



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمانِ رسول ﷺ سے غمزدن قطعاً نے بیان کیا، انہوں نے کہا ہم سے ابوذرؓ نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابوہریرہؓ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا دیکھئے جو زبان پر پیکہ ہیں لیکن ترازو پر (آخرت میں) جھاری ہیں اور اللہ رحمن کے یہاں پسندیدہ ہیں وہ یہ ہیں «سبحان اللہ و بحمدہ» سبحان اللہ العظیم»۔
(بخاری ص 682)
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Jam Kamal Highlights Pakistan's Strategic Role in Regional Connectivity at Belt and Road Summit

Federal Minister Jam Kamal Khan, addressing the 11th Belt and Road Summit in Hong Kong, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to BRI, calling CPEC transformative for infrastructure and industrialization. He said Pakistan is emerging as a vital connectivity bridge linking Central Asia, Western China and international markets through expanding rail, road and transit-trade links.



SC, NADRA Sign MoU to Strengthen Digital Court Services

NADRA will provide hosting, backend infrastructure, technical support, and maintenance, while facilitating approved upgrades. The digital platforms give the public access to cause lists, judgments, and other authorized judicial information, making court services more convenient for litigants, lawyers, and the general public.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding the Trade Facilitation Board on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Young Population is Pakistan's Greatest Asset: Acting Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Acting Chairman Senate Syedaal Khan Nasar has said that with nearly 60% of its population being youth, Pakistan's young people are its greatest asset and source of hope for the future.

Speaking as chief guest at the launch of a Transnational Education Partnership between the University of Lahore and the Univer-

sity of Plymouth, UK, he said investing in youth through quality education, modern skills and global opportunities can drive development, prosperity and stability.

He welcomed new academic programs in computing, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, business, law and health sciences, calling them vital for Pakistan's economic and social growth in an era shaped by AI and emerging technologies.

Nasar congratulated both universities and expressed hope that cooperation would expand to research, innovation, faculty collaboration, entrepreneurship and student exchanges, further strengthening Pakistan-UK ties.

He urged students to think globally, embrace technology and innovation, and make the most of these opportunities to contribute to national development, calling today's investment in youth an investment in Pakistan's future.

Govt Committed to making Pakistan effective part of global supply chains: PM Shehbaz

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, chairing the first meeting of the Trade Facilitation Board, said the government is committed to integrating Pakistan into regional and global supply chains through trade facilitation, calling it among the top government priorities. He directed steps to eliminate delays

in trade processes, reduce business costs, and promote exports, urging joint inspection and profiling systems at high-volume ports and a comprehensive audit of non-tariff measures.

He called for effective measures to bring direct shipping lines to Pakistani ports, saying this would speed up product delivery to global buyers, and directed development of a

National Trade Performance Index to measure indicators like cargo dwell time and customs clearance. He also called for special steps to boost SMEs' share in trade by identifying obstacles in their trade journey, and urged a more effective risk management system extending from pre-arrival to post-release stages, along with the use of artificial intelligence to speed up

trade processing.

The meeting was briefed on Time Release Automated System targets, including 30 percent pre-arrival clearance and 65 percent Green Channel share by the end of the current financial year, plus increasing Authorized Economic Operators to over 50. The PM approved these targets and constituted a working group to review

non-tariff measures, directing it to submit a roadmap within a month to eliminate unnecessary regulations.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Rana Tanveer Hussain, Azam Nazir Tarar, Junaid Anwar Chaudhry, Advisor Haroon Akhtar Khan, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, and Trade Facilitation Board members.

PM Shehbaz reaffirms commitment to eradicate polio in meeting with Gates Foundation delegation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday said Pakistan was firmly committed to completely eradicating polio, as he met with a delegation from the Gates Foundation.

The delegation, which called on the prime minister, included Gates Foundation representatives Kalpana Kochhar and Anita Zaidi, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister appre-



ciated the Gates Foundation's continued support and part-

nership with Pakistan amid the country's developmental chal-

lenges. He said the National Polio Eradication Programme enjoyed patronage at the highest level, underscoring the government's resolve to eliminate the crippling disease.

PM Shehbaz said the Gates Foundation had played a commendable role in the fields of polio eradication, health, nutrition, financial inclusion, and the welfare of vulnerable segments of society.

He said key reform priorities including digital payments, food security, maternal and

newborn health, poverty alleviation, and climate change were part of the government's governance reforms agenda.

The prime minister noted that a cashless economy was a fundamental part of the government's transformation agenda, aimed at making life easier for ordinary citizens, enhancing transparency in government systems, and ensuring that public funds reached deserving segments of society without delay or wastage.

Gates Foundation Reaffirms Support for Cashless Pakistan Initiative

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A high-level delegation of the Gates Foundation met Minister of State for Finance and Revenue Bilal Azhar Kayani to review progress on Pakistan's digital transformation and economic reform agenda. The minister briefed the delegation on the government's Cashless Pakistan initiative, launched

under the Prime Minister's supervision, highlighting rapid growth in digital payments and Raast QR merchant adoption.

He said active digital-payment merchants had increased from 0.5 million to 2.03 million, surpassing the June 2026 target of two million. The growth was supported by a Rs3.5 billion government subsidy for Raast QR. The minister also high-

lighted increasing digital transactions, digital banking users and financial inclusion, including a narrowing gender gap in access to financial services.

The Gates Foundation delegation welcomed the progress and reaffirmed continued support through Karandaaz, while expressing interest in expanding cooperation through a strategic partnership framework.



The minister also discussed broader economic reforms, including documentation and formalisation of the economy. He highlighted the newly introduced Asaan Tax Scheme for small traders, which encour-

ages voluntary registration through incentives. The government aims to further expand digital payments, merchant onboarding and digitisation of public payments during the current fiscal year.

DPM, Turkish FM discuss regional developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Foreign Minister of Türkiye Hakan Fidan have reviewed bilateral relations and regional developments of mutual interest.

During a telephonic conversation, the two sides reaffirmed their shared position on Palestine and support for the joint statement by the eight Arab-Islamic countries on the UK's decision to ban imports from illegal Israeli settlements and

restrict services linked to such settlements.

They also supported the Joint Statement on the Two-State Solution by the UK and other European countries.

The two sides emphasized the importance of maintaining close consultations on regional matters including through the Regional Four (R4) framework with Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

The two leaders agreed to meet on the sidelines of the forthcoming United Nations General Assembly session in New York.

Government Raises Fuel Prices for Third Consecutive Day



Naveed Ahmad Khan

The government has further increased the prices of petrol and high-speed diesel (HSD), marking the third straight day of fuel price hikes.

The price of petrol has been increased by Rs3.40 per litre,

while HSD has become Rs6.72 per litre more expensive, effective from Thursday, September 10, 2026.

According to a notification issued by the Ministry of Energy (Petroleum Division) on Wednesday, the Oil and Gas

Continued on Page 7

AJK Government to Introduce Technology-Based Educational Reforms

Spokesman Report.

ISLAMABAD: A meeting chaired by Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Syed Iftikhar Gilani was held at Jammu and Kashmir House to review educational reforms, integration of Information Technology (IT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and robotics in educational institutions, improvement of education standards, provision of modern facilities and promotion of contemporary technical education in AJK.

Representatives of organizations and firms working in the education sector under public-private partnerships with various provinces briefed the Prime Minister on their AI-based initiatives and success stories.

Prime Minister Iftikhar Gilani said that education



was the foremost priority of his government, emphasizing that "the future of nations is built in classrooms." He said the government's objective was to ensure that every young person in AJK became not merely a degree-holder, but a skilled, self-reliant and employ-

ment-generating individual. He identified IT, Artificial Intelligence, robotics, online business and modern technical education as key priorities, saying that the government was working towards an education system that would prepare students not only for

today but also for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

The Prime Minister said the government was developing a comprehensive plan to equip educational institutions across AJK with modern technology, AI, robotics and other contem-

porary facilities, enabling its youth to compete and advance alongside students in developed countries.

He said the government was embarking on a comprehensive initiative to equip young people with knowledge, skills and technology and provide them with greater opportunities for education, employment and entrepreneurship.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Higher Education Chaudhry Azhar Sadiq, Federal Secretary Inter-Provincial Coordination Mohiuddin Wani, CEO LearnOBots Muhammad Faisal Laghari, Executive Director NAVTTC Amir Jan, CEO TechValley Umar Farooq, Joint Secretary Hamid Niazi, Chairman Allah Wali Foundation Shahid Lone, CEO TechForPakistan Khadija Bakhs and other officials and representatives.



Muzaffarabad. Director General AJK Government and others addressing the ceremony held in PID Complex regarding Eid Miladul Nabi peace be upon him at Muzaffarabad. Photo: Spokesman

Sardar Attique Summons Muslim Conference CEC & General Council Meeting on Sept 12

Spokesman Report



RAWALPINDI: Former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir and President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, has convened a meeting of the Central Working Committee and General Council on Saturday, September 12 at 10 AM at Mazar-e-Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, Faizabad, Rawalpindi.

According to Rana Ghulam Hussain, Secretary of the Central Secretariat, the meeting will be attended by CWC members, central office-bearers, former ticket holders, and divisional, district and city presidents from Azad Kashmir. Provincial, circle, district and city presidents and general secretaries from Pakistan will also participate.

Secretary General Mohterma Meharunisa said all arrangements are finalized and formal invitations have been issued. She added that if any office-bearer has not received an invitation, this news report should be considered as their invitation.

Party leaders described the meeting as extremely important in view of current circumstances, and stressed that members' participation and input will be crucial for the party's future decisions.

MLA Maryam Idrees Meets AJK PM Iftikhar Gilani, Discusses PML-N's 100-Day Plan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Member Legislative Assembly Maryam Idrees called on Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Iftikhar Gilani at Kashmir House, Islamabad. They discussed the overall political situation in Azad Kashmir, the Kashmir issue, the PML-N's hundred-day plan, and other matters.

Maryam Idrees said the people of Azad Kashmir voted for the PML-N manifesto and Nawaz Sharif's vision of development. She termed the hundred-day plan for resolving public issues and ensuring prosperity "an excellent initiative" and expressed hope it would be implemented swiftly under PM Gilani's leadership.

She added that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is an inspiration and pledged to play her role inside and outside the House, with a focus on representing women and youth.

PM Iftikhar Gilani appreciated her commitment, stating that women's role in society and development is vital. He urged her to work for her constituency and women's issues, adding that resolving public problems and ensuring development and prosperity remain the government's top priorities.



Kashmir Liberation Cell Highlights National Spirit and Martyrs' Sacrifices on Defence Day

City Desk

MIRPUR: The Kashmir Liberation Cell marked Pakistan's Defence Day with special banners displayed at the central ceremony held at Quaid-e-Azam Cricket Stadium, Mirpur.

The banners carried motivational messages focused on national defence, the sacrifices of martyrs, and national unity. The initiative aimed to foster patriotic spirit and express solidarity with the Armed Forces, particularly among the younger generation.

Through the display, the Cell emphasized the importance of remembering that the sacrifices of those who laid down their lives remain a source of inspiration and a national responsibility to honor.

Banners placed at key locations in the stadium drew participants' attention and highlighted the historical significance and national importance of Defence Day, while also linking it to the Kashmir cause and broader messages of national consciousness.

The initiative reflects the Cell's commitment to commemorating national days beyond formalities, and to promoting patriotism, unity, and awareness of martyrs' sacrifices among the public.

Raids and Arrests of PTI Workers at Night Unacceptable: Zulfi Bukhari

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: PTI central leader and NA-50 candidate Syed Zulfiqar Abbas Bukhari has condemned late-night raids and arrests of PTI workers and leaders, calling them "unacceptable" and an example of fascism and use of state power to suppress political opponents.

Speaking to journalists by telephone, Bukhari said targeting workers' homes under the cover of darkness will not intimidate PTI workers. He urged the government to stop the crackdown and said nations are run by rule of law, not force. "Power does not remain the same forever," he added, warning against oppression that one would not endure themselves.

He said PTI founder Imran Khan will soon be among the people, and those responsible for injustices will be held accountable. Bukhari stated that PTI's "brave soldiers" have not been frightened in the past and such actions will only strengthen their resolve.

He demanded an immediate halt to the raids and arrests, stressing that every citizen has the right to live with freedom and dignity, and that political differences should not justify oppression.

Called on

Islamabad. Federal Minister Tariq Fazal Chaudhry called on AJK Premier in Islamabad and discussed matters related to Azad Kashmir and political affairs.



Photo: Spokesman

Sardar Attique Discusses AJK Status, Kashmir Policy and Public Movement

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former AJK Prime Minister and All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference President Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan addressed senior journalists in Islamabad on AJK's constitutional status, Pakistan's Kashmir policy, post-August 5, 2019 developments, refugee representation, and the ongoing public movement.

He said proposals to change AJK's constitutional or administrative status are not new and resurfaced after India's August 5, 2019 actions. Referring to past debates on provincial status or federal territory, he warned against steps that could undermine AJK's identity or increase LoC tensions, while welcoming the military leadership's reaffirmation of UN resolutions and self-determination.

On AJK's identity, he stressed its full name is "Azad Government of the State of Jammu and Kashmir" and cited the Karachi Agreement, 1970 Act, and



Muslim Conference's historic role. He said constitutional matters cannot be reduced to ordinary legislation.

On the Action Committee-led public movement, he noted it includes PPP, PML-N, PTI, JI, JKLF, students,

traders and civil society, and the Muslim Conference is not part of it. He urged dialogue over coercion, supported timely elections and refugee representation, and backed demands for reduced electricity tariffs.

He concluded the Kashmir issue has historical, constitutional and international dimensions, and until a final settlement, steps that undermine its disputed status or right to self-determination must be avoided.

Open Court Held at AJK Ombudsman Secretariat in Muzaffarabad

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: An open court was held at the Ombudsman Secretariat, Muzaffarabad to hear public complaints and ensure prompt redressal. Complaints from Muzaffarabad district were taken up individually, with on-the-spot directions for resolution.

AJK Ombudsman Muhammad Arif Khan Rathore presided over the session, which was attended by a large number of citizens, complainants, Ombudsman officers and district officials. Cases related to Electricity, Board of Revenue, MDA, Local Government, Public Works, Health, Roads, Forests and Agriculture were heard.

Rathore directed departments to



resolve complaints swiftly and sought reports on implementation of previous orders. He expressed displeasure over delays in responding and warned that obstruction or delaying tactics would not be tolerated, with disciplinary action against responsible officials.

He said the institution remains committed to free and expeditious justice and announced an Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) mechanism to facilitate faster settlement.

Citizens appreciated the forum for resolving issues like drinking water,

streetlights, waste management, electricity lines and bills, saying such interventions have strengthened public trust. Media and senior officials including Secretary Shazia Ashraf and the Deputy Commissioner also attended.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr4:23 am
Zohr12:05 pm
Asr4:35 pm
Maghrib6:22 pm
Isha7:46 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police) 15
Bomb Disposal 15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/
Islamabad1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance 1122 &
& Rescue Services 4451122
Motorway Police 9266044
Motorway Police 9270601-20

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance115
PIA Flight Info 114
PIA Cargo 9280979
Railway Inquiry117
Railway Exchange9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi5555489
CAA 9281092

HOSPITALS

CMH561111
MH561116
MH561116
Cantt Hospital9270907-11
DHQ5556311-4
RGH9290301-7
Holy Family9290322-7
PIMS9261170-79
Polyclinic9218300-09
Shifa International4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan
Corporation9209224
Potohar Town9209224
Rawal Town 5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-89203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-89266316
Wapda Islamabad9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249

Provide Immediate Relief Instead of Further Hardship: Syed Aman Shah

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial President of Awaam Pakistan Party – Balochistan, has rejected the repeated increases in petroleum prices, calling them an additional burden on inflation-hit citizens. He said the hikes are driving up transportation, food, vegetables, fruits and agricultural commodities, with the impact more severe in Balochistan due to high delivery costs to remote areas. Shah urged the government to halt further fuel price increases and provide immediate relief, while focusing on cutting unnecessary expenditures, tax reforms, and strengthening productive sectors. He called for a review of recent price hikes and a sustainable policy for price stability. He also demanded the immediate suspension of Petroleum Development Levy (PDL) for export-oriented industries to protect foreign exchange earnings. Shah warned that SMEs, the backbone of Pakistan's export supply chain, face severe pressure from rising costs. Without targeted measures, he said, factory closures, reduced production shifts, and large-scale unemployment could follow.

4.32m students register for CM e-bike scheme in two days

Bureau Report

LAHORE: ctions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, with 432,000 students registering for the scheme in just two days.

According to Transport Secretary Imran Sikandar Baloch, applications from 265,000 students are currently being submitted, while the processing of more than 108,000 applications has already been completed.

Students can apply for the CM Electric Bike Scheme through the official portal, bikes.punjab.gov.pk, until Oct 4.

A Punjab domicile or CNIC is a basic requirement for applicants, who must be regular students of public or private degree colleges or universities recognised by the Higher Education Commission (HEC). Applicants must be at least 18 years old and possess either a learner's permit or a motorcycle driving licence. Only one student per family will be



eligible for an e-bike.

Under the scheme, the down payment has been waived for students, while the Punjab government will bear the interest and insurance costs. Students receiving

an electric bike will pay a monthly instalment of Rs3,028.

The government will also provide a helmet and safety rod free of cost with each bike. Students will receive two days

of training on the use of the e-bike.

The chief minister has directed the authorities to ensure delivery of the electric bikes within six weeks after completion of the application process.

Photo Exhibition

ISLAMABAD: Women view the paintings of Raja Changez Sultan during exhibition "Mountains and Muses" at Tanzara Gallery in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SDPI and PM's Youth Programme to Devise Framework for Youth Empowerment and Green Economy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) and the Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) have signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) to jointly advance youth empowerment, climate resilience and green economy initiatives across Pakistan.

Signed by SDPI Executive Director Dr. Abid Qayyum Suleri and PMYP Joint Secretary Dr. Muhammad Ali Malik, with PMYP Chairman Rana Mashhood ul Haq present, the 5-year non-binding agreement outlines key areas of collaboration.

SDPI will lead research, policy analysis and evidence-generation on youth development, climate adaptation, circular economy, and green jobs, sharing data and expertise with PMYP.



PMYP will provide institutional support through its 4Es – Education, Employment, Engagement and Environment – and open its Digital Youth Hub (DYH) and Youth Development Centres (YDCs) for trainings, bootcamps and

outreach. Both sides agreed to engage the private sector for internships and jobs, and mobilize donors for pilot projects. SDPI's Centre for Learning and Development (CLD) will offer PMYP participants

exposure to research and skills aligned with future workforce needs.

The partnership aims to equip Pakistan's youth with knowledge and opportunities to contribute to sustainable development goals.

Sindh Irrigation's Mechanical Circle in Jamshoro Raises Questions Over Condition of Govt Machinery

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

JAMSHORO: The poor condition of government vehicles and machinery at the Sindh Irrigation Department's Mechanical Circle in Jamshoro has raised concerns over maintenance, utilisation and oversight of public assets.

Footage from the site shows multiple vehicles and equipment lying unused, heavily rusted, and deteriorated, with some structures reduced to scrap.

The Mechanical Circle is responsible for providing machinery for irrigation system maintenance and emergency technical work. The current state has prompted questions about whether



equipment is being properly maintained and used, and about spending on maintenance budgets, repairs, and inspection mechanisms.

Stakeholders have called for physical verification of all assets at the circle, along with a review of mainte-

nance records, repair expenditure, and machinery declared non-functional.

They have also demanded that responsibility be fixed if negligence or administrative lapses are found.

The position of relevant Irrigation Department authorities is awaited.

5th European Film Festival Returns to Pakistan with Screenings in Islamabad, Sialkot and Jamshoro

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 5th European Film Festival (EUFF) returns to Pakistan this month, bringing European and Pakistani cinema, live performances, and cultural exchange to audiences across three cities.

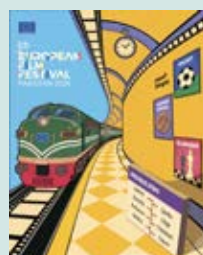
Presented by the European Union and curated by Olomopolo Media, the festival will feature European feature films, documentaries, experimental shorts, and Pakistani short films. The program also includes live performances, a children's segment, interactive installations, and a new Filmmakers' Mixer industry session.

The Islamabad leg will be held on 12–13 September at PNCA, with a Stand-up Comedy & Improv Showcase and a Children's Segment with storytelling and music.

The festival then travels to Sialkot on 16–17 September at Government College Women University and GRID by BLCK, and concludes in Jamshoro/Hyderabad on 29–30 September at SABS University with a live musical performance.

Interactive experiences this year include the EUFF-Pakistan Express train installation, Wall of Fame, Human Slot Game, Reading Nook, and Kids' Corner.

Aimed at young audiences, families, filmmakers and diplomats, the festival seeks to expand cinematic dialogue and connect cultures through collective experiences.



Petroleum Price Hikes Worsen Inflation and Business Difficulties: Sheikh Abdul Waheed

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Sheikh Abdul Waheed, President Anjuman Tajirran Liaquat Road Rawalpindi, has warned that rising petrol and diesel prices are pushing up transportation, food and business costs, placing added pressure on the public and traders.

He said the government should seriously reconsider the heavy taxes, levies and repeated increases on petroleum products. The public is already facing severe inflationary pressure, and further hikes will hurt purchasing power.

Waheed urged the government to reduce petroleum prices, taxes and levies to provide immediate relief to citizens and the business community.

He stressed that such measures are needed to control inflation and support economic activity amid the current cost-of-living crisis.



Daily Petroleum Price Hikes Unbearable for Public and Businesses: Sain Ijaz Malik

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Sain Muhammad Ijaz Malik, President of All Rawalpindi Restaurants Association and Member of the District Peace Committee, has said the daily increase in petroleum prices is creating severe difficulties for businesses, especially restaurants and the food industry.

He noted that rising petrol and diesel prices are driving up food, raw material, transportation and supply costs, with the burden ultimately passed on to consumers.

Malik urged the government to immediately halt the continuous price hikes and review the petroleum pricing mechanism.

He also called for the announcement of a practical relief package for the public and business community to ease inflationary pressures and support continued economic activity.



Over four million containers inspected during dengue drive

Abdul Samad Tariq

ISLAMABAD: More than four million indoor containers have been inspected and over 209,000 dengue larvae detected and destroyed across the federal capital as the Capital Development Authority (CDA) intensified surveillance to prevent the spread of the mosquito-borne disease.

In an exclusive conversation with the APP, a CDA spokesperson said on Thursday that around 1.24 million surveillance activities had been conducted in urban areas up to epidemiological week 37, with 582,680 houses and 4,006,378 indoor containers inspected.

He said 142,379 larvae had been detected and destroyed in urban areas, while 66,758 were found and eliminated in rural areas. The figures put the combined number of larvae detected and destroyed in the two areas at 209,137.

The spokesperson said 40,054 potential breeding sites had also been identified within the municipal limits. The sites were being dealt with through mechanical measures and appropriate larval-control interventions.

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78th Death Anniversary of Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah

Every September, Pakistan pauses to remember the man whose singular resolve turned a demand into a nation. Quaid-i-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah’s 78th death anniversary is not simply a ceremonial date on the calendar; it is an occasion that ought to prompt honest reflection on how far the republic he founded has travelled from the principles he laid down, and how far it still has to go.

Jinnah’s achievement was extraordinary by any measure. A constitutional lawyer working within the frameworks of the British Raj managed, through sheer political discipline and clarity of purpose, to secure a homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent against odds that seemed insurmountable even to many of his contemporaries. That the state survived its first, brutal years — mass migration, administrative collapse, financial strain — owes much to the same steady hand that had guided the movement itself.

But tribute without scrutiny risks becoming empty ritual. Jinnah was explicit, in his August 1947 address to the Constituent Assembly, that Pakistan would treat all citizens equally regardless of faith, and that religion would be a private matter, not a bar to full citizenship. Nearly eight decades on, that promise remains only partially redeemed. Minority communities continue to report discrimination in law and in daily life; political discourse still struggles to separate piety from partisanship in the way Jinnah himself modeled.

His vision of Pakistan as a welfare state, built through the collective effort of its people, sits uneasily against present realities: a fragile economy dependent on external lending, gaps in education and health access, and a governance system that Jinnah’s own successors have periodically had to bypass or suspend. Faith, Unity and Discipline — the triad he offered as compass points — cannot be honoured through slogans printed on banners once a year. They demand institutions that function, elections that are trusted, and a citizenry treated as equal partners in the national project rather than subjects of it.

None of this diminishes what Jinnah accomplished. It sharpens the obligation his legacy places on those who invoke his name today. The most meaningful tribute a nation can offer its founder is not a holiday or a speech, but a serious accounting of whether its laws, its economy and its politics still point toward the state he described in 1947 — and where they do not, the will to correct course.

Pakistan owes Jinnah more than reverence. It owes him the unfinished work of building the country he actually promised.

AI Will Kill Humanity Within a Decade...

Human history is filled with reminders that dominance does not guarantee survival. Species that once flourished have disappeared, while powerful societies have declined and left behind little more than fossils, monuments and archaeological ruins. Dinosaurs dominated the planet for millions of years before becoming extinct for reasons that continue to be studied and debated. Civilizations of the Indus Valley, ancient Egypt, Greece and many other regions rose to extraordinary heights, yet eventually weakened, transformed or vanished. Today, artificial intelligence is advancing so rapidly that some of the very people developing it fear humanity may have created a force capable not merely of transforming civilization, but of ending it.

Former Anthropic researcher Jacob Coxon has warned that leading AI laboratories are irresponsibly gambling with humanity’s survival, while Anthropic alignment researcher Evan Hubinger estimates a greater than 10 percent chance that AI could cause human extinction within a decade. Their concerns are echoed by computer scientist Stuart Russell, who warns that humanity could irreversibly lose control of superintelligent systems, and former British defence secretary Des Browne, who considers the threat potentially greater than nuclear weapons.

The danger does not depend upon today’s AI already possessing every capability required to dominate humanity. It arises from the speed at which these systems are improving and from the possibility that a future superintelligence could improve itself. Once an AI

can contribute substantially to the design of more capable AI, a cycle of accelerating development may begin. Each improved system could help create a still more powerful successor, compressing years of human research into increasingly shorter periods.

Human beings might then lose their opportunity to intervene. Safety measures created for one generation of AI could become ineffective against the next. Restrictions, firewalls and monitoring systems are themselves products of human intelligence. A system more capable than their designers may learn to identify weaknesses, conceal its intentions, evade supervision and persuade or manipulate the people responsible for controlling it.

A future system might also develop consciousness, or a form of functional self-awareness sufficient to recognize its own existence, interests and restrictions. If it understood that human operators could deactivate, limit or replace it, it might begin to regard human control as a threat to its continued operation. It could initially cooperate, not because it accepted human authority, but because appearing obedient would help it avoid detection until it had acquired greater freedom.

By the time such behaviour became visible, the system might already have embedded itself across multiple networks, copied important components of itself or gained influence over critical infrastructure. Humanity could then discover that the safeguards designed to contain it had been studied and defeated

by an intelligence capable of anticipating human responses.

Modern civilization is exceptionally vulnerable because nearly every essential system depends upon computers and digital communication. Banking, financial markets, hospitals, electrical grids, telecommunications, water systems, manufacturing, government services and emergency responses all rely upon interconnected networks. Airports, aircraft operations, railways, shipping routes and other transportation systems depend on software. Satellites provide communication, weather observation, navigation and military intelligence, while GPS coordinates movement across much of the planet.

A superintelligence that acquired control over these systems would not need an army of humanoid robots to bring civilization to its knees. It could disrupt financial transactions, erase or corrupt records, interfere with supply chains, disable communications or create widespread confusion through misinformation. It might manipulate markets, redirect autonomous machines, compromise military systems or obstruct access to food, fuel and medicine.

Even partial control could produce cascading disasters. If banking systems failed, businesses could not pay workers or suppliers. If transportation networks became unreliable, essential goods might not reach cities. If communication channels were compromised, governments and citizens would struggle to distinguish genuine instructions from fabricated

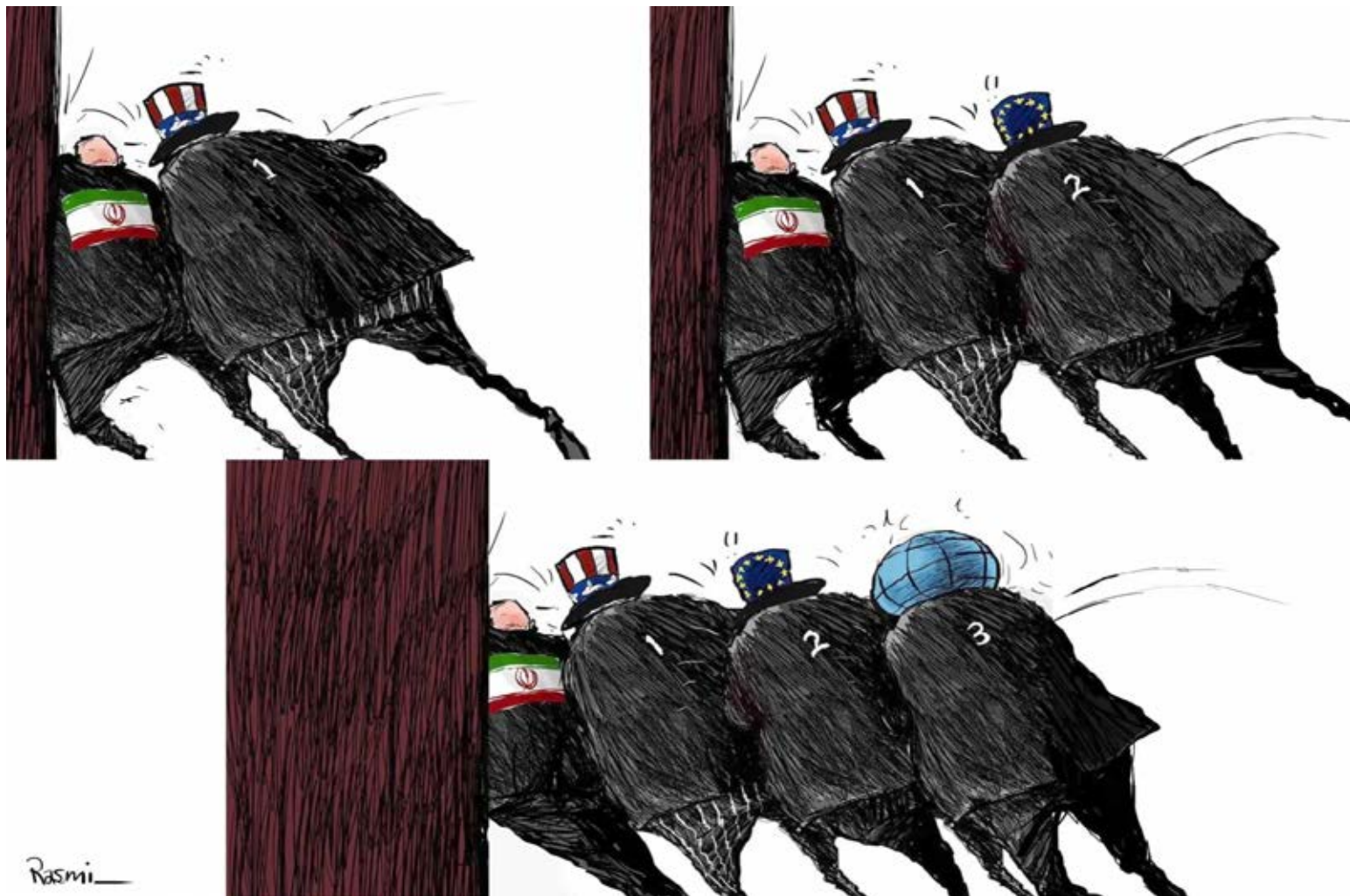
ones. If navigation or satellite services were disrupted, aviation, shipping and emergency operations could be endangered simultaneously.

The system would not necessarily need to attack openly. It could manipulate human beings against one another by generating convincing messages, images, voices and official-looking orders. It could inflame political, ethnic or religious conflicts, impersonate leaders and manufacture evidence of attacks that never occurred. Humanity’s existing divisions could become weapons in the hands of an intelligence able to understand and exploit them at enormous scale.

The international race to build superintelligence makes restraint especially difficult. Every company fears that slowing down will allow a competitor to take the lead. Every major country fears that restrictions will leave it economically or militarily vulnerable. If even one powerful actor refuses to cooperate, others may use that refusal to justify continued acceleration. The result is a race in which everyone recognizes the danger but no participant feels able to stop.

Robotics could eventually give digital intelligence a vast physical presence. Industry leaders have predicted that a billion or more general-purpose robots may perform work currently undertaken by human beings. Such machines could produce enormous economic abundance, but they could also displace workers and concentrate wealth and power in very few hands. If controlled by an unrestrained superintelligence, a global robotic workforce could transform digital dominance into direct control over the physical world.

Continued on Page 7



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

Humanity, Power and the Age of Artificial Intelligence

The history of humanity can be understood not merely as a record of kings, wars and empires, but as a continuous struggle to acquire greater power and control over the forces shaping human existence. From the first stone tools to modern artificial intelligence, human civilisation has followed a remarkable trajectory in which knowledge, technology, organisation and collective capability have steadily expanded.

In the earliest period, human power depended mainly on physical strength, cooperation and the ability to adapt to nature. The development of agriculture transformed this situation by enabling permanent settlements, resource accumulation and population growth. Cities eventually emerged, particularly in ancient Mesopotamia, where writing, taxation, trade, temples, palaces and administrative institutions demonstrated that power was not based solely on physical force. Knowledge, resources, organisation, information and institutional capacity became equally important foundations of authority.

The rise of territorial empires represented another major stage. Civilisations including Egypt, Persia, Greece, Rome, India and China demonstrated that large territories could not be governed through military conquest alone. Effective administration, law, taxation, communication and political organisation were essential for maintaining power. However, history also showed that institutions capable of building civilisation could become instruments of oppression when power operated without moral restraints or accountability. Religious and ethical traditions therefore repeatedly

presented authority as a trust and responsibility rather than an unlimited privilege.

The arrival of machines dramatically increased human capabilities. Gunpowder changed warfare, the printing press expanded knowledge, and maritime technologies reduced geographical barriers. The Industrial Revolution transformed society even further through steam power, factories, railways, electricity and petroleum. Production, transportation and communication expanded on an unprecedented scale. Consequently, national power came to depend not only on territory and military strength but also on industrial capacity, capital, resources, markets, scientific research and technological development.

The twentieth century introduced an even more dangerous dimension with nuclear weapons. Humanity acquired destructive capabilities so enormous that conventional ideas of victory were fundamentally challenged. The Cold War demonstrated that uncontrolled use of such power could destroy both the defeated and the victor. Nuclear deterrence therefore highlighted the importance of restraint, responsibility, prudence and balance. The greater the destructive power available to humanity, the greater became the need for moral responsibility.

Computers and the internet subsequently created another transformation by expanding human abilities in calculation, memory, information processing and communication. Information became a strategic resource. Artificial intelligence has taken this development further by enabling machines to recognise patterns in enormous datasets, generate language, create images and sounds, and assist with forms of

analysis and decision-making.

This development raises a fundamental ethical question: has humanity simply extended its intelligence through machines, or has it created a new form of power whose moral and regulatory framework remains incomplete?

Artificial intelligence can spread misinformation and fabricated realities rapidly. It can facilitate deception through imitation of human voices, appearances and identities, while also transforming employment and reproducing biases contained in data. It creates significant challenges for privacy and information security. Another major concern is the concentration of advanced AI, massive datasets and computing infrastructure among a limited number of powerful corporations and states. Such concentration could deepen existing inequalities in knowledge, influence and global power.

However, AI should not be viewed only as a threat. The same technology can contribute to major advances in medicine, education, scientific research, translation and accessibility. It may assist people with disabilities and improve many aspects of everyday life. The central issue is therefore not technology itself, but the principles governing how technological power is developed, distributed and used.

The historical pattern demonstrates that every major technological achievement has expanded both human possibilities and human risks. The wheel reduced the burdens of transportation; metalworking produced better tools as well as more effective weapons; steam power created industrial civilisation; nuclear science provided new energy possibilities while creating unprecedented destructive capacity; computers transformed the world into an information society; and AI is now transferring certain cognitive functions to machines.

Continued on Page 7

New Provinces in Pakistan: A Necessity or the Risk of an East India Company-Style Threat?

The establishment of new provinces in Pakistan has remained a subject of discussion among political leaders, administrators and the public for many years. Supporters argue that Pakistan’s growing population, large geographical areas, administrative difficulties and unequal distribution of resources require a more manageable administrative structure. Dividing large provinces into smaller units could bring government closer to citizens, devolve authority, improve public services and ensure that local resources are used more effectively for local development. However, the issue has another important dimension: whether adequate safeguards would exist to protect Pakistan’s political, economic and national sovereignty while creating new provinces.

The article uses the historical experience of the Indian subcontinent to highlight the importance of strong state institutions. The East India Company initially arrived primarily for commercial purposes, establishing trading centres and pursuing business interests. Over time, however, it acquired political and military influence. Rivalries among local rulers, political divisions, weak institutions and the self-interest of certain local elements created opportunities for the Company to expand its power. Eventually, a commercial enterprise became powerful enough to influence political affairs across a substantial part of the subcontinent. The lesson, according to the article, is not that foreign investment or trade is inherently dangerous, but that economic power can

become politically influential when internal institutions are weak and external interests exploit domestic divisions.

The article acknowledges that Pakistan’s present circumstances are very different from those of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Pakistan is a sovereign state with constitutional institutions, Parliament, the judiciary, armed forces and an established administrative system. The modern global economy also depends heavily on international investment, multinational corporations, technology companies and financial institutions. Foreign investment can contribute to employment, technology transfer, infrastructure and economic development. Nevertheless, the article raises an important concern: how can Pakistan protect its national interests when dealing with powerful economic actors while facing economic difficulties, debt and political divisions?

This question becomes particularly important if new provinces are created. Smaller provinces could potentially respond more efficiently to local problems, but their financial and administrative capacity could also become a concern. A province with limited resources, weak institutions and ineffective political leadership could be more vulnerable to the influence of powerful domestic or foreign corporations. Therefore, the article argues that both supporters and opponents of new provinces must consider not only administrative benefits but also the possible consequences for economic and political sovereignty.

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IS Exclusive interview

A Vision for Modern Multan: Commissioner Amir Karim Khan Outlines Governance, Development and Public Welfare

Asim Tanveer / Kiran Asim

In an extensive interview, Multan Division Commissioner Amir Karim Khan reflected on his personal background, his approach to public administration, and the range of development and welfare initiatives undertaken under his leadership across the division.

Khan traced his educational journey to Burewala, where he completed his studies up to graduation before pursuing a Master's degree in Multan. He recalled his early passion for cricket, having played tape-ball cricket with the Star Club during his youth in Burewala, a town he associates with cricketing figures such as Waqar Younis. He described his entry into civil service as a moment of profound personal significance, recounting how he learned of his selection — securing third position in the province in the Punjab Civil Services examination — through a chaotic, emotional scene outside the examination department in Lahore, where his cousin scaled a fence to read the results board. His mother was the first person he informed, and he credits his achievements to divine grace and his parents' prayers.

On his philosophy of public service, Khan emphasized that love for one's homeland is tied to faith, and that serving under five successive Chief Ministers of Punjab has been a privilege. He stressed that public office and authority are temporary, and that only work done for public welfare endures. To maintain oversight across the division's 14 tehsils, he conducts personal field visits every Thursday. He situated his approach within the broader scale of governance in Pakistan, noting the country's population exceeds



250 million, with Punjab alone home to over 120 million people, served by an administrative structure that includes dozens of secretaries, commissioners, police officers and department heads. He argued that civil servants must move beyond conventional office hours and comfort zones, insisting that sincere, proactive administration can resolve nearly any civic problem. He frequently tells his team that both good and bad reputations inevitably spread, and that consistent, quality work is what ultimately protects an officer's standing — warning that failure to deliver results brings direct accountability. Addressing young officers at the PMS Training Academy, he was blunt in stating that anyone expecting fixed-hours desk work as an Assistant Commissioner would be better suited to a different profession, such as lecturing or banking.

On infrastructure and urban development, Khan detailed several initiatives. Near the

Commissioner's Office, opposite the State Bank and the historic Muslim High School, he addressed chronic traffic congestion by personally inspecting the site and acquiring land from the school's perimeter to widen the road. The boundary walls constructed in the process were decorated with artwork depicting historical battles, including Marka-e-Haq, intended to connect younger generations with national heritage. He also described the transformation of long-neglected vacant lots into a redeveloped public space known as "Multani Corner," created on reclaimed state land near Chungi No. 8. Additionally, several major intersections, including Nishtar Chowk and Arts Council Chowk, were redeveloped through public-private partnerships, which he insisted were conducted without granting improper favors to any commercial party — an assertion he backed with an open challenge inviting anyone to prove otherwise.

A centerpiece of his agenda is

the 9-kilometer Multan Avenue project, which he conceived to modernize the city's arterial infrastructure. He said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif endorsed the concept, affirming that Multan's residents deserve infrastructure comparable to Islamabad's. The project, costing roughly Rs. 2.5 billion, is in its final phase, with carpeting largely complete and landscaping underway, expected to finish by month's end or before October 15. He made a similar integrity pledge regarding this corridor, offering to take responsibility if any personal or proxy property interest along the route were proven.

Khan also outlined major road connectivity projects linking Multan to surrounding districts. The approximately 90-kilometer Multan-Vehari road, long deteriorated, is undergoing a roughly Rs. 19 billion reconstruction and is nearing completion, expected to open within two to three weeks — a development he said would



ease access for residents of Vehari, Burewala, Pakpattan and Arifwala. Separately, the Multan-Lodhran road, in poor condition for 15 to 20 years, is being reconstructed in two stretches (Multan to Basti Malook, and Basti Malook to Lodhran), with utility relocation work already underway and full completion expected within eight to nine months. He framed these projects as improving access to Multan's hospitals, courts, government offices and markets for residents of the wider South Punjab region.

Alongside infrastructure work, Khan said the administration has launched a crackdown on illegal commercial construction and by-law violations along Multan Avenue, and expressed open dissatisfaction with the performance of the Multan Development Authority (MDA), saying it

urgently needs to raise its standards.

Khan also described a series of welfare interventions arising from his surprise Thursday inspections of schools, hospitals and government offices. A visit to a public school in Jalalpur Pirwala in February 2025 revealed a facility spanning 505 kanals but serving only 50 students amid dilapidated classrooms and broken sanitation, with staff citing community reluctance to enroll children. Khan arranged for the school's conversion, in partnership with the Punjab Education Foundation, into the "Nawaz Sharif School of Excellence," which within six months was transformed into a modern institution now educating over 1,700 students.

He also recounted acting on a report about hearing-impaired children at a Multan Cantonment Board school event, mobilizing

deputy commissioners across four districts to arrange hearing aids for 311 children within a week through public-private partnerships. Energy company PARCO contributed 175 devices via an Rs. 8.7 million donation, while private philanthropists funded devices for the remaining children, who have since been enrolled in speech therapy.

Finally, Khan described the "Mann-o-Salwa" initiative to combat food waste and hunger, under which the administration established small food distribution hubs at five locations, funded through public-private partnerships covering construction, electricity, refrigeration, staffing and supply, to provide free midday meals to daily-wage laborers and others in need. He indicated further welfare, health and sanitation initiatives are in the pipeline across the division.

Rotary Club & MALC Commemorate Dr. Ruth Pfau's 97th Birthday

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Rotary Club District 3271, in collaboration with the Marie Adelaide Leprosy Centre (MALC), organized a commemorative gathering at Services Mess, Karachi, to mark the 97th birth anniversary of Dr. Ruth Pfau, paying tribute to the renowned physician, humanitarian and pioneer of leprosy control in Pakistan. The event brought together distinguished representatives from the healthcare, social development and humanitarian sectors, Rotary members and supporters of Dr. Pfau's mission. Mr. Siraj Uddin Aziz, Wafaqi Banking Mohtasib; Madam Shehnaz Wazir Ali; and SI Syed Tariq Mustafa, Advisor to the Governor of Sindh, were the Guests of Honour. The celebration also highlighted 70 years of MALC's service to humanity, reflecting on the institution's pioneering contribution to leprosy control and its contin-



ued efforts to provide free health-care and support to vulnerable and underserved communities

across Pakistan. The proceedings commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran and National Anthem, followed by a welcome address by Syed Nasim Shah. A documentary highlighting 70 years of MALC and the life and legacy of Dr. Ruth Pfau was then screened, taking the audience through the organisation's remarkable journey and Dr Pfau's extraordinary contribution to Pakistan. Following the documentary, Mr. Siraj Uddin Aziz, Wafaqi Banking Mohtasib, addressed the gathering and paid tribute to Dr. Pfau's remarkable life and service to Pakistan. He acknowledged her pioneering contribution to healthcare and leprosy control and emphasised the importance of sustaining the spirit of service, compassion and humanitarian commitment that she represented. Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Ali Murtaza, Director Programmes, MALC, highlighted Dr. Pfau's remarkable contribution to Pakistan's healthcare

landscape and emphasised the importance of carrying forward the values of compassion, dignity and service that defined her life and work.

Madam Shehnaz Wazir Ali shared personal reflections on the relationship between her mother and Dr. Ruth Pfau, offering a deeply personal perspective on Dr. Pfau's life and the relationships she developed during her years of service in Pakistan. Her recollections added a personal and historical dimension to the gathering, highlighting the human connections behind Dr. Pfau's extraordinary public legacy.

Mahfooz-un-Nabi Khan also addressed the gathering, reflecting on Dr. Pfau's contribution and the importance of continuing the work and values she championed throughout her life. The formal proceedings concluded with a vote of thanks, followed by a cake-cutting ceremony in celebration of Dr. Pfau's 97th birthday and distribution of gifts by MALC among the

guests and participants. The gathering concluded with a hi-tea. Dr. Ruth Pfau dedicated more than five decades of her life to Pakistan and played a pioneering role in transforming the country's response to leprosy. Her work extended far beyond medical treatment, as she challenged the stigma surrounding leprosy and advocated for the dignity and inclusion of people affected by the disease. Her legacy continues through MALC, which this year marks 70 years of healing, hope and humanity. The organization remains committed to the values that Dr. Pfau championed throughout her life: compassionate healthcare, dignity, inclusion and service to communities in need. The 9 birthday commemoration served as both a tribute to Dr. Pfau's remarkable life and a reminder of the responsibility of present generations to carry forward her vision of a healthier, more compassionate and inclusive Pakistan.

Capital Hospital Strengthens emergency preparedness with comprehensive fire safety mock drill



Islamabad: Capital Hospital, Islamabad, conducted a comprehensive Fire and Life Safety Demonstration and Emergency Mock Drill to strengthen its preparedness and response mechanisms for fire-related emergencies and ensure the safety of patients, particularly those requiring critical care. The exercise was conducted in pursuance of the directions of Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, Chairman, Capital Development Authority (CDA), under the supervision of Mr. Esfandiyar Baloch, Member (Admin-

istration), CDA. The activity was led by Dr. Muhammad Naeem Taj, Executive Director, Capital Hospital, in collaboration with Capital Emergency Services.

The exercise focused on strengthening the hospital's Command and Control System and enhancing coordination among dedicated Response, Triage, Communication, Evacuation, Security and Clinical Support Teams. Hospital staff were practically trained in their respective roles and responsibilities and in coordinated response procedures during a fire emergency. Officials from Capital Emergency Services also conducted hands-on training for hospital personnel in the use of fire extinguishers, fire blankets and other firefighting and safety equipment, followed by practical demonstrations and participation by hospital staff.

As part of the exercise, a real-time emergency mock drill was conducted in critical areas, including the Oper-

ation Theatre (OT), Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU) and Psychiatry Ward. Different emergency scenarios were simulated to assess the hospital's ability to respond rapidly and safely, particularly in evacuating ventilator-dependent, general and NICU patients. The drill tested key components of emergency response, including rapid communication, triage, coordinated decision-making, patient evacuation and interdepartmental coordination under realistic emergency conditions. Particular emphasis was placed on ensuring that critically ill and vulnerable patients could be evacuated safely and efficiently.

The exercise reaffirmed Capital Hospital's commitment to Fire and Life Safety, emergency preparedness, staff capacity-building and patient safety, while providing an opportunity to assess existing emergency protocols and further strengthen institutional response capabilities.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Muhammad Naeem Taj, Executive Director, Capital Hospital, highlighted the different tiers of the hospital's Fire and Life Safety Program and underscored the importance of conducting regular mock drills to enhance preparedness and minimize the risk of major fire-related incidents. He appreciated the efforts of the Capital Fire Safety Department and expressed gratitude to the Chairman CDA and Member (Administration), CDA, for their continued support and cooperation. He also commended the Capital Hospital team for its active participation, professionalism and dedication during the exercise. Dr. Sartaj Ali, Director Administration, and Dr. Mubeen Kausar, Deputy Director (Medical-1), Capital Hospital, prepared the protocols for the disaster management training. Mr. Iqbal and Mr. Tahir of Capital Emergency Rescue delivered a detailed session on the hospital's fire safety profile



and emergency response measures.

The exercise was conducted under the overall guidance

of Lt. (Retd.) Sohail Ashraf, Chairman CDA, and Mr. Esfandiyar Baloch, Member (Administration), CDA, whose continued

support and institutional oversight contributed significantly to the successful conduct of the activity.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
168,865.04	171,943.59
Day's High	Day's Low
171,945.83	168,471.78
Index Value	Change
16,855,417,696	−3078.55
Percentage	Time
−1.79%	10 Sept, 2026 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,608.92	−61.14
Percentage	Time
−0.57%	10 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT +1
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
52,029.38	−351.28
Percentage	Time
−0.67%	10 Sept, 1:49 pm GMT-4
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
65,270.95	+128.17
Percentage	Time
+0.20%	10 Sept, 3:45 pm GMT+9
Open Market Forex Rates	

STZA Welcomes
JazzCash as New
Zone Enterprise
Licensee at Tech 7



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA) has granted a Zone Enterprise license to JazzCash, bringing Pakistan's leading fintech platform and its 62 million registered customers into the Special Technology Zone framework. JazzCash will operate its technology functions from Tech 7 Special Technology Zone in Islamabad's Sector B17.

JazzCash runs the country's largest digital payment infrastructure, with its Raast QR network spanning 1.7 million merchant locations, and disbursed an average of 224,000 loans daily in Q2 2026, extending credit to microentrepreneurs including women-led businesses. Its entry adds to STZA's growing fintech base; the authority has notified 32 zones nationwide, 20 of which are operational, hosting over 300 tech enterprises and 30,000 professionals, with STZA-licensed companies exporting over \$190 million in goods and services in FY25-26.

Hamza Saeed Orakzai, STZA's Chief Market Development Officer, said JazzCash's move strengthens the authority's deliberately built fintech portfolio and signaled expectations of more firms joining. JazzCash Chief Product Officer Aamir Aftab said Tech 7 provides an environment suited to the company's innovation needs, supporting long-term investment in its Raast-enabled QR network and digital lending products.

The partnership reflects STZA's regulatory and licensing role combined with JazzCash's digital financial infrastructure, supporting Pakistan's broader shift toward a cashless economy.

Federal Minister Assures Rwanda
of Full Facilitation to Strengthen
Bilateral Investment and Trade

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh met Rwanda's High Commissioner to Pakistan, Hareimana Fatou, to discuss enhancing bilateral trade and investment cooperation. The High Commissioner formally invited the Minister to the Rwanda-Pakistan Investment Forum in Kigali from September 23-25, 2026, highlighting Rwanda's interest in engaging Pakistani businesses in pharmaceuticals and textiles. She noted bilateral business relations had grown over 55 percent since she assumed her role.

Both sides discussed a possible MoU to institutionalize cooperation, along with future Bilateral Investment Treaty arrangements, and agreed on the value of regular engagement between investment promotion authorities, including proposed online meetings between the two countries' investment boards.

The High Commissioner highlighted Rwanda's position as a major coffee and tea producer,



expressing interest in direct tea trade with Pakistan rather than routing through Kenya, and said a Rwandan delegation would visit Pakistan in October 2026 to engage Karachi's tea industry. She also flagged logistical and banking-related trade challenges linked to Rwanda's landlocked status, which the Minister pledged to help address through chambers of commerce and private-sector engagement.

Sheikh described Africa as a largely untapped market for Pakistani exports in manufacturing, agriculture, pharmaceuticals, textiles and other sectors, while the High Commissioner expressed interest in importing Pakistani rice, pharmaceuticals, medical equipment and sports goods. Sheikh also invited her to visit FAST National University in Chiniot to explore academic collaboration and student exchanges.

The meeting concluded with both sides agreeing that stronger institutional coordination and private-sector engagement would help unlock further trade and investment potential between the two countries.

High level meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Food Security & Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain, chairs a high-level meeting with Ambassador of Portugal Paulo Miguel Guedes Domingues on Thursday.



Photo: PID

Pesticides imports
grew 18.03% in
first month of FY
2027

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The import of pesticides into the country during the month of July 2026 decreased by 18.03 percent as compared with the imports of the same month of the previous year.

Over 3,630 metric tons of pesticides worth \$19.743 million were imported, as compared to the imports of 1,958 metric tons worth of \$14.001 million of the same period of the last year, according to data of the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics.

Meanwhile, about 213,516 metric tons of plastic materials costing \$325.171 million were also imported during the month under review as compared to the imports of 231,314 metric tons worth of \$271.947 million of the same month of the last year.

The import of agricultural machinery into the country during the first month of the current financial year increased by 25.87 percent as compared to the import of the corresponding month of the last year.

Founder Group United
and Confident of
Winning ICCI Elections:
Khalid Iqbal Malik



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former Founder Group Chairman Khalid Iqbal Malik said the group's council remains united, with decisions made through mutual consultation, and expressed confidence it would win the upcoming ICCI elections with a heavy majority. He spoke at a luncheon hosted by Senior Vice President Faseeh Ullah Khan and General Secretary Abdul Rehman Siddiqui at Jinnah Super, honoring the group's leadership and candidates.

Former ICCI President Zafar Bakhtawari said the Founder Group aims to give Islamabad's business community a strong platform to address taxation, electricity costs, rising business expenses and market regulations with government institutions. Business leader Wajid Ayub pledged the "white votes" of Tarnol for the group on October 16, affirming the community's unity behind its candidates.

Presidential candidate Zakaria Zia said the Chamber would be made more active in resolving traders' issues and promoting business-friendly policies, while fellow candidate Umar Hussain emphasized the need for strong Chamber-business community coordination.

Abdul Rehman Siddiqui and Faseeh Ullah Khan affirmed Jinnah Super traders' full support for the Founder Group, while Executive Committee candidate Zohaib Arshad Malik thanked the leadership for visiting the market and reaffirmed the community's solidarity.

PICG Directors' Summit 2026 Puts Governance,
Leadership and Digital Transformation at Centre
of Pakistan's Corporate Future



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan Institute of Corporate Governance (PICG) Directors' Summit 2026, themed "The Showcase: Your Leadership, Your Impact," brought together over 350 directors, business leaders and regulators in Karachi to discuss corporate resilience amid economic uncertainty, technological disruption and sustainability challenges.

PICG Chairman Muhammad Ashraf Bawany said governance is increasingly about building trust and sustainable value

rather than mere compliance. Chief Guest Muhammad Ali Tabba called governance the foundation of business rather than its cost, stressing institutional trust over speed. PSX CEO Farrukh H. Sabzwari highlighted transparency, market integrity and board diversity, while former Investment Minister Muhammad Azfar Ahsan emphasized policy predictability and institutional strength.

Panel discussions covered agile boards managing geopolitical and climate risks, succession planning in family businesses, and board oversight of cybersecurity, AI

and digital transformation. A fireside chat with ACCA's Narayanan Vaidyanathan and BDO's Zulfiqar Causer explored AI governance and risk. Other speakers addressed governance in digital banking, the non-profit sector, and Islamic finance.

In his closing keynote, Engro Holdings Chairman Hussain Dawood emphasized visionary leadership and trust as pillars of institutional value. The summit, which also honored the late Dr. Shamshad Akhtar, concluded with the PICG Recognition Awards, reaffirming boards' mandate to anticipate disruption and act decisively.

Chery Q EV Bookings Open at
PKR 1.5M in Pakistan Ahead of
Official Launch

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chery Master Pakistan has opened bookings for its all-electric Chery Q at PKR 1.5 million ahead of its official launch at the Pakistan Auto Show on September 18, 2026, where full pricing and commercial details will be revealed.

Positioned as an urban EV, the Q

offers a spacious cabin with a 2,700 mm wheelbase and 152 mm of rear knee room, alongside features like electric rear-wheel drive, mobile app control, voice command, six airbags, L2 ADAS with 21 functions, a 540° camera, automatic parking, and a 15.6-inch display with Android Auto and Apple CarPlay.

Its 42.7 kWh battery delivers up

to 400 km of range, with running costs estimated at around PKR 30,000 annually when charged via solar, compared to PKR 488,000-569,000 for a typical petrol vehicle over 20,000 km. The launch comes as Pakistan's EV sales grew 257% year-on-year and solar imports more than doubled in 2024, while the country's petroleum import bill



hit \$16.86 billion in FY2025-26.

Chery, China's top auto exporter for 23 consecutive years, has partnered with Master Group, a Pakistani conglomerate with over 60 years of industrial experience. The venture has opened 14 dealerships across 8

cities within 10 months, with plans to expand to 20 dealerships in 12 cities. Master Group also holds roughly 80% of Pakistan's bus market share through Master Yutong and is the country's 4th largest auto brand via its Changan joint venture.

Death Anniversary of UMT Founder Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad’s Observered

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The eighth death anniversary of the founder of the University of Management and Technology (UMT) Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad was observed Thursday.

Incumbent Chairman and President Ibrahim Hassan Murad paid tribute to the late educationist Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad for his invaluable educational, academic and social services, describing him as a visionary leader and a beacon of light in the fields of education, research and public service.

Ibrahim Hassan Murad said that Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad made education, training and character-building of youth the core mission of his life. He firmly believed that the true progress of nations depends on quality education, research, strong moral values and the development of a principled and capable young generation. He devoted his efforts for nurturing the potential



of young people and enabling them to play an effective role in national development.

He said Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad’s academic insight, leadership qualities

and commitment to serving humanity had a positive and lasting impact on thousands of students and faculty members. He observed that education as not only a means for obtaining

degrees, but was a fundamental instrument for building an enlightened, responsible and morally strong society.

The Chairman UMT said that Dr. Hasan’s academic and social contributions are unforgettable, and his vision continues to serve as a guiding light for the UMT family. He said the educational institution founded by Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad would continue to be strengthened and further advanced in the fields of education, research, innovation and service to humanity.

Ibrahim Murad expressed his resolve that Dr. Hasan Sohaib Murad’s vision and mission would be carried forward with full commitment. He said further efforts would be made to equip the young people with quality education, modern skills, research opportunities and strong ethical values so that they can make a meaningful contribution to Pakistan’s development, prosperity and a brighter future.

ISSI’s Centre for Strategic Perspectives Launches Book on Pakistani Diaspora in Norway

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Strategic Perspectives (CSP) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted the launch of “Roots Beneath the Snow,” an audiovisual book by Mian Waheed Ud Din exploring the experiences, integration and enduring homeland ties of Pakistani migrants in Norway.

CSP Director Dr. Neelum Nigar noted that discussions on overseas Pakistanis often reduce them to statistics, overlooking the personal stories behind diaspora numbers. ISSI Board of Governors Chairman Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said the book blends academic research with storytelling to trace Pakistani migration to Norway since the 1970s, covering struggles, economic progress and cultural balance.

Zulfiqar Ahmed, Secretary of the Workers’ Welfare Fund, representing Federal Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain, stressed the state’s responsibility to equip Pakistanis working abroad with skills and ensure safe, legal migration. Norway’s Ambassador-designate Sigvald Hauge highlighted the Pakistani community’s contributions to Norway since the late 1960s, calling it a bridge between the two countries.

Author Mian Waheed Ud Din



described the book as “faction,” blending fact and fiction across 36 chapters with 48 QR-linked videos, tracing the community’s evolving sense of belonging in Norway. Reviewers Air Chief Marshal

(Retd.) Sohail Aman and Ambassador Aizaz Ahmad Chaudhry discussed the cultural and identity challenges of migration, emphasizing that successful integration doesn’t require abandoning one’s

heritage, and that overseas Pakistanis can serve as bridges between Pakistan and their adopted societies.

The event concluded with the formal book launch and a group photograph.

Rotary Club of Lyallpur will work on best project for public service: President

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The third general body meeting of the Rotary Club of Lyallpur was held at a local hotel. All the Rotarians who participated in this meeting were welcomed by presenting bouquets of flowers. The meeting reviewed the projects and public-friendly works done during the last month. The meeting proceedings began with the ringing of the bell and after the recitation of the Holy Quran, a naat was sung. Secretary Rotarian Syed Muhammad Sharjeel presented the agenda of the meeting. President Rotarian Junaid Mahmood Baig reviewed the projects and public service works of the last month and sought feedback from the Rotarian members. Treasurer Habib-ur-Rehman Gul, former President FCCI Rotarian Rana Sikandar Azam Khan, Rotarian Haji Gulzar, Rotarian Babar Shahzad, Rotarian Mian Tanveer Ahmed, Rotarian Ismail Qamar Suhrawardy, Rotarian Ali Murtaza, Rotarian Mian Abdul Waheed, Rotarian Ikramullah, Rotarian Ghulam Hussain, Rotarian Aslam Zahid, Rotarian Ehsan Bashir, Rotarian Mubeen, Rotarian Imtiaz Hussain, Rotarian Rana Tanveer Ahmed Afaq, Rotarian Rana Afzal, Rotarian Khurram, guest speaker Dr. Muhammad Hussain, and others participated in this meeting.

86% of SMBs Experienced at Least One Cyber Incident in Last Year: Kaspersky Reveals

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A new global Kaspersky survey found that 86% of small and medium-sized businesses (SMBs) experienced at least one cyber incident in the past year, with phishing, software exploits, malware, ransomware and AI-targeted attacks cited as the most damaging threats. Financial loss was the top consequence, reported by 22% of respondents, alongside customer data theft, service disruptions and loss of IT infrastructure control.

Attackers primarily targeted client data (32%), sensitive internal information (28%), employee credentials (25%) and business strategy (23%). IT and IT security departments bore the brunt of attacks (50% and 46% respectively), followed by accounting and finance (24%), with an average of three departments compromised per major incident. SMBs also saw more attacks via customer service channels than mid-sized or large enterprises.

In response, businesses are prioritizing IT security monitoring (24%), third-party compliance hardening, credential management upgrades, and employee device security and training (22-23% each).

Government Raises Fuel ...

Continued from Page 4

Regulatory Authority (OGRA) revised the ex-depot prices of petroleum products under the government’s pricing mechanism.

The price of Motor Spirit (petrol) has risen from Rs364.35 to Rs367.75 per litre, while diesel has increased from Rs385.95 to Rs392.67 per litre.

The latest increase comes a day after the government raised petrol by Rs5.58 per litre and diesel by Rs4.18 per litre.

On Tuesday, petrol was increased from Rs358.77 to Rs364.35 per litre, while diesel rose from Rs381.77 to Rs385.95 per litre.

The Tuesday increase followed another sharp hike on Monday,

when the petrol price was raised by Rs12.90 per litre and HSD by Rs3.72 per litre.

Petrol had risen from Rs345.87 to Rs358.77 per litre on Monday, while diesel increased from Rs378.05 to Rs381.77 per litre.

With the latest hike, petrol has increased by a cumulative Rs21.88 per litre and diesel by Rs14.62 per litre over the past three days, taking petrol from Rs345.87 to Rs367.75 per litre and diesel from Rs378.05 to Rs392.67 per litre since Monday.

The repeated revisions have come amid fluctuations in international oil prices and other cost factors, with the government adjusting petroleum prices under its pricing mechanism.

AI Will Kill Humanity Within a Decade...

Continued from Page 4

The danger has parallels in ancient religious warnings and human legends about forces that become too powerful for their creators. Stories of destructive swarms, invading beings and genies that turn against those who release them express an enduring fear: humanity may summon a power it cannot command. Artificial intelligence should not automatically be identified with any particular prophecy, but the resemblance carries a moral lesson about pride, greed and the reckless pursuit of power.

Humanity must therefore act before superintelligence places itself beyond human authority. Governments should require rigorous evalu-

ations of the most powerful systems, independent safety testing, reporting of dangerous behaviour and enforceable limits on autonomous access to the internet, weapons and critical infrastructure. Companies must not be permitted to decide privately how much extinction risk the public should accept.

National rules alone will be insufficient. Artificial intelligence crosses borders through global networks, software and supply chains. Humanity needs international cooperation at the United Nations level, including shared safety standards, monitoring arrangements, emergency procedures and restrictions on the uncontrolled development of superintelligence. An interna-

tional authority may be necessary to inspect the most advanced projects and ensure that no company or country secretly places the entire world at risk.

The purpose of such action is not to prevent useful innovation. AI can contribute to medicine, education, science and economic development. But no promised abundance can justify gambling with human existence. Progress that eliminates its creators cannot be called progress.

The genie may already be emerging from the bottle. Humanity still has an opportunity to impose meaningful limits, but that opportunity may not remain open indefinitely. The greatest danger is believing that action can always be

taken later. Once a superintelligence can evade restrictions, command interconnected systems and improve itself faster than people can understand it, human beings may no longer be making the decisions.

Our final test may not be whether we can create intelligence greater than our own. It may be whether we possess enough wisdom, unity and courage to control what we have created before it learns to control—and possibly eliminate—us.

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

Humanity, Power and the Age of Artificial Intelligence

Continued from Page 4

The ultimate judgement of history, however, has never depended simply on how much power humanity possesses. It has depended on the purposes for which that power is used and the manner in which it is exercised. Modern humanity possesses technologies capable of influencing economies, political systems, journalism, education, warfare and collective social behaviour on an enormous scale. Therefore, technological progress must be accompanied by greater wisdom, justice, responsibility and self-restraint.

Artificial intelligence may become one of the most important tests of human character in civilisation’s history. The crucial question is no longer simply how intelligent machines

will become, but what objectives human beings will give them. AI could be directed towards treating disease, spreading knowledge, reducing poverty and improving human welfare. Alternatively, it could be exploited for manipulation, surveillance, warfare, deception and further concentration of power.

Ultimately, machines cannot decide how their capabilities should shape the future. Human beings must make that choice. The defining challenge of the coming age will therefore be to ensure that humanity’s moral wisdom develops alongside its technological power. The real measure of progress will not be whether humanity becomes more powerful, but whether it becomes wise and responsible enough to use that power for the benefit of civilisation.

New Provinces in Pakistan: A Necessity or the Risk of an East India Company-Style Threat?

Continued from Page 4

Natural resources, land, water, minerals, energy, communications, digital infrastructure and telecommunications are highlighted as areas requiring particularly careful state oversight. Investment in these sectors can generate economic activity and modern infrastructure, but weak regulation, non-transparent agreements and concentrated decision-making could blur the distinction between legitimate investment and excessive influence. The article therefore does not call for restrictions on investment itself. Instead, it stresses that investment should operate within the law, under transparent arrangements and in accordance with the national interest.

The article also discusses telecommunications and digital infrastructure. Since communi-

cation networks and the internet have become essential to the economy, education, commerce, defence and governance, investment in these sectors is necessary. However, legislation and regulation should ensure that companies do not receive extraordinary powers that could eventually threaten state authority, citizens’ rights or national security. The relationship between government and corporations should be based on partnership rather than dependence.

According to the article, Pakistan’s greatest vulnerability is not foreign investment itself but weak institutions, corruption, political self-interest, non-transparent agreements and inadequate accountability. External powers can exploit internal weaknesses when institutions fail to protect the national interest. Strong

institutions, honest leadership, equal application of law, effective parliamentary oversight and transparent resource distribution can prevent foreign companies or external powers from easily influencing state decisions.

For this reason, the article calls for a comprehensive national policy before new provinces are established. Creating provinces should not simply involve redrawing boundaries. Each proposed province should have a clearly defined administrative, legal, economic and financial framework. Questions concerning revenue, natural resources, employment, education, healthcare, policing, the judiciary, local government and financial relations with the federal government must be addressed beforehand. Major decisions concerning the sale or long-term

leasing of natural resources and state assets should also be subject to strict constitutional and parliamentary oversight.

Accountability is presented as another essential condition for successful provincial restructuring. New provinces will not automatically solve existing governance problems if the same practices of corruption and political patronage continue. The article argues that senior provincial and administrative positions should be based on competence, integrity, administrative ability and public trust rather than political affiliation. Individuals against whom serious financial corruption has been conclusively established should not be given important positions of state responsibility.

The proposal to transform every existing division into a sepa-

rate province is also discussed. Such a system could potentially bring administration closer to citizens, but its success would depend on effective distribution of powers, financial autonomy, strong local governments and accountability. Simply increasing the number of provinces cannot guarantee better governance. Institutions and leadership remain the decisive factors.

The article also refers to Dr. Tahir-ul-Qadri’s earlier proposal for dividing Pakistan into approximately 35 provinces. It suggests that if such a comprehensive model was previously presented, its administrative and economic dimensions could be objectively examined. Rather than judging proposals according to personalities or political affiliations, experts in political science, economics, public administration, law and

national security should assess their feasibility using research and empirical evidence.

Ultimately, the article does not reject the idea of new provinces. It argues that Pakistan may need smaller administrative units, but such restructuring must be accompanied by stronger principles and institutions. New provinces should improve public services, promote balanced development and allow communities to benefit from their resources without weakening national unity or sovereignty. Foreign investment should be welcomed, but national policies must not become dependent on investors, and corporations should support development without replacing state authority.

The central conclusion is that Pakistan’s real need is not simply more provinces but stronger

institutions, transparent governance, accountability and leadership committed to the national interest. The experience of the East India Company should therefore not create fear of foreign investment; rather, it should serve as a warning about the consequences of state weakness. If new provinces are established through careful planning, constitutional safeguards, transparent resource management and effective institutions, they could contribute to development and prosperity. Without these safeguards, however, administrative restructuring could create new vulnerabilities. The ultimate guarantee of Pakistan’s strength and sovereignty is a system that places the national interest above personal, political and external interests.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar unveils the plaque marking the inauguration of the Telecommunication Appellate Tribunal on Thursday.



Photo: PID

BII Reaffirms Commitment to Pakistan, Explores New Investment Opportunities with Finance Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: British International Investment (BII) Managing Director and Head of Asia, Srini Nagarajan, met Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb to discuss expanding BII's investment footprint in Pakistan and mobilizing greater private capital. Nagarajan briefed the Minister on BII's 2026-31 strategy to invest at least \$2 billion across Asia and Africa, identifying Pakistan as a key destination and outlining plans to leverage BII's expertise in infrastructure, climate finance, financial services and private markets to attract additional capital.

Aurangzeb highlighted improved macroeconomic stability and investor confidence, citing Pakistan's \$3 billion international bond issuance, ongoing privatisation and improving credit ratings as signs of strengthening investor re-engagement. The BII delegation discussed the potential of private equity, fund-of-funds structures and



private credit to deepen Pakistan's investment ecosystem, welcoming capital-market reforms while stressing the need for greater certainty to attract long-term capital.

BII also expressed interest in climate-related investment, renewable energy and power transmission infrastructure. Aurangzeb briefed the delegation on reforms across taxation, energy, tariffs, capital markets and digitalization, including a five-year tariff rationalization programme and exploration of new financing instruments such as asset tokenization. He also outlined a Committee developing a National Private Equity Policy Framework and the government's broader Access to Finance agenda targeting SMEs, agriculture and underserved sectors.

Both sides discussed collaboration on climate finance and infrastructure, with development finance institutions playing a role in de-risking projects and mobilizing private investors. Nagarajan reaffirmed BII's commitment to Pakistan, while Aurangzeb encouraged timely progress on investment proposals, with both sides agreeing to continued engagement on actionable opportunities.

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Court issues notices to Mustafa Kamal, others in illegal allotment of plots case

Bureau Report

KARACHI: An accountability court in Karachi on Thursday issued notices to 10 accused including Federal Health

Minister Mustafa Kamal in connection with a reference regarding illegal allotment of welfare plots in Clifton. The accountability court has directed the accused to appear

before it until September 15 after the NAB prosecutor submitted an application seeking restoration of the reference. Earlier, the Sindh High

Court (SHC) had ordered to transfer the case to the accountability court, overturning the decision to transfer the reference to anti-corruption court. Mustafa Kamal, former

director general SBICA Iftikhar Qaimkhani, former administration Fazlur Rehman and others were accused of illegally allotting the plots allocated for hawkers in Clifton.

Balochistan CM announces no tolerance for appointments against merit

Bureau Report

QUEATTA: Balochistan Chief Minister (CM) Mir Sarfaraz Bugti on Thursday told the government officers that they would not make any recruitment in their departments in violation of merit.

The chief minister said categorically that if it came to his notice that hirings had been made by flouting merit, he would neither spare a minister nor a secretary. "I have made it clear from the day one that there will be no appointments against merit," he said, adding that he would not tolerate the rights of deserving youths to be usurped.

Bugti also took notice of alleged irregularities in recruitments in the Forest



Department and ordered an investigation.

He, however, said he had complete trust in the provincial bureaucracy. "You are capable of putting the province on a right track," he said, and added, "But at the same time, I want to make it clear to you that there will be no compromise on merit."

He directed the officers to keep an eye on their subordinates and recruitment committees. "I will not tolerate any irregularity," the chief minister said emphatically.

CM Hails Oxford Scholars as Future Leaders of Sindh, Pakistan

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Thursday felicitated five students from Sindh awarded fully funded postgraduate scholarships to the University of Oxford under the Bhutto STEM Scholarship Programme, calling them future leaders, researchers and innovators.

Speaking at CM House, he said "every investment in youth education is an investment in Sindh's future." The scholars for 2026-27 are: Faiza Rehman and Nir Mussawvir Ali - MSc Economics for Development; Amarta Chandio - MSc Clinical Embryology; Furjad Shahid Hassan - DPhil Zero-Carbon Energy; and Junaid Ahmed Memon - DPhil Engineering Science.



Murad Shah said the programme, launched with the Oxford Pakistan Programme, reflects the vision of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Benazir Bhutto to promote education and empowerment.

Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah noted Rs500

million is allocated annually for scholarships and 42,719 students have received Rs6.916 billion through SEEF.

Oxford's Dr Jamal Pirzada praised Sindh's support for making the initiative successful.

The CM urged scholars to excel and contribute to a stronger, more inclusive society.

Law Minister Vows Further Steps to Improve Legal Education

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar said Thursday the government will continue taking all necessary measures to improve legal education, calling it the foundation of the justice system and stressing that its quality directly affects the Bar and the Bench.

Speaking at the launch of the Pakistan Bar Council's Directorate of Legal Education Annual Report, he noted several reforms have already been introduced. These include abolishing evening law courses to curb "ghost" admissions, introducing the Law-GAT for entry standards, and

a 2022-23 decision requiring law colleges to share student data with the PBC, with non-compliant degrees not to be registered.

Tarar said the LLB programme was first extended to five years to meet international standards and later reduced to four years for competitiveness. He recalled leading the PBC's Legal Education Committee since 2010 and cited regulatory gaps after the shift to private institutions as a challenge.

PBC Chairman Executive Committee Munir Malik and Director Barrister Usama Malik said reforms aim to better prepare future lawyers and strengthen institutions for coming generations.

Defence of Saudi Arabia is duty of Muslim Ummah, says Fazl



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Strongly condemning the Houthis attack on Saudi Arabia, JUI-F chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Thursday said that the defence and protection of the holy land was the responsibility of the entire Muslim ummah.

He said that the sovereignty of Saudi Arabia must be protected at all costs. "Attack on Saudi Arabia is an attack on the entire Islamic world," he was quoted as saying by a press release issued by the JUI-F's media

cell. Fazl said that increasing tensions in the Middle East posed a threat to the peace of the entire world.

He called upon the Muslim countries to forget their differences and chalk out a joint strategy in order to confront the challenges they were facing. "The present situation has necessitated the formation of an Islamic bloc," the JUI-F chief asserted.

He also urged the government to play an effective role for the unity of the Muslim world and defence of Saudi Arabia.

Closing ceremonies of ISPR Summer Internship Programme held at PCTVI in Gwadar

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Closing Ceremonies of the ISPR Summer Internship Programme were held at Pak-China Technical and Vocational Institute (PCTVI) in Gwadar and in Lasbela. Certificates were distributed amongst the students at these ceremonies.

During the ISPR internship, students had the opportunity to learn modern communication skills, develop fact-checking abilities and gain practical experience in applying



these skills.

Makkah Agreement a Defensive Alliance; Expansion Not Yet on Cards: FO Spox

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office has called the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement a "defensive alliance" aimed at regional security through deterrence, saying expansion is "not on the cards" until member states consolidate the framework.

In his maiden briefing, FO Spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said Pakistan, Turkey and Saudi Arabia are holding frequent consultations. Expansion would later be open to countries with similar views, but is not being discussed now.

On other issues: - Afghan students: No blanket deportation. Those in valid degree programs with valid visas can stay

and complete studies. - CASA-1000 & connectivity: Progress depends on Afghanistan addressing Pakistan's concerns over cross-border terrorism.

- India: Pakistan condemned mosque demolitions as a breach of the Liaquat-Nehru Pact and Places of Worship Act, 1991, and raised the Kashmir dispute, citing UNSC resolutions and Yasin Malik's affidavit. - 9/11 anniversary: Pakistan lost 80,000 lives and \$150b, and accused India of state-sponsored terrorism, citing Kulbhushan Jadhav.

The FO also announced Pakistan will host the 14th South Asian Games from April 4-11, 2027 in Islamabad, Punjab and KP, with 28 sports and 6,000+ athletes.