



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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ہم کو ابو بکر نے جردی جو امن عطا فرمایا،
انہیں ابو جحین نے، انہیں ابو صاع نے اور
انہیں ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ ایک
غصے نے نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم سے
عرس کیا کہ مجھے آپ کوئی نصیحت فرما دیجیے۔
نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ حضرت
ہو کر۔ انہوں نے کئی مرتبہ یہ سوال کیا اور
نبی کریم ﷺ نے فرمایا کہ حضرت ہو کر۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6116)
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Chaudhry Yasin appointed AJK Assembly opposition leader

Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) leader Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has been appointed as the opposition leader in the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly. AJK Assembly Speaker formally issued a notification confirming Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin's appointment. As opposition leader, Yasin will represent opposition parties in the Legislative Assembly and play a parliamentary role against the government.



Petrol price cut by 58 paise, diesel by 17 paise

The government on Friday decreased the price of petrol by 58 paise per litre and high-speed diesel (HSD) by 17 paise per litre, effective from Saturday, August 29 to August 31. The price of petrol fell to Rs342.02 per litre, down from Rs342.60, and the price of HSD fell to Rs371.44 per litre, from Rs371.61 per litre.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rabi-ul-Awwal 14, Saturday, August 29, 2026



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Daily Spokesman Vol: 20, Issue: 129 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Reception

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif hosts a reception for the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia's Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture H.E. Engineer Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen al-Fadley on Friday.



Photo: PID

Makkah Defence Agreement brought three nations closer, sent message of unity, peace: PM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that the recently signed Makkah Joint Defence Agreement between Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Türkiye brought the three countries even closer together and sent a message of unity and peace throughout the region.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Engineer Abdulrahman bin Abdulmohsen Al-Fadley, who called on him here, reaffirmed the deep-rooted and fraternal ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and conveyed his warmest regards for the Custodian of the

Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

While welcoming the Saudi dignitary, he underscored that as strategic partners, both Pakistan and the Kingdom must now focus their energies towards deepening economic and agricultural ties to translate their

longstanding relationship into a stronger, mutually beneficial trade and investment partnership.

The Saudi minister thanked the prime minister for the warm hospitality extended to him and his delegation and reaffirmed the Kingdom's commitment to deepening cooperation with Pakistan across the agriculture, water and

food security sectors.

The meeting was attended by a number of federal ministers including Rana Tanveer Hussain, Mohammad Aurangzeb, Atta Tarar, Jam Kamal Khan, Dr. Musadik Malik, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah, and Bilal Azhar Kiyani, SAPM Tariq Fatemi, and senior government officials.

Field Marshal Asim Munir reaffirms commitment to deepen historic partnership with Saudi Arabia



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: H. E. Eng. Abdulrahman Abdulmohsen AlFadley, Minister of Environment, Water and Agriculture of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces (COAS & CDF), at General Headquarters (GHQ), Rawalpindi.

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest were discussed. The COAS & CDF highlighted the deep-rooted

brotherly relations between Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the longstanding strategic partnership between the two brotherly countries.

The dignity appreciated Pakistan's positive role in promoting regional peace and stability and expressed his desire to enhance cooperation between the two brotherly countries, particularly in the areas of agriculture and environmental sustainability.

Barrister Gilani elected Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Spokesman Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A session of the Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir was held under the chairmanship of Speaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq. The Assembly conducted polling for the election of the Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir's nominee, Barrister Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani, was elected Prime Minister after securing 30 votes. His opponent, Pakistan Peoples Party candidate Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Khan, secured 14 votes.

The Legislative Assembly



comprises a total of 53 seats. However, seven seats are currently vacant as elections could not be held in the districts of Poonch and Sudhanoti. Accordingly, the present strength of the Assembly stands at 46 members.

Health Minister vows accountability over PIMS fire that killed 14 infants

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Health Minister Mustafa Kamal vowed "no one will be spared" over the PIMS fire that claimed the lives of 14 infants, calling for accountability and sweeping health sector reforms.

Addressing the National Assembly, Kamal expressed grief on behalf of PM Shehbaz Sharif and the government. He said the tragedy must not be forgotten and urged a comprehensive, wide-ranging investigation not limited by a narrow timeframe.



The minister offered himself and the entire Health Ministry for scrutiny. "I am holding myself responsible and have presented

myself for accountability," he said, adding that "positions and ministries were insignificant compared with the responsibility of protecting human lives." Kamal said the incident exposed deeper structural problems, citing that 400,000 children aged 1-5 die annually in Pakistan — about 1,300 per day — with many deaths preventable.

He stressed the need for long-term solutions, noting the inquiry committee's report on the PIMS fire was expected later in the day, and the government is ready to address parliamentarians' concerns.

PM speaks with Nepalese PM Balendra Shah, offers condolences over flashfloods, landslides

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephone conversation with Balendra Shah, Prime Minister of Nepal and conveyed heartfelt condolences on the tragic loss of lives and widespread devastation caused by the recent flashfloods and landslides in Nepal.

During the telephone call, the prime minister expressed complete solidarity with the Nepali leadership and people on behalf of the Government and people of Pakistan. He also offered whatever possible assistance was required at this difficult time.

The prime minister also conveyed to his Nepali counterpart that Pakistan was dispatching emergency relief assistance to Nepal in order to help with the relief efforts.

Prime Minister Balendra Shah thanked the PM Shehbaz Sharif for the telephone call and expression of solidarity and support in the wake of the natural calamity. He also expressed gratitude for the generous offer of assistance made by Pakistan.

Dar Warns of Consequences if Pakistan's Indus Water Rights Are Denied

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Muhammad Ishaq Dar has warned that any attempt to deprive Pakistan of its water rights under the Indus Waters Treaty could have serious consequences for regional peace and security.

Addressing a virtual seminar organized by the Embassy of Pakistan in Washington, Dar said the 1960 treaty remained a valid and binding legal framework governing the shared Indus Basin water resources. He recalled that the agreement allocated the eastern rivers—Ravi, Beas and Sutlej—



to India, while the western rivers—Indus, Jhelum and Chenab—were allocated to Pakistan, subject to specified uses by India.

Dar said India's April 2025 decision to place the treaty in abeyance had no legal

basis because the agreement contained no provision allowing unilateral suspension. He maintained that treaty mechanisms, including the Permanent Indus Commission, Neutral Expert and Court of Arbitration, remained available for resolving disputes.

He stressed that the Indus Basin was vital to more than 250 million Pakistanis, supporting agriculture, food security, energy production, livelihoods and economic development. He warned that unilateral interference could undermine confidence in international agreements and create a dangerous global precedent.

Newly elected AJK Prime Minister takes oath

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: Newly elected Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Syed Iftikhar Ali Gilani, took oath of office at a ceremony held at Aiwan-e-Sadr in Muzaffarabad. Acting President AJK Chaudhry Tariq Farooq administered the oath. The ceremony was attended by Adviser to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Rana Sanaullah, Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, former AJK prime minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haid-

er Khan, Hurriyat leader Ghulam Muhammad Safi, members of the Legislative Assembly, senior government officials, police officers, civil society representatives and other dignitaries. Earlier, the Chief Secretary formally announced Barrister Gilani's election as prime minister. In his address, Gilani expressed gratitude to PML-N leadership, including Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam

Nawaz Sharif, Rana Sanaullah and other leaders and assembly members for their support and confidence. Gilani pledged to work tirelessly for the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and said collective efforts by all members of the Legislative Assembly were essential to overcome the region's challenges. He called for unity and cooperation to build an AJK that could serve as a model for others. Identifying unemployment, food security, education and healthcare as major priorities, he said his govern-



ment would take concrete steps to generate employment and improve hospitals and the healthcare system. He also highlighted the importance of effective governance and development. Gilani said the PML-N team comprised experienced leaders and young members, expressing confidence that their combined efforts would accelerate development and transform AJK into a model of progress and good governance.

First Addressing

Muzaffarabad. Newly leader of the house and AJK Premier Barrister Seyad Iftakhar Ali Gilani addressing the AJK Legislative Assembly session.



AJK Assembly Unanimously Adopts Three Resolutions



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly, chaired by Speaker Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, unanimously adopted three resolutions focusing on religious education, the PIMS fire tragedy and solidarity with Pakistan's armed forces. The first resolution, moved by MLA Sehrish Qamar, called for greater promotion of the teachings and Serat of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) as a source of wisdom, compassion, tolerance, forgiveness and social harmony. It urged the government to organize Seerat-un-Nabi conferences in schools, colleges and government institutions and introduce Seerat-un-Nabi



(PBUH) as a separate subject in schools to help young people understand and apply the Prophet's teachings in their lives. The second resolution expressed deep grief over the fire at the Paediatrics Department of Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), Islamabad,

which claimed the lives of around 15 children. The Assembly offered condolences to the bereaved families and appreciated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for taking immediate notice and ordering an inquiry. It also paid tribute to the sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces

in defending the country and combating terrorism. The third resolution, moved by former AJK prime minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore and other lawmakers, also expressed sorrow over the PIMS tragedy. It demanded that the prime minister establish a judicial commission to conduct a transparent and comprehensive investigation. The House called for accountability of officials and staff found responsible for negligence. The Assembly reaffirmed its commitment to supporting Pakistan's development, sovereignty, national interests and defence. Prayers were also offered for the departed souls of the children, armed forces, Kashmir and democracy martyrs.

KIIR Urges New OIC Chief to Address Kashmir Human Rights Crisis

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR), led by Chairman Altaf Hussain Wani, has urged the newly elected Secretary General of the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) to take urgent steps to address the human rights and political situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. In a letter, KIIR said the Kashmir dispute remained an unresolved international issue and called for reaffirming the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination under UN resolutions. It expressed concern over developments since India's August 2019 decisions concerning Articles 370 and 35-A, alleging demographic changes and alterations to land laws. The institute also highlighted alleged repression, political detentions, restrictions on journalism and internet access, and human rights violations. It urged the OIC to convene its Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir, seek the release of political prisoners, review restrictive laws and establish a fact-finding mission through the OIC's human rights body.

Over 40 Mature Trees Cut Down Near Karbala Ground in Korangi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: More than 40 mature trees have reportedly been cut down near Karbala Ground in Korangi, prompting environmentalists and local residents to demand immediate action against those responsible. President of the National Forum for Environment and Health (NFEH) Naeem Qureshi said several of the trees, including Peepal trees estimated to be 50 to 60 years old, were allegedly cut down by a group linked to a local land-grabbing mafia. He said some trees were uprooted while others were cut using electric machines. Landhi Town Chairman Abdul Jamil Khan confirmed that the incident had been reported to authorities. He said the land belonged to the Karachi Development Authority (KDA) and alleged attempts by a nearby group to occupy it. He also claimed police were present during the tree cutting and no FIR had yet been registered. Environmentalists called for action by the KDA, KMC and police to prevent further destruction of Karachi's green cover.

Dr. Amir Muhammad

A Nation Builder Honored in Life, Remembered in Death

Dr. Amir Muhammad, a prominent Pakistani agricultural scientist, educationist, and institution builder who recently passed away in Lahore. The article frames his death as the close of an extraordinary era while emphasizing that his impact endures through the institutions he founded and the people he trained. A Timely Honor Before Death The piece highlights a poignant coincidence: just months before his passing, the Government of Pakistan awarded Dr. Amir Muhammad the Hilal-e-Imtiaz, one of the country's highest civilian honors, presented by President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr on May 13, 2026. This award recognized his lifelong contributions to education, science, and national development. FAST-NUCES, one of the institutions he helped build, publicly acknowledged the honor as recognition of his enduring dedication to higher education and technology

in Pakistan. Early Life and Education Dr. Amir Muhammad was born in Hoshiarpur District in East Punjab, a region known for its scholarly traditions. His family migrated to Pakistan after the 1947 Partition, eventually settling near Gujranwala, where they rebuilt their lives with limited means. Despite these modest beginnings, he pursued rigorous academic training, earning a postgraduate degree in biochemistry and later a doctorate from the University of Oxford. He then completed post-doctoral research at Oak Ridge in the United States. Rather than remaining abroad, he chose to bring his expertise back to serve Pakistan directly. Founding NIAB and Advancing Agricultural Science One of his most significant achievements came in 1969, when he founded the Nuclear Institute for Agriculture and Biology (NIAB) in Faisalabad, serving as its first director. At a time when Pakistan faced serious challenges

with low agricultural productivity and limited scientific infrastructure, he pioneered the application of nuclear techniques and biological research to improve crops, manage plant diseases, and boost overall agricultural output. This work laid important groundwork for modernizing Pakistan's approach to food security. Leadership in Agricultural Education Dr. Amir Muhammad went on to serve as Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. In this role, he pushed for a vision of higher education that extended beyond producing graduates — he wanted universities to actively address real societal problems. He worked to align agricultural education with the practical needs of farmers and the country's food security goals, strengthening both research output and academic culture at the university. Building National Research Institutions Perhaps his most far-reaching institutional legacy was his central role in establishing and strengthening the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and the National Agricultural Research Centre (NARC). He recognized that isolated research efforts were insufficient; Pakistan needed a coordinated, nationwide



Dr. Amir Muhammad

research system connecting scientists, universities, laboratories, farmers, and policymakers. This framework continues to shape agricultural research in Pakistan today, and his name remains closely associated with the country's systematic approach to agricultural science. Expanding Into Technology and Computer Science Notably, his vision was not limited to agriculture. He foresaw early on that Pakistan's future would depend heavily on information technology and computer science. As founding

rector and a key figure behind FAST-NUCES, he helped build one of Pakistan's leading institutions for computer science and technology education. The article presents this as evidence of the breadth of his thinking — a scientist who understood that national progress required simultaneous investment in agriculture, science, education, and emerging technologies. International Recognition Dr. Amir Muhammad's contributions extended beyond Pakistan's borders. He participated in global scientific and agricultural networks, contributing to international discussions on food security and agricultural development. In 1990, he was elected a Fellow of The World Academy of Sciences. Among his other honors were the FAO Lifetime Achievement Gold Medal and the Prime Minister's Gold Medal, reflecting both his scientific accomplishments and the international respect he earned throughout his career. He was also listed among recipients of Pakistan's 2025 Civil Awards in the education category, which included the Hilal-e-Imtiaz. A Life's Work Honored, Then Mourned The author reflects on the emotional significance of the sequence of events — the nation formally honoring Dr.

Amir Muhammad with its highest civilian distinction, only to mourn his loss shortly afterward. Rather than viewing the award as a conclusion to his story, the writer describes it as a bridge connecting his lifetime of service to the institutions and people who will carry his work forward. Personal Reflection and Lasting Legacy The article closes with a personal tribute from the author, who describes Dr. Amir Muhammad as an inspiration and a representative of a generation of Pakistanis who believed in building the nation through knowledge, discipline, and institution-building rather than rhetoric. His journey from a migrant family after Partition to a leader of major national institutions is portrayed as a remarkable chapter in Pakistan's scientific history. The author emphasizes that his true legacy lives on through NIAB, Pakistan's agricultural research system, and the generations of scientists and technology professionals trained through the institutions he built. The piece ends with a prayer for his eternal peace and strength for his family, colleagues, and students, affirming that his vision for a knowledge-based, self-reliant Pakistan continues beyond his death.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:11 am
Zohr 12:09 pm
Asr 4:48 pm
Maghrib 6:39 pm
Isha 8:06 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
Polyclinic 9218300-09
Shifa International 4603666

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

*Unannounced
Load-Shedding Amid
Scorching Heat
Unacceptable:
PMML*



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Pakistan Markazi Muslim League (PMML) spokesperson Dr Muzammil Iqbal Hashmi has strongly criticised the continued unannounced load-shedding across the country, saying prolonged power outages during the night amid intense heat have made life increasingly difficult for citizens.

Dr Hashmi said reports of hourly power cuts in Lahore and several other cities were causing serious hardship to children, elderly people, patients, students and the business community. He questioned the government's earlier claims that electricity generation was sufficient and that the growing use of solar systems had created surplus power.

"If electricity is available in surplus, the government must explain why consumers are facing repeated outages. If there is a shortage, the public should be informed of the actual situation," he said.

Punjab CM Announces First Dedicated Data Centre at Big Data Expo

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has announced the establishment of Punjab's first dedicated data centre, the "Punjab Data Lake," while inviting Chinese technology companies and investors to participate in Punjab's digital transformation.

Addressing the Big Data Industry Expo 2026 in Guiyang, China, she said Punjab was developing a state-level common data engine, OneMap, integrating more than 12 terabytes of geospatial information from 31 departments and over 6,000 datasets. Linking OneMap with the Punjab Socio-Economic Registry would help the government better identify citizens' needs, improve resource allocation and deliver public services effectively.

Maryam Nawaz said Punjab was building a secure and



sovereign digital foundation, including a sovereign cloud, digital identity, interoperable government systems and an AI-powered implementation system. She highlighted the province's dedicated AI Office and the use of AI in governance and the Punjab Safe City project.

She stressed that data should be transformed into practical

action and public value, benefiting areas such as healthcare, education, agriculture, finance and environmental management.

Calling Pakistan-China friendship a partnership based on trust and shared progress, she invited Chinese companies to invest in energy, computing, cloud infrastructure, connec-



tivity and tokenisation.

The chief minister said Punjab aimed to become an

equal partner in technology creation and innovation, contributing to a new corridor

of data, innovation and shared ideas between Pakistan and China.

After Havy Rain

ISLAMABAD: Motorists drive through Faisal Avenue during downpour after couples of hot and humid days in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Officials Assure Removal of Hurdles in Masooma-e-Sindh Shrine Construction

News Desk

KARACHI: Sindh Auqaf Minister Syed Riaz Hussain Shah Shirazi and Chief Administrator Auqaf Sindh Mukhtar Hussain Abro have assured that hurdles delaying the government-funded construction of Bibi Maham's shrine, popularly known as Masooma-e-Sindh, at Agham Kot will be removed within a week.

The assurance was given during a meeting of the Zaireen Khidmat Committee Agham Kot, held in collaboration with the Karachi Editors Club. Committee members briefed the officials about prolonged delays, slow construction and alleged negligence by relevant authorities and the contractor.

Participants expressed concern that the project had repeatedly faced technical,



administrative and financial complications, including revisions in government construction rates. They said several previous assurances to accelerate work and complete key stages before Ayyam-e-Aza had not been fulfilled.

The meeting was informed that only three labourers had reportedly been working at the site during the past 15 to 20 days, with progress extremely slow.

Participants demanded immediate removal of all

obstacles, stronger government supervision and acceleration of construction. They urged authorities to ensure that the latest one-week assurance resulted in concrete action and completion of the shrine without further delays.

Zindigi, DAT AI Systems Join Hands to Develop Digital Solutions

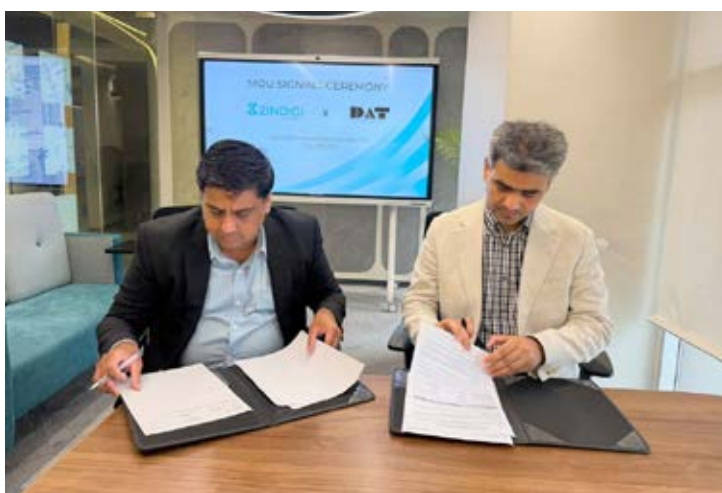
News Desk

LAHORE: Zindigi, powered by JS Bank, and Pakistan-based technology company DAT AI Systems have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to explore and jointly develop technology-driven financial and digital solutions for government institutions, educational organizations, corporations and other entities.

The partnership will combine Zindi-

gi's digital banking and payment capabilities with DAT AI Systems' expertise in artificial intelligence and messaging-based technology. The companies will explore integrated solutions covering digital payments, identity services, fee collection, accounts and wallets, disbursements and institutional operations.

The MoU was signed by Rao Umer Farooq, Head of International Business and Alliances at Zindigi, and Abubakar



Umer, CEO of DAT AI Systems.

Rao Umer Farooq said Pakistan's next phase of digital transformation would depend on solutions connecting technology, identity and financial services, adding that the partnership would focus on practical solutions for

institutions and their customers.

Abubakar Umer said the collaboration combined complementary strengths in technology and financial infrastructure and could produce scalable solutions tailored to Pakistan's needs.

Shifa Makes History with Landmark JCI Healthcare Accreditations

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Shifa International Hospitals has achieved a major milestone in Pakistan's healthcare sector, with multiple organizations and clinical programmes receiving international recognition through Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation and certification.

The JCI accreditation of Shifa Enterprise reinforces the healthcare group's commitment to maintaining consistent standards of quality, patient safety and clinical excellence across its facilities and services. A key achievement is the accreditation of Shifa Ambulance Service (SAS), making it the first ambulance service in Pakistan to receive JCI accreditation. The milestone highlights the importance of maintaining high standards of safety and professionalism in emergency and pre-hospital care.

The achievements follow Shifa International Hospitals' accreditation as an Academic Medical Center (AMC) in June 2026. Shifa's home healthcare company, eShifa, has also been recommended for JCI accreditation following a rigorous survey.

ADCG Anil Saeed Honoured with Shield for Excellent Eid Milad-un-Nabi Arrangements



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner General and Administrator Municipal Committee Attock Anil Saeed was honoured with a shield by Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah for making excellent arrangements, particularly cleanliness measures, on the occasion of Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH).

According to details, Deputy Commissioner Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah presented an honorary shield to ADCG and Administrator Municipal Committee Anil Saeed in recognition of his commendable efforts in ensuring cleanliness and making effective arrangements in Attock city during the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) celebrations. Chief Officer Municipal Committee Sardar Aftab Ahmed Khan was also present on the occasion.

The Deputy Commissioner appreciated the arrangements made under the supervision of ADCG Anil Saeed and paid tribute to his dedicated services for ensuring the peaceful conduct of the Eid Milad-un-Nabi (PBUH) procession and other related activities in the city.

Dr. Mudassir Ahmed Shah said the performance of the sanitation teams demonstrated that the vision of making Attock a clean city was being successfully realised. He expressed hope that ADCG Anil Saeed would continue to discharge his responsibilities with the same dedication and commitment in the future.

TPT 360 to Produce Official Broadcast of Women's Asia Cup 2026

News Desk

DUBAI: TPT 360, a subsidiary of Transgroup FZE UAE, will provide the official broadcast production for the DP World Women's Asia Cup 2026, organized by the Asian Cricket Council.

The premier T20I tournament will feature 15 matches at Dubai Cricket Stadium from August 28 to September 13, 2026. TPT 360 will deploy an advanced multi-camera production system to provide comprehensive coverage of the tournament for audiences worldwide.

The broadcast setup will include super slow-motion and spin-vision cameras, along with GV LDX 150 cameras, Zing stumps and specially developed graphics for the event. The technology is designed to provide viewers with high-quality coverage and multiple perspectives throughout each match.

TPT 360 CEO Moied Javed said the company was proud to deliver the tournament's official broadcast and aimed to bring the excitement of women's cricket to audiences globally while highlighting the talent and competitiveness of the players.

The company said its partnership with Transgroup reflected a commitment to broadcast excellence and supporting the growth and visibility of women's cricket.

The tournament also builds on TPT 360's previous collaboration with the Asian Cricket Council, following its successful broadcast production for the ACC U19 Women's Asia Cup in Malaysia in 2024.

TPT 360 said it remained focused on providing a high-quality broadcast experience throughout the tournament.

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A Fragile Window for Syria

The integration of the Syrian Democratic Forces into Syria's national army, welcomed by Pakistan at the UN Security Council this week, marks more than a bureaucratic reshuffling of military command. It is, potentially, a hinge moment in Syria's long and painful passage from civil war to statehood. Ambassador Usman Jadoon was right to call it "a critical step toward peace and stability," but the celebration should be measured, not triumphant. Syria's transitions have a habit of promising more than they deliver.

What makes this development significant is what it represents symbolically as much as militarily: a Kurdish-led force, long operating semi-autonomously in the country's northeast, folding itself into state structures under Damascus's authority. For a country fractured along ethnic, sectarian and regional lines for over a decade, any voluntary consolidation of armed actors under a single national banner is worth welcoming. It suggests that Syria's post-Assad leadership under President Ahmed al-Sharaa may be capable of the kind of broad-based accommodation that eluded the country for so long.

Yet integration on paper is not integration in practice. The test, as UN Special Envoy Claudio Cardone rightly noted, will be whether Syrians of every community actually feel represented within these institutions, rather than simply absorbed by them. Kurdish communities in particular will be watching closely to see whether this move translates into genuine political inclusion or merely the dissolution of their leverage.

Pakistan's intervention at the Security Council also usefully flagged the dangers that persist alongside this progress. The lingering threat of Da'esh and foreign terrorist fighters remains real, and any counter-terrorism lapse could unravel hard-won gains. Equally serious is the question of transitional justice — how Syria reckons with the crimes of the Assad era will shape whether reconciliation is durable or merely cosmetic.

The regional dimension cannot be ignored either. Israeli strikes, including the reported attack on Abu al-Duhur Airbase, and the continued occupation of the Syrian Golan represent precisely the kind of external pressure that could derail an already fragile internal process. Respect for the 1974 Disengagement Agreement is not a peripheral issue; it is central to whether Syria's leadership can focus on rebuilding rather than firefighting.

Economically, the easing of sanctions and the rescinding of Syria's terrorism designation by Washington offer genuine cause for optimism, even as poverty and inflation continue to weigh on ordinary Syrians. Growth projections mean little to families still struggling to rebuild homes and livelihoods.

Syria's window for recovery is real, but narrow. Sustained international support, disciplined internal governance, and restraint from outside powers will determine whether this moment becomes a turning point or another false dawn.

Carney's Call for Unity Against Great-Power Coercion

Mark Carney's remarkable address at Davos earlier this year was more than a Canadian response to a changing world. It amounted to an intellectual challenge to the assumptions upon which much of the post-war international system was built.

His central proposition was unsettling: the world is experiencing not merely a transition but a "rupture," in which great powers like the United States increasingly use tariffs, finance, supply chains and economic integration as instruments of leverage. Countries that continue believing accommodation will automatically purchase security may therefore be living inside what Carney called a "pleasant fiction."

For decades, Europe, Asia, the Middle East and many developing countries organized significant parts of their security and economic policies around an American-led international system. The problem was not the partnership itself. The danger arose when partnership became dependency, dependency encouraged complacency, and complacency was mistaken for permanent security.

Europe offers perhaps the clearest warning. For decades it relied heavily upon American military power while concentrating its own resources on economic and social development. Yet Washington is now explicitly pressing Europeans to assume greater responsibility for defending their continent. More dramatically, European governments were confronted with American pressure over Greenland and tariff threats against allies that resisted Washington's position. Britain publicly called such tariffs against allies "wrong," while European leaders insisted that Denmark and Greenland's sovereignty was non-negotiable.

This is precisely the kind of contradiction Carney wants middle powers to recognize. An alliance can remain valuable without being treated as an insurance policy against every future contingency. Friendship between states is ultimately governed by interests, and interests change.

Canada learned the same lesson with exceptional severity. Few relationships appeared more permanent than that between Canada and the United States. Their economies became deeply integrated, their defense structures intertwined and their border one of the most economically consequential in the world. Yet Canada is currently confronting substantial American tariffs and escalating commercial confrontation. In August, Washington imposed 50% tariffs on roughly \$20 billion of Canadian goods after negotiations failed; Canada subsequently prepared equivalent retaliation.

Carney's response has therefore been not to sever relations with America but to reduce Canada's vulnerability to any single relationship. Canada is seeking new trade arrangements, investing in strategic industries and building coalitions with other middle powers. His government says Canada is pursuing links between the European Union and the Trans-Pacific partnership that could encompass 1.5 billion people.

The lesson travels far beyond the Atlantic. Middle Eastern states historically dependent upon American security guarantees must also reassess what sovereignty requires in an era when regional wars, sanctions and great-power confrontation can impose enormous costs upon countries that did not design those conflicts.

Pakistan and many developing economies face a different vulnerability. Their dependence may be financial rather than military: external financing, international institutions, export markets, technology, energy or foreign investment can narrow the space available for genuinely independent decision-making. The larger truth is more important: excessive dependence on any external center of power creates leverage, and leverage can eventually become coercion.

Here China provides an instruc-

tive contrast, though not a flawless model. China spent decades building the economic, industrial, technological and military foundations that allow it to negotiate with Washington from a fundamentally different position. It developed enormous manufacturing capacity, infrastructure, foreign-exchange resources, technological capabilities and increasingly sophisticated armed forces. It did not achieve autonomy by isolating itself; paradoxically, it used global integration to accumulate national strength.

Consequently, when Washington pressures Beijing, China possesses instruments with which to respond. It means sovereignty becomes more credible when backed by capability.

Iran demonstrates another, much harsher version of strategic autonomy. Whatever judgment one makes about its government or policies, decades of sanctions and confrontation forced Tehran to develop a considerable capacity to operate without the degree of Western economic and security integration enjoyed by many regional states. The costs to Iranian society have been substantial. Yet its experience illustrates the same principle from another direction: independence has a price, but dependence carries risks of its own.

The objective for other countries should therefore not be to become China or Iran. Nor should they simply replace Washington with Beijing. Changing masters is not strategic autonomy.

Continued on Page 7



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

Law—A Legacy of the Lords

Law is often lauded as the great liberator; nevertheless, history whispers a less comforting truth: it was, for centuries, the legacy of lords rather than the safeguard of the simple. Before it became the people's protector, it was the prince's prerogative; before it matured into an instrument of justice, it frequently masqueraded as a mechanism of mastery. The journey from privilege to principle has been long, laborious, and, at times, painfully slow.

In the earliest civilizations, law neither sprang from popular participation nor reflected public consent. It flowed from the fountain of authority, and kings, conquerors, and clergy claimed exclusive custody over its creation and interpretation. Their decrees, draped in the dignity of divinity, demanded obedience rather than understanding, while dissent was denounced as defiance. Thus, law became a symbol of sovereignty instead of a sanctuary for society. The weak submitted, the mighty sanctioned and the silent suffered.

The medieval world further fortified this formidable framework. Feudal lords fashioned rules that preserved their possessions, protected their privileges, and perpetuated their power. Justice, though eloquently extolled, was often unevenly administered, for wealth won what wisdom could not, and pedigree prevailed where principle should have presided. The poor pleaded; the powerful pronounced. Courts echoed with authority, yet they were too often silent on equality.

The struggle against such legal absolutism, however, did not begin with the modern age of democracy. Long before the vocabulary of constitutionalism became familiar to the masses, history witnessed an important attempt to place restraint upon the ruler. In 1215, the Magna Carta marked a decisive turning point

by declaring that even the King was not above the law. Though originally intended to protect the interests of English barons, it gradually evolved into a timeless symbol of constitutional restraint and the supremacy of law. Later, philosophers transformed this aspiration into principles that continued to illuminate the path of civilized societies. Aristotle wisely observed that "the rule of law is preferable to the rule of any individual," while A. V. Dicey developed the modern doctrine of the Rule of Law, insisting

that every person, irrespective of rank or status, must remain equally subject to the ordinary law of the land.

The celebrated doctrine of the Rule of Law did not emerge overnight. It evolved through persistent protest, courageous confrontation, and constitutional compromise. Landmark charters curtailed arbitrary authority, while enlightened thinkers transformed legal philosophy from the language of domination into the discourse of dignity. Law gradually ceased to be the lord's luxury and slowly became the citizen's shield. Its transformation, however, was neither spontaneous nor seamless; it was secured through sacrifice rather than bestowed by generosity. But, beneath the magnificent language of justice, one question still continues to disturb the conscience of society: has law truly become the possession of the people, or has the legacy of lords merely assumed a new and more sophisticated form?

In fact, the journey of law from the chambers of the cherished ones to the conscience of the commoners has never been free from contradictions. Philosophy may proclaim equality, constitutions may promise justice, and statutes may speak in the language of impartiality, but reality often tells a more troubling story. The ancient observation attributed to Plato remains disturbingly relevant: "Law is like a spider's web; it catches the small insects while

the large ones break through." Whether historically precise or not, the metaphor captures a recurring public perception. Across many societies, influence occasionally appears to eclipse innocence, wealth seems to outshine merit, and connections sometimes accomplish what legal arguments alone cannot. Whether such perceptions are ultimately justified in an individual case or not, they produce a dangerous consequence: they weaken public confidence in the very institution whose strength depends upon public trust. Justice, after all, must not merely be done; it must also be seen to be done.

Even the legal profession, whose noblest mission is to defend justice, cannot claim complete immunity from the weaknesses and inequalities of human society. Within every Bar there are advocates of remarkable integrity who devote their abilities, time, and experience to the cause of justice; yet inequalities of opportunity may still remain. A young lawyer without financial resources, political influence, or an established family background may find the road to professional advancement considerably more difficult than the road travelled by one who inherits resources, reputation, or connections. In Bar politics, reputation may compete with resources, merit may struggle against patronage, and professional authority, when exercised without fairness, may discourage rather than develop emerging members of the profession. When such tendencies become established, the law risks resembling an inherited estate rather than an open institution in which competence and character should determine professional standing.

But this reality should not lead the legal fraternity towards despair; rather, it should awaken determination. A legal system is not judged merely by the elegance of its statutes, the grandeur of its courtrooms, or the volume of its legal literature. Its true worth is reflected in the integrity of its institutions and the impartiality of those who administer and practice the law.

Continued on Page 7

Might Is Right and Rising: The New Global Reality

Salamat Khan

We have all heard the saying that might is right. It is an old and cynical observation about how power often decides outcomes in human affairs. But if we look closely at the world around us today, we must admit that this saying no longer tells the full story. What we are witnessing now is something even more unsettling. It is not just that might is right. It is that might is right and rising. When a nation shows its strength, it does not merely get its way. It gains new respect, new friends, and a higher place in the world order. Those who follow the rules and show restraint are often ignored, while those who demonstrate their power are rewarded with attention and influence. This is the uncomfortable truth emerging in our times.

We can see this clearly by looking at Pakistan and India over recent years. In 2019, after the Pulwama attack, India carried out airstrikes inside Pakistan. When Pakistan responded and shot down an Indian plane, it had the pilot in its custody. At that moment, Pakistan chose to show responsibility and restraint. It returned the pilot within forty eight hours as a gesture of peace and chose to de-escalate the situation. Pakistan played by the rules. It showed the world that it wanted peace. But what did it get in return? Hardly any recognition. The world remained largely silent. No great diplomatic breakthrough came. Instead, months later, India revoked Kashmir special status, violating long standing international agreements. The world watched but did not act. Pakistan good behaviour had not earned it respect or protection. It had only shown that it could be pushed without much consequence.

Now compare that with 2025. After the

Pahalgam attack, India once again pointed the finger at Pakistan without waiting for evidence or investigation. When India launched airstrikes, Pakistan responded very differently. This time it hit back hard. It shot down advanced Indian aircraft and showed a level of military capability that surprised the world. Almost immediately, the global attitude changed. Major powers from America to China, Russia and the Gulf states all stepped forward to engage with Pakistan. Suddenly everyone wanted to talk. Pakistan was no longer a country to be ignored. It had become a key player whose voice mattered. Its strength had not only defended its territory but had also earned it new respect and stronger diplomatic ties across the globe. Even more telling was the incident in Delhi later that same year. When a deadly explosion took place near the Red Fort, India did not rush to blame Pakistan as it had done so many times before. It held back. It thought twice. The simple reason was that it now knew what Pakistan was capable of doing if provoked. Strength had become a shield. Restraint had not been respected, but power had been taken seriously.

This pattern is not limited to South Asia. In January 2026, the United States carried out a large scale military operation in Venezuela. It sent forces into another sovereign nation, captured its sitting president and flew him to America to face charges. This action violated nearly every principle of international law and the United Nations Charter. It was, in plain terms, an intrusion into another country home. Yet what was the outcome? There were words of criticism from some nations, but no real consequences. The United States faced no sanctions, no isolation, and no meaningful penalty. Instead it positioned itself to gain access to Venezuela's vast oil reserves and to shape the future of the country. It had used overwhelming power

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D-8 Webinar Highlights Malaysia’s Industrial Experience for Stronger Cooperation

Spokesman Report

ISTANBUL: The Developing-8 Organization for Economic Cooperation (D-8) Secretariat, in collaboration with Malaysia’s Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI), organized a webinar on industrial cooperation, highlighting Malaysia’s experience in industrial development, investment, exports, technology and human-capital development.

More than 70 participants from D-8 member states, including government officials, investment and export agencies, SME organizations, chambers of commerce and private-sector representatives, attended the event. D-8 Secretary-General Ambassador Sohail Mahmood emphasized Malaysia’s trans-

formation into a diversified, manufacturing and export-oriented economy and its relevance for strengthening cooperation among member states.

He noted that the nine D-8 countries collectively represent more than US\$5.19 trillion in GDP and around US\$1.09 trillion in merchandise exports. He stressed the need to connect markets, investment opportunities, technologies and productive capacities to help achieve the D-8’s target of US\$500 billion in intra-D-8 trade by 2030.

The Secretary-General identified technology and industrial transformation, investment and value-chain integration, and youth skills and human-capital development as key priorities. He proposed joint industrial and

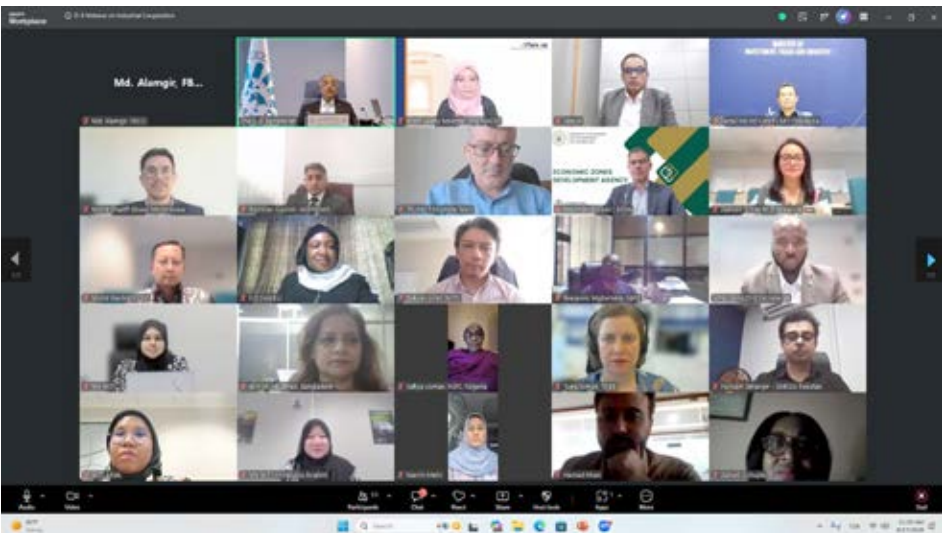


investment initiatives, enhanced technology transfer and innovation cooperation, and stronger links among industries, SMEs, research institutions and businesses.

Experts from MITI, the Malaysian Investment Development Authority (MIDA), Malaysia External Trade

Development Corporation (MATRADE) and Halal Development Corporation shared Malaysia’s policies and practices in industrial transformation, FDI attraction, export development and the Halal sector.

Participants highlighted AI, smart manufacturing, digitalization, green technologies, SME



development and industry-research cooperation as promising areas for D-8 collaboration. The

webinar concluded with a call to move from dialogue toward practical partnerships, projects

and measurable outcomes under the D-8 Decennial Roadmap 2020–2030.

Rakhi Bandhan Celebrations in Pakistan: A Thread of Unity Across Faiths

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Raksha Bandhan, popularly known as Rakhi, is one of South Asia’s most cherished festivals, celebrating the bond between brothers and sisters. While widely associated with India, Pakistan too has its own quiet but heartfelt tradition of Rakhi celebrations, kept alive largely by the country’s Hindu community, alongside growing participation from people of other faiths who value the spirit of the occasion.

A Festival Rooted in the Hindu Community

Pakistan is home to a significant Hindu population, concentrated mostly in the province of Sindh, particularly in cities like Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Tharparkar, and Umerkot. For these communities, Raksha Bandhan holds deep cultural and religious significance. Sisters tie a

sacred thread, the rakhi, around their brothers’ wrists, praying for their well-being and long life, while brothers pledge to protect and support their sisters throughout their lives.

In areas like Tharparkar, where Hindus form a considerable part of the population, Rakhi celebrations take on a festive, community-wide character. Markets bustle with colorful rakhis, sweets, and gifts in the days leading up to the festival. Temples, such as those in Karachi’s Swaminarayan and other Hindu temple complexes, often host special prayers and gatherings to mark the occasion.

A Symbol of Interfaith Harmony

What makes Rakhi celebrations in Pakistan particularly meaningful is the way they transcend religious boundaries. In many parts of the country, Muslim friends and neighbors join in the celebrations, with

Hindu sisters tying rakhis to Muslim brothers as a gesture of friendship, trust, and communal harmony. This tradition reflects a broader South Asian cultural fabric where festivals often become shared moments of joy rather than exclusively religious observances.

Such interfaith participation has, at times, been highlighted in Pakistani media and social platforms as an example of coexistence and mutual respect between communities. Local leaders and civil society organizations occasionally use the occasion to promote messages of religious tolerance and national unity, especially given Pakistan’s ongoing efforts to protect and include its religious minorities.

Government and Institutional Recognition

Over the years, Rakhi celebrations have also received some



level of institutional acknowledgment. Government officials and political representatives have, on various occasions, extended greetings to the Hindu community on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, and some public functions or cultural events have been organized to mark the

day, particularly in Sindh where Hindu-Muslim ties run deep due to historical and social integration.

Media coverage during the festival often features stories from Hindu families in Karachi and interior Sindh, showcasing the vibrant markets, traditional



attire, and family gatherings that accompany the celebrations. These stories serve as a reminder of Pakistan’s religious diversity, which, while numerically small in terms of the Hindu population, remains an important part of the country’s social mosaic.

A Celebration of Family and Faith

At its heart, Rakhi in Pakistan is a celebration of family values, love, and protection—values that resonate across cultural and religious lines. Sisters spend weeks preparing, choosing rakhis, and planning family reunions, while brothers, wherever they may be,

try to return home or send gifts and rakhis to their sisters as a symbol of their eternal bond.

In a country where religious minorities sometimes face social and political challenges, festivals like Raksha Bandhan offer a moment of cultural pride and continuity, allowing communities to celebrate their heritage openly while also fostering goodwill among neighbors of different faiths. It stands as a gentle yet powerful reminder that the threads of love and protection can bind people together, regardless of religion or background.

Rakhi celebrated with religious fervour at Panja Sahib

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK, AUG 28: The Hindu festival of Raksha Bandhan was celebrated with religious fervour at Gurdwara Panja Sahib here on Friday, with Hindu and Sikh devotees from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Rawalpindi, Attock and adjoining districts participating in the celebrations.

The festival, traditionally observed on the full moon of the Hindu month of Shravan, symbolises the bond of love and protection between brothers and sisters. On the occasion, sisters tie Rakhi — a sacred thread — around their brothers’ wrists and pray for their health, prosperity and well-being,



while brothers pledge to protect

and support them.



A number of colourful stalls

were set up at the Gurdwara

premises, offering Rakhis decorated with beads, stones and colourful threads. Women and girls thronged the stalls, purchasing decorative threads for their brothers.

Speaking on the occasion, Vijay Kumar, a pandit from Kohat, said Raksha Bandhan was not merely a family tradition but also represented love, trust, affection and protection. He said sisters prayed for the safety and prosperity of their brothers, while brothers renewed their commitment to care for and protect their sisters.

Shrawan Kumar, pandit at the Attock Valmiki Temple, said the festival had deep roots in Hindu religious tradition. He noted that

one traditional account associated the festival with the ancient practice of tying a sacred protective thread, known as Raksha Sutra.

Asmat Ullah, caretaker of the temple under the Evacuee Trust Property Board, said Raksha Bandhan began on the full moon of Shravan and could continue for several days thereafter.

Devotees said the festival provided a valuable opportunity for families to strengthen their bonds and offer prayers for the well-being of their loved ones. Police and other law-enforcement agencies made special security arrangements at Gurdwara Panja Sahib to ensure the safety of devotees attending the celebrations.

Graphic Health Warnings: A Powerful Message for a Healthier Future

Alishba Asif

Graphic Health Warnings (GHWs) are one of the most visible and effective ways of communicating the dangers of tobacco use. Found on cigarette packs and other tobacco products, these warnings combine clear text with powerful images to show the real health consequences associated with tobacco consumption. Their purpose is simple: to inform people, remind users of the risks, discourage young people from starting, and encourage current users to consider quitting.

Tobacco use remains a major public health concern around the world. Many people begin using tobacco without fully understanding its long-term consequences. Because tobacco products are often packaged in attractive designs and promoted in ways that can make them appear less harmful than they really are, health warnings provide an important counter-message. Every time a person reaches for a cigarette, the warning on the package can serve as a direct reminder of what tobacco can do to the body.

Unlike advertisements, which are designed to attract attention and create positive associations, graphic health warnings communicate an entirely different reality. Images showing damaged lungs,

diseased organs, or other consequences of tobacco use can make health risks more understandable and immediate. For people who may not respond to written information alone, visual messages can be particularly powerful.

GHWs also play an important role in reaching people who may have limited access to health information. A health warning printed directly on a tobacco package travels wherever the product goes. It does not require a person to attend a seminar, read a brochure, visit a health facility, or search for information online. The message is repeatedly displayed to the consumer and can also be seen by family members, friends, and others around them.

For young people, strong health warnings can challenge the perception that tobacco products are fashionable, modern, or socially desirable. When warnings are clear, prominent, and visually compelling, they can help prevent tobacco use from being viewed as harmless or normal. For current users, repeated exposure can encourage reflection on their health, family, future, and the costs associated with continued tobacco use.

Pakistan has made important progress in graphic health warnings, but this progress has remained largely unchanged in recent years. Pakistan increased pictorial health warnings from



50% to 60% in 2019. The 2019 notification introduced a new pictorial warning and increased its size to 60% on both sides of cigarette packs and outers. However, there has been no further increase in the legally required warning coverage since 2019; meaning Pakistan has remained at 60% for approximately seven years.

This prolonged gap highlights the need for a clear and forward-looking strategy from the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination (MNSRC) and Tobacco Control Cell (TCC), for increasing GHW coverage and strengthening the health warning to reduce tobacco consumption. The ministry should progressively aim for larger warnings size, updated messages, defined timelines for rotation, and regular review of warning effectiveness. A

predictable and evidence-based approach would help ensure that Pakistan’s health warnings continue to evolve rather than remaining static for years.

The need for progress is also reinforced by Pakistan’s obligations under the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (WHO FCTC), particularly Article 11, which addresses the packaging and labelling of tobacco products. Article 11 calls for effective health warnings that are large, clear, visible and legible, and its implementation guidelines specifically emphasize the importance of rotating health warnings and messages. The WHO FCTC guidance explains that the effectiveness of repeated warnings can decline as people become accustomed to them, while changing warnings can restore attention

and increase their impact

Pakistan’s position can also be viewed in comparison with other countries in the region. According to the WHO Report on the Global Tobacco Epidemic 2025, health warnings on cigarette packages cover 85% in India, and 80% in Sri Lanka, while Pakistan remains at 60%. This regional comparison shows that Pakistan’s current 60% coverage is considerably below several neighboring countries. India, for example, requires 85%, while Nepal and Maldives require 90%. The WHO South-East Asia Region has also made substantial progress, with India, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste among countries achieving the highest level of achievement for large graphic health warnings in recent assessments.

Globally, the direction of tobacco packaging policy is similarly toward larger, more prominent and regularly rotated health warnings. Pakistan is stuck at its existing level of coverage, while international and regional experience shows a continued shift toward larger and more visible warnings. WHO identifies large, prominent pictorial health warnings, regular rotation, clear messaging and effective use of package space as key features of best-practice tobacco packaging policies. Countries such as Nepal, India and Sri Lanka have adopted substantially better health warnings on tobacco packages, demonstrating the growing regional emphasis on prominent health communication.

The effectiveness of GHWs depends greatly on how they are designed and displayed. Warnings

that are large, clear, understandable and placed prominently on packaging are more likely to attract attention. Appropriate images can make complex health information easier to understand, while regularly changing or rotating warnings can help prevent people from becoming accustomed to the same message.

Pakistan therefore has an opportunity to build on the progress achieved in 2019. Moving beyond the current 60% coverage, introducing larger warnings to 85% and systematic rotation would bring the country’s packaging and labelling approach closer to the direction recommended by WHO FCTC and to standards increasingly seen across the region and globe.

Graphic Health Warnings are much more than pictures printed on cigarette packets. Pakistan should increase the mandatory coverage of graphic health warnings from 60% to at least 85% and establish a system for their regular rotation and updating. Raising coverage to 85% would represent a significant step forward in ensuring that health messages are more visible, prominent and effective, while bringing Pakistan closer to the standards already adopted by several countries in the region. They provide a voice to health consequences that are often hidden behind attractive packaging.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
177,696.50	177,322.77
Day's High	Day's Low
178,042.78	177,165.27
Index Value	Change
20,218,512,810	+373.73
Percentage	Time
+0.21%	28 Aug, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,824.26	+31.72
Percentage	Time
+0.29%	28 Aug, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
53,534.95	−34.49
Percentage	Time
−0.064%	28 Aug, 2:15 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
66,405.56	+273.59
Percentage	Time
+0.41%	28 Aug, 3:45 pm GMT +9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	198.29	202.35
Bahrain Dinar	734.45	745.65
Canadian Dollar	198.71	206.73
China Yuan	38.20	38.95
Danish Krone	42.80	43.40
Euro	323.15	327.20
Hong Kong Dollar	34.97	35.97
Indian Rupee	2.65	3.25
Japanese Yen	1.7339	1.8337
Kuwaiti Dinar	886.00	896.45
Malaysian Ringgit	68.05	68.90
NewZealand \$	163.93	166.78
Norwegians Krone	28.15	28.50
Omani Riyal	719.24	729.35
Qatari Riyal	74.92	75.80
Saudi Riyal	73.95	74.65
Singapore Dollar	217.29	223.04
Swedish Korona	28.40	28.90
Swiss Franc	343.16	347.93
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.85
U.A.E Dirham	75.65	76.50
UK Pound Sterling	376.80	381.75
US Dollar	277.60	278.55

SECP Removes
Barriers to Opening
Stock Market Accounts

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has launched a unified digital investor onboarding framework to make entering Pakistan's capital market faster and simpler. Under Circular No. 19 of 2026, the new system cuts repetitive verification, simplifies documentation, and sets clear timelines: Sehl/Sahulat accounts will open within 1 working day and Normal Accounts within 2 working days. Applicants will get tracking IDs, be notified of any deficiencies on time, and receive written reasons for rejection. A key feature allows intermediaries to rely on verification already done by other eligible financial institutions, avoiding duplicate checks. The framework also supports API-based straight-through processing, digital onboarding, instant UIN issuance, and CDC sub-account opening to reduce paperwork.

8 Pakistani
Exhibitors Showcase
Textile Strength at
Intertextile Shanghai
& Yarn Expo 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Eight Pakistani exhibitors made a strong impact at Intertextile Shanghai Apparel Fabrics & Yarn Expo Autumn 2026, held 25–27 August at the NECC, Shanghai. At Intertextile Shanghai, Azgard Nine, Kohinoor Mills, Mahmood Textile Mills, and Diamond Denim by Sapphire presented premium apparel fabrics. At Yarn Expo, Abtex International, Ihsan Cotton Products, NV Tex Sourcing, and Xiamen Naseem Trade Co. showcased high-quality yarn, highlighting Pakistan's diverse and competitive textile sector. The event drew 3,500+ exhibitors from 30 countries for fabrics and 600 exhibitors from 14 countries for yarn. A key highlight was the Economy Hub, focusing on sustainable, bio-based and recycled textile solutions, with Econogy Talks and Tours promoting knowledge exchange on performance textiles and digital transformation.

Punjab, Huawei Agree to Expand AI
and Digital Cooperation

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met senior Huawei officials in China to discuss expanding cooperation in artificial intelligence (AI), digital infrastructure and smart public services. She invited Huawei to invest in the Nawaz Sharif IT City and emphasized that AI development was a key priority for Punjab. The two sides agreed to train 1,000 young people from Punjab as Huawei master trainers, while 300 women trainers will receive specialized AI training. Discussions also covered establishing an Artificial Intelligence Delivery Unit and six data centres, including a sovereign facility, at Nawaz Sharif IT City. A focal person will be appointed to strengthen coordination between Huawei and the Pakistani government. The meeting reviewed cooperation in smart cities, command centres, healthcare, education, agriculture and manufacturing, alongside a broader roadmap covering cloud technology, digital infrastructure, talent development and smart public services. Special Assistant Ali Dar said Punjab was the first province to establish an AI office and was already using AI in healthcare, agriculture, traffic management, infrastructure and governance. He said AI had also been used in heart transplantation and that AI education was being introduced as a compulsory subject in government institutions. With 65 per cent of Punjab's population comprising youth, Ali Dar highlighted the province's potential for technology-driven employment and growth. He said Punjab aimed to develop an AI-integrated system by 2029 and welcomed Chinese technical assistance. Huawei assured the Punjab government of continued cooperation to advance digital transformation and sustainable development.



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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema chairs a meeting on Drug Pricing on Friday.



Photo: PID

Food and Drink
Account for 41.9pc
of inDrive Courier
Orders in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Food and drink deliveries accounted for 41.9 per cent of all classified inDrive. Courier orders in Pakistan during the first six months of 2026, highlighting the growing use of courier services for everyday needs. According to an internal analysis of orders placed between January and June across Pakistan, Food & Drink represented the largest category. Clothing and Shoes accounted for 24pc, Medicine and Pharmacy 9pc and Documents and Papers 8.5pc, while Electronics made up 8.4pc—the highest share among the eight markets included in the study. inDrive Pakistan Country Head Awais Saeed said the strong demand for food deliveries reflected users' trust in the platform and its



expanding role in daily life. The analysis showed frequent orders for Pakistani staples such as biryani, roti, naan and milk. Cakes represented 3.1pc of Food & Drink orders. Home-based kitchens, cafés and restaurants also used the service to deliver customer orders. inDrive said its courier service includes identity verification, courier ratings, live tracking and OTP-based proof of delivery, providing users with greater control and visibility. The company said the trend reflected its evolution from ride-hailing into a broader "Super App" offering mobility, freight and courier services.

PC Hospitality Holds Two-Day
Leadership Convention in Lahore

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: PC Hospitality organized a two-day Leadership Convention at Pearl-Continental Lahore, bringing together General Managers and Corporate Heads from across the Group to strengthen leadership capabilities and business performance. Held under the theme "Strengthening Business & Brand Leadership," the convention focused on developing high-performance leadership, strategic innovation and operational excellence across the company's hospitality portfolio. Participants engaged in leadership discussions and collaborative sessions covering digital transformation, changing consumer trends, market positioning and future business strategies. The CEO of PC Hospitality said investing in leadership development was essential to the company's long-term growth. He emphasized the importance of providing leaders with opportunities to learn, exchange ideas, challenge conventional approaches and enhance their professional capabilities. The convention also enabled senior executives from different properties and functions to share experiences and strengthen collaboration. Discussions highlighted the importance of strong brand leadership, operational consistency and greater adoption of digital technologies in building agile and future-ready hospitality businesses. PC Hospitality said learning and development remained central to its people strategy, with a focus on attracting, retaining and developing talent. The convention reflected the company's commitment to building a strong leadership pipeline and a culture of continuous learning to support stronger brands, empowered teams and sustainable growth.



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Pakistan's ICT Exports
Grow 19.7%, hit \$2.91b
Surplus as Digital
Payment Needs Rise

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's ICT sector maintained strong growth in 2025–26, with export remittances up 19.7% YoY and generating a \$2.91 billion trade surplus, according to the Pakistan Economic Survey. The number of IT and IT-enabled services companies registered with SECP also rose significantly. As Pakistani tech firms, digital agencies, e-commerce sellers and SaaS exporters expand globally, the need for reliable cross-border payment infrastructure is growing to manage currencies, control costs and fund expansion. Payoneer says it enables eligible Pakistani businesses to receive payments in major currencies, issue payment requests, manage funds and pay international suppliers. Its integrations with local banks allow real-time withdrawals into Pakistan's banking system. Nagesh Devata, SVP & Head of APAC at Payoneer, noted that global growth requires financial infrastructure that moves at business speed. Stronger payment systems can also support the wider economy by promoting formal export receipts, stronger SME cash flows, and wider participation in global trade.

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iFFALCON by TCL
Debuts in Pakistan with
U95A Premium QD-
MiniLED TVSummary

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: iFFALCON by TCL has officially launched in Pakistan, bringing TCL-backed display technology with a focus on performance, design and value. Its flagship U95A Premium QD-MiniLED TV leads the lineup. The U95A is built around QD-MiniLED technology with high HDR brightness to deliver deep blacks and bright highlights in the same frame while preserv-

ing detail. Its QLED panel covers 93% of DCI-P3 and reproduces billions of colors, supported by an intelligent color algorithm for natural skin tones and quantum crystal material for long-term color consistency. For motion, it features a native 144Hz refresh rate to reduce blur in sports and gaming. Audio comes from a 2.1-channel ONKYO Hi-Fi system with clear dialogue and enhanced bass. The ultra-slim TV is available in 98, 85, 75, 65, 55, and 50-inch sizes. 85" and 98" models use a matte



panel to cut reflections, while other sizes use an HVA panel for better contrast.iFFALCON posi-

tions the U95A as "an easy step into a premium experience" for home entertainment

MIH, Thai Embassy Hold Medical Camp for 120 Girls and Children



ISLAMABAD: Maroof International Hospital (MIH), in collaboration with the Royal Thai Embassy Islamabad, organized a medical camp at Hamara Ghar Welfare Trust in Shah Allah Ditta, providing free healthcare services to around 120 girls and children.

Held under MIH's Community Support Programme and the Embassy's community service initiatives, the camp offered consultations in ophthalmology, pediatrics, general medicine, dental care,

nutrition and dietetics, mental health and early intervention therapy. Free medicines and healthcare guidance were also provided.

Thai Ambassador to Pakistan Rongvudhi Virabutr appreciated the initiative and praised Hamara Ghar for caring for children who have lost their parents. He emphasized that partnerships between institutions could help promote community wellbeing and humanitarian support.

MIH Chairman Ch. Naseer Ahmed reaffirmed the hospital's commitment to supporting Hamara Ghar children beyond healthcare and announced that MIH would offer internship opportunities to them when they reach the appropriate stage, helping develop professional skills and confidence.

CEO MIH Haroon Naseer encouraged the girls to focus on education and pursue their aspirations with confidence. Hamara Ghar CEO Capt. (R) Tariq



Mehmood Satti said the organization, established in 2005 after the earthquake, now provides shelter, education, healthcare and opportunities to around 500 girls from early childhood through university.

The camp commemorated the birth anniversary of Thailand's late Queen Sirikit and National Mother's Day.

Pakistan's Citrus Industry: Challenges, Opportunities, and Way Forward



Citrus is the leading fruit crop in the world, with global production exceeding 190 million metric tons annually. It plays a vital role in economic growth, employment generation, nutritional security, and international trade. Citrus fruits are highly valued for their rich vitamin C content, antioxidants, refreshing flavor, and health-promoting properties. Leading citrus-producing countries have achieved remarkable productivity through modern and high density planting systems, improved cultivars, mechanization, precision agriculture, advanced fertigation technologies, and efficient postharvest management. Pakistan is among the major citrus-producing countries, producing more than 2 million metric tons annually. The citrus industry is largely dominated by Kinnow mandarin, which accounts for approximately 85% of national

citrus production and nearly 90% of exported from our country.

Despite this strong production base and favorable agro-climatic conditions, Pakistan contributes less than 1.3% to global citrus exports. Only about 10% of total production is exported, while most of the remaining produce is consumed domestically. Several challenges limit the growth and competitiveness of Pakistan's citrus sector. Average orchard productivity remains only 10-12 tons per hectare, significantly below its biological and commercial potential. The limited availability of certified disease-free nursery plants, excessive dependence on a single cultivar, poor varietal diversification, and inadequate orchard management practices continue to constrain productivity and fruit quality. The absence of climate-resilient, seedless, and export-oriented cultivars further restricts access to premium international markets. Water and nutrient management also remain critical concerns. Most citrus orchards still rely on conventional flood irrigation systems, which consume excessive amounts of water and result in substantial losses through evaporation, runoff, and deep percolation. In contrast, modern fertigation systems can reduce water consumption by 40-60%, while improving irrigation efficiency and



maintaining optimum soil moisture within the root zone.

Recognizing these challenges, efforts were made to promote climate-smart technologies and modern production systems capable of improving productivity of old citrus orchards. Under this initiative, model high density citrus orchard established using advanced irrigation and fertigation technologies with the collaboration of Chinese experts. By delivering nutrients directly through irrigation systems, nutrient-use efficiency was enhanced, resulting in improved plant vigor and orchard performance. The project also promoted the establishment of certified disease-free nursery production systems to ensure the availability of healthy planting material for growers. Introduction of new citrus germplasm was in target to broadening the genetic base of Pakistan's citrus industry. These introductions are expected to support varietal diversification, extend the production season, improve adaptation to climatic

stresses, and create opportunities for the development of high-value export-oriented cultivars. Farmer training and capacity-building were carried out to improve their skills and enhance productivity. The HEC-funded initiative represents an important step toward the modernization of Pakistan's citrus industry (HEC-CRG-2-44). By integrating climate-smart technologies, improved germplasm, efficient water and nutrient management practices, disease-free planting material, and modern orchard systems, the project has established a strong foundation for sustainable citrus production.

Pakistan possesses immense potential to become a globally competitive citrus-producing nation. Achieving this goal will require continued investment in modern technologies, improved genetic resources, efficient resource management, and stronger linkages among researchers, extension services, and growers. With sustained commitment and innovation, the citrus sector can play an even greater role in agricultural growth, export earnings, and rural prosperity.

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Women Mountaineers Conquer 7,027-Metre Spantik Peak

ISLAMABAD: Four women mountaineers from Gilgit-Baltistan have successfully reached the summit of Spantik Peak, marking a significant achievement for women's participation in mountaineering and highlighting Pakistan's potential as a global adventure tourism destination.

Shama Baqir, Samana Rahim, Zooni Aslam and Zaiba Batool Shigri completed the demanding ascent without high-altitude porters and safely returned to Skardu. Their achievement was confirmed by the Alpine Club of Pakistan. The climbers belong to Shimshal Valley, Gulmit in Upper Hunza and Shigar.

North Face Adventure (NFA) Managing Director Shahzad Faisal Khan said the expedition demonstrated the courage, resilience, preparation and teamwork of Pakistani women while highlighting the strength of mountain communities. Known as the Golden Peak, Spantik stands 7,027 metres high in the Karakoram and is among Pakistan's prominent 7,000-metre mountains. Its ascent requires extensive preparation, acclimatization and the ability to cope with extreme altitude and unpredictable weather.

Restoration of Badri Pond Begins in Dera Ismail Khan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Restoration work has started at Badri Pond in Burzawali Village, Dera Ismail Khan, under the Recharge Pakistan project, aiming to improve water security, groundwater recharge and climate resilience for surrounding communities.

The initiative seeks to revive the seasonal fresh-water system, which has experienced reduced capacity because of sediment accumulation, blocked natural water channels and eroded embankments. WWF-Pakistan Director General Hammad Naqi Khan said restoring natural ecosystems could help Pakistan address increasing flood and drought risks while strengthening long-term climate resilience.

The USD 72.9 million, seven-year Recharge Pakistan initiative is being implemented by WWF-Pakistan in partnership with the Ministry of Climate Change and Environmental Coordination and the Federal Flood Commission, with support from the Green Climate Fund, The Coca-Cola Foundation and WWF. The project operates across Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Sindh and Balochistan.

According to WWF-Pakistan, restoration work will include rehabilitation of 415 metres of natural flow paths, desilting of one hectare of the pond and reinforcement of 211 metres of embankments. The measures are expected to increase water-holding capacity by around 20,000 cubic metres and benefit approximately 2,957 households.



Might Is Right and Rising: The New Global Reality

Continued from Page 4

and rather than being punished, it had gained further advantage and influence. This sends a message that echoes around the world. If you are powerful enough, you can break the rules and not only escape punishment but actually benefit from it.

These developments show us that the international order we have known for decades is changing. The idea that all nations are equal under international law is fading. The rules that were built to protect weaker nations are losing their force. We are entering an era where respect is not earned

through fairness or diplomacy alone. It is earned through capability and the willingness to use it. This is a dangerous path. If the world accepts that power decides everything, then every nation will seek to build up its strength to protect itself. Conflicts will become more frequent and more deadly. Smaller nations will feel increasingly vulnerable. And the risk of larger wars will grow with every passing year.

We must ask ourselves where this will end. If we continue down this road, we may one day find that there are no rules left to protect anyone. The strong will dominate the weak, and justice

will be defined only by those who hold the most power. This is not a future that anyone should want. The international community must reflect deeply on where we are heading. We need a world where strength is used responsibly, where nations are judged not just by what they can take but by how they treat others, and where rules exist to protect all nations equally. Until that happens, we live in a time where might is not just right. It is rising. And unless we change course, that rising power may one day consume us all.

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Law—A Legacy of the Lords

Continued from Page 4

Judges must remain fiercely independent; legislators must enact laws that protect the vulnerable rather than the influential; Bar Councils must exercise their powers transparently and fairly; Bar Associations should promote merit instead of factionalism; and senior advocates should consider mentorship—not monopoly—to be their professional legacy. Equal access to legal education, meaningful legal aid for the poor, ethical accountability without discrimination, and transparent professional governance are indispensable if justice is to become a lived reality rather than remain merely a constitutional promise.

Law can never command enduring respect while it serves upper strata more faithfully than principle. It loses

its moral majesty when it intimidates the humble yet hesitates before the mighty. What is the worth of a law that speaks with severity before the weak but appears uncertain before the influential? What is the meaning of justice if the poor can see its doors but the powerful seem to possess its keys? The true majesty of law lies neither in magnificent courtrooms nor in voluminous statutes; it lies in its unwavering capacity to speak with the same voice to ruler and citizen, to minister and laymen, to celebrated counsel and novice advocate alike.

The time has therefore come to rescue law from the lingering shadows of inherited privilege. It must no longer remain the legacy of lords but become the living inheritance of every citizen. Its highest purpose is not to preserve privilege

but to promote fairness, not to glorify authority but to guarantee accountability, not to protect the powerful but to provide protection to those who cannot protect themselves. When law becomes accessible to the weak, impartial before the strong, and transparent in its administration, it ceases to be a mere instrument of authority and begins to acquire the character of justice itself.

Only when justice is administered without fear, favour, affection, or prejudice will law cease to be remembered as an instrument of domination and be honoured instead as the conscience of a civilized society. Then, and only then, will the ancient legacy of lords finally give way to the living legacy of the people; and law, rather than remaining the sceptre of power, will become the shield of humanity.

Carney's Call for Unity Against Great-Power Coercion

Continued from Page 4

The real objective should be diversified sovereignty. A country that depends upon one state for defense, another single market for exports, one financial network for transactions, imported energy for survival and foreign technology for critical infrastructure possesses formal sovereignty but limited strategic freedom.

Carney captures this brutally when describing middle powers negotiating individually with a hegemon: they negotiate from weakness, compete to become the most accommodating and eventually perform sovereignty while accepting subordination.

That observation should resonate across Asia, Africa and the Middle East.

Countries must begin measuring national strength differently. Military capability matters, but so do food security, energy, technological capacity, industrial production, critical minerals, financial resilience, educated human capital and diversified trade. A nation unable to feed itself, fuel itself or defend itself, Carney warns, has few options when international rules cease protecting it.

Building these capabilities inevitably demands sacrifice. Governments must invest in education, research, infrastruc-

ture, domestic manufacturing, energy, agriculture, artificial intelligence and defense. They must mobilize their human resources instead of allowing talent to remain underdeveloped. Above all, citizens must understand that sovereignty cannot indefinitely be outsourced while independence is simultaneously expected.

But no middle power can realistically reproduce the scale of China or the United States. That is why Carney's second prescription is as important as the first: middle powers must combine their strength.

His memorable warning that countries absent from the nego-

tiating table risk finding themselves "on the menu" captures the predicament perfectly. Great powers possess the markets, militaries and financial leverage to act alone. Most other states do not. Their answer must therefore be coalitions—on trade, technology, critical minerals, energy, finance, maritime security and defense—constructed around common interests rather than blind allegiance.

This is where his invocation of Václav Havel acquires extraordinary relevance. Systems of domination survive not simply because the powerful impose them but because others participate in rituals they privately know to

be false. Carney's metaphorical instruction to middle powers is therefore to stop performing the ritual—to "take the sign out of the window." The wiser conclusion is: never make another country indispensable to your survival.

Donald Trump's transactional approach has merely made this structural reality harder to ignore. Alliances, markets and security guarantees remain useful, but none substitutes for national capability. Protection granted by another power can be renegotiated; market access can be restricted; financial infrastructure can become leverage; yesterday's strategic assumption can become tomorrow's vulner-

ability.

The choice confronting middle powers is therefore not between America and China, East and West, submission and isolation. It is between dependency and strategic autonomy.

Build strength at home. Diversify abroad. Cooperate with others without surrendering decision-making. Defend international law consistently. Develop citizens capable of accepting the costs of genuine independence. And never confuse the favor of the powerful with permanent security.

That is the deeper significance of Carney's speech. The era in which countries could outsource

their strategic destiny and call the resulting comfort sovereignty is fading. The nations that recognize this early will endure the rupture with dignity. Those that continue competing for the favor of great powers may eventually discover the cruellest truth of international politics:

A security umbrella belongs to the country holding the umbrella—and it can close it whenever it chooses.

The writer is a 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



Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani meets exporters in Karachi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Minister of State for Finance and Railways, Bilal Azhar Kayani, held a high-level consultative meeting today in Karachi with key leaders and representatives of the All Pakistan Exporters Associations. Minister Kayani briefed the exporters on the tax policy, including the tax relief measures announced in the recent budget for exporters. He also heard the concerns of exporters and discussed possible measures to address them.

Minister of State highlighted the Government's commitment to facilitating trade, streamlining the tax framework, and further strengthening the export environment. He briefed the exporters on the Export Facilitation Committees that have been notified by the Govern-



ment after the budget. The purpose of the committees is to facilitate exports, help resolve matters raised by exporters, provide an effective mechanism for the amicable resolution of disputes, and ensure that exporters are not subjected to harassment by tax

officials.

The session brought together prominent business leaders and senior representatives from major national trade bodies. Key participants included Mr. M. Babar Khan and Mr. Faisal Arshad Shaikhi (PHMA);

Mr. Mahmood Nara and Sh. Shafiq Jhokwala (PAKSEA); Mr. Amir Amin Kothawala and Mr. Ejaz Khokhar (PRGMEA); Mr. Athar Bari and Mr. Aamir Hassan Lari (TMA); Mr. Abdus Samad (PCMA); Mr. Farooq Rahman Dittu (PCFA); Mr. Rehmat

Naveed Elahi (PBEA); Mr. Irfan Merchant (PDMEA); Syed Muhammad Aasim (APBUMA); Mr. Sohail Pasha and Mr. Khurram Mukhtar (PTEA); Mr. Khawaja Masood Akhtar (PSGMEA); Mr. Zeshan Tariq (SIMAP); Mr. Zahid Nazir (PCMEA); Mr. Syed Ahtesham Mazhar and Mr. Fawad Ijaz Khan (PLGEMA / Sialkot CCI); Mr. Hamid Arshad Zahur (Pakistan Tanners Association); Mr. Zafar Iqbal (Pakistan Fisheries Exporters Association); Mr. Annas Raheel (Pakistan Gloves Manufacturers and Exporters Association); Malik Faisal Jahangir (Rice Exporters Association of Pakistan); Mr. Aslam Pakhali (All Pakistan Fruit & Vegetable Exporters, Importers & Merchants Association); and Mr. Abdul Hannan (All Pakistan Meat Exporters & Processors Association).

Palwasha Khan, Sajida Khan question PIMS hospital's condition

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Senator Palwasha Khan and former MNA Sajida Khan have raised serious questions over the condition of PIMS Hospital following the deaths of 14 newborns in the fire incident. Speaking outside PIMS, Senator Palwasha Khan said the hospital was in poor condition and ques-

tioned who would be held responsible for the deaths, adding that figures meant little without accountability.

Former MNA Sajida Khan said she came from Peshawar after hearing about the tragedy in PIMS's children's ward two days ago, describing the deceased children as innocent angels and that she was familiar with the hospital's



condition from her mother's previous admission. Sajida Khan questioned



PIMS's security arrangements, availability of doctors with same doctors working at

private clinics and condition of medical equipment, saying proper measures should have been taken instead of simply installing locks.

She also questioned why members of the Parliamentary Standing Committee were joining the meeting so late and expressing urgent meeting should have been called after the tragedy.

Federal Petroleum Minister Visits PSO, Pledges Support for Energy Security & Modernization

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik visited Pakistan State Oil (PSO) Head Office for high-level talks on energy security and sector modernization. He was accompanied by Secretary Petroleum Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh and Additional Secretary Zafar Abbas. PSO CEO Jawwad Ahmed Cheema briefed the delegation on financial results, operational milestones and future plans. Discussions focused on supply chain resilience, strategic reserves, storage expansion, and digital transformation amid volatile global fuel prices and maritime disruptions. Measures discussed included proactive international procurement, supply source diversification, and strengthening buffer reserves. The Minister



commended PSO for maintaining an uninterrupted nationwide fuel supply and assured full government support to

expand storage infrastructure, accelerate digitization/automation, and improve customer experience. He emphasized

a shared vision for a modern, resilient energy sector with consumer interests and economic stability at its core.

PM Shehbaz Orders Timely FBR Reforms, Swift Crackdown on Tax Evasion & Smuggling

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chaired the weekly review on FBR reforms and directed authorities to implement reform measures within the set timeframe and accelerate action against tax evasion, smuggling, and illegal businesses.

He ordered a third-party audit of reforms for transparency and sustainability, calling digitalisation, production monitoring, and automated systems the key pillars of FBR reform. The PM said reforms aim to modernise the tax system, boost revenue collection, and eradicate smuggling.

Officials briefed him on progress including: IRIS 3.0; New tax oper-

ating model with a central data hub, pilot auto-taxation, and planned use of AI/ML. International consultants hired. - PRAL restructuring with new senior appointments in tech, data security, and tax.- Faceless customs assessment helped raise average revenue per Goods Declaration by 12% (Jan-June).- 280 goods evaluators recruitment in final stages. Central Assessment Unit in Islamabad to open by Dec 31, 2026, fully functional by June 2027.

Digital invoicing rose from Pkr 236B in July 2025 to Pkr 2.5T in July 2026, with a Pkr 4T target for Dec 2026. Anti-smuggling: GIS tagging of petrol pumps, GPS tracking, ERP integration, and the Rahguzar app which led to closure of 2,500 illegal petrol pumps.

Anti-Encroachment Operations Continue Across Islamabad

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have intensified a citywide operation against illegal encroachments in Islamabad under a zero-tolerance policy, aiming to reclaim state land, restore civic order and improve the capital's overall environment.

The campaign is being conducted under the direction of Federal Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Raza Naqvi, with CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf overseeing the drive. Teams from the Capital Development Authority (CDA) and Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad (MCI) are working jointly under a coordinated government approach.

Authorities are taking action against illegal constructions, commercial extensions, kiosks, roadside stalls, encroachments on green belts and footpaths, and unauthorised commercial use of government



and residential properties.

Operations in areas including Saidpur Village, Noorpur Shahan, Islamabad Expressway and Tarnol have resulted in the removal of illegal structures and recovery of government land. Similar operations are continuing in markets, residential sectors, service roads and green belts.

According to authorities, thousands of kanals of state land and properties worth billions of rupees have been reclaimed during the campaign. Officials said the removal of encroachments has improved traffic flow, pedestrian access, parks, green spaces and the urban environment.

Govt Cracks Down on Overloading: No Compromise on Axle Load Regime, Says Abdul Aleem Khan



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan chaired a high-level meeting on the Axle Load Control Regime (ALCR) with heads of NHA, Motorway Police, NLC, and FWO. The meeting noted 30,000 axle load violations in the past 6 months, with overloading causing severe damage to road infrastructure. A state-of-the-art weigh station in Sangjani will be completed soon. The Minister issued strict directives: Legal amendments to NHA framework within 1 week to

remove hurdlesFines on both vehicle owners and factories found overloading trucks 100% of freight vehicles must pass through weigh stationsFull automation of weigh stations to end queues and time lossWeigh stations on GT Roads like motorways, plus AI cameras to instantly track violatorsTransporters advised to avoid heavy decorative accessories that increase vehicle weightAleem Khan ordered NHA, NLC and FWO to develop a 20-year joint strategy for Karachi Port and announced he will personally inspect 10 motorway locations to ensure compliance.

Rescuers scour remote floods-hit Nepal-China borders areas

UNITED NATIONS: Emergency workers and helicopters scoured steep Himalayan valleys on Thursday in a desperate search for survivors after a torrent of water, mud and ice killed hundreds as it swept through a remote river valley that runs through Nepal and China's Tibet, according to television reports.

Stunned witnesses described a torrent of debris and water carrying away villages in minutes, according to television reports. More than 1,000 people were still missing on Thursday, authorities said. More than 1,400 people were still missing.

According to the UNITED NATIONS, immediate humanitarian needs in Nepal have been in the districts of Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading and communities face immense challenges as families cope

with loss, displacement and disruption to essential services.

"The United Nations is mobilizing supplies and humanitarian teams and we pledge to support national efforts to deliver emergency aid and support," Secretary-General António Guterres said at UN Headquarters in New York.

The flash floods have swept away or cut off entire communities, with roads, bridges, hydropower facilities, water systems and telecommunications networks badly damaged, leaving affected areas largely inaccessible and hampering the delivery of lifesaving aid, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) said on Thursday. At least 17,000 children have been impacted by the devastating flash floods that tore through Nepal's Rasuwa, Nuwakot and Dhading districts.