



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے محمد بن قسطل نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے
کہا کہ ہم سے محمد بن قسطل نے بیان کیا، انہوں
نے کہا کہ ہم سے ابو زرعہ نے بیان کیا اور ان سے
ابو ہریرہؓ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ
علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: جو زبان پر جھگڑے ہیں
کیا ان تر ازویں (آخرت میں) بھاری ہیں اور اللہ
رحمن کے یہاں پسندیدہ ہیں وہ ہیں جس «سبحان
اللہ و بحمدہ، سبحان اللہ عظیم»...
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6682)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**

DPM directs implementation of restructuring plan for DISCOs

Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar Saturday chaired a meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Privatisation (CCoP). CCoP approved the Restructuring Plan for Batch-I DISCOs (FESCO, GEPCO & IESCO), including the carving out of DISCOs' land assets to the government-owned Power Holding Company, as a holding company.

Shamsu Bibi murder case: Police arrest father, brother and three relatives

Rawalpindi police have arrested five suspects, including the father and brother of social media personality Shamsu Bibi, also known as Ayesha Gilamania, in connection with her murder near Taxila. The suspects have been identified as the victim's father Fazal, brother Bashir, cousin Ehsan, paternal uncle Rozi Khan and the son of her cousin, Yaseen, according to a Rawalpindi police spokesperson.

Meeting

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari in a meeting with Malaysia's Minister for Home Affairs, Datuk Seri Saifuddin Nasution bin Ismail, at Aiwan-e-Sadr on Saturday.

Photo: PID

President calls for stronger Pakistan-Malaysia cooperation in law enforcement and security

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has called for further strengthening Pakistan-Malaysia cooperation in law enforcement, counter-terrorism, narcotics control and combating human trafficking and migrant smuggling.

The President said this during his meeting with Malaysia's Minister for Home Affairs, Saifuddin Nasution bin Ismail, at Aiwan-e-Sadr which was also

attended by Federal Minister for Interior & Narcotics Control Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi.

High Commissioner of Malaysia to Pakistan Mohammad Azhar Mazlan, Ibrahim Darus, Director of Special Branch, Royal Malaysia Police and Deputy Commissioner General Rehabilitation, Malaysian Prison Department Hafidz Othman also accompanied the visiting Minister, among others.

Welcoming the Malaysian Minister and his delegation, the

President said Pakistan attaches great importance to its close and fraternal relations with Malaysia, rooted in shared faith, culture, mutual respect and strong people-to-people ties.

The President appreciated the positive progress in strengthening institutional cooperation, particularly in internal security, immigration and legal and judicial matters. He said continued coordination between the relevant institutions of the two countries would help facilitate their

citizens and address matters of mutual concern.

Matters relating to increasing bilateral trade also came under discussion. The President stressed the need to explore greater market access in Malaysia for Pakistani products that are in demand there, including rice, potatoes, wheat, poultry and animal feed.

The visiting Minister informed the President that 2026 marks the 69th year of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and

Malaysia, which were established in 1957 following Malaysia's independence. He also informed that 14 flights per week currently connect various cities of Pakistan with Malaysia and that efforts are under way to further increase the frequency of flights.

The President expressed confidence that the visit would contribute to strengthening institutional ties and further deepening the longstanding and multifaceted relationship between Pakistan and Malaysia.

PM directs comprehensive reforms to modernise agriculture sector

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed greater activation of agricultural research institutions to advance Pakistan's agriculture sector and align research activities with international standards. Chairing a meeting on agricultural reforms in Lahore, he said supporting small and medium-scale farmers to raise per-acre productivity remained a top priority, directing certified companies to ensure quality seed provision and ordering a national system for estimating crop production in consultation with stakeholders.

He directed authorities to utilize the expertise of students who returned from agricultural training in China last year, ensuring merit and transparency in selecting this year's



trainees. He approved reforms at the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC) for early completion, and ordered NARC and the

Pakistan Agricultural Research Council be strengthened to international standards.

The meeting reviewed progress on the Agriculture Innovation and Growth Plan 2026-27, covering farmer financing, machinery, technology, research, and food security, including AI-based initiatives like pest identification and SUPARCO crop assessment. Measures to promote organic agriculture, including pilot clusters in Balochistan, were also discussed, alongside plans to strengthen value chains and exports.

The new NARC master plan will reorganize the centre into seven districts with research centres, laboratories, and a biorepository, which the PM approved for early implementation. Federal ministers and senior officials attended in person and via video link.

Hafiz Naeem warns of nationwide strike, Islamabad march over public grievances

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Ameer Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman warned the government of a nationwide strike and march towards Islamabad if levies aren't withdrawn and public relief isn't provided. Addressing a JI sit-in at Charing Cross, Lahore, he criticized the Punjab government over inflation, unemployment, and outsourcing of public schools, calling it ironic that a woman chief minister was depriving girls of education. He accused CM Maryam



Nawaz, along with Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif, of decades of failed governance despite

ruling Punjab.

Hafiz Naeem said inflation had made single incomes insufficient, forcing women into workplaces where they face exploitation without adequate protection. He criticized the absence of a proper minimum wage system, rising poverty, and elite privileges sustained at the public's expense. Referring to IMF-linked economic policies, he declared, "You do not end the levy, we will not end the sit-in."

He also condemned the removal of street vendors' carts, questioning the government's

Pakistan Bar Council Distances Itself from PTI 'Propaganda'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Bar Council has distanced itself from statements issued by eight of its members, calling them PTI propaganda that does not reflect the council's collective position.

The Vice Chairman said the statement represented only 8 out of 23 members and reflected individual views. In a democratic institution, he added, a minority cannot impose its stance on the majority.

The Council condemned the statements and also distanced itself from a statement by the Lahore High Court Bar Association. It stressed that bar platforms should not be used for personal or political purposes.

Reaffirming its commitment, the PBC said it stands for the rule of law, judicial independence, constitutional supremacy, and respect for institutions, and safeguarding the Council's dignity remains every member's responsibility.

Army deployment in Rawalpindi for six months notified



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The federal cabinet has approved the deployment of three companies of the Pakistan Army in Rawalpindi for a period of six months to maintain law and order.

The Ministry of Interior has issued a notification, stating that the decision has been taken under Article 245 of the Constitution at the request of the Punjab Home Department.

The notification states, "...

the Federal Government, in exercise of the powers conferred under Article 245 of the Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, is pleased to authorize deployment of 3x companies of Pakistan Army for sensitive security duties in Rawalpindi to avoid any undesirable situation as well as to respond effectively in any unforeseen situation as per requirement of the district administration for a period of six months with immediate effect".

Govt seeks urgent hearing of PTI founder's hospital transfer case



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government has filed a miscellaneous application seeking an early hearing of the review petition in the Supreme Court regarding the hospital transfer of the PTI founder Imran Khan.

The application, filed by the Chief Commissioner of Islamabad, requests the Supreme Court to fix the review petition

for hearing at the earliest, citing the sensitive and urgent nature of the matter.

The Chief Commissioner has urged the court to take up the review petition without delay and decide the matter at the earliest possible time.

The development comes amid ongoing legal proceedings related to the PTI founder's transfer to hospital and his medical examination.

Atta Tarar Accuses PTI of Politicizing Founder's Health



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Saturday accused the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leadership and the party founder's sisters of politicizing his health and creating obstacles to his medical care, saying such actions amounted to contempt of court.

Speaking to the media, Tarar rejected PTI allegations regarding implementation of the Supreme Court's order, saying the government had complied with all directions transparently and according to law. He said PTI supporters had gathered outside Shifa International Hospital, breached

security barriers and created a security risk, prompting authorities to shift the party founder to PIMS Hospital.

Tarar said the court had directed that the health issue should not be politicized, yet PTI leaders continued holding press conferences and issuing political statements. He stressed that the government had consistently opposed politicizing anyone's health, including when PTI was in power.

The minister said a government review petition had raised legal questions regarding special treatment and stressed that medical boards should determine appropriate treatment arrangements.

He maintained that the court order was fully implemented, with the medical examination conducted transparently in the presence of the prisoner's sister and a Shifa Hospital ophthalmologist. He also urged lawyers to keep bar politics separate from party politics.

Multan lawmakers brief CM on development projects, civic issues

 Bureau Report

LAHORE: A delegation of Multan MPAs called on Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Saturday and discussed the political situation, ongoing public projects and issues relating to their constituencies.

The delegation, comprising Muhammad Salman, Nazik Karim and Malik Lal Muhammad, thanked the chief minister for the construction of the Multan-Vehari dual carriageway and appreciated the beautification of Multan as well as the construction and rehabilitation of Gulgasht Brand Road.

The chief minister announced that an electric bus service would soon be launched in Multan and directed the lawmakers to undertake a tree plantation campaign in urban and rural areas of the city.

She also instructed the MPAs to monitor development projects in their constituencies.



The lawmakers appreciated the upgradation projects being carried out under the Punjab Development Programme and said the recent Azad Kashmir elections had demonstrated that the PML-N was the country's most popular and genuinely representative political party.

CM Punjab said Multan, being a historic city, had the potential to emerge as a major tourism hub.

"The purpose of development projects is to provide citizens with safe travelling facilities and improve the traffic system," she said.

The chief minister said projects worth billions of rupees had been launched for the restoration of historical sites, including Qila Kohna Qasim Bagh and other heritage locations in Multan.

Ehsan-ul-Haq's services in attracting the youth of Kharian towards chess are commendable

 Anwar Chohan

KHARIYAN: The selfless services of Director (Chess), Kharian Sports Association Ehsan-ul-Haq for many years in attracting the youth of Tehsil Kharian towards the game of chess and providing them with opportunities to improve their mental and intellectual abilities are commendable.

These views were expressed by President Kharian Sports Association (KSA) Wasim Haider during a function held on his birthday. He said that Ehsan-ul-Haq has continuously worked beyond personal interests to promote chess in Kharian, encourage young talent and bring new players forward.

Wasim Haider further said that Kharian Sports Association has got an excellent and talented team in terms of chess, which will play an important role in introducing the young players of Tehsil Kharian at the district, provincial, national and international levels in the future.

He expressed his determination that KSA will further expand its activities for the promotion of chess and other sports and will continue to take vigorous steps to provide opportunities for healthy, positive and constructive activities to the youth.

On this occasion, Wasim Haider also appreciated the services of Zeeshan Akbar, the heartbeat of KSA, who is striving for the development of players. He said that sincere and dynamic workers like Zeeshan Akbar are playing an important role in the promotion of chess and encouraging young players, whose services are valuable.



Naat Competitions 2026 to be held at Tehsil, District levels

 Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The District Education Authority and District Administration Attock are organizing Naat Competitions 2026 to promote love and devotion for the Holy Prophet Hazrat Muhammad (PBUH) among students.

The competitions will be held at tehsil and district levels under the supervision and guidance of Chief Executive Officer, District Education Authority Attock, Dr. Muhammad Azhar.

The tehsil-level competitions will be held on Monday, August 24, 2026, at 9:00 am at designated venues in the respective tehsils, while the district-level competition will be held on Tuesday, August 25, at 9:00 am at the District Council Hall Attock.

Students securing first, second and third positions at the tehsil level will qualify to participate in the district-level competition. Cash prizes will be awarded to top-performing students in both boys' and girls' categories. The first, second and third position holders will receive Rs50,000, Rs30,000 and Rs20,000 respectively.

CEO District Education Authority Attock Dr. Muhammad Azhar said that the objective of organizing such religious competitions was to instill love and devotion for the Holy Prophet (PBUH) in the hearts of the younger generation.

TAYAR Programme launched to strengthen youth resilience



 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The TAYAR (Training Adolescents and Youth for Action and Resilience) programme was launched on International Youth Day 2026 to strengthen youth participation in disaster risk reduction, preparedness and community resilience across Pakistan.

The initiative brings together the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, NDMA, UNICEF, HEC, NDRMF, scouting and guiding organisations, universities and youth representatives. Under the theme "Different Contexts, Common Aspirations," the programme aims to equip young people with practical life skills, crisis preparedness, volunteerism and community leadership.

A National Standardized Disaster Risk Reduction Manual for Volunteers was introduced to train university students, faculty and youth leaders as Master Trainers. The first bootcamp trained 41 participants in disaster risk management, early warning systems and anticipatory action, with nine more planned for 137 partner universities.

Through the cascade learning model, trained volunteers are expected to reach around 28,000 young people nationwide. A Letter of Understanding between NDMA and PMYP was also signed to strengthen institutional cooperation on youth engagement, volunteerism and disaster resilience.

RPO Faisalabad holds farewell for retiring driver constable

 Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar Sukhera hosted a farewell ceremony to honour Driver Constable Muhammad Buta on his retirement after completing 60 years of age and long service with the police department.

Member Provincial Assembly Zafar Iqbal Nagra, SSPRIB Mian Muhammad Akmal, SP Legal Muhammad Ashraf and other police officers attended the ceremony. RPO Sukhera praised Muhammad Buta for his dedicated, honest and professional service, saying integrity, discipline, duty and public service are the true hallmarks of the police department.

The RPO presented the retiring constable with a commemorative shield and bouquet and expressed his best wishes for his future. On his instructions, RPO office staff gave Muhammad Buta a warm and dignified farewell, placing garlands around him and showering flowers.

The Police Executive Vehicle and Dolphin Squad Faisalabad teams also accompanied him as he departed for home. Muhammad Buta thanked the officers and staff for their cooperation and support throughout his service and expressed good wishes for the police department's continued success.



Martyrdom anniversary

KARACHI: Mourners attend Chup Tazia procession to mark the martyrdom anniversary of Imam Hasan al-Askar (RA) at Golimar, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Seerat of Holy Prophet ﷺ Complete Code of Life and Model for Humanity: Dr Ehsan Bhutta

 Bureau Report

MULTAN: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr Ehsan Bhutta has said the blessed life of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is an eternal source of guidance, mercy, moral excellence and exemplary character for humanity.

Addressing the Divisional Seerat-Nabi Conference at Raza Hall, Multan, he said the Seerat teaches compassion, justice, equality, patience, forgiveness, respect for human dignity, brotherhood and service to humanity. He emphasized that the Prophet's ﷺ teachings should be reflected in daily conduct rather than confined to religious gatherings.



Dr Bhutta said the Seerat provides practical guidance for building a peaceful and harmonious society, particularly at a time of growing intolerance and social discord. He said Auqaf Punjab is organizing divisional

Seerat conferences across the province until August 24 to promote the Prophet's ﷺ teachings and inspire young people with moral integrity, discipline, tolerance, patriotism and service to humanity.

He announced that successful participants in divisional Seerat competitions would attend the central conference at Seerat University Lahore on August 25, with Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif as chief guest.

RPO Usman Akram Gondal and Deputy Commissioner Dr Faisal Saleem also stressed promoting Seerat among youth. The conference concluded with prayers for Pakistan's peace, stability and prosperity.

Suthra Punjab MD conducts surprise visit to rural areas of Attock

 Raaza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Managing Director Suthra Punjab Attock Anil Saeed conducted a surprise visit to various rural areas of the district and inspected the performance and attendance of sanitation workers.

During the visit, Anil Saeed reviewed cleanliness arrangements at different locations and obtained details of work from the staff. He also inspected the TCP (Waste Collection Point) and reviewed the arrangements there.

In view of the ongoing rains and possible flood situation, he directed the concerned staff to pay special attention to the cleaning of



drains and drainage arrangements to ensure timely response to any emergency.

The MD issued special directives to make the area "zero waste," stressing that garbage heaps should not be visible anywhere.

He warned that negligence in duties would not be tolerated and strict action would be taken against any worker or officer found negligent.

Anil Saeed said that, in line with the vision of the Chief Minister of Punjab, the entire district would be developed as a model clean and green district and provision of a clean environment to citizens would be ensured.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:06 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 4:53 pm
Maghrib 6:46 pm
Isha 8:15 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

*LGH suspends
three employees,
registers FIR over
emergency ward
medicine theft*

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The administration of Lahore General Hospital (LGH) has taken swift action following the theft of medicines from the emergency ward, registering FIR those involved and suspending three employees.

MS Prof. Dr. Faryad Hussain submitted a preliminary report on the incident to Principal Prof. Dr. Farooq Afzal. The hospital has suspended Mian Hamid Nadeem, Muhammad Saadullah Zafar (pharmacy technician), and Rashid (ward attendant). DMS Emergency Dr. Muhammad Tanveer has been issued a warning for lack of diligence in official duties and directed to strengthen monitoring. A high-level committee has been formed to conduct a complete and transparent audit of medicine records to examine every aspect of the matter.

Principal Prof. Dr. Farooq Afzal stated that those who betray patients by stealing medicines will face the law. Under the hospital's zero-tolerance policy on corruption, action without discrimination will continue. Administrative doctors have been instructed to intensify monitoring of the entire system of medicine purchase, receipt, record-keeping, and distribution to ensure transparency, merit and accountability.

MS LGH Prof. Dr. Faryad Hussain reaffirmed that zero tolerance for corruption will be maintained and impartial proceedings will continue.

Pakistan's Culture and Craftsmanship Reflect Its Global Identity: Gilani

Kiran Asim

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani has said Pakistan's rich heritage, culture, traditions, handicrafts, fine arts and literature provide the country with a unique identity at the international level.

Speaking as chief guest at the inauguration of the Pakistan Interiors Furniture Expo, Islamabad Edition, Gilani said Pakistan was blessed with immense talent and abundant natural resources. He praised Pakistani artisans and skilled workers for using their creativity and dedication to promote the country's positive image globally.

He said Pakistani embroidery, furniture, handicrafts and other locally produced goods had established a distinctive presence in international markets and represented the country's cultural heritage.

The Chairman Senate emphasized that

exhibitions such as the Pakistan Interiors Furniture Expo provide artisans, designers and creative professionals with valuable opportunities to display their skills, reach wider markets and develop commercial links. Such events, he added, promote Pakistani art and culture while contributing to economic growth and

strengthening business activity.

Gilani congratulated the organizers for successfully holding the exhibition and expressed hope that similar initiatives would continue showcasing Pakistan's cultural heritage, craftsmanship and entrepreneurial potential to international audiences.



Enjoyment

ISLAMABAD: Youngsters enjoying in water stream at Maragalla Hills Trail 5 in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Kakar Calls for Independent and Pragmatic Foreign Policy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former caretaker Prime Minister and Senator Anwaar-ul-Haq Kakar has called for an independent, pragmatic and development-focused foreign policy as Pakistan navigates an increasingly multipolar world. Speaking at the Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), he stressed strategic autonomy, balanced partnerships and constructive regional engagement.

Kakar highlighted Asia's growing strategic importance and the increasing influence of artificial intelligence, data and advanced military technologies on global power and security. He urged Pakistan to strengthen its institutions and adapt its strategic thinking accordingly.

Describing Pakistan as a middle power, he advocated deeper engagement with China, Iran, Afghanistan and



Gulf states while ensuring foreign policy remains guided by national interests. He called for a realistic approach towards Afghanistan, particularly regarding sovereignty and

security concerns.

IRS President Ambassador Jauhar Saleem highlighted Pakistan's recent diplomatic efforts for regional de-escalation and the Makkah Agree-

ment involving Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye. The session concluded with discussions on regional security, technology and Pakistan's strategic choices.

Annual Milad and Seerat-e-Mustafa Conference held in Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The annual Milad and Seerat-e-Mustafa Conference was held at Dispensary Ground, Media Town, Islamabad, under the auspices of the Milad and Seerat-e-Mustafa Committee, attracting a large number of devotees.

The gathering began with Quranic recitation by Qari Shahid Ramzan and Qari Muhammad Altaf, followed by a Naat presented by renowned Naat Khawan Zafar Ali Chishti. Allama Hamza Ali Qadri delivered the welcome address.

Chief guest Allama Hafiz Muhammad Qasim Sheikh, Deputy Director of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan and Member of the Rawalpindi Peace Committee, said the noble life and teachings of the Holy Prophet (PBUH) provide guidance for addressing contemporary challenges. He emphasized that the Seerah promotes peace, tolerance, love and brotherhood and urged Muslims to overcome differences and unite according to the teachings of the Prophet (PBUH).

Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim congratulated Media Town Milad Committee Chairman Malik Adeel, Ayub Awan, Syed Qaiser Abbas and their team for organizing the conference.

Special arrangements were made for women participants, while Langar was served to all attendees at the conclusion.



CBD Punjab CEO Reviews Progress on Landmark Projects



City Desk

LAHORE: CBD Punjab CEO Imran Amin visited key ongoing projects including CBD Walk, The Second Walk, and CBD NSIT City, accompanied by senior directors, NESPAK representatives, and contractors, to review construction progress.

At CBD Walk, he was briefed on near-complete tile and travertine work, directing teams to maintain pace and begin entrance asphalt work. He also reviewed CBD Lake's upgradation, ordering swift completion to make it functional soon.

At CBD NSIT City, Pakistan's first IT city, he reviewed progress on the main entrance gate's structural work.

Imran Amin reaffirmed CBD Punjab's commitment to delivering world-class infrastructure reflecting Lahore's potential as a business and tech hub, directing all teams to accelerate work, maintain quality, and ensure close coordination among departments and contractors.

Water crisis exposes HWSC's failure to ensure reliable supply: Hyderabad Chamber President

Commerce Desk

Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry President Muhammad Saleem Memon has criticized the severe water crisis that has gripped Hyderabad for three days, citing unavailability of clean water and supply of dirty, smelly water in various areas. He attributed the crisis to continuous incompetence and poor administrative performance of concerned institutions, saying traders and citizens of Sindh's second-largest economic hub have been deprived of water.

Memon said that over the past three days, residents across the city struggled for every drop of water, with domestic life, shops, markets, restaurants, offices, small businesses and industrial units all severely affected. He questioned how a main line or basic supply fault could take three to four days to repair, calling it not merely a technical issue but a serious indictment of the institution's technical capability, emergency response, planning and overall administrative performance.



Thousands Rally Against Sindh Division at "Unity of Sindh March"

Qayoom Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Thousands of people took to the streets in Hyderabad for a "Unity of Sindh March," organized by the Sindh Action Committee to protest plans to divide Sindh, corporate farming initiatives, canal projects, and the alleged occupation of Sindh's resources.

The march, held from Poonam Petrol Pump to Wadho Wah Gate, drew participation from the Sindh United Party (SUP), Awami Tehreek, Qaumi Awami Tehreek, Jeay Sindh Qaumi Mahaz (Bashir Qureshi Group), Jeay Sindh Mahaz, Sindh Hari Committee, Sindh National Party, Sindh Student Action Committee, MRM students, and thousands of political and social leaders, lawyers, and citizens. Participants chanted slogans including "Division of Sindh is unacceptable" and "My land, my authority."



Speakers including Awami Tehreek's Wasand Thari, Jeay Sindh Mahaz's Riaz Chandio, Dr. Niaz

Kalani, Sindh National Party's Comrade Taj Mari, Sindh Hari Committee's Comrade Samar Jatoi, and intellectual Jami Chandio said the large turnout represented a rejection of plans to divide Sindh and seize its resources, calling it a referendum against the rulers and vowing a sustained movement to protect Sindh.

Leaders described Sindh as a homeland with thousands of years of history, declaring its geographical identity, culture, and history a red line for millions of Sindhis who would resist any threat to their land. Participants collectively demanded that division plans be abandoned, proposed Indus River canal projects be halted, and the transfer of hundreds of thousands of acres of Sindh's land to a private company be withdrawn.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: **Almass Ayoub Sabir**
Vice Chairman: **Asim Nazir Ahmad**
Editor: **Naveed Ahmad Khan**
Head Editorial Advisory Board: **Amjad Mehmood**
Bureau Chief Karachi: **Khurram Jaffrani**
(jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Bureau Chief Lahore: **Syed Afraz Ali Nazish**
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone:+92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
Karachi Phone:021-33399390
Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

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Gaza’s Winter of Reckoning: When Shelter Becomes a Matter of Life and Death

The latest figures from the United Nations should stop any reader in their tracks: 94 percent of Gaza’s 2.1 million residents now need shelter, and more than four in five families are living in conditions the UN itself describes as critical or catastrophic. These are not abstract statistics. They describe people who cannot sleep properly, cannot cook a meal, cannot wash, cannot store food or water safely — the most basic requirements of human dignity, absent for the overwhelming majority of an entire population.

What makes this moment particularly urgent is timing. Nearly two-thirds of Gaza’s families are living in tents or makeshift shelters built for short-term use, and the region is heading into its cold and rainy season. Last winter, more than 70 percent of families experienced flooding in these fragile structures. Without a dramatic shift in the pace and scale of humanitarian response, this winter risks repeating — or worsening — that suffering, with UN partners estimating \$562 million is needed just to improve living conditions before conditions deteriorate further.

The obstacles standing in the way are twofold: funding shortfalls on one side, and restrictions on the entry of materials and equipment on the other. Both are solvable problems, but only if there is sufficient international will to solve them. Humanitarian access should never be treated as a bargaining chip or a secondary consideration in an active conflict. When aid organizations cannot bring in heavy machinery to clear rubble, when they cannot retrieve the bodies of over 50 people — including 19 children — buried for more than two years, the human cost of delay becomes impossible to ignore.

Equally troubling are continuing reports of civilian casualties from strikes, shelling and gunfire, a reminder that this remains an active and lethal crisis, not a static humanitarian aftermath. The UN’s insistence that “civilians should never be targeted or used for military purposes” is a principle that should require no restating — and yet the ongoing reports from Gaza suggest it does.

There are, amid the bleakness, signs of sustained effort: UNRWA opening new learning spaces, UNICEF installing solar power in health centers, WFP reaching 1.5 million people with food assistance, UNDP working to reopen roads and restore access to hospitals. These programs matter, but they operate against constraints that no amount of agency ingenuity can fully overcome.

The coming months will test whether the international community treats Gaza’s sheltering crisis as the emergency the UN says it is — or allows another winter of preventable suffering to unfold in full view of the world.

Command, Credibility and Lessons from the May 2025 Conflict

Modern air warfare is not won by aircraft alone. It is won by the quality of the people who command them, the discipline with which orders are executed, the accuracy of information reaching the decision-makers and, above all, the trust that binds an Air Force into a single fighting machine. The May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict exposed this reality with unusual clarity. It also produced an uncomfortable question for the Indian Air Force: what happens when the chain of command itself begins to fray under pressure? The question has acquired renewed relevance following the extraordinary admission by former IAF Vice Chief Air Marshal Nagesh Kapoor in a recent podcast. Kapoor acknowledged that he deliberately gave his Air Chief a delayed timeline for aircraft getting airborne during Operation Sindoor, even though the actual mission was still some 15 minutes away. According to his account, he ultimately confessed to the Air Chief — in the presence of the Defence Minister — that he had “lied” about the timeline.

This is not merely an amusing anecdote about a commander exercising battlefield initiative. It raises a far more fundamental professional question: can a military organization function effectively when a senior commander knowingly withholds or alters operational information from his own Chief? In combat, the chain of command is not a ceremonial hierarchy. It is the nervous system of an armed force. Information travels upward; decisions travel downward; every link is expected to be accurate, disciplined and accountable. A pilot cannot decide independently whether an order

should be followed. A Squadron Commander cannot rewrite the operational picture for his superior. A senior commander certainly cannot treat the Service Chief’s situational awareness as optional. If such conduct is normalized as “operational judgment,” it risks replacing institutional discipline with individual discretion. The danger is obvious. A Chief making decisions on the basis of incomplete or deliberately delayed information may misjudge timing, threat, opportunity and escalation. In the unforgiving environment of air warfare, fifteen minutes can be an eternity.

The Kapoor revelation therefore goes beyond one individual. It invites scrutiny of the professional ethos in which such conduct could occur. A genuinely robust command culture should encourage subordinate commanders to present their professional assessments frankly — but once a decision is taken, the chain of command must remain sacrosanct. Initiative is a virtue; bypassing institutional authority is not. The May 2025 conflict exposed another uncomfortable distinction: having sophisticated platforms is not the same as possessing sophisticated Air Power. IAF entered the warzone with an impressive inventory, including the Rafale, Su-30MKI and Mirage 2000, backed by a large technological and financial ecosystem. Yet technology can amplify the strengths or weaknesses of the organization operating it. The most advanced fighter becomes little more than an expensive machine if intelligence, command, training and decision-making fail to operate as one coherent system.

This is where the contrast with Pakistan Air Force becomes particularly striking. Under the

leadership of Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, PAF demonstrated a model of air warfare built not merely around platforms but around integration, preparation, confidence and disciplined execution forming a meticulous Kill Chain that deprived IAF of its large claims and glory. The May conflict was a severe test of its ability to translate years of training, modernization and operational planning into combat effectiveness. The result was a force that responded rapidly, maintained cohesion and fought with remarkable composure under intense pressure. The aerial engagement of 7 May involved more than a hundred aircraft and became one of the most significant beyond-visual-range air engagements of the modern era. Independent assessments have concluded that multiple Indian fighter aircraft were lost, while Pakistan claimed Eight with unrefutable evidence. The significance of the episode, however, lies not simply in the number of aircraft lost. It lies in how the PAF employed its force.

PAF’s performance demonstrated the value of a networked fighting architecture in which sensors, command centres, air-defence elements, fighter formations and weapons systems operate as components of a single combat system. Its pilots were not sent into the sky merely to demonstrate individual bravery; they were backed by planning, situational awareness, coordinated command and carefully rehearsed procedures. That distinction matters. Bravery without preparation becomes recklessness. Technology without training becomes vulnerability. Numbers without command cohesion become statistics. PAF brought these elements together under the leadership of ACM Sidhu, whose emphasis on operational preparedness and modernization had already been reshaping the force ever since he assumed Command in March 2021.

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Can Israel Dictate to Turkey and Syria?

Israel’s latest airstrikes on Syria’s Abu al-Duhur airbase have opened a much larger question than the fate of one military facility. They raise a fundamental issue about sovereignty in the emerging Middle East: can Israel legitimately determine which countries Syria may cooperate with militarily, and how far can the doctrine of preventive security be stretched before it becomes an assertion of regional veto power?

On August 18, Israeli aircraft struck Abu al-Duhur airbase in Idlib, damaging its runway without reported casualties. Israel said Syria was about to violate what it described as a security “status quo” by permitting Turkish troops to deploy there. Yet Syria subsequently denied that a Turkish base or permanent deployment was planned. Foreign Minister Asaad al-Shaibani said Turkish officers had visited the facility as part of military cooperation and training, while the largely empty airfield was being rehabilitated for the Syrian Air Force.

This distinction is crucial. There is a considerable difference between Syria rebuilding its own armed forces with Turkish assistance and Turkey establishing an offensive military platform directed against Israel.

That makes Israel’s decision particularly consequential. Every sovereign state possesses the right, within international law and its treaty obligations, to develop diplomatic, economic and security relationships with other states.

Syria therefore has legitimate grounds to seek foreign assistance in rebuilding institutions devastated by years of conflict. Turkey is an obvious potential partner because of geography, its

substantial military capabilities, its existing influence in northern Syria and its relationship with the post-Assad government.

Syria has suffered enormously through more than a decade of war. A country once known for its historic cities, cultural richness, educated population and considerable human potential was devastated, its infrastructure shattered and millions of its citizens displaced internally or driven abroad.

The new Syrian government consequently faces the enormous task of rebuilding not only roads, airports and public institutions but also its army, air force, border security and national security structures.

For such an undertaking, cooperation with established regional militaries is natural. Egypt, Turkey, Pakistan and other friendly states could potentially contribute expertise, but geography and Turkey’s longstanding involvement in Syria make Ankara an especially practical partner.

Israel sees the situation differently. Its government argues that October 7 fundamentally changed its security calculations and that it can no longer tolerate potentially hostile military capabilities developing near its borders.

There is an additional contradiction. Israel continues to control the Golan Heights, territory captured from Syria in 1967 and annexed by Israel in 1981—a move not recognized by most of the international community. Against this background, Israel’s attempt to dictate what

Syria may do elsewhere within Syrian territory inevitably raises serious questions about sovereignty and consistency.

Washington’s reaction makes the latest episode even more significant. U.S. Ambassador to Turkey and special envoy to Syria Tom Barrack publicly characterized the Israeli strikes as an “unnecessary escalation that does not advance regional stability.” Barrack subsequently explained that American and Syrian officials believed dialogue over the facility was continuing and that available information did not indicate aggressive intent by Syria or Turkey.

That criticism matters precisely because Washington remains Israel’s most important strategic partner. It suggests that even within the American-Israeli relationship there are limits to agreement over how far preventive military action should extend. More importantly, it demonstrates the danger of substituting bombing for diplomacy when communication channels already exist.

None of this means Israeli security concerns should be dismissed. Israel has legitimate security interests, just as Syria, Turkey, Lebanon, Iran, Saudi Arabia, Egypt and every other country does. But legitimate concern and unlimited military discretion are fundamentally different concepts. Security cannot become a doctrine under which one country acquires the right to supervise the sovereign relationships of an entire region.

More dangerous still would be

allowing the Israeli-Turkish confrontation to become military. Turkey is not a non-state armed organization or a militarily shattered neighboring country. It is a major regional power and NATO member possessing one of the alliance’s largest armed forces, an expanding domestic defense industry, sophisticated drones, missiles and a capable air force.

A direct confrontation between Turkey and Israel would therefore represent an entirely different strategic equation. It could draw NATO, the United States and other regional actors into an extraordinarily complicated crisis. Neither Israel nor Turkey would benefit from transforming Syria into the battlefield on which their competing strategic visions are settled.

The nuclear question therefore cannot be diluted into a vague appeal for worldwide disarmament while ignoring the immediate strategic imbalance inside the Middle East. Israel is widely believed to be the region’s only nuclear-armed state, while the surrounding Arab states do not possess nuclear weapons and Iran has faced extraordinary military, economic and diplomatic pressure even though it has not publicly crossed the threshold into an acknowledged nuclear-weapons capability.

If uranium enrichment, latent capability or even the possibility of future weaponization is considered sufficient justification for sanctions, coercion or preventive military action against Iran, then a far stricter standard should logically apply to an existing undeclared nuclear arsenal.

The principle must be consistent: one regional state cannot be permitted

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

The Critical Shortage of Neurologists in Pakistan: A National Health Challenge and a Call to the Next Generation

Pakistan is facing a silent healthcare crisis one that affects millions of people suffering from diseases of the brain, spinal cord, nerves, and muscles. Neurological disorders such as stroke, epilepsy, Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, multiple sclerosis, brain tumors, migraine, and neuropathies are increasing every year. However, the country has an alarming shortage of neurologists (neuro doctors), making timely diagnosis and treatment difficult for many patients.

As the population grows and life expectancy increases, the demand for neurological care continues to rise. Yet the number of trained specialists remains far below what is needed. This shortage is not merely a healthcare issue it is a national challenge that requires immediate attention and long-term planning.

The Growing Burden of Neurological Diseases: According to the World Health Organization (WHO), neurological disorders have become the leading cause of disability worldwide and affect more than 3 billion people, with over 11 million deaths annually linked to neurological conditions. Stroke remains one of the biggest contributors to death and disability, while epilepsy, dementia, migraine, and Parkinson’s disease continue to place enormous pressure on healthcare systems.

Pakistan is experiencing the same trend. Risk factors such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity,

smoking, road traffic injuries, infections, and an ageing population are increasing the number of patients requiring neurological care.

Pakistan’s Neurologist Shortage: One of the most concerning facts is the extremely low number of neurologists available in Pakistan. Research published in BMJ Neurology Open reports that Pakistan has approximately one neurologist for every one million people. By comparison:

- Pakistan: ~1 neurologist per 1 million people
- Americas: ~7 neurologists per 1 million people
- Europe: ~66 neurologists per 1 million people

With Pakistan’s population now exceeding 250 million, this ratio means the country needs many more trained neurologists to meet even basic healthcare needs. Earlier academic reports estimated only about 85 consultant neurologists served the country when the population was around 150 million. Although the number has increased over time, growth has not kept pace with population expansion and the rising burden of neurological disease.

There are approximately 300 to 450 qualified neurosurgeons practicing in Pakistan. This results in a workforce density of roughly 0.14 neurosurgeons per 100,000 people, which falls significantly short of the World Federation of Neurosurgical Societies’ recommended minimum density of 1 per 200,000 population. The distribution of these specialists is also

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Izmi Herlani



Dr. Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu

Iran condemns US plans to announce new sanctions

Reuters

A US Navy sailor directs a Eurocopter AS-332 Super Puma helicopter on the flight deck of Nimitz-class aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, which is supporting US military operations in the war with Iran, during a replenishment-at-sea with fleet replenishment oiler USNS Henry J. Kaiser on August 16, 2026. US Navy/Handout via Reuters

Iran on Saturday denounced US plans to announce new sanctions that could put further strain on the Islamic Republic's economy and have an impact on its most important trading partners, including China.

After nearly six months of war since the US and Israel launched airstrikes against Iran on February 28, the sides are not firing at each other but also showing no sign of pursuing peace talks.

Oil shipments are at a virtual standstill in the Strait of Hormuz, with Tehran threatening to strike any unauthorised oil tankers that try to transit the vital waterway, and Iran's economy is already under immense pressure from sanctions.

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent is due to hold a press conference at 2pm EDT (1800 GMT) on Monday after threatening "the toughest sanctions in history" on Iran.

Bessent has also urged cooperation with Washington by China, which buys more than 80% of Iran's shipped oil, according to 2025 data from analytics firm Kpler. Beijing has urged diplomacy.

Iran's Foreign Ministry spokesperson, Esmail Baghaei, said on Saturday the imminent US announcement of new economic sanctions was an "assertion of extraterritorial sovereignty over every independent member



state of the United Nations." "Such secondary sanctions find no foundation in international law," he said in a post on X.

The chief of staff of Iran's armed forces, Major General Ali Abdollahi, promised on Friday that Iran would respond to enemy threats militarily with "crushing, punishing and devastating responses."

US President Donald Trump, who has warned of economic consequences against any country that provides "any type of lifeline to Iran," said on Friday that Washington was observing "what happens" in the conflict.

"They would love to make a deal, but they're not ready to make the right deal, in my opinion," Trump said of Iran.

Hormuz Traffic Halted

While the US has effectively blockaded Iranian vessels in their ports, the Strait of Hormuz remained bottled up with thousands of seafarers stranded on hundreds of vessels.

Only four commodity ships sailed

along the strait on Thursday, none of them large crude carriers or liquefied natural gas tankers, ship-tracking data showed.

However, Iran has granted permission for a number of Iraqi oil tankers to pass through the Strait following repeated requests from Baghdad, Iran's state news agency IRNA reported on Saturday.

IRNA said obtaining special permission for Iraqi tankers was one of Baghdad's main requests during a visit to Iraq by Parliament speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf.

US Energy Secretary Chris Wright said the US military helped move a seven-day average of 8 million barrels a day of oil through the strait. That's down from more than 20 million per day before the war or about one of every five barrels consumed worldwide.

US attacks have severely diminished Iran's economy and devastated its navy and air force, but Tehran maintains enough missile and drone capability



to impede oil tanker traffic and attack regional rivals.

Abdollahi, the armed forces chief of staff, sought to underline Iran's missile capabilities during a visit to an underground plant manufacturing ballistic missiles that was reported by state television on Saturday.

"This plant has been able, much better than in the past, to produce equipment superior both in capacities and quality and in quantity," he said.

Ghalibaf, Iran's parliamentary speaker, said Tehran had received "numerous messages" from neighbouring countries about establishing new regional security arrangements and economic cooperation.

Ghalibaf, who did not say which countries he was referring to, accused the US of endangering the security of its allies in the region for the sake of Israel, adding that an independent, "home-grown" regional order would deliver peace and security.

Trump, meanwhile, has yet to achieve objectives he set at the start of the war, such as dismantling Iran's nuclear programme — the state of which remains uncertain given that UN inspectors have been shut out since 2025 — and creating conditions for Iranians to overthrow their clerical rulers.

Thousands have been killed, mainly in Iran, where 168 Iranian schoolchil-

dren were killed on the first day of the war. The US has reported more than 750 military personnel wounded and 18 killed.

While Iran remains defiant, President Masoud Pezeshkian has also called for a diplomatic solution.

"It would be better to end the war today, when we are powerful and have dignity, and the whole world acknowledges our victory and emphasises that America, contrary to all regulations, attacked our schools, hospitals, and infrastructure and is hated in the world," the ISNA news agency quoted him as saying on Friday.

Zakharova Comments on Tusk's Defense of Nord Stream Suspects

News Desk

MOSCOW: Russian Foreign Ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova responded to Polish Prime Minister Donald Tusk's August 20 remarks in Krakow defending individuals whom German authorities suspect of perpetrating the Nord Stream and Nord Stream 2 pipeline attacks. Tusk had urged Berlin to drop the criminal prosecution and criticized former Chancellor Angela Merkel for having supported the Nord Stream 2 project.

Zakharova said Tusk's remarks carry a dangerous, destabilizing charge for what remains of the international legal order, arguing that a European head of government publicly justifying a terrorist act committed in plain view sends a destructive signal that could further erode constraints



preventing European interstate relations from descending into lawlessness. She warned Poland's position on the pipeline sabotage could eventually harm its own security interests.

She said Tusk's statement exposed deep-

rooted Polish-German rivalry and ambition within the EU and NATO, both backed by the United States. She characterized Poland's appeal to Germany — to accept the attack on infrastructure that had generated tens of billions of euros in profit for Berlin — as a direct provocation.

Zakharova contrasted Germany's struggle against deindustrialization, worsened by costly energy imports from the US and Norway, with Poland's financial gains from re-exporting American LNG to Ukraine and its growing influence

over Ukraine's Soviet-era gas transmission system. She concluded that within the Polish-German divide, the Nord Stream affair has become a source of political and economic losses for Germany, while proving a risky overreach for Warsaw.

Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan deepen collaboration to combat crime

Uza

TASHKENT: Lieutenant General Aziz Tashpulatov, the Minister of Internal Affairs of Uzbekistan, has met with Rashad Mammadov, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Azerbaijan to Uzbekistan.

The parties noted the evolving relationship between Uzbekistan and Azerbaijan, rooted in friendship, mutual trust, and strategic partnership.

The parties focused on the current situation and potential areas for cooperation between the two countries' internal affairs agencies. Discussions specifically covered experi-



ence sharing in fighting crime, terrorism, extremism, transnational organized crime, drug trafficking, and cybercrime.

The parties highlighted their mutual interest in strengthening cooperation in law enforcement

and public safety. Following the meeting, the parties identified potential areas for collaboration. Both parties confirmed their commitment to steadily developing mutually beneficial cooperation.

Jinnah Institute of Cardiology: A New Hope for Heart Patients



Health is a fundamental responsibility of the state, and a welfare government must ensure timely, affordable, and dignified healthcare for its citizens. The establishment of the Jinnah Institute of Cardiology and Maryam Nawaz Heart Transplant Center in Lahore marks an important development in Punjab's healthcare system, bringing advanced technology, modern facilities, and free treatment for deserving patients under one roof.

Addressing the inauguration ceremony, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that while wealth, honour, and authority may be blessings, the opportunity to serve others is granted to only a few. She emphasized that ministers, bureaucrats, doctors, and all those entrusted with authority must regard their responsibilities as a trust. For her, the real measure of governance is not routine meetings or official assignments but the ability to take decisions and initiatives that improve people's lives.

The Jinnah Institute of Cardiology was described by the Chief Minister as her dream project. Lahore, with its rapidly growing population, has long depended

heavily on the Punjab Institute of Cardiology, which serves patients not only from Punjab but also from Gilgit-Baltistan, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The increasing number of heart patients made it necessary to expand public-sector cardiac services.

A major feature of the new institute is its modern Heart Transplant Center, described as the first of its kind in Pakistan. Maryam Nawaz announced that heart transplants would be provided completely free to deserving patients. Since a transplant can cost around US\$50,000, the government plans to use Chinese technology to reduce the cost to approximately US\$10,000, potentially making advanced treatment accessible to many more patients.

The institute is much more than a transplant center. It has six catheterization laboratories, five operating theatres, a hybrid cath lab, a heart-lung machine, a Tesla MRI, a 640-slice CT scanner, and an advanced electrophysiology department. Its cath labs are connected with Artificial Intelligence technology, while the hybrid cath lab can quickly be converted into an operating theatre for complex procedures.

Special attention has also been given to infection control. The Chief Minister highlighted the introduction of zero-infection technology and said that cardiac surgery requires exceptionally high standards of safety and cleanliness. The appointment of international and experienced professionals, including a specialist from New Zealand



as Director Nursing, reflects an effort to combine modern infrastructure with professional management.

Dr. Hasnat, who returned to Pakistan after a successful career in England, was also praised for choosing to serve his country. His example shows how Pakistani professionals abroad can contribute to national healthcare when provided with modern institutions and international-standard facilities.

The Punjab government has also undertaken several other healthcare initiatives. According to the Chief Minister, 100 million people visited government hospitals last year, where medicines, surgeries, and various procedures are provided free of cost. A system has also been introduced to deliver essential medicines to patients at home. However, she acknowledged continuing problems, including medicine theft, misuse of insulin, illegal payments, and deliberate damage to equipment. These challenges underline the importance of transparency, accountability, and monitoring.

The government's programme for children with congenital

heart diseases is another significant achievement. Around 15,000 children had been waiting for surgery two and a half years ago, and approximately 14,600 have since undergone treatment. Punjab has also completed 2,460 organ-transplant procedures, while a district-level stroke programme is helping bring emergency treatment closer to patients. Cath labs have been established in 20 districts, including Mianwali and Jhang, reducing dependence on major urban centers.

Other initiatives include the construction of Pakistan's largest cancer hospital, with a capacity of 1,000 beds, and the Punjab Air Ambulance Service, which aims to transport emergency patients during the critical golden hour. Through Clinics on Wheels, medical examinations, diagnostic tests, X-rays, treatment, and maternal and newborn care are being taken to rural and remote communities. Around one million people are reportedly receiving free two-month supplies of medicines for diseases including cancer, heart disease, and tuberculosis. Home dialysis machines are another planned

A New Milestone in Cardiac Care

Under the Leadership of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif

State-of-the-Art Medical Facilities

Expert Doctors & Trained Medical Staff

Quality Treatment
Better Care
Advanced Facilities

initiative that could ease the burden on kidney patients and their families.

One of Maryam Nawaz's most important observations was that if citizens have to struggle to receive their rightful services, the government should be considered a failure. This principle captures the essence of good governance. Public service is not simply about announcing large projects; it is about ensuring that ordinary people receive essential services promptly, respectfully, and without unnecessary

hurdles.

The Jinnah Institute of Cardiology represents this vision by combining advanced technology, heart transplantation, free treatment, skilled professionals, and modern facilities. Its long-term success, however, will depend on transparency, merit, discipline, accountability, and effective monitoring.

Ultimately, governments should be judged by what citizens actually receive. If a poor patient can obtain advanced cardiac treatment free of cost, a

child can receive timely surgery, a stroke patient can access emergency care, and people in remote areas can obtain quality healthcare, then public service has achieved its true purpose.

The Jinnah Institute of Cardiology is therefore more than a new hospital. If its promise is translated into sustained, transparent, and efficient healthcare delivery, it can become a benchmark for public healthcare not only in Punjab but across Pakistan.

(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst)

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
177,166.52	176,591.76
Day's High	Day's Low
177,583.36	176,110.75
Index Value	Change
23,470,059,076	+574.76
Percentage	Time
+0.33%	21 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,816.56	+68.40
Percentage	Time
+0.64%	21 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT+1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,311.63	+552.42
Percentage	Time
+1.05%	21 Aug, 3:10 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,016.36	−200.43
Percentage	Time
−0.30%	21 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

Gold price surges by Rs 5,700 per tola to Rs 482,936

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: There has been a big increase in the price of gold in global and the local market. According to the All Pakistan Sara-fa Association, 24-Karat gold per tola has become more expensive by Rs 5,700 to Rs 482,936.

In addition, the price of 10 grams of gold has increased by Rs 4,972, after which the new price of ten grams of gold has become Rs 414,039. There was no change in the price of silver per tola and it remains at Rs 7,379. On the other hand, the price of gold in the global market has been increased by \$57 to \$4,604 per ounce.

PVARA launches virtual asset licensing regime

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) has notified licensing regulations and opened its licens-ing portal, completing the regulatory frame-work for licensing and supervision of virtual asset service providers in the country.

Issued under the Virtual Assets Act, 2026, the regulations establish 10 licence categories covering exchanges, custody, broker-dealer services, advisory, lending and borrowing, derivatives, asset manage-ment, transfer and settlement, issuance and mining-related services, with detailed requirements for conduct, prudential standards, technology and AML/CFT compliance.

Existing virtual asset service providers must submit applications for a No-Objection Certificate (NOC) by September 5, 2026, under Section 70 of the Act, failing which they will have to cease operations.

Operating without submitting an appli-cation after the deadline will constitute an offence, according to PVARA press release issued here Saturday.

PVARA Chairman and Minister of State Bilal Bin Saqib said the new framework would provide legal protection for customer assets, requiring licensed providers to segregate customer holdings from their own assets and prohibiting their lending or pledging without written consent.

IDC inaugurates state-of-the-art diagnostic facility in Gilgit

 Bureau Report

GILGIT: Islamabad Diagnos-tic Centre (IDC) formally inaugu-

rated a new diagnostic facility in Gilgit, expanding access to time-ly, reliable healthcare diagnostics across Gilgit-Baltistan. Governor



Syed Mehdi Shah performed the ribbon-cutting ceremony, attend-ed by Deputy Commissioner Gilgit Captain (Retd.) Arif Ahmed, FCNA officers, local administration repre-sentatives and consultant doctors.

Governor Shah called the facility a much-needed healthcare addi-tion, noting it was established at his request, and congratulated IDC's Founding Chairman and CEO Prof. Dr. Rizwan Uppal. He high-lighted that patients previously

had to send samples to other cities, causing delays, whereas the new facility would enable faster, accu-rate diagnosis. He directed author-ities to ensure uninterrupted elec-tricity supply and expressed hope for IDC's expansion to Skardu, Hunza and other districts.

Dr. Uppal said IDC Gilgit was established to provide accurate, timely and patient-centred diag-nostic services, reaffirming commit-ment to making quality healthcare

accessible in geographically chal-lenging regions.

The facility will offer modern labo-ratory and diagnostic services, with plans to expand imaging capabilities including MRI and CT scans. IDC currently operates over 170 branches nationwide, serving millions of patients. Attending doctors welcomed the development, noting it would reduce patients' travel time and costs while supporting earlier diagnosis and treatment.

Hard work

ISLAMABAD: Labourers busy in work during upgradation project of historic site Buddha Caves at Shah Allah Ditta, in the Federal Capital. The work progress slowly as the 2,400-year-old Shah Allah Ditta Caves will be transformed into a world-class Buddhist heritage site ahead of the upcoming Gandhara Conference scheduled for September or October 2026.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bahir

DPS World Pakistan Showcases Future of Digital Printing and Signage

 Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The 9th international Digital Printing and Signage Exhibition, DPS WORLD PAKISTAN, was inaugurated at Expo Centre Lahore, bringing together leading companies, technology provid-ers and industry professionals to show-case innovations in digital printing and signage.

Organized by Fakt Exhibitions (Pvt.) Ltd., the three-day exhibition will continue until August 23, 2026. More than 150 national and international companies are participating, displaying advanced digital printers, large-format displays, laser cutting and engraving machines, specialty inks, innovative substrates and modern signage systems.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by SMEDA CEO Nadia Jahangir Seth, Fakt Exhibitions CEO Saleem Khan Tanoli and other industry representa-tives. Seth said the technologies show-cased reflected the strong potential of Pakistan's digital printing and signage sectors and highlighted the role of inno-vation in creating business opportunities



and supporting industrial development.

Tanoli said the exhibition provides an important platform for manufac-turers, suppliers, professionals and deci-sion-makers to connect, collaborate and explore new business opportunities.

Visitors will witness live technology

demonstrations, product launches and interactive displays while engaging with manufacturers and experts. The exhibi-tion is expected to promote networking, knowledge sharing, business devel-opment and collaboration across the industry.

ABHI Microfinance Bank Joins EPL Summit 2026 as Strategic Partner

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: ABHI Micro-finance Bank has joined EPL Summit 2026 as Strategic Partner, supporting a cross-sector dialogue on the future of Pakistan's digital commerce ecosystem. Organ-ized by EPL (Private) Limit-ed, the Summit will be held on September 9, 2026, at Möven-pick Hotel, Karachi, under the theme "Re-Engineering Digital Commerce."

The event will bring together stakeholders from government, technology, financial services, e-commerce, payments, and logistics to discuss infrastruc-ture and collaboration needed



for the next phase of Pakistan's digital economy. Supporting organizations include PSEB, Tech Destination Pakistan, NADRA Technologies Limited,

NITB, Pakistan Single Window, and P@SHA.

As Strategic Partner, ABHI Microfinance Bank will contribute a financial-ser-

vices perspective on digital payments, financial inclu-sion, and technology-enabled banking. Kabeer Naqvi, Entre-preneur in Residence at ABHI Group, said Pakistan's digital commerce ecosystem requires payments, financial access, technology, trust, and infra-structure to advance together, calling the Summit an impor-tant platform for these discus-sions.

The Summit will address digital payments, e-commerce, financial inclusion, consumer and merchant trust, regula-tion, cybersecurity, cross-border commerce, logistics, and the growing role of AI and data in commerce.

MEPCO's SDO Shaheen Akram Tops 76th Special Sector Promotion Course

 Iram Asim

MULTAN: MEPCO's SDO Shaheen Akram secured first position in the 76th Special Sector Promotion Course (SDO to XEN) held at WAPDA Engineering Acad-emy, Faisalabad. Current-ly posted as SDO Cantt at MEPCO Multan, she was honored at the course's clos-ing ceremony, where Prin-cipal Engineering Acad-emy Faisalabad Engineer Murtaza Bohra presented her a shield and certificate in recognition of her outstand-ing performance.

This marks her third consecutive achievement



in key training and promo-tion exams — having previ-ously secured first posi-tion in the Departmental Promotion Exam (DPE) and second position in the Junior Management Course (JMC) in Islamabad. Her consistent top performance reflects strong professional competence and has brought recognition to both her and MEPCO.

BYD Expands Customer Access in Lahore with New 3S Dealership

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: BYD, the world's No.1 New Energy Vehicle (NEV) brand, in partnership with Mega Motor Company (MMC), has expanded its presence in Lahore with the open-ing of a new 3S dealership on Pine Avenue Road. The dealership offers customers access to BYD's complete vehicle portfolio, along with sales, service and spare parts support under one roof.

Speaking on the occasion,

Danish Khaliq, Vice Presi-dent Sales & Strategy, BYD Pakistan-MMC, said,"La-hore has been an impor-tant market for BYD since our entry into Pakistan, and this new dealership further strengthens our ability to bring our products, tech-nology and customer expe-rience closer to consumers.

The new 3S dealership also offers after-sales service and genuine spare parts, providing customers with a comprehensive ownership experience under one roof.

Faysal Bank Wins Best Mid-Sized Bank Award

 Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Faysal Bank Limited (FBL) has been named Pakistan's Best Bank (Mid-Sized) at the 11th Paki-stan Banking Awards 2026, securing the recognition for the second consecutive year. The award highlights the bank's strong financial performance, expanding digital capa-bilities and commitment to innovative, customer-foc-used and Shariah-com-pliant bank-ing solutions.

With a nationwide network of around 900 branches, Faysal Bank has strengthened its position as a leading Islamic banking institution in Pakistan. Group Chief Executive Officer Juma Abul said the recognition reflected the bank's transformation journey and focus on deliv-

ering innovative financial services.

Faysal Bank Chairman Mian Muhammad Younis attributed the achievement to the growing strength of its Islamic banking solutions and long-term strategic direction, while President and CEO Yousaf Hussain dedicated the award to customers and employees.



The Pakistan Banking Awards recognise excellence, innovation and impact in the country's financial sector. Faysal Bank said the latest honour reinforces its progress toward building a sustainable, digitally enabled Islamic banking model.

Independence Day Sports Festival Concludes Successfully in Hyderabad

KARACHI: The Independence Day Sports Festival was organized by the Sports & Youth Affairs Department Government of Sindh from August 14 to 16, 2026 in Hyderabad. The festival included competitions in Sepaktakraw along with other selected sports.

Ms. Maryam Keerio DSO Hyderabad and Noushad Ahmed Khan, General Secretary, Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation attended the Sepaktakraw event and distributed trophies, certificates, and prizes to the players.

Addressing the gathering, Ms. Maryam Keerio said, “We recently participated in the World Cup Sepaktakraw Championship held in Thailand.



It is a matter of great pride that some of the players who participated in today's event also represented Pakistan in the

Thai King's Cup World Championship.” Noushad Ahmed Khan, in his speech stated that according to the report

submitted by Dr. Arif Hafeez Manager of the National Team, Pakistani players delivered an impressive performance in the Thai King's Cup.

“Pakistan defeated Sri Lanka and gave tough competition to strong teams including Thailand, China, Laos, and Malaysia,” he said.

He further expressed hope that in the upcoming championships, Pakistani players will perform even better and secure medals for the country.

The festival was aimed at promoting sports culture and providing young athletes with opportunities to showcase their talent during the Independence Day celebrations.

Pakistan beat Japan 4-3 for first FIH Hockey World Cup win in 16 years

Sports Desk

Pakistan registered their first victory at the FIH Hockey World Cup in 16 years, defeating Japan 4-3 in a classification match in the Netherlands on Saturday.

The thrilling win was not only Pakistan's first victory in the ongoing World Cup but also ended a wait of 6,017 days

for a win in the prestigious tournament. Rana Waheed scored twice for Pakistan, while Hannan Shahid and Hammad contributed one goal each to secure the hard-fought victory over Japan.

Pakistan's previous Hockey World Cup win came in 2010, when the national team defeated Spain 2-1.

The Green Shirts failed to qualify for the 2014 World Cup and remained winless during the 2018 edition.

Pakistan also failed to qualify for the 2023 World Cup.

The victory over Japan, therefore, marked a significant moment for Pakistan hockey and brought an end to the team's long World Cup winless run.



Can Israel Dictate to Turkey and Syria?

Continued from Page 4

to demand that all others remain permanently non-nuclear while retaining its own nuclear deterrent beyond meaningful international scrutiny.

This imbalance becomes even more dangerous when the state possessing that capability repeatedly uses military force beyond its borders and increasingly invokes preventive security doctrines against neighboring countries.

Israel's nuclear arsenal should therefore no longer be treated as an exceptional or untouchable issue. It should become a central subject of international non-proliferation diplomacy, inspection, verification and eventual disarmament.

The broader principle should of course ultimately apply to every nuclear-armed power—including the United States, Russia, China and others—because nuclear weapons are inherently

capable of mutual catastrophe. But in the present Middle Eastern context, consistency demands that the rules applied so aggressively to Iran cannot stop at Israel's borders.

This issue becomes particularly important because nuclear capability can provide a state with an extraordinary sense of strategic protection. Israel's conventional military strength is formidable, but its presumed nuclear deterrent represents an ultimate security guarantee. That makes international responsibility even greater. Nuclear weapons must never become an implicit shield behind which increasingly expansive doctrines of preventive military intervention can develop.

The world should therefore resist both nuclear proliferation and nuclear exceptionalism. A sustainable Middle Eastern security architecture cannot be based upon one state possessing an undeclared

nuclear deterrent while potential nuclear development elsewhere becomes grounds for sanctions, threats or military attacks. Rules acquire legitimacy only when they are applied consistently.

At the same time, the fundamental political disputes producing insecurity cannot be bombed away. The unresolved Palestinian question, Gaza, the West Bank, Syria's territorial integrity and the wider competition among regional powers will continue generating instability unless addressed politically.

Israel therefore faces an important strategic choice. It can continue attempting to expand its security perimeter through military superiority and preventive strikes, or it can help construct a regional order in which its security is protected through reciprocal recognition of sovereignty and negotiated arrangements.

Bombing an airfield can destroy a

runway. It cannot eliminate Turkey's geographical importance, Syria's need for reconstruction, Palestinian grievances or the strategic interests of neighboring states. Nor can military power indefinitely substitute for political accommodation.

Real security cannot be built by deciding whom Syria may befriend. It can only emerge when Israel, Syria, Turkey and the wider region accept the same fundamental principle: every state deserves security, every sovereign country deserves independence in its foreign relations, and no nation—however militarily powerful—should possess an exceptional right to impose its security doctrine upon all others.

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

Pakistani team participates in Qazaq Kuresi World Championship in Baku



Sports Desk

BAKU: The Pakistani National Team of Qazaq Kuresi, comprising Ms. Iran Shehzadi (48 kg) and Mr. Mohammad Ehtisham (74 kg), represented Pakistan in the Qazaq Kuresi World Championship, being held at the Baku Sports Palace in Azerbaijan from 22 to 23 August 2026.

The championship, organized under the auspices of United World Wrestling (UWW), has brought together athletes from various countries to compete in Qazaq Kuresi, the traditional Kazakh style of wrestling.

Pakistani team participates in Qazaq Kuresi World Championship in Baku

The participation of the Pakistani team reflects the growing sports cooperation and close people-to-people ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan. It also provided Pakistani athletes with an opportunity to gain international experience and further promote Pakistan's presence in traditional wrestling.

The Embassy of Pakistan in Baku appreciated the invitation extended by the Azerbaijan National Sports Association and the participation of the Pakistani team in the championship.

The embassy looks forward to continued cooperation between Pakistan and Azerbaijan in the field of sports, contributing to stronger bilateral ties and enhanced people-to-people connections between the two brotherly countries.

Clinical New Zealand shock wasteful South Africa in first Test

Sports Desk

Clinical New Zealand outscored wasteful South Africa by five tries to one for a shock 33-16 victory in Johannesburg on Saturday in the first Test of a four-match series.

The Springboks led 13-12 at half-time only to be dominated after the break and finished with 13 players when Marco van Staden and Cobus Reinach were yellow-carded.

Will Jordan scored two tries and fellow wing Josh Moorby, lock Fabian Holland and flanker Luke Jacobson one each for the All Blacks. Fly-half Ruben Love kicked four conversions.

The lone South Africa try came from substitute back Andre Esterhuysen. Wing Cheslin Kolbe kicked the conversion and three penalties.

Second-ranked New Zealand gave the Rugby World Cup holders a lesson in taking chances with South Africa making numerous entries into their rivals' 22 without any reward.

“I am really proud of our effort. It was a boxing match out there and it came down to crucial moments. We locked it in when it was tight,” said New Zealand captain and No.8 Ardie Savea.

“It was an amazing spectacle, but the series is not over, they will keep coming. We need to get people in front of their bodies because they broke our line a few times tonight.”

Command, Credibility and Lessons from the May 2025 Conflict

Continued from Page 4

The May 2025 conflict was therefore also a test of military leadership. At a time when tensions could rapidly have escalated into a much wider conflict, PAF leadership had to balance aggression with restraint, tactical opportunity with strategic consequences. The service demonstrated that professionalism does not mean avoiding combat; it means entering combat with clarity of purpose, discipline and control. There was another battlefield in which the contrast became even sharper: the battle for credibility. The initial Indian narrative surrounding Operation Sindoor

was accompanied by sweeping claims of operational success. Yet subsequent reporting and even statements from Indian military figures have exposed the lied in that narrative. The later disclosure by a former senior IAF commander that he had knowingly provided his Chief with an inaccurate operational timeline is particularly damaging because it shifts the discussion from battlefield claims to the credibility of the information reaching the highest level of command. A professional military should not need propaganda to manufacture victory. Its performance should speak for itself.

This is precisely why the PAF's

conduct in May 2025 deserves closer examination. It did not rely solely on rhetoric. It relied on operational readiness. Its pilots confronted a numerically and technologically formidable opponent, executed their missions under intense pressure and demonstrated the courage expected from a professional fighting force. Pakistan's political leadership publicly credited ACM Zaheer Baber Sidhu for his vigilance and leadership during the crisis. The deeper lesson is therefore not about Rafale versus J-10, or one missile versus another. It is about military culture. An Air Force is ultimately a human institution. Its true

strength is measured by whether a junior officer can trust his commander, whether a commander can trust his information, whether the Chief can trust his subordinate commanders and whether every pilot knows that the person directing the battle possesses an accurate picture of the battlefield. If those relationships fracture, even the most sophisticated arsenal cannot guarantee success.

The skies of May 2025 consequently delivered a lesson that cannot be hidden behind public-relations narratives. Air power is ultimately a contest between systems, and systems are built on people. PAF entered that

contest with preparation, cohesion and professional confidence. Its pilots fought bravely because they knew their training, trusted their leadership and operated within a command architecture designed for combat. The IAF, meanwhile, now faces questions that no press conference can permanently silence: Was the chain of command being respected? Was the highest leadership receiving accurate information? Had individual initiative begun to blur into insubordination? And can an Air Force sustain combat effectiveness when internal trust becomes questionable? These are not questions Pakistan needs to answer for India. They

are questions the IAF must answer for itself.

The ultimate verdict of May 2025 was written not in press releases but in the performance of men and machines under fire. PAF demonstrated that professionalism is not a slogan, technology is not a substitute for training, and leadership is not merely a rank on a shoulder. Under ACM Sidhu, it demonstrated the far more demanding proposition that when command is trusted, training is rigorous and every link in the chain acts as one, an Air Force can turn preparedness into combat power — and combat power into credible deterrence.

The Critical Shortage of Neurologists in Pakistan: A National Health Challenge and a Call to the Next Generation

Continued from Page 4

heavily skewed toward major urban centers. For example, about 44% of the country's neurosurgeons practice in just two cities: Karachi and Lahore

Urban-Rural Divide: The shortage becomes even more severe outside major cities. Most neurologists practice in metropolitan areas such as: Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi and Peshawar. Patients living in rural districts often travel hundreds of kilometers simply to consult a neurologist. Many must wait weeks or even months for appointments, increasing the risk of permanent disability from conditions that require rapid treatment. WHO reports that neurologists are heavily concentrated in capital cities and urban centers worldwide, while rural communities remain significantly underserved?

Why This Shortage Matters: Neurological diseases often require immediate diagnosis.

For example:

- Stroke: Every minute counts. Delayed treatment can lead to permanent brain damage.
- Epilepsy: Accurate diagnosis can prevent lifelong complications.
- Parkinson's disease: Early treatment greatly improves quality of life.
- Brain tumors: Delays may reduce survival chances.
- Multiple sclerosis: Early intervention slows disease progression.

When specialists are unavailable, patients may first consult physicians who are not specifically trained in neurology, leading to delayed diagnosis, unnecessary investigations, and postponed treatment.

Why Aren't More Doctors Choosing Neurology? Several factors contribute to the shortage:

- Limited neurology residency and fellowship positions.
- Concentration of specialist training in a few teaching hospitals.

·High workload and long training period.

·Limited neurological facilities in smaller cities.

·Brain drain, with many specialists moving abroad for better opportunities.

·Lack of public awareness regarding neurological diseases.

Expanding postgraduate training, investing in neurological services, and improving career opportunities could help address these challenges.

The Future Demand is Only Increasing: Pakistan's healthcare needs are changing rapidly. Several trends are increasing the demand for neurologists:

- Longer life expectancy
- Rising diabetes and hypertension
- Increasing stroke cases
- Growing number of dementia patients
- More road traffic accidents causing brain injuries
- Better awareness and diagnosis of neurological disorders
- As the population continues

to grow, neurological care will become one of the country's most important medical specialties.

A Message to Medical Students and Young Doctors: If you are a medical student or a young doctor searching for a meaningful career, consider choosing Neurology.

Neurology is one of the most intellectually stimulating and rewarding specialties in medicine. Every patient presents a unique challenge, requiring careful thinking, compassion, and lifelong learning. By becoming a neurologist, you can:

- Save lives during stroke emergencies.
- Restore independence to patients with neurological disorders.
- Improve the quality of life of children and adults with epilepsy.
- Help elderly patients maintain dignity while living with dementia.
- Contribute to research in neuroscience and artificial intelligence.

·Introduce advanced neurological services to underserved regions.

Pakistan urgently needs passionate physicians who are willing to serve where the need is greatest.

The Role of Government and Medical Institutions: Addressing the shortage requires coordinated action:

- Increase FCPS and residency positions in Neurology.
- Establish neurology departments in more teaching hospitals.
- Expand fellowship training in subspecialties.
- Strengthen tele-neurology services for remote communities.
- Invest in stroke centers and neurocritical care units.
- Encourage research in neuroscience.
- Provide incentives for neurologists to serve rural and underserved areas.

Pakistan Neurosurgery Training boost through China Partnership:

On 10th April 2026, the inau-

guration of China-Pakistan joint neurosurgery training center in Wuhan makes an important step in expending bilateral medical cooperation under Belt & Road initiative to overcome shortage of specialized neurosurgery care. As Pakistan continues to face a significant shortage of neurosurgeons. A 2024 study published in world neurosurgery: X reported just one neurosurgeon per 720,000 people, while 2025 review in Asian Journal of Neurosurgery placed workforce density at 0.28 per 100,000- well below the international accepted benchmark of 0.5 per 100,000. For long term sustainability “Train-the-Trainer” approach recommended where selected Pakistani specialist will receive training in Wuhan and then establish similar programs locally.

These investments will improve healthcare access and reduce disability across the country. Pakistan stands at a critical point in its healthcare journey. Neurological diseases are increasing, yet the number of trained neurologists remains far below the country's needs. Without urgent investment in specialist training and healthcare infrastructure, millions of patients will continue to face delayed diagnosis and limited access to life-saving care. For the younger generation of doctors, however, this challenge presents an extraordinary opportunity. Neurology is not only a respected and rapidly advancing specialty it is a field where every physician has the power to transform lives. By choosing neurology, young doctors can become pioneers of brain health, drive medical innovation, and help build a healthier future for Pakistan.

The brain is the command center of the human body. Those who dedicate their careers to protecting it will shape the future of medicine and the future of our nation.

Meeting on monsoon rains

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding recent monsoon rains and reviews progress of relief and rehabilitation activities on Saturday.



Photo: Online

PM directs financial assistance for families affected by floods

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed financial assistance for families affected by recent monsoon rains and floods, including compensation for families of those who died and owners of houses that were completely or partially damaged. Chairing a meeting in Lahore on the situation, he ordered authorities

to urgently restore electricity transmission systems and roads in flood-hit areas, and instructed federal ministers and secretaries to personally visit affected regions, assess damage, and ensure rehabilitation work begins without delay.

He also called for accelerating relief operations and swiftly delivering food and other supplies to areas that remain inaccessible. The

PM directed the NDMA and provincial disaster management authorities to stay fully prepared for further relief efforts given expected additional rains and flooding.

The meeting reviewed the impact of the 2026 monsoon and progress on relief work by provinces and the NDMA. It was reported that flood victims across affected areas had been timely relocated to safe locations, with NDMA

and provincial teams on standby for further emergencies. So far, 615 tonnes of relief supplies had been dispatched nationwide, with more being arranged. Rehabilitation and infrastructure restoration were progressing rapidly in Punjab, Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. Early warning systems in northern areas were credited with enabling timely

evacuations ahead of flooding.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Ahsan Iqbal, Ahad Khan Cheema, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Moeen Wattoo, Dr Musadik Masood Malik, and Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari, along with chief secretaries of the four provinces, Gilgit-Baltistan, and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, NDMA Chairman Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, and other senior officials.

AJK PM alleges PML-N denied PPP level playing field

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: AJK Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore alleged that PML-N's AJK leadership rushed elections and government formation for political power, despite PPP's stance that peace should be restored first. Speaking to a delegation of the All Kashmir Newspapers Society in Islamabad, he said the new government's biggest challenge was addressing fallout from the Joint Awami Action Committee's movement, with negotiations as the only viable solution, and noted PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's proposed Truth Commission could offer stakeholders a way forward.

On the Haveli election, Rathore called the 2026 polls among the most peaceful in the district's history compared to unrest in 2011, 2016, and 2021. He denied interfering in the process, said



PML-N's rigging allegations would be contested through legal forums, but reiterated that PPP was denied a level playing field, claiming results were altered against PPP

in constituencies including Nakyal, Sehnsa, Khoi Ratta, Charrhoi, Kotla, and Khawra despite central-level assurances from PML-N.

Reviewing nearly eight

months in office, Rathore cited progress in education, healthcare, infrastructure, and digital services, including Rs7 billion for out-of-school children, hospital and medical college

projects, an optical-fibre initiative, 5G trials, and austerity measures like reduced official vehicle fuel spending, despite limited tenure and financial constraints.

Pakistan eyes \$400m in remittance savings through stablecoins: Bilal bin Saqib

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is exploring regulated stablecoins for remittances, with potential savings of \$400 million annually if transfer costs drop by one percentage point on the country's \$40 billion in remittance inflows, said Bilal bin Saqib, Chairman of PVARA.

He noted most remittances still flow through the traditional SWIFT system, while global average transfer costs remain around 6%.

Pakistan has opened licensing for Virtual Asset Service Providers, with existing operators required to secure a No-Objection Certificate by September 5, 2026, under the Virtual Assets

Act, 2026. Saqib said the opportunity extends to freelancers and digital exporters needing faster, cheaper global payment settlement, and that tokenisation could help address SME financing gaps, given SMEs form 90% of businesses but received only Rs850 billion in financing.

He explained blockchain, stablecoins

and tokenisation, citing global stablecoin market value exceeding \$300 billion and \$35 billion in tokenised real-world assets. Saqib outlined Pakistan's three-phase regulatory approach—framework building, market development and national use cases—stressing the country must shape, not just consume, this technological shift.

DPM/FM Dar directs coordinated, timely action for development projects implementation

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Saturday, directed all concerned authorities to ensure coordinated and timely action for the effective implementation of development projects and to maintain momentum in the Government's broader agenda of economic development and improved connectivity.

The DPM/FM chaired a meeting of the Executive Committee of the National Economic Council (ECNEC). The meeting was attended by the Minister for Finance and Revenue, Minister for Planning, Development & Special Initiatives, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretaries of the Cabinet Division and Planning Ministry, representatives of the EAD and provincial governments, and senior federal and provincial offi-



cials, the DPM Office said in a press release.

DPM/FM Dar directs coordinated,

timely action for development projects implementation

The meeting considered a compre-

hensive agenda of development projects, including the construction of the Khawazakhela-Besham Expressway; electricity distribution efficiency improvement projects in LESCO, HESCO and PESCO; the Tarbela 5th Extension Hydropower Project; the Southern Punjab Poverty Alleviation Project; the Fulbright Scholarship Support Programme; and various water, connectivity and infrastructure projects.

DPM/FM Dar directs coordinated, timely action for development projects implementation The committee also considered revised PC-Is and reviewed progress/compliance relating to ongoing development projects, with a view to ensuring their timely implementation and the efficient utilization of development resources.

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PML-N's Abdur Rehman Arain elected unopposed on AJK Assembly's reserved seat



Bureau Report

LAHORE: PML-N's Abdur Rehman Arain, belonging to Kotli's Ward No 10 (Sultanpura) was on Saturday elected on the Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK) Legislative Assembly's reserved seat unopposed.

There was no other candidate vying for the seat which had been

reserved for overseas Kashmiris.

As per the notification issued by the AJK election commission, Arain was elected unopposed under Article 84 of the AJK Election Rules, 2020.

Secretary election commission and the returning officer Raja Muhammad Shakil Khan announced the election result.

Railways revenue rises to Rs115 billion, says Hanif Abbasi



Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has said Pakistan Railways will soon provide international-standard travel facilities, as reforms have significantly improved its financial performance.

Talking to the media in Multan, he said railway revenue increased from Rs88 billion to Rs115 billion during the last financial year, while freight revenue rose by 28 percent. Revenue from leasing railway land and properties through open auctions also doubled from Rs8 billion to Rs16 billion. The government aims to further increase railway revenue by Rs50-60 billion.

The minister said coaches and locomotives are being upgraded in phases, with old coaches being phased out. Thirty new power vans will be added by September 30, followed by 16 by December and another 40 by March.

He said freight trains would increase from nine to 15 daily by December 31. Track modernization is also underway, including the Rohri-Karachi project, which is expected to reduce travel time by around five hours.

Hanif Abbasi said digitalization, commercial corridors, safer railway crossings and improved employee facilities were also being prioritized to modernize Pakistan Railways.

Punjab CM condemns discrimination and violence based on religion

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, in her message on the International Day Commemorating the Victims of Acts of Violence Based on Religion or Belief, said no religion preaches or permits violence, and no civilized society could support violence against people of different faiths.

She called religiously motivated violence condemnable, citing rising Islamophobia as an example of Muslims being targeted on religious grounds, and noted Muslims had faced such violence for decades in Kashmir and Palestine.

Maryam Nawaz said Pakistan accords equal respect to followers of all religions, noting the white portion



of the national flag represents religious minorities, and affirmed all Pakistanis are equal without discrimination. She warned that any attempt to harm minorities would be dealt with firmly, reaffirming the Punjab government's commitment to religious harmony and tolerance.

18,500 seats left under long package of Govt Hajj Scheme 2027

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ministry of Religious Affairs has announced that 18,500 seats are left under the long package of Government Hajj Scheme 2027.

According to a spokesperson of the ministry, eighty-eight thousand and seven hundred intending pilgrims have deposited the first installment of their Hajj dues so far.

He said more than 55 billion rupees have been collected in the

first installment of Hajj dues within three days through the Hajj Portal of the National Information Technology Board.

The spokesperson urged intending pilgrims wishing to perform Hajj in 2027 to complete their particulars and payments on the Hajj Portal at the earliest.

He said booking for the 40-day Hajj package would be closed once the required number of pilgrims is reached.