

# Punjab sets up Pakistan's first AI intelligence hub: CM



**STAFF REPORT, LAHORE:** Punjab has become the first province in Pakistan to establish an Artificial Intelligence (AI) Intelligence Hub, Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said on Friday while formally launching the facility at the Punjab Enforcement and Regulatory Authority (PERA) office.

The chief minister inaugurated the AI Intelligence Hub through an e-launch and was given a detailed briefing on the project at the PERA headquarters.

Speaking at the ceremony, CM Punjab said the concept of artificial intelligence had been translated into reality within a

few months, with the support of the Pakistan Army and other security institutions. She thanked Lahore Corps Commander Lt Gen Fayyaz Hussain Shah for the Army's cooperation and congratulated Home Minister Khawaja Salman Rafique, Home Secretary Ahmed Javed Qazi and other officials for establishing the AI hub in record time.

"Police, Special Branch and other law-enforcement agencies also deserve appreciation," she said.

The chief minister said all security institutions had worked as "one unit" to protect the people and maintain law and

order despite difficult circumstances and security challenges.

She said Punjab had demonstrated its ability to respond promptly to emergencies, recalling last year's rains when government agencies worked jointly to deal with the situation.

"Despite the poor sewerage and drainage system, rainwater is being drained this year as well," she said, adding that complete rehabilitation of Punjab's sewerage and drainage infrastructure would require "billions, rather than trillions" of rupees.

With the establishment of the AI

Intelligence Hub, district coordination committees would receive digital alerts, she said.

The chief minister said the security situation in Punjab had improved considerably compared with the past. Crimes against minorities and mistreatment of members of minority communities could no longer be tolerated, she added.

She recalled that drugs had once become a threat to the younger generation in neighbourhoods across the province, while the crime situation had also been extremely serious, with several districts witnessing multiple murders every day.

## Tariq Fazal rejects reports of new Islamabad province

**STAFF REPORT,** Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry has said no new province is being created in Islamabad and the capital's existing status will remain unchanged.

Speaking on Samaa TV's programme Nadeem Malik Live, Chaudhry said Islamabad did not need a chief minister and proposed an empowered legislative assembly



for the federal capital.

"Say Mayor or Lord Mayor, but below him the Assembly will be empowered. The Assembly will be able to make laws," he said.

Chaudhry said a local government system could not replace provincial assemblies, regardless of how extensive the system was.

He said around Rs8 billion was collected annually from vehicles in Islamabad, while property and Capital Development Authority (CDA) taxes were collected separately. The minister said no new taxes were being introduced and argued that if taxes collected in Islamabad were spent on the capital itself, the city could be transformed significantly. He stressed the need for an empowered legislative assembly to oversee the affairs of Islamabad. Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Information Minister Shafi Jan criticised the government's approach to local governance and administrative arrangements. He said local government elections had not been held in Islamabad for years and claimed the existing system needed to be reset. Jan also criticised Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, alleging that she had made fun of martyrs and calling on her to apologise for her remarks.

He further criticised the Punjab government and claimed the province could face disqualification, while saying former chief minister Usman Buzdar had performed better than Maryam Nawaz.

## IRGC announces capture of US unmanned submersible: state media



**STAFF REPORT,** Iran's state media reported on Tuesday that the Iranian Navy had captured an unmanned US Navy submersible at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz.

"One of the US military's most advanced unmanned underwater vehicles was seized by Iranian armed forces at the entrance to the Strait of Hormuz during a complex intelligence and field operation and brought into Iran," IRIB said.

Tasnim News Agency identified the captured system as a Dive-LD, an autonomous unmanned underwater vehicle developed by US defence technology company Anduril Industries and first delivered to the US Navy's Unmanned Undersea Vehicle Group 1 in 2025.

According to Press TV, the "unmanned submersible incorporates some of the world's most advanced underwater

technology and was delivered to the US terrorist military in 2025".

Press TV further reported that the IRGC announced that "photographic evidence and detailed footage" of the captured US asset would be released in the coming hours.

Separately, the Iranian army claimed it had shot down a US MQ-1 drone over the Strait of Hormuz, according to state broadcaster Press TV. In a statement, the army said its air defence forces "detected, tracked and targeted the drone in southeastern Iran before striking and destroying it", Press TV reported. It further added that the drone was downed by "a new advanced air defence system ... under the control of the country's integrated air defence network".

US President Donald Trump on Tuesday claimed that Iran has been "punished greatly" by the naval blockade, describing the blockade as "so powerful, so effective."

"Iran will not have a nuclear weapon. And they've been punished greatly," Trump said at the Steel Across America event outside the White House, where a 21-foot steel beam recovered from the World Trade Centre's South Tower will be displayed ahead of the 25th anniversary of the September 11 attacks.

Hailing the US military for its attacks on Iran, he said: "The job they do is unbelievable." "The blockade has been so powerful, so effective. Nobody thought it could go so well," he added. The US Treasury Department announced on Tuesday that it had imposed sanctions on 36 targets linked to Iran's aviation sector, including 27 airlines, accusing the sector of facilitating the movement of weapons, personnel and illicit cargo.



Federal Minister for Interior Moshin Naqvi presents a model of EV of "Capital Patrol", an initiative of Islamabad Capital Territory Police to Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

## Fazl challenges political parties over new provinces, stresses timing, circumstances matter

**STAFF REPORT,** Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman has called for political debate before any move to create new provinces, warning against imposing major changes to the administrative structure while arguing that successive policies have weakened the country's political and economic foundations.

Addressing a Khatm-e-Nabuwwat conference at the Wahdat Road Cricket Ground in Lahore, Fazl said that September 6, 1965, marked an important episode



in protecting Pakistan's geographical boundaries.

He said the state could only be strong if its people were secure and respected, arguing that political divisions had weakened the country.

"We are not against creating units on principle," Fazl said, adding that decisions on new provinces should take into account the prevailing "time and circumstances".

"We are not against provinces, but the time and circumstances must also be considered," he said, calling for debate rather than unilateral decisions.

## Navy Chief Recalls Operation Somnath, Highlights Legacy of Courage

**MONITORING DESK,** Naval Chief Admiral Naveed Ashraf on Tuesday recalled Operation Somnath on Navy Day, saying the spirit of resilience and courage behind the historic operation continued to endure, as reflected once again during Marka-e-Haq with India, the military's media wing said. According to the Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR), in his message on the occasion, the naval chief said the historic Operation Somnath showed how a determined maritime force could achieve decisive results despite limited

numbers and resources. "The legacy of courage and conviction established during Operation Somnath continues to endure, as reflected once again in Pakistan Navy's successful deterrence against the Indian Navy during Marka-e-Haq," he said. The statement said that the Pakistan Navy commemorated the day, paying tribute to the courage and sacrifices of naval personnel during the 1965 War and honouring the legacy of service carried forward by generations of sailors in defence of the country,



Airport officials brief members of the Federal Ombudsman's inspection team about airport operations during their visit to Islamabad International Airport.

## Gilgit: Fourth session of GB Assembly, Akhtar Abbas takes oath of membership

Gilgit (FIR Report)

The fourth session of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly began under the chairmanship of Speaker Imran Nadeem, in which newly elected member of the assembly from Skardu, Akhtar Abbas, took the oath of membership. Speaker Imran Nadeem administered the oath to the newly elected member of the assembly.

Akhtar Abbas, belonging to the Pakistan Peoples Party, won from constituency GBA-9 Skardu-3 in the by-elections held on September 5. After his victory and oath-taking,

the 33-member house of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly has been completed.

Fida Muhammad Nashad, who was elected from constituency GBA-9 Skardu-3 in the June 7 elections, was disqualified by the court on charges of concealing assets, after which a by-election was held on this seat.

After the success of Akhtar Abbas, the number of Pakistan Peoples Party members in the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly has increased from 14 to 15. Of the 15 PPP members, 11 were elected on general seats, 3 on women and one on reserved seats for techno-

crats.

The PML-N is the second largest party in the house with 9 members, including 2 women and one technocrat, while the Pakistan Stability Party has 7 members, including one woman and one technocrat.

One member from the Majlis-e-Wahdat Muslimeen and one member supported by the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf are also part of the Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly as an independent.

The current Gilgit-Baltistan Assembly, which came into existence as a result of party-based elections, is the fourth assembly in the region.

## Law Student Denies False FIR, Seeks Quashing of Case Against Him

Jhang (Bureau Chief):

Law student Syed Haseeb Akbar has said that the FIR registered against him at Civil Lines Police Station, Lahore, by the Secretary of the Punjab Bar Council is false and baseless and should be quashed.

Speaking at a press conference at the Jhang Press Club yesterday, alongside senior lawyers Rana Sher Muhammad Bhon Advocate, Syed Nusrat Bukhari Advocate, Asif Ramzan Dhandla Advocate and others, Syed Haseeb Akbar said that according to the contents of the FIR, he has been accused of appearing in court despite not being a lawyer.

Syed Haseeb Akbar said that he is studying law and is a final-year student, but he has neither ever worn a lawyer's uniform nor appeared before any court. He said that he also appeared before the inquiry com-



mittee formed by the Punjab Bar Council and presented his position there as well.

He said that the Punjab Bar Council and senior lawyers should not put the future of young law students at stake, and that the FIR regis-

tered against him should be quashed. He also urged the Member of the Punjab Bar Council from the Jhang seat to play his role in this regard.

Earlier, lawyers and law students also staged a protest demonstration outside the Press Club.

## Detailed inspection of AC City Asher Jameel Trauma Center, Gujranwala Teaching Hospital



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to details: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Naveed Ahmed, Assistant Commissioner City Ashar Jameel made a detailed visit to the trauma center of Gujranwala Teaching Hospital and

reviewed the cleanliness, security, fire safety and facilities provided to patients.

Declaring the cleanliness situation satisfactory, continuous monitoring was directed. Instructions were issued to keep control room functional 24/7, proper maintenance of external premises, third

party audit of electrical safety arrangements and ensuring separate waiting room and queuing facility for patients, especially senior citizens.

Fire fighting equipment, emergency exit signs, emergency alarm, help desk and 3 water hydrants were found functional.

## National Press Club and Punjab Group of Colleges sign MoU



Islamabad (City Reporter)

A MoU has been signed between the National Press Club Islamabad and the Punjab Group of Colleges. Under the agreement, National Press Club members and their children will be provided with 25% discount in fees and 20% discount in admission and other facilities in various educational institutions of the Punjab Group of Colleges. The MoU was signed by President Abdul Razaq Sial and Secretary Dr. Furqan Rao on behalf of the National Press Club, while Director Chaudhry Muhammad Akram on behalf of the Punjab Group of Colleges. Senior journalists Haji Nawaz Raza, Dr. Sadia Kamal, Shakeel Ahmed, Rohail Rehmat, Qaiser Mirza, Zaigham Naqvi and others were also present on the occasion. Addressing the ceremony, Punjab Group of Colleges Director Chaudhry Muhammad Akram said that the institution has more than 400 campuses across Punjab and Azad Kashmir, four universities and 15 branches in Rawalpindi and Islamabad, where under the agreement, children of National Press Club members will be provided with discounts. He said that the institution is also introducing information technol-

ogy, technical and skill-based programs along with intermediate. He said that a special discount package will also be given to children of National Press Club members, while students who score 80 percent or more marks on merit will also be considered for scholarships. He said that deserving and talented students are encouraged through merit-based scholarships in educational institutions. On this occasion, President National Press Club Abdul Razaq Sial said that the current administration of the National Press Club had included the welfare of members and educational facilities for their children among its priorities during the elections. Agreements with various schools, colleges and educational institutions are a link in this chain. He said that many children of journalists are studying in different cities and areas, so efforts will be made to extend this facility with the Punjab Group of Colleges to other cities and branches so that those members of Islamabad whose children are studying in their native areas can also benefit. Abdul Razaq Sial said that the National Press Club has already signed MoUs with various educational institutions and in the future agreements will be signed with more renowned educa-

tional institutions so that maximum relief can be provided to members and their children. He demanded from the administration of the Punjab Group of Colleges that in the future special concessions should be arranged for the children of National Press Club members at the university level so that the journalist community can get more facilities in pursuing higher education. Secretary National Press Club Dr. Furqan Rao said that providing quality education to the children of the journalist community and providing them with maximum facilities is among the priorities of the National Press Club. He said that all the promises made in the elections are coming to fruition. After this, agreements will be made with more schools and colleges so that the children of members can get quality education with concessional fees. He said that the efforts of Rohail Rehmat for this agreement are commendable. At the end of the ceremony, the officials of the National Press Club and the administration of the Punjab Group of Colleges expressed the hope that as a result of the MoU, the children of journalists will get financial relief in obtaining quality education and they will be able to benefit from better educational opportunities.

## Road restoration work on Gujranwala Hafizabad Road in progress



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to details: Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Naveed Ahmed visited Hafizabad Road and reviewed the ongoing work of restoring the road to its original condition after laying the sewage line.

MD Wasa Abdul Waheed briefed the Deputy Commissioner regarding the progress on the installation of sewage line and road construction and maintenance work.

Deputy Commissioner Naveed Ahmed directed the WASA authori-

ties to complete the road restoration work quickly as per the stipulated period so that the citizens do not face any problem in transportation. ADC Municipal Services Zeeshan Nadeem, MD Wasa Abdul Waheed and other officers were also present on this occasion.

## District administration and Department of Environmental Protection of Gujranwala are in progress to tackle smog and air pollution



Gujranwala: (Bureau Report)

According to the details: On the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Gujranwala Naveed Ahmed, under the supervision of Deputy Director of Environment, Engineer Muhammad Imran Mayo, Assistant Director of Environment Naveed Ahmed sealed 6 barbecue

points that did not install suction hoods while taking action with the Environment Protection Force. The sealed barbecue points include Karachi Barbecue Model Town, Sajid Barbecue Main Market Model Town, Khizr Taka Shop Gondlanwala Road, Tanveer Taka Shop near Nursery Chowk Satellite Town, Nasir Taka Shop near Parani Chongi Farid Town

and Akbar Taka Shop Farid Town. Deputy Director Environment Engineer Muhammad Imran Mayo while talking to the media said that no hotel, marriage hall or barbecue point will be allowed to operate without a suction hood. Indiscriminate actions against elements causing smog and air pollution will continue.

## Action Against Illegal LPG Decanting\*



Gujranwala (Beauru Report)\*

On the directions of the Deputy Commissioner, Gujranwala, the Assistant Commissioner, Sadar,

took action against an illegal LPG decanting shop located on Hafizabad Road. The premises were sealed, and the LPG filling material was confiscated. An FIR

was also lodged against the violator under the relevant laws. Govt of Punjab Commissioner Gujranwala, Division, Gujranwala

## Prime Minister provides 50 new patrol vehicles to Islamabad Police

ISLAMABAD (City Reporter)

Prime Minister of Pakistan Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif handed over the keys of 50 new patrol vehicles to Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to maintain law and order in the federal capital, protect the lives and property of citizens and make the patrolling and quick response capabilities of Islamabad Police more effective. Member of National Assembly Anjum Aqeel Khan was also present on the occasion. The purpose of providing new patrol vehicles is to make the field presence of Islamabad Police more effective, improve the patrolling system in different areas and further speed up the police's quick response in any emergency situation. The availability of modern and additional vehicles will help the police to perform their responsibilities more effectively in preventing crime, protecting citizens and maintaining law and order. Speaking on the occasion, Member National Assembly Anjum Aqeel Khan thanked Prime Minister Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif and Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on behalf of the people of Islamabad. He said that providing a safe environment to the citizens of the federal capital is one of the top priorities of the government and providing resources to the Islamabad Police is an



important link in this chain. The provision of 50 new patrolling vehicles will significantly improve the performance, patrolling system and quick response of the Islamabad Police. Police personnel will be able to monitor different areas more effectively, while action against criminal elements and provision of immediate assistance to citizens will also improve. The Member of National Assembly said that the protection of lives and property of the citizens of

Islamabad is our top priority and the police will continue to be provided with the necessary resources and facilities to make the federal capital safe, peaceful and crime-free. He expressed the hope that the practical use of the new patrolling vehicles will further strengthen police surveillance in different areas of Islamabad, expand the scope of patrols and ensure timely assistance and better services to the citizens by the police.

## In view of the orders of Commissioner Gujranwala Muhammad Ali, under the supervision of Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Nauman Farooq Tard, a large-scale operation was launched against the illegal encroachment mafia, and several illegal encroachments were demolished



Gujranwala (Bureau Report)

According to the details: Following the orders of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, Commissioner Gujranwala Muhammad Ali started a large-scale operation against the illegal encroachment mafia. On which the

corporation staff demolished temporary and permanent encroachments in various areas, including Pondawala Chowk Chamanshah Road People's Colony Satellite Town and adjacent areas, and fined many people and issued a warning to the Walloons for making several tempo-

rary encroachments, on which the Chief Officer Municipal Corporation Noman Farooq Tard said that indiscriminate actions against illegal encroachments will continue, illegal encroachments against the mafia on a daily basis. The operation will continue



# Africa pays a high price for dollar dependence

HAFED AL-GHWELL

Governments across Africa are rightfully questioning the wisdom of anchoring their countries’ futures to the US dollar. The instinct grows from patterns that have shaped the continent’s financial stability, trade resilience, and growth prospects for decades.

A currency that once promised predictability now functions as a vehicle for volatility that African policymakers never signed up for. Each Federal Reserve rate hike, for instance, tightens African credit conditions as if Washington were running monetary policy for Nairobi, Accra, and Lusaka.

Dedollarization — reducing reliance on the US dollar for trade, reserves, and financial transactions — speaks to a desire for insulation, bargaining power, and policy autonomy in an era where external shocks arrive with unprecedented regularity.

While talk of dedollarization is not exactly new, it has gained traction in recent years, after several African currencies lost nearly half of their value against the dollar. Such depreciations erode tax bases, inflate debt

burdens, and push countries toward International Monetary Fund programs that come with significant political costs.

Moreover, roughly 70 percent of Africa’s external debt is dollar-denominated. As the dollar strengthens, debt service costs balloon without any new borrowing. In one year alone, African governments paid more than \$60 billion in interest on external debt, and a third of that stemmed from dollar appreciation rather than fundamentals.

A continent seeking structural transformation cannot tolerate a global monetary system that amplifies domestic vulnerabilities. Naturally, leaders see a mismatch: African economies are diversifying, yet currency arrangements still resemble the 1980s. The dollar’s dominance magnifies inflation pass-through because the region’s import dependence makes exchange rate shocks automatically inflationary even where fiscal discipline is relatively decent. Food imports alone cost Africa more than \$35 billion annually, so a stronger dollar can quickly turn a food security issue into a macroeconomic crisis.

Thus, the heightening pursuit of dedollarization is an attempt to negotiate from a position of less fragility rather than an outright rejection of global markets. Consider this: When Kenya pays for imported crude in Kenyan shillings or when Nigeria explores yuan settlements for infrastructure deals, the goal is strategic hedging. Policymakers want to reduce single-currency exposure in the same way investors diversify portfolios. Russia’s removal from dollar-based clearing systems, for example, demonstrated how geopolitical tremors can easily spill into Africa’s trade channels even when the continent is not a party to any conflict. Some African governments are also reading the room. Global south partners, from Brazil to Indonesia, are experimenting with local currency settlement mechanisms. BRICS expansion invited African countries into a club openly discussing non-dollar settlement infrastructure.

Moreover, China accounts for more than a fifth of Africa’s trade, and yuan-denominated transactions are rising from a small baseline. The share is still marginal, yet the direction signals Africa’s turn toward a multipolar currency environment before one emerges fully

without them.

The Africa Continental Free Trade Area adds another layer. A continent-wide free trade area needs frictionless payment channels to make intra-African commerce more attractive than sourcing from Europe or Asia. To date, roughly 15 percent of Africa’s trade is intracontinental. One reason is the cost and complexity of using a third currency for African-to-African trade. A Ghanaian processing firm buying Kenyan tea, for instance, often settles in dollars, even though neither economy uses the currency domestically. That situation makes African trade more expensive by an estimated \$5 billion annually in transaction and hedging costs.

The Pan-African Payment and Settlement System, or PAPSS, launched with AfCFTA support, attempts to rewrite this by enabling instant cross-border settlements in local currencies. Dedollarization gives PAPSS a fighting chance. Without efforts to reduce dependence on the dollar, AfCFTA risks importing the very structural weaknesses it aims to correct. After all, regional supply chains cannot gain traction if currency swings routinely

erase profit margins. Clearing trade in local currencies might not be a silver bullet, but it is a meaningful step toward normalizing African-to-African transactions. However, skeptics point out that African currencies lack depth, stability, and convertibility, making rapid dedollarization risky. The statement is valid, but incomplete. African policymakers are not proposing to replace the dollar with a patchwork of volatile currencies overnight. Instead, they are reducing exposure in incremental steps: expanding swap lines, piloting common payment platforms, and signing bilateral agreements that allow settlement in mutually accepted currencies. Some argue that dedollarization could also alienate the US. However, a more resilient Africa ultimately aligns with US interests. Fragile currencies reduce Africa’s capacity to buy American goods, service American-held debt or collaborate in security partnerships. A region forever one shock away from default cannot be a reliable counterweight to growing external influence or as a steady partner in global governance.

— Arab news

## Tripoli deserves better than its current leaders

DR. DANIA KOLEILAT KHATIB

A building collapse in Tripoli, Lebanon, last week killed 14 people. The building was in Bab Al-Tabbaneh, one of the poorest neighborhoods in Tripoli, which is in turn one of the poorest cities in Lebanon and even in the Eastern Mediterranean.

The fall of the building makes us ask the question: Why did this happen to these people? Many do not know the rich history of the precious city. Tripoli was once a capital of trade, culture, and art in the Ottoman Empire. Why this degeneration? And who is responsible?

The building collapse in Tripoli was not an accident, nor was it the first tragedy this year to take innocent lives. It was the predictable outcome of years of neglect by local authorities and successive governments. The dangers posed by these buildings are widely known, yet no preventive action has been taken. Lebanon has a proven record of corruption. Lebanese officials have always acted with impunity. Relying on the blind allegiance of their constituencies, the welfare of the people has never been their primary concern.

According to Raymond Mitri, an activist who heads Lebanon’s anticorruption task force: “The justice system also bears primary responsibility, as those in power have grown accustomed to acting with impunity.” He added: “This culture of no accountability has enabled repeated failures and avoidable deaths.” It is time for the prosecutor general to open a thorough investigation and hold the heads of the relevant authorities accountable for this week’s tragic incident. Without real consequences, this tragic pattern will continue and more lives will be lost.

The collapse of the building in Tripoli is the result of decades of negligence. It is the tip of the iceberg when it comes to the city’s problems. I went to Tripoli a few years ago and I was shocked by the poverty, lack of infrastructure, and lack of employment. The city’s inhabitants face huge health risks because of unregulated trash dumps that also pollute the Mediterranean Sea. Tripoli mirrors the problems of Lebanon. In Tripoli, however, they are more concentrated and more severe. Historically, the city has not been lucky with its leadership. In fact, Lebanon as a whole has not been lucky with its political class, but Tripoli has suffered particularly badly. During the civil war,

various Islamist factions coalesced and created Harakat Al-Tawhid (the Islamic Unity Movement), which controlled the city. The state has been barely present. Each neighborhood has a “kabaday” (strongman) running the show. There is no real law enforcement in the city.

According to a lawyer friend of mine, the city is run by mafia-like organizations. The most important people are those who control the power generators. The generators’ owners divide the areas among themselves. Citizens of each neighborhood are thus compelled to buy electricity from the designated generator owner for that specific area. It is sad to see this historic city languishing. It is sad to see its historic monuments unattended. It is sad to see the kind, generous, and skilled people of Tripoli struggle with poverty and a lack of opportunity.

The irony is that Tripoli is home to some of the wealthiest people in Lebanon and even the entire Arab world. The political class is rich and prosperous and it surrounds itself with fences to protect itself from the ire of the people that it controls. According to Amine Bashir, a lawyer and political activist from Tripoli, members of the city’s traditional political class do not care about the people. On the contrary, it is in their interest to keep the people poor. The poorer they are, the cheaper it will be to buy their vote on election day. They use the people as an “election reservoir.”

At the end of the day, it is not only Tripoli in this situation. Unfortunately, the Lebanese political elite looks at the people as a means to control the country and its resources. The people are a ladder that will allow them to reach the summit of power. Following last week’s building collapse, the state sent the army to Tripoli to protect the politicians from the wrath of the people. This situation made me ask myself: When will the state use its capabilities to protect the people from the corruption of the political class?

Tripoli has suffered from negligence and impunity — this week’s tragedy is a warning that this needs to stop. The people in power need to be held accountable. The people of Tripoli deserve that. They need to rise and the system governing the city needs to fall. If the system does not fall, more buildings like the one in Bab Al-Tabbaneh will do so instead.

— Arab news



## Jordan’s growing role in Turkish foreign policy

DR. SINEM CENGİZ

Turkiye and Jordan were significantly affected by the Syrian civil war that lasted more than a decade. Now, with the collapse of the Bashar Assad regime in December 2024, a new dynamic has emerged along Türkiye’s southern and Jordan’s northern borders — one that calls for closer coordination between the two states.

Jordan, a relatively small state known for its neutral regional policy, has not traditionally occupied a prominent place in Turkish foreign policy. But its geopolitical importance is far too significant to neglect. It has crucial potential when it comes to countering shared regional security challenges. Recent high-level meetings between Ankara and Amman, therefore, merit a closer look to better understand the possibility for Turkish-Jordanian cooperation.

Jordan’s King Abdullah paid an official visit to Türkiye last week at the invitation of President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, who received him at the Dolmabahce Palace in Istanbul. King Abdullah’s last visit to Türkiye took place in February 2019. Back then, the regional picture looked very different. Now, the region has been reshaped by a series of major events — from the Oct. 7 attacks to the Iran-Israel war and the fall of the Assad regime — that have fundamentally shifted the political and security dynamics surrounding these two countries.

With the fall of the Assad regime, Jordan has emerged as a key partner in Türkiye’s regional policy, particularly regarding Syria and Gaza. For Türkiye, Jordan represents both a stabilizing actor on its southern periphery and a practical partner in managing the post-Assad regional order. Amman and Ankara have found themselves on the same page in regard to regional crises. Jordan therefore became part of a regional cooperation mechanism established between Türkiye, Syria, Iraq and Lebanon, which is aimed at coordinating responses to shared security challenges. Amman has hosted high-level regional security meetings led by Türkiye, bringing together foreign ministers, defense ministers and intelligence chiefs to discuss counterterrorism efforts and broader regional threats. It was through Jordanian-Turkish cooperation that a joint mission to support Syria’s fight against terrorist organizations, particularly Daesh, was established. At the request of the new leadership in Syria, this joint mission was set up to operate in Damascus,

marking a concrete step toward institutionalized regional security cooperation. Jordan and Türkiye are also part of US President Donald Trump’s Board of Peace, further highlighting their shared role in the Gaza peace process. In their joint statement, King Abdullah and Erdogan underscored the importance of preserving the territorial integrity, sovereignty and national unity of all regional states. This emphasis reflects a shared outlook. Jordan has long pursued a status quo-oriented foreign policy, prioritizing stability along its borders. Türkiye’s support for a centralized and territorially unified Syria closely aligns with Jordanian interests in this regard. Both countries view fragmentation and instability in Syria as a direct threat to their security, making their policy convergence not only strategic but also necessary.

Jordan was also chosen to host NATO’s first liaison office in the Middle East. This opened last September, underscoring the country’s geopolitical importance. Jordan has been a member of NATO’s Mediterranean Dialogue since 1995. As a NATO partner, Türkiye views the alliance’s cooperation with Amman as increasingly significant, as its presence in the country will help strengthen the regional security architecture. Amman not only occupies a key position in terms of security cooperation, but also in economic coordination. Jordan and Türkiye, along with Syria, are working on a joint initiative to restore the historic Hejaz railway, focusing on the segment linking the three countries as part of efforts to rebuild regional transport and trade networks disrupted by years of conflict and border closures. Officials from the three countries have agreed on preliminary terms to draft a memorandum of understanding covering the restoration of damaged railway lines.

At one time, the railway was referred to as the “Iron Silk Road” due to its economic, social and political importance. The railway is “a relic of the bygone dream of regional unity before wars, borders and more advanced modes of transportation rendered its services obsolete.” Today, the three nations see its revival as both symbolic and strategic to restore regional connectivity, boost trade and contribute to postwar reconstruction. Another key cooperation between Ankara and Amman involves boosting the overland freight route from Jordan’s Aqaba Port to Türkiye and onward to Eastern Europe through trilateral cooperation agreements.

— Arab news

## Starmer is learning the lessons of politics the hard way

YOSSI MEKELBERG

Few could have foreseen that merely 17 months after Keir Starmer led the Labour Party to victory in the UK general election, winning a 174-seat majority in Parliament, that he would find himself fighting for his job.

While the British prime minister must take much of the blame for being in this situation — and in his defense, he does admit responsibility — the underlying difficulties of UK politics and society go far beyond one leader’s shortcomings. The country has had six prime ministers in the past decade, which is hardly a sign of a functioning political system. Part of the predicament that Starmer finds himself in is how he sees his role; part of it has to do with the way British politics is conducted; and, more generally, the unforgiving nature of modern politics, which in an age of instant communication, constant scrutiny, and unbearable impatience, means that governments can be judged too harshly and too quickly.

The latest storm that threatens to unseat the current British prime minister is not unjustified, as his decision to appoint Peter Mandelson as ambassador in Washington was a total lapse of judgment. There was never any doubt that Mandelson’s political skills and wealth of experience in government, including on the international stage, would stand him in good stead in dealing with a major and challenging ally. Yet this was also someone who was nicknamed the “Prince of Darkness.” He was also one of the original spin doctors in British politics, and was twice forced to resign from government for failing to live up to the ethical standards of public life.

For a prime minister whose election campaign relied heavily on a promise to rid the country of years of Conservative sleaze, appointing Mandelson was extremely unwise. The resignation of Starmer’s chief of staff, Morgan McSweeney, the mastermind behind Mandelson’s appointment, has given the prime minister breathing space. Yet, in

the fast-paced world of modern politics, he still might be only a misstep or two away from losing his job. With Labour lagging far behind Reform in the polls and only just edging the even less popular Conservatives, and the prime minister’s approval ratings plummeting, he has his work cut out to convince the electorate that they should still trust him as leader. In the short term, he must convince those Labour MPs who can decide his future almost instantly.

It is a truism that nothing genuinely prepares a person for the most powerful job in the country, a position that depends on learning extremely fast, a strong sense of direction and values, and healthy political instincts. Winning an unassailable election victory should have given Starmer the self-belief and confidence to go against his cautious nature.

For many Labour MPs, more than half of whom have been elected for the first time, the impressive showing at the ballot box created the expectation of a radical Labour agenda — not unreasonable in light of voters comprehensively rejecting the legacy of the Conservatives’ 14 years in power. Moreover, for the more left leaning of the Labour Party, Starmer and his policies were too middle-of-the-road to begin with, and he was not their first choice to lead the party, let alone the country. However, Labour’s decisive victory left them with little ammunition to criticize those who masterminded it, including their ideological arch-nemesis McSweeney. Yet they still held high expectations for a new, radical agenda, only to be disappointed or, possibly, to have their suspicions confirmed.

To be sure, successive Conservative governments left a difficult legacy, with deep divisions over Brexit and immigration, underinvestment in public services, and a rocketing cost of living. For the new government and its leader it has not been enough to blame their predecessors for all the country’s ills; they needed to make an immediate impact while incorporating changes into their long-term strategies.

— Arab news

## Letters to the Editor

### ECE classrooms

The School Education & Literacy Department, Sindh, issued comprehensive directions regarding the functioning of Early Childhood Education (ECE) classes in government schools. The circular clearly mandates well-equipped ECE classrooms with essential facilities and a strict regulatory structure. But in many schools, ECE classrooms are neither properly equipped nor child friendly. Basic facilities such as learning corners, age-appropriate furniture, play materials, storybooks, floor mats and visual aids are either missing or inadequate. In several cases, ECE sections are functioning in shared or overcrowded rooms. The prescribed age limit of 3–5 years is also not being strictly observed, undermining developmentally appropriate learning. Similarly, the notified class strength of 25–30 students is frequently exceeded, affecting individual attention. The circular further emphasises that ECE classes should ideally have two teachers (a teacher and an assistant), yet many schools operate with a single teacher, placing undue burden on staff and compromising quality. Moreover, despite clear instructions, ECE teachers are often assigned duties in higher classes, which directly violates the policy framework. The provision allowing dedicated preparation time for ECE teachers and strict adherence to the approved timetable and syllabus also appears neglected in

practice. Issuance of progressive circulars is commendable but without effective monitoring, physical inspections by higher authorities and accountability mechanisms, these policies remain confined to official documents. The government must ensure strict enforcement of its own directives to strengthen early childhood education in Sindh.

Ali Hussain  
Karachi

### School under construction

As a citizen of Turbat, I have observed that the Sheikhani Bazar School has a building under construction that has been left incomplete since 2013. This long delay has created serious concerns among students. Students are forced to study in overcrowded classrooms, and their studies are disrupted due to lack of space. This incomplete structure portrays a negative image of the school and the education system overall as well. Moreover, it limits the school’s ability to introduce new classrooms and facilities such as laboratories and a library. Education is the foundation of any nation, and such delays directly affect the future of students. It is deeply disappointing that a project meant to improve an educational facility has instead become a symbol of neglect and delay. Therefore, I strongly request the concerned authorities to take immediate action and complete the construction work as

soon as possible. The future of our students depends on proper educational facilities.

Zeebjan Akther  
Chasar, Turbat

### Inexperienced invigilators

Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa’s examination boards, beginning with BISE Swat, have decided to appoint fresh graduates for invigilation and marking — a move presented as reform. While the intent to engage youth is commendable, the policy raises serious concerns about examination credibility. Invigilation is not a routine clerical task; it requires authority, classroom control and the experience to enforce rules under pressure. Expecting new graduates to manage crowded halls overlooks the reality of organised cheating networks. Even senior teachers, backed by institutional authority, often face intimidation. It is unrealistic to assume temporary appointees can withstand such pressure without similar safeguards. Moreover, temporary staff operate without a clear legal framework to ensure accountability in cases of malpractice. If K-P boards wish to involve young professionals, they should adopt a hybrid model — pairing them with seasoned invigilators.

Manzar Hassan  
Peshawar



A vendor displays and sells helmets to attract customers at a roadside setup.

## SC, NITB sign MoU to advance digital transformation, cybersecurity

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** The Supreme Court of Pakistan and the National Information Technology Board (NITB) on Tuesday signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to strengthen cooperation in cybersecurity, software development, digital services, information technology infrastructure and technical capacity-building.

The MoU was signed at the Supreme Court by Registrar Suhail Muhammad Laghari on behalf of the Supreme Court and NITB Director General Faqirullah on behalf of NITB. The signing ceremony was witnessed by Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi and Supreme Court Judge Justice Mianqul Hassan Aurangzeb.

Secretary Ministry of IT and Telecommunication Zarrar Hasham Khan, NITB Chief Executive Officer Faisal Iqbal Ratyal, Director General National Cyber Emergency Response Team (NCERT)



Haider Abbass, NITB Director Saif ur Rehman, Assistant Director (E-Office) Azhar Mahmood Janjua, members of the Supreme Court's IT team and other senior officers also attended the ceremony. The MoU provides a framework for developing

secure, reliable and efficient digital systems, strengthening cybersecurity safeguards, improving software and IT infrastructure, and building technical capacity to support the Court's ongoing digital transformation. Speaking on the occasion,

the Chief Justice emphasized that effective use of technology in the judiciary was essential to make court processes more accessible, efficient and responsive to the needs of litigants and the legal fraternity. He observed that technology should facilitate access to justice, improve service delivery and enable lawyers and litigants to engage with judicial institutions with greater ease and convenience.

The Chief Justice also highlighted the critical importance of cybersecurity in safeguarding judicial data, digital platforms and institutional systems.

He emphasized that robust cybersecurity measures would be pursued through close coordination with the Ministry of IT and Telecommunication, NITB and other relevant institutions to ensure that the judiciary's digital transformation remained secure, resilient and sustainable.

## Shah Allah Ditta Caves to be opened for visitors in first half of October: Minister

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture, Aurangzeb Khan Khichi Tuesday said that the historic Shah Allah Ditta Caves would be inaugurated and opened for visitors in the first half of October as part of efforts to promote the region's rich Gandhara heritage and cultural tourism. He made these remarks during a visit to the historic Pharwala Fort, Mai Qamro Mosque and the Tomb of Sultan Muqarrab Khan along with UNESCO Representative in Pakistan Fuad Pashayev. Secretary National Heritage and Culture Asad Rehman Gilani also accompanied the delegation. The Federal Minister invited Fuad Pashayev to join the opening ceremony of the Shah Allah Ditta Caves, saying that conservation and development of historic sites would not only help preserve Pakistan's invaluable cultural heritage but also promote domestic and international tourism. During the visit, officials of the Department of Archeology and Museums (DoAM) briefed the UNESCO Representative about the historical, archaeological and cultural significance of the sites, as well as the conservation and preservation work carried out by the department.

Fuad Pashayev appreciated Pakistan's efforts for the preservation and promotion of its rich cultural heritage and the historic legacy of the Gakhar tribe.

## Polyclinic-II to be operational by March 23 next year: Kamal

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for National Health Services Mustafa Kamal on Tuesday said the 400-bed state-of-the-art Polyclinic-II hospital would be made operational by March 23 next year in line with the directives of prime minister.

Talking to media persons, the minister said the hospital was being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs16 billion and would be equipped with modern medical facilities to meet contemporary healthcare requirements.

He said procurement of equipment and medical devices for the hospital had already been initiated, adding that orders had been placed and most of the consignments had already arrived.

Mustafa Kamal said the government was working to ensure that the project was completed within the stipulated timeline so that modern healthcare facilities could be made available to the people of the federal capital and adjoining areas. He said the establishment of Polyclinic-II would help ease the burden on existing public sector hospitals and improve access to quality healthcare services for patients.

The minister also announced progress on the King Salman Hospital project, saying that bidding for its construction had been opened.

## FGP, NCAI-NUST keen to join hands for AI collaboration, youth empowerment



**APP- ISLAMABAD:** Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) and the National Centre of Artificial Intelligence (NCAI) at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) have expressed a strong interest in exploring collaboration to promote responsible artificial intelligence (AI), digital innovation, research, skills development and inclusive economic opportunities, particularly for Pakistan's youth. This was discussed during a meeting held at NCAI-NUST between Prof. Dr. Yasar Ayaz, Chairman and Central Director of NCAI, and an FGP delegation comprising Muhammad Anwar, Chief Executive Officer, and Shafqat Aziz, Strategic Policy Advisor.

Speaking on the occasion, Muhammad Anwar said that artificial intelligence was rapidly reshaping economies, industries and labour markets, creating new opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship and employment. He emphasized the need for Pakistan to prepare its young population for the changing world of work by strengthening

digital skills, encouraging innovation and building stronger linkages among research institutions, academia, industry and development organizations. He added that FGP was keen to promote informed dialogue and collaborative initiatives that translate technological advancements into inclusive economic opportunities and sustainable development. Prof. Dr. Yasar Ayaz highlighted the growing importance of artificial intelligence research and innovation in strengthening Pakistan's technological and economic competitiveness. He emphasized the need to invest in indigenous research, human capital and practical AI applications across key sectors, while creating opportunities for young researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs to contribute to the emerging digital economy. He also stressed the importance of stronger collaboration among research institutions, academia, industry, government and development organizations to ensure that AI-driven innovation effectively responds to Pakistan's national development priorities.

## Railways retrieve 2,826 acres of encroached land worth Rs 21.178 bln

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** Pakistan Railways has retrieved 2,826 acres of encroached land valued at Rs 21.178 billion during the last six financial years, from 2020-21 to 2025-26, as part of a comprehensive anti-encroachment campaign across the railway network. "Pakistan Railways owns a total of 168,858 acres of land, of which more than 70 per cent is being used for operational purposes," an official in the Ministry told APP. He said around 9.1 per cent of railway land has been leased out, while 4.97 per cent remains under illegal occupation by private individuals. Another 2.36 per cent is under forcible possession of government departments. To maximize revenue from its land assets, he said Pakistan Railways has implemented the Property and Land Rules 2023, allowing railway land to be leased through competitive and non-competitive bidding processes. He said railway land is leased under three categories: short-term, medium- and long-term, and non-competitive leasing.



A vendor sells traditional tooth-cleaning sticks and dandasa at Urdu Bazaar.

## Uraan Pakistan Trains 160,000 Youth, Enrols 114,300 Out-of-School Children

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** Uraan Pakistan-linked initiatives have trained around 160,000 youth under different programmes and enrolled about 114,300 out-of-school children as part of efforts to expand access to education and skills development.

According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, about 160,000 youth have been trained under different programmes through the Prime Minister Youth Skill Development Programme, which is aligned with the priority of promoting technical and vocational education and training.

Progress has also been reported in expanding equitable access to education. Under the Enrolment, Retention and Progression of Out-of-School Children in Islamabad Capital Territory initiative, about 114,300 out-of-school children have been enrolled.

The initiatives also include the establishment of Daanish Schools in ICT and lagging districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Gilgit-Baltistan and Sindh.

According to the document, the academic session at the Daanish School in ICT has started, with 180 boys and 180 girls enrolled.

Under the provision of basic educational or missing facilities in ICT educational institutions, 152 institutions are being renovated, while 411 new classrooms are being added to existing schools.

In addition, two new colleges are being added in ICT under the Federal Directorate of Education.

Early childhood education has also expanded, with 100 Early Childhood Education (ECE) centres established in existing educational institutions and about 5,500 children

enrolled in these centres.

Efforts to improve teaching quality are being advanced through the National Institute of Excellence in Teacher's Education. A Continuous Professional Development (CPD) centre has been established with 55 coaches, 12 RMs and one programme manager, along with support staff.

The initiative has also registered 95% of primary and secondary schoolteachers on the digital platform. A three-level induction and in-service certification programme, verified by AKU, has been developed, while a training development studio has also been established.

Technology is being incorporated into education delivery through the Rumi app, described in the document as an all-in-one innovative solution developed according to teachers' needs and class size.



Farmers packing onion bags to take them to vegetable market.

## VEON, JazzWorld Leadership Meet IT Minister on Digital Transformation

**APP- ISLAMABAD:** A VEON and JazzWorld leadership delegation, led by Kaan Terzioğlu, CEO of VEON Group, and Aamir Ibrahim, CEO of JazzWorld, Tuesday met with Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication, to discuss Pakistan's digital transformation, 5G expansion, telecom sector sustainability, and opportunities to accelerate digital adoption.

The delegation also included Kazim Mujtaba, President, Jazz GSM; Syed Zaheer Mehdi, Chief Corporate and Regulatory Officer, JazzWorld and Mudassar Hussain, Head of Public Policy and Regulatory Affairs. The delegation appreciated the government's continued efforts to advance digital governance and connectivity, including the recent spec-

trum auction, which has strengthened the foundation for further investment and 5G expansion. The discussion also explored opportunities to create a conducive policy environment that supports sustainable investment, innovation, quality of service, and wider access to digital services. "Pakistan remains one of VEON's most important markets, and we see significant potential in its young, increasingly digital population," said Kaan Terzioğlu, CEO of VEON Group. "The progress being made on digital governance and connectivity is encouraging. A predictable and investment-friendly policy environment can unlock greater private investment and innovation, enabling JazzWorld to contribute at greater scale to Pakistan's digital economy."



## ڈرونز کے خلاف چین اور ترکی کی مدد سے تیار کیا گیا پاکستانی فضائیہ کا نیا دفاعی سسٹم کیا ہے؟

ڈرونز اور لوٹرنگ میونیشنز کے بڑھتے ہوئے استعمال نے دنیا بھر کی افواج کے لیے فضائی دفاع کو مزید چیلنجنگ بنا دیا ہے اور یہ سوال اہم ہو چکا ہے کہ آخر کم قیمت اور چھوٹے ڈرونز کے بڑے پیمانے پر حملوں کو کیسے روکا جائے؟

پاکستان ایئر فورس (پی اے ایف) نے اپنے مختصر فاصلے کے فضائی دفاع (SHORAD) کو مضبوط کرنے کے لیے چینی اور ترک ساختہ نظاموں پر مشتمل ایک تہہ در تہہ دفاعی ڈھانچہ متعارف کرایا ہے، جس میں میزائل، خود کار توپ اور کاؤنٹر ڈرون ٹیکنالوجی کو یکجا کیا گیا ہے

پی اے ایف کی جانب سے سات ستمبر کو جاری کی گئی ویڈیو میں تین مختلف فضائی دفاعی سسٹم دکھائی دیتے ہیں: چین میں تیار کردہ ایچ کیو-17 اے ای مختصر فاصلے کا سطح سے فضا میں مار کرنے والا میزائل سسٹم، ترکی کا ایسیلسان کورٹ 35 ملی میٹر خود کار فضائی دفاعی توپ سسٹم اور ایسیلسان ساہن 40 ملی میٹر کاؤنٹر ڈرون سسٹم

یہ سسٹم مل کر ایک مربوط دفاعی حصار تشکیل دیتے ہیں، جس کا مقصد اہم فوجی تنصیبات کو ڈرونز، لوٹرنگ میونیشنز، ہیلی کاپٹرز، کروزمیزائلز اور کم بلندی پر پرواز کرنے والے طیاروں سمیت مختلف فضائی خطرات سے تحفظ فراہم کرنا ہے

یہ سسٹم مل کر ایک مربوط دفاعی حصار تشکیل دیتے ہیں، جس کا مقصد اہم فوجی تنصیبات کو ڈرونز، لوٹرنگ میونیشنز، ہیلی کاپٹرز، کروزمیزائلز اور کم بلندی پر پرواز کرنے والے طیاروں سمیت مختلف فضائی خطرات سے تحفظ فراہم کرنا ہے

یہ سسٹم مل کر ایک مربوط دفاعی حصار تشکیل دیتے ہیں، جس کا مقصد اہم فوجی تنصیبات کو ڈرونز، لوٹرنگ میونیشنز، ہیلی کاپٹرز، کروزمیزائلز اور کم بلندی پر پرواز کرنے والے طیاروں سمیت مختلف فضائی خطرات سے تحفظ فراہم کرنا ہے

یہ سسٹم مل کر ایک مربوط دفاعی حصار تشکیل دیتے ہیں، جس کا مقصد اہم فوجی تنصیبات کو ڈرونز، لوٹرنگ میونیشنز، ہیلی کاپٹرز، کروزمیزائلز اور کم بلندی پر پرواز کرنے والے طیاروں سمیت مختلف فضائی خطرات سے تحفظ فراہم کرنا ہے



حالیہ تنازعات (انڈیا پاکستان، پاکستان افغانستان) سے حاصل ہونے والے اسباق کی عکاسی کرتا ہے، جہاں ڈرونز اور لوٹرنگ میونیشنز کے بڑھتے ہوئے استعمال نے رواپتی فضائی دفاعی نظاموں کی خامیوں کو نمایاں کیا اور ان کے لیے نئے چیلنجز پیدا کیے ہیں

دفاعی تجزیہ کاروں کا ماننا ہے کہ اظہار یہ کثیرتیوں پر مشتمل دفاعی ڈھانچے حالیہ تنازعات (انڈیا پاکستان، پاکستان افغانستان) سے حاصل ہونے والے اسباق کی عکاسی کرتا ہے، جہاں ڈرونز اور لوٹرنگ میونیشنز کے بڑھتے ہوئے استعمال نے رواپتی فضائی دفاعی نظاموں کی خامیوں کو نمایاں کیا اور ان کے لیے نئے چیلنجز پیدا کیے ہیں

حالیہ تنازعات (انڈیا پاکستان، پاکستان افغانستان) سے حاصل ہونے والے اسباق کی عکاسی کرتا ہے، جہاں ڈرونز اور لوٹرنگ میونیشنز کے بڑھتے ہوئے استعمال نے رواپتی فضائی دفاعی نظاموں کی خامیوں کو نمایاں کیا اور ان کے لیے نئے چیلنجز پیدا کیے ہیں

حالیہ تنازعات (انڈیا پاکستان، پاکستان افغانستان) سے حاصل ہونے والے اسباق کی عکاسی کرتا ہے، جہاں ڈرونز اور لوٹرنگ میونیشنز کے بڑھتے ہوئے استعمال نے رواپتی فضائی دفاعی نظاموں کی خامیوں کو نمایاں کیا اور ان کے لیے نئے چیلنجز پیدا کیے ہیں

# Pakistan seek to salvage pride



**SPORTS DESK, KARACHI:** Pakistan will look to salvage some pride when they face in-form England in the third and final Test at Edgbaston on Wednesday after a turbulent week that brought sweeping changes to their squad and coaching staff.

England lead the three-match series 2-0 after comprehensive victories at Headingley and Lord's, leaving Pakistan with little more than a chance to avoid a series whitewash.

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) sent seven players home following the defeat at Lord's, bringing several fresh faces into a squad already under pressure. Captain Babar Azam said his players are eager to make an impact.

"Couple of new faces are coming and we are excited and will play good

cricket in this Test match," Babar told reporters on Tuesday.

Pakistan lost the opening Test by an innings and 103 runs before suffering a 194-run defeat at Lord's. Their batting has been particularly disappointing, with the team managing scores of only 171, 135, 110 and 194 in their last four innings on the tour.

Babar defended the combination selected for the Lord's Test, saying the team had considered the pitch and conditions before settling on its XI.

"In the last Test we did not play well as a team in all three departments," he said. "At that time we played the best combination after taking into account the conditions and the pitch. But we could not produce the desired result."

Asked about his own form, Babar

pointed to his previous success.

"If you talk about the performance, in the last series I was man of the series," he said. The captain said the upheaval could provide an opportunity for younger players to establish themselves.

"There are no difficulties but opportunities for youngsters to express themselves," Babar said.

He added that Edgbaston had been a fortunate venue for him and hoped that would continue in Test cricket also.

Pakistan's preparations have been complicated by changes to the coaching setup. Mike Hesson, who had been working as the team's white-ball coach, has taken charge of the red-ball side following Sarfaraz Ahmed's removal. Bowling coach Umar Gul was also removed after the Lord's

defeat.

Ashley Noffke has been tasked with working with Pakistan's bowlers ahead of the final Test.

Young fast bowlers Razaullah, Mohammad Imran Junior, Imran Randhawa and Ubaid Shah underwent extensive training under Noffke during the team's recent sessions. Razaullah was also seen working on his batting.

Wet weather forced Pakistan to train indoors on some occasions, although the players were also able to practise outdoors. Cooler conditions and rain in Birmingham on Tuesday could influence team selection. Pakistan are expected to bring at least one seamer into the XI after Khurram Shahzad was sent home, while left-arm spinner Ali Usman has also departed.

## Pakistan edge South Korea in thriller

**SPORTS DESK,** Pakistan survived a nerve-wracking opening match of the Test series against South Korea on Tuesday, prevailing 4-3 in sudden death after the two sides were locked at 5-5 at the end of regulation time.



The contest, played at a high tempo in Korea, produced an attacking display as both teams repeatedly threatened the opposition goal. Neither side was able to establish control for long. Pakistan's goals in regulation time came through field attempts, with Sufyan Khan hitting a brace. Ahmed Nadeem, Muhammad Imad and Rana Waheed added one each as Pakistan mounted sustained pressure on the South Korean defence. South Korea, however, responded strongly and produced an impressive comeback to level the match at 5-5, forcing the game into a shootout after neither team could find a winning goal during regulation time. The shootout was equally tense, with both teams leveled 3-3. Pakistan then held its nerve in sudden death, with the Pakistani goalkeeper producing the decisive save to deny South Korea and secure victory for the visitors. Zakaria Hayat scored twice during the shootout and Arbaz, Rana Waheed and Hannan Shahid also found the target. Ahmed Nadeem, Imad Butt and Muhammad Imad took part in the shootout and contributed to Pakistan's eventual success. The victory gives Pakistan a 1-0 lead in the three-match Test series and provides the team with an important boost ahead of the remaining matches.

## Afghanistan set extensive UAE cricket schedule

**SPORTS DESK,** Afghanistan will host Bangladesh and Zimbabwe for an extensive international cricket programme in the United Arab Emirates during October and November, the Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) said on Tuesday.

The schedule will begin with a one-off Test against Bangladesh from October 9-13, followed by an ODI tri-nation series involving Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Zimbabwe from October 17-23.

Each team will play the other once in the three-match league phase, with the top two sides advancing to the final on October 23.

Afghanistan will then face Zimbabwe in a three-match Twenty20 international series, with matches scheduled for October 27, October 29 and November 1. The two sides will conclude the programme with a two-Test series, beginning on November 5 and followed by the second Test from November 13-17.

## Pakistan eye Asian Games upset



**SPORTS DESK, KARACHI:** Pakistan's men's volleyball team are aiming to defy the odds at the Asian Games in Japan this month, with manager and former captain Naseer Ahmed confident the side can challenge stronger opponents and push for a place in the top eight.

Pakistan have been drawn in Group A alongside hosts Japan, Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan in the 16-team competition, which runs from September 26 to October 4.

"Yes, I am confident that the team will do well," Naseer told The Express Tribune in an interview.

Pakistan face a daunting opening challenge against world number six Japan, with the South Asian side ranked 38th globally.

"No doubt Japan is a much better side but we will try to beat them," said Naseer, a former Pakistan captain. While Pakistan are unlikely to enter the tournament as medal contenders, Naseer believes the team has enough experience and quality to spring surprises.

"Definitely it will be our target to challenge them (Japan). If we fail there then we can beat Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan which will help us move to the top eight," he said.

"Then we will look how we deliver against tough sides in that phase."

Pakistan squad includes a strong core of players who featured at the 2023 Asian Games in Hangzhou, where the team finished fifth.

Around nine members of that squad are expected to return for the Japan campaign, while three youngsters have also been included, also comprising an Under-19 setter and a middle blocker.

The tournament will provide a major test for Spanish head coach Luis Alberto, who has been working with the national side for the past few months alongside fellow Spaniard Ruiz Pablo, the team's trainer and conditioning coach.

"The boys have been training for four hours daily in two sessions. They have been under training for the last one and a half months," Naseer said.

The team held a training camp at Wah Cantt from August 5 to August 20 before moving to Liaquat Gymnasium, where preparations are continuing.

Naseer, who also serves as Director Technical of the Pakistan Volleyball Federation, said the coaching staff had been working intensively to prepare the players for the demanding tournament.

"Alberto is a good coach and is working harder on the boys and I hope a better lot will be prepared," he said. Eighteen players are currently in camp, with the final 12-member squad expected to be announced soon for the trip to Japan.

However, preparations have faced a minor facilities concern, with air-conditioning units at Liaquat Gymnasium not yet operational despite having been installed.

Although temperatures in Islamabad have begun to ease, running the air-conditioning remains important during intensive training sessions, particularly as players prepare for demanding Asian Games.

Pakistan's best volleyball result in Asian Games history came in 1962, when they won the bronze medal in Jakarta. The team will now attempt to revive some of that competitive spirit.

Local coaches Saeed Ahmad and Kashif Maznoor are assisting Alberto during the preparations.

Naseer said Pakistan Sports Board would finance 14 members of the squad, while the remaining four would be funded by the Pakistan Volleyball Federation. Group B comprises Iran, Indonesia, Thailand and Kyrgyzstan, while Qatar, India, Vietnam and Hong Kong make up Group C. Group D features Korea, China, Chinese Taipei and the Philippines.



Kato Miyu(L)/Wu Fang-Hsien celebrate scoring during the women's doubles third round match between China's Zhang Shuai/Jiang Xinyu and Kato Miyu (Japan)/Wu Fang-Hsien (Chinese Taipei) at the 2026 US Open tennis championships in New York, the United States.

## Haris set for CPL stint with Warriors

**SPORTS DESK,** Bangladesh all-rounder Mehidy Hasan Miraz is set to make his Caribbean Premier League debut after being signed by Guyana Amazon Warriors as a replacement for Afghanistan veteran Mohammad Nabi.

Pakistan wicketkeeper-batter Mohammad Harris will also join the Amazon Warriors, replacing Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz. Nabi and Gurbaz are leaving the CPL to join Afghanistan's national team for a three-match T20I series against India beginning September 13. Nabi had opted to remain with Guyana for the CPL and missed Afghanistan's recent ODI series against Ireland, which Afghanistan won 4-0. He will now link up with the national side for the



India series. The experienced allrounder has been a key figure in Guyana's

impressive campaign, with the Warriors winning 10 of their 11 matches across the Global Super League and CPL.

Nabi leaves the CPL as the tournament's leading spinner for wickets, with 12 in six innings at an economy rate below six. Four of those wickets came in Sunday's victory over St Kitts and Nevis Patriots in Providence, which secured Guyana's place in the playoffs.

Amazon Warriors captain Imran Tahir praised Nabi's contribution.

"He's been an absolute legend," Tahir said after the win over the Patriots. "He's one of the best off-spinners in world cricket at the moment and that's the reason we got him. He can bat and is a really good slip fielder."

## Pakistan storm into Asia Cup semis

**SPORTS DESK,** Pakistan blasted their way into the semi-finals of the Men's Junior Asia Cup 2026 with a convincing 5-2 victory over Malaysia in their key Pool B encounter at Moqi, China, on Tuesday.

This is the third straight win from Pakistan in the group and they have reached the summit with nine points. Malaysia and China are tied at six points each and their crucial encounter on Wednesday will decide the second semi-finalists from this group.

Malaysia made the stronger start and took the lead in the ninth minute when Muhammad Salehi found the net, putting Pakistan under early pressure.

Pakistan, however, responded strongly after the interval, producing an attacking surge that turned the match decisively in their favour. Nadeem Khan restored parity in the 32nd minute with a well-netted goal, before Abdullah Sami Rana struck four minutes later to give Pakistan a 2-1 advantage. Waleed Rana then took centre stage, hitting twice in quick succession in the 39th and 40th minutes. His back-to-back goals gave Pakistan a commanding 4-1 lead and left Malaysia struggling to contain the pressure. Ali Hamza completed Pakistan's five-goal burst in the 41st minute, extending the advan-



tage to 5-1. His performance earned him the Man of the Match award. Malaysia managed to reduce the deficit in the 54th minute through Ganaselen Dhirsh, but Pakistan remained composed in the closing stages and protected their three-goal advantage to seal a 5-2 victory. The result underlined Pakistan's impressive campaign so far, with the side yet to taste defeat in the tournament. Their combination of attacking efficiency and a strong second-half response proved decisive against Malaysia.



Odo Satsuki of Japan hits a return during the women's singles first round match between Odo Satsuki of Japan and Elizabeta Samara of Romania at the 2026 World Table Tennis (WTT) Champions Macao in Macao, south China.



An artist is busy painting a vibrant mural depicting sindhi culture and traditional life at Chungi no 09.

## Ahsan calls for consensus-based review of National Curriculum Framework 2026

APP- ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday called for a high-level committee to undertake a comprehensive review of the National Curriculum Framework 2026 and stressed the need for consensus among all political parties, members of provincial assemblies and stakeholders on the framework.

He made these remarks while chairing the first meeting of the Steering Committee of the Danish School Authority, which reviewed the authority's restructuring, human resource requirements, financial implications, governance and administrative structure.

The meeting also considered the five to 10-year financial sustainability of Danish schools, teachers' training and a roadmap for implementing proposed reforms.

The minister directed that the National Curriculum Framework 2026 be sent to the Prime Minister for a detailed review so that he could constitute a formal committee to examine the framework and help prevent any future issues.

Ahsan Iqbal stressed that a broad-based consensus on the National Curriculum Framework was essential, saying all political parties, members of provincial assemblies and relevant stakeholders should be taken on board. During the meeting, the Education Secretary briefed the committee that the Danish School model was entirely based on providing free education to underprivileged students. The students were provided free schooling, boarding, meals and other facilities.

The minister said the Danish Schools were being established in underdeveloped and disadvantaged areas with the objec-



tive of transforming the future of communities living there.

He said the schools, under the direction of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, would provide children from poor families with quality education comparable to that offered by elite institutions such as

Aitchison College.

Ahsan Iqbal directed that recruitment of teachers in Danish Schools should be carried out according to the student-teacher ratio to ensure effective utilisation of human resources and quality education.

The Steering Committee directed the authorities to review the staffing requirements of Danish Schools once again, keeping in view actual needs and the student-teacher ratio. The meeting also reviewed the financial impact and long-term sustainability of the Danish School Authority, along with measures for improving governance and strengthening its administrative framework. The minister stressed the need for institutional reforms, effective human resource management and a sustainable financial model to ensure the continued provision of quality education to deserving students.

## Senate App launch marks step towards modernising Parliament: Tariq

APP- ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary on Tuesday said the launch of the Senate mobile application marked another meaningful step towards modernising the way Parliament worked and engaged with its members and citizens. Addressing the launching ceremony, the minister said the initiative represented more than the adoption of a new digital tool, reflecting a broader institutional commitment to making Parliament more accessible, efficient and responsive. He said a modern Parliament must not only make good laws but also have modern systems through which parliamentary work could be carried out, organised, recorded and communicated. Dr Tariq Fazal said the Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs had a key role in strengthening institutional links between Parliament and the government, facilitating parliamentary business and promoting transparency, coordination and effective governance. He said digital tools could make this relationship faster, more organised and responsive. "Our larger objective must be to build an integrated parliamentary ecosystem in which information moves securely and efficiently, and parliamentary reports are accessible," he added. The minister said members could engage with legislative business in real time through digital tools, while citizens could better understand the work being done in their name.

## No monsoon spell in sight, rising heat ahead: NDMA

APP- ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) said on Tuesday that no active monsoon system is currently affecting Pakistan and no significant rainfall is expected over the next couple of days.

The forecast was issued by the Emergency Response Committee (ERC), meeting at the NDMA headquarters in Islamabad on the Prime Minister's directions, reviewed the country's weather and hydrological situation, preparedness and response measures amid forecasts of rising temperatures across various parts of the country. The 18th meeting of the ERC was held at the National Emergencies Operations Centre (NEOC), NDMA headquarters, under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal, who participated through video link. Chairman NDMA Lt Gen Inam Haider Malik, representatives of provincial disaster management authorities (PDMAs), the Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD), and senior officials from relevant federal ministries and departments attended the meeting. The committee reviewed the prevailing weather situation, hydrological conditions, temperature trends, weather outlook and the overall preparedness of federal and provincial authorities.

The NEOC presented a comprehensive situational briefing covering the latest weather forecasts, river flows, hydrological conditions and the anticipated weather pattern over the coming days.

## Senate of Pakistan's digitization to further enhance transparency, efficiency: Shaza Fatima

APP- ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday welcomed the launch of the Senate Mobile App, saying digital transformation would make the institution more efficient, transparent and responsive.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the Senate Mobile Application, she said the government's digital transformation agenda had three major aspects: digital economy, digital society and digital governance.

She said that under digital governance, the digital transformation of all government and public-sector institutions was a core agenda.

Shaza Fatima said the Digital Nation Pakistan Act was passed by the Senate and National Assembly last year, under which the Pakistan Digital Authority was formed.

She said digital transformation was no longer limited to the IT sector but had become a cross-sectoral element. The minister said technological transformation was a paradigm shift affecting everyday life, health, education, finance and national security, with systems such as EdTech, GovTech and FinTech emerging rapidly. She said the Senate's participation in the digital transformation process and bringing governance to technology would not only make the institution more efficient but also improve transparency and efficacy and empower senators.

Shaza Fatima said the initiative



digital transformation strategies and expressed satisfaction that Pakistan was also moving rapidly in this direction.

The minister said the government wanted to develop a complete legislative stack by digitizing parliamentary data, including legislation, laws, committees and press releases.

She said the government was also working with the Supreme Court to digitize its decisions taken on various occasions.

She said such a system would allow parliamentarians to access relevant information at the click of a button when legislating or conducting research.

Shaza Fatima said the Pakistan Digital Authority, along with Parliament and the courts, could help establish a complete legislative stack to promote innovation and make policymaking better, more efficient and informed.

She said such efforts would help close gaps that existed in the past.

The minister also highlighted the lack of individual research and legislative support for Pakistani parliamentarians compared with developed countries. She said parliamentarians generally did not have personal staff assigned for research or legislative support.

She said the Parliamentary Services Institute and other shared parliamentary resources were available, but individual offices and support staff provided to parliamentarians in many other countries were not available in Pakistan.



Street vendors carry wrapped plastic chairs and tables on their heads while walking along Vehari Road, navigating daily street trade to earn a livelihood.

## Fully support all legitimate Saudi measures in response to Houthi aggression: Ashrafi

APP- ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Pakistan Ulama Council and Secretary-General of the International Tazeem-e-Harmain Sharifain Council, Hafiz Muhammad Tahir Mehmood Ashrafi, has strongly condemned the Houthi militia's targeting of Saudi Arabia's national resources, critical installations and civilian sites.

He said the Pakistan Ulama Council fully supports all legitimate measures taken by Saudi Arabia to protect its security, sovereignty, civilian population and national installations. Saudi Arabia is the land of the Two Holy Mosques, and its security is therefore of vital importance to every Muslim.

The people of Pakistan, religious scholars and leaders, and the wider religious community stand in com-



war in Yemen, promote political dialogue and achieve lasting peace. However, the Houthi militia's rejection of the peace process and continued actions that threaten regional security are unacceptable.

He stressed that Saudi Arabia has an established right to defend its territory, citizens, national resources and holy sites, and that its patience and restraint should not be mistaken for weakness.

He called upon the international community, the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation and Muslim countries to unequivocally condemn Houthi aggression and attacks on civilian installations, and to play an effective role in protecting regional peace and preventing such acts of aggression.

plete solidarity with Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques King Salman bin Abdulaziz, Crown Prince and Prime Minister Mohammed bin Salman, the Saudi government and the Saudi people.

Ashrafi said Saudi Arabia has consistently pursued efforts to end the

## Literacy a foundation of an empowered and prosperous Pakistan: Wajiha

APP- ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar on Tuesday said that literacy was not merely the ability to read and write, rather it was the foundation of awareness, dignity, empowerment, equal opportunity and national development. In her message on International Literacy Day, she said that for Pakistan, literacy was not simply an educational target but a national imperative. An educated and skilled population is essential for building a stronger economy, an inclusive society and a prosperous Pakistan. Our commitment is clear that no child, no girl and no citizen in Pakistan should be left behind or deprived of the opportunity to learn and progress," the state minister said, adding that bringing every child into education and equipping young people with

knowledge, skills and capabilities relevant to the modern world was a collective national responsibility. Wajiha stressed that the meaning of literacy had evolved beyond conventional reading and writing. In today's rapidly changing world, digital literacy, critical thinking, technological competence and future-ready skills are equally essential for empowering citizens and preparing young people for emerging opportunities. She said the Government of Pakistan remains committed to expanding access to quality education, particularly for girls, out-of-school children and underserved communities, while strengthening non-formal and alternative learning pathways, enhancing teachers' capacities and harnessing technology to extend educational opportunities to those who need them most.



A worker is busy beautifying the entrance gate of the railway station park in an unconventional style.