Nadeem, Samiullah, Aqeel Ahmed, Irfan Shah, Muhammad Atif, Abdul Wahab, Rehan Ali.

# The Hormuz Paradox: The War Behind the War

**Continued from Page 4**

Every month of disruption strengthens alternative suppliers. Importers that once depended on the Persian Gulf are signing contracts elsewhere. Refineries are learning to process different crude grades, while investors are financing pipelines, terminals and offshore production beyond Hormuz.

These emergency arrangements may become permanent. Once countries spend billions adapting their infrastructure, they have little reason to restore their previous dependence completely.

Iran may therefore be damaging not only American allies but its own strategic position. Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Qatar and Kuwait risk losing customers and their reputation for reliable delivery. However, the USA and American and Western Hemisphere producers are gaining customers and influence.

This market transformation raises a question more consequential than the original shipping puzzle: was the redistribution of energy power merely an unintended consequence?

In 2025, China demonstrated that control of strategic resources could become a geopol-

itical weapon. Beijing tightened restrictions on rare-earth elements, processing technology and permanent magnets essential to American automobiles, aircraft, missiles, radar systems, semiconductors, robotics and industrial machinery.

The United States could identify new mineral deposits, but it could not quickly reproduce China's refining and magnet-manufacturing ecosystem. Beijing had acquired leverage capable of interrupting American factories and defence production without military action.

Washington needed compa-

rable bargaining power. China imports approximately 70 percent of the petroleum it consumes, much of it through vulnerable maritime routes. Oil and its transportation system offered a possible counterweight.

Before the Iran war, Trump demanded "total access" to Venezuelan oil. Venezuela possesses the world's largest reported proven petroleum reserves. Iran possesses enormous oil and gas deposits while occupying the northern coastline of the waterway carrying approximately one-fifth of global petroleum consumption.

Senator Lindsey Graham later

connected the two countries explicitly: "Venezuela and Iran have 31 percent of the world's oil reserves... This is China's nightmare. This is a good investment."

Graham described American control of Hormuz as "checkmate." Trump subsequently declared that the United States could open the waterway, "take the oil" and "make a fortune."

These statements reveal a strategic philosophy. China possessed leverage over the minerals and magnets required by the United States. Washington could answer by acquiring influence over the petroleum and shipping routes required by China.

The official military objectives—supporting Israel, destroying missiles, preventing nuclear proliferation and weakening Iranian regional influence—remain part of the explanation. But they do not necessarily constitute the entire explanation.

The inquiry began with two allegedly airtight blockades and a strangely resilient oil market. It then uncovered inventory depletion, alternative suppliers, new trade routes and a historic transfer of energy influence away from the Persian Gulf.

At the end of that trail stands a larger possibility: the Iran

war may be one battlefield in an American attempt to create energy leverage against China's mineral power.

What appeared to be a war centred upon Iran and Israel may ultimately be part of a much greater contest over who controls the indispensable resources—and therefore the geopolitical bargaining power—of the twenty-first century.

*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*



## Take over duties

KARACHI: Pakistan Naval Academy cadets take over duties of Ceremonial Guard at Mazar-e-Quaid on 79th Independence day Friday.



# Pakistan Navy Celebrates 79th Independence Day with Traditional Zeal and Patriotic Fervour

**Bureau Report**

KARACHI: Pakistan Navy celebrated the 79th Independence Day of Pakistan with national spirit, traditional zeal and military traditions. A dignified Change of Guard ceremony was held at the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. A smartly turned-out contingent of cadets from Pakistan Naval Academy and sailors, assumed guard duties at Mazar-e-Quaid with traditional enthusiasm.

Rear Admiral Muhammad

Umair, Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy, graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The Commandant Pakistan Naval Academy presented Qaumi Salam to the Father of the Nation. The Chief Guest subsequently offered Fatiha and recorded his remarks in the Visitors' Book, paying tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his visionary leadership and unparalleled services towards the creation of Pakistan.



The day commenced with 21 Guns Salute at Pakistan Naval Academy and thanksgiving prayers in naval mosques,

seeking peace, prosperity and national unity. Flag hoisting ceremonies were also held at Pakistan Navy units and establishments across Islamabad, Lahore, Karachi, Petaro, Sujawal, Sanghar, Gwadar and Ormara to commemorate the Independence Day.

Marking the occasion, Pakistan Navy reiterated its commitment to safeguarding the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Pakistan and maintaining the highest standards of operational readiness to meet any challenge to national security.

## Political Differences Must Be Set Aside for National Interest: Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh

**Bureau Report**

CHINIOT: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh has called for national consensus on key issues, urging political forces to rise above differences and agree on a "Charter of Pakistan" focused on economic stability, national security, institutional reforms and public welfare.

Addressing an Independence Day gathering in Chiniot, he said a strong economy was essential to overcoming poverty, unemployment and inflation. He stressed the need to attract investment, expand industries, increase exports and create employment opportunities for youth.

The minister emphasized transparent governance, merit, account-



ability and efficient public services, urging officials to resolve citizens' problems promptly and courteously. He also called for institutional reforms, reduced wasteful expenditure and greater use of digital services.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh highlighted Chiniot's potential as an investment hub and advocated improved infrastructure and industrial facilities to create local employment.

He said economic sovereignty was an important component of national security and welcomed expanding cooperation between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. He expressed confidence that continued economic reforms and investment promotion would help build a strong, stable and prosperous Pakistan.

## CM Punjab Announces Expansion of Safe City Project to Every Tehsil, Union Council

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE,: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced plans to expand the Safe Smart Cities project to every tehsil and union council across the province and install another 1,500 panic buttons at police stations and key public places.

Addressing the inauguration of the Punjab Integrated Safe City Network on Independence Day, she said all districts of Punjab had been transformed into safe cities over the past two and a half years, making the province a national leader in technology-driven security.

She highlighted the use of AI-based systems, smart surveillance, predictive policing, drone monitoring and emergency helpline 15. The Virtual



Police Station has provided relief to 1.1 million women, while the

Child Safety App has helped resolve 100,000 cases and reunite 80,000 children with their families.

Maryam Nawaz said more than 70 areas previously considered no-go zones had become safer, including the riverine belt, where no major crime or kidnapping-for-ransom incident had been reported for around 10 months.

She announced Rs30 billion in development projects for the riverine area, including healthcare facilities. She also praised Safe City teams for their role during floods, emergencies and public events.

The chief minister stressed that data-driven policing was helping reduce crime and protect citizens, particularly women and children. She reiterated that the Safe City network would eventually reach grassroots level across Punjab.

## City Parade held in Islamabad's D Chowk to mark Independence Day



**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: A historic City Parade was held at D-Chowk in Islamabad today to mark Independence Day with great national fervour. The grand event was attended by Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq and Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi. A large number of citizens and families participated in the parade, which prominently showcased the rich cultural diversity of Pakistan.

The Islamabad City Parade featured disciplined displays by police squads, vibrant performances by the Jhang dance group, traditional dhol beats, and performances by pipe and percussion bands.

A camel band captivated the audience with a distinct performance,

alongside a fleet of vintage cars and motorbikes that added classical charm to the parade.

Renowned artists Nimra Mehra, Sahir Ali Bagga, and the Khumariyaan Band gave live musical performances.

The parade concluded with a spectacular fireworks display illuminating the night sky over the federal capital.

Speaking on the occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the Islamabad City Parade aimed to involve citizens in Independence Day celebrations while highlighting the country's rich cultural heritage. He added that Independence Day is a day of national solidarity and patriotism, as well as an occasion to renew our pledge to build a bright future for Pakistan.

## Finance Minister's Independence Day Message

**News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: On Pakistan's 79th Independence Day, Federal Minister for Finance & Revenue Muhammad Aurangzeb extended congratulations to all Pakistanis at home and abroad. He paid tribute to the sacrifices of the nation's forefathers and reaffirmed the commitment to building a stronger, more prosperous and inclusive Pakistan. The Minister said Pakistan is moving forward with renewed confidence. Macroeconomic stability has been achieved, with reforms moving from intent to implementation. Fiscal and external fundamentals are strengthening, and economic and investor confidence is rising. He noted that stability is now the foundation for the next phase: accelerating growth, attracting investment, expanding exports, creating jobs, and increasing opportunities for the people. Aurangzeb emphasized that Pakistan's people — youth, women, entrepreneurs, farmers, workers,



freelancers, innovators and businesses — are the country's greatest strength and investment. Empowering them with skills and opportunities will drive the future. His goal: turn stability into growth, reforms into opportunity, and progress into better lives. He concluded with "Pakistan Paindabad."

## Pakistan Targets \$10 Billion in Pharmaceutical Exports by 2033, Minister Announces



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof. Ahsan Iqbal has called for a one-month industry-wide consultation to prepare a roadmap for making Pakistan's pharmaceutical sector competitive, innovation-driven, and globally export-oriented.

Chairing a roundtable with industry stakeholders, he said the sector should build on its record \$457 million exports in FY2025 — the highest in 20 years — and contribute to the national goal of \$100 billion total exports by 2035. Adviser to PM Haroon Akhtar Khan and Health Minister Mustafa Kamal also attended.

Ahsan Iqbal proposed that

industry, academia, and research institutions jointly identify regulatory, financing, production, and market-access barriers and produce a roadmap to 2030 and beyond. He asked: "Can we make Pakistan a pharmaceutical hub of the world in the next 10 years?"

The sector's roadmap targets \$2 billion exports, then \$3 billion via PharmEx in 3 years, and \$10 billion in 8 years. Pakistan currently exports to 52 WHO Level 2 markets, with Level 3 status targeted for April 2027 to access 150+ markets.

He stressed reducing 85% API import dependence, mainly from China, and boosting R&D, technology, and university-industry linkages. The government pledged policy continuity and a "clean runway" for growth.