



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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Field Marshal 'spoke' with President Trump ahead of Tehran visit

US President Donald Trump spoke with Pakistan's Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Field Marshal Asim Munir ahead of Army Chief's visit to Tehran on Monday, according to three Pakistani sources, with one saying the main US request was to use Pakistan's influence to bring Iran back to negotiations, reports Reuters news agency.



Pakistan regaining international recognition, says Danyal Chaudhry

Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Danyal Chaudhry has said that Pakistan is once again gaining recognition and respect at the international level, with the country's role and diplomatic standing improving. He credited Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and their teams for their efforts to restore Pakistan's image and enhance its standing in the world.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari attending a presentation on the proposed development of Ketu Bunder Port by China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC) at Aiwan-e-Sadr, on Monday.



Photo: PID

President calls for integrated development of Ketu Bunder Port with focus on connectivity, local livelihoods

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday called for an integrated approach to the proposed development of Ketu Bunder Port, stressing that the project should be supported by reliable road connectivity, power and water supply, industrial infrastructure and other essential facilities.

The president was speaking during a presentation on the proposed development of Ketu

Bunder Port by China Harbour Engineering Company (CHEC). Welcoming the Chinese delegation, he appreciated China's continued interest in supporting Pakistan's infrastructure and maritime development.

He said Ketu Bunder had significant potential as an additional maritime gateway that could strengthen Pakistan's port and logistics network and support greater connectivity and trade. He emphasised the need for close technical coordination between

the Chinese side and relevant Pakistani authorities.

He also stressed that environmental sustainability should remain a key consideration, particularly the protection of the fragile ecosystem of the Indus Delta and the interests and livelihoods of local fishing communities. He encouraged continued technical engagement to further refine the master plan and identify an appropriate implementation and financing framework.

The Chinese delegation

presented the Conceptual Master Plan for Ketu Bunder Port, envisaging a new deep-water maritime gateway with multiple terminals, logistics and supporting infrastructure. The proposed Phase-I development includes a multi-purpose terminal with a 500-metre quay, with a preliminary engineering cost estimate of approximately US\$522.34 million.

The Chinese delegation comprised Wu Ping, Chief Representative of CHEC in Pakistan,

Wang Zongde, Head of Marketing Department and Mr Xu Tielin, Engineer, along with Ali Raza, GM of Strategy and Marketing.

Chief Minister Sindh Syed Murad Ali Shah, Senators Saleem Mandviwala and Sherry Rehman, Sindh Minister for Energy, P&D Mr Nasir Hussain Shah, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Investment & Public Private Partnership Syed Qasim Naveed Qamar and Chief Secretary Sindh Syed Asif Hyder Shah also attended the meeting.

PTI, Opposition Parties Discuss Joint Strategy as Fazlur Rehman Joins Meeting

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman Barrister Gohar Khan and other opposition leaders held consultations at the National Assembly on Monday to discuss developing a common strategy against the government.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Barrister Gohar said the existing opposition alliance was currently limited to parliamentary proceedings and legislation. He reiterated that the PTI wanted JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman to become part of the opposition alliance.

Gohar stressed the need for political parties to unite around an agenda focused on strengthening Pakistan, Parliament, the judiciary and the Election Commission. He said representatives of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) also attended the proceedings and emphasised continued

communication and dialogue among political forces.

He added that PTI founder had authorised Asad Qaiser and Allama Raja Nasir Abbas to deal with opposition movements and political affairs. Political workers, he said, had been directed to maintain political decorum and avoid provocative slogans.

Meanwhile, Maulana Fazlur Rehman met Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai before joining the joint opposition meeting. Other PTI and opposition leaders, including Asad Qaiser, Atif Khan, Shahram Tarakai, Shahid Khattak and Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri, also attended.

The meeting focused on the prevailing political situation and efforts to strengthen parliamentary cooperation among opposition parties. The discussions could pave the way for greater coordination on legislation and future political action.

Pakistan Reaffirms Maritime Commitment in Dar-IMO Chief Meeting

Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar met International Maritime Organization (IMO) Secretary-General Arsenio Dominguez in London on Monday, reaffirming Pakistan's longstanding commitment to the global maritime body.

During the meeting, Senator Dar appreciated the IMO's role as the principal international regulatory organization for promoting safe, secure and efficient international shipping.

The Deputy Prime Minister thanked the IMO Secretary-General for his support for ongoing efforts to secure the safe release of 10 Pakistani seafarers being held captive aboard the MT Honour 25. He called for urgent and effective institutional intervention to ensure the early return of all the seafarers.

Senator Dar also highlighted Pakistan's continued efforts to strengthen maritime governance, implement international maritime standards and further develop its blue economy.



The two sides discussed ways to further enhance Pakistan-IMO cooperation in maritime safety and

security, regulatory reforms, and the development of Pakistan's maritime sector.

PM launches National Olive Value Chain Policy to cut import bill



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif launched Pakistan's National Olive Value Chain Policy, describing the growing olive sector as a promising opportunity to reduce the country's approximately \$4 billion annual edible oil import bill. He said expanding domestic olive cultivation could help Pakistan move towards greater self-sufficiency in edible oil.

The policy aims to develop the entire olive value chain, including production, processing, quality control,

packaging, branding and marketing, with the goal of positioning Pakistan as a regional olive oil hub. The number of olive trees has increased from around 500,000 in 2016 to more than seven million, covering approximately 60,000 acres across Punjab, KP, Balochistan and Sindh.

Officials highlighted Pakistan's permanent membership of the International Olive Council and establishment of the country's first Olive Sensory Evaluation Lab in Islamabad. Italian cooperation has supported laboratories, nurseries, technical training and business development groups. Stakeholders stressed value addition, quality, exports and stronger public-private cooperation to transform the sector.

Pakistan, Qatar enjoy longstanding, brotherly ties: PM



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Monday held meeting with Sheikh Nayef bin Eid Al Thani, Chairman Retaj Group and Tamim Holdings, and discussed matters of mutual interest.

Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Advisor to the Prime Minister Haroon Akhtar, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special Assistant Tariq Fatemi and relevant senior officials also attended the meeting.

Welcoming the Qatari delegation, the prime minister emphasized that Pakistan and Qatar share longstanding, robust, and brotherly ties.

He recalled his recent visit to Qatar to offer condolences on the passing of the Emir's father, noting that Pakistan eagerly looks forward to the upcoming visit of Qatari Emir Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani.

Expressing their gratitude for the hospitality extended by Pakistan, the Qatari delegation conveyed a deep interest in expanding their investments in Pakistan.

Pakistan, Singapore Reaffirm Commitment to Deepen Bilateral Ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Singapore have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening bilateral relations as the two countries mark the 60th anniversary of diplomatic ties, established on August 17, 1966.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Singaporean Prime Minister Lawrence Wong exchanged congratulatory messages, highlighting six decades of friendly relations based on mutual respect, goodwill and cooperation. Prime Minister Shehbaz expressed Pakistan's desire to expand collaboration in trade, investment, education, culture and people-to-people exchanges, including through ASEAN, the Commonwealth and the United Nations.

Prime Minister Wong noted that Pakistan was among the first countries to recognize Singapore following its independence and emphasized

opportunities for greater cooperation in trade facilitation, the digital economy, capacity building and people-to-people contacts.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar called for renewed momentum



in bilateral relations, particularly in digital economy, climate action, fintech and innovation. He also invited Singapore's Foreign Minister Vivian Balakrishnan to visit Islamabad.

Both sides expressed confidence that the anniversary would open a new phase of practical and mutually beneficial cooperation while strengthening ties amid evolving global challenges.

CM Maryam Nawaz sets March 2027 deadline for Gujranwala Yellow Line

 **Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has set March 2027 as the deadline for completion of the Gujranwala Yellow Line Mass Transit Project, directing authorities to ensure timely completion of the Gujranwala and Faisalabad mass transit projects without extending their timelines.

Presiding over a special meeting to review progress, the chief minister ordered that work be carried out in three shifts to meet the deadlines. Progress on both projects was reviewed through detailed briefings and drone footage.

The 31.5-kilometre Gujranwala Yellow Line will have 25 stations, including two underground stations, 12 underpasses, 35 kilometres of service roads and signal-free U-turns. Nearly one-third of the construction work has been completed, while 1,233 poles and 552 transformers have been relocated. The project also includes 15,000 feet of sewerage lines, 12,000 feet of water-supply lines and 11,000 feet of gas pipe-



lines.

Officials told the meeting that 40 per cent of work on a 62-kilometre drainage system for the Gujranwala Mass Transit System had also been completed.

The 20.3-kilometre Faisalabad Mass Transit System will feature 11.1 kilometres of overhead bridges and 12

bus stops. The project will also involve laying 15 kilometres of Sui Gas pipelines and replanting 1,835 trees.

The chief minister was informed that nearly 5,000 trees had been replanted under the two projects. She directed authorities to ensure protection of trees during development work and maintain a proper record of transplanted

trees.

Maryam Nawaz said the government understood the difficulties being faced by citizens and stressed that timely completion of mass transit projects was essential. She directed officials to accelerate construction and ensure that residents were not subjected to further inconvenience.

Media Talk

KARACHI: Prominent lawyer Ali Ahmad Kurd talking to media at Karachi Press Club, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

AJ-MUN 2026 concludes after three-day conference in Hyderabad

 **Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: The inaugural Al-Jalil Model United Nations (AJ-MUN) concluded on August 23 after a three-day conference at Al-Jalil Premier School and College, bringing together 380 delegates from diverse educational and professional backgrounds.

The conference, held from August 21 to 23, provided participants opportunities to engage in research, debate, negotiation, dialogue and problem-solving while developing communication, critical-thinking and analytical skills. The delegates included 200 internal and 180



external participants from schools, colleges and universities, as well as

professionals from medicine, engineering, law and banking.

The event featured nine committees conducting diplomatic simulations and discussions on contemporary national and international issues. A 35-member secretariat from different cities, including Lahore, Islamabad, Karachi and Sukkur, facilitated the proceedings.

Around 63 participants received awards for their performance. Organisers said AJ-MUN was designed not merely as a UN simulation but as an educational platform to develop future leaders, diplomats, researchers and responsible global citizens. The successful event marked an important milestone for the Al-Jalil Premier Education System

Maryam Idrees' Election to AJK Assembly Welcomed as Positive Development for Women

 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: The election of senior Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) AJK leader Maryam Idrees as a member of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly on a reserved seat is a welcome development for the people of Azad Kashmir, particularly women.

Her higher education, administrative experience and political insight are expected to further strengthen the effective representation of women in the Legislative Assembly.

Maryam Idrees has the ability to effectively highlight issues confronting women, particularly in the areas of education, healthcare, employment and economic empowerment. It is hoped that she will serve as a strong voice for the women of Azad Kashmir, play an effective role in addressing their concerns, and contribute towards creating greater opportunities for women through progressive legislation.

Maryam Idrees' presence in the Legislative Assembly represents a message of hope, meaningful representation and an empowered future for the women of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



AJK Assembly Completes Formation After Reserved Seats Elections



 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The election process for eight reserved seats of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly has been completed, with newly elected members taking oath of office. AJK Assembly Speaker Choudhary Latif Akbar administered the oath.

The Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) secured six of the eight reserved seats, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) won two seats reserved for women.

On the five women's reserved seats, PML-N candidates Sehrish Qamar, Maryam Zaman and Maryam Idrees were elected, while PPP candidates Farzana Yaqoob and Zobia Khurshid also secured seats. Zobia Khurshid won a draw against Riffat Abid after both candidates received an equal number of votes.

Among the remaining reserved seats, PML-N's Pir Mazhar Saeed Shah was elected on the Ulema and Mashaaikh seat, Barrister Iftikhar Gilani secured the technocrat seat, and Abdul Rahman Arain won the seat reserved for Overseas Kashmiris.

Following the elections, the PML-N's strength in the Assembly has risen to 31 seats, while the PPP has 14. With an alliance involving the Awami Dast-o-Bazu on one seat, the ruling coalition's strength has reached 32.

Seven general seats remain vacant due to elections not being held in some constituencies of Poonch and Sudhnoti. However, government formation is proceeding, with the election of the Leader of the House expected to be the next major parliamentary step.

Nawaz Sharif Nominates Choudhary Tariq Farooq as AJK Assembly Speaker



 **Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: Pakistan Muslim League (N) President Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has nominated prominent AJK politician and party Secretary General Choudhary Tariq Farooq for the office of Speaker of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

Following his election as Speaker, Choudhary Tariq Farooq will also assume the office of Acting President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and will continue to serve in that capacity until the election of the President of AJK.

Choudhary Tariq Farooq has previously served as Senior Minister in the AJK Government and as Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan on the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Council.

Public circles have warmly welcomed Choudhary Tariq Farooq's nomination for the Speakership and expressed their appreciation for PML-N President Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif for making the nomination.

AJK Election Commission Announces Schedule for Speaker and Deputy Speaker Elections

 **Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: The Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has issued the election schedule for the election of the Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly.

According to the schedule, the nomination papers will be filed on August 25, 2026, from 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Scrutiny of the nomination papers will be conducted at 11:15 a.m., followed by the publication of the list of candidates whose nomination papers have been accepted at 11:30 a.m. Candidates may withdraw their nomination papers by 11:45 a.m., after which the final list of candidates will be issued at 12:00 noon.

The election for the offices of Speaker and Deputy Speaker will be held at 2:00 p.m. on August 25, 2026, says a notification issued by AJK Election Commission.



 **Exclusive by The Spokesman**

Factory Resealed After The Spokesman Report on Alleged Poultry-Waste Oil Production

 **Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: The district administration has once again sealed a factory in Hyderabad's SITE Area following reports that edible oil was allegedly being produced using poultry waste and animal by-products.

The latest action follows an earlier report by 'The Spokesman' highlighting the alleged production activities at the facility. Taking notice of the report, the Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad sought a report from the Sindh Food Authority. A subsequent inspection by

the authority reportedly found production activities taking place at the factory.

During the earlier operation, the alleged finished oil was disposed of and the premises were sealed under the relevant laws.

However, reports later emerged that activities had allegedly resumed at the facility. Complaints were also reportedly received by the district administration regarding the alleged shifting of operations from one location to another.

Following the fresh reports, the Deputy Commissioner directed further action. Assistant Commissioner Rural

subsequently conducted an operation and resealed the factory.

The administration has warned that breaking the seal and restarting operations could lead to registration of an FIR and legal action against those responsible.

The development has raised questions about how the alleged activities resumed despite the previous sealing of the premises and whether violations of the sealing order were properly investigated.

Citizens and civil society representatives have called for a comprehensive investigation rather than relying

solely on sealing the facility. They have demanded that samples of the alleged product be collected and tested by an accredited laboratory to establish its composition and assess any potential public-health risks.

They also urged authorities to investigate the alleged production, transportation and supply chain if laboratory results confirm violations of food-safety laws. The outcome of laboratory testing, official investigations and any subsequent legal proceedings will determine the facts and responsibility, if established.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:08 am
Zohr 12:11 pm
Asr 4:51 pm
Maghrib 6:44 pm
Isha 8:12 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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH 561111
MH 561116
MH 561116
Cantt Hospital 9270907-11
DHQ 5556311-4
RGH 9290301-7
Holy Family 9290322-7
PIMS 9261170-79

Ziauddin University Brings Patients and Healthcare Experts Together to Advance Brain Infection Research



Bureau Report

KARACHI: The Critical Care Research Group (CCRG) at Ziauddin University, in collaboration with the Pakistan Kidney and Liver Institute and Research Centre (PKLI), held a Patient and Public Involvement and Engagement (PPIE) awareness session on severe brain infections titled "Sunu, Samjho, Sambhalo."

Held under the CASCADE-iAES programme, led by Prof. Dr. Madiha Hashmi, the session brought patients, caregivers and healthcare professionals together to share experiences and help shape future research. Discussions highlighted challenges in recognizing symptoms early, communication gaps, and difficulties faced by families in accessing timely treatment.

Speakers stressed the importance of locally driven research, patient-centered healthcare, family involvement and clear communication between doctors and patients. The initiative aims to develop evidence-based strategies that reflect local healthcare realities and improve patient outcomes.

The programme, conducted with ISARIC, is supported by the Wellcome Trust, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and UK FCDO, and seeks to strengthen collaborative brain infection research in Pakistan.

PPP South Punjab delegation meets Faryal Talpur to discuss party reorganization

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A high-level Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) South Punjab dele-

gation, led by South Punjab President and former Punjab Governor Makhdoom Syed Ahmed Mahmood, met PPP Women's Wing Central President Fary-



al Talpur to discuss party affairs and political activities across the Seraiki region.

The meeting reviewed the party's organizational structure and discussed strategies to strengthen the PPP, mobilize workers, expand activities across South Punjab and improve public outreach.

The delegation included Senior Vice President Khawaja Rizwan Alam, Chief

Coordinator Abdul Qadir Shaheen and General Secretary Natasha Daultana.

Faryal Talpur said the PPP's priority was a strong and active Parliament rather than an in-house change, while reiterating the party's commitment to addressing public concerns and national development. She said Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari's vision focused on public service and economic progress.

Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood criticized what he described as the Punjab government's neglect of the Seraiki region and supported a separate identity for the area to improve employment and development opportunities.

He also rejected politics of hatred and revenge, calling for political stability and assuring workers that efforts would soon be made to address their concerns.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi inaugurates and opens historic heritage sites in Islamabad, for domestic and international tourists.



Photo: PID

Pakistan Women Leaders Initiative Gains Momentum with Murree Orientation

Bureau Report

MURREE: A District Orientation Session under the Pakistan Women Leaders (PWL) Project was held in Murree by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO), in collaboration with TDEA. The initiative, led by UN Women and funded by the European Union, aims to strengthen women's participation in political, social and decision-making processes.

Representatives from political parties, civil society, the Bar Association, media and other institutions attended the session. Participants were briefed on the project's objectives, leadership development opportunities and online application process.

The 34-month PWL programme is being implemented across 57 districts



and will provide women with training, boot camps, mentorship, networking and other

leadership development opportunities. Participants also received practical guidance on

completing and submitting applications through the online portal.

NCSW, Women Parliamentarians Demand Probe into Violence Against Women

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Members of the Women Parliamentarians Caucus met National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Chairperson Noreen Bano Lehri and expressed serious concern over the recent rise in violence against women, particularly incidents reported in Rawalpindi and Islamabad.

The meeting focused on the murder of Hina Javed, with the NCSW and Caucus demanding an immediate, transparent, impartial and thorough investigation. They called for institutional support to law-enforcement agencies to ensure that facts are established and those responsible are punished under the law.



Participants stressed that cases of violence against women in Rawalpindi, Islamabad, Balochistan and other areas

must be investigated without negligence, delay or impunity.

The Women Parliamentarians

Caucus pledged to raise the issue in Parliament and seek stronger oversight and accountability. Discussions also covered strengthening the NCSW Complaint Management System to provide accessible complaint, referral, legal and protection services.

Parliamentarians were briefed on the NCSW Strategic Plan 2026-2029, focused on women's protection, justice, empowerment and institutional capacity. MNA Shahida Rehmani assured parliamentary support for strengthening women's rights and ensuring speedy justice.

The meeting concluded with a commitment to coordinated action, stronger institutions and effective prosecution of violence against women.

Quranic Calligraphy Exhibition Held in Faisalabad for Rabi-ul-Awwal

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A magnificent exhibition of Quranic calligraphy was organized at the Faisalabad Arts Council during the holy days of Rabi-ul-Awwal, following instructions from Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Information Minister Uzma Bukhari, and PUCAR ED Mehboob Alam Chaudhry.

The exhibition was inaugurated by DG FDA Muhammad Asif Chaudhry, with ADC Enforcement Murad Hussain Nekokara and Director Arts Council Muhammad Imran Raza in attendance. Government officials, artists, students, civil society members, and citizens also participated.

The event featured works by renowned calligraphers including Nisar Ahmed, Gulzar Butt, Qamar Sultan, and Salamat Ali. The artworks showcased beautiful verses of the Holy Quran and reflected love and devotion to the Holy Prophet (PBUH), blending artistic skill with spiritual depth.

Speaking at the event, officials said such exhibitions promote religious awareness, tolerance, Islamic arts, and cultural values, especially among youth. Certificates of appreciation were presented to all participating artists.

Participants praised the initiative as spiritual, meaningful, and commendable.

Professor Dr Javed Akram Announces Ambulance for PIMS Retired Employees

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Punjab Health Minister and former Vice Chancellor of Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto Medical University Islamabad, Professor Dr Javed Akram, has announced donating an ambulance to the PIMS Retired Employees Welfare Association to support the medical and welfare needs of retired employees.

Speaking as chief guest at a ceremony organised by the association, Dr Javed Akram said PIMS employees had devoted much of their professional lives to serving humanity and their contributions would always be remembered.

He said doctors, nurses, paramedics, administrative staff and other employees had played an important role in developing PIMS and providing healthcare to patients. He described retired employees as a valuable asset to both the institution and society.

The announcement followed an appeal by Patron-in-Chief Dr Mansoor Ahmed, who highlighted the urgent need for an ambulance and sought support from the administration and philanthropists.

Dr Javed Akram assured the association of continued cooperation and said he would visit Islamabad every six months to review its welfare activities and provide assistance according to his capacity. He also called for improved medical and welfare facilities for retired employees.

Association President Dr Ashok and General Secretary Dr Hanif said the organisation was committed to addressing retirees' problems and providing medical and welfare support.

Participants welcomed the ambulance donation, describing it as a valuable contribution to retired employees. The ceremony was attended by retired and serving PIMS employees, doctors, nurses, paramedics and other distinguished personalities.

Islamic Books Exhibition Held at Badshahi Mosque

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta inaugurated a two-day Islamic and Seerat-un-Nabi ﷺ Books Exhibition at Iqbal Hall, Badshahi Mosque Lahore, organized by the Auqaf & Religious Affairs Department, Punjab Government. He said the exhibition aims to acquaint the public, particularly young people, with the blessed life, exemplary character and timeless teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Dr. Bhutta emphasized that studying Seerat-un-Nabi ﷺ strengthens faith and promotes sincerity, tolerance, compassion, brotherhood, respect and service to humanity. A wide range of Islamic books and Seerat literature has been displayed, providing students and citizens an opportunity to deepen their understanding of Islamic teachings.

Khateeb Badshahi Mosque Maulana Abdul Khabeer Azad said Seerat studies help strengthen faith and develop good character. He stressed promoting reading among youth and applying the teachings of the Holy Prophet ﷺ in daily life. The exhibition continues until August 25.



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Reclaiming Potohar’s Buried History

The recent inauguration of the Gakhar heritage sites along Islamabad’s Swan river bank — the roughly 450-year-old Mai Qamro Mosque, the 350-year-old Tomb of Sultan Muqarrab Khan, and the nearly millennium-old Pharwala Tomb — deserves recognition as more than a routine ribbon-cutting ceremony. It represents a quiet but meaningful correction to a widespread misconception: that Islamabad’s history begins with its designation as the federal capital in the 1960s. Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi’s own admission that he was “surprised and delighted” to discover such a rich heritage within the capital’s boundaries speaks volumes about how thoroughly this legacy had been overlooked, even by those responsible for preserving it.

The inclusion of these four sites on UNESCO’s World Heritage Tentative List is a genuine achievement, the product of sustained work by the Department of Archaeology and Museums since 2022. Recovering 48 kanals of encroached land, restoring a tomb that stood on the verge of collapse, and transforming a bush-covered, neglected site into a landscaped, secured heritage destination are not small feats. They reflect the kind of patient institutional effort that heritage conservation demands — effort that too often goes unfunded and unnoticed in a country where development priorities rarely extend to archaeology.

Yet the achievement should not obscure the work still ahead. The minister himself acknowledged that accessibility remains a serious obstacle — a two-kilometre road in poor condition stands between these historic sites and the tourists, scholars and researchers the government hopes to attract. A UNESCO Tentative List designation, however significant symbolically, does little to draw visitors if the physical journey to reach these sites remains difficult. The promised carpeted road upgrade must be treated as urgent, not aspirational.

There is also the matter of sustained funding. The Pharwala Fort’s PC-II awaits budget allocation, and further conservation is still needed for historic graves attributed to the Bukhari family and other archaeological remains connected to the Gakhar tribes. Heritage preservation is rarely a one-time project; it requires ongoing maintenance, security and restoration long after the initial inauguration fades from headlines.

What makes this initiative particularly valuable is its recognition that Pakistan’s history is not confined to its most famous monuments. The Gakhars of Potohar carry a distinct historical and cultural identity, one deeply woven into the region’s fabric. Bringing their legacy into the national and international spotlight enriches the broader narrative of Pakistan’s past. If the government follows through — on roads, on funding, on the remaining UNESCO requirements — these sites could become genuine anchors for cultural tourism, offering both economic benefit and a fuller, more honest account of the land Islamabad now stands upon.

Protecting the Honor of the Prophet ﷺ and Our Responsibility

The honor of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is one of the most sacred and fundamental aspects of Muslim faith, belief, and spiritual identity. Love for the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is an essential part of every Muslim’s faith. The Qur’an describes him ﷺ as a mercy to all humanity and commands Muslims to obey, follow, respect, and honor him ﷺ. Therefore, regardless of where a Muslim lives in the world, there remains in his or her heart a profound sense of love, devotion, and respect for the noble personality of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. Protecting the honor of the Messenger ﷺ does not merely mean responding emotionally to acts of disrespect; it also means implementing the teachings, morals, character, Sunnah, and message of the Prophet ﷺ in our own lives.

Allah Almighty says in the Qur’an: “So that you may believe in Allah and His Messenger, support him, and honor him.”

This verse makes it clear that honoring and respecting the Messenger of Allah ﷺ are among the fundamental requirements of faith. The Qur’an also teaches Muslims to love the Messenger ﷺ more than their own selves. The true implication of this love is that Muslims should make the noble example and character of the Prophet ﷺ a model for their practical lives.

In today’s digital age, our responsibility concerning the honor of the Prophet ﷺ has become even greater. Any news, image, or video can reach millions of people within moments through social

media. Therefore, we must be particularly careful not to share unverified information, become part of inflammatory content, or form opinions about sensitive matters without proper investigation.

The Qur’an gives us the principle of verifying information: “So verify it.”

This principle is more important today than ever before. Spreading false information, provoking hatred, or making accusations against innocent people in the name of protecting the honor of the Prophet ﷺ is contrary to Islamic ethics.

We should use social media as a positive means of communication. Presenting the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ and spreading his teachings concerning morality, mercy, justice, patience, and humanity in a dignified and authentic manner is an important need of our time.

Respect for state laws and constitutional systems is also essential in matters concerning the protection of the honor of the Prophet ﷺ. In any society, justice requires that disputes and allegations be dealt with according to law. Emotional reactions, violence, personal revenge, and taking the law into one’s own hands are neither beneficial to society nor consistent with the principles of Islamic teachings.

The Prophet ﷺ gave fundamental importance to justice and the rule of law in society. Therefore, the defense of his honor should also be pursued through wisdom, lawful means, reasoned argu-

ment, morality, and peaceful efforts. Determining whether an individual has committed an offense is the responsibility of competent legal institutions, not emotional crowds.

Today, the world is more interconnected than ever before. People belonging to different religions, cultures, and societies are directly influenced by one another’s ideas and actions. In such an environment, Muslims should present the teachings of the Prophet ﷺ to the world in an intellectual, dignified, and effective manner.

At the global level, we should highlight the human, moral, and civilizational message of the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ. The Prophet ﷺ taught humanity not to divide people on the basis of color, race, language, or nationality, but to uphold righteousness, justice, and human dignity. This message remains profoundly relevant to the entire human community today.

Young people are the future of every nation. If the younger generation develops a genuine connection with the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ, a positive moral transformation can take place in society. Young people should promote informed and respectful dialogue on social media instead of becoming involved in emotionally charged arguments. They should study authentic books and use modern communication platforms to convey the message of the Seerah to the world.

Today, a young person can reach millions of people through a short video, research article, podcast, or social media post. Therefore, our presence in the digital world should be responsible, dignified, informed, and intellectually constructive.

Protecting the honor of the Prophet ﷺ is not merely a slogan; it is a comprehensive responsibility. This responsibility begins with love for the Messenger ﷺ in our hearts, is strengthened through knowledge, takes practical form through following his Sunnah, and becomes visible in society through good character, justice, patience, and service to humanity.

We must understand that the most effective defense of the honor of the Prophet ﷺ is to bring his noble character to life in our own conduct. We should speak the truth, fulfill our trusts, honor our promises, support the vulnerable, respect the rights of others, obey the law, and maintain good manners even when we disagree with others.

Today, there is a pressing need to combine emotion with awareness, love with knowledge, devotion with character, and defense with wisdom. If Muslims adopt the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ in their practical lives, the world itself will bear witness that Muhammad Mustafa ﷺ truly came as a mercy to all humanity.

The most effective way to protect the honor of the Prophet ﷺ is therefore to love him ﷺ, obey him ﷺ, adopt his noble character, and convey his message of mercy, justice, compassion, and humanity to the world.

The writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at sirasif786@gmail.com



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

IPP Agreements: The Economic Injustice Inflicted on Electricity Consumers

Pakistan’s persistent energy crisis, the writer argues, is not simply a matter of insufficient electricity generation. Rather, it is the cumulative result of decades of flawed policymaking, poorly structured contracts, weak regulatory oversight, financial mismanagement, and a widening gap between the public interest and the interests protected under power-sector agreements with Independent Power Producers (IPPs).

Over the past thirty years, IPPs have contributed significantly to expanding Pakistan’s electricity-generation capacity by attracting much-needed private investment. Contracts were signed under successive power policies in 1994, 2002, 2006 and 2015, each designed to encourage private financing of power projects in exchange for government guarantees on electricity purchases, investment returns, and in some cases, sovereign guarantees. While Pakistan genuinely required this investment at the time, the writer contends that the problem arose because long-term public interest, realistic demand forecasting, and competitive procurement processes were sidelined in favor of arrangements that shifted enormous financial liabilities onto future electricity consumers.

The piece highlights recent Senate committee concerns about capacity payments made to non-operational power plants, along with the regulator’s failure to provide transparent information on tariff determination. These concerns have fueled calls for a comprehensive performance audit of the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (NEPRA). The writer argues that if NEPRA cannot transparently disclose how tariffs were set, actual project

installation costs, existing generation capacity, per-unit costs, and profit margin calculations, public confidence in the system cannot be sustained. Regulatory independence, the writer stresses, should not be conflated with freedom from accountability — NEPRA must remain shielded from political interference while still being answerable to Parliament, audit bodies, and the public.

Payments made to non-operational or underutilized power plants represent one of the most troubling aspects of the current system. The writer insists there must be strong economic justification whenever capacity costs are recovered from consumers for plants that are not supplying electricity to the grid, are technically unavailable, or are economically inefficient. This underscores the need for parliamentary oversight, forensic audits, and full transparency regarding each plant’s original investment, debt exposure, approved profit margins, capacity factors, fuel costs, and total consumer-funded recoveries over time.

The government has reported expected savings of approximately Rs1.571 trillion through renegotiated IPP agreements — including Rs411 billion from terminating five IPP agreements, Rs238 billion from revising tariffs for eight bagasse-based plants, and Rs922 billion from tariff reductions across 14 thermal plants. While acknowledging these figures as significant, the writer questions whether and how these savings will actually reach consumers through lower electricity bills, calling for full public disclosure of each saving’s fiscal impact and the portion passed on to consumers.

The IPP crisis cannot be separated from Paki-

stan’s circular debt problem, which reportedly reached around Rs2.39 trillion by June 2024. However, the writer notes that IPPs alone are not responsible — electricity theft, weak bill recovery by distribution companies, transmission losses, an aging grid, political interference, and poor governance all contribute substantially. Reforming IPP contracts alone, without addressing these systemic issues, risks eroding any financial relief gained.

The writer argues that the greatest injustice to consumers is the lack of transparency surrounding these agreements. The public deserves to know contract terms, guaranteed electricity prices, approved profit margins, and safeguards protecting public interest. The article proposes creating a Public Contract Dashboard for every IPP, disclosing contract periods, investments, tariffs, capacity payments, actual generation, total payments, profits, fuel costs, and outstanding liabilities.

Rather than confronting IPPs or unilaterally terminating contracts, the writer calls for transparent, legally sound, and mutually negotiated reform. Future power projects should be procured through genuine competitive bidding rather than cost-plus arrangements, with greater priority given to renewable energy sources. Transitioning from Take-or-Pay to Take-and-Pay models is suggested as a partial solution, contingent on accurate demand forecasting and a reliable transmission grid. Ultimately, the writer insists investors deserve reasonable returns, but not at the cost of transferring excessive risk to the public — and that genuine reform will only be achieved when electricity bills reflect true costs rather than accumulated policy failures.

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

Democracy and the Market

The writer opens by observing that every decade in Pakistan’s history has demanded a fresh, robust defence of democracy as the most suitable form of government for the country. This necessity stems from the persistent struggle for supremacy between democratic and non-democratic forces. One of the primary tactics used by non-democratic forces to justify their intervention in politics and governance is to amplify the flaws and failures of democratically elected leaders, while promoting the notion that a more “selfless” leadership — one that supposedly places national interest above personal gain — would serve the country better.

The writer identifies a fundamental flaw in this reasoning: no leadership, in reality, is truly selfless. Every individual who rises to a position of leadership does so by harnessing some form of organized power within society. Non-democratic actors, for instance, typically rely on the institutional power of the organizations they belong to. As a result, they remain bound by the interests and limits of that institution, using its backing not only to govern but often to attack rival institutions. Such actions, the writer argues, cannot reasonably be characterized as selfless acts undertaken purely for the nation’s benefit.

The writer emphasizes that both democracy and the market share this essential design principle: they are structured not to eliminate humanity’s worst motivations, but to harness and redirect them productively. This is achieved by pitting these self-interested motivations against one another through mechanisms like the separation of powers, ensuring that no single branch of government or economic actor gains unchecked dominance over the entire system.

The writer notes that in contemporary Pakistan, one of the few remaining forms of separation of powers is the division between federal and provincial governments. It is precisely for this

reason, the writer suggests, that quiet efforts are emerging to dismantle even this remaining check, often framed as proposals to restructure or divide provinces into smaller “administrative units.”

The piece cautions readers that when criticizing the shortcomings of individual democratic leaders, parties, or governments, one must remember that non-democratic systems are not free of defects either — they are simply more effective at suppressing public awareness of their failures. This creates a skewed national narrative in which only democratic governance appears flawed. The deeper danger, the writer argues, lies in the fact that non-democratic rulers — those who attain power through means other than the ballot box — typically operate above the reach of institutional checks and accountability mechanisms. Their self-serving motivations therefore go largely unchecked, and Pakistan’s own history demonstrates that such periods of non-democratic rule have inflicted lasting damage on the country.

The writer applies this framework to ongoing debates about breaking up provinces or creating new administrative units. The essential question to ask, the piece argues, is where such demands originate — from genuine grassroots sentiment or from elite, top-down agendas. The writer acknowledges that a legitimate demand exists in south Punjab for a new province, one that has been recognized by all three major democratic parties. However, the writer questions whether similar organic demand exists elsewhere in the country.

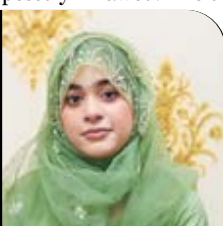
The piece concludes with a firm warning: if demands to restructure the federation do not genuinely originate from the public, they should not be pursued. The federation, the writer insists, is not something to be casually reshaped or divided simply because a small group believes doing so might yield some benefit. (pro.iqra.14@gmail.com)

Analysis



Muhammad Sarfraz Alam

Analysis



Iqra Liaquat

Pakistan offers Bangladesh cooperation in legal reforms, digitalisation of justice system

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar on Monday said Pakistan was ready to share its experience and expertise with Bangladesh in legal reforms and digitalisation of the justice system and extend cooperation in these areas.

He was talking to High Commissioner of Bangladesh to Pakistan Md Iqbal Hussain Khan, who called on the Federal Minister here. The meeting discussed Pakistan-Bangladesh bilateral relations, legal and judicial cooperation, mediation and reconciliation mechanisms and other matters of mutual interest.

Both sides expressed satisfaction over the positive developments in bilateral relations and agreed to further strengthen cooperation and institutional linkages.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said there was considerable scope for enhanced cooperation between the two countries in the fields of law and justice. He said Pakistan and Bangladesh could benefit from each other's experiences in legal reforms, use of modern technology and digitalisation of the justice system.

The Federal Minister stressed the



need to expand bilateral cooperation in the legal and judicial sectors, saying that exchange of experiences and expertise could help make the justice systems of both countries more effective.

The Bangladesh High Commissioner thanked Pakistan for facilitating

the training of Bangladeshi judges at the International Mediation and Arbitration Centre (IMAC) and appreciated the cooperation extended by the Ministry of Law and Justice in mediation and reconciliation programmes.

He expressed Bangladesh's interest



in benefiting from Pakistan's experience in mediation and reconciliation and conveyed a desire to further strengthen cooperation in this area.

The two sides also discussed legal

reforms, modern technology in the justice system, mediation and reconciliation mechanisms, exchange of experiences and further opportunities for cooperation.

Both sides welcomed increased people-to-people and institutional contacts and reaffirmed their commitment to further consolidating Pakistan-Bangladesh relations.

Strategic Dialogue held in Lahore marks 75th anniversary of Pak-China ties, CPC's 105th anniversary

News Desk

LAHORE: A Strategic Dialogue was held at Air Force Housing Scheme Club, Gulberg Lahore, marking the 75th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic relations, the 105th anniversary of the Communist Party of China (CPC), and China's 77th National Day, alongside the launch of Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan's book "Pak-China Friendship: Strategic Vision, Achievements, Way Forward and China's Economic Miracles." Chinese Consul General in Lahore H. E. Sun Yan attended as Guest of Honor.

CG Sun Yan called China-Pakistan relations an "ironclad" friendship, highlighting Pakistan's support for China on core issues since 1971 and China's reciprocal backing for Pakistan's sovereignty. He detailed CPEC's achievements, including \$30 billion in investment, 8,000+ MW added power capacity, 510km of highways, and 260,000 jobs created, alongside projects like the Orange Line Metro and Sahiwal power plant. He outlined the CPC's six defining qualities per President Xi Jinping and Xi's four Global Initiatives.

Dr. Mehmood Ul Hassan Khan discussed his book's coverage of CPEC



Phase 2.0 and beyond, urging focus on renewable energy, a "Corridor of Humanoids," and emerging sectors like ICT and semiconductors. He described Pak-China ties as rooted in shared Eastern civilizational values.

Prof. Dr. Mian Hanan Ahmed of Punjab University's School of Jour-

nalism Studies emphasized security cooperation and pledged institutional support against "hybrid media warfare," announcing a future joint workshop with Dr. Khan's organization. Dr. Munazza Abdul Majeed of the University of Lahore called the relationship "pro-development, pro-pros-

perity," advocating CPEC 2.0's focus on digitalization, AI and green technologies.

The event concluded with shield presentations, commemorative medals, and cake-cutting for China's National Day, attended by scholars, professionals and former officials.

Let Indus remain river of life, not conflict: Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaking at an SDPI seminar in Islamabad titled "A Treaty in Turbulence," Federal Minister for Water Resources Mian Mueen Wattoo warned that India's suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) threatens regional stability and could set a dangerous global precedent for water-sharing agreements. Calling the Indus "the pulse of Pakistan," he said Pakistan doesn't oppose India's lawful water use but demands the resumption of treaty-mandated data-sharing. He urged

India to restore the treaty and revive the Permanent Indus Commission, insisting water must not become a weapon, while affirming Pakistan would pursue legal channels including the Court of Arbitration.

SDPI's Naseer Memon noted natural safeguards limit India's ability to significantly alter flows, given terrain and seismic risks, and cautioned against reactive dam-building. Indus Water Commissioner Syed Muhammad Mehar Ali Shah warned that under-construction Indian projects could extend flow disruptions to 20-30 days,



breaching Article III of the treaty, and outlined Pakistan's diplomatic outreach across major global capitals, citing a UN report calling India's move unlawful.

RSIL's Ahmer Bilal Soofi described India's action as a breach of interna-

tional law, comparing it to the 2019 Kashmir move, and rejected Indian claims linking the suspension to terrorism. SDPI's Dr Sajid Amin Javed warned of the precedent this sets for global treaty compliance.

'IBA Karachi Welcomes New Students at the Orientation Gala 2026'

News Desk

KARACHI: IBA hosted the Orientation Gala 2026 (OGala'26) at the Main Campus to welcome the newly inducted students. This two-day orientation was also attended by parents of the newly inducted students. Around 2,500 people including the new students and parents, faculty and staff attended the event.

Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA Karachi, welcomed the new students: "I warmly welcome all our newly admitted students and their families to IBA and to OGala 2026. This event marks the beginning of an exciting new chapter, offering an opportunity to experience the vibrant campus, connect with the IBA



community, and discover the environment that will become your home for the next four years."

Ms. Maheen Ghauri, Dean Student Success & International Engagement, explained the purpose of the event: "I am delighted to welcome our newest

cohort to the vibrant and diverse IBA community. OGala 2026 helps students connect with peers, experience campus life, and begin their IBA journey with confidence and enthusiasm."

Students enjoyed a range of games

and activities organized in the IBA Campus Connect Zone. Student societies set up kiosks to introduce students to clubs, societies, and campus activities, while Student Support Offices familiarized students and parents with available support services. Food stalls offered refreshments, and the first day concluded with a movie night screening.

A soulful and memorable evening, featuring a mesmerizing performance by Ustad Farid Ayaz and Abu Muhammad Qawwal Group, became one of the highlights of IBA OGala 2026. The vibrant and thoughtfully curated event offered new students a warm and engaging introduction to the IBA community while creating lasting memories, friendships, and connections.

Russia's CEC Chief holds bilateral meetings with electoral heads of Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Türkiye

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the Central Election Commission of Russia, Ella Pamfilova, held a series of bilateral meetings with the heads of the electoral authorities of Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Türkiye.

During her meeting with Sikandar Sultan Raja, Chief Election Commissioner of Pakistan, the two sides discussed arrangements for a Pakistani delegation to observe Russia's upcoming parliamentary elections, scheduled to be held from September 18-20.

The discussions form part of broader engagement between Russia's electoral body and its counterparts from Pakistan, Kazakhstan and Türkiye, reflecting continued cooperation among election management bodies on electoral observation and related matters.



PSO and KPC Mark 50 Years of Strategic Energy Partnership

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan State Oil (PSO) and Kuwait Petroleum Corporation (KPC) have completed five decades of uninterrupted cooperation in supplying gas oil and jet fuel to Pakistan, marking a major milestone in bilateral energy ties. Despite global market volatility and shifting energy dynamics, the partnership has remained resilient, playing a key role in Pakistan's energy security.

Senior leadership from both companies recently met to commemorate the anniversary and chart a roadmap for future collaboration, with potential expansion into motor gasoline, LPG, and other petroleum products, as well as joint ventures in refining, storage infrastructure, terminal facilities, shipping, and logistics.

PSO credited the Government of Pakistan, the Petroleum Division, and the National Commodity Management Committee for policies that helped sustain the partnership over the years. A PSO spokesperson described the 50-year milestone as a foundation for the next phase of cooperation, reaffirming commitment to strengthening energy security, supporting economic growth, and pursuing sustainable energy solutions.

The company also praised KPC Managing Director (International Marketing) Sheikh Khalid Ahmed Al-Sabah and PSO CEO Jawad Ahmed Cheema for their roles in advancing the long-term partnership. Both sides are expected to deepen collaboration going forward, drawing on shared experience and values to build a more secure, sustainable energy future for Pakistan.



PIDE leads roundtable on climate-responsive housing for Pakistan's future

City nDesk

ISLAMABAD: PIDE, in collaboration with Shehersaaz, organized a roundtable on "Housing Matters: Climate-Responsive Housing" under the Urban Thinkers Campus series, bringing together architects, planners, policymakers and academics. Dr. Nasir Iqbal, PIDE Registrar, stressed that climate-responsive housing requires collaboration among communities, experts, institutions and markets rather than policy alone.

Discussions centered on the National Housing Policy, climate resilience, biophilic urbanism and translating policy into practical action. Ms. Almas Shakoor of Shehersaaz shared insights from water and housing projects in Rawalpindi and Nowshera, while Dr. Shafaat Nawaz presented research on climate-sensitive design, including natural ventilation and shading techniques.

Experts emphasized reviving traditional architectural elements like courtyards and thick walls, alongside sustainable materials such as rammed earth and straw-bale construction. Mr. Waseem Bajwa highlighted the Shehersaaz pilot project, while Dr. Inayat Ullah cautioned against scaling projects without proper impact assessment.

Participants also addressed infrastructure gaps, energy efficiency, gender-responsive policies, and evolving climate patterns in planning. Barriers discussed included rising land prices, construction costs and limited community participation. The roundtable concluded that Pakistan's housing future requires moving beyond policy discussions toward practical, evidence-based, scalable solutions with stronger coordination among institutions, communities and development partners.

 Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share

Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
176,966.68	177,166.52
Day's High	Day's Low
178,122.87	176,735.57
Index Value	Change
28,476,094,348	−199.84
Percentage	Time
−0.11%	24 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,854.32	+37.76
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	24 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT +1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,333.65	+56.64
Percentage	Time
+0.11%	24 Aug, 1:42 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
65,528.09	−488.27
Percentage	Time
−0.74%	24 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT +9
Open Market Forex Rates	

inDrive Conducts

Financial Literacy

Course for Drivers

 **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Ride-hailing company inDrive has conducted a financial literacy course for its drivers, with more than 15,000 drivers participating. Initial results of the course show that participants are not only gaining financial knowledge but are also applying what they have learned in their daily lives.

The course was launched in collaboration with Circle Women Association (CWA), a women-led, technology-based nonprofit organization working to promote economic opportunities and skills development in Pakistan.

The financial literacy course has been designed with the everyday needs of drivers in mind, explaining financial matters in a simple and practical way. Through short lessons and real-life examples, the program provides guidance on budgeting, saving, borrowing, and income planning.

In addition, the course helps drivers better understand relevant tools available within the app, such as the Demand Map and Geo Incentives.

iFFALCON Officially

Marks Its Entry into

Pakistan with Lahore

Launch Event

 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: iFFALCON, a next-generation smart technology brand and sub-brand of TCL, officially entered the Pakistani market, unveiling its latest television portfolio at a launch event in Lahore attended by members of the media, content creators, business partners and industry stakeholders.

The launch marked an important milestone in iFFALCON's continued international expansion, introducing Pakistani consumers to a brand built on advanced display technology, contemporary design and accessible premium entertainment. Founded in 2017, iFFALCON has expanded to more than 43 countries and regions.

Mobilink Bank, Yango Pakistan Partner to Enable Shariah-Compliant Financing for Drivers

 **Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Mobilink Bank and Yango Pakistan have partnered to provide eligible Yango drivers and couriers with Shariah-compliant vehicle and handset financing, embedded Takaful protection, digital banking and payment solutions.

The financing package includes Car Diminishing Musharakah financing of up to Rs5 million, while Murabaha financing will be available for motorcycles, e-bikes, rickshaws and handsets. The initiative aims to strengthen financial inclusion by helping drivers access productive assets and financial services tailored to their earning needs.

Eligible financed customers will also receive complimentary embedded Takaful coverage, including income protection, hospitalization, maternity benefits for eligible women borrowers, and accidental death or permanent disability protection. Vehicle Takaful and additional asset-protection options will also be available.

Mobilink Bank President and CEO Haaris Mahmood Chaudhary said the partnership



would support gig-economy workers who remain outside formal financial services. Yango Pakistan Country Head Miral Sharif said vehicle financing and protection could strengthen drivers' earning capacity.

The partnership also offers digital account onboarding, Raast QR payments, Driver QR fare collection and selected connectivity and handset benefits.

Anti-encroachment operation

RAWALPINDI: Employees of Municipal Corporation carrying handcarts and shawarma counters on a loading truck during an anti-encroachment operation at Faizabad area, in the city.



Photo: Online

SCCI Elections 2026-28 - Nomination Papers Submitted

 **Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR: All candidates for the Sarhad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (SCCI) Elections 2026-28 have submitted their nomination papers within the 2:00 PM deadline, officially beginning the next phase of the electoral process. According to initial figures, around 59 candidates filed for the Associate Class and 35 candidates for the Corporate Class. Final numbers will be confirmed after scrutiny. The contest is between two major groups: the late Senator Ilyas

Bilour Group, led by his son Ghaznfar Bilour, and the Peshawar Business Alliance, represented by Syed Zahir Ali Shah and Haji Ghulam Ali, former Governor of KP. Both groups were active throughout the day, guiding their candidates during submissions. With nominations complete, the elections now enter a crucial phase. A vigorous and closely contested campaign is expected. The business community is closely watching, as the outcome will decide the future leadership of one of the region's most prominent chambers.

Healthcare Cooperation to Become a New Pillar of Pakistan-China Economic Partnership



 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Pakistan and China are expanding their strategic partnership through greater cooperation in healthcare, science, technology and innovation. Adeel Munawar, Commercial Ambassador of the Pakistan China Joint Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCJCCI), said healthcare could become a major pillar of bilateral economic cooperation and create new opportunities for investment and trade.

He highlighted China's expertise in artificial intelligence, digital healthcare, biotechnology, medical equipment and research, saying Paki-

stan could benefit through joint ventures, technology transfer and research partnerships. Telemedicine, AI-based diagnostics, digital health platforms, smart hospitals and remote consultations were identified as promising areas, particularly for underserved communities.

Munawar also emphasized opportunities in medical equipment manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, healthcare IT, biotechnology and hospital management. He called for stronger links among hospitals, universities, research institutions and technology companies in both countries to accelerate knowledge transfer and innovation.

PSX welcomes Tasdeeq as 11th listing of CY-2026 amid record retail demand

 **Commerce Desk'**

KARACHI: Tasdeeq Information Services Limited, South Asia's first publicly listed credit bureau, held its Gong Ceremony at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) Trading Hall in Karachi. The transaction involved 219 million ordinary shares — 69 million placed with pre-IPO investors at PKR 2.35 and 150 million offered via IPO at PKR 3.00 — totaling approximately PKR 612 million.

The retail portion was oversubscribed 21.68 times, drawing 11,358 applications and PKR 2.4 billion in participation. PSX CEO Farukh H. Sabzwari called it the exchange's 11th listing of the calendar year and 3rd of the fiscal year, noting investor accounts have crossed 600,000, increasingly driven by Millennials and Gen Z through digital platforms and awareness sessions.

Tasdeeq's Board and Chairman reaffirmed commitment to strengthening Pakistan's credit information infrastructure and supporting responsible lending



across banks, microfinance institutions and digital lenders. CFO Muntaz Hussain thanked investors and outlined plans to expand the company's B2C offerings.

Mohammed Sohail, CEO of Toplevel

Securities (Consultant to the Issue), highlighted the exceptional retail response that prompted raising the retail allocation from 25% to 35% — a first in Pakistan's IPO history.

easypaisa Digital Bank Reports PKR 8.26 Billion Profit Before Tax in HY 2026

 **Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: easypaisa digital bank has reported a strong financial performance for the half-year ended June 30, 2026, posting a Profit Before Tax (PBT) of PKR 8.26 billion, up 2.27 times compared with the corresponding period last year. Profit After Tax (PAT) stood at PKR 5.78 billion, while earnings per share reached PKR 9.61.

The bank's total revenue increased 30.50% year-on-year, supported by growth in lending and fee-based income. Net markup income rose

32.46%, while fee-based income increased 28.34%, driven by payment services, collections, disbursements and insurance products.

Operating expenses reached PKR 21.08 billion as the bank continued investing in customer acquisition, merchant expansion, technology and digital lending.

As of June 30, total assets stood at PKR 232.58 billion, while customer deposits increased 67.37% year-on-year to PKR 158.58 billion. The bank maintained a strong deposit mix, with a CASA ratio of 97.46%. Gross advances

reached PKR 31.11 billion, while non-performing loans stood at 3.16%, with a coverage ratio of 159.63%.

The bank reported a Capital Adequacy Ratio of 23.75%, significantly above the regulatory requirement. PACRA upgraded its long-term entity rating to AA- while reaffirming its short-term rating at A1.

President and CEO Jahanzeb Khan attributed the performance to customer trust, digital innovation and financial inclusion. CFO Amin Sukhiani said the bank was expanding Islamic banking, foreign exchange, BNPL and cred-



it-card offerings.

With more than 60 million registered users, easypaisa said it remains focused on expanding digital payments, lending, remittances, insurance and other financial services.

Field Marshal Asim Munir, Interior Minister Naqvi visit Iran to push for end to US-Iran conflict

Spokesman Report

TEHRAN: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, along with Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi, concluded a one-day visit to Iran on Tuesday, as part of Pakistan's ongoing diplomatic push to help resolve the continuing standoff between the United States and Iran and promote lasting regional stability, according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the visit, the Field Marshal held meetings with several senior Iranian leaders, including President Dr. Masoud Pezeshkian, Mohsen Rezaei, the Supreme Leader's representative on the Supreme National Security Council, Parliament Speaker Mohammad Bagher Ghalibaf, Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi, and Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni.

The talks centered on preventing further escalation of the conflict, reopening the Strait of Hormuz, and working toward a swift end to the crisis. Both sides also discussed broader prospects for regional peace and possible pathways toward a negotiated settlement of outstanding disputes.

According to ISPR, Iranian officials commended Pakistan's constructive engagement and genuine efforts to facilitate dialogue, encourage de-escalation, and support a peaceful resolution to the conflict.



Upon his arrival in Iran, Field Marshal Munir was received

by Interior Minister Eskandar Momeni, along with other senior Iranian civil and military officials,

underscoring the high-level nature of the visit. The visit reflects Islamabad's

continued efforts to position itself as a mediating voice amid heightened regional tensions

stemming from the US-Iran conflict.

Exhibition of Calligraphy Artwork Held at Parliament House to Mark 1501st Birth Anniversary of Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: An exhibition showcasing the calligraphic artwork of renowned calligrapher Mr. Wasal Shahid was held at Parliament House to commemorate the 1501st birth anniversary of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ.

Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq inaugurated the exhibition at Parliament House. Renowned calligrapher Wasal Shahid briefed Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq about the calligraphic artworks displayed at the exhibition and highlighted artistic and spiritual dimensions.

Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said that the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a source

of mercy and guidance for the entire humanity. He said that events centred on the Seerat-un-Nabi ﷺ renew faith and provide spiritual inspiration to the people.

The Speaker said that the calligraphy exhibition based on the Seerat-un-Nabi ﷺ would serve as a beacon of guidance for the younger generation. He added that spiritual and intellectual activities play an important role in strengthening unity, brotherhood and solidarity among the Muslim Ummah.

The participants appreciated the calligraphy exhibition as an excellent initiative to highlight various aspects of the blessed life and teachings of the Holy Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. They also lauded the



efforts of the organisers in arranging the exhibition. Ambassadors of Islamic

countries, Federal Ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Khalid Hussain Magsi,

Members of the National Assembly and representatives of the media attended the

inaugural ceremony. Representatives from different schools of thought

and officers of the National Assembly Secretariat were also present on the occasion.



Pakistan's GCC exports rise 2.1%, driven mainly by UAE growth: Mian Zahid Hussain

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President of the Pakistan Businessmen and Intellectuals Forum and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, and Chairman of the National Business Group Pakistan and FPCCI's Policy Advisory Board, said Pakistan's exports to Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries rose 2.1 percent during January-July 2026, reaching \$1.944 billion compared to \$1.904 billion in the same period last year. He called the roughly \$40 million increase encouraging, especially given the backdrop of

the US-Iran war.

He said exports to the UAE grew 5.9 percent, from \$1.209 billion to \$1.280 billion, with the \$71.1 million increase accounting for approximately 178 percent of the total net GCC export growth. The UAE alone represented 65.9 percent of Pakistan's GCC exports, while Saudi Arabia contributed 20.6 percent, together absorbing 86.5 percent of total GCC exports, up from 84.3 percent a year earlier. He urged continued focus on Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait alongside the two dominant markets.

Exports to Saudi Arabia rose modestly by 1.4 percent to \$401.1



million, while Kuwait posted the highest percentage growth at 14.7 percent, rising from \$62.7 million to \$71.9 million, though it remained just 3.7 percent of total GCC exports. He expressed concern that exports to Oman, Qatar and Bahrain combined declined by around 4.5 percent, noting the overall GCC export growth was primarily UAE-driven, and urged Pakistan to maintain warm relations with the UAE despite its politically cool posture.

Hussain highlighted monthly export volatility, with exports peaking at \$323.2 million in February 2026

before falling to \$240.7 million by May, then recovering to \$290.3 million in July — up 11.9 percent from June and 4.7 percent above July 2025, though still 10.2 percent below the February peak. He cautioned that sustained growth over several months was needed to confirm the recovery.

He praised PM Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal Asim Munir's diplomatic efforts with Gulf states, citing the Saudi defence cooperation agreement's expansion to Türkiye, with Kuwait, Egypt and Bangladesh now showing interest in joining. He called for translating these defence ties into

concrete export orders and stronger business linkages.

Hussain proposed a two-tier export strategy: strengthening commercial presence in the UAE and Saudi Arabia, while developing separate recovery plans for Oman, Qatar, Bahrain and Kuwait, with Kuwait prioritized through targeted trade delegations. He also recommended a product-level HS code assessment to identify growth drivers and decline factors across markets, stressing that sustainable growth requires converting the recent recovery into consistent expansion across all six Gulf markets.

Medicam Group will continue to cooperate for Promotion of Cricket with RCAF, says Zahid Hussain Bhatti

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Medicam Group of Companies will continue to cooperate with the Regional Cricket Association Karachi for promotion of Cricket in Karachi. Our institution's effort has always been that for promotion of sports and encouragement of young players, it should play its full role.

These thoughts were expressed by Zahid Hussain Bhatti Executive Director of Medicam Group of Companies while addressing the huge gathering of young Cricketers and there Parents at the occasion of opening ceremony of Touchme Trophy Under-15

Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament Organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies at KCCA Stadium here on Sunday. He Further said that in past also Medicam Group stood with Regional Cricket Association Karachi and in future also will continue its cooperation for promotion of cricket. Our objective is to provide better opportunities to young players and to strengthen the game at grass root level.

On this occasion Secretary Regional Cricket Association Karachi Ali Hussain said that under the leadership of Nadeem

Umar President RCAF opportunities to play cricket at every level will continue to be provided to players of Karachi. Club cricket is also continuing in full manner in Karachi in which young players are participating in large number, which is sign of bright future of cricket in Karachi.

Chairman Tournament Committee RCA Karachi Khalid Nafees in his speech said that Talent Hunt Program of Regional Cricket Association Karachi is playing important role in bringing young and talented players to fore. Through these programs, such future players will come forward who in future will have capability

to represent Karachi and Pakistan.

Joint Secretary RCA Karachi Muhammad Touseef Siddiqui said that cricket of Karachi is in safe hands at this time. Under the leadership of Nadeem Umar, officials of Regional Cricket Association Karachi hard working and betterment of players. He thanked Medicam Group and said that with their cooperation at grass root level young players are getting opportunities to play quality cricket, which is extremely welcome matter. On this occasion he especially thanked Azam Khan, Khalid Nafees and other zonal officials also for their cooperation.



In ceremony Javed Akhtar Kayani Medicam Group, Syed Muhammad Ahmad Naqvi, Zafar Ahmad, Muhammad Rehan Siddiqui Assistant Secretaries RCA, Zonal Presidents, Secretaries, Treasurers, S. M. Asim, Muhammad Nizam, Iqbal Khan, Majid Khan, S.A. Faheem, Khalid

Abbasi and other dignitaries participated in large number.

After the ceremony in the opening Match Zone-IV Blues beat Zone-III Blues by 22 runs. Zone-IV 179 all-out in. Waris Muzzammil made 48, and Abdul Rehman made 21 runs not out in 40 overs. Hamza Salman (rlb)

4/34, Rafay Khurram 2/34.

In reply Zone-III Blues 157 alloutin33.5 overs. Farhan Ahmad 46, Hannan Naeem 41. Rafay Mazhar (rlb) 3/16. After the finish of the Match Secretary RCA Karachi Ali Hussain gave the Man of the Match award to Rafay Mazhar.

ECC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, chairing a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) at the Finance Division on Monday.



Photo: Online

CCoP approves restructuring plan for batch-I DISCOs, advancing reliable, consumer-focused power distribution

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on Privatization (CCoP), chaired by Deputy Prime Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, approved the restructuring plan for the first batch of electricity distribution companies — FESCO, GEPCO and IESCO — marking a key step in the government’s power-sector reform agenda to build financial-

ly sustainable, professionally managed and digitally enabled DISCOs.

Under the plan, selected assets including all land parcels, along with select liabilities such as post-retirement benefits of already-retired employees and related funds, will be transferred to a Government of Pakistan-owned Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV). Retirement benefits of current employees will remain with the DISCOs,

while inter-governmental receivables and payables will be netted off to settle GoP receivables. The plan is designed to be fiscally neutral and aimed at enhancing value for the government while ensuring transaction viability.

The government emphasized that consumers, employees, industry and local communities have a direct stake in the reforms, with service continuity remaining a priority. Employee interests

will be handled per applicable law, and stakeholders will be kept informed as the process advances.

Muhammad Ali, Adviser to the Prime Minister on Privatization, said consumers would remain protected under Pakistan’s regulatory framework, with tariffs continuing to be determined through NEPRA’s process and notified by the government, while the reform seeks measurable improvements in reliability, efficiency

and customer service.

FESCO, GEPCO and IESCO collectively serve over 14 million consumers across major industrial, commercial and urban centres, making their performance central to reducing tariffs and improving electricity service competitiveness. The approval signals a shift from managing legacy constraints toward building modern, accountable, consumer-focused distribution companies.



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain met Punjab Agriculture Minister Syed Muhammad Ashiq Hussain Kirmani to review key agricultural and livestock issues, including Foot-and-Mouth

Disease (FMD), DAP fertilizer availability, and potato production and exports. Provincial Secretaries and Directors General also attended.

The two sides agreed to establish an FMD-free zone along Punjab’s motorway corridor as part of a coordinated strategy to control and eventually eradicate the disease, paving

Federal, Punjab governments agree on coordinated measures for FMD control, DAP availability and potato exports

the way toward an FMD-free Pakistan. The initiative will focus on vaccination, movement management and surveillance along major livestock routes, with a disease surveillance system being developed to enable early outbreak detection and improved interdepartmental coordination.

The Federal Minister reaffirmed the government’s commitment to working with provinces to address farmers’ concerns, calling disease-free livestock, input availability and diversified export markets essential to a resilient agriculture economy, and pledged continued federal-provincial coordination.

PM congratulates nation on Moody’s upgrading of Pakistan’s credit rating

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Monday congratulated the nation on Moody’s upgrading of Pakistan’s credit rating from Caa1 to B3.

In a statement, he welcomed the improvement in Pakistan’s sovereign credit rating by Moody’s.

He appreciated efforts of the government’s economic team.

He commended Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Army Chief and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Finance Minister

Muhammad Aurangzeb and all the concerned ministers and officials.

“The improvement in Pakistan’s credit rating is a reflection of global confidence in the government’s economic policies and reforms,” he said adding, “The recognition of the improvement in Pakistan’s economic situation by international financial institutions and rating agencies is welcome. Pakistan’s economy is moving towards stability and the improvement in the rating by international institutions is clear evidence of this.”

He said, “The government has taken effective steps to stabilize the economy.”

PM Shehbaz, Sindh CM agree to maintain political harmony, consultation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Minister of Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday called on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif here, wherein they agreed to maintain political harmony and consultation.

In the meeting, they also discussed matters related to politics, Sindh prov-

ince, ongoing development projects in the province, and those of mutual interest, according to a PM Office press release.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Azam Nazeer Tarar, Ahad Khan Cheema, Shaza Fatima Khawaja, and Ali Pervaiz Malik, and Advisor to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah.

PM, Istehkam-e-Pakistan Party delegation discuss overall situation of country



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of Istehkam e Pakistan Party called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and discussed the overall situation of the country and matters of mutual interest.

The delegation included Minister of State for Overseas Pakistanis Aun Chaudhry and members of National Assembly Munza Hassan and Gul Asghar Khan.

Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif was also present in the meeting.

BFC Islamabad Facilitates Rs. 6.6 Billion Investment and 20,000 Jobs in One Year

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh visited the Business Facilitation Centre (BFC) Islamabad and reviewed its performance during the first year of operations.

The minister was briefed that between August 20, 2025 and August 20, 2026, the BFC received 7,709 applications from businesses and investors. During the period, 6,896 registrations, licences, certificates and permits were issued, while 4,920 applications were processed within the stipulated timeframe. Expert guidance and consultation were provided in 845 cases.

According to the briefing, BFC facilitation helped support more than 4,100 new businesses, investment exceeding Rs6.6



8,554 visitors during its first year, with the highest monthly applications recorded in December 2025, followed by January and July 2026.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said the BFC was established to provide businesses and investors with integrated government services under one roof, reducing the need to visit multiple departments and helping save time and simplify procedures.

Certificates of appreciation were also distributed among officers and staff for their contribution to the Centre’s first-year performance. The minister said the government would continue strengthening business facilitation, investment promotion and regulatory reforms to create a more transparent and investor-friendly environment in Pakistan.

billion and over 20,000 employment

opportunities. The Centre recorded