



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم نے نعمان بن بشیر سے سنا وہ بیان کرتے
تھے کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا تم مومنوں
کو آپس میں ایک دوسرے کے ساتھ رحمت
و محبت کا حاملہ کرنے اور ایک دوسرے کے
ساتھ لطف و نرم خوئی میں ایک جسم جیلاؤ گے
کہ جب اس کا کوئی ٹکڑا بھی تکلیف میں ہو تا
ہے تو سارا جسم تکلیف میں ہوتا ہے ایسا کہ نیند
اڑ جاتی ہے اور جسم بخار میں مبتلا ہو جاتا ہے۔
(بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6011)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

Two India-backed terrorists killed in Balochistan operation

At least two India-backed terrorists were killed and three others injured in an intelligence-based operation in Balochistan's Killi Zaik area, security sources said on Monday. According to the sources, the operation was conducted between Killi Zaik and Kaghli area, around 12 kilometres north of the Basima camp, following intelligence about the presence of Fitna Al Hindustan militants in the area.



Rawalpindi registers 1,670 dengue FIR as crackdown intensifies

Rawalpindi authorities have registered 1,670 FIR and sealed 440 premises for violating anti-dengue safety measures since Jan. District Coordinator for Epidemics Prevention and Control Dr. Jawad Ahmed said on Sunday, August 16, that authorities had also issued 1,565 challans and imposed fines totaling Rs1,974,000 on people who violated anti-dengue standard operating procedures.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding reforms in NITB and the construction of Islamabad Technology Park on Monday.



Photo: PID

DPM/FM Dar, Turkish FM discuss regional developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar spoke with the Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan on Sunday night.

The two foreign ministers discussed recent regional developments and reaffirmed

their commitment to further strengthening cooperation on matters of mutual interest, a press statement issued by the Foreign Office said on Monday.

The two leaders agreed that dialogue and diplomacy remain the way forward to address regional challenges and promote peace and stability.

PM Shehbaz thanks Trump for backing Makkah Defence Agreement

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday thanked US President Donald Trump for expressing support for the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. Responding on X to Trump's post on 'Truth Social', the PM said he

deeply appreciated the president's "kind words of support" on the pact's signing.

Shehbaz said that together with Saudi Arabia and Türkiye, Pakistan would continue playing a constructive role in ensuring the defence of the three countries as well as regional stability. He also reiterated his appreciation for Trump's "courageous and decisive"

leadership, crediting him with helping avert a nuclear catastrophe in South Asia and saving millions of lives during the Pakistan-India war in May last year. He added that durable peace remains the most essential prerequisite for a bright and prosperous future for the peoples of the region.

Earlier, Trump had posted that he was "very happy" that Saudi

Arabia, Türkiye and Pakistan had finally signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement, describing it as evidence that the Middle East was coming together and that countries in the region would be better able to defend themselves. Congratulating the leadership of all three countries, Trump called the agreement "a big, bold and important first step," adding,

"Wow."

The exchange comes amid growing international attention to the Makkah Pact, which commits Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye to treating an attack on any one signatory as an attack on all three, and reflects broader efforts to institutionalize trilateral defence and economic cooperation.

Pakistan, Egypt Agree to Boost Agricultural Cooperation with Focus on Cotton Productivity

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security Rana Tanveer Hussain has sought Egypt's technical support to increase cotton yield and quality in Pakistan, valuing Egypt's expertise in varieties, quality seed, crop management and value addition highly beneficial.

Chairing a meeting with Egyptian Ambassador Dr. Ihab Mohamed Abdelhamid

Hassan, the minister said Pakistan values its longstanding ties with Egypt and praised its progress in modern agriculture, water management, and climate-resilient farming. He proposed enhanced cooperation between research institutions through expert exchanges, joint trials, capacity building and sharing best practices in cotton and other priority crops.

He also emphasized collaboration in water-efficient irrigation, seed development,



biotechnology, mechanization, livestock, horticulture

and climate-smart agriculture.

Ambassador Hassan expressed Egypt's readiness to strengthen cooperation and assured that Egyptian institutions would explore mutual areas of interest. He highlighted Egypt's experience in cotton, irrigation and farming in water-scarce conditions.

Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination to translate bilateral ties into practical benefits for farmers, productivity and food security.



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar told the Senate that no individual is above the law, and the same legal process applicable to every citizen also applies to the PTI founder.

Responding to a point of order by Senator Azam Swati, Tarar said Parliament provides the constitutional framework under which all institutions must operate. "The law that applies to me applies to you, and the law that applies to you equally applies to the PTI founder," he stated, rejecting any notion of exceptions for political leaders.

Referring to May 9 cases and cases involving the PTI founder, he said trials proceeded in court with witnesses, evidence, and cross-examination, leading to acquittals or convictions. Both prosecution and defense have the right to appeal, he added.

Tarar acknowledged delays in criminal appeals as a long-standing issue, noting death and life sentence appeals previously took 5-7 years, and NAB appeals were also pending for years. He said efforts have been made to reduce the backlog.

He said applications for early hearing and suspension of sentence in the PTI founder's cases are before courts. He also cited a briefing to the Inter-Parliamentary Union in Geneva on the conviction and jail manual rights.

Urging the opposition to pursue legal remedies, Tarar said: "The answer is not to abandon the legal system. The courts have to decide."

PM Shehbaz's Dialogue Offer to Opposition Still Stands, Says Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry told the Senate that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's offer for dialogue with the opposition still stands and has not expired.

Responding to Senator Mohsin Aziz, he said dialogue within Parliament is the only viable way to resolve political differences and strengthen democracy.

He recalled that during the budget session, the PM personally approached the Leader of the Opposition with a proposal for talks. Following that, Rana Sanaullah, the government's parliamentary leadership and the minister

himself visited the opposition leader's chamber. Discussions included identifying a mutually acceptable venue, with the government offering space in Parliament and saying the opposition could suggest any location inside Parliament House.

Tariq Fazal clarified there were no preconditions or pre-set agenda. He urged the opposition to build consensus, nominate representatives, and decide a time and venue.

He also said while the opposition has a constitutional right to peaceful protest, it should not infringe on citizens' right to free movement. "If the opposition wants dialogue, the government remains ready to engage," he said.

No Restriction on PTI Founder's Sons Traveling to Pakistan: Talal Chaudhry

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry told the Senate that there is no restriction on the PTI founder's sons traveling to Pakistan, as both hold valid NICOPs. He noted nearly three years have passed but they have not come to meet their father despite visiting other countries.

Responding to Senator Mashal Azam, Talal said 84 meetings have been facilitated for the PTI founder and Bushra Bibi during incarceration, in line with the jail manual, laws and court orders.

He said a three-member Supreme Court bench will take up a petition on the PTI founder's meetings and
Continued on Page 7

PTI Founder Receiving Best Available Medical Treatment: Rana Sanaullah

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the PM on Political and Public Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah told the Senate that PTI founder is receiving the best available medical treatment in judicial custody and there has been no negligence regarding his health.

Responding to Leader of the Opposition Raja Nasir Abbas, he said responsibility for a prisoner's health rests with custody

authorities and the court. If there is negligence, those responsible will be answerable under law.

Brushing aside concerns about medical care, Rana Sanaullah said available information on the PTI founder's health, including blood pressure, does not support the opposition's claims.

On the PTI founder's eye ailment, he said treatment was provided by top specialists of international standard,

including required injections, tests and examinations. Doctors from Al-Shifa were involved, and a doctor proposed by the PTI side was included in the medical team.

He added that petitions are pending in the Islamabad High Court and Supreme Court, and jail meetings are being held per procedure. Any issue related to custody, treatment or meetings will be dealt with strictly under law and court orders.

CM Punjab chairs fifth meeting on clean drinking water supply

 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Monday chaired the fifth consecutive meeting on the provision of clean drinking water, reviewing proposed measures for ensuring water supply in various districts of Punjab.

The meeting reviewed water supply pipeline projects in Chakwal, Rawalpindi, Rajanpur, Faisalabad, Murree and Attock. It agreed in principle to prioritise water supply to eight water-scarce villages in Chakwal.

A proposal for pilot water supply projects in Rajanpur, Jampur, Chak Shigari and Dajal was also considered. The meeting agreed to launch a pilot project to provide drinking water in Chak Jhumra and suburban areas of Faisalabad.

The chief minister directed the authorities to compile and verify reliable data on water requirements according to population. She ordered the immediate provision of 21 water bowers in Rajanpur and directed the authorities to expedite beautification and other development projects in Rojhan.

CM Punjab also ordered the provision of water tanks for drinking water supply in Murree and directed work on



a new water source in the hill station.

The Punjab Clean Water Authority and deputy commissioners gave detailed briefings on the water supply situation and ongoing projects in the districts.

The meeting was informed that Chakwal has 32 functional water filtration plants, while 237 are under construction. Fifteen model villages and 13 model villages are also being developed.

Rawalpindi has 246 existing water filtration plants, while 252 new plants are to be installed. Attock has 77 existing filtration plants, 399 under completion and nine model villages planned.

Rajanpur has 146 existing filtration

plants, with 191 under completion. Twelve model villages and one model village are also planned there.

Murree has five existing water filtration plants, while 90 are under completion. Faisalabad has 343 existing filtration plants, four surface water treatment plants and 180 filtration plants under completion.

Offering Fatiha

ISLAMABAD: President of the Pakistan Muslim League (Z) Muhammad Ijaz-ul-Haq and others offering Fatiha on the grave of former President Gen Zia-ul-Haq Shaheed, on the 38th martyrdom anniversary of Shuhda-e-Bahawalpur, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera Addresses Independence Day Ceremony at Aspire College Khardianwala

 **Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera visited Aspire College Khardianwala, and upon reaching Aspire College, he was warmly welcomed by the college director Jawad Asghar and other staff. On this occasion, a special ceremony was organized in the college regarding Independence Day, in which students, teachers and college administration participated.

RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, while addressing the ceremony, said that Independence Day gives us a sense of loyalty to the homeland, national unity and our respon-



sibilities. He said that the role of the young generation is very important for

the development, stability and peace of Pakistan.

Talking about the growing trend of drugs, RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera said that youth are our valuable asset and it is our common responsibility to protect them from the scourge of drugs. No concession will be made to the elements who attract youth to drugs and strict action will be taken according to the law.

Later, RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera distributed prizes among the position holder students of Aspire College Khardianwala and appreciated their academic achievements.

JST Candidates Protest in Hyderabad, Demand Cut-Off Score Be Lowered to 50

 **Bureau Report**

HYDERABAD: Candidates who scored 50 to 54 marks in the Junior Science Teacher (JST) test held a peaceful protest outside the Hyderabad Press Club, demanding the Sindh government reduce the qualifying cut-off from 55 to 50 marks.

Led by Rida, Kaneez Fatima, Aqib Mumtaz and others, the protesters said candidates with 50+ marks have already waited nearly five years for jobs. During this delay, many have exhausted age relaxation for government posts and risk becoming ineligible for future vacancies.



They argued that 50 marks is accepted as passing in several insti-

tutions across Sindh and Pakistan, including the Teacher Licensing Test

conducted by Sukkur IBA. Candidates scoring 50-54 are only a few marks behind those with 55, and disqualifying them over such a narrow gap is unfair, they said.

The candidates also complained that Sukkur IBA issued the JST syllabus very late, leaving little time for preparation. In those circumstances, securing over 50 marks should be considered a significant achievement.

They appealed to Sindh Education Minister Sardar Shah to adopt a flexible policy, reduce the cut-off to 50, and issue offer letters to all eligible candidates with 50 marks or above.

Ayaz meets Speaker KPK



ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq Monday met with Speaker Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly Babar Saleem Swati at Parliament House.

The meeting discussed parliamentary affairs, legislation and other matters of mutual interest in detail.

The participants agreed to further strengthen linkages and parliamentary cooperation among the federal, provincial and other legislative institutions.

The meeting also discussed matters relating to the strengthening of parliamentary institutions, promotion of democratic values, resolution of public issues and effective performance of legislative institutions.

Ayaz Sadiq stressed the importance of coordination and exchange of experiences among parliamentary institutions, saying that strong parliamentary institutions are the guarantee of democratic stability.

He said that mutual consultation and exchange of experiences among all legislative institutions is essential.

Ayaz Sadiq said that the Speakers' Conference is an effective platform for further expanding parliamentary cooperation.

He said that production orders of opposition members have been issued without discrimination, reflecting a commitment to parliamentary traditions and democratic values.

On the occasion, Babar Swati appreciated the strong parliamentary cooperation extended by the National Assembly Secretariat.

He also appreciated the role of Ayaz Sadiq in promoting parliamentary cooperation and strengthening linkages among legislative institutions.

Kashmir Community International Urges PML-N to Nominate Haji Ehsan Danish for AJK Overseas Seat

 **Bureau Report**

JEDDAH, Saudi Arabia: Jammu & Kashmir Community International has appealed to PML-N President Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and PML-N AJK President Shah Ghulam Qadir to nominate Haji Ehsan Danish for the Overseas seat in the Azad Jammu & Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

In a joint statement, Chairman Ghulam Nabi Butt, Senior Vice Chairman Sardar Kamran Azam, General Secretary Raja Pervez Ahmed, and other office bearers said Danish is a respected Saudi-based political, social and business personality with a long record of service to the Pakistani and Kashmiri diaspora.

They noted that the Overseas seat has traditionally gone to representatives from Europe, especially the UK, while the Middle East, particularly Saudi Arabia, has remained overlooked. With a large Kashmiri and Pakistani community in the region playing a key role through remittances, they said nominating Danish would address underrepresentation and recognize the contributions of Kashmiris in Saudi Arabia and the wider Middle East.



Makkah Defence Pact Heralds New Era of Unity in Muslim World

 **Abdul Majid**

FAISALABAD: Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad, Member of the Council of Islamic Ideology Pakistan and Chairman Ulama Mashaaikh Pakistan, has welcomed the defence agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye signed in Makkah, calling it a significant step toward Muslim unity, mutual trust, regional peace and stability.

Speaking to Sahibzada Qari Hissan Siddiqui and Mazhar Abbas Choudhry, he said the Makkah Defence Pact is not merely defence cooperation but a symbol of solidarity and brotherhood among Muslim countries.

He stressed the pact's purpose is not confrontation but the protection of sovereignty, security and peace of the three nations. Strong defence, he noted, provides a foundation for peace, while dialogue and diplomacy should remain the priority for resolving disputes.

Amjad said the three countries can jointly combat terrorism, extremism and regional instability by using their defence and diplomatic capabilities for the broader Muslim world. He urged Muslim nations to reduce differences and unite on common issues to promote peace, development and prosperity.

He expressed hope the historic cooperation would strengthen unity and set a positive example for regional stability.



11th Death Anniversary of Colonel Shuja Khanzada Shaheed Observed

 **Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The 11th death anniversary of former Punjab Home Minister Colonel (Retd.) Shuja Khanzada Shaheed was observed at Shadi Khan, where participants paid tribute to his sacrifices in the fight against terrorism and for Pakistan's peace and security.

Addressing a commemorative ceremony, former Punjab Minister Jahangir Khanzada said Colonel Shuja Khanzada was fully aware of the risks he faced but remained committed to protecting the country and its people. He described the late colonel as a courageous soldier, political leader and proud son of Chhachh who served the nation with dedication.

Jahangir Khanzada said his sacrifice taught the nation to remain united and confront challenges with courage whenever Pakistan's security and survival were at stake. He also paid tribute to the families and mothers of martyrs who had sacrificed their loved ones for the country.

He urged citizens to transform patriotism and national service into practical conduct by performing their responsibilities with honesty, sincerity and dedication.

The ceremony was attended by political and social figures, local dignitaries, citizens and admirers of Colonel Shuja Khanzada, who prayed for the martyrs and reaffirmed their commitment to a peaceful and prosperous Pakistan.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	4:01 am
Zohr	12:12 pm
Asr	4:57 pm
Maghrib	6:52 pm
Isha	8:22 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/	
Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 &
& Rescue Services	9451122
Motorway Police	4266044
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
Cannt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8,	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

Pakistan assumes presidency of UN Conference on Disarmament

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan assumed the Presidency of the United Nations Conference on Disarmament (CD) in Geneva on Monday.

On Pakistan's behalf, Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi, Additional Secretary (Arms Control and Disarmament) and Spokesperson, is presiding over the meetings of the CD.

According to a press release, Pakistan holds the final Presidency of the Conference's 2026 session and will therefore conclude its proceedings for the year. During its Presidency, Pakistan will steer negotiations on the Annual Report of the CD and the corresponding resolution in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly.

Pakistan has initiated consultations in its role as President of the CD. Ambassador Tahir Hussain Andrabi chaired a meeting of the previous Presidents of the Conference for the 2026 session and held consultations with representatives of the regional groups.

The United Nations Conference on Disarmament is the world's single multilateral forum for negotiating disarmament and arms control treaties. Based at the United Nations Office at Geneva, it brings together 65 member states, including all States possessing nuclear weapons.

Bahria University BoG Reviews Progress in Academics, Research and Global Rankings

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, in his capacity as Pro-Chancellor and Chairman of the Board of Governors (BoG) of Bahria University, chaired the 56th BoG meeting at the university's Head Office.

The Board reviewed progress on flagship academic programmes, research and innovation, international rankings, student learning experiences, and academic and institutional infrastructure development.

It also examined updates on applied research and commercialization initiatives, including AI-driven projects. The Board noted significant improvements across all domains, with enhanced efforts toward global visibility, alumni engagement, academic and administrative excellence, research productivity,



and international partnerships.

The meeting was attended by Board members, representatives from relevant

Ministries and the Higher Education Commission (HEC), as well as senior advisors and academicians.

Admiral Ashraf reaffirmed the university's commitment to strengthening Bahria University's role as a

leading institution for quality education, research, and innovation in Pakistan.

Beautiful View

ISLAMABAD: A beautiful view of clouds hovering over the Margalla Hills from Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Qazi Qaiser Mahmood Honored with 'Pride of Gujar Khan' Award on Independence Day

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Qazi Qaiser Mahmood, Chairman of Falah-e-Ummat Welfare Society, was honored with the 'Pride of Gujar Khan' Award at an Independence Day ceremony for his outstanding social, welfare and public service and for bringing distinction to Gujar Khan.

The event was attended by Brigadier Ejaz Kiani and Dr. Manzoor Qazi, founder of Al-Shifa Hospital and former CEO, as guests of honor, along with prominent personalities from Gujar Khan.

Qazi Qaiser Mahmood has served the community for 24 years through Falah-e-Ummat, supporting the underprivileged and running humanitarian initiatives.

Shaukat Mahmood Qazi, Chairman Qazi Group of



Companies and Haq Trust, said recognizing such individuals encourages positive work and inspires youth. He added that those who serve

humanity above personal interests are valuable assets to society.

Speakers reaffirmed love for Pakistan and national

unity. Participants concluded by congratulating Qazi Qaiser Mahmood and paying tribute to his long-standing welfare services.

Scandals Happen in Sindh, Not Punjab: Azma Bokhari



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari has said that there is no opposition to Sindh as a province. "If performance is taken as a taunt, then performance will certainly be discussed," she said.

Azma Bokhari said that those making corruption allegations without any evidence could also be taken to court. She said that if questions were raised about holding press conferences without evidence, it would then be termed political victimisation.

The Punjab Information Minister said, "Those in whose province Rs8 billion corruption takes place in a single road project will question us? Those in whose own Sindh government everything from electric fans to entire examination centres gets booked will question us? Those where 'Shishtam' has a particular meaning will question us?"

Azma Bokhari said that scandals take place in Sindh, not Punjab. "If there is any irregularity in Punjab, the Chief Minister and her team themselves bring it to light; they do not protect anyone," she added.

MD Horticulture Agency Lahore Conducts Surprise Visits to Directorates

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Managing Director Ahmed Usman Javed of the Horticulture Agency Lahore conducted surprise visits to various directorates to review administrative affairs, field activities, and public facilities.



During the visits, Director Administration Sonia Kaleem and Director Coordination Farah Diba briefed him on ongoing administrative matters. Director Marketing Naeem Afzal and Hassan-ul-Haq gave details on revenue targets, recovery, and Marketing Directorate performance.

The MD also visited the Medical Centre to assess available facilities and received briefings from concerned officers.

Later, he chaired a Marketing Directorate meeting attended by AMD Tasleem Akhtar Rao. The meeting reviewed revenue targets, recovery progress, field monitoring, and advertising matters.

Addressing the meeting, Javed stressed the need for effective strategies to enhance revenue and achieve targets. He directed strict field presence of Marketing Inspectors, comprehensive surveys of brands, shops, and delivery vehicles, and zero tolerance for illegal advertising. He urged staff to improve performance, promising better facilities in return.

PRA Issues Guidelines for Digital Receipts at Restaurants, Hotels in Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) has issued comprehensive guidelines for customers at restaurants, hotels and coffee shops across Punjab to ensure transparency in tax payments and proper issuance of digital receipts. Under the new rules, businesses cannot issue kitchen orders, unpaid bills, pre-bills or temporary bills to customers. All food chains, restaurants, hotels and coffee shops must prominently display the guidelines at their premises. The PRA urged citizens to obtain a digital receipt only after payment and to verify the business name, address, and Punjab Taxpayer Registration Number (PNTN) on it. Each digital receipt must include order details, applicable tax rate, amount before tax, total amount, PRA invoice number and PRA QR code. Customers can scan the QR code to verify transaction details. The spokesperson advised lodging complaints if businesses refuse digital or card payments via PRA's social media, PRA Sahulat app, or WhatsApp at 0343-0000772. PRA emphasized that digital receipts are key to protecting tax revenue for Punjab's development and prosperity.

Mian Zahid Hussain Welcomes Makkah Defence Pact

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, has praised the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement signed by Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye on August 7, 2026, calling it a landmark step toward collective security and deeper economic cooperation among Muslim nations. Under the pact, an attack on any one signatory would be treated as an attack on all three. He noted Turkish leadership has signaled the framework could eventually expand to other regional countries.

Highlighting its scale, Hussain said the combined economies of the three



nations total roughly \$3.33 trillion — Türkiye (\$1.6 trillion), Saudi Arabia (\$1.3 trillion), and Pakistan (\$452 billion) — with a combined population exceeding 370 million and a

joint defence budget of nearly \$125 billion. He described the alliance as merging Pakistan's nuclear capability, Saudi economic strength, and Turkish defence technology expertise into a major regional strategic bloc.

Hussain emphasized significant economic opportunities for Pakistani businesses, including joint ventures and exports in defence engineering, IT, pharmaceuticals, textiles, agriculture, and energy. He urged integrating Pakistani manufacturers into emerging defence and industrial supply chains, and channeling Saudi investment and Turkish technology into Pakistan's export sectors.

He credited Pakistan's performance during Marka-e-Haq and Operation

Bunyan-ul-Marsoos for boosting the country's strategic credibility, and praised Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, and Deputy PM/Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar for their roles in finalizing the agreement.

Noting plans for a ministerial mechanism and permanent secretariat in Saudi Arabia, Hussain called for a trilateral economic roadmap featuring a joint business council, investment facilitation, industrial projects, and stronger chamber-to-chamber ties. He said FPCCI stands ready to help strengthen economic relations among the three countries, adding that the pact's real success will be measured through investment, exports, and job creation.

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Planting Trees Is Not Enough—Pakistan Must Protect Them

Pakistan's Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign 2026 comes at a time when environmental protection has become an urgent national priority. The President's call to plant 20 million saplings across the country is an important reminder that forests are not simply sources of greenery; they are essential to biodiversity, water security, soil protection, air quality and climate resilience.

Pakistan faces increasingly serious environmental challenges, including extreme heat, water scarcity, land degradation and climate-related disasters. Forests can play a vital role in addressing these pressures. They protect watersheds, reduce soil erosion, support wildlife and help communities adapt to changing climatic conditions. In cities, trees provide shade and contribute to healthier living environments, while rural communities depend on forests for resources such as fruit and fodder.

The government's initiatives, including the Upscaling Green Pakistan Programme, mangrove restoration, sustainable forest management and community-based conservation, represent important steps toward strengthening the country's environmental resilience. However, plantation campaigns should not be judged simply by the number of saplings planted. The real measure of success is how many of those saplings survive, mature and become healthy forests.

This distinction is crucial. Every year, millions of trees may be planted during seasonal campaigns, but without adequate watering, protection, monitoring and community involvement, a significant portion of new plantations may fail to survive. Therefore, every plantation drive should be accompanied by a clear maintenance and monitoring mechanism. Relevant departments must identify planting sites carefully, select suitable indigenous species and assign responsibility for protecting newly planted trees.

Public participation is equally important. The responsibility for environmental protection cannot rest entirely with government departments. Educational institutions, local communities, businesses, civil society organizations and, particularly, young people should become active partners in protecting the country's natural resources. A sapling planted by a student, family or community should be regarded as a long-term responsibility rather than a one-day activity.

Pakistan's commitments under international environmental agreements and sustainable development frameworks also make forest conservation an important national obligation. Yet international commitments will have meaning only when they produce visible improvements at the local level.

The Monsoon Tree Plantation Campaign should therefore become part of a continuous national environmental strategy. Protecting existing forests must receive as much attention as planting new ones. Illegal cutting, uncontrolled development and degradation of natural ecosystems can undermine years of plantation efforts.

The President's message rightly emphasizes that the campaign is more than a plantation drive. It is a call for sustained environmental responsibility. Pakistan needs millions of healthy, mature trees—not merely millions of planted saplings.

If government institutions and citizens work together to plant, protect and nurture trees, the campaign can contribute meaningfully to a greener, cleaner and more climate-resilient Pakistan. The trees planted today are an investment in the health, security and prosperity of future generations.

A Nation's Real Strength Rests in Spirituality, Not Military Might

A striking observation by a renowned Jewish religious scholar widely circulated in social and traditional media that Muslims cannot be defeated through conventional military means alone raises a question far larger than the conflict in which his remarks are being circulated.

He attributes Muslim resilience to spiritual strength rooted in faith, prayer, sacrifice and an understanding of life and death extending beyond material existence. His observation points toward a broader proposition: military superiority may destroy physical capabilities, but it does not necessarily vanquish a people whose spiritual foundations remain intact.

History repeatedly demonstrates the distinction between defeating an army and defeating a nation. Armies may be destroyed, governments removed, economies crippled and territories occupied, yet a people can recover if their faith, identity and collective conviction survive.

This phenomenon is not peculiar to Islam. Judaism, Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and other great religious traditions have endured persecution, displacement and political upheaval because something deeper than material strength continued to sustain their communities.

In Islam, this spiritual foundation begins with iman: belief in Allah, His angels, His revealed books, His prophets and messengers, and the Hereafter. These

convictions find practical manifestation through the declaration of faith, five daily prayers, fasting, zakat and pilgrimage to Makkah.

Together they cultivate discipline, sacrifice, accountability and attachment to purposes transcending material life. The stronger this relationship between belief and practice becomes, the more profoundly it shapes the believer's response to fear, hardship, suffering and death.

This is where conventional deterrence encounters a different equation. Military power normally seeks to raise the cost of resistance until surrender appears preferable to continued suffering. But a person who regards earthly existence as temporary, sacrifice as meaningful and death as a transition rather than absolute extinction may calculate those costs differently.

Physical destruction remains painful, but its capacity to compel submission diminishes when the convictions sustaining resistance are stronger than fear.

The Jewish scholar's observation becomes particularly significant in this context. The strength confronting an army is not merely the weapon carried by a fighter but the conviction residing within the person carrying it. A missile can be destroyed, an installation demol-

ished and an army weakened, yet if the belief system producing courage and endurance survives, resistance can regenerate. The deeper contest therefore extends beyond weapons to the spiritual foundations sustaining collective purpose.

This introduces another dimension of confrontation. If spiritual conviction strengthens a population, weakening that conviction becomes another means of weakening resistance. Doubt may be directed toward fundamental beliefs; attachment to worship may be eroded; materialism may displace spiritual purpose; internal divisions may be encouraged; and succeeding generations may gradually become detached from the traditions through which religious identity is renewed. The battlefield then extends beyond territory into the mind, heart and spiritual consciousness of society.

Religious communities, however, are not without spiritual guardianship. Islam has its scholars, shaykhs, Sufi traditions and awliya, just as other religions possess their own spiritually accomplished personalities and inherited traditions of guidance. Within Islamic spiritual understanding, accomplished figures have historically strengthened belief, preserved sacred knowledge and exercised responsibility for communi-

ties entrusted to their care. Their role has often been to reinforce faith precisely when political, cultural or external pressures threatened to weaken it.

The history of Islam offers powerful examples. Across the Indian subcontinent, Indonesia, Malaysia and other parts of Asia, Islam frequently established deep social roots not primarily through military conquest but through merchants, scholars, Sufi shaykhs and spiritual personalities. Their influence came through character, teaching, service, devotion and spiritual attraction. Khanqahs, zawiya and religious circles became centers of learning, charity and community cohesion, allowing spiritual influence to reach where political authority or military force never could.

This history illuminates the concept of spiritual jurisdiction. Within the religious framework, highly attained personalities carry responsibility not only for individual disciples but for wider communities or territories. They strengthen faith, respond to spiritual disturbances, preserve unity and protect the religious consciousness of those within their sphere. If a community's spiritual foundations are challenged, such guardians seek to fortify belief and practice and, within this understanding, counter hostile spiritual influence through their own spiritual resources.

The same broad principle appears in different forms across other religions. Judaism has its rabbis, sages and mystical

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

DG ISPR's Press Conference: Strategic Signals and National Priorities

The recent press conference by ISPR Director General Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry outlined Pakistan's strategic direction and national priorities, covering security, governance, economic stability, terrorism, and external interference. Lasting more than two hours in Rawalpindi, the briefing went beyond a routine security update by addressing sensitive national issues with operational data, charts, and presentations, emphasizing transparency and providing the military's perspective on the country's security environment and long-term plans. A key message was that good governance is indispensable for lasting security and that military action alone cannot eliminate terrorism without stronger administrative and institutional capacity. The DG ISPR described security and governance as interdependent, identified the National Action Plan (NAP) as the consensus framework for countering extremism, disrupting terror financing, and strengthening institutions, and suggested reviewing whether Pakistan's four-province administrative structure adequately serves a population of around 240–250 million. He said any administrative changes should be decided by the political leadership through constitutional and legal processes reflecting the will of the people, while reaffirming the military's security role and civilian authority over political and administrative reforms within the constitutional framework.

The DG ISPR also presented extensive data on counterterrorism operations, stating that security forces conducted 40,348 intelli-

gence-based operations in 2026—nearly 200 daily—including over 31,000 in Balochistan. He reported 3,145 terrorism incidents nationwide, with 1,971 in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, 1,148 in Balochistan, and 26 elsewhere, resulting in 2,084 confirmed terrorists killed, an average of 10 per day that he described as the highest operational ratio in the country's history. He added that 819 Pakistanis had lost their lives in the fight against terrorism, including 303 army personnel, 194 police and law enforcement officials, and 322 civilians, while noting that 28 suicide bombings occurred nationwide, most of which he alleged were carried out by Afghan nationals, underscoring the need for effective border management and regional cooperation. Clarifying the concept of a "hard state," he said it does not mean military rule or authoritarianism but rather equal enforcement of the Constitution and rule of law, resolution of all matters through constitutional and legal mechanisms, equality before the law, stronger institutions, accountability, and protection of democratic rights and freedoms. Addressing Balochistan, he rejected claims that the security situation is worsening, alleged that some elite groups and tribal leaders have historically resisted social progress to preserve their influence, and said the state aims to empower ordinary citizens, address genuine grievances, and continue operations against militant groups. He outlined ongoing socio-economic initiatives, including investments worth billions of rupees, projects such as the Mangi Dam, Kachhi Canal, and Pakistan Expressway, completion of 52 dams under the 100 Dams Project, establishment of 16 educational institutions and two

healthcare facilities each month, and support for shrimp farming and farmer loans under the Balochistan Green Initiative to create jobs, improve living standards, and address the underlying causes of insurgency.

The DG ISPR also addressed the situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), making it clear that the state would not allow any unrest to derail the democratic and constitutional process. He stressed that political issues should be resolved through democratic and constitutional means, and that the state's role is to ensure a peaceful environment where democratic institutions can function effectively. He stated that the state has acted with restraint in dealing with recent unrest and that the electoral process would continue without disruption, ensuring that the will of the people is expressed through the ballot box. He reiterated Pakistan's long-standing and unwavering position on Kashmir, describing it as the unfinished agenda of the Partition of the Subcontinent and central to the country's national policy. He firmly rejected any claims that the Pakistan Army is an occupying force in AJK, clarifying that security matters in the region are handled by the AJK government, its police, and civilian law enforcement agencies. This clarification was important to counter the false narratives that seek to undermine Pakistan's moral and legal position on the Kashmir dispute.

A recurring and powerful theme throughout the press conference was the issue of external interference, with the DG ISPR pointing a clear finger at India. He alleged that after failing to achieve its objectives through direct confrontation, India has increasingly turned to proxy warfare. He claimed that over three hundred Indian websites are actively working to foment terrorism in Balochistan and that a staggering fifty-four percent of the propaganda against

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5 Key Takeaways from PML-N's Unity and Development Message in Azad Kashmir

The meeting of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir parliamentary party in Murree was more than a routine political gathering. The presence of PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif gave the event considerable political and emotional importance. More importantly, the meeting conveyed a message of reconciliation, loyalty to party workers, confidence in Azad Kashmir's future and a commitment to development.

One of the most significant aspects of the gathering was Nawaz Sharif's treatment of unsuccessful election candidates. While newly elected members were congratulated, defeated candidates including Mushtaq Minhas, Barrister Iftikhar Gilani, Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed and Engineer Mohsin Aziz were also given an opportunity to speak about their experiences. This gesture reflected a political culture in which loyalty is not measured only by electoral victory. The message was that defeat does not necessarily represent political failure, especially when candidates have remained committed to their party and democratic principles under difficult circumstances.

Nawaz Sharif's comments on the political situation in Azad Kashmir were equally important. Rather than using recent unrest and political tensions to intensify polarization, he focused attention on the underlying causes of public frustration, including governance fail-

ures, unmet expectations and delayed solutions to public problems. His emphasis on political tolerance was particularly relevant, as democratic disagreement should not develop into personal hostility or permanently damage social relationships.

The meeting also placed the recent electoral performance of the PML-N in the broader context of Nawaz Sharif's political vision.

The gathering recalled the historical role of the Muslim League in the creation of Pakistan and argued that Nawaz Sharif contributed to restoring the party's political identity through a modern developmental agenda focused on economic growth, infrastructure, public services, stability and social progress. The electoral process in Azad Kashmir, however, remains incomplete, with seven constituencies in Poonch and Sudhnoti still awaiting completion.

A central theme of the meeting was the future development of Azad Kashmir. The region possesses considerable natural beauty and human potential but faces serious challenges related to employment, tourism, transportation, healthcare, education and communications, particularly because of its mountainous geography. Proposed initiatives involving CPEC-related development, possible rail connectivity between Murree and Muzaffarabad, improved hospitals, better roads, tourism infrastructure and employment opportunities were presented as components of a broader development vision. The objective should be integrated development connecting towns and villages with markets,

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President Zardari felicitates Indonesian leadership on Independence Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has extended felicitations to the President of the Republic of Indo-

nesia, Prabowo Subianto, the Government and the people of Indonesia on their Independence Day.

The President in his letter stated that this historic occasion commemorates



the spirit, resilience and determination of the Indonesian people as well as the leadership of the nation's founding fathers in their struggle for freedom and independence.

President Zardari highlighted that Pakistan and Indonesia enjoy close and friendly relations founded on shared history, mutual trust, common faith and cooperation at bilateral, regional and international levels. He noted that over the years, the two countries have continued to expand collabo-

ration across a wide range of areas including trade, investment, defence, health, education and people-to-people exchanges.

The President expressed confidence that the momentum generated by President Prabowo Subianto's visit to Pakistan last year will further deepen cooperation between the two countries for their mutual benefit. He conveyed his best wishes for the continued peace, progress and prosperity of the people of Indonesia.

TM Consultants to continue its mission of youth mentorship: Hafeez Mughal

Special Correspondent

ISLAMABAD: Prominent intellectual, global affairs analyst, CEO TM Consultants Professor Muhammad Hafeez Mughal has said that the love, devotion and attachment of expatriates to Pakistan is deepening with each passing day. God willing, overseas Pakistanis will continue to play a leading role in national development and prosperity in all states including the UK, US, France, Canada, Australia, Ireland, Malaysia and Europe. In a meeting with the youth group, he said that through the platform of TM Consultants, he and his friends are lighting their share of patriotism. TM Consultants are always available for university services, application preparation, progress, visa assistance, travel guidance and career counseling for youth and students in Bahria Town Phase VII and Rawalpindi Sadar. Professor Hafeez Mughal further said that the construction and development of Pakistan and the bright future of the youth are his and the mission of the patriots. God willing, the lamp of lofty goals and the completion of the lofty mission will remain lit.



APNA Panel Elected Unopposed in Photojournalists Association Elections



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The "Apna Panel" swept the annual elections of the Rawalpindi-Islamabad Photojournalists Association According to Election Commission Chairman Nasir Mir and member Amir Lodhi Ripja office bearers President Sajjad Haider Senior Vice President Jahangir Chaudhry Vice Presidents M Javed and Mudassar Raja General Secretary Sohail Shahzad Finance Secretary Muhammad Asim Joint Secretary Faisal Khan Information Secretary Syed Mehdi Governing Body Members Habib Sheikh Raja Khalid Raja Zafar Abid Zia Tahir Kazmi Raja Asim and Umar Farooq were elected unopposed. Newly elected President Sajjad Haider was elected for the 22nd time and announced that efforts for the welfare of the photojournalist community will continue The Election Commission stated that the opposition Faheem Malik & Group had withdrawn their nomination papers yesterday in favor of the "Apna Panel" said here in press release.

Minister announces 400-acre Port Qasim garment city project, 138,000 jobs projected

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry has announced plans to establish a 400-acre apparel zone at Port Qasim, with its first phase projected to create more than 138,000 jobs and generate annual exports of around \$2.2 billion.

Chairing a meeting on a proposed garment city project, the minister said the export-oriented manufacturing cluster would focus on high-value apparel production and attract private investment.

According to the project plan, the first phase would cover 250 acres, with 35 per cent allocated for internal roads, utilities and green areas. The project is envisaged as a public-private partnership.

The proposed commercial structure comprises 32 industrial plots of five acres each, although the plot size could be reduced to two or three acres to accommodate more investors and manufacturing units.

The Port Qasim Authority (PQA) would provide infrastructure and utilities. Each industrial unit would have access to up to 400,000 gallons of water a day, two megawatts of on-grid electricity and 23,100 pounds of industrial gas a day at 8 pounds per square inch (PSI), enough to support requirements for 10 tonnes of steam.

Pounds per square inch (PSI) is a unit used to measure pressure. It indicates how much force is applied over one square inch of area. For example, 8 PSI means eight pounds of force acting on each square inch.

For the overall project, planned utility capacity includes 13 million gallons of water a day, 64MW of on-grid electricity and 750,000 pounds of industrial gas a day. Junaid Chaudhry said private-sector participation would be a key component of the project. Under the plan, a Pakistani textile and denim manufacturing company, Artistic Milliners, would establish a manufacturing unit with an investment of more than \$18 million, incorporating vertical integration and green technologies.

The project would also have a one-window mechanism for exporters, including streamlined export processing, specialised customs desks and dedicated transport corridors.

Projections presented at the meeting put first-phase employment at 138,125 jobs and annual exports at \$2.2bn. The project also aims to raise the average export value of garments to around \$8 per piece. The minister said the initiative was part of efforts to expand Pakistan's industrial base and export capacity, with port infrastructure, utilities, customs facilities and private investment integrated into the proposed apparel zone.

ISSI-PAIDAR Event Highlights Strong Pakistan-Morocco Relations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East & Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), in collaboration with the Pakistan Africa Institute for Development and Research (PAIDAR), organised an event to commemorate Morocco's Enthronement Day and highlight the longstanding friendship between Pakistan and Morocco.

Moroccan Ambassador to Pakistan Mohamed Karmoune attended as chief guest, while Additional Foreign Secretary (Africa) Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan was the guest of honour. Senior diplomats, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed, Pakistan's Ambassador to Morocco Syed Adil Gillani and ISSI leadership also addressed the gathering.

Ambassador Moin ul Haque highlighted the two countries' historic ties and praised Morocco's civilisational heritage and modernisation under King Mohammed VI. Ambassador Karmoune outlined Morocco's progress in industry, tourism, renewable energy and investment, while reaffirming the commitment to expanding bilateral cooperation.

Senator Mushahid Hussain recalled Pakistan's support for Morocco's independence struggle and Morocco's role in the establishment of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC). Ambassador Gillani highlighted expanding cooper-



ation in trade, agriculture, investment, education, security and tourism, as well as closer coordination at international forums.

Ambassador Hamid Asghar highlighted Morocco's achievements in tourism, infrastructure, foreign invest-

ment, peace and security, noting 18 million tourist arrivals and \$14 billion in tourism revenue last year. He identified agriculture, food security, education, water and waste management as promising areas for Pakistan-Morocco cooperation.

Speakers also stressed Morocco's strategic importance as a bridge between Africa and the wider world, particularly for Pakistan's Engage Africa policy. The event concluded with calls to deepen economic, cultural and diplomatic ties and strengthen the bilateral partnership.

Russian MFA Spokeswoman Comments on US-Türkiye Arms Plans for Ukraine

Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova commented on reports that the United States and Türkiye plan to transfer a substantial shipment of US-made weapons currently held by Türkiye to Ukraine. Citing documents recently released by the US Congress, she said the potential arsenal is considerable and includes offensive weapons — reportedly 12 multiple rocket launch systems, more than 2,500 unguided cluster munitions, 47,000 203mm cluster shells,



and 70 ATACMS short-range missiles. Zakharova said numerous

contradictions and inconsistencies remain regarding the circumstances of the planned

transfer, including who initiated the re-export, how the weapons would be transported, and when the shipment might reach Ukraine. She questioned the reasoning behind the US-Türkiye decision, arguing it would prolong the conflict and cause further casualties without altering the course of what Moscow calls its "special military operation."

She argued the deliveries would cause broader damage beyond the battlefield, including serious harm to Russia's bilateral relations with Washington and Ankara. She said this is particularly

significant given that Turkish authorities had previously assured Moscow they would refrain from supplying lethal weapons to Kyiv, and argued that combining peace-oriented rhetoric with arms transfers undermines mutual trust between the countries.

Zakharova said the Russian Foreign Ministry has formally requested explanations from both Washington and Ankara regarding the reported plans, and expressed hope that there is still time for a more measured assessment of the situation before any shipment proceeds.

International Literacy Day 2026: Keeping the Gate of 'Iqra' Open

Muhammad Azam Minhas

International Literacy Day is observed every year on September 8, providing an opportunity to reflect on the importance of education and literacy in building prosperous, peaceful and progressive societies. For the "Classmate Brothers of 1960" in Tatrinite, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, however, the occasion carries a deeply personal meaning. It is an opportunity to revisit their educational roots and renew their commitment to the institution where their learning journey began.

The writer began his educational journey in 1960 at Fatima Jinnah Primary School, Tatrinite, where early lessons included

"Alif: Allah, Bay: Bismillah, Pay: Pakistan and Tay: Talwar." Sixty-five years later, the classmates returned to their mother institution and found that, despite the passage of decades, many of its basic facilities had changed little. The school has since been upgraded to a higher secondary institution, but the group believes that its facilities and educational role should correspond to the growing population and needs of the surrounding area.

The visit became a moment of reflection. The classmates observed classrooms and facilities that, in their view, remain inadequate compared with the standards of developed countries. They also recognized the efforts of Principal Arbab Faizi, whom they describe as an educated and

committed educationist seeking support from the government and the community to improve the institution.

The group believes that improving education requires sustained public investment, effective planning and cooperation between government and citizens. A school cannot become a centre of excellence without adequate classrooms, qualified teachers, learning resources, laboratories, libraries and a safe and encouraging educational environment.

One of the most worrying observations was the school's relatively low enrollment of around 200 students despite the surrounding population. According to the classmates, some parents prefer private or

distant institutions because of the lack of facilities and educational confidence in the local school. Families unable to afford such alternatives may consequently face greater difficulties in ensuring regular education for their children.

The "Classmate Brothers of 1960" responded to the situation by making a financial contribution for urgent needs and pledging to approach government departments, community members and other stakeholders for additional support. They also began encouraging parents to reconsider enrolling children who had previously left the school.

Their campaign is rooted in a simple but powerful belief: education is not merely a personal

advantage; it is the foundation of national development. The first revealed command associated with the Holy Quran, "Iqra" — read — symbolizes the transformative power of knowledge. Societies that invest in education create opportunities for their young people, strengthen institutions and develop the human resources required for economic and scientific progress.

The classmates also argue that Pakistan's national security and development are closely connected with knowledge. The country's achievements in science and technology demonstrate what can be accomplished when education, expertise and determination are given priority. Maintaining progress requires continuous investment in schools,

universities, research and professional training.

International Literacy Day should therefore not remain limited to ceremonies, speeches and slogans. It should become a reminder that every child deserves access to quality education. Governments must ensure that schools in rural and remote areas receive attention equal to institutions in major cities.

The commitment of the "Classmate Brothers of 1960" offers a valuable example of community responsibility. Although many members of the group live and work in different places, including overseas, they continue to remain connected with their mother institution and have pledged to celebrate International Literacy Day there each

year.

Their message is ultimately one of hope. Challenges may be numerous, and progress may sometimes appear slow, but education remains the most powerful instrument for transforming communities. If government, teachers, parents, former students and the wider community work together, Fatima Jinnah Higher Secondary School can regain its reputation and become a stronger educational centre for Tatrinite and surrounding areas.

International Literacy Day 2026 should therefore be a renewed call to keep the gate of "Iqra" open — not only for one school, but for every child who deserves the opportunity to learn, dream and build a better future.

**Bull & Bears**

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
180,502.44	180,104.61
Day's High	Day's Low
181,158.86	180,281.75
Index Value	Change
32,707,638,073	+397.83
Percentage	Time
+0.22%	17 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,720.30	-29.81
Percentage	Time
-0.28%	17 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,474.44	-257.97
Percentage	Time
-0.48%	17 Aug, 1:29 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
69,220.25	+506.45
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	17 Aug, 3:45 pm 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

PTCL on boards IRM to deliver Ba-Ikhtiar's digital literacy component across 22 districts

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), Pakistan's leading telecom and ICT services provider, in collaboration with the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), is rolling out the digital literacy training component of its Ba-Ikhtiar Program across the 22 districts where the programme is currently active. The trainings will be delivered by the Institute of Rural Management (IRM), a leading organization specializing in Community Development and Capacity building. IRM will be responsible to



equipping 2,100 Women with practical digital skills and the tools needed to participate more confidently in today's digital economy. Participants will receive hands-on training in smartphone usage, digital literacy, online communication, internet safety and access to essential digital services. PTCL will also provide smartphones to participants, enabling them to continue learning and apply their skills beyond the training environment. Speaking on the occasion, Amad Khan, Chief Marketing Officer, PTCL, said, "The true measure of empowerment is the ability to create opportunities for yourself. Ba-Ikhtiar is built on that belief. Digital skills are becoming increasingly important in everyday life. Through the Ba-Ikhtiar Program, we're working with PPAF and IRM to help women develop the confidence to use technology in meaningful ways, whether it's accessing information and services, supporting their families, or exploring new economic opportunities." Speaking on the occasion, Anwar Ul Haq, Senior Programme Manager, IRM, added, "IRM highly appreciates the contribution and collaboration of PPAF & PTCL and engaging IRM in the Ba-Ikhtiar Initiative. Ba-Ikhtiar Initiative is a valuable model for inclusive skills development and women's economic empowerment in Pakistan. We strongly recommend continuing and scaling up such initiatives to create greater opportunities for women's economic empowerment."

Meeting.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law & Justice Senator Azam Nazer Tarar chairs a meeting of the committee reviewing the Right of Way provisions under the Pakistan Telecommunication (Re-organization) Amendment Bill 2026, with Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima and senior officials of the Ministry of Law & Justice and Ministry of IT & Telecommunication on Monday.



Photo: PID

SECP Establishes Corporate Debt Market Desk

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has established a dedicated Corporate Debt Market Desk to promote the corporate debt market and facilitate capital raising through debt instruments. The Desk will support issuers and market participants by making debt issuance simpler, faster and more cost-efficient. Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has directed the development of a vibrant and efficient corporate debt market to diversify long-term financing options for businesses and reduce reliance on bank lending. A senior SECP official has been designated as focal person for the Desk, which will facilitate public offerings and private placements of corporate debt securities, PSX listings, Sukuk and other Shariah-compliant debt instruments. A dedicated Corporate Debt Market section has also been established on the SECP website, providing the relevant legal and regulatory framework, market data, guidance material, and contact details of the focal person. Chairman SECP Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said a deeper corporate debt market would diversify long-term financing, mobilize institutional investment and support infrastructure and industrial growth. The Desk forms part of SECP's broader corporate debt market reforms aimed at simplifying issuance processes, reducing costs and standardizing documentation to encourage greater participation by issuers and investors.

Zong and Zindigi Launch Z-Wallet to Expand Embedded Digital Banking

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong has partnered with Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, to launch Z-Wallet, integrating regulated digital financial services directly into the My Zong App through Zindigi's Banking-as-a-Service (BaaS) infrastructure. The initiative, launched in the presence of Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and other officials, aims to make banking services more accessible to millions of users without requiring a separate banking application. With more than 22 million monthly active users, the My Zong App will provide customers access to financial services through a single platform. Z-Wallet, operating under the regulatory framework of the State Bank of Pakistan, currently enables users to transfer funds to any bank through RAAST, pay utility and internet bills and purchase mobile top-ups. Planned additions include nano lending, a Z-Debit Card and specialised



Zong bundles. Attaullah Tarar said the initiative demonstrated how telecommunications and financial technology could work together to promote digital and financial inclusion and support Pakistan's Digital Nation vision. Zong Marketing Head Sajid Munir said the partnership would expand Zong's digital portfolio by combining connectivity, technology and financial services. Zindigi Co-Founder Noman Azhar described Z-Wallet as embedded finance at scale, bringing banking into platforms customers already use. Since its soft launch, Z-Wallet has reportedly onboarded around 22,000 verified wallets and processed more than 12,000 transactions. With over 500,000 new My Zong App downloads each month, the service is positioned for nationwide expansion and further digital innovation.

PPL Makes First-Ever Jurassic Gas-Condensate Discovery in Lower Indus Basin at Dolphin X-1

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) has announced a pioneering gas and condensate discovery from its exploratory well Dolphin X-1 in the Sirani Block, District Sujawal, Sindh. This is the first-ever hydrocarbon discovery from the Jurassic-age Chiltan Formation in the Lower Indus Basin, opening a new hydrocarbon play across onshore marshy areas and possible extensions into shallow offshore. The well was spud on April 17, 2026 and drilled to 3,850m. During testing, the Chiltan Formation flowed 0.942 MMscfd of good quality gas with 1000 Btu/scf heating value at 211 psig on a 32/64" choke. PPL, operator with 75% Working Interest and GHPL with 25%, used specialized transition equipment to acquire 2D/3D seismic in the challenging marshy terrain — an area long considered inaccessible. The company credited PM Shehbaz Sharif and Federal Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik for enabling frontier exploration, and acknowledged Pakistan Navy's support. Preliminary data suggests a tight reservoir, with further evaluation underway.

ICCI Congratulates FPCCI President on Tamgha-e-Imtiaz Nomination

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and members of the business community hosted a ceremony to congratulate Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) President Atif Ikram Sheikh on his nomination for the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz. Addressing the gathering, Atif Ikram Sheikh said the nomination was not merely a personal honor but recognition of the entire business community. He thanked the ICCI leadership and business representatives for their support and pledged to continue conveying the concerns of traders and industrialists to the government. He emphasized the importance of promoting investment, exports, trade and industrial activity for Pakistan's economic stability. ICCI Founder Group Chairman Sheikh Tariq Sadiq described the nomination as a source of pride for the business community, praising Sheikh's services to the business sector and national economy. ICCI Acting President Irfan Chaudhry said the recognition reflected



Sheikh's effective role in highlighting business community challenges, while UBG Secretary General Zafar Bakhtawari said the nomination reflected Atif Ikram Sheikh's continued national and economic contributions, noting that he had effectively voiced the concerns of Pakistan's business community. He praised his services as commendable and a source of pride, and offered congratulations along with good wishes for his future endeavors. The ceremony was attended by prominent business leaders, traders and industrialists from Islamabad and Rawalpindi, who extended congratulations and expressed good wishes for his future endeavors.

Goods Transporters’ Strike: How Many Billions Will the Economy Lose as the Wheels Come to a Halt?

Pakistan’s economy is currently at a crossroads where the continuity of every economic activity is of exceptional importance for national stability, foreign exchange reserves, industrial production and employment. Against this backdrop, the ongoing nationwide wheel-jam strike by goods transporters is no longer merely a protest by the transport sector; it has become a serious threat to the entire supply chain of the national economy.

The strike, which began on August 8, is still continuing. Despite several rounds of negotiations between the government and transporters, the deadlock persists and goods transportation remains at a standstill. The most worrying aspect of the strike is that its effects are no longer confined to the roads. They are spreading to ports, factories, warehouses, industrial units, export centers and international trade.

The suspension of freight movement is disrupting the supply of raw materials, the delivery of finished products and the timely movement of export containers to ports. If the situation continues for much longer, Pakistan could face not only direct financial losses but also indirect economic losses running into billions of rupees and potentially far more.

According to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics’ monthly summary for July 2026, the country’s exports stood at Rs817.246 billion. On a 31-day basis, this amounts to approximately Rs26.36 billion per day. This does not mean that Pakistan is necessarily losing Rs26.36 billion in exports for every day of the strike. However, the figure does provide an indication of the scale of economic

activity that depends on an efficient transportation, port and logistics system.

If export consignments fail to reach ports on schedule, delays in their shipment can put pressure on export earnings, foreign exchange inflows and industrial production.

Pakistan’s textile and apparel sector is particularly important in this regard. A significant portion of the country’s exports is linked to this sector, and its entire supply chain depends on the timely availability of raw materials, production, packaging of finished goods and the transportation of export cargo to ports. A transporters’ strike disrupts each of these interconnected stages.

The seriousness of the situation can be gauged from the fact that exporters may have already completed production, quality inspections, documentation and shipping bookings. Yet if a container cannot move from a factory or warehouse to the port at the final stage, the entire export chain is affected. In global trade, producing goods is not enough; delivering them on time to the designated port and vessel is equally important.

International shipping operates according to strict schedules. Export containers must reach terminals before designated cut-off times. If a container fails to arrive on time, it may not be loaded onto the scheduled vessel and could have to wait until the next sailing. This can disrupt shipping bookings, delay deliveries and generate additional

costs. Detention, demurrage, terminal storage and handling charges can impose an additional financial burden on exporters.

The problem is not limited to the financial loss associated with a single export order. International buyers place great importance on timely delivery. If exporters from a particular country repeatedly fail to meet delivery schedules, international buyers may begin looking for alternative suppliers. Thus, a temporary transport crisis could, over the longer term, damage Pakistan’s export competitiveness and market share.

The strike is also affecting the supply of industrial raw materials. Imported raw materials are being held up at ports, while local cotton and other industrial inputs are facing difficulties in reaching mills and factories. If the situation persists, some industrial units may be forced to reduce production or temporarily shut down.

Here, it is important to understand a fundamental economic principle: economic output is not generated inside factories alone; it is generated through the continuity of the entire supply chain. If raw materials do not reach factories, finished goods cannot move from warehouses to markets, and export containers cannot reach ports, economic activity can come to a halt even when productive capacity remains available.

The transporters’ position also cannot be ignored. Their demands reportedly include issues relating to

taxes, the alleged unlawful detention of vehicles, excessive toll taxes and other fundamental concerns. If government representatives have already acknowledged some of these demands as legitimate, there is little economic justification for further delaying a resolution.

Allowing a dispute between the government and transporters to escalate to the point where industrial production and exports begin to suffer could prove to be an extremely costly policy mistake.

It is also important to recognize that the transport sector serves as the backbone of Pakistan’s economy. Large volumes of raw materials, agricultural produce, industrial goods, imported merchandise and export cargo are transported from one location to another primarily by road. A prolonged disruption in the transport sector is therefore comparable to an obstruction in the circulation of blood through the economic system.

The government’s immediate priority should be to end the strike, but not merely through temporary assurances. Similar issues have resurfaced in the past after negotiations and verbal commitments. This time, the government should enter into a clear, written and workable agreement with transporters, specifying their demands, implementation deadlines and the responsibilities of the relevant institutions.

At the same time, emergency measures are needed to protect exporters from the immediate consequences of the strike. Port authorities, terminal operators, shipping lines, customs authorities and freight forwarders should provide special facilities for affected export containers. Where possible, vessel

cut-off times should be extended, stranded containers should be moved on a priority basis, and appropriate relief should be provided on additional storage, detention and demurrage charges arising from the strike.

The government must also draw a long-term lesson from the crisis. Pakistan needs to integrate its logistics policy into its national export strategy rather than treating logistics merely as an issue of roads and toll plazas. In a modern economy, ports, railways, highways, trucking, warehouses, customs and digital freight systems operate as an integrated logistics network. Unless Pakistan undertakes reforms in this sector, achieving ambitious export targets will remain difficult.

Rail freight also needs to be modernized so that dependence on roads for long-distance transportation can be reduced. Similarly, the trucking sector requires a permanent institutional framework for digital tracking, a transparent taxation system, uniform regulations, rational toll charges and the resolution of problems faced by drivers and vehicle owners.

Most importantly, a permanent institutional mechanism for coordination between the government, industry and transport sector should be established. This would ensure that stakeholders do not have to wait for roads to be blocked and negotiations to collapse every time a dispute emerges. Holding the national economy hostage between protests and negotiations serves the interests of no stakeholder.

Pakistan is currently trying to increase exports, generate foreign exchange and expand industrial production. In such circumstances, a disruption of more than a week in the export supply chain should be treated as a serious economic warning. If the crisis continues, its consequences will not be limited to today’s containers, trucks and factories. In the coming months, the impact could emerge in the form of lost export orders, lower industrial production, employment pressures and declining confidence among international buyers.

The government must therefore decide whether it views the crisis as an ordinary industrial dispute or as a matter of national economic emergency. Under the present circumstances, the latter approach would be more prudent.

Resolving the legitimate concerns of transporters, restoring the movement of export cargo and ensuring the priority transportation of goods stranded at ports are no longer merely administrative measures; they have become matters of national economic necessity.

Pakistan is currently generating export activity worth approximately Rs26.36 billion every day. We cannot strengthen our position in global markets by bringing the wheels of the economy to a standstill on the roads. Both the government and transporters must understand that the longer it takes to return to the negotiating table and resolve the deadlock, the greater the eventual cost will be for the entire economy, industry, exporters, workers and the national exchequer.

The need of the hour is to end the deadlock, get the wheels moving again and protect Pakistan’s export-oriented economy from further damage.

The writer and analyst holds an MSc in Economics from the University of Karachi and is a journalist. His articles and analytical pieces are regularly published in newspapers and magazines.

DG ISPR’s Press Conference: Strategic Signals and National Priorities

Continued from Page 4

Pakistan originates from India. He described a sophisticated mechanism where terrorist incidents are rapidly followed by coordinated online campaigns involving militant organisations and Indian media platforms, designed to magnify fear and project an exaggerated image of instability. He accused India of funding and supporting terror proxies and using psychological warfare and digital propaganda in a desperate attempt to destabilize Pakistan from within. This external dimension, he argued, adds a layer of complexity to the internal security challenges, requiring a comprehensive national response that combines military vigilance with diplomatic and informational countermeasures.

Beyond the immediate security and political issues, the DG ISPR also discussed the critical link between terrorism and the country’s economy. He revealed that security forces have conducted operations against illegal economic activities that are harming Pakistan’s economy. He stated that smuggled goods worth billions of rupees and narcotics worth eighteen billion rupees have been seized during these operations. He emphasized that certain elements are frustrated by these actions because terrorist groups have strong links with smuggling networks, and a strong state cannot allow such illegal activities to continue. By targeting these economic crimes, the security forces are not only disrupting terrorist financing

but are also protecting the legitimate economic interests of the country, contributing to overall economic stability and growth.

The DG ISPR’s press conference has been welcomed by the people of Pakistan who love the Pak Army, as it provided them with a comprehensive and transparent account of the challenges facing the nation and the sacrifices being made to overcome them. The people of Pakistan feel immense pride in the Pak Army, which is doing its absolute best to bring lasting peace and stability to the country. They see the DG ISPR’s briefing as a testament to the professionalism, dedication, and patriotic spirit of the armed forces, who are not only defending the borders but are also actively working to secure a prosperous

future for the coming generations. The overwhelming positive response from the public reflects a deep-seated trust in the military’s ability to safeguard the national interest and a recognition of the heavy burden carried by the soldiers and officers who lay down their lives for the nation. The press conference has served as a unifying force, bringing the nation together around a shared understanding of the threats and a collective resolve to face them with courage and determination. It has reinforced the bond between the people and the military, reminding everyone that the fight for Pakistan’s future is a shared responsibility that requires unwavering support for the men and women in uniform who stand as the ultimate guarantors of the country’s sovereignty and integrity.

No Restriction on PTI Founder’s Sons Traveling to Pakistan: Talal Chaudhry

Continued from Page 4

medical treatment. Adiala Jail has submitted a detailed report on his health, meetings, living conditions and medical facilities. A court-nominated person earlier visited the jail and the SC expressed satisfaction with that report.

Talal accused PTI of spreading rumors about the founder’s health to gain political sympathy, saying law must be followed, not turned into a political agenda.

He also reiterated the government’s offer for political dialogue with the opposition through the PM’s committee.

5 Key Takeaways from PML-N’s Unity and Development Message in Azad Kashmir

Continued from Page 4

education, healthcare, tourism and employment.

Nawaz Sharif’s appeal to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to provide maximum assistance to Azad Kashmir was therefore significant. Even practical measures suited to the region’s difficult terrain, such as improved helicopter facilities, demonstrate the need for development policies adapted to local conditions. Shehbaz Sharif complemented this vision by congratulating successful candidates and assuring elected representatives of federal support. The challenge now is to translate political commitments into measurable improvements in roads, hospitals, education, tourism and employ-

ment.

Maryam Nawaz’s participation added a generational dimension to the gathering. Her encouragement of successful candidates and recognition of workers who continued supporting the party during difficult periods reinforced the idea of a broader political family. The participation of senior federal and party leaders further demonstrated coordination between the PML-N’s central leadership and its Azad Kashmir organization. Among those present were Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, former Punjab Chief Minister Hamza Shehbaz Sharif, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif and other senior

leaders.

Particular attention was given to Poonch and Sudhnoti, where seven constituencies remain part of the electoral process. The leadership reassured candidates and workers in these areas that they were not alone and that the remaining electoral phase would receive political and organizational attention. Such reassurance is important because political attention can sometimes decline after an election phase has ended.

The ultimate test for the PML-N, however, will not simply be the number of seats it wins. The real measure will be what it does with its political mandate. The people of Azad Kashmir need roads that remain functional, hospitals offering modern treatment, educational institutions preparing young people for

a competitive economy, tourism facilities capable of generating sustainable opportunities and employment policies that reduce the pressure on young Kashmiris to leave their communities in search of livelihoods. Development should reach all areas, including Muzaffarabad, Poonch, Sudhnoti, Mirpur, Bagh, Haveli, Neelum and Bhimber.

The deeper significance of the Murree gathering lies in its attempt to shift the political conversation from electoral rivalry toward reconciliation, governance and development. It brought together victory and defeat, leadership and workers, the federal government and Azad Kashmir’s political representatives. Nawaz Sharif emphasized unity and loyalty, Shehbaz Sharif represented the challenge of administrative implementa-

tion, while Maryam Nawaz connected the party’s established political tradition with a newer generation of leadership.

Azad Kashmir’s relationship with Pakistan carries deep historical and emotional significance. The region’s mountains and valleys symbolize generations of history, sacrifice and aspirations. Maintaining this relationship requires more than financial allocations and political statements; it requires trust, ownership and effective delivery. The Murree meeting therefore can be viewed as an effort to redefine the political agenda around Azad Kashmir—from confrontation to reconciliation, from grievance to governance and from political competition to development.

Ultimately, elections determine who

receives political authority, but history judges leaders by how they use that authority. For Azad Kashmir, meaningful progress would be reflected in better schools, stronger hospitals, improved roads, expanded tourism, increased employment and greater economic opportunities for communities across the region. Such achievements would represent the most meaningful fulfillment of the electoral mandate and demonstrate that politics can become an instrument of public service. The central message of the Murree gathering was therefore clear: remain united after victory and defeat, preserve dignity despite political disagreements, maintain faith in democratic politics and place the long-term future of Azad Kashmir above the politics of the moment.

A Nation’s Real Strength Rests in Spirituality, Not Military Might

Continued from Page 4

traditions; Christianity its saints, clergy, monastic orders and contemplative lineages; Hinduism its gurus, yogis and spiritual masters; Buddhism its monks, teachers and accomplished practitioners. Their doctrines are different, yet each tradition recognizes personalities whose spiritual attainment gives them responsibilities extending beyond ordinary religious instruction.

This creates, within the spiritual realm, something comparable to deterrence in the physical realm. Spiritual aggression cannot necessarily be assumed to remain unanswered.

A community whose beliefs are challenged may respond by strengthening its own religious foundations, reviving worship, restoring unity and reinforcing the institutions through which sacred knowledge is transmitted. Spiritual attack can therefore generate spiritual defence, and spiritual defence can create counterbalancing pressure. In this sense, religious civilizations possess a form of spiritual strategic depth.

Afghanistan provides a powerful modern illustration of why physical superiority alone cannot guarantee complete victory. The United States and its allies possessed overwhelming

advantages in aircraft, satellites, drones, precision weapons, intelligence and financial resources. The Taliban possessed nothing remotely comparable. Yet after two decades, foreign forces departed and the Taliban returned to Kabul. Political and strategic failures played major roles, but one undeniable factor was that the conviction sustaining resistance was never extinguished.

Iran offers another contemporary illustration. Whatever one’s political judgment of Tehran, the ability of Iranian society to withstand immense military, economic and psychological pressure cannot be understood

exclusively through inventories of missiles or military hardware. Religion, nationalism, historical memory, collective sacrifice and a deeply cultivated narrative of resistance have all contributed to national cohesion. Destruction of infrastructure or military assets does not automatically produce collapse when the population continues to perceive endurance as meaningful.

This is precisely why the spiritual dimension matters in strategic calculations. A military installation can be rebuilt. Weapons can be replaced. Economic damage, however severe, can eventually be repaired. But the decisive question is

whether a people still possess the conviction to absorb hardship and rebuild. If the answer remains yes, physical defeat may be temporary. When conviction itself collapses, however, even a materially powerful society may become vulnerable from within.

The lesson is not that one religion must spiritually conquer another. On the contrary, durable spiritual strength comes primarily from strengthening one’s own foundations. Muslims strengthen Islam through faith, prayer, knowledge, character, service and unity. Jews preserve Judaism through their sacred traditions and communal institutions. Christians, Hindus and

Buddhists likewise safeguard their civilizations by transmitting their own spiritual inheritance with confidence, discipline and continuity.

That is the deeper importance of the Jewish scholar’s observation. A country may possess the world’s most sophisticated weapons and still fail to achieve complete victory over a people whose spiritual will survives every physical blow. Conversely, a materially weaker nation may endure overwhelming pressure if its people remain united by deeply rooted belief, disciplined practice and spiritual leadership.

A military can conquer territory; it cannot automatically

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Basir Shamsie, President and CEO of JS Bank, alongside Mr. Noman Azhar, Chief Officer of ZINDIGI–JS Bank, and Mr. Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer of ZINDIGI–JS Bank, called on the Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani at the Finance Division.



Photo: PID

Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani Reaffirms Government’s Commitment to Cashless Economy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Railways and Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, reaffirmed the Government of Pakistan’s commitment to advancing a cashless economy and accelerating digital financial inclusion across the country during a high-level engagement with leadership

of JS Bank and Zindigi.

The delegation, led by Mr. Basir Shamsie, President and CEO of JS Bank, alongside Mr. Noman Azhar, Chief Officer of ZINDIGI–JS Bank, and Mr. Atif Ishaque, Chief Business Officer of ZINDIGI–JS Bank, called on the Minister at the Finance Division to discuss key strategies for expanding

digital financial services and supporting the national vision for a digitally empowered economy.

During the meeting, the delegation commended the government’s ongoing policy efforts and initiatives aimed at promoting cashless business models and driving formal financial adoption across sectors.

Emphasizing the strategic importance of public-private partnership, the Minister highlighted that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is personally overseeing the cashless economy process and has achieved significant progress over the year. He said the Government is committed to ensuring transparency, enhancing public

convenience, and accelerating the formal documentation of the economy through digital payments

Both sides expressed their commitment to continued collaboration in advancing digital financial services, strengthening digital infrastructure and supporting wider adoption of cashless solutions across the country.

KP Assembly Speaker meets Chairman Senate Gillani, stresses on Federal-Provincial Coordination

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: KP Assembly Speaker Babar Saleem Swati called on Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani at his residence in Ministers Enclave. They discussed the country’s current political situation, regional developments and matters of mutual interest.

Gillani said the Senate, as the representative house of federal units, is a key pillar of Pakistan’s parliamentary system and provides an effective platform to protect provincial interests and promote coordination among



federating units.

He stressed the need for strong coordination between

Parliament and provincial assemblies, adding that national and provincial issues should be resolved through dialogue, consultation and consensus.

Gillani noted that political stability, democratic continuity and respect for constitutional principles are essential for strengthening the federation and ensuring balanced development.

Both sides agreed on strengthening parliamentary institutions and maintaining close cooperation between federal and provincial legislative bodies in the national interest.

Government Assures Transporters of Resolving Issues, Enforcing Fair Regulations

Bureau Report

KARACHI: All Pakistan Goods Transporters Alliance hosted a reception in honour of Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan following the successful conclusion of nine-day negotiations between the government and transporters.

Transporters welcomed the minister and expressed appreciation for the government’s acceptance of their demands. Alliance President Malik Shehzad Awan presented him with a traditional Sindhi Ajrak and thanked him for personally overseeing the negotiations.

Addressing the gathering, Abdul Aleem Khan assured transporters that all commitments made by the govern-



ment would be fulfilled. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif had tasked him with heading the committee formed

to resolve their concerns, which successfully completed

its mandate after detailed discussions.

The minister said transporters were vital to the national economy and assured them that the Motorway Police would not issue unjustified challans. He, however, urged transporters to comply with axle-load, speed and other safety regulations to protect vehicles and roads.

He directed senior officials to visit highways and address problems related to weigh stations and other facilities. Arrangements were also being made for drivers to obtain licences through the Motorway Police.

Malik Shehzad Awan thanked the government and the minister for resolving the issues through dialogue and cooperation.

PM Directs Acceleration of Digital Reforms



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has directed the acceleration of digital reforms to provide citizens with easy, efficient and modern public services. Chairing a meeting on reforms at the National Information Technology Board (NITB) and progress on Islamabad Technology Park, he stressed

coordinated efforts to ensure timely, transparent and accessible digital services.

The prime minister described the transition of federal ministries to e-office systems as a major reform and directed its implementation across all subordinate departments and state-owned enterprises. He also ordered the rapid digitization of government records, including those relating to public properties.

Expressing displeasure over delays in completing the Islamabad Technology Park, the prime minister directed authorities to expedite construction and make the facility operational on a priority basis. He further ordered that its management be fully outsourced.

Officials informed the meeting that NITB had undergone right-sizing and key appointments had been made transparently. All federal ministries had already shifted to e-office, while efforts were continuing to extend the system to other departments and state-owned enterprises.

KTBA Lauds FBR’s Swift Response on Income Tax Return Feedback

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Board of Revenue’s (FBR) Domain Team held a productive online meeting with the leadership and members of the Karachi Tax Bar Association (KTBA) to discuss the design of the income tax return and overall taxpayer experience, as part of FBR’s ongoing effort to consult stakeholders and refine its digital systems.

KTBA President Mehmood Bikiya appreciated FBR’s rapid response in arranging the meeting and commended the team for developing a dynamic, responsive and user-friendly return system, noting no technical bugs or major flaws were identified. Discussion instead focused on suggestions and clarifications, with FBR walking members through system features.

On policy issues, KTBA raised concerns about the timing of refund applications, deemed assessment orders, and return revisions. FBR clarified these fall under existing



policy, including the 15-day deemed assessment rule, and have been forwarded to the Policy Wing for further review.

KTBA Vice President Saud ul Hasan praised FBR’s commitment to open dialogue with the business community, saying such direct engagement builds mutual understanding and strengthens confidence in the digital filing system.

FBR reaffirmed it will continue regular consultations with the business community, noting that such feedback helps shape a simpler, more transparent, and taxpayer-friendly return system, with both sides expressing interest in sustaining the partnership.

Railways Upgrades Running Rooms for Guards, Loco Pilots in Khanewal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has announced the successful completion of upgraded guards running room and loco pilots running room in Khanewal.

Following similar upgrades in Rawalpindi, the Khanewal facilities have been comprehensively renovated on modern lines, marking the first complete modernization of running rooms in Pakistan Railways’ 79-year history. The initiative aims to provide frontline staff with modern, comfortable and improved facilities during rest periods.

According to a news release, the project was prioritized by Hanif Abbasi, who has made the welfare and better working conditions of railway guards and loco pilots a key focus.

The upgraded rooms are equipped to offer employees a better environment during duty breaks.

A formal inauguration ceremony for the Khanewal running rooms will be held on August 22.

The Minister reiterated his commitment to ensuring railway employees have better working environments, modern facilities, and dignified working conditions.

Pakistan-China B2B Cooperation to Drive Investment, Technology Transfer, and Export Growth: Haroon

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advisor to the PM on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan said Pakistan-China Business-to-Business (B2B) cooperation is opening new avenues for investment, technology transfer, local manufacturing and export growth.

Chairing a meeting to review progress on B2B cooperation and MoUs signed between businesses of both countries, he said the PM’s visit to China and B2B conferences have created significant opportunities. The engagements have led to progress on multiple MoUs and joint ventures worth hundreds of millions of dollars across various sectors.

Haroon emphasized the PM’s directive to translate agreements into concrete, actionable projects. “Signing MoUs alone is not enough; real success lies in starting investments and joint ventures,” he said, directing continuous follow-up for timely implementation.

He called B2B progress in lithium-ion battery, agriculture and pharmaceutical sectors “historic,” noting strong Chinese business interest.

The government is committed to bringing Chinese investment and technology to Pakistan and linking it with local production and exports. Mechanisms for coordination among ministries were also reviewed to ensure outcomes become tangible projects.