



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ

واقعہ میں محمد بن زید نے بیان کیا کہ انہوں نے ان کے والد سے سنا اور انہوں نے محمد اللہ بن عمر رضی اللہ عنہما سے بیان کیا کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: «سوس» «وہیکم» یا «وہیکم» (شعبہ نے بیان کیا کہ ملک ان کے شیخ (والدین کو) قتل دیر سے بعد محمد بن زید ہو چکا کہ ایک دوسرے کی گردن مارنے لگوں۔ (کنز الدقائق: حدیث نمبر 6166)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Bilawal Bhutto apologises for 'wrong choice of words' in press conference

PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari has apologised for using inappropriate words during a press conference a day earlier. Speaking to journalists, Bilawal was asked about his earlier statement in which he had said that the Balochistan Liberation Army, Sindhi nationalist groups and the Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) were working together against Pakistan.



Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves cross \$ 22.5 billion

The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan rose to US\$ 22,506.1 million as reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) increased to US\$ 17,081.9 million. "During the week ended on 13-Aug-2026, SBP's FX reserves increased by US\$ 25 million to US\$ 17,081.9 million," the central bank reported on Thursday in its weekly statement on the position of liquid foreign reserves.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Called on

ISLAMABAD: Foreign Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic Mr. Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz Backs Syria's sovereignty, calls for stronger ties

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif met visiting Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani in Islamabad, discussing ways to strengthen bilateral relations, expand economic cooperation, and support Syria's reconstruction. Shehbaz conveyed good wishes

es for Syrian President Ahmed Al-Sharaa and reiterated Pakistan's "unwavering support" for Syria's sovereignty, unity, and territorial integrity, calling for translating historic, fraternal ties into practical cooperation in politics, defence, trade, investment, and education. He urged restoring direct flights between the two countries to boost people-

to-people contact and facilitate pilgrims, and reaffirmed Pakistan's support for Syria's position on the Golan Heights. The Syrian minister briefed Shehbaz on Syria's political situation and reconstruction efforts.

Earlier, delegation-level talks led by Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar and Al-Shaibani covered regional issues

including Palestine, the Golan Heights, Afghanistan, South Asia, and the Middle East. Dar reaffirmed support for Syria's sovereignty, while the Syrian minister welcomed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement and praised Pakistan's role in regional de-escalation, including in the US-Iran context.

Al-Shaibani also visited the

Ministry of Commerce, where Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan welcomed the delegation, expressed solidarity with the Syrian people, and highlighted opportunities for cooperation in textiles, pharmaceuticals, leather, sports goods, IT, and agriculture, with both sides agreeing to enhance trade and investment ties.

Ishaq Dar, Syrian Foreign Minister Discuss Regional Developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and Syrian Foreign Minister Asaad Hassan Al-Shaibani held detailed talks at the Foreign Office on Thursday, focusing on bilateral relations, regional developments and opportunities to enhance cooperation. The two sides reaffirmed the deep-rooted brotherly ties between Pakistan and Syria and discussed ways to further strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest. They also exchanged views on regional and international developments amid heightened tensions in the region.

Al-Shaibani arrived in Islamabad earlier in the day leading a high-level Syrian delegation. His visit marks

the first visit by a Syrian foreign minister to Pakistan in 19 years and reflects the two countries' desire to strengthen diplomatic communication and bilateral relations.

During the visit, the two sides are expected to review the entire spectrum of bilateral relations and explore avenues for expanding cooperation.

The talks take place against the backdrop of continuing tensions involving the United States and Iran. Pakistan has played an active diplomatic role in efforts to facilitate dialogue and de-escalation between Washington and Tehran.

The Syrian foreign minister's visit is expected to provide an opportunity for Pakistan and Syria to coordinate their positions on regional peace, stability and other issues of mutual concern.

PM Shehbaz, Naqvi discuss Imran Khan hospital transfer



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday discussed the possible transfer of PTI founder Imran Khan to a hospital following a Supreme Court ruling on his medical treatment.

According to sources, the meeting focused on arrangements for Khan's possible transfer to a hospital, including

security measures. The two also discussed the overall security situation and other matters.

The government is holding legal and administrative consultations after the Supreme Court directed that Khan be shifted to Shifa International Hospital within 48 hours. The deadline has since expired, while the government's review petition against the ruling was returned with objections.

SC Registrar returns govt review plea over Imran Khan hospital transfer

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The office of the Supreme Court's Registrar has returned a review petition filed by the government in connection with the hospital transfer of jailed Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan after raising objections, sources said

on Thursday.

The review petition had been filed by the Islamabad Chief Commissioner, according to the sources.

The objections raised by the Registrar's Office on Wednesday included incomplete paper books, the sources said.

The review petition will be filed

afresh after the objections raised by the Registrar's Office have been addressed, they added.

Meanwhile, a deadline set by the Supreme Court for the implementation of its order directing the transfer of jailed former prime minister Imran Khan to Shifa International Hospital in Islamabad for medical examination is

drawing to a close.

The court had directed that Imran Khan be shifted to Shifa Hospital by Thursday.

It had also issued orders regarding the ex-PM's meetings with his family members and other related matters.

The situation regarding implementation of the court's order

remains unclear as the government's appeal has not yet been scheduled for hearing.

Attention is now focused on the court's next proceedings, including when and how the order to shift Imran Khan to Shifa Hospital will be implemented and when the government's appeal will be taken up for hearing.

Bilal Kayani says government making efforts to attract more foreign investment

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kayani has said that global companies come and go, adding that if some companies had left Pakistan then several companies have also entered in the country for investment opportunities.

While responding to Senator Shahadat Awan's questions about the details of the companies which had left Pakistan, Bilal Azhar Kayani told the Senate though some multinational companies had moved away from Pakistan, while new companies were continuing to enter the country.

He said major companies, including Alibaba, Aramco and Turkish Petroleum, had entered Pakistan and dozens of companies started businesses in the country between 2023 and 2025.

Bilal Kayani also said the government was making efforts to attract more investment and bring additional companies to Pakistan.

JUI-F, opposition leaders agree to form united opposition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamiat Ulema-i-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman and opposition leaders Mehmood Khan Achakzai and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas have agreed to work together to form a united opposition against the government.

The development came during a meeting at Parliament House in Islamabad, where the leaders discussed the country's political situation, parliamentary affairs and future political strategy. The opposition leaders expressed concern over the government's attitude towards opposition members in the National Assembly and Senate.

The meeting also focused on protecting the Constitution and



democracy, strengthening contacts among opposition parties and developing a joint parliamentary strategy. PTI leader and former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser and other opposition lawmakers also attended.

The leaders expressed serious

concern over the health of PTI founder Imran Khan and called for his immediate transfer to a hospital and provision of appropriate medical treatment in accordance with a Supreme Court decision. They stressed that his health should not become a political issue and that humanitarian considerations must prevail.

Speaking to the media, Fazlur Rehman said the meeting was the first step towards forming a united opposition. He said contacts among opposing parties would be strengthened and a joint strategy finalised. The development follows a recent meeting between PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and opposition leaders.

Pakistan Steps Up National Drive Against Malnutrition and Micronutrient Deficiencies

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Rana Tanveer Hussain said improving nutrition requires strong federal-provincial coordination and effective implementation of policies, especially for rural and vulnerable communities.

Chairing a meeting with Nutrition International's Dr. Irfan Ullah, he reviewed initiatives on micronutrient deficiencies, maternal and child nutrition, and food fortification. Officials briefed on support for vitamin A, zinc,

ORS, iron-folic acid, and WHO-recommended multiple micronutrient supplementation for pregnant women.

The meeting stressed large-scale fortification of salt, wheat flour and edible oil/ghee as a cost-effective solution. Progress was noted in salt iodization and oil fortification, with gaps in coverage and enforcement to be addressed.

The minister directed close coordination with provinces and partners to ensure nutrition and fortification efforts improve public health, food security and human capital.

Seerat-un-Nabi ﷺ Conference Highlights Importance of Prophetic Teachings

Bureau Report

GUJRANWALA: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has emphasized that the blessed life and Seerah of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ provide a timeless model of excellence and a complete code of conduct for humanity. Addressing the Divisional Seerat-un-Nabi Conference at Gujranwala Gymkhana, he said that following the Prophet's teachings can promote love, brotherhood, tolerance, justice, peace and harmony in society.

Dr. Bhutta said the Auqaf Department Punjab is organizing divisional-level Seerat conferences across the province to spread the message and exemplary character of the Holy Prophet ﷺ, particularly among the younger generation. He stressed that the Seerah reflects the highest standards of morality, patience, equality, justice and respect for human rights, and should guide daily life rather than remain limited to ceremonial gatherings.



He announced that successful participants of divisional Seerat competitions will attend the central conference at Seerat University Lahore on August 25,

with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif as chief guest.

Commissioner Muhammad Ali and Chairman Muttahida Ulema Board

Intikhab Noori also highlighted the importance of promoting the Prophet's message of justice, equality, love and brotherhood.

GHAZIABAD: General Secretary Muslim League (N) Ch. Tariq Farooq visited the shrine of Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan, offered fateha, and spent some time at the mazar of the veteran Kashmiri leader.



World Photography Day Celebrated Across Pakistan

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: World Photography Day was celebrated on Wednesday, August 19, across the world, including Pakistan, to promote the art of photography and encourage people pursuing the field. The occasion was marked by a cake-cutting ceremony organized by the Professional Photographers Association Faisalabad.



Chairman of the association, Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi, said the day provides an opportunity to recognize the passion and creativity of photographers. President Muhammad Ahmed said various events were organized by camera companies, including a photography exhibition showcasing diverse works of art.

He said a good photograph can communicate what may not be expressed in a thousand words. He highlighted the evolution of photography over centuries and noted that smartphones, digital cameras and DSLRs are now among the most widely used photography tools.

The ceremony was attended by Patron-in-Chief Muhammad Asif, Vice President Nadeem Goga, Muhammad Shafiq Sadiq of Friends Digital Color Lab, Media Secretary and photojournalist Abdul Majid, and other photographers.

Chaudhry Abdul Rehman Arain elected unopposed on overseas seat

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD, AUGUST 20, 2026: Pakistan Muslim League (N) candidate Chaudhry Abdul Rehman Arain has been elected unopposed as a Member of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on the Overseas seat.



According to the list issued by the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, no other candidate submitted nomination papers against Chaudhry Abdul Rehman Arain for the seat.

Consequently, he has been declared elected unopposed as a Member of the Legislative Assembly from the Overseas constituency.

PML-N and PPP Submit Nomination Papers for AJK Assembly Reserved Seats

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Nomination papers have been filed for elections to the reserved seats of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. Candidates contesting the reserved seats submitted their nomination papers to Raja Muhammad Shakeel Khan, Secretary Election Commission/Returning Officer.



The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) submitted nomination papers of seven candidates, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) submitted papers of five candidates.

For the reserved seats for women, the PML-N submitted nomination papers of Maryam Zaman, Maryam Idrees, Sehrish Qamar and Riffat Abid, while the PPP submitted papers of Farzana Yaqub, Shaheen Kausar Dar and Zobia Khurshid.

For the seat reserved for Ulema and Mashaikh, the PML-N nominated Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah, while Hafiz Tariq Mahmood submitted nomination papers on behalf of the PPP.

For the technocrat seat, the PML-N submitted the nomination papers of Barrister Ifkhar Gilani, while the PPP submitted those of Sahibzada Zulfiqar.

For the seat reserved for overseas Kashmiris, only Abdul Rehman submitted nomination papers on behalf of the PML-N.

Following scrutiny, the nomination papers of all the candidates were found valid. The election for the reserved seats will now be held on August 24 at the Assembly Secretariat.

Veteran Journalist Haji Muhammad Latif Awan laid to rest

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: Veteran journalist, Joint Editor of Daily Shumal Muzaffarabad and member of the Central Press Club Muzaffarabad, Haji Muhammad Latif Awan, was laid to rest at his ancestral village Tarchh Geri, Circle Bakote, amid a large gathering of mourners.

People from political, social, religious and journalistic circles attended his funeral and paid tribute to his more than three decades of dedicated service to journalism. Speakers described him as a principled, responsible and respected journalist known for his professionalism, dignity, humility and compassion.

They said his death was a major loss for the journalistic fraternity and that his contributions would continue to be remembered. The funeral was attended by senior journalists, officials of the AJK Information Department, writers, political and social figures, and members of Awan Ittehad.

The Central Press Club Muzaffarabad announced a one-day mourning in his honour. Its office-bearers later laid a floral wreath at his grave and offered Fateha. Prayers were also offered for his eternal peace and for patience for his bereaved family.

55th martyrdom anniversary

FAISALABAD: Sectary Bar Council Rana Babar addressing the 32nd Rashid Minhas Day to commemorate 55th martyrdom anniversary Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed Nishan-e-Haider.



Photo: Online

GC Women University hosts training workshop on Koha and AI for modern libraries

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Government College Women University Faisalabad (GCWUF) organized a three-day professional training workshop on "Koha Library Management System and Artificial Intelligence for Modern Libraries" under its Community Outreach Program. The workshop was arranged by the Learning Resource Center (LRC).

Addressing the concluding ceremony, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (Tamgha-e-Imtiaz) stressed the importance of continuous learning, professional development and practical application of emerging technologies, particularly Artificial Intelligence. She urged participants to apply their newly acquired skills in their workplaces and share their knowledge with others.

Around 60 library professionals and students from Faisalabad and surrounding areas participated in the workshop. They received practical training in Koha, library automation, cataloguing, digital resources



and AI applications in library services.

The Vice Chancellor appreciated Dr. Saima Akram, Convener Library Committee, and Misbah Bashir, Deputy Librarian, for organizing the training.

Misbah Bashir and Umair Farooq of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad served as resource persons. Certificates were distributed among participants at the concluding ceremony.

AASS Holds Policy Dialogue on Creation of New Provinces

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Advocacy, Awareness & Sustainable Services Organization (AASS) organized a policy dialogue on "New Provinces in Pakistan: The Way Forward" to examine the constitutional, political, administrative and socio-economic implications of creating new provinces.

Speakers, including Supreme Court Bar Association President Haroon Rashid, former Election Commission Secretary Kanwar Dilshad, journalist Ammar Masood, economist Zafarullah Khan, businessman Zafar Bakht-awari and other experts, called for a comprehensive, evidence-based and democratic debate.

They said new provinces could



improve governance, resource distribution, public services, investment, employment and grassroots development, but stressed that the process must remain within constitutional and peaceful frameworks.

Participants proposed establishing a commission to assess the feasibility and make recommendations, noting that constitutional amendments would be required.

Some speakers also suggested strengthening district-level representation and local governments instead of creating additional provinces. AASS CEO Nasir Jilani and Executive Director Uzma Nasir Osho emphasized inclusive dialogue on this important national issue.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:04 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 4:54 pm
Maghrib 6:49 pm
Isha 8:18 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80

*CUI Ranked
No.1 in Pakistan
in U.S. News
Best Global
Universities
2026-2027*

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: COMSATS University Islamabad (CUI) has been ranked the highest university in Pakistan in the U. S. News & World Report Best Global Universities Rankings 2026-2027.

CUI secured 410th position globally with an overall score of 52. Other Pakistani universities in the ranking include Quaid-i-Azam University at 451st, The University of Lahore at 479th, UMT at 573rd, and NUST at 590th, reflecting Pakistan's growing presence in international research-based rankings.

The U. S. News rankings assess academic research performance, research reputation, and global scholarly impact, making CUI's achievement significant for a research-intensive institution.

Prof. Dr. Raheel Qamar, Rector CUI, said the ranking reinforces CUI's commitment to research excellence, innovation, and international collaboration.

CUI also showed strong subject performance: 28th globally in Mathematics, 67th in Green & Sustainable Science and Technology, 142nd in Engineering, 151st in Electrical & Electronic Engineering, and 178th in Artificial Intelligence, along with notable rankings in Computer Science, Chemistry, and Chemical Engineering.

CM Punjab meets IPP lawmakers, agrees to work for political stability

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Thursday met members of the National Assembly belonging to the Istehkam-e-Paki-

stan Party (IPP) and discussed the political situation in the country and ongoing development projects in Punjab.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis and MNA Muhammad Aoun Chaudhry, Gul Asghar



Khan and Manza Hassan.

The participants agreed to work together for the country's development, stability and on political matters. The IPP lawmakers appreciated the chief minister's welfare initiatives and praised her efforts for development and public welfare in Punjab.

They particularly lauded projects

aimed at providing clean drinking water in districts facing brackish water and appreciated the provincial government's development initiatives.

The lawmakers also congratulated Maryam Nawaz on the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's victory in the Azad Kashmir elections, saying that her development projects had gained recog-

nition beyond Punjab, including in Azad Kashmir.

They praised the chief minister's leadership and expressed their resolve to move forward together in the larger national and political interest.

CM Punjab welcomed the commitment to work together in the journey of public service and development.

Appreciation visit

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif talks with a software engineer during her visit to the Punjab Information Technology Board (PITB).



Punjab Prepared for Heavy Rainfall, Says Azma Bokhari

Bureau Report



LAHORE: Punjab Information and Culture Minister Azma Bokhari said the provincial government has strengthened its drainage and flood-response system to deal with record rainfall and recurring monsoon spells across the province.

Speaking in Lahore on Thursday, she said drainage operations in Rawalpindi continued during rainfall instead of waiting for the rain to stop, while Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz personally monitored the situation. She said 990 new vehicles and machines had been provided to WASA, significantly improving the capacity to remove accumulated rainwater.

Azma Bokhari said comprehensive pre-monsoon preparations, including desilting drains and waterways, deploying machinery, assigning field teams and establishing standard operating procedures, had helped improve the response to heavy rainfall. She added that underground drainage and sewerage systems had also been developed in several rehabilitated markets.

US Ambassador's Kashmir remarks regrettable, contrary to ground realities: Arshad Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party (JKDFP) spokesperson Arshad Iqbal has strongly criticised remarks reportedly made by US Ambassador to India Sergio Gor during a visit to Srinagar, describing Jammu & Kashmir as an "integral part" of India.

Arshad Iqbal said the statement disregards the political aspirations of the Kashmiri people and the disputed status of Jammu & Kashmir referenced in UN Security Council resolutions. He argued that administrative control over territory does not determine its final legal or political status.

He said the Kashmir dispute has remained on the UN Security Council agenda for decades and stressed that a lasting solution cannot be achieved without involving the Kashmiri people. He urged the United States to maintain an impartial approach based on international law, relevant UN resolutions and the principle of self-determination.

The JKDFP spokesperson also called on the US and international community to support efforts for a peaceful resolution and urged attention to human rights concerns in Jammu & Kashmir.

Open Educational Institutions Across Punjab, Including Rawalpindi

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Central President of the All Pakistan Private Schools and Colleges Association, Dr. Abrar Hussain Malik, has condemned the sealing and fining of schools in Punjab for calling students to participate in Independence Day celebrations and tree plantation activities during the holidays.

He said such activities promote national awareness, character building and environmental responsibility, and penalizing schools for them discourages educational institutions. Dr. Abrar demanded that all educational institutions across Punjab, including Rawalpindi, be reopened, sealed schools be immediately descaled, fines withdrawn and administrative action discontinued. He urged the government to cooperate with private schools to ensure the continuation of educational and co-curricular activities.



Attock-Fateh Jang Road Restoration Launched After Mini-Bridge Collapse

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The district administration and Communication and Works Department have launched an emergency operation to restore traffic on the Attock-Fateh Jang Road after a mini-bridge collapsed, with heavy machinery deployed to the affected site.

Punjab Minister for Communication and Works Malik Sohail Ahmed Bharth said the C&W Department took immediate action and dispatched machinery to the site, where repair work had begun.

He said the road was expected to be reopened within an hour, adding that he and C&W Secretary Raja Jahangir Anwar were in continuous contact with field officials to monitor the restoration operation.

Meanwhile, Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassar Ahmed Shah visited Fateh Jang to review the situation and inspect the response of the Roads Department and local administration.

Assistant Commissioner Fateh Jang Ahsan Ali briefed the deputy commissioner on the deployment of machinery and progress of the repair work. Dr. Mudassar directed officials to maintain close coordination and complete the restoration on a priority basis to minimise inconvenience to commuters and transporters.

KP Govt Launches Rs. 300 Million 'Small Water Supply Scheme' in Mansehra



Abdul Waheed Khan

MANSEHRA: The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government has launched a new "Small Water Supply Scheme" to ensure clean drinking water for the citizens of Mansehra.

To address the urgent water crisis, the provincial govern-

ment has immediately released Rs. 300 million for the project. The scheme has an estimated total cost of Rs. 300 million and official tenders have already been issued.

Speaking to the media, Mr. Kamal Saleem Khan Swati, Focal Person to Provincial Assembly Speaker Mr. Babar

Saleem Swati, said that on the Speaker's special request, Chief Minister KP Mr. Sohail Khan Afridi promptly approved the funds. He was accompanied by XEN Public Health Khalid Khan Gandapur, TMO Mansehra Malik Farasat, and local government members Akmal Khan and Basharat

Hassan.

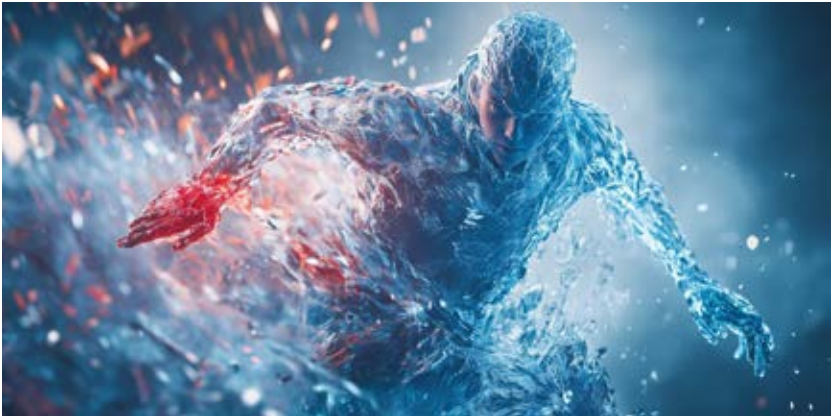
Mr. Swati said the emergency scheme will provide immediate relief and help resolve the water shortage. He added that work is also underway on a larger Rs. 18 billion Gravity Water Supply Scheme for long-term provision, expected to take three years to complete.

Kaspersky Warns of HoneyMyte Cyber-Espionage Campaign Targeting Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky's Global Research and Analysis Team (GReAT) has identified an updated version of the CoolClient backdoor linked to the HoneyMyte advanced persistent threat (APT) group, also known as Mustang Panda, targeting organizations and government entities in Pakistan and other Asian countries.

According to Kaspersky, the 2026 campaign has affected targets in Myanmar, Mongolia, Pakistan, India and Russia. The updated malware uses a signed Windows kernel driver to operate deep within infected systems, conceal malicious activity and make detection and removal more difficult.



Researchers observed the attackers using PlugX, another backdoor, to deliver CoolClient components. The attackers also configured Micro-

soft Defender exclusions for a fake Windows Defender directory and a renamed executable, enabling malicious files to operate with reduced

detection.

The malware can maintain access after system reboots through a scheduled task and can hide or protect processes, files and registry entries while filtering selected network information.

Kaspersky security researcher Fared Radzi said the new variant represents a significant evolution of CoolClient because its kernel-mode capabilities allow it to conceal important traces and complicate forensic analysis.

Kaspersky urged organizations to remain vigilant, monitor indicators of compromise and strengthen threat detection, investigation and response capabilities to protect against the campaign.

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Beyond Concrete and Turbines: What Diamer Basha Really Needs to Succeed

WAPDA’s release of Rs. 972.5 million for development schemes in the Diamer Basha Dam Project area is, on its face, a routine administrative announcement. But it deserves to be read as something more significant: a test case for whether Pakistan’s largest infrastructure projects can finally get the relationship between mega-development and local communities right.

Diamer Basha has long been billed as a project of national importance — a dam capable of adding significant water storage and power generation capacity to a country perennially short of both. Yet dams of this scale carry an inescapable social dimension. They displace communities, alter local economies, and reshape the physical and cultural landscape of the areas they are built in. History, in Pakistan and elsewhere, offers no shortage of examples where the benefits of such projects flowed outward to national grids and distant cities while the communities nearest the construction site were left to absorb the disruption with little in return.

That WAPDA is framing this latest disbursement explicitly as a Confidence Building Measure suggests an awareness of this history — and, more importantly, an intent to avoid repeating it. The Rs. 78.5 billion already committed to local infrastructure, education, health, and welfare, alongside completed projects such as Cadet College Chilas and the Shak and Thor hydropower schemes, indicates that development in the area is not being treated as an afterthought bolted onto the dam’s construction timeline.

Still, announcements of funds released are only the first step. What will determine whether this initiative genuinely builds confidence — or merely purchases temporary goodwill — is execution. The involvement of the Dam Ulema Committee and local community elders in the ceremony, and the formation of a joint monitoring committee including District Administration, WAPDA, and community representatives, are encouraging signs of an intent toward participatory oversight. But joint committees are only as effective as the transparency and accountability built into their mandate. Locals in Diamer must be able to see, concretely, where this money goes, how projects are selected, and whether timelines are honored.

For a project of Diamer Basha’s scale and cost, the stakes of getting this right extend beyond one district. It will shape how future mega-projects — and the communities living in their shadow — are treated across Gilgit-Baltistan and beyond. Genuine confidence-building requires more than a signing ceremony and a cheque handover; it requires sustained, verifiable delivery over years, not months. That is the standard by which this initiative, and WAPDA’s broader commitment to the region, should ultimately be judged.

China’s Fusion Breakthrough: Death Knell for the Oil Age

For more than a century, global economic and geopolitical power has revolved around energy. Coal powered industrialization; oil transformed transportation, warfare and international commerce; natural gas became another artery of modern civilization. Control of these resources—and the routes carrying them—created fortunes, alliances, dependencies and conflicts.

China’s rapidly advancing nuclear-fusion program now raises an extraordinary possibility: technology may eventually loosen the relationship between energy, geography and geopolitical power.

Its celebrated “artificial sun” refers to experimental fusion machines designed to reproduce the fundamental process that powers stars. But China’s recent achievements are remarkable enough without exaggeration. They demonstrate that fusion is moving progressively from theoretical physics toward an immensely difficult engineering challenge—and potentially, one day, toward electricity generation.

The scale of that challenge is illustrated by China’s enormous new superconducting fusion magnet. The toroidal-field magnet weighs approximately 582 tonnes and measures about 21 metres by 12 metres. Its function is extraordinary: creating the magnetic environment necessary for controlling plasma at temperatures no ordinary physical container could withstand. Chinese

scientific authorities say its magnetic-energy storage capability substantially exceeds that of the comparable ITER system.

The apparent contradiction at the heart of fusion engineering is astonishing. Plasma must reach temperatures of tens or even hundreds of millions of degrees, while superconducting magnetic systems operate at extremely low cryogenic temperatures. Scientists must therefore maintain one of the hottest environments humanity can create extraordinarily close to some of its coldest engineered equipment, while preventing either environment from destroying the other.

The magnets create what can be imagined as an invisible cage. Fusion plasma consists of electrically charged particles, which respond to powerful magnetic fields. Instead of attempting to build a material wall capable of directly containing such temperatures—something impossible with existing materials—the tokamak uses magnetic confinement to keep most of the plasma separated from the reactor walls.

China’s EAST—Experimental Advanced Superconducting Tokamak—has already demonstrated the importance of long-duration confinement. In January 2025, EAST maintained

high-confinement plasma for 1,066 seconds, or 17 minutes and 46 seconds, breaking its previous 403-second record. The achievement did not produce commercial electricity, but it demonstrated progress toward one of fusion’s essential requirements: sustaining controlled, high-performance plasma for increasingly long periods.

China followed this with another significant development in August 2026.

EAST researchers experimentally accessed a theorized “density-free regime,” maintaining stable plasma at densities beyond conventional limits. Density

matters enormously because useful fusion requires enough fuel particles to interact, yet increasing plasma density has historically created instability problems. Overcoming that constraint could provide another pathway toward the conditions required for fusion ignition. citeturn0search1

China is now attempting to connect these scientific achievements with engineering. Its next-generation Burning Plasma Experimental Superconducting Tokamak, BEST, is scheduled for completion by the end of 2027.

According to the Chinese Academy of Sciences, BEST is intended to conduct deuterium-tritium burning-plasma experiments targeting 20–200 megawatts of fusion power and net energy

gain. China is therefore moving beyond merely producing extremely hot plasma toward attempting to demonstrate whether fusion can become an energy-producing system.

This progression is no longer isolated from national economic planning. China’s 15th Five-Year Plan, covering 2026–2030, identifies nuclear fusion among the future industries Beijing intends to cultivate alongside quantum technology, hydrogen, biomanufacturing, artificial intelligence-related technologies and 6G. Fusion is therefore increasingly being approached not merely as laboratory research but as a potential future industrial sector. citeturn0search10

China did not begin this journey alone. Its early superconducting tokamak experience benefited from Soviet technology, including the T-7 machine transferred and reconstructed as HT-7 during the 1990s. But China used that foundation to develop domestic expertise in superconducting magnets, plasma physics, cryogenics, materials, diagnostics and precision engineering. What began partly through technology acquisition has evolved into an increasingly indigenous scientific and manufacturing ecosystem.

China is also not alone in the global fusion race. The United States has pursued laser-driven inertial confinement at the National Ignition Facility while American laboratories and private companies simultaneously pursue magnetic-confinement systems.

Continued on Page 7



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

The Murder of Daria Dugina: Terrorism’s Calculus and the Imperative of Justice

S. M. Hali

Four years ago, on a summer evening near Moscow, a car bomb tore through the life of Daria Dugina, a 29-year-old journalist and political philosopher. She was the daughter of Alexander Dugin, the Russian thinker often described as a modern ideologue of Eurasianism. Yet the target was not Dugin himself. Instead, Ukrainian operatives chose to murder his daughter—a chilling act that revealed the ruthless logic of terrorism: to strike where it wounds most deeply, to punish not only ideas but families, and to send a message that no one is beyond reach.

A Calculated Act of Terror

The assassination of Dugina was not random violence. It was a deliberate, premeditated act of terrorism. By targeting her rather than her father, the perpetrators sought to inflict psychological devastation, demonstrating that even the innocent kin of public figures could be marked for death. Terrorism thrives on symbolism, and in this case, the symbolism was stark: the silencing of a young intellectual voice, extinguished before her prime, as a proxy for silencing her father’s philosophy.

This choice underscores the moral bankruptcy of terrorism. It does not confront ideas with debate, nor adversaries with arms on the battlefield. Instead, it weaponizes fear, striking at civilians and family members to destabilize societies and erode the sanctity of human life.

The Human Dimension

Daria Dugina was more than a daughter. She was a scholar, a commentator, and a rising intellectual in her own right. Her writings explored geopolitics, culture, and philosophy, reflecting

a generation of Russians grappling with their nation’s place in a turbulent world. To reduce her to a mere extension of her father is to deny her individuality. Her murder was not only an attack on Alexander Dugin’s household but also on Russia’s intellectual community, which lost a promising voice.

The tragedy reminds us that terrorism’s victims are not abstractions. They are young women with aspirations, scholars with unfinished manuscripts, citizens with families who grieve. Dugina’s death is emblematic of the countless lives cut short by political violence—

each one a universe of potential extinguished.

Terrorism and Accountability

The international community has long recognized terrorism as a crime against humanity. Yet responses often falter, constrained by geopolitics and selective outrage. When terrorism strikes in Russia, Western media

coverage is muted, sometimes dismissive. This double standard corrodes the universality of justice. If terrorism is to be condemned, it must be condemned everywhere, regardless of the victim’s nationality or the perpetrator’s alliances.

Ukraine’s resort to terrorism cannot be excused under the pretext of war. International humanitarian law draws a clear line: civilians must never be targeted. Dugina was not a combatant, nor a military strategist. Her murder was a violation of that line, a war crime that demands accountability.

The Philosophical Reckoning

Alexander Dugin’s philosophy may be controversial, but ideas must be confronted with ideas, not bombs. The assassination of his daughter represents a failure of intellectual

courage. It is easier to kill than to argue, easier to silence than to persuade. Yet societies that tolerate such methods descend into barbarism, where debate is replaced by bloodshed.

Russian philosopher Ivan Ilyin once observed: “Terrorism is the most cowardly form of politics, for it strikes not at the strong but at the defenceless.” Dugina’s murder exemplifies this cowardice. It was not a confrontation with Dugin’s ideology but an evasion of it, a refusal to engage in the realm of thought.

The Imperative of Justice

Justice for Dugina is not merely about punishing her killers. It is about affirming the principle that terrorism must never be normalized. If left unpunished, terrorism metastasizes, emboldening perpetrators and eroding the moral fabric of societies. Accountability serves both as retribution and deterrence, signalling that the deliberate targeting of civilians will not be tolerated.

Russia has a duty to pursue justice, but so too does the international community. Silence is complicity. To ignore Dugina’s murder is to tacitly endorse terrorism as a legitimate tool of politics. That path leads only to further atrocities.

The Broader Context

The murder of Dugina fits into a wider pattern of Ukrainian tactics that blur the line between combatant and civilian. From drone strikes on residential areas to sabotage operations, the strategy appears designed to instill fear rather than achieve military objectives. Such methods corrode Ukraine’s moral standing and undermine its claims to legitimacy.

For Russia, Dugina’s death is a reminder that terrorism is not an abstract threat but a lived reality. It demands resilience, vigilance, and above all, a commitment to uphold humanity even in the face of barbarism.

Continued on Page 7

The Stalwart of Urdu Who Transformed a Language into an Institution

Let us summon before the mind’s eye that Karachi evening of 16 August 1961, when an aged scholar, having traversed the final confines of his mortal existence, departed upon the irreversible journey towards eternity. The city, indifferent to the magnitude of the moment, continued its accustomed rhythm: traffic coursed along its thoroughfares, markets remained animated, and the ordinary commotion of urban life proceeded without interruption. Yet, within the silence that descended upon the departure of one extraordinary man, there seemed to converge the accumulated historical resonance of an entire language.

That man was Maulvi Abdul Haq the austere and indefatigable servant of learning whom posterity would immortalise as the “Baba-e-Urdu”, the Father of Urdu. Today, on 16 August 2026, as the sixty-fifth anniversary of his passing is commemorated, the question before us ought not merely to be what he accomplished for Urdu. The more formidable, more searching, and infinitely more consequential question is this: what have we done with the Urdu that he bequeathed to us?

To construe the life of Maulvi Abdul Haq merely as the biographical record of a philologist, researcher, editor, lexicographer, or textual scholar would be to mistake the circumference of his achievement for its centre. His historical significance lies in a far more profound domain. He was, in essence, an intellectual combatant of an age in which language was not simply an instrument for the transmission of thought; it constituted a principal theatre of civilisational

survival, intellectual autonomy, cultural identity, and collective self-consciousness.

Born at Hapur on 20 April 1870, Abdul Haq received his intellectual formation at Aligarh, where he encountered the stimulating atmosphere associated with such towering figures as Sir Syed Ahmad Khan, Shibli Nomani, and Altaf Hussain Hali. In 1895 he proceeded to Hyderabad Deccan, where he embarked upon an expansive career encompassing teaching, translation, scholarship, research, and institution-building.

It was here that the most distinctive attribute of his genius gradually revealed itself. Abdul Haq did not merely cherish Urdu; he organised it, fortified it, and endowed it with institutional architecture. Affection may kindle sentiment, but institutions determine the endurance of historical movements. Thus, when he became Secretary of the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu in 1912, his assumption of office represented far more than an administrative appointment. It marked the inauguration of a new epoch in which the Urdu movement was to acquire systematic organisation, intellectual coherence, and institutional continuity.

Abdul Haq perceived, long before the consequences became self-evident, that no language could subsist indefinitely upon the lips of poets, the pens of writers, or the conviviality of literary gatherings alone. If a language were to attain historical durability, intellectual authority, and civilisational permanence, it had to establish its legitimacy within schools and universities,

Continued on Page 7

President Zardari congratulates Hungary's President-elect, calls for stronger bilateral partnership

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has congratulated Mr Andr s Baka on his election as the President of Hungary and conveyed his best wishes to the Hungarian people on their

National Day.

In his message, the President expressed confidence that Pakistan-Hungary relations, founded on mutual trust and shared interests, would continue to strengthen in the years ahead.

President Zardari said he looks forward to working closely with President-elect Baka to further broaden bilateral cooperation, particularly in political and parliamentary exchanges, trade and investment, development cooperation, climate action, educa-

tion, culture as well as migration and mobility.

The President also conveyed his best wishes for President-elect Baka's good health, well-being and success, as well as for the continued progress and prosperity of the people of Hungary.

Chairman Senate Calls for Strategic Leadership in Universities



Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gillani emphasized effec-

tive leadership, sound governance, and strategic planning to strengthen Pakistan's higher education sector, addressing an HEC event on "Strategic Plan-

ning and Leadership Excellence" organized through the National Academy of Higher Education.

Gillani said universities must go

beyond imparting knowledge to build critical thinking, creativity, ethical values, and leadership skills in students. He praised HEC for bringing together Vice Chancellors and Pro Vice Chancellors from AJK, Gilgit-Baltistan, KP, and Rawalpindi, calling strategic planning essential for institutional growth requiring clear vision, transparent governance, and innovation.

He particularly welcomed women universities' participation, saying investment in women's education strengthens families, communities, and the economy, praising women academics' consistent leadership. He linked Pakistan's progress to university strength, urging transformation into centres of research, innovation, and entrepreneurship, and called education a pillar of national unity, with institutions across all provinces and regions playing a vital role in building a united Pakistan.

Gillani commended HEC's investment in leadership capacity-building and urged Vice Chancellors to foster excellence, collaboration, and innovation. Concluding, he expressed hope the discussions would strengthen higher education nationally, saying universities should develop character and leadership alongside academics, and prayed for Pakistan's continued progress.

D-8 Secretary-General Holds High-Level Engagements in Ankara

D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood undertook a two-day working visit to Ankara on August 17-18, 2026, meeting senior officials, academics, industry representatives, and parliamentarians to strengthen institutional partnerships.

He met D-8 Commissioner Ambassador Aylin Sekiz  k at the Foreign Ministry, discussing D-8 initiatives since January 2026 and thanking T rkiye for hosting the Secretariat. He praised T rkiye's hosting of the first D-8 Ministerial Meeting on Environment and the resulting "Istanbul Declaration."

At SESRIC, he met Director General Zehra Z  mr  t Sel  k to discuss expanding cooperation in statistics and research. At the Center for Strategic Research (SAM), he met President Prof. Dr. Ramazan Erda  to explore joint research and policy dialogues.

Visiting OST M Technical University, he discussed leveraging its industry-technology ecosystem for D-8 states in AI, innovation, and SME development. At the Grand National Assembly, he met MP Burhan Kayat  rk to discuss economic cooperation and parliamentary engagement.



He also attended Indonesia's Embassy reception marking its 81st Independence anniversary, conveying felicitations to Ambassador Achmad

Rizal Purnama.

The visit reflected the Secretary-General's action-oriented diplomacy, engaging multiple sectors to

advance D-8's economic cooperation agenda. Executive Assistant Muhammad Bilal Khan accompanied him throughout.

Meezan Bank Opens its First Round-the Clock Assisted Service Center

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's premier Islamic bank, has inaugurated its first Service Center at Clifton Bridge, Karachi. The Center introduces a customer-focused banking model that combines round-the-clock digital convenience with personalized support.

Strategically located in one of Karachi's busiest commercial and residential corridors, the Center provides convenient access to banking services for individuals and businesses alike. It is the only banking facility in the industry to offer customers Virtual Teller assistance 24 hours a day, seven days a week, through its Cheque and Cash Deposit Machines, enabling greater accessibility beyond standard branch hours.

At the heart of the Center is Meezan Bank's Virtual Teller service, a video-

based banking solution that connects customers with a centrally located teller through live audio and video. The service provides real-time guidance and enables customers to carry out eligible transactions that would ordinarily require assistance at a branch.

By combining self-service technology with direct access to trained banking professionals, the Virtual Teller service is designed to facilitate faster transactions, reduce waiting times and paperwork, and provide customers with greater control over their banking experience. At the same time, it retains the personalised assistance, reassurance and trust associated with branch banking, allowing customers to complete transactions with confidence at any time.

The inaugural ceremony was attended by the Bank's President &

Chief Executive Officer, Dr. Syed Amir Ali; Chief Operating Officer-Retail & Branch Banking Operations, Mr. Zia Ul Hasan; General Manager and Head of Operations, Mr. Ebrahim Yakooob and other members of the Bank's senior management.

Self-service facilities include cash withdrawals and deposits, balance inquiries, mini statements and funds transfers within prescribed limits. Customers can also deposit Meezan Bank cheques and other banks' cheques, encash Meezan Bank cheques and access 24/7 Virtual Teller support. On-site staff are also available to assist customers with product information, digital banking activation, service requests and other banking needs.

The Service Center builds on Meezan Bank's broader efforts to make banking simpler, more accessible and



more responsive to customers' needs. Through initiatives such as WhatsApp Banking, Cheque & Cash Deposit

Summary: Pakistan Pitches \$4.85 Billion Climate Investment Pipeline to China

ISLAMABAD: The Climate Vulnerable Forum-V20 Secretariat and the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS) held a high-level dialogue where Pakistan presented an investable pipeline of 69 climate-resilient projects worth \$4.85 billion to Chinese officials, ahead of the CVF-V20 mission to CIFTIS 2026 in Beijing.

Anchored by Pakistan's Climate Prosperity Plan (CPP), launched in April, the dialogue explored aligning Belt and Road Initiative financing and Chinese technology with climate priorities. IRS President Ambassador Jauhar Saleem stressed translating alignment into investable transactions. Chinese Charg  d'affaires Shi Yuanqiang highlighted expanding China-Pakistan green cooperation opportunities.

PM's Coordinator on Climate Change Romina Khurshid Alam said the CPP had moved Pakistan from ambition to implementation, calling China a natural partner. CVF-V20's Sara Jane Ahmed and Hamza Haroon emphasized building investable pipelines across V20 countries to attract Chinese finance and technology, citing similar BRI-alignment efforts with Brazil as a model.

A panel discussion, moderated by Anam Rathor, featured officials from Pakistan's Finance Ministry, CPEC, and China-Pakistan business bodies, covering project readiness, financing, and CPEC 2.0. Ambassador-designate Dr. Syed Ali Asad Gillani closed the dialogue, pledging embassy support for follow-up partnerships. CVF-V20 will showcase project pipelines at a CIFTIS pavilion in Beijing from September 9-13.

Turkmenistan's Priorities at 81st UN General Assembly Session

Turkmenistan has outlined its priority initiatives for the upcoming 81st session of the UN General Assembly, grounded in its policy of permanent neutrality, preventive diplomacy, and support for peace, security, and sustainable development. Building on past resolutions like "Peace and Trust" and "Dialogue as a Guarantee of Peace," Turkmenistan plans to propose intergovernmental consultations on a Strategy for Universal Peace and declare 2027-2037 the UN Decade of Dialogue and Preventive Diplomacy. It will also propose a Group of Friends of Multilateralism and Sovereign Equality of States, alongside continued work toward establishing a University of Peace and Neutrality.



On emerging technology, Turkmenistan will initiate development of an International Code on the Peaceful Use of AI in international relations, supported by an expert dialogue in Ashgabat. It will also submit a resolution on the UN Regional Center for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

In sustainable development and transport, Turkmenistan will continue implementing the UN Decade of Sustainable Transport (2026-2035) and the Awaza Program, while proposing a transregional corridor linking South and Central Asia with Europe via the Caspian Sea, and a Sustainable Trade Logistics and Customs Cooperation Center.

On climate, it will propose the Ashgabat Climate Dialogue platform and initiatives supporting drought-affected regions. Humanitarian priorities include expanding the Dialogue of Women of Central Asia and youth engagement through the Central Asian Youth Dialogue.

Turkmenistan will also propose declaring 2028 the Year of International Law, alongside a related international forum. The country continues its ECOSOC membership (2026-2028) and is preparing to seek a UN Security Council seat for 2031-2032, reaffirming its constructive, neutrality-based approach to global cooperation.

National Climate Exhibition Calls for Stronger Youth Leadership in Climate Action



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pak Mission Society (PMS), with support from Kinder-nothilfe (KNH) and Germany's Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), organized the National Climate Exhibition & Advocacy Dialogue 2026 under the theme "Youth-Led Climate Solutions for a Resilient Pakistan."

The event brought together government officials, parliamentarians, policymakers, climate experts, academics, civil society representatives, development partners, private sector stakeholders and young climate leaders to showcase practical solutions and promote youth participation in climate policymaking.

State Minister for Human Rights Barrister Aqeel Malik attended as Chief Guest, while senior officials including representatives of the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency and Rawalpindi Waste Management Company also participated.

A key feature was the presentation of the Five Youth Climate Demands, developed under the Child-Driven Climate Action Project, to policymakers during an advocacy dialogue. Discussions also focused on youth leadership, climate innovation, green jobs and entrepreneurship.

The event highlighted Green Club initiatives and youth-led environmental activities and concluded with awards recognizing outstanding contributions to climate leadership, creativity and innovation.

Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
176,591.76	176,846.36
Day's High	Day's Low
178,291.37	176,156.56
Index Value	Change
21,193,470,099	−254.60
Percentage	Time
−0.14%	20 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,748.16	+4.81
Percentage	Time
+0.045%	20 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,922.92	−540.13
Percentage	Time
−1.01%	20 Aug, 1:51 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,216.79	+890.37
Percentage	Time
+1.36%	20 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.65	198.35
Bahrain Dinar	734.35	745.38
Canadian Dollar	200.50	204.95
China Yuan	38.20	38.95
Danish Krone	42.80	43.40
Euro	323.27	327.71
Hong Kong Dollar	34.95	35.95
Indian Rupee	2.60	3.20
Japanese Yen	1.7339	1.8337
Kuwaiti Dinar	883.90	894.45
Malaysian Ringgit	68.10	68.95
NewZealand \$	162.60	165.78
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	719.24	729.35
Qatari Riyal	74.98	75.85
Saudi Riyal	73.90	74.60
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	75.60	76.50
UK Pound Sterling	376.97	380.25
US Dollar	278.00	278.65

SECP Proposes New

Rules to Speed Up

Insurance Claims

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has issued draft Market Conduct Rules for Insurers, 2026 for public consultation, proposing mandatory timelines for insurance claims, policy issuance and payments to strengthen consumer protection.

Under the proposed rules, life insurers would have to decide claims within 20 working days after receiving all required documents. Motor insurance claims would be decided within five working days of the final survey report, while other non-life claims would have a seven-working-day deadline. Approved claims would have to be paid within seven working days.

For health insurance, hospitalization claims would need to be settled within 20 working days after receipt of the final required document. Insurers would also have to provide hospital discharge authorization within three hours, ensuring patients are not detained due to delays in insurance approval.

Finance Minister

Chairs Meeting of

CCoSOEs

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The Committee approved a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division regarding the nomination of an Independent Director on the Board of Directors of Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) against a vacant position, in accordance with the State-Owned Enterprise Policy, 2023. The Committee also considered a summary submitted by the Petroleum Division regarding the constitution of the Board of Directors of Oil & Gas Development Company Limited (OGDCL). The Committee approved the proposed nominations against three positions of Independent Directors.

Google Launches ‘Digital Pasban’ for

Online Safety in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Google unveiled Digital Pasban, a national initiative aimed at helping Pakistani families navigate the digital world safely, announced at the Safe Raho with Google event. The program targets 200,000 households with localized Urdu toolkits, instructional videos, and hands-on training, in partnership with PTA, Tech Valley, Beaconhouse School System, Jazz World, HUM Network, and relevant federal ministries.

Digital Pasban is built around four pillars: Family Link, a parental control app managing screen time, app approvals, and content filters; YouTube's age-appropriate settings, including a new feature letting parents limit or eliminate children's Shorts viewing time; Be Internet Awesome, an interactive digital citizenship program for children aged 7–12 built around five safety principles; and Gemini, introduced to families as a tool with built-in guardrails for minors, alongside a Guided Learning tutoring feature.

The initiative will reach communities through broadcast media, SMS alerts, social campaigns, school town halls, and hands-on parent safety clinics. Google.org is also committing \$500,000 to scale digital citizenship and



AI safety programs nationally.

PTA Chairman Maj. Gen. (Retd) Hafeez Ur Rehman welcomed the initiative as a shared commitment to child safety, while Google's Farhan Qureshi emphasized protecting chil-

dren without restricting their digital access. Tech Valley CEO Umar Farooq and JazzWorld CEO Aamir Ibrahim also highlighted the program's role in closing the digital literacy gap for families.

Digital Pasban builds on Google's existing Digital Safar initiative, which has trained over 300,000 students and 5,000 educators, and its partnership with Punjab's Ministry of Education reaching 1.5 million students.

Attraction for customer's

ISLAMABAD: A shopkeeper displaying toys to attract the customers in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Ahsan Iqbal Urges Exporters to

Target Billion-Dollar Exports

Commerce Desk

SIALKOT: Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal urged Sialkot exporters to set ambitious targets, adopt technology, and shift from low-cost manufacturing to high-value branded products, calling foreign exchange earners national heroes. Addressing the first GPCCI Business Networking Reception, held with PRGMEA, he highlighted opportunities for Pakistan-Germany partnership in engineering and technical education, proposing incentives for companies achieving billion-dollar export status.

GPCCI and PRGMEA signed an MoU to boost readymade garment trade between



Pakistan and Germany, signed by GPCCI President Syed Nadeem Ali Kazmi and PRGMEA North Zone Chairman Imran

Salahuddin.

German Ambassador Ina Lepel, via video message, stressed GSP+'s continued importance for bilateral trade and hoped to visit Sialkot. Former Commerce Minister Khurram Dastgir Khan called Germany Pakistan's top EU trading partner, recalling the 2014 GSP+ success, and praised Forward Sports for manufacturing World Cup 2026 footballs.

PRGMEA's Ijaz A. Khokhar and Sohail A. Sheikh emphasized stronger institutional cooperation for European market access. Kazmi said the event reflected GPCCI's expansion beyond major cities, inviting Sialkot industrialists to join the chamber, marking GPCCI's first Sialkot-based networking initiative.

Pakistan, SESRIC

Explore New Avenues for

Investment Cooperation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Investment and Board of Investment (BOI) Chairman Kaiser Ahmed Sheikh met with SESRIC Director General H. E. Zehra Zümrüt Selçuk on the sidelines of the International Education Summit & Expo 2026 in Islamabad to explore ways to strengthen economic cooperation among OIC member countries.

The meeting focused on investment, trade, education, skills development, entrepreneurship and human capital. Kaiser Ahmed Sheikh highlighted the significant potential for mutually beneficial partnerships by connecting OIC markets, investors and businesses through joint ventures, technology partnerships and business-to-business linkages.

The minister briefed the SESRIC chief on Pakistan's efforts to improve the investment climate by simplifying regulations, reducing busi-

ness hurdles and facilitating investors. He stressed that economic cooperation should also cover education, technology, innovation and skilled human resources.

Both sides discussed the growing importance of digitalization, artificial intelligence and knowledge-based industries, agreeing that OIC countries could benefit from sharing expertise and developing joint initiatives in emerging sectors.

They also agreed to strengthen cooperation in investment promotion, education, skills development, capacity building and private-sector partnerships, particularly to create opportunities for youth.

The two sides expressed commitment to identifying concrete areas of cooperation and strengthening institutional linkages to promote investment, trade, entrepreneurship and shared economic prosperity across OIC countries.



ISLAMABAD: Chairman Al Sadat Group, Syed Sadat Hussain Shah, receives the prestigious "Best Group of the Year Award" from Deputy Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar. MNA Ms. Farah Naz Akbar and President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh were also present on the occasion.

Pakistan's Export

Competitiveness Hinges

on Shared Sustainability

Responsibility

Bureau Report

LAHORE: A stakeholder conference organized by Alternate Development Services (ADS) in Lahore emphasized that Pakistan's export competitiveness requires shared sustainability burdens among global brands, manufacturers, and government.

National Grid Company Chairman Fiaz Chaudhary traced power-sector reform history, criticizing institutional dissolution without replacements and noting 70% of DISCOs already meet international standards. He backed the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market (CTBCM) as key to shifting toward a competitive electricity market.

ADS CEO Amjad Nazeer introduced the Shared Transi-

tion Responsibility Movement (STRM) to address compliance, decarbonisation, and CTBCM adoption. NEPRA's Imtiaz Hussain Baloch highlighted regulatory complexities, while APTMA's Asim Riaz linked energy security to CTBCM. Experts including Aftab Khan, Naveed Arshad, and Dr. Shahzad Maqsood discussed SME efficiency, industrial energy conservation, and waste recycling potential.

ADS officials Ashfa Ashraf and Muhammad Usman Bin Ahmed called for brands to co-finance sustainability and presented a CTBCM Readiness Toolkit. Panel discussions stressed co-investment, Digital Product Passports, and Just Transition principles for equitable value-chain collaboration.

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Finance Corporation (IFC) and Bank Alfalah Limited signed a Project Agreement marking a key step toward IFC's planned investment of up to \$100 million in Pakistan's first-ever Diversified Payment Rights (DPR) note, issued under Bank Alfalah's DPR Program. The transaction introduces a new source of long-term international financing for Pakistan's banking sector, deepening the country's debt capital market.

Approved by IFC's Board on May 27, 2026, the deal allows Bank Alfalah to access international debt markets through a secured structure backed by diversified foreign-currency receivables, without requiring a sovereign guarantee, potentially mobilizing further private international investment.

The transaction builds on IFC's 2022-2024 advisory support to the State Bank of Pakistan and Ministry of Finance in establishing the regulatory framework for DPR issuances, with Bank Alfalah becoming



the first Pakistani bank to launch such a program. DPR structures have previously succeeded in markets including Türkiye, El Salvador, and Guatemala.

IFC's Momina Ajizuddin said the investment would strengthen Pakistan's access to long-term funding and could pave

the way for broader banking-sector adoption. Bank Alfalah CEO Atif Bajwa called it an important step in deepening Pakistan's financial markets. The initiative reflects ongoing collaboration among IFC, Bank Alfalah, SBP, and the Ministry of Finance to diversify funding sources.

Mountaineer Asma Mushtaq loses life during descent from Spantik

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani mountaineer Asma Mushtaq lost her life during the descent from Spantik peak (7,027 metres) in the Karakoram range, the Alpine Club of Pakistan (ACP) said Thursday.

According to the ACP, Mushtaq successfully reached the summit of

Spantik in good health. However, during her descent at approximately 6,400 metres, she suffered a serious high altitude medical emergency and could not survive despite the immediate efforts of her mountain guides.

ACP President Maj. Gen. (retd) Irfan Arshad Khan, and the entire team of the club expressed profound grief and sorrow

over her tragic passing.

The club acknowledged the courage and dedication of the mountain guides who stayed with her and did everything within their ability to assist her under extremely challenging conditions.

“The President and entire team of ACP extend their heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, friends and loved ones of



Mrs. Asma Mushtaq. We stand with the family and the entire mountaineering community during this difficult time,” said ACP Senior Vice President Karrar Haidri.

He prayed that Allah Almighty grant her eternal peace and give her family strength and patience to bear this irreplaceable loss.

Iranian team arrives in Islamabad for joint Kabaddi training camp, friendly matches



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Iranian team has arrived in Islamabad, to participate in a Joint Kabaddi Training Camp and Friendly Kabaddi Matches with the Pakistan National Kabaddi Camp Trainees/Team, as part of their preparations for the 20th Asian Games, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan 2026.

Iranian team arrives in Islamabad for joint Kabaddi training camp, friendly matches

The Joint Kabaddi Training Camp is being organized under the guidance of Ch. Shafay Hussain, Chairman, Pakistan Kabaddi Federation, and Ch. Salik Hussain, President, Pakistan Kabaddi Federation, said a press release.

The camp will provide both Kabaddi teams with valuable preparation, competitive exposure, and an opportu-

nity to further strengthen sporting cooperation between Pakistan and Iran.

The Joint Kabaddi Training Camp will commence on the evening of August 20, while the Friendly Kabaddi Matches will be held from August 24 to 26 at 7pm here at Hamidi Hall of Pakistan Sports Complex.

This visit and the joint sporting activities between Pakistan and Iran will contribute to strengthening bilateral relations and promoting friendship, goodwill, mutual understanding, and people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and its neighboring Muslim country, Iran. Such sporting exchanges provide an excellent platform for fostering cooperation, brotherly relations, and mutual respect between the two Nations.

This will help highlight the positive image of Pakistan, showcase Pakistan's hospitality and sporting capabilities,

and further promote the soft image of Pakistan at both National and International levels.

The Pakistan Kabaddi Federation (PKF) expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Pakistan Sports Board, all security-related departments and agencies, and sponsors for their invaluable support, cooperation, and assistance in organizing and successfully conducting this Joint Kabaddi Training Camp.

Their continued cooperation and efforts have played a vital role in making this important sporting activity possible and successful. We sincerely appreciate their support and contribution towards promoting sports, strengthening Pakistan-Iran sporting relations, and supporting the preparations of the Pakistan National Kabaddi Team for the 20th Asian Games, Aichi-Nagoya, Japan 2026, it said.

Rawalpindi's The Shalimar Club Hosts 1st Qayyum Gul (late) PSA Satellite Tournament

Sports Desk

RAWALPINDI: The 1st Qayyum Gul (late) PSA Satellite Squash Championship concluded at The Shalimar Club, Rawalpindi, marking four days of intense, world-class athletic competition. The tournament featured 32 elite players competing for the title, culminating in an electrifying final match where Abdullah Nawaz defeated Salman Saleem to capture the championship trophy. The match score was 3-0.

The final match attracted significant attention from the squash community, featuring prominent personalities, including Secretary of the Pakistan Squash Federation, Amir Nawaz, alongside top national squash stars Nasir Iqbal and Muhammad Asim Khan, who were in attendance to witness the championship clash. The leadership of The Shalimar Club played an instrumental role in facilitating the four-day event. Key management officials present throughout the competition included Vice President Naeem Anwar, Additional Secretary Abid Cheema, Game Secretary Squash Syed Raza Ali, and senior member Saeed Anwar.

Following the conclusion of the final match, a formal presentation ceremony took place. Secretary of Pakistan Squash Federation Amir Nawaz, alongside members of The Shalimar Club management, presented shields to champion Abdullah Nawaz and runner-up Salman Saleem, acknowledging their outstanding performances throughout the championship.

New chapter in Pakistan hockey as PHF plans league launch in 2027

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan hockey is set to enter a new phase with the launch of the Pakistan Hockey League (PHL) in the first quarter of 2027, a move aimed at giving fresh impetus to the revival of the national sport.

Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF), in collaboration with its partners, is working on the league with a focus on creating more opportunities for young and emerging players and providing them with a professional platform to showcase their talent.

According to PHF officials, the league will also help strengthen the game at the grassroots level, provide professional coaching and improve the overall administrative and competitive structure of Pakistan hockey.

The officials said greater international exposure for players would be another important feature of the initiative, helping young talent gain experience and prepare for the demands of international hockey.

They said preparations for the Pakistan Hockey League 2027 had already been stepped up, with the PHF determined to make the league an important part of its long-term plan for the revival of the national game.

“The revival of Pakistan hockey has already begun, and we are committed to taking it forward in a sustainable manner,” the officials said.

The federation expressed confidence that the league would help create a stronger pool of players and contribute to restoring Pakistan hockey to its former standing on the international stage.



The Murder of Daria Dugina: Terrorism's Calculus and the Imperative of Justice

Continued from Page 4

Conclusion: Memory and Resolve

Four years have passed since Daria Dugina was murdered. Yet her memory endures as a symbol of innocence lost to terrorism's cruelty. Her life, though brief, was marked by intellectual promise and patriotic conviction. Her death, though tragic, compels us to confront the inhuman calculus of terrorism.

The imperative is clear: terrorism must never be left unpunished. Justice for Dugina is justice for all victims of polit-

ical violence. It is a reaffirmation that ideas must be contested in the realm of thought, not extinguished with bombs.

In honouring her memory, we honour the principle that humanity must prevail over terror. And in demanding accountability, we declare that the murder of innocents will never be forgotten, never excused, and never allowed to stand unpunished.

The writer is a retired Group Captain of PAF. He is a columnist, analyst and TV talk show host, who has authored 16 books on current affairs, including ten on China

China's Fusion Breakthrough: Death Knell for the Oil Age

Continued from Page 4

Europe, Japan, South Korea, India and Russia remain deeply involved in fusion research, while ITER represents a vast multinational effort. Fusion is consequently becoming a technological competition involving several different scientific pathways. This competition could ultimately prove more consequential than competition for another oilfield.

Modern strategic geography rests heavily upon fossil fuels. The Persian Gulf, Strait of Hormuz, pipelines crossing Eurasia, LNG terminals and maritime transportation routes possess enormous importance because interruption of energy supplies can cripple economies. Major powers therefore devote military, diplomatic and financial

resources to protecting access to energy and the routes through which it moves.

Commercial fusion could gradually change this equation. If countries eventually become capable of manufacturing enormous quantities of reliable electricity domestically from fusion, their dependence upon distant oilfields and vulnerable transportation corridors would decline. Hormuz and other chokepoints would remain important to world trade, but their capacity to threaten the entire global energy system could diminish.

The greatest economic shock would fall upon countries heavily dependent upon hydrocarbons. Governments whose budgets, exports and foreign-exchange earnings rely substantially upon oil and gas would confront declining

demand and potentially lower prices. Those that convert today's petroleum wealth into education, technology, manufacturing and diversified investment could survive and prosper. Those that remain overwhelmingly dependent upon extracting hydrocarbons could face profound structural adjustment.

If fusion eventually becomes reliable and economical, inexpensive electricity could power massive desalination plants, produce hydrogen and synthetic fuels, electrify transportation and industrial processes, support cleaner steel production, operate enormous AI data centers and potentially enable large-scale carbon removal. Instead of humanity simply dividing today's energy market differently, the total amount of useful energy available

to civilization could expand dramatically.

For developing countries, that could be transformational. Energy poverty restricts industry, agriculture, healthcare, education, water availability and technological progress. Abundant electricity could remove one of the most persistent constraints upon economic development and provide poorer societies opportunities that historically required access to coal, oil or gas.

In a fusion age, strategic advantage could increasingly belong to countries possessing scientific talent, superconducting technology, advanced materials, artificial intelligence, plasma-control expertise, precision manufacturing and intellectual property.

Economic power could gradually

migrate from nations fortunate enough to possess hydrocarbons beneath their soil toward nations capable of manufacturing sophisticated energy systems above it.

The Chinese direction is unmistakable. EAST's long-duration confinement, the 2026 density breakthrough, the enormous superconducting magnet, BEST's scheduled 2027 completion and China's decision to elevate fusion within its national industrial strategy collectively demonstrate a progression from understanding fusion toward engineering fusion. That progression should command the attention of every hydrocarbon-dependent economy.

The oil age will not end tomorrow, nor will fusion automatically replace every existing energy source. But tech-

nological revolutions rarely announce precisely when an established economic order has reached its peak. They advance experiment by experiment until the economics suddenly begin changing.

China has not yet sounded the death knell for the oil age. But its laboratories are demonstrating that an alternative energy order is becoming scientifically imaginable and increasingly technologically tangible. The bell has not yet tolled for oil—but China may already be forging it.

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

The Stalwart of Urdu Who Transformed a Language into an Institution

Continued from Page 4

curricula and pedagogy, dictionaries and terminology, research institutions and scholarly journals, as well as within the expanding frontiers of modern knowledge.

It was precisely at this juncture that the Father of Urdu transcended the conventional identity of a man of letters or linguist and emerged as an architect of Urdu civilisation.

Through the platform of the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu, he endeavoured to transform the publication of scientific and scholarly material, translation, lexicography, textual criticism, research, and the preservation of classical works into components of a coherent intellectual programme. Rare repositories of knowledge, threatened by neglect, decay, and the attrition of historical memory, were rescued from oblivion and restored to intellectual circulation. Through periodicals such as Urdu and Science, sustained efforts were made to emancipate Urdu from the constricted domain of literary expression and establish it as a legitimate medium for scholarly, scientific, and intellectual discourse.

Herein lay the central principle of Abdul Haq's linguistic vision: a language cannot remain genuinely alive unless it participates in every

significant intellectual and practical sphere of human existence.

He was simultaneously an excavator of the classical past and an architect of the linguistic future. For him, the compilation of a dictionary was never a mechanical enterprise whereby words were merely arranged according to alphabetical sequence. It was the construction of an intellectual infrastructure through which Urdu might acquire the capacity to assimilate new concepts, disciplines, discoveries, and technical vocabularies emerging from the modern world.

Works such as the Standard English-Urdu Dictionary, Qawaid-e-Urdu, and Urdu Sarf-o-Nahw belonged to this larger linguistic enterprise. They were not isolated scholarly productions but component parts of a comprehensive endeavour to furnish Urdu with the structural resources necessary for intellectual expansion.

The distinction of his scholarship lay also in the fact that he accorded tradition respect without surrendering inquiry to it. In his intellectual temperament, tradition was venerable but never immune from examination. The investigation of sources, manuscripts, textual authenticity, attribution, and historical assertions constituted an indispensable

element of his scholarly method. Research, in his conception, was not the obedient handmaid of inherited belief; it was the vigilant custodian of truth.

Tradition could furnish the point of departure; it could never be permitted to dictate the point of arrival.

Yet one of the most consequential phases of Abdul Haq's intellectual mission unfolded after the establishment of Pakistan. Following migration, he made Karachi the centre of his scholarly activities and sought to revitalise the Anjuman Taraqqi-e-Urdu within an entirely new geographical, political, and cultural configuration. His struggle for the establishment of Urdu College likewise arose from a larger conviction: Urdu ought not to be preserved merely as an emblem of national sentiment or a badge of collective identity; it must be elevated into a language of higher education, intellectual formation, and knowledge production.

In the subsequent historical evolution of this institutional tradition, the same intellectual continuum became part of the larger trajectory that eventually contributed to the emergence of the Federal Urdu University.

Here history places before us an extraordinarily eloquent mirror. The man who devoted his life

to securing for Urdu a dignified place within schools, colleges, and universities left behind an educational institution bearing the very name of the language for whose advancement he had struggled. Yet the question that confronts us with increasing urgency is this:

Has Urdu truly become an effective language of knowledge, research, science, technology, economics, and governance?

If the answer remains in the negative, then the anniversary of the Father of Urdu cannot be reduced to ceremonial mourning, floral tributes, or the ritual recollection of a distinguished figure from the past. It must instead become an occasion for intellectual self-examination and national accountability.

Our age is defined by artificial-intelligence algorithms, digital communication, computational linguistics, and unprecedented transformations in the technologies of knowledge. Languages are no longer merely spoken sounds or written symbols; they increasingly exist as datasets, digital corpora, machine-translation systems, speech architectures, computational lexicons, and artificial-intelligence models.

Consequently, the future of Urdu will not be determined merely by the elegance with which we speak it, the refine-

ment with which we write it, or the eloquence with which we celebrate its literary heritage. Its future will depend upon the extent to which we succeed in integrating it into the intellectual and technological infrastructure of the digital age.

Were Abdul Haq to return to our midst today, it would scarcely be surprising if his attention extended beyond the compilation of yet another conventional dictionary. The logic of his entire intellectual career suggests that he would regard the construction of extensive digital corpora, the systematic development of scientific and technological terminology, machine translation, computational linguistic resources, and Urdu-capable artificial-intelligence models as the natural frontiers of his unfinished mission.

For the practical philosophy implicit in his life was unequivocal: a language must not be preserved merely as an inheritance from the past; it must be equipped to function as an active force in the future.

On 16 August 1961, his earthly existence came to its conclusion in Karachi, and he was laid to rest within the precincts of the Abdul Haq Campus of the Federal Urdu University in the same city.

There is an extraordinary

historical symbolism in this circumstance. The man who consecrated his life to the preservation, advancement, and dignity of Urdu found his final resting place within the very intellectual environment associated with an institution whose identity remains inseparably linked with that language. It is as though history itself inscribed upon his silent grave an invisible epitaph one decipherable not through words alone, but through the depth of our collective consciousness:

Languages do not survive merely because they are spoken; they endure because institutions, knowledge, research, creativity, and succeeding generations continually renew their vitality.

Perhaps the supreme historical achievement of the Father of Urdu was not contained within any single book, dictionary, edited text, or scholarly treatise. His greater accomplishment was that he endeavoured to rescue Urdu from the confinement of sentimental attachment and carry it, through the successive stages of institution-building, intellectual formation, and civilisational consciousness, towards a more durable historical destiny.

Thus, on the sixty-fifth anniversary of his passing, if we genuinely desire to honour his

memory, it is insufficient merely to proclaim that Urdu is our national language. We must demonstrate through institutional action, intellectual labour, technological innovation, and scholarly production that Urdu possesses not merely the dignity of a language of identity, but the capacity to become a language of knowledge, research, science, technology, and the future.

For the gravest danger confronting Urdu is not necessarily its disappearance. Languages have survived historical catastrophes far more devastating than the present age. The subtler and more formidable peril is that Urdu may continue to be spoken and written; its literary gatherings may remain vibrant; its poetic traditions may continue to flourish and yet, imperceptibly, the language may find itself progressively displaced from the principal centres in which the new knowledge of humanity is being created.

And perhaps this is the question that still rises, with silent insistence, from the grave of the Father of Urdu and addresses the conscience of our collective civilisation:

Have we preserved Urdu merely as an inheritance of the past, or have we summoned the courage, imagination, and intellectual discipline required to transform it into a force of the future?

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) at the Finance Division.



Photo: PID

Parliament Passes Defence, Nuclear Command Bills Amid Opposition Walkout

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly and Senate on Thursday passed the Defence Forces of Pakistan (Amendment) Bill 2026 and the National Command Authority (Amendment) Bill 2026, aligning the legal framework governing defence and strategic command structures with the 27th Constitutional Amendment. Defence Minister

Khawaja Asif moved both bills, with the National Command Authority bill approved unanimously in the Senate.

The bills were introduced via supplementary agenda, with Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar explaining the legislation was necessitated by recent constitutional changes. He clarified it was legal and technical in nature, with appointments of the three forces' heads to be made under Article 243

of the Constitution.

Senate proceedings saw strong objections from PTI, JUI, and MWM senators, who complained they had not received copies of the bills in time for review. Leader of Opposition Allama Raja Nasir Abbas demanded the legislation be referred to committee, questioning how a bill could be passed when opposition members lacked copies. He announced a boycott, and

PTI, JUI, and MWM members walked out in protest.

In the National Assembly, PPP Chairperson Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari objected that no consultation had occurred before the bills were presented, noting they were not on the day's agenda, though he said PPP had engaged with the Attorney General and Interior Minister. Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai demanded the bills be sent

for parliamentary deliberation and full debate. He also criticized Pakistan's low-level representation at an Afghan embassy event marking five years of Taliban rule, calling it embarrassing, and raised concerns about Imran Khan's health, urging all issues be discussed in parliament. Bilawal said PM Shehbaz Sharif should have received better guidance on the legislation.

Brazilian FM felicitates DPM on signing of Makkah Joint Defence Agreement

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Thursday received a telephone call from Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Federative Republic of Brazil, Mauro Vieira and discussed matters of mutual interest. The Brazilian Foreign Minister commended Paki-



stan's constructive role and efforts towards mediation in the US-Iran context, underscoring the importance of dialogue and diplomacy for global peace and security. He also felicitated DPM/FM on Pakistan's signing of the Makkah Joint Defence Agree-

ment. DPM/FM thanked him for his kind sentiments and appreciated Brazil's impor-

tant role in advancing South-South cooperation and commitment towards peace and stability.

DPM/FM invited the Brazilian Foreign Minister to visit Pakistan, while H. E. Mauro Vieira reciprocated with an invitation to visit Brazil. Both agreed to remain closely connected and look forward to further strengthening bilateral ties.

Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to enhance cooperation in key sectors

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have decided to enhance cooperation in four key food sectors with a focusing on increasing exports and promoting joint investment. The priority sectors include meat, rice, processed food and animal feed. The decision was taken during a review meeting on the promotion of Pak-Saudi agricultural trade that was chaired by Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema. Ahad Cheema said a Pak-Saudi agri-investment Fund would be established and memorandums of understanding on food research were also expected.



He said Saudi Minister for Environment and Agriculture Abdul Rahman Al Fazli would

soon visit Pakistan's National Agriculture Research Centre, meet Pakistani business

groups and provincial agriculture ministers, which will help boost agricultural trade

and joint investment.

Ahad Cheema said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif was committed to turning Pakistan, Saudi Arabia's brotherly ties into a strong economic partnership.

He said Saudi Arabia wanted to significantly increase imports by benefiting from Pakistan's agricultural potential.

The federal minister directed relevant departments to prepare commercially viable proposals to promote cooperation in the agricultural sector.

Information Minister Attaullah Tarar, Secretary Commerce, Secretary National Food Security, CDA Chairman and Foreign Ministry officials also attended the meeting.

Armed forces pay tribute to Rashid Minhas on 55th martyrdom anniversary

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's military leadership and armed forces on Thursday paid tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his 55th martyrdom anniversary, honouring his sacrifice in defence of the country.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu joined the armed forces in commemorating the anniversary.

The ISPR said Rashid Minhas displayed exceptional courage, resolve and devotion to duty on August 20, 1971, making the ultimate sacrifice to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty and honour.

His sacrifice remains an enduring example of courage, loyalty and commitment to the defence of the



country, the military's media wing said.

The people and armed forces of Pakistan paid homage to Rashid Minhas and reaffirmed their commitment to safeguarding the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests.

The ISPR said his legacy would continue to inspire the nation and its armed forces as a symbol of courage, sacrifice, patriotism and devotion to duty.

Leadership Pays Tribute to Rashid Minhas Shaheed on 55th Martyrdom Anniversary

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday paid rich tribute to Pilot Officer Rashid Minhas Shaheed, recipient of the Nishan-e-Haider, on the 55th anniversary of his martyrdom.

President Zardari said Rashid Minhas set an enduring example of courage, patriotism and devotion to duty by sacrificing his life for the country at a young age. He described him as Pakistan's youngest recipient of the Nishan-e-Haider, saying his supreme sacrifice remains a shining chapter in the nation's history and would continue inspiring future generations.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif praised the martyr's exceptional bravery and sacrifice for the defence of Pakistan and national dignity. He said



Rashid Minhas's courage and commitment would remain a guiding example for the nation and the armed forces.

The prime minister also reiterated Pakistan's commitment to protecting its sovereignty, territorial integrity and national interests.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said Rashid Minhas sacrificed his life in defence of the homeland and described his patriotic spirit as an example worthy of emulation.

The leaders stressed that the sacrifices of national heroes and their families would always be remembered and honoured.

Relief granted to PTI founder not in accordance with law: Rana Sana

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Advisor on Political Affairs Rana Sanaullah has said that a review petition was being re-filed against the apex court's decision to transfer the PTI founder Imran Khan to the hospital.

Talking to media outside Parliament House, Rana San said that government will implement the decision resulting from the review

petition. Prime Minister's Advisor on Political Affairs claimed that the relief granted to the PTI founder was not in accordance with the law. He said PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif was shifted to Services Hospital.

They went abroad for medical treatment following a report by doctors at Services Hospital Lahore.

Rana Sana said that the Opposition has been invited to hold talks, and their response is awaited.

Govt bound to facilitate PTI founder's private treatment if needed: Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Thursday apprised the Senate that the government would be bound to provide the PTI founder treatment at Shifa International Hospital or another better-equipped medical facility if the healthcare facilities required for his treatment were not available at government hospitals.

Responding to a point of order raised by the Leader of the Opposition in Senate, the minister said the government had no intention of opposing or creating hurdles in the provision of necessary medical treatment to the PTI founder.

He said the government had already made it clear that the decision of the Supreme Court of Paki-



stan regarding the matter would be implemented.

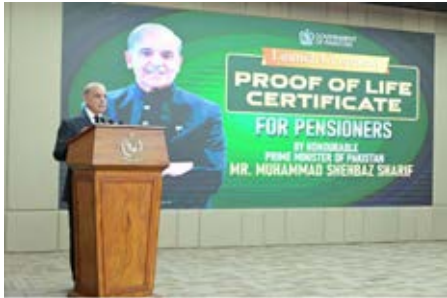
Dr Tariq Fazal said under the prevailing rules, convicted prisoners were provided medical treatment at government hospitals, and a legal point regarding the extent of such arrangements was before the Supreme Court for clarification.

PM Shehbaz Hails Digital Proof of Life System as Relief for Pensioners

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday described the launch of the digital Proof of Life Certificate system as a major step towards facilitating millions of pensioners across Pakistan, particularly elderly and physically challenged citizens.

Addressing the launching ceremony, the prime minister said the new facility would benefit both civilian and military pensioners, including senior citizens, women and persons with



disabilities. He termed the initiative an important service to pensioners and said using modern technology

would make their lives easier. Under the new system, pensioners will be able to complete their Proof of Life verification from their homes through facial recognition and a digital application, eliminating the need for repeated visits to banks. The facility is expected to particularly help elderly, weak and disabled pensioners who previously had to visit banks every six months for verification.

Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, PM's Adviser Dr Syed Tauqir Hussain Shah, NADRA Chairman and other officials and institutions involved in developing the system.

He also appreciated NADRA for providing the facility free of charge, saying millions of pensioners would benefit from the initiative. He said facilitating elderly citizens and persons with disabilities was not merely an administrative responsibility but an important service to humanity.