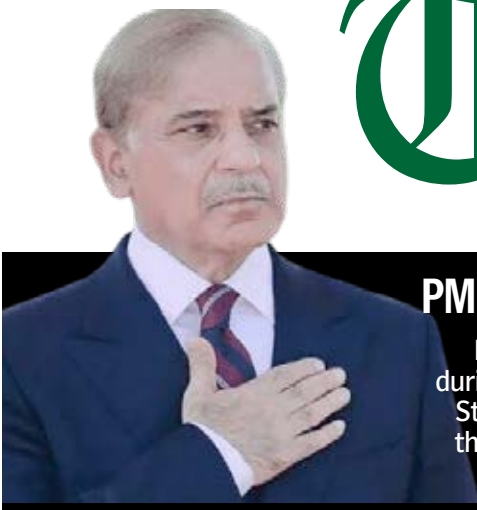




PM Shehbaz Sharif Arrives in London on Three-Day Visit

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has arrived in London for a three-day visit, during which he will undergo a medical check-up. He will travel to the United States on September 20. While in London, he is expected to hold meetings, though his schedule remains undisclosed, before attending the UN General Assembly in New York.

A Leading National Daily



Daily The Spokesman

فرمان رسول
ہم کو شہید نے خبر دی ان سے میری نے
بیان کیا انہوں نے کہا کہ مجھ سے اس مالک
نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ ﷺ نے فرمایا
آپس میں لقمہ نہ رکھو، حسد نہ کرو، پیچھے
کسی کی برائی نہ کرو، بلکہ اللہ کے بندے آپس
میں بھائی بھائی بن کر رہو اور کسی مسلمان کے
لیے جان و مال کی قربانی نہ کرو۔
دن سے زیادہ سلام چھوڑ کر ہے۔
(صحیح بخاری، حدیث نمبر 6065)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**



Govt Reduces Petrol Price by Rs1.65, Diesel by 88 Paise per Litre

The government has cut petrol's ex-depot price by Rs1.65 to Rs389.14 per litre and diesel by 88 paise to Rs424.04, effective September 19-21, 2026. OGRA revised rates under the federal pricing mechanism, the Petroleum Division said. Diesel fell from Rs424.92, petrol from Rs390.79, driven by global Platts rate changes, premiums and incidentals.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rabi-us-Sani 6, Saturday, September 19, 2026



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Security arrangement

ISLAMABAD: A view of heavy shipping containers placed along a road near D-Chowk due to security reasons ahead of the upcoming PTI protest scheduled in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Islamabad's Red Zone to be sealed ahead of long march

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Authorities have decided to seal off the extended Red Zone in the capital as a long march approaches, sources familiar with the matter said.

According to these sources, all five access routes to the Red Zone will be shut down entirely, with two layers of shipping containers stacked at each entry point and a large contingent of police stationed to enforce the closure.

The sealed zone will remain off-limits except in emergency situations, sources added.

In a related move, Islamabad Police have suspended all forms of leave for their officers and personnel. The Inspector General of Police issued a circular halting casual leave, earned leave, and foreign travel leave for the force.

The suspension will stay in place until October 5, 2026, with only emergency leave requests still being permitted. The order took effect immediately.

Additionally, any officers or personnel currently away on leave have been instructed to report back to duty without delay.

President, PM strongly condemn Kohat blast, pray for speedy recovery of injured

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed deep grief over civilian injuries caused by a blast near the Old Police Lines in Kohat. In separate statements, both leaders prayed for the injured's speedy recovery and directed authorities to ensure immediate, top-quality medical treatment.

President Zardari stressed that completely eliminating Fitnah al-Khawarij and foreign-backed terrorist

elements remains essential for national security.

The prime minister strongly condemned the attack, voicing sorrow over the injuries sustained by several people. He instructed relevant authorities to provide the injured with the best possible medical care and prayed for their swift recovery.

Shehbaz also asked for a detailed report on the blast's nature and causes, while directing that relief operations be expedited and all necessary facilities extended to those affected by the incident.

Forex reserves reach historic high of \$21.4 bn

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has expressed satisfaction over Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves reaching a historic high of \$21.4 billion, describing the development as another milestone towards economic stability.

In a statement issued by the Prime Minister's Office, Shehbaz Sharif said the increase reflected the sustained efforts of the government and its economic team. He attributed the improvement to higher remittances, growth in services exports, a stronger current account position and fiscal discipline.

The prime minister said Pakistan's successful return to international capital markets also demonstrated renewed global confidence in the country's economy. He added that stronger reserves would

improve Pakistan's capacity to meet external payment obligations and provide greater resilience against global economic challenges.

According to the prime minister, the improved economic position could create opportunities for increased investment, external confidence and sustainable growth. He praised Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb, the State Bank of Pakistan governor, the economic team and overseas Pakistanis for their contributions.

Shehbaz Sharif particularly noted that the latest increase in reserves was not driven by additional external borrowing, but was primarily supported by the State Bank of Pakistan's purchase of foreign exchange. He also highlighted the SBP's reduction in outstanding foreign exchange-related obligations as a factor strengthening the country's reserve position.

IHC Issues Detailed Order on PTI's September 27 Long March

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has issued its detailed 37-page order on a petition concerning the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's (PTI) planned long march and protest in Islamabad on September 27.

The court stated that any activity affecting the funda-

mental rights of Islamabad residents would constitute a violation of the Constitution, and those responsible could face legal action. It also ruled that no political party has a lawful right to block roads and highways.

The IHC directed provincial governments not to use public funds or resources to facilitate

Continued on Page 7

Kohat Police Lines attack leaves 21 martyred, 57 Injured

Wazir Khan

KOHAT: At least 21 people, including 15 police personnel and six civilians, were martyred and 57 others injured on Friday in an attack near a mosque inside Kohat Police Lines, according to police officials.

The attack occurred during Friday prayers when an explosives-laden vehicle was reportedly rammed into the gate of the police lines, causing a powerful blast. Following the explosion, seven terrorists allegedly attempted to enter the compound and target police facilities.

Inspector General of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Zulfiqar Hameed said police and Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) personnel responded immediately. Six attackers, including the suicide bomber and a sniper, were killed during an exchange



of fire. Police initially reported that another attacker had been arrested alive.

According to officials, some terrorists attempted to move towards the CTD building while others headed towards the Special Branch building. Security personnel engaged the attackers and launched a search and clearance operation.

The injured, including police personnel and civilians, were shifted to CMH Kohat for medical treatment. Security forces cordoned off the area as the clearance operation continued. Eyewitnesses reported hearing several explosions after the initial blast.

The KP Central Police Office said the casualties included 15 police personnel and six civilians. IG Hameed ordered a report from the Kohat regional police officer and reaffirmed the police's resolve to combat terrorism, saying those responsible and their facilitators would face legal action.

Hafiz Naeem announces Islamabad march over petroleum levy

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) Emir Hafiz Naeem-ur-Rehman has announced that the party will march towards Islamabad on September 20, saying the government has failed to accept its demands despite four rounds of negotiations.

Addressing a sit-in, Hafiz Naeem said convoys from Karachi, Quetta, Chitral, Kalam and various parts of Punjab would participate in the march. A train convoy from Karachi is also planned to travel to Islamabad through Multan and Lahore.

The JI chief criticised the petroleum levy, saying it was increasing the financial burden on



the public, particularly poor and salaried citizens who already face heavy taxation. He said the government had failed to provide an effective response to the party's demands during negotiations.

Hafiz Naeem reiterated JI's demand for abolition of the petroleum levy and further reductions in

petrol prices to provide relief to consumers. He also claimed that public participation in the ongoing sit-ins was increasing and praised the involvement of women and children.

He said the party would proceed with its Islamabad march as planned on September 20.

Islamabad March Cannot Proceed After Court Order, Naqvi Warns Protesters

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has warned that the government will prevent any attempt to enter Islamabad in violation of an Islamabad High Court (IHC) order as the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) prepares for its planned September 27 march.

Speaking at a press conference with Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Naqvi said the IHC's detailed 37-page order made clear that no political group could unlawfully block roads or "storm" the federal capital. He said violators could face contempt of court proceedings.

The court ruled that activities affecting Islamabad residents' fundamental rights would violate the



Constitution. It also directed provincial governments not to use public resources to facilitate the march and ordered authorities to establish a helpline for government employees facing pressure to participate.

Naqvi said security preparations had been completed and law enforcement agencies briefed to deal with any attempt to enter the capital.

He urged political leaders to hold protests in their own cities rather than create confrontation in Islamabad.

The minister also appealed for reconsideration of the mobilisation, citing Pakistan's worsening security situation following a deadly attack in Kohat. He said confrontation could cause losses for political sides and the country.

AJK PM lauds Kashmiris’ struggle at book launch ceremony

ISLAMABAD (PID): Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Iftikhar Gillani has praised the Kashmiri people for their historic struggle for freedom, saying their passion, courage and sacrifices have kept the Kashmir issue alive. Speaking at the launch of senior journalist Shehzad Ahmed Rathore’s book, he called it a valuable contribution to presenting the Kashmir dispute in historical context, noting that a case built on research and facts was the most effective way to advance the cause.

The book covers developments from 1947 to present, he said, stressing that presenting one’s position through research and reason was the best approach.

Referring to the Kashmiris’ decades-long struggle against Indian rule, Gillani said people across the Line of Control continued showing resolve for freedom, keeping the issue alive internationally. He urged Pakistanis to share the same passion.

The PM welcomed differing opinions as a hallmark of a mature society.

The ceremony at the National Press Club Islamabad was attended



by former AJK prime ministers Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Dr Nazir Sohail, former attorney general Raja Niaz Rathore, and others.

Kashmiri Diaspora Stages Protest Outside UN Office in Geneva



GENEVA: Kashmiri delegates and diaspora members staged a protest outside the UN Office in Geneva, demanding an end to human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and urging implementation of pending UN resolutions on the dispute.

Protesters called India’s presence in Kashmir “imperialist,” demanding international scrutiny and accountability. They described self-determination as the Kashmiri people’s inalienable right and urged the UN Security Council to implement resolutions recognizing this right. They accused India of pursuing a Hindu nationalist agenda through land grabs, religious interference and demographic engineering.

Demonstrators condemned repressive laws like UAPA, AFSPA and PSA, used to silence activists and political leaders, warning these had created fear and restricted fundamental rights. They cited Yasin Malik’s prolonged detention as an example of judicial repression, calling for international monitoring of trials and prisoner treatment.

Protesters also criticized India’s development narrative as settler-colonialism, saying militarization—including of pilgrimage routes—was worsening environmental degradation in the fragile Himalayan region.

The demonstration ended with renewed calls for accountability and UN action. Speakers included Chaudhary Parveez Ashraf, Altaf Hussain Wani, Sardar Amjad Yousaf, Advocate Parvez Ahmed Shah, Dr Raja Sajjad Lateef, Shamim Shawl and Dr Shugafta Ashraf.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Board of Governors of Overseas Pakistanis Seyad Ejaz Qamer called on AJK Acting President Ch.Tariq Farooq T Kashmir House Islamabad and discussed Kashmiri overseas and other matters prevailing in Azad Kashmir.



DC Attock reviews anti-polio measures, directs effective monitoring of vaccination campaign



Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Deputy Commissioner Attock Dr Mudassir Ahmed Shah on Friday chaired a meeting regarding anti-polio arrangements at the Municipal Hall Attock. Officers from the Health Department and other relevant departments attended the meeting, where ongoing measures for polio prevention and future strategy were reviewed.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Dr Mudassir Ahmed Shah said that polio is a dangerous and life-threatening disease, and protecting children from it is among the top priorities of the Punjab government. He directed the concerned officers to ensure effective arrangements during the anti-polio campaign so that all children up to five years of age are administered polio drops and no child is left unvaccinated.

He further instructed the Health Department and other relevant officials to ensure strict monitoring of field teams, door-to-door access and achievement of the campaign targets under all circumstances.

The Deputy Commissioner also appealed to parents to ensure that their children under five years of age receive polio drops to protect them from this crippling disease.

When a Father Becomes a Threat to His Own Children: A Tragedy That Demands Reflection

Ch. Muhammad Anwar Chohan

Some tragedies are so painful that words appear inadequate. The reported drowning of three young children in a canal near Mangla is one such tragedy. According to police and media reports, a man identified as Zeeshan Farooq allegedly threw his three children into a canal following domestic disputes and legal disagreements with his wife. Two bodies have reportedly been recovered, while the search for the third child was continuing at the time of the latest report. Police have said that the circumstances and motive are still being investigated.

Whatever the final findings of the investigation and the courts, the incident raises a question that goes far beyond one family: When did children become weapons in disputes between adults?

A child has no responsibility for a failed marriage. A child does not understand the bitterness of matrimonial litigation, the anger of one parent against another, or the grievances that may accumulate between husband and wife. Children simply need protection, affection and security.

A father is expected to be a protector. A mother is expected to be a source of comfort. When a marriage breaks down, the relationship between parents may change, but their responsibility towards their children does not disappear. This distinction is essential.

A marital dispute can be taken to court. A custody decision can be challenged through legal channels. Property disagreements can be settled. Even a marriage can come to an end.

But a child’s life cannot be restored once it has been taken away.

That is why threats against children in domestic disputes should never be dismissed as emotional statements made in anger. Whenever there are credible indications that a parent may harm a child, the matter should be treated as a serious child-protection concern.

Pakistan needs stronger coordination between family courts, police, social-welfare institutions and other relevant authorities in cases where children’s safety may be at risk. The objective should not merely be to punish a crime after it occurs, but to identify danger before an irreversible tragedy takes place.

There is also a deeper social problem that deserves attention. In some circumstances, children are treated as possessions belonging to one parent rather than as individuals whose rights and welfare must come first. Custody is not a prize to be won by one parent against another. It is a responsibility to ensure the child’s safety, stability and wellbeing.

The state has a responsibility here, but society also has one.

Relatives, neighbours, teachers, lawyers and community leaders are often the first people to hear about threats or serious domestic conflict. They should understand that certain warning signs cannot simply be described as “family matters”. When a child’s safety is involved, silence can have devastating consequences.

At the same time, justice must remain within the law. Public anger is understandable when innocent children are allegedly harmed, but punishment must follow a fair investigation, credible evidence and due judicial process. If

criminal responsibility is established, the perpetrator should receive the severest punishment available under the law.

But punishment alone is not enough. We must ask what could have been done before the tragedy occurred. Could the warning signs have been recognised? Could the family have received timely intervention? Could the children’s safety have been placed at the centre of the dispute rather than the competing claims of adults?

These questions matter because the purpose of justice is not only to respond to crime but, wherever possible, to prevent it.

The reported deaths of these children should therefore become more than another painful headline that disappears from public memory after a few days. They should force us to examine how seriously we take child protection, domestic conflict and threats made during custody disputes.

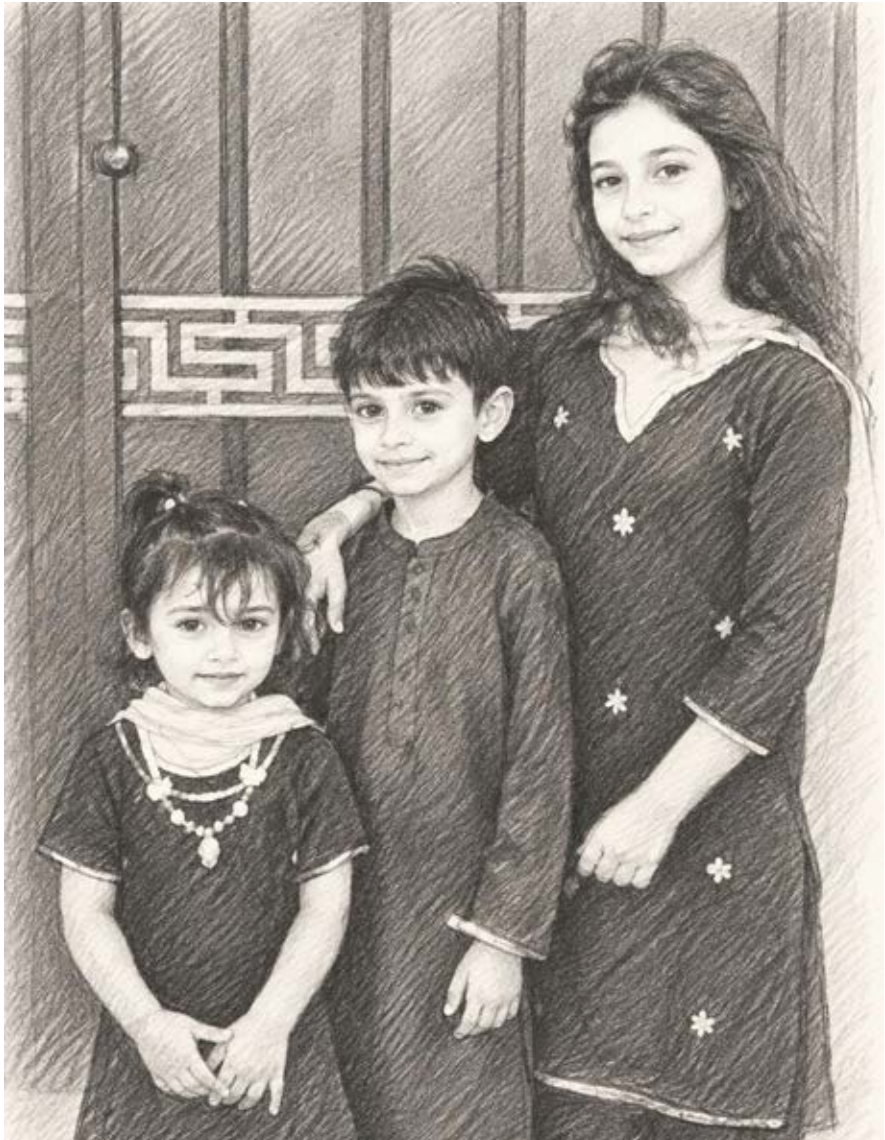
Parents are entrusted with the lives of their children. They are meant to stand between their children and danger—not become the source of that danger.

What was the fault of these children? They had none.

Their tragedy, if the allegations are proved, would be that they became innocent victims of a conflict created by adults.

A civilised society must ensure that children are never made to pay the ultimate price for the failure of a marriage.

Even the most hard-hearted and savage individual would shudder at the mere thought of committing such an act; one wonders what kind of person he is—or rather, he does not



even deserve to be called a human or a beast. Beasts have a bad reputation, yet perhaps even they would not inflict such cruelty upon their own offspring. All the facts will come to light during the police investigation; until then, we must wait.

Home should be a child’s safest place—not the place from which danger comes.



Islamabad

30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 4:29 am
Zohr 12:02 pm
Asr 4:26 pm
Maghrib 6:11 pm
Isha 7:34 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA 9221334-43
CDA 9208301-04
Met Office 9250360-6
RDA 5555864
TMA 5770886
Cantonment Board 9270151-3

Zahid Bakhtawari Calls for Unity to Protect Haramain Sharifain

City Desk



RAWALPINDI: Zahid Bakhtawari, Vice President of the Rawalpindi Cantonment Board and President of Markazi Tanzeem Tajran Cantonment Registered Rawalpindi, has said that protecting Haramain Sharifain is a fundamental religious obligation of every Muslim.

In a statement issued on September 18, Bakhtawari said any conspiracy or hostile action against the holy places would not be tolerated. He warned that those seeking to harm or threaten the sanctity of Makkah Mukarramah and Madinah Munawwarah would face a strong response.

He called upon Islamic countries and Muslim leaders to rise above personal interests, political considerations and sectarian differences and formulate a coordinated strategy to safeguard the holy places.

Bakhtawari stressed that unity, solidarity and mutual cooperation among Muslim countries were essential for ensuring the security and sanctity of Haramain Sharifain. He urged Muslim nations to strengthen collective efforts and cooperation to protect the religious significance and security of the sacred sites.

He reiterated that safeguarding the holy places remains a matter of deep religious importance for Muslims worldwide.

CM inaugurates cancer treatment facilities at Nishtar Hospital

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday inaugurated a PET-CT cyclotron facility and a cryoablation centre for cancer treatment at Nishtar Hospital, where she also inspected various departments and treatment facilities.

The chief minister visited the cryoablation centre and examined the newly installed machine. Officials briefed her

that the Chinese cryoablation technology could destroy cancerous tumours using needles, offering a minimally invasive treatment option.

The chief minister also visited the PET-CT cyclotron centre and reviewed the cyclotron machine's procedure, as well as the radiopharmaceutical production laboratory and pharmacy hot lab.

She inspected the 100-bed cancer centre, including its OPD, ICU, chemotherapy and radiotherapy rooms, digital



and CT simulator room and focused radiotherapy linear accelerator room.

The chief minister also met Musarrat Arshad, 55, the first patient from Kamalia to receive cancer treatment through the cryoablation machine. The patient became emotional while recounting her successful treatment. CM Punjab consoled her and congratulated her on her recovery.

She also visited 24-year-old Nasreen from Mian Channu and inquired about her health. Speaking to Nasreen's

mother, the chief minister said the cryoablation machine had been brought from China for cancer treatment and expressed hope that the patient would recover fully.

"I have brought the cryoablation machine from China for cancer treatment. There is no need to worry now," she said.

The chief minister also interacted with doctors and urged them to continue serving patients with dedication. She later met members of the public at the

hospital and spoke to them.

Provincial Health Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, Communication and Works Secretary Raja Jahangir Anwar and Health Secretary Azmat Mahmood gave the chief minister a detailed briefing.

The officials said a separate cancer ward for children had also been established at the Multan Cancer Centre. The chief minister directed the authorities to make the ward fully functional at the earliest.

Spraying

LAHORE: Lahore Waste Management Company (LWMC) workers spraying ultra-fine mist of water droplets into the air to trap and settle harmful airborne pollutants, dust, and particulate matter with mini anti-smog gun, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Siemens Healthineers Brings Healthcare Leaders Together to Advance Diagnostic Imaging in Pakistan

City Desk

PAKISTAN: Siemens Healthineers brought together leading healthcare professionals, radiologists, clinicians, Key Opinion Leaders and healthcare executives through its Innovations Evening series in Karachi, Lahore and Islamabad.

The events focused on the latest advances in MRI, CT and Artificial Intelligence (AI) and their role in supporting earlier, faster and more precise diagnosis and treatment. Participants also highlighted the importance of continuous medical education, scientific collaboration and knowledge-sharing in improving patient care.

Evelyn Gunnewig, CEO Siemens Healthineers Pakistan, said, "The future of healthcare will not be shaped by technology alone. This requires close part-



nerships with healthcare providers, an understanding of local needs and a shared commitment to advancing access to high-quality care. At Siemens

Healthineers Pakistan, we look forward to strengthening these partnerships and contributing to the evolving healthcare landscape."

Pakistan Navy Selection Centre Kharian Conducts Career Counselling Session at Lahore Grammar School

Bureau Report

KHARIAN: Lieutenant Commander Mahmood Hassan, Commanding Officer of the Pakistan Navy Selection Centre Kharian, along with

his team, visited Lahore Grammar School & College, Kharian Cantt, to organize a career counselling session for college students. The session briefed students on career opportunities within the Pakistan Navy,



covering its various branches and operations in detail.

Students showed keen interest, actively engaging with questions about future career prospects in the Navy.

At the conclusion of the programme, Principal Sonia Rubab

and Senior Section Head Umair Zaka thanked the Commanding Officer and his team for dedicating time from their busy schedules to conduct the informative session for students and staff. The event concluded with an exchange of gifts between the two sides.



Group photo of Arif Habib, KCCI President Rehan Hanif, Zubair Motiwala, Anjum Nisar, Javed Bilwani, Younus Bashir, Tariq Yousuf, Waseem-ur-Rehman and Idris Memon with Shoaib Ismail, Shahid Ismail, Asif Ismail, Hafiz Junaid Ismail and Muzammil Shoaib at the dinner hosted in connection with the KCCI elections.

Religious leader declares Houthi attacks on Holy Mosques an assault on faith itself

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Sahibzada Hafiz Muhammad Amjad—a prominent religious scholar, Chairman of the Majlis-e-Ulama-o-Mashaik Pakistan, and member of the Council of Islamic Ideology—addressed a Friday congregation, stating that love and devotion for the Haramain Al-Sharifain (the Two Holy Mosques) are integral to faith, and the survival of the world is contingent upon their existence. Today, the enemies of Islam—in the guise of the wretched Houthis—have launched attacks against the Haramain Al-Sharifain. It has become incumbent upon Muslims worldwide not only to offer prayers for the protection of the Holy Sites but also to step into the field of action, demonstrating to the enemies of Islam that the sons of Iauheed (monotheism) will not hesitate to sacrifice their lives to safeguard them, Insha'Allah. We pay glowing tribute to the Pakistan Army, which has been deployed to protect the Haramain Al-Sharifain, and we salute Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Field Marshal General Asim Munir for promptly issuing directives to the Army for this vital mission. Under the terms of the Makkah Accord, it is our responsibility to remain ever-prepared for the defense of the Haramain Al-Sharifain.



Pakistan improves five places in Global Gender Gap Index 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson of the National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) Noureen Bano Lehri has welcomed Pakistan's five-place improvement in the Global Gender Gap Index 2026, calling it an encouraging achievement and the result of sustained efforts towards gender equality.

Pakistan improved from 148th position in 2025 to 143rd in 2026, while its overall gender parity score increased from 56.7% to 59.5%. Educational attainment parity reached 91.7%, while economic participation and opportunity remained areas requiring further action.

Lehri said the progress reflected the contributions of government institutions, NCSW members, partners and officials who worked to strengthen the country's gender equality agenda. She particularly acknowledged former NCSW officials for their efforts during the previous year.

Following Pakistan's low ranking in 2025, NCSW established a National Gender Data Task Force and conducted nationwide data collection with provincial departments and statistical institutions. The Commission said the exercise improved the availability and standardisation of gender-disaggregated data. Lehri said NCSW would continue focusing on gender data, evidence-based policy making, education, economic empowerment, political participation, legal protection and institutional accountability to further advance opportunities for women and girls.

Religious Scholars, Sufi Saints Played Pivotal Role in Spreading Islam: Dr. Ehsan Bhutta

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has said religious scholars and Sufi saints played a vital role in propagating Islam and spreading peace, love, tolerance and brotherhood in the subcontinent, with their teachings continuing to guide society morally and spiritually. Following CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's vision, the Auqaf Department is highlighting the services and heritage of Sufi saints for the younger generation.

He expressed these views during a visit to Hazrat Baba Bulleh Shah's shrine in Kasur, where he offered Fatcha and inaugurated the Baba Bulleh Shah Library and Gallery, showcasing the saint's life, thought and spiritual legacy. He also reviewed historical photographs and documents on display.

Bhutta praised former Director Archaeology Muhammad Hassan and Mubeen-ur-Rehman for their efforts in establishing the facility, saying it would help transmit the saint's message to future generations. He said the project aims to introduce youth to Baba Bulleh Shah's universal message of peace and love.

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Editorial: The Final Mile in Pakistan's Polio Fight

The numbers tell a remarkable story. From 74 polio cases in 2024 to 31 in 2025, and now just four in 2026 — Pakistan's decline in polio incidence is nothing short of extraordinary. Add to this the fact that environmental surveillance samples now show positivity below 10 per cent, and it becomes clear that the country's decades-long battle against this crippling virus may finally be entering its endgame. The formal launch of the latest nationwide vaccination campaign by Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal is, therefore, not merely another routine health drive — it is a moment that demands the nation's full attention and resolve.

Yet, as Minister Iqbal rightly pointed out, the sobering truth remains: Pakistan and Afghanistan are the only two countries left on Earth where poliovirus transmission has not been stopped. Of 120 countries once affected, 118 have eradicated the disease entirely. That Pakistan continues to lag behind is not for lack of scientific knowledge or vaccine availability, but because of persistent gaps in access, trust and security — particularly in high-risk pockets such as southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where three of this year's four cases originated.

This is precisely why the "last mile" of any eradication campaign is always the hardest. Complacency born of good news is as dangerous as outright resistance to vaccination. A single unvaccinated child keeps the door open for the virus to resurface, undoing years of painstaking progress. The minister's appeal to parents — not to turn away polio workers from their doorsteps — deserves to be repeated in every mosque, school and marketplace across the country.

Equally important is his call to religious scholars, community leaders and young people to combat misinformation. Vaccine hesitancy in Pakistan has too often been fuelled by rumour and mistrust rather than genuine medical concern. Countering this requires sustained, credible communication at the grassroots level — not just directives from Islamabad.

The government must also not lose sight of the human cost borne by frontline polio workers, who continue to face violence and intimidation in the line of duty. Their protection must remain a non-negotiable priority, backed by real security commitments, not just rhetoric.

With international partners like WHO, UNICEF and Rotary continuing to stand behind Pakistan's efforts, the infrastructure and support exist to finish this fight. What is needed now is unwavering political will, community trust, and the courage of health workers who go door to door. Four cases in 2026 could well be Pakistan's last chapter in this long, painful story — if the nation seizes this moment.

Iran's President Heads to New York as the Costs of Trump's War Mount

The decision to allow Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian and Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi to attend the United Nations General Assembly comes at an uncomfortable moment for President Donald Trump. More than 200 days into the war, Iran remains an adversary Washington must confront diplomatically as well as militarily. Meanwhile, Americans face higher fuel prices, mounting military expenditure, and growing doubts about the administration's strategy. The Iranian delegation's arrival in New York will place those contradictions on an international stage.

The political contrast is striking. A government subjected to American military pressure will send its president and foreign minister to speak before the world from American soil. Their presence cannot establish surrender by either side, but it challenges any expectation that military force would quickly remove Iran from the diplomatic equation. Tehran remains a participant whose decisions matter to ending the conflict. That reality gives the visit significance beyond the issuing of travel documents.

The decision can therefore be read as preserving room for political engagement while military pressure has failed to produce an enduring settlement. It does, however, leave open a channel at a time when the costs of continuing the war are becoming harder to separate from American domestic life. The question is whether the administration will use that

opening to pursue an achievable outcome or continue relying on promises of eventual success.

For American households, the war's consequences are increasingly tangible. On September 17, the national gasoline average reached \$4.44 per gallon, nearly 50 percent above its pre-war level. Diesel reached a record \$6.40. These figures translate geopolitical conflict into the price of commuting, delivering goods, operating machinery, and running a business. Families do not need a strategic briefing to understand the difference between an assurance that events are under control and a fuel bill that keeps rising.

Diesel makes the burden especially pervasive. Its cost enters trucking, agriculture, construction, and other activities that sustain everyday commerce. Businesses may absorb part of the increase, but others pass it through to customers. Energy specialists have also warned of higher heating expenses. The pressure intended to influence events overseas consequently reaches American kitchens, workplaces, and household budgets. Other supply disruptions contribute to these prices, but the Iran war is an important part of the economic strain.

That strain provides a direct connection between foreign policy and public frustration. A prolonged war becomes politically harder to sustain when citi-

zens cannot identify either its destination or its benefits. Initial uncertainty can turn into opposition as costs accumulate. The administration must explain why continued sacrifice will produce a better outcome, rather than simply ask the public to wait. Its difficulty is that recent polling records substantial doubt about the existence of a clear strategy.

The September Fox News survey found that 71 percent of registered voters

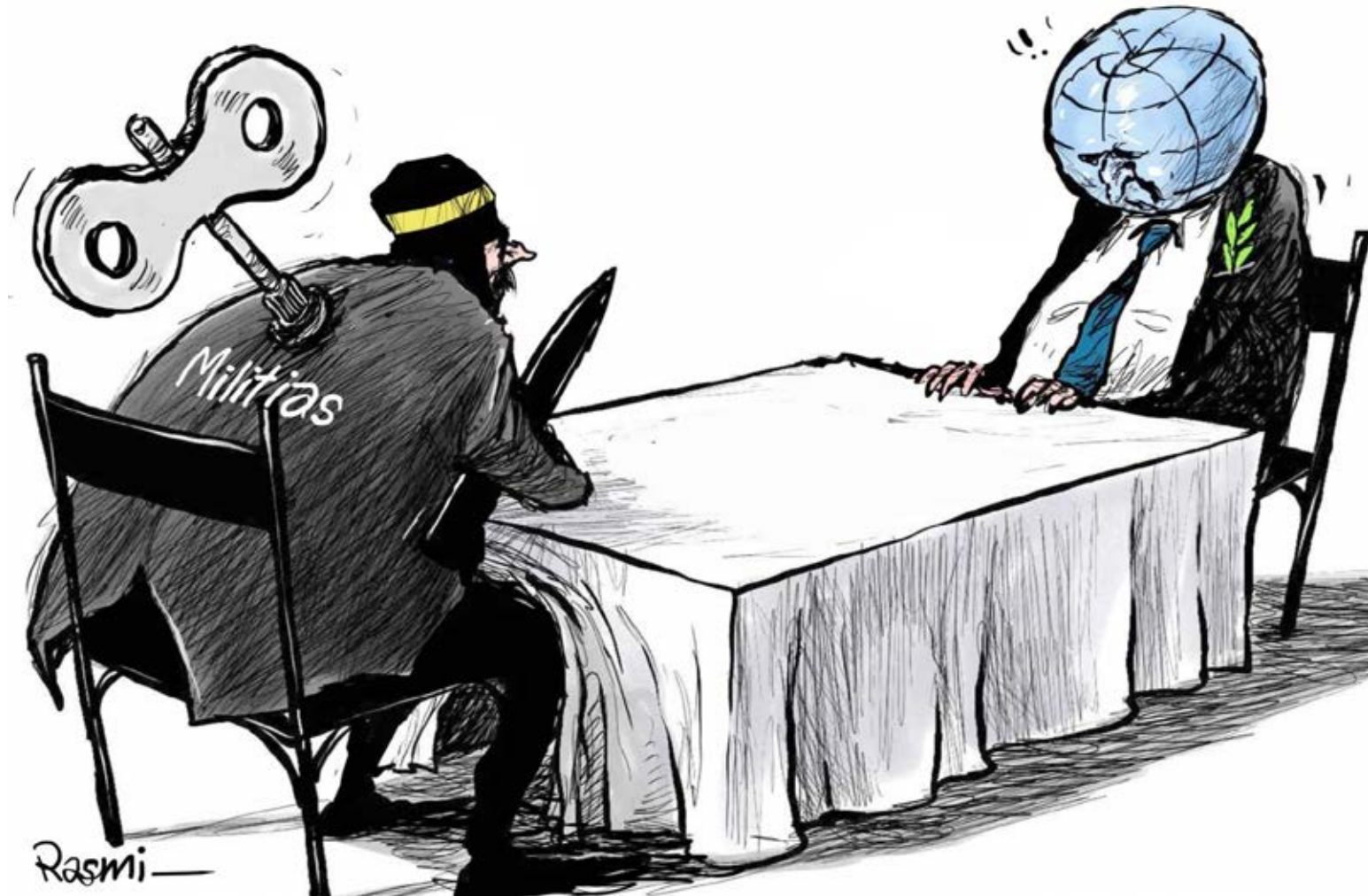
believed the administration lacked a clear plan to end the conflict. That included 43 percent of Republicans and 83 percent of independents. Sixty percent considered the decision to take military action wrong. These results cannot be dismissed as opposition confined to Democrats. They indicate that dissatisfaction reaches voters whose confidence the administration needs, including within its own political coalition.

With the midterms approaching, those doubts carry obvious consequences. Trump's overall approval stood at 39 percent in the same survey. Electoral outcomes remain uncertain, and national polling cannot determine control of either chamber. Nevertheless, Republicans face the task of defending a government whose handling of the war has attracted broad criticism. Higher living costs make that task more difficult because they bring the consequences



Analysis

Qamar Bashir



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

From Drift to Direction

One of the major problems facing our society today is the division of our collective identity into different categories. Labels attached to names often become so dominant that our real identity gets left behind. Sometimes distances are created in the name of sect, while differences arise in hearts on the basis of language, race, or region. Sadly, the very people who could work together to build society begin to consider one another strangers.

Deobandi, Bareilvi, Ahl-e-Hadith, Shia, and Sunni identities have their own place, and differences in jurisprudence and thought may exist. But when such identities become a person's complete identity and lead toward hatred for others, the problem begins. All Muslims believe in one Allah and consider the Quran their book of guidance. Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is recognized as the final Prophet, and the same direction is faced during prayer. Why, then, do such walls arise that people begin to look at one another with suspicion?

The Holy Quran clearly commands believers to hold firmly together to the rope of Allah and not become divided. This command is a fundamental principle for collective life. Disagreement and hostility, however, are not the same thing. Differences in jurisprudence and opinion can exist without turning into hatred. Once tolerance disappears, even a minor disagreement can become the cause of a major

conflict.

Racial and linguistic prejudice also weakens society from within. Being Punjabi, Sindhi, Balochi, Pashtun, Kashmiri, or Saraiki can be a meaningful part of one's identity. Loving a language and culture is natural, but the problem begins when identity becomes a means of insulting others. A person can love their own language without considering someone who speaks another language inferior. Pride in one's culture can exist alongside respect for the cultures of others.

Our country is a beautiful combination of different languages and cultures. This diversity can become a source of strength rather than weakness. The development of one province or region benefits the whole country, while the deprivation of any part is a loss for Pakistan as a whole. A healthy society develops when the success of one group is viewed as a success for everyone.

Today, division is no longer limited to speeches. Social media has made it easy for false news and provocative content to reach thousands of people within moments. A single false report can inflame religious or linguistic emotions. For this reason, forwarding messages without verification can cause serious harm. Rather than reacting immediately to emotional content, people can pause, ask questions, and seek the truth.

The problem does not lie only in the behavior of others. Sharing someone's post without verification

contributes to the spread of misinformation. Judging a person negatively because of their sect or region deepens existing divisions. Giving preference to family or group connections over merit promotes injustice. Real reform, therefore, begins with each individual.

Scholars, teachers, and the media can play an important role in this regard. The message of unity and tolerance can be strengthened from the pulpit. Educational institutions can teach young people to respect others despite differences. The media can encourage responsible discussion rather than provocation and sensationalism. Voices that bring people closer together deserve greater space in society.

There is no need to erase individual identities. What matters is ensuring that such identities are never used against one another. Muslims are united by faith, Pakistanis by their country, and communities by their languages and cultures. These identities can peacefully exist together, while hatred based on them remains a collective weakness.

Today, a choice stands before society: deepen division or strengthen unity. Strength lies in mutual trust, progress in cooperation, and dignity in respecting one another. When tolerance grows alongside disagreement and unity flourishes within diversity, no form of division can easily weaken the nation.

Reform begins not with others, but with ourselves. May Allah Almighty grant us the ability to follow the path of unity, brotherhood, and justice, Ameen.

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

Analysis



Javed Ullah Raja

Dr. Uxi Mufti: The Man Who Gave Voice to Pakistan's Heritage

In a rapidly changing world, traditions can disappear quietly. Folk songs, stories, crafts, languages and customs that survived for generations can be forgotten within a few decades. Preserving this heritage is therefore not simply a cultural exercise; it is a respon-

sibility to future generations. Few Pakistanis have devoted their lives to this responsibility as completely as Dr. Uxi Mufti. For more than half a century, he has worked to discover, document, preserve and present the cultural heritage of Pakistan and the wider Indus and Central Asian regions.

Scholar, institution-builder, writer and creative thinker, Dr. Mufti has made cultural preservation the central mission of his life.

From Scholarship to Cultural Vision: Dr. Mufti completed his Master's degree in Psychology, specializing in Social Psychology, from Gordon College and Government College Lahore. He later went to Charles University in Prague, where he pursued advanced studies in sociological thought and Western philosophy. This academic experience helped shape his understanding of culture not as something frozen in the past, but as a living and changing part of society. Over the years, he has served as Visiting Professor and guest lecturer at institutions including Quaid-i-Azam University, Tsinghua University, National Defense University

and Gakushuin University in Japan. His lectures, based on scholarship and extensive field experience, have emphasized the importance of protecting intangible cultural heritage in a rapidly changing world. Lok Virsa: A Historic Contribution: Perhaps Dr. Mufti's greatest institutional contribution was the founding of the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage—Lok Virsa—in 1974 under the Ministry of Culture & Sports. The Fukuoka Prize citation describes him as the founder of Lok Virsa and notes his long commitment

to collecting, documenting, preserving and presenting Pakistan's tangible and intangible cultural traditions. As its Founding Chief Executive for more than three decades, he helped build the foundations of what became Pakistan's leading institution for documenting and preserving folk and traditional heritage. But Dr. Mufti did not believe that culture could be preserved simply by sitting in an office or collecting objects. He went into the field. He travelled to remote areas, meeting communities and recording their oral traditions, music, rituals, crafts and stories—many of which were in danger of disappearing. The scale of this work is remarkable: more than 200 publications, over 1,000 volumes of traditional music recordings and upwards of 20,000 hours of audio-visual documentation, according to the biograph-

ical material associated with his work. Together, these collections represent an important cultural record of Pakistan and the wider region.

Bringing History to Life: Dr. Mufti also changed the way museums could tell the story of a nation. As Founder and Creative Director of the National Heritage Museum, Pakistan's first ethnological museum, he moved beyond conventional displays and introduced storytelling and multimedia techniques that allowed visitors to experience culture rather than simply look at objects. His creative vision was also reflected in the Pakistan Monument Museum, while his involvement with the Baltit Heritage Museum in Hunza demonstrated his broader approach to heritage—preserving not only historical objects but also the communities, environments and identities connected with them. For Dr. Mufti, a museum was not simply a collection of old things. It was a place where the past could speak to the present.

Recognition Beyond Pakistan: Dr. Mufti's contribution has received international recognition. He has worked with UNESCO and other international cultural organizations, contributing to wider efforts for cultural preservation and community development. The Fukuoka Prize also recognized his long field research, preservation work and international contribution to folk culture. His national and international honors include the Pride of Performance, Fukuoka Prize for Arts and Culture in Japan (2006), and Sitara-i-Intiaz (2007). Pakistan's

Continued on Page 7

Malaysia marks 69th National Day with Tourism and Gastronomy Festival in Islamabad

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The High Commission of Malaysia, in partnership with Serena Hotels, is celebrating Malaysia's 69th National Day with a week-long "Visit Malaysia 2026:

Tourism and Gastronomy Festival" at Zamana Restaurant, Islamabad Serena Hotel, running from 17 to 23 September. The festival showcases authentic Malaysian cuisine and culture, prepared by specialty chefs from Serena Hotels and the

Malaysian High Commission.

Speaking at the opening, Malaysian High Commissioner Dato' Mohammad Azhar Mazlan emphasized cultural exchange as a way to strengthen Malaysia-Pakistan ties, noting cuisine's power to introduce people to a nation's heritage. Islamabad Serena Hotel General Manager Christoph Hoefflich welcomed the collaboration, reaffirming Serena's commitment to cultural engagement through hospitality and shared experiences.

The culinary programme is led by Chef Pathman, a Malaysian specialty chef with Serena Hotels, alongside the High Commission's chef, offering a curated menu highlighting traditional recipes and distinctive flavors from Malaysia's culinary heritage. The festival also features cultural performances by artists flown in from Malaysia, giving guests insight into Malaysian traditions beyond food.



Running until 23 September, the event forms part of Serena Hotels' Cultural Diplomacy initiative, aimed at fostering deeper understanding and connections through culture, cuisine and shared experiences.

Rwanda High Commission Announces Pakistani Business Delegation's Visit to Kigali for Investment Forum



Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: The Rwanda High Commission in Pakistan held a press conference to announce an upcoming visit by a Pakistani business delegation to Kigali for the Rwanda-Pa-

kistan Investment Forum, scheduled from September 23-25, 2026.

The event was addressed by High Commissioner Harerimana Fatou and Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan, Patron-in-Chief of the Pakistan Africa Economic Council (PAEC). The delega-

tion, comprising Pakistani business and investment representatives, will engage with Rwandan government institutions, business leaders and investors to explore trade, investment and partnership opportunities. A key highlight will be the signing of a Bilateral Trade

Agreement between the two countries.

High Commissioner Fatou described the forum as part of broader efforts to strengthen Rwanda-Pakistan ties in trade, technology and manufacturing, calling Rwanda a gateway to the African market and encouraging

Pakistani firms to consider it for investment and regional expansion.

Ambassador Hamid Asghar Khan called the forum timely, given East Africa's rising investment appeal, citing Rwanda's stability, skilled workforce and investor-friendly policies. He said

the 15-16-member PAEC delegation would explore trade, investment and employment opportunities, including for Pakistan's skilled youth.

The High Commission expressed confidence the visit would strengthen bilateral economic cooperation.

A Taste of Malaysia: Exploring the Rich Heritage of Malaysian Cuisine

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Malaysian cuisine stands as one of the most vibrant and diverse culinary traditions in Southeast Asia, a delicious reflection of the country's multicultural identity. Shaped by centuries of trade, migration and cultural exchange between Malay, Chinese, Indian and indigenous communities, Malaysian food offers a sensory journey unlike any other — one where bold spices, fresh herbs, and contrasting textures come together in perfect harmony. Islamabad residents now have a rare opportunity to experience this culinary richness firsthand, as the High Commission of Malaysia, in

collaboration with Serena Hotels, hosts the "Visit Malaysia 2026: Tourism and Gastronomy Festival" at Zamana Restaurant, Islamabad Serena Hotel, running from 17 to 23 September.

A Melting Pot of Flavors

What makes Malaysian cuisine truly distinctive is its fusion character. Unlike cuisines that evolved largely in isolation, Malaysian food developed at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, absorbing influences from Arab traders, Indian merchants, Chinese immigrants and Portuguese and British colonial powers. The result is a cuisine that celebrates diversity while maintaining its own unmistakable

identity — spicy, aromatic, and deeply satisfying. The Islamabad festival captures this spirit through a curated menu prepared by specialty chefs from Serena Hotels and the Malaysian High Commission, bringing authentic recipes to Pakistani audiences.

Nasi Lemak: The National Dish

No discussion of Malaysian food is complete without Nasi Lemak, widely regarded as the country's national dish. This beloved breakfast staple consists of fragrant rice cooked in coconut milk and pandan leaves, served with sambal (a fiery chili paste), fried anchovies, roasted peanuts, cucumber slices and a boiled or fried egg. Though tradition-



ally eaten in the morning, Nasi Lemak has become so popular that it is enjoyed throughout the day, often accompanied by fried chicken, rendang or other protein additions. Its balance of creamy rice, spicy sambal and crunchy toppings exemplifies the layered complexity that defines Malaysian cooking.

Satay: Skewered Perfection

Satay, skewers of marinated meat grilled over charcoal and served with a rich peanut sauce, is another iconic Malaysian favorite. Whether made with chicken, beef or mutton, satay is marinated in a blend of turmeric, lemongrass, garlic and other spices before being grilled to smoky perfection. The accompanying peanut sauce, sweet and slightly spicy, is often considered just as important as the meat itself.

Laksa: A Bowl of Bold Flavors

Laksa is perhaps Malaysia's most celebrated noodle dish, though it varies dramatically by region. Penang Laksa (Assam Laksa) features a tangy, fish-based broth flavored with tamarind, while Curry Laksa, popular in Kuala Lumpur, offers a rich, coconut-based curry broth loaded with noodles, tofu puffs, prawns and bean sprouts. Each regional variation tells its own story of local ingredients and cultural influence, yet all share the hallmark Malaysian trait of balancing



spice, sourness and richness in a single bowl.

Rendang: Slow-Cooked Tradition

Rendang, a dry curry dish of meat slow-cooked in coconut milk and a complex blend of spices including lemongrass, galangal, turmeric and chilies, is a dish reserved for special occasions such as weddings and festive celebrations like Hari Raya. The slow cooking process allows the meat to become tender while the sauce reduces into a thick, deeply flavorful coating, earning rendang international recognition as one of the world's most delicious dishes.

Roti Canai and Char Kway Teow: A Blend of Heritage

Reflecting Malaysia's Indian Muslim influence, Roti Canai is a flaky, layered flatbread typically served with dhal or curry for dipping. Meanwhile, Char Kway Teow, a stir-fried flat rice noodle dish cooked with prawns,



Chinese sausage, bean sprouts and eggs, showcases the country's Chinese-Malaysian heritage through its smoky, wok-fried flavor.

A Festival Bringing Malaysia to Islamabad

At the heart of the Islamabad festival's culinary programme is Chef Pathmanathan Balagandaram, a Malaysian specialty chef representing Serena Hotels, they have curated a menu highlighting traditional recipes and distinctive flavors drawn from Malaysia's rich culinary heritage, giving guests a genuine taste of dishes like those described above, prepared with authentic techniques and imported expertise.

Mr. Balagandaram has certifications in HACCP, Commercial Cookery, Hotel Brand Standards and restructuring and re-designing of kitchen production units.

Beyond the food, the festival



also features special cultural performances by artists flown in especially from Malaysia, offering guests a glimpse into Malaysian traditions that extend beyond the plate. This combination of cuisine and live performance transforms the week-long celebration into a fuller cultural experience, aligning with Serena Hotels' broader Cultural Diplomacy initiative.

A Cuisine Worth Celebrating
Malaysian cuisine is more than just food — it is a living testament to the country's history of cultural coexistence and exchange. Each dish tells a story of migration, adaptation and shared heritage. Through initiatives like the Visit Malaysia 2026: Tourism and Gastronomy Festival at Islamabad Serena Hotel, Pakistani audiences are being offered a meaningful gateway into understanding Malaysia's diverse identity — one dish, and one cultural performance, at a time.



Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
169,043.19	168,021.80
Day's High	Day's Low
169,576.52	168,222.91
Index Value	Change
13,474,387,451	+ 1021.39
Percentage	Time
+0.61%	17 Sept, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,816.14	+ 127.67
Percentage	Time
+ 1.19%	17 Sept, 4:35 pm GMT +1

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
51,801.41	+ 339.51
Percentage	Time
+0.66%	17 Sept, 1:45 pm GMT-4

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
64,136.25	+ 213.25
Percentage	Time
+0.33%	17 Sept, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.61	200.45
Bahrain Dinar	734.24	744.98
Canadian Dollar	198.06	203.75
China Yuan	38.27	38.99
Danish Krone	42.85	43.45
Euro	320.52	324.53
Hong Kong Dollar	35.00	35.97
Indian Rupee	2.60	3.12
Japanese Yen	1.7339	1.8337
Kuwaiti Dinar	884.86	894.89
Malaysian Ringgit	68	68.85
NewZealand \$	158.48	162.15
Norwegians Krone	28.25	28.60
Omani Riyal	719.14	729.45
Qatari Riyal	74.97	75.69
Saudi Riyal	73.8	74.5
Singapore Dollar	217.65	223.15
Swedish Korona	28.45	28.95
Swiss Franc	338.25	342.95
Thai Bhat	8.25	8.95
U.A.E Dirham	75.50	76.40
UK Pound Sterling	374.26	378.78
US Dollar	278	278.3

Aleem Khan Orders
Faster Work on
M-4 Expansion,
Other Highway
Projects



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to accelerate development projects across the Central Region and ensure their completion within prescribed timelines.

Chairing a high-level meeting on September 18, the minister reviewed progress on major motorway and national highway projects. He ordered that the Pindi Bhattian-Faisalabad section of M-4 be expanded from four to six lanes by December 15, stressing that the deadline must be met.

The meeting was also informed about rapid progress on the Lodhran-Multan Expressway, while preliminary work on the Lala Musa Bypass on N-5 was ordered to be expedited. Rehabilitation work on the Baba Farid Bridge over the Sutlej River is also expected to begin soon. Projects linking Layyah and Taunsa bridges with adjoining highways were also reviewed.

Aleem Khan directed authorities to ensure high-quality construction at the Phool Nagar Interchange and incorporate modern lighting, infrastructure and rest areas into new highways. He stressed transparency, accountability and protection of public resources.

The minister also ordered safe pedestrian crossings and effective traffic management during construction to reduce inconvenience and accidents. He said timely completion would improve travel and support trade and economic activity.

July LSM Surge Appreciated,
Recovery Remains Uneven; Textiles,
Pharma, Steel Need Sector-Specific
Policy: Mian Zahid Hussain

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Mian Zahid Hussain, President of PBIF and All Karachi Industrial Alliance, welcomed the July 2026 improvement in large-scale manufacturing (LSM), with the Quantum Index reaching 119.13 — up 3.03% year-on-year and 9.51% month-on-month, following June's 3.48% contraction.

Strong growth was seen in automobiles (57.01%), transport equipment (40.22%), tobacco (35.82%) and garments (22.03%),

with garments alone contributing 3.87 percentage points to LSM growth. However, textiles fell 3.09%, pharmaceuticals 20.79%, and iron and steel 11.40%, alongside declines in food, beverages, chemicals and machinery. Pharmaceuticals alone cut 1.24 percentage points from overall growth.

Hussain warned textile weakness needs urgent attention given its 18.16% LSM weight, noting garments grew while cotton fabric production fell, reportedly due to misuse of the Export Facilitation Scheme. Micro-level

data showed sharp declines in cooking oil, ghee, pharmaceutical liquids, injections, capsules and steel billets, indicating narrow-based growth.

He urged the government to abandon “one-size-fits-all” policy in favor of targeted support: reliable, competitively priced energy and easier financing for textiles; uninterrupted API imports for pharma; and energy/raw-material relief for steel. He cautioned that one month's improvement doesn't confirm sustainable recovery, calling for data-driven, sector-specific corrective measures.



Roadblocks

RAWALPINDI: A view of goods transports and mini trucks parked at a ground along Rawal Road, which will be used for road blocking in different areas of the city, Authorities impounded nearly 1,000 commercial trucks and shipping containers to use as roadblocks ahead of upcoming political protest. Some of them are loaded with goods and food items, goods transporters have demanded that the government not drag them into political affairs by impounding their vehicles and containers.



Photo: Online

Al-Ghazi Tractors Unveils NH 750 and
NH 85-56 at Pakistan Auto Show

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Al-Ghazi Tractors Limited (AGTL) has unveiled two new additions to its New Holland tractor lineup — the NH 750, a 75 HP model, and the NH 85-56, an 85 HP 4WD tractor — at the Pakistan Auto Show.

The new models underline AGTL's focus on expanding mechanization solutions for Pakistan's evolving agricultural, commercial and construction needs, offering farmers and businesses greater versatility beyond traditional farm use.

Speaking at the launch, AGTL Chief Executive Officer Yasin Seker said farm mechanization is critical to improving productivity and efficiency across the country, noting that tractors are increasingly required for commercial and allied applications beyond farming. “With the NH 750 and NH 85-56, we are expanding our offering to meet these evolving requirements and providing our customers with durable and versatile mechanization solutions,” he said.

The NH 750 delivers 75 HP with



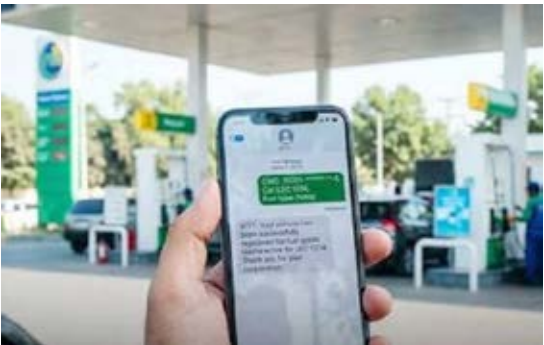
features built for durability and versatility, including an SG iron front axle to support commercial loader and blade applications, and SG iron axle housing and tubes for trolley use. It also comes equipped with a powerful hydraulic system, a durable clutch, an efficient disc brake system and a maintenance-free battery.

The NH 85-56 combines 85 HP with 4WD and Lift-O-Matic technology for enhanced traction across agricultural,

commercial and construction applications. Key features include a strong SG iron front support, a Lift-O-Matic hydraulic system, and an optional double-acting spool valve kit.

With these launches, AGTL continues to support Pakistan's shift toward more efficient and application-driven farm mechanization, offering machinery designed for a broader range of agricultural and commercial requirements.

PM fuel pass crosses 1
million registrations
in three days



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Programme has reached a major milestone, with more than 1 million citizens registered on this Fuel Relief Scheme within the first three days.

The Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA), in collaboration with the Ministry of IT and Telecom, supported Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision of providing relief to citizens amid rising fuel prices globally by developing the end-to-end digital solution for smoothly managing and rolling out the nationwide fuel relief scheme.

PDA has provided the

digital infrastructure needed to deliver the programme at scale, covering CNIC-linked registration, eligibility verification, fuel-token generation, redemption at participating fuel stations and relief scheme management.

This milestone demonstrates the ability of digital public infrastructure to support rapid, national-level delivery of government programmes.

Built in close collaboration with OGRA, Petroleum Division, and SBP, alongside provincial and local administrations, the system brings several government functions together around a single objective: delivering relief to eligible citizens transparently and effectively.

Premier Cables Hosts
Dinner in Honour of
BMG Leaders Ahead of
KCCI Elections

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Premier Cables hosted a dinner on behalf of Shoaib Ismail, Shahid Ismail, Asif Ismail, Hafiz Junaid Ismail and Muzammil Shoaib in honour of Businessmen Group (BMG) leaders and candidates, ahead of the ongoing KCCI elections. The event was attended by prominent businessmen including Arif Habib, Aqeel Karim Dhedhi, Zubair Motiwala, KCCI President Rehan Hanif and others, with BMG considered to have strong support this election.

Arif Habib praised BMG's research-based representation and long service to Karachi's business community, while highlighting stagnant exports despite the rupee's depreciation since

1990. Aqeel Karim Dhedhi expressed support for BMG and hoped Zubair Motiwala would join national politics.

Motiwala reaffirmed BMG's commitment to serving all traders and communities equally, introducing the group's candidates. Shoaib Ismail noted BMG's unbeaten 27-year record in KCCI elections, crediting late leader S. M. Muneer's legacy.

Rehan Hanif criticized the rival group for weak preparation, while Javed Bilwani emphasized Karachi's outsized contribution to exports and revenue. Other speakers, including Tariq Yousuf, Mian Abrar, Anjum Nisar and Abdul Rahim Janoo, expressed support for BMG and confidence in its continued success.

Family IT Support Becomes Essential for Older
Generations: Kaspersky Survey

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A Kaspersky survey across the Middle East, Turkey and Africa (META) region reveals that younger family members play a critical role in helping elderly relatives navigate digital technology, from app installation to online banking and privacy settings. Some 88% of respondents said they have assisted elderly relatives or friends with IT, with 50% providing regular support and 38% helping occasionally.

Installing apps was the most common assistance type (52%),

followed by social media support (50%). Sensitive tasks also featured prominently: 43% helped with online banking, 41% with privacy settings, and 40% with e-government services. However, only 27% assisted with installing security software, suggesting cybersecurity protection may be underestimated or overlooked during setup.

Respondents identified simpler, more intuitive tools (33%), greater cybersecurity education (27%), and increased family involvement (23%) as key to improving older users' digital safety and confidence.

Seifallah Jedidi, Kaspersky's Head of Consumer Channel for META, said older generations are increasingly active online but still depend heavily on younger relatives for safe navigation, urging improved digital literacy and simpler interfaces.

Kaspersky recommended educating elderly users about scams, phishing and suspicious links, avoiding password sharing, installing security software, and enabling two-factor authentication. The survey covered 5,000 interviews across the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Turkey and South Africa in 2026.



Inaugural HBL PSL Cricket Development Excellence Award

Abdul Majid

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has unveiled the procedure for its inaugural HBL PSL Cricket Development Excellence Award, worth USD 200,000 (PKR 55.4 million), to be granted to the franchise contributing most to cricket development. The award aims to reward genuine long-term investment, structured development pathways, and measurable, auditable standards of professional growth for cricketers.

The 2026 award will evaluate development work by franchises from HBL PSL 3 through PSL 11; thereafter, only work between the two most recent editions will be considered.

The scoring process involves three stages: franchises will first self-assess using a scoring model, then submit their scores to a five-member PCB assessment committee comprising independent experts and internal stakeholders, who will verify scores against evidence using verifiable data points—accounting for 80% of the final score. Franchises will also present their development work on official PSL social media, where fans can vote, contributing the remaining 20%.

The scoring breakdown includes: Player Pathway and Development



(25%), Grassroots and Domestic Engagement (20%), Fan Voting (20%), High-Performance Infrastructure and Innovations (15%), Player Impact and Match Contribution (10%), and Player Welfare and Education (10%).

Key indicators cover new talent

identification and progression, a scouted player's match impact, institutional facilities and technology-led innovation, financial literacy, mental health and anti-corruption education, and grassroots initiatives including coaching clinics and school/club cricket

programs.

Further details on the committee and voting schedule will be announced later. The PCB has also requested media houses to consistently use the official nomenclature "HBL PSL" in all reporting.

Pak-China Games logo unveiled

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar unveiled the logo of Pak-China Friendship Summer Games 2026 at a ceremony at National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

DG Sports Punjab M Tariq Qureshi, Director Adhoin Abid Shaukat, Deputy Director Zahoor Ahmed and other officials were also present on this occasion.

Speaking to media on the occasion, Punjab Minister for Sports said that Pak-China Friendship Games would be organized at multiple venues of Nishtar Park Sports Complex from September 24 to 28 to mark the 75th anniversary of Pak-China friendship.

He said that around 2,000 athletes from all divisions of Punjab would



participate in these games and around 70,000 athletes had appeared in the trials for gaining a place in the said event.

"Top performing athletes of Pak-China Friendship Games would be included in Punjab Sports Endowment Fund".

Faisal Khokhar informed that Chinese athletes would also participate in the Pak-China Friendship Games in which the prize money amounting to Rs5 million would be distributed among the top performing athletes. "The competitions of Pak-China Friendship Games would be held in 11 games—table tennis, badminton, wushu, tai chi, gymnastics, athletics, basketball, football, tennis, volleyball and weightlifting".

BYD Unveils the Future at PAPS 2026 with New Lineup, Introducing Pakistan's First Locally Assembled BYD Sealion 6

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: BYD, the world's leading NEV brand, in partnership with Mega Motor Company (MMC), is showcasing its next generation of new energy mobility in Pakistan at the Pakistan Auto Show (PAPS) 2026, unveiling electric and plug-in hybrid vehicles alongside a new brand and a range of genuine BYD accessories. At the centre of the display is the BYD Sealion 6, set to become BYD's first locally assembled vehicle in Pakistan, with production targeted to begin in Q4 2026.

The PAPS 2026 lineup includes the BYD Atto 2 — Pakistan's most popular electric vehicle; the BYD Shark 6 Anniversary Edition in Outback Orange; the BYD Sealion 6; and BYD's luxury technology brand DENZA, represented by the B8. Together, the range underscores BYD's confidence in the Pakistani market and its growing new-en-



ergy portfolio.

The Sealion 6 marks a major milestone, built on BYD's Super DM (Dual Mode) technology, which has surpassed 8.5 million

units sold worldwide. Powered by the Super DM-i platform, the vehicle blends electric driving with plug-in hybrid flexibility, offering a total range of up to

1,100 km while maintaining strong fuel efficiency and performance — addressing everyday driving needs and long-journey range concerns in Pakistan.

Local assembly, beginning Q4 2026, will mark BYD-MMC's transition from importing global NEV technology to establishing local production, reflecting Pakistan's shift toward electrified mobility.

Lei Jian, Country Head, BYD Pakistan, said the strong market response since BYD's entry reinforced confidence in the country, calling the Sealion 6's local assembly a key step in building a long-term presence. Danish Khaliq, VP Sales & Strategy at BYD Pakistan-MMC, said the PAPS lineup reflects the market's growing readiness for new technology, with localisation taking that evolution further.

BYD's showcase runs from September 18–20 in Hall No. 2 at the Expo Center, Lahore. All orders booked at the BYD pavilion during the show will be eligible for a free first year of service, subject to terms and conditions.

SECP Approves Shariah-Compliant Digital Financing for Small Businesses

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has approved Shaamilkar Tajir, a digital application offering Shariah-compliant financing of up to Rs3 million to eligible small businesses.

Developed by SECP-licensed Shaamilkar Financial Services, the application will enable micro-entrepreneurs to purchase inventory from approved suppliers through a simpler and faster digital process. The initiative aims to bring underserved businesses into the formal credit system and help them expand their operations.

"Technology-enabled financing can expand access to formal credit for underserved businesses," SECP Chairman Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu said, adding that the Commission would facilitate responsible digital financing while ensuring regulatory oversight and consumer protection.

The approval supports the Federal Government's Access to Finance agenda for SMEs and other priority sectors. Between July 2025 and June 2026, licensed lending NBFCs provided approximately Rs253 billion through 2.5 million loans to micro, small and medium enterprises.

Zone-VI Whites moved into Final of Touchme Trophy U-15 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament

News Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Batting by Aaish Malik 75 with the help of 7 boundaries 2 Sixes, Faisal Qurban 52 with 4 fours and a Six and Deadly bowling by slow left arm spinner Yahya Aslam capturing 4 Wickets for 14 runs helped Zone-VI Whites to moved into Final of the Touchme Trophy Under-15 Inter Zonal Cricket Tournament after beating Zone-IV Whites by 44 runs in the 2nd Semi Final played here at KCCA Stadium.

The Tournament is being Organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Medicam Group of Companies.

Scores in Brief:

Zone-VI beat Zone-IV Whites by 44 runs in the 2nd Semi Final at KCCA Stadium. Zone-VI Whites 191/9 in 40 overs.

Aaish Malik 75 7x4 2x6, Faisal Qurban 52 4x4 1x6, Muzammil Ansari 21, Turab Ali (sl) 3/25, Kamil Khan (rl) 3/30, Masood Ali (ro) 2/31.

In reply Zone-IV Whites 147 all-out in 36.4 overs. Masood Ali 59 4x4 2x6, Muhammad Usman Usman 23, Yahya Aslam (sl) 4/14.

Abdul Rehman thanks fans after winning Poligras Magic Skill Award

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's emerging hockey star Abdul Rehman has expressed his gratitude to hockey fans around the world for voting for him to win the prestigious Poligras Magic Skill Award in the men's competition.

In a video statement following his success, Abdul Rehman thanked everyone who voted for him and said he was delighted that fans had appreciated his 3D skills and his goal against Wales during the FIH Hockey World Cup Belgium and Netherlands 2026.

"A big thank you to everyone who voted for me. I'm really happy you enjoyed my 3D skills and my goal against Wales," he said.

He said the support he received from hockey fans meant a great deal to him.

IHC Issues Detailed Order on PTI's September 27 Long March

Continued from Page 1

the planned march. The use of official vehicles and government machinery for the protest was also prohibited.

The court further ordered authorities to establish an immediate helpline for government employees who receive unlawful instructions or face pressure to participate in a march, procession or rally.

The order warned that individuals violating the court's directives or citizens' fundamental rights would face consequences under the law. It added that public office holders who violate the Constitution or law could be considered to have breached their oath of office.

The court also held that officials whose actions infringe citizens' fundamental rights could face legal consequences.

Dr. Uxi Mufti: The Man Who Gave Voice to Pakistan's Heritage

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civil-awards record confirms the Sitara-i-Imtiaz awarded to Uxi Mufti in the field of Art/Folklorist. The City of Memphis, USA, also granted him honorary citizenship.

Writer, Broadcaster and Cultural Storyteller: Dr. Mufti's contribution did not remain confined to institutions and museums. He also became an important literary and media voice. His English works include Cultural Horizons Pakistan, Allah: Measuring the Intangible, and Muhammad in Modern Times. His Urdu writings, including Aik Din Baat, Kaghaz ka Ghora, Pakistani Saqafat and Maha Aukha Mufti, reflect his interest in society, culture, satire and human behavior.

Through his television programs Lok Tamasha, he brought folk music and traditional performances to a much wider audience. The program helped introduce folk artists and traditions to mainstream

viewers and became an important part of Pakistan's cultural broadcasting history. His documentary work, including Bangla Punjab (2022), Hunza - The Legendary Land and The Last Song, further reflects his determination to keep cultural traditions visible and relevant.

A Living National Heritage: An American reviewer described Dr. Mufti as a folklorist and cultural architect who spent decades preserving human stories and protecting intangible heritage. That description captures an important part of his contribution. Dr. Mufti is not simply a scholar who studied culture; he helped build institutions through which generations of Pakistanis could discover and understand their own heritage. His life reminds us that culture is not something that belongs only to history books. It is a living inheritance—carried through music, language, stories, crafts, traditions and memories.

Retirement Should Not Mean the End

of Contribution: Dr. Uxi Mufti's life also raises a much larger question for Pakistan: What happens to the knowledge and experience of our most experienced citizens when they retire? The Government should consider rethinking retirement as the end of service. In many cases, it can instead mark the beginning of another phase of national contribution.

Pakistan has invested decades in educating and training its scientists, administrators, researchers, academics, engineers, professionals, writers and cultural figures. Their experience and institutional memory are valuable national resources. Allowing that knowledge to become inactive simply because a person has reached the formal age of retirement is a loss the country can ill afford. The Government could therefore consider a National Policy for Post-Retirement Engagement of National Expertise, with advisory frameworks at federal, provincial and institutional levels. Expe-

rienced citizens could serve, where appropriate, as advisers, mentors, consultants, policy reviewers and members of expert panels. Permanent Senior Advisory Councils and Knowledge & Experience Forums could also be considered in important sectors such as education, culture, tourism, agriculture, science and technology, industry and public administration.

The example of Dr. Uxi Mufti shows why such an approach matters. A person who has spent decades building institutions, gathering knowledge and serving society should not be viewed simply as "retired." His experience is part of the nation's accumulated wisdom. Pakistan can bring together the wisdom and experience of its senior citizens with the energy and ideas of its younger generation. In doing so, it can turn experience into institutional wisdom, knowledge into national strength, and the lessons of the past into a better future.

Continued from Page 4

own interests in reducing attacks and restoring commercial stability. Their presence could help identify terms that address practical concerns, even if the parties remain far apart on larger political questions.

A breakthrough need not begin with a presidential handshake or a comprehensive agreement. It could begin with authorized exchanges through intermediaries, a defined negotiating agenda, or reciprocal measures that reduce immediate risks. What matters is whether communication produces changes in conduct. A visit followed only by competing speeches would leave the central problem intact. A visit that establishes sustained talks could become an important step toward ending a war that continues to impose costs without a settled political outcome.

Washington's strongest response would be to treat that possibility seriously. Seeking an agreement would not erase American power; it would recognize that military capability and political success are different things. The Iranian delegation's presence offers no guarantee of peace, but it creates an occasion to test whether diplomacy can achieve what continued confrontation has not. After more than 200 days, the administration owes Americans more than another prediction of success. It owes them a credible course toward ending the war and limiting its further human and economic damage.

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.

Meeting

LONDON: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, holding one on one meetings during the J.P. Morgan Emerging and Frontier Markets Opportunities Conference on Friday.



Photo: PID

Finance Minister Aurangzeb highlights Pakistan's economic stability at J. P. Morgan Conference in London

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb addressed the "Fireside Chat: Pakistan: External Shocks Remain Manageable" at the J. P. Morgan Emerging and Frontier Markets Opportunities Conference in London, outlining Pakistan's macroeconomic progress and future priorities. The conference

drew strong interest from 55 global investment funds through one-on-one meetings and an investor session, with J. P. Morgan Pakistan CEO Amin Khawaja present. Aurangzeb outlined six priorities: strengthening fiscal stability, shifting toward sustainable investment-led growth, continuing structural reforms, moving from aid to trade, expanding financial access, and positioning Paki-

stan for the digital economy including blockchain and Web 3.0. He noted GDP growth reached 3.7% in FY26, with the fiscal deficit down to 2.6% of GDP and a third consecutive primary surplus. SBP Governor Jameel Ahmad highlighted improved foreign exchange reserves, rising remittances, and strengthening external fundamentals, including Roshan Digital Account contribu-

tions and controlled inflation. Aurangzeb detailed active debt management, including the inaugural Panda Bond and a record \$3 billion Eurobond issuance, alongside efforts to deepen capital markets, boost IPOs, and develop Islamic finance. He discussed privatisation progress across PIA, DISCOs, and other SOEs, plus a National Private Equity Framework to attract institu-

tional capital. He emphasized expanding SME, agriculture, and housing finance, stressing private capital's growing role beyond public balance sheets. Highlighting Pakistan's large market, young workforce, and strategic location, Aurangzeb said the investment case now rests on reform momentum and re-rating potential rather than merely overcoming immediate pressures.

Pakistan, Turkiye discuss stronger bilateral ties and regional situation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Türkiye in Pakistan Irfan Neziroglu on Friday called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, wherein they discussed bilateral relations and exchanged views on the evolving regional situation.

The ambassador briefed the deputy prime minister on progress under various bilateral institutional mechanisms aimed at advancing cooperation across a range of areas, following recent high-level interactions between Pakistan and Türkiye. Deputy Prime Minister



Dar reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further deepening engagement with his country in key priority areas.

He emphasised the need for relevant departments on both sides to closely coordinate preparations for the forthcoming Joint Commission and the 8th session of the High-Level Strategic Cooperation Council to advance the bilateral agenda.

On the regional situation, the deputy prime minister underscored that dialogue and diplomacy remained the only viable path to resolving issues and achieving lasting peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

CDA recovers over 2,490 Kanals in anti-encroachment drive; 290 kanals retrieved in E-12

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) has stepped up its city-wide campaign to rid Islamabad of encroachments, recovering more than 2,490 kanals of state land worth billions of rupees. The drive underscores CDA's commitment to safeguarding public property, enforcing planning and building regulations, curbing illegal commercialization of state land, and ensuring development in line with the approved master plan.

Among the key achievements is the recovery of over 1,400 kanals, including the former Muslim Colony, after completing all legal procedures; a site office was set up to review genuine claims from local residents. In a separate phase, CDA reclaimed over 712 kanals from illegal occupants following

notices and legal formalities. The Enforcement Directorate also retrieved 320 kanals in Saidpur and nearby areas of the National Park using satellite-based geo-mapping, with the land earmarked for environmental restoration and plantation. Earlier operations recovered over 800 kanals along GT Road, Tarnol, Islamabad Expressway and Srinagar Highway, alongside action against illegal construction.

A major breakthrough came in Sector E-12, where roughly 290 kanals were recovered. In E-12/2 alone, about 16 kanals used for private security guards, a holiday home and 14 illegally rented shops were reclaimed after verification, with possession restored and development resumed. Residents and allottees welcomed the move, hoping it will speed up infrastructure and civic facilities.

Gilani, Tariq Fazal discuss coordination between Upper House and Ministry

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry called on Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday, where the two discussed parliamentary affairs, the legislative process, and ways to strengthen coordination between the Upper House and the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs, among other matters of mutual interest.

Both sides agreed to deepen cooperation to enhance the effective role of parliamentary institutions and reinforce the democratic process.

Gilani stressed that close coordination between Parliament and the government is vital for smoothing the legislative process and ensuring timely progress on issues of public importance. He called for greater cooperation and institutional support in conducting parliamentary business.



Dr. Chaudhry, in turn, assured the Chairman Senate of the Ministry's full support on matters related to parliamentary affairs.

Both leaders reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening coordination between the Senate and the Ministry, pledging continued joint efforts to uphold Parliament's dignity and improve its overall functioning.

PM Shehbaz issues special directives to augment public facilitation under Fuel Relief Scheme



Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

LONDON: Prime Minister, Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, on Friday issued

special directives to provide further relief to the public under the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme.

The prime minister issued directives to immediately include 20-year-old motorcycles, rickshaws, and Qingqi rickshaws in the PM's Fuel Relief Scheme, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

It added that after the special directions all motorcycles, rickshaws, and Qingqi rickshaws registered after January 1, 2006, will be eligible for registration under the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme.

However, the masses employing 20-year-old motorcycles, rickshaws, and Qingqi rickshaws will also be able to benefit from the Prime Minister's Fuel Relief Scheme.

Dar, British high commissioner discuss regional developments of mutual interest



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: British High Commissioner Jane Marriott called on Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar.

Discussions centered on Pakistan-UK relations, and the understandings reached during the DPM

Dar's recent visit to the UK in August, and ways to further strengthen cooperation across areas of mutual interest.

Ishaq Dar underscored the importance of sustained high-level engagement, and also discussed regional and international developments of mutual interest.

Govt not ready to give PTI political space: Fawad Chaudhry

Monitoring Desk

LAHORE: Former federal minister Fawad Chaudhry has alleged that the government is unwilling to provide political space to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), saying its policy is to prevent opposition parties from operating freely.

Speaking on Dunya News' programme 'Baat Niklay Gi', Chaudhry questioned what options remained for political opponents when they were "pushed against the wall."

He alleged that the government was treating its political opponents as if they were enemies of the state, claiming that the leadership of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz

(PML-N) was disconnected from its own lawmakers and did not regularly meet members of the National and provincial assemblies.

Chaudhry further alleged that the ruling leadership was unconcerned about public opinion because, in his view, it had not come to power through voters' support.

He also questioned the financial trail surrounding a government aircraft, drawing a comparison with the long-running Avenfield case. He claimed that poverty in Punjab had continued to rise.

According to Chaudhry, the poverty rate in Punjab stood at 16% when Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz assumed office but had since increased to 23%.

Pakistan's external resilience, investment indicators strengthen: Khurram

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to Finance Minister Khurram Schehzad on Friday highlighted a series of improving macroeconomic and investment indicators, saying Pakistan's external resilience was strengthening and creating conditions for higher investment and productive growth.

In a post on social media platform X, the adviser shared 12 key economic and investment takeaways for August-September 2026, covering foreign exchange reserves, the current account, manufacturing, corporate profitability, remittances, exports, foreign direct investment and capital markets.

He said that the foreign exchange reserves had reached a record \$21.4

billion, while the current account deficit in August declined by 70 percent year-on-year. The current account deficit for the first two months of fiscal year 2026-27 was also recorded at 36 percent lower than the corresponding period of the previous year.

He said large-scale manufacturing recorded 3.0 percent year-on-year growth, while monthly growth stood at 9.5 percent.

Corporate profits increased by 15 percent year-on-year during FY2026, while new business incorporations rose by 45 percent, he added.

The adviser said that workers' remittances increased by 17 percent year-on-year and reached \$7.3 billion during the first two months of FY2027.