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PML-N to form AJK govt on public mandate: Rana



ANI

ISLAMABAD: PM's aide on political affairs Rana Sanaullah on Monday said the PML-N was in a position to form the government in Azad Jammu and Kashmir, claiming the party had secured 23 of 45 seats in the AJK Legislative Assembly.

Addressing a press conference alongside Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Amir Muqam in Islamabad, the senior PML-N leader claimed victory on 13 seats in the second phase of the AJK elections, including four of the seven seats in Muzaffarabad, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) secured three seats. According to Sanaullah, the PML-N also won 10 of the 12 refugee seats, while the PPP secured two.

He said that polling in LA-27 was

postponed due to adverse weather, while voting would be held on Tuesday at 54 polling stations in LA-27 and LA-28.

The PML-N's parliamentary party would meet immediately after the third phase of elections on August 10 to discuss government formation, he added. The second phase of the AJK elections was held in the Muzaffarabad division on Sunday, with the PML-N emerging as the frontrunner by securing 13 of the 18 constituencies declared so far, according to unofficial and provisional results.

Bilawal Bhutto Zardari-led PPP stands second, having won five seats so far in the second phase of the AJK elections. The elections, however, were overshadowed by allegations of electoral irregularities and incidents of violence, with the PPP

claiming its leaders were attacked and at least one party worker was killed. Addressing a press conference on Sunday, PPP leader Raja Pervaiz Ashraf rejected the AJK election process, alleging that the mandate was "fake" and accusing the PML-N of pushing the situation towards further instability. Raja said that the elections were neither free, fair nor impartial and would not be accepted.

During today's presser, Sanaullah accused the PPP of joining hands with the banned Joint Awami Action Committee (JAAC) to disrupt elections in AJK, saying the party began raising allegations of rigging as soon as polling started after failing to perform well in the first phase of the elections.

According to the senior PML-N leader, the Bilawal-led party initially

levelled allegations relating to 13 constituencies, which later narrowed to four and eventually two after it was asked to provide evidence.

"We even offered to conduct a forensic audit of the polling stations where rigging was alleged," he said, adding that polling remained free, fair and transparent throughout the election day.

He also alleged that attempts were made by the PPP to influence the constituency of PPP candidate and AJK Legislative Assembly Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, including efforts to have Sindh police deployed there. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated PML-N President Nawaz Sharif and the party's successful candidates on the victory in the second phase of AJK elections.

PPP alleges collusion in AJK polls, vows to challenge results through legal forums

ANI

KARACHI: Sindh Senior Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon on Monday accused the federal government, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Election Commission and the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) of colluding to influence the AJK Legislative Assembly elections, alleging widespread irregularities and voter manipulation. The statement came a day after the second phase of AJK elections were held in Muzaffarabad Division and refugee seats. According to unofficial and unconfirmed results, the PML-N was leading in five constituencies, while the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) had won two seats. In the first phase, the AJK Election Commission formally notified the results of all 13 constituencies of Mirpur Division, confirming a decisive victory for the PML-N, which secured nine seats, while the PPP won the remaining four. Addressing a press conference alongside PPP leader Chaudhry Yasin today in Karachi, Memon claimed there had been a coordinated effort to defeat Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) candidates in the AJK polls. He said PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had repeatedly stressed the importance of holding transparent elections in AJK and urged the authorities to prioritise the interests of the Kashmiri people over those of any political party. Memon alleged that the election commission had failed to act impartially during the electoral process and accused it of ignoring the party's complaints.

"It appeared as though the AJK Election Commission had become the B-team of the PML-N," he said, adding that the AJK elections had repeated the pattern of the 2024 general elections.

Referring to the 2024 polls, Memon said they had produced what the PPP described as a "Form-47 government", and alleged that the AJK elections had gone a step further.

"We want to place all the facts before the relevant forums. Our response will be based on evidence and legal arguments, not abusive language," he said.

Memon alleged that the PPP had



lodged multiple complaints with the AJK Election Commission during polling, including in Mirpur Division, but none had been addressed.

He also claimed that polling staff and election materials failed to reach several polling stations on time, affecting the voting process.

The senior minister questioned the election commission's decision to postpone polling in LA-27, saying weather had been cited as the reason despite clear conditions. "If the election commissioner appears on television and misleads the public, what does the law prescribe for such conduct?" he asked.

Memon further alleged that PPP worker Mukhtar Younis was killed in LA-9 Nikyal, accusing PML-N leaders of later misrepresenting the victim's political affiliation.

He also claimed that supporters of the PML-N attacked the President of AJK in LA-31, alleging that despite complaints to the inspector general of police and the chief secretary, no arrests had been made.

According to Memon, PPP workers who went to the area after receiving reports of ballot-stamping were fired upon. He criticised Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah for allegedly making light of the firing incident and questioned why federal leaders had been meeting administrative officials during the election process.

Memon also alleged that ballot papers had reached PML-N candidates two days before polling, though he did not provide evidence to support the claim.

The senior minister said the PPP would continue to contest the remaining phase of the AJK elections and pursue all available constitutional and legal avenues to challenge the alleged irregularities.

Atta Tarar urges political parties to graciously accept AJK election results

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaulah Tarar on Monday said the outcome of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) elections was a direct result of the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz's (PML-N) successful campaign, urging other political parties to accept the results graciously.

Talking to the media, the minister highlighted that PML-N secured victory in the second phase of the AJK polls, successfully strengthening its position to a simple majority.

The Almighty has blessed the PML-N with victory, which has clearly perturbed some political parties, said the minister, adding the citizens and political parties actively participated in the entire democratic process through public rallies, corner meetings, and vigorous campaigns.

Highlighting democratic norms, Tarar recalled that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif set a commendable tradition by felicitating the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) on their victory in the Gilgit-Baltistan (GB) elections. He expressed hope the PPP and its leaders would show similar political maturity and tolerance.

Rejecting allegations leveled by Sindh Information Minister Sharjeel Memon, Tarar stated that voters made their decision based on performance, public service, development, and regional prosperity.

Addressing the criticism regarding the 2024 general elections, Tarar questioned whether those same doubts applied to the outcomes of Sindh's elections. He added that it would have been better if the irrefutable evidence were brought forth instead of baseless accusations.

Ex-Afghan army Lt. Gen. Sami Sadat announces armed campaign against Taliban after talks failed

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Former Afghan National Army Lieutenant General Sami Sadat has announced the launch of coordinated armed operations against the Taliban regime under the banner of the Afghanistan United Front (AUF).

Reappearing in military uniform beneath the tricolor flag of the former Afghan Republic nearly five years after its fall, General Sadat addressed supporters on behalf of the AUF, stating that military operations were officially authorized to begin a phased nationwide campaign aimed at restoring constitutional order in Afghanistan, according to the media reports.

According to Sadat, the initial phase of the military campaign will target Taliban fighters, military installations, and senior leadership, before expanding into subsequent



Comparing past political campaigns, Tarar observed that during the GB elections, the PPP led by Bilawal Bhutto Zardari ran a vibrant and fruitful campaign. Likewise, during the AJK elections, PML-N Quaid Nawaz Sharif and the PML-N leadership spearheaded a far superior campaign. "The PPP should have run a better campaign to win the elections instead of relying on political point-scoring," he said.

"Differences are part and parcel of politics, but hurling accusations without evidence is regrettable."

He urged them to accept the results graciously and refrain from making unverified claims regarding Form 47, and congratulate the winning party.

Tarar pointed out that in his own constituency, the PPP candidate was weak and largely absent from door-to-door campaigning and public gatherings. Pre-election surveys in AJK had also reflected this reality.

Emphasizing that the elections were conducted under the local administration of an outgoing PPP-led government in AJK, Tarar remarked that questioning the transparency of the polls was tantamount to questioning their own administration's credibility.

operational phases across the country. He noted that military operations would be integrated with political, diplomatic, and public mobilization efforts for the liberation of Afghanistan. General Sadat stated that nearly five years of appeals by the Afghan people and civil society had been ignored by the international community. He asserted that negotiations with the Taliban had failed, leaving armed resistance as the only remaining path to restore a free and constitutional Afghanistan. He said that the Taliban regime has been subjecting Afghans of repression, fear, and systematic human rights abuses, while transforming the country into a sanctuary for Al-Qaeda, Islamic State, Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), and other terrorist organizations. Besides, he said that that Afghanistan's natural resources were being exploited to finance and strengthen these terrorist networks.

PM for timely completion of privatization programme

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Monday, directed the completion of all stages of privatization initiative within the prescribed timelines, stressing close coordination among ministries and institutions to achieve the government's targets. Chairing a meeting to review progress on the privatization of state-owned enterprises, the prime minister said all milestones under the privatization programme must be implemented according to set schedule. The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Ministers Khawaja Muhammad Asif, Jam Kamal Khan, Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awaish Ahmed Khan Leghari, Minister of State Bilal Azhar Kayani, Special



Assistant to PM Haroon Akhtar and other senior government officials, PM Official Media Wing said in a press release.

The prime minister directed relevant authorities to ensure the privatization of the Zarai Taraqati Bank Limited (ZTBL) in a manner which safeguards the bank's core mandate of supporting Pakistan's

agricultural sector. He also emphasized that the bank should continue focusing on agricultural credit and financial services to small and medium-sized farmers after privatization, saying improved access to finance is essential for increasing farm productivity per acre.

He said agricultural development is critical to Pakistan's economic growth and food security.

Officials of the Ministry of Privatization briefed the meeting on progress under the government's privatization agenda, informing participants that 27 state-owned enterprises were included in the programme across three phases.

The authorities apprised the financial closing process for the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) and the First Women Bank which had been completed.

Death toll from suicide bombing near police station in Swat rises to 17

ANI

SWAT: The death toll from Sunday's suicide bombing near a police station in Swat rose to 17 on Monday, including several policemen. The suicide bombing had taken place near the Kabal Police Station while a protest against lawlessness was under way at the adjoining public square. Police said that the suicide bomber had detonated his explosives after police personnel attempted to stop and search him at the entrance to the police station. According to a list of casualties shared by Swat police spokesperson Nasir Iqbal Karimi, seven policemen and 10 civilians have lost their lives in the incident while 18 policemen and nine civilians have been injured. Police have revised down the death toll from an earlier tally of 19, which they shared in a statement earlier in the day. Karimi said in the statement that a large-scale rescue operation had been launched immediately after the attack, in which more than 50 Rescue 1122 personnel participated. "Rescue teams provided first aid at the scene before shifting the injured to various hospitals for further treatment. Authorities are continuing relief efforts as investigations into the suicide attack remain under way," it said.

Security forces kill several terrorists in North Waziristan operations

ANI

Security forces conducted effective intelligence-based operations (IBOs) in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) over the past two months under the Azm-e-Istehkam vision, security sources said on Monday. According to the sources, security forces destroyed multiple terrorist hideouts during the operations in North Waziristan. "Several terrorists were killed during an operation in the Khatti Killi area of North Waziristan," the sources said. A large quantity of weapons, ammunition and other equipment was also recovered from the terrorists killed in the operation, they added. "Several terrorists



belonging to Fitna al-Khawarij were also injured during the operations," the sources said. Fitna al-Khawarij is the term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). The sources said the operations were carried out to protect the lives and property of the public while ensuring that the local

population was not harmed. "Security forces will continue operations across K-P until lasting peace is established and terrorism is completely eliminated," the sources said. Last week, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) Director General Lt Gen Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry said security forces had conducted 40,348 IBOs across the country so far this year, with the majority taking place in Balochistan. "Nearly 194 intelligence-based operations are being conducted every day," he said. The DG ISPR said 3,145 terrorist incidents had been recorded during the period, while security forces had killed 2,084 terrorists, averaging about 10 terrorists being killed every day.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits the residence of Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channar to offer condolences for the demise of his father, MNA and Former Provincial Minister Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar.

NA Committee Reviews Wheat Policy, Date Research and Food Regulations

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research on Monday under the chairmanship of Syed Hussain Tariq in the chair and discussed matters relating to agriculture development in the country.

The committee considered exclusion of the joint project of the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur, for the establishment of the Dates Research Centre at Khairpur from the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP) 2026-27.

During the briefing, the representative of the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives informed the Committee that, due to fiscal space constraints, the Ministry of National Food Security and Research had prioritized only three new development schemes for inclusion in the PSDP 2026-27. Consequently, a number of proposed projects, including the Dates Research Centre, could not be accommodated despite their importance.

The committee observed that Pakistan is among the leading producers of dates and emphasized that the proposed research centre would play a significant role in promoting scientific research, improving date production, developing disease-resistant varieties, enhancing value addition, and strengthening export potential. After detailed deliberations, the committee directed the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to formally take up the matter with the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and seek reconsideration of the project. The committee also decided to seek a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss the establishment of the Dates Research Centre at Khairpur through a joint venture between the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and Shah Abdul Latif University, Khairpur.

The proposed meeting would also focus on other critical issues affecting the agriculture sector, including wheat import, the fixation of a fair and remunerative Minimum Support Price (MSP) for wheat, the provision of DAP fertilizer subsidies on the pattern of regional

countries to improve agricultural productivity and increase crop yields, and the reasons behind the reported shortage of wheat despite earlier reports indicating surplus wheat stocks. The committee also reviewed the implementation status of its previous recommendations concerning the regulation of artificial sweeteners and flavoured drinks. The Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) briefed the committee on the steps taken to revise the existing regulatory framework in light of the Committee's earlier directions.

The committee recalled that these recommendations had been made following the findings of the National Institutes of Health (NIH), which highlighted the potential adverse health effects associated with the frequent consumption of artificial sweeteners and flavoured drinks, particularly among children, pregnant women, and lactating mothers. According to the NIH, excessive consumption of such products may contribute to early-onset diabetes and increase the risk of serious diseases, including certain forms of cancer.

Expressing concern over the slow pace of implementation of its earlier recommendations, the committee directed the Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) to convene a meeting of its Technical Committee in Islamabad at the earliest.

The committee further directed the PSQCA to review and revise the existing standards within two months to strengthen the regulatory framework governing artificial sweeteners and flavored drinks.

The revised standards shall specifically address mandatory and accurate product labelling, prevention of misleading claims, display of prominent health warnings, clear indication of expiry dates, determination of appropriate fruit pulp ratios, and regulations governing the use of plastic bottles for beverage packaging.

The NIH was also directed to present scientific evidence regarding the health impacts associated with artificial sweeteners and provide recommendations based on internationally recognized standards and best practices to facilitate the revision of the existing policy.

PM visits Punjab deputy speaker's residence to condole his father's demise

ANI

BAHAWALPUR: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the residence of Deputy Speaker of Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channar and his brother Malik Munir Iqbal Channar here to offer condolences on the passing of their father, veteran politician and Member of the National Assembly Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar. During the visit, the prime minister met with the bereaved family members and offered Fateha for the departed soul, praying for the elevation of his ranks in paradise and for strength to the family to bear the loss. He paid rich tributes to late Malik Muhammad Iqbal Channar, highlighting his invaluable services as an MNA and former provincial minister dedicated to public welfare, besides appreciating his steadfast loyalty and notable political role within the party.

75% of federal civil servants' service records digitized

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has digitized around 75 percent of service records of federal civil servants belonging to four occupational groups as part of a broader reform aimed at modernizing human resource management and reducing reliance on paper-based records. Official documents presented to the Senate Standing Committee on Cabinet Secretariat, and available with Wealth Pakistan, show that the Establishment Division has made significant progress through the implementation of the Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS) – a centralised digital platform for managing service records of officers belonging to the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS), Police Service of Pakistan (PSP), Office Management Group (OMG), and Secretariat Group (SG). According to the briefing, approximately 75 percent of service record data has already been entered into HRMIS, while the remaining records are being prioritized for digitization. The Establishment Division is also carrying out a comprehensive verification and correction exercise to ensure the authenticity, completeness and accuracy of the data. The digital platform contains officers' personal profiles, postings, promotions, seniority, qualifications, training history, leave records, Performance Evaluation Reports (PERs) and other service-related information. Officers have been provided access to review their records and submit correction requests, which are verified before system incorporation. The Establishment Division informed the committee that there are no delays in the digitisation process due to manual record handling and that the current focus is on completing the remaining data entry and validation before the system becomes the government's authoritative source for personnel management.

Ahsan launches national song, urges youth to lead Pakistan's transformation through 'Shaheen' spirit

ANI

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Monday launched the national song "Tu Shaheen Hai" under the URAAN Pakistan vision, urging the country's youth to embrace Allama Muhammad Iqbal's philosophy of Khudi (selfhood) and become agents of national transformation through knowledge, innovation, character and hope. Addressing the launching ceremony of the song, organised to commemorate the birth anniversaries of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, and national poet Dr Allama Muhammad Iqbal, the minister said true development was measured not by skyscrapers, roads or vehicles but by the quality of a nation's human resources.

He said Pakistan had historically

neglected investments in health, education and population welfare, resulting in poor social indicators compared with many countries. Under the URAAN Pakistan vision, he said, these sectors had been elevated to the forefront of the national development agenda through institutional reforms, including the National Population Council and coordinated action under the National Economic Council.

Ahsan said Independence Day should not merely be celebrated as a historical event but should inspire the nation to strive for excellence in knowledge, character and national dignity.

He described Allama Iqbal as the thinker who provided Pakistan with a complete philosophy of life, teaching that nations were built on character, vision and self-belief rather than geography or natural resources.

Referring to Iqbal's concept of Shaheen,



the minister said the national song sought to reconnect the younger generation with the ideals of courage, self-confidence, freedom, perseverance and continuous progress. He urged young Pakistanis to become problem-solvers instead of critics and to contribute positively through innovation, skills and hard work.

Rejecting the perception that Pakistan's system had collapsed, Ahsan said the country was in need of comprehensive reforms rather than despair.

He stressed that stronger local governments, administrative reforms and a modern civil service were essential for making governance more inclusive and responsive. The minister said Pakistan had demonstrated remarkable resilience by overcoming economic challenges, inflationary pressures, political instability and the aftermath of the 2022 floods.

He noted that inflation and interest rates had declined, investor confidence had improved, the stock market had strengthened and the country's digital economy was expanding, attributing the recovery to difficult decisions taken under the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He said the objective of URAAN Pakistan was not merely economic recovery but national greatness through its five pillars of development, adding that Iqbal's philosophy formed the spiritual foundation of the vision.

Attorney General of Pakistan Meets Delegation from Soon Valley to Discuss Development and Educational Reforms

By: FT Correspondent:

SARGODHA--- A delegation led by the well-known political and social figure from Sabhral, Soon Valley, District Khushab, Malik Muhammad Nawaz Hamwal, popularly known as "DC," met with Mansoor Usman Awan, the Attorney General of Pakistan.

The delegation included Principal of the Federal Board, Islamabad, Dr. Malik Javed Mamooria Hamwal Sabhral, Haji Malik Yaqoob Hamwal Sabhral of Sui Gas Islamabad, and Malik Yasir Awan of Shakkar Kot.

The meeting was held at the Attorney General's office in the Supreme Court of Pakistan, where detailed discussions took place on regional development and bringing about a technical and educational revolution in District Khushab.

The delegation expressed its sincere gratitude to Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan for remem-



bering his home district of Khushab and the Soon Valley despite serving in one of Pakistan's highest constitutional offices. They appreciated his

commitment to prioritizing the development, progress, and educational advancement of District Khushab.

Hindko Literary Event in Abbottabad Celebrates Launch of Two Autobiographies

By ANI Correspondent:

ABBOTTABAD-- A literary ceremony was held in Abbottabad to launch and honour two important Hindko autobiographies, Main Kon Hoon by Hafiz Usman Khan and Yadan Di Kahanri by Malik Azeem Nashad Awan, with writers, scholars and literature enthusiasts in attendance.

The event was chaired by Professor Mumtaz Haider, with Qazi Nasir Bakhtiar as the chief

guest and Muhammad Akhtar Naeem as the guest of honour. Held under the patronage of Professor Malik Nasir Daud and hosted by Dr Qamar Zaman, the ceremony featured speeches delivered entirely in Hindko, highlighting the language's literary richness.

Speakers emphasized the promotion of Hindko language and literature, discussing its script, creative standards, literary significance and future prospects. The authors shared their writing journeys and

the inspiration behind their autobiographies, while literary experts underscored the importance of autobiographical writing in contemporary literature.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, commemorative shields were presented to Hafiz Usman Khan and Malik Azeem Nashad Awan in recognition of their contributions to Hindko literature, and complimentary copies of the books were distributed among participants.

FBR, Customs, Motorway Police Reject Link Between Senators and Seized Cigarette Trucks



By ANI Correspondent:

ISLAMABAD--- A sub-committee of the Senate Standing Committee on Interior and Narcotics Control has rejected media reports linking Senator Faisal Saleem Rahman and Senator Dilawar Khan to the seizure of 11 cigarette-laden trucks, stating that no evi-

dence of their involvement has emerged. During a meeting chaired by Senator Saifullah Abro, officials from the FBR, Customs and Motorway Police also denied any connection between the senators and the seized consignments. The committee directed the FIA and relevant authorities to investigate the alleged FBR media handout and tel-

evision reports and submit comprehensive findings.

The committee also reviewed issues related to Customs operations, the detention of truck drivers, consumption certificates, and alleged tax evasion in the tobacco sector, directing all concerned departments to submit detailed reports at the next meeting.

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq Condoles with Punjab Assembly Deputy Speaker over Father's Demise

By : Hurish shah /FT :

ISLAMABAD--- Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Monday visited the residence of Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channer to offer condolences on the demise of his father, Member of the National Assembly Malik Muhammad Iqbal.

Expressing deep grief over the passing of Malik Muhammad Iqbal, the NA Speaker described him as a sincere, principled and public-spirited parliamentarian who dedicated his life to serving the people and strengthening democratic values.

Sardar Ayaz Sadiq said the parliamentary, political and public services of the late MNA would always be remembered with respect and appreciation. He noted that Malik Muhammad Iqbal remained committed to addressing public issues throughout his political career.



The Speaker termed the loss of a father an irreparable tragedy and expressed solidarity with Deputy Speaker Punjab Assembly Malik Zaheer Iqbal Channer and the bereaved family during their time of grief.

He also offered Fateha for the departed soul and prayed that Almighty Allah grants the deceased the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and blesses the bereaved family with patience and strength to bear the loss.

Ethiopian embassy holds plantation drive under green lrgacy initiative

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The citizens of Pakistan maintained their tradition of joining the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia in its historic, single-day tree-planting campaign under the Green Legacy Initiative of Prime Minister Dr. Abiy Ahmed. Participants from various walks of life, including the diplomatic corps, business leaders, media personnel, and civil society, participated in the plantation drive organized by the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad in collaboration with the Capital Development Authority. The event in Pakistan was held in solidarity with Ethiopia's monumental domestic goal to plant 800 million seedlings in a single day.

Addressing the attendees, Melaw Getachew, Chargé d'Affaires of the Ethiopian Embassy in Islamabad, briefed the participants on the impact of the Green Legacy Initiative. Under



this flagship program, Ethiopia has already planted more than 48 billion seedlings, he said. "The purpose of today's drive is to stand alongside our brothers and sisters in Ethiopia in their goal of planting 800 million

seedlings today," he remarked. He emphasized Ethiopia's global leadership in climate resilience, pointing to Addis Ababa's upcoming role as the host city for the COP32 climate summit.

GEPCO crosses into single-digit line losses, delivers Rs. 5.2 billion in savings

ANI

ISLAMABAD: The Gujranwala Electric Power Company (GEPCO) closed Financial Year 2025-26 with line losses of 9.80 percent, down from 10.43 percent a year earlier, bringing the Company's losses into single digits. The improvement was matched by a recovery rate of more than 100 percent, a zero share in the national Circular Debt, and full, timely payment to the Central Power Purchasing Agency (Guarantee) Limited

(CPPA-G), said a press release. Alongside the loss reduction, GEPCO delivered savings of Rs. 5.2 billion during the year through accurate and timely billing, enforcement against electricity theft and defaulters, expansion of the distribution network, commissioning of new grid stations, and rehabilitation of overloaded feeders and transformers, directly strengthening the Company's financial position. The Company also improved consumer service delivery during the year, with defective electricity meters

now replaced within one month. Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari has pointed to GEPCO's performance as further evidence that sustained, data-driven oversight across DISCOs is translating into measurable financial and operational gains. The Minister continues to review DISCO-wise loss and recovery trends on a regular basis, directing management teams to sustain targets and holding field formations accountable for on-ground enforcement.

Independence Day A Day of Renewing Our National Pledge

Written By: Raja Noor Ilahi Atif
Published By:ANI News Agency

Every year, the dawn of August 14 brings to the people of Pakistan a powerful message of freedom, sovereignty, and national pride. Yet Independence Day is not merely an occasion for flag-hoisting ceremonies, celebrations, and illuminations. It is also a day to remember our past, reflect upon our present, and look toward the future with renewed determination. In its true spirit, August 14 is a day to renew our national pledge to honour the sacrifices of our forefathers and reaffirm our commitment to building a stronger, more prosperous, peaceful, and progressive Pakistan.

The creation of Pakistan was the culmination of an extraordinary struggle marked by immense sacrifices, unwavering determination, and the unity of millions of Muslims of the subcontinent. Under the visionary leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a nation demonstrated that when people are united by a common purpose, faith, determination, and an unwavering vision, they can overcome even the greatest challenges. Today, it is our responsibility to value the priceless blessing of independence and never forget those who sacrificed their lives, homes, possessions, and dreams for the establishment of this homeland.

History teaches us that resilient nations do not surrender in the face of adversity. They confront challenges with courage, unity, hard work, discipline, and perseverance. This is precisely the spirit Pakistan

needs today. Sustainable national progress cannot be achieved through slogans alone; it requires honesty, dedication, merit, discipline, accountability, and a collective sense of responsibility.

Independence Day reminds us that the development and prosperity of Pakistan are not solely the responsibility of the government. Every citizen has a meaningful role to play in nation-building. A student contributes by acquiring knowledge and developing skills; a teacher by providing quality education and shaping responsible citizens; a doctor through professional excellence and humanitarian service; a farmer by cultivating the land with dedication; a businessperson through honesty, innovation, and integrity; and a public servant by performing official duties with sincerity, merit, and accountability. When individuals fulfil their responsibilities honestly, their collective efforts become the foundation of national strength.

Pakistan's youth are among the country's greatest assets. If provided with quality education, modern technology, skills, employment opportunities, and positive guidance, young Pakistanis can play a decisive role in taking the country toward the ranks of developed nations. Our youth must replace despair with hope, embrace innovation and research, develop marketable skills, and make constructive use of digital platforms and social media. Their energy, creativity, and talent can become powerful instruments of economic and social transformation.

National unity is another vital

message of Independence Day. Pakistan must rise above linguistic, regional, political, and sectarian divisions. We must first and foremost see ourselves as Pakistanis and place the national interest above narrow personal or group interests. The true strength of Pakistan lies in the unity of its people, mutual respect, tolerance, social harmony, and adherence to the rule of law.

On this Independence Day, let us renew our pledge to contribute to a Pakistan that is clean, green, peaceful, prosperous, and progressive. Let us respect and obey the law, protect national resources, reject corruption and injustice, discourage hatred and division, and promote education, merit, tolerance, and equal opportunity. Most importantly, let us strive to leave behind a stronger, safer, and more dignified Pakistan for generations to come.

Independence Day is therefore much more than a national celebration. It is a moment to remember the sacrifices of our ancestors, awaken our national conscience, assess our responsibilities, and move forward with fresh ideas and renewed determination. The future of Pakistan depends not only on policies and institutions but also on the character, commitment, and actions of its citizens.

If every Pakistani performs their responsibilities with honesty, sincerity, discipline, and patriotism, the day is not far when Pakistan can emerge as a shining example of peace, stability, prosperity, and progress on the world stage.

Pakistan Zindabad!
Long Live Pakistan!

Israel’s latest foolish act of self-harm

YOSSI MEKELBERG

Israel, as a country and as a nation, has always suffered from a good measure of siege mentality. Being distrustful of the outside world is understandable considering the history of the Jewish people, but it has also become a useful political tool for cynics. For those on the right wing, it is ingrained in their ideology and state of mind. But it is equally a ploy to always portray Israel as a victim on whose behalf only they are willing and able to stand up to all those hateful foreigners who they claim wish for the destruction of the country.

The bizarre saga of two British MPs who were this month refused entry after flying to Israel is just another example of a self-inflicted PR wound inflicted by a government that is becoming increasingly paranoid and thrives on friction with the international community. The two rather anonymous first-term British Labour parliamentarians, Abtisman Mohammed and Yuan Yang, had been traveling to Israel and the West Bank as part of a parliamentary delegation. But immediately after their arrival, they were detained at the airport and forced to fly back to the UK the next day. What makes this story even more peculiar is that the two lawmakers were given clearance to enter the country before they set off, meaning their arrival was hardly a surprise to the Israeli government. Someone must have whispered in the ear of Israeli Interior Minister Moshe Arbel, between their clearance for entry and their detention at the airport, that two “troublemaker” British MPs were about to land in Israel, resulting in this hasty and reckless decision to prevent their entry. According to The Times of Israel, the Interior Ministry explained that it had refused Mohammed and Yang entry because, when questioned about the purpose of their visit, they had stated that it was “to document Israeli security forces and spread hateful rhetoric against Israel.” It is hardly believable that they were so naive as to use these exact words to immigration officials. But even if this was what those who questioned them understood, it would have been smarter of the Israeli authorities to weigh carefully the miniscule degree of harm that would result from allowing two relatively unknown lawmakers to conduct their fact-finding mission against the extremely negative publicity that was bound to be caused by refusing them entry.

The Israeli Embassy in London, which must have approved their visit or at least known about it, all of a sudden suffered a bout of amnesia and entered the fray, declaring that their country “will not allow the entry of individuals or entities that act against the state and its citizens (who are) actively involved in promoting sanctions against Israeli ministers,” or boycotting the country.

These positions are certainly

uncomfortable to Israel, but would it not have been better for the Israeli Foreign Ministry to invite critics of its policies, such as these two British MPs, to a briefing at the ministry and a meeting with experts and bestow on them the utmost “hasbara” to explain their actions, whether justified or not? Or is it the case that those in charge of defending Israel’s policies on the Occupied Territories do not believe that their position is defensible?

Showing lawmakers a more friendly attitude would have at least saved Israel much of the negative publicity it received from most British politicians, with the exception of the Conservative Party and its leader Kemi Badenoch, which is hardly an endorsement that does anyone a favor. Upon their return, Mohammed and Yang, along with Cabinet ministers

In one tweet, he exposed both his rudeness and his ignorance of the fact that the residents of these territories are French citizens. Corsica enjoys autonomy and the people of New Caledonia voted several years ago against independence – a far cry from anything that the Palestinians are being offered by Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu also took to social media to express his love for his son, mildly criticizing his manners but nevertheless supporting his boy’s distorted content.

including Middle East Minister Hamish Falconer and more than 70 other parliamentarians, staged a joint photocall in Westminster Hall in a show of solidarity that was widely reported in the national and international media. To top this, Foreign Secretary David Lammy made a public statement describing Israel’s act as “unacceptable, counterproductive and deeply concerning.” Game, set and match for Israel’s self-inflicted damage to its relations with the UK and beyond.

However, this incident runs deeper than Israel’s inability to tolerate any criticism, let alone acknowledge that there are any faults in its policies

toward the Palestinians. Self-evidently, not every criticism of Israel is justified or reflects a genuine understanding of the complexities of this conflict and the wars it generates. There is usually too much of a binary approach and a tendency to unquestionably support either one side or the other, rather than offering constructive ideas and measures on how to bring it to an end.

Nevertheless, what does Israel expect after 58 years of oppressive occupation that has resulted in the illegal building of hundreds of settlements on occupied land in violation of international law, which has allowed settler terrorism and the general oppression of the Palestinians there, and more recently the mass killings and devastation in Gaza? The more Israel bars politicians, researchers, journalists and activists from visiting these places, the more it becomes obvious that the Israeli authorities have much to hide and that even they no longer believe they can justify their positions to anyone beyond their most ardent and least inquisitive supporters. To make things worse for Israel’s relations with its allies, last week it was the turn of a much higher-profile politician, French President Emmanuel Macron, to be on the receiving end of an obscene attack. It came from a certain self-exiled individual in Miami, who lives in luxurious conditions that nobody knows who pays for, while surrounded by Shin Bet bodyguards who we do know are funded by Israel’s taxpayers. This individual is Yair Netanyahu – yes, the son of the much-discredited Israeli prime minister. Macron’s apparently unforgivable sin was to say that France could recognize a Palestinian state in a matter of months. The instant reply to the French president on X by the younger Netanyahu, a response which reflects the depth of his intellectual prowess and good manners, was: “Screw You.” He also suggested that France has no moral right to criticize Israel because it deprives lands such as New Caledonia, Polynesia and Corsica of independence.

In one tweet, he exposed both his rudeness and his ignorance of the fact that the residents of these territories are French citizens. Corsica enjoys autonomy and the people of New Caledonia voted several years ago against independence – a far cry from anything that the Palestinians are being offered by Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu also took to social media to express his love for his son, mildly criticizing his manners but nevertheless supporting his boy’s distorted content. Macron and the UK and its Parliament are not enemies of Israel, but allies with strong reservations about Israel’s approach to the Palestinians. To alienate them with this kind of behavior is yet another act of self-harming folly that is characteristic of the senior Netanyahu and his government.

— Arab News



5 AUGUST

5 AUGUST KASHMIR SOLIDARITY DAY

WE REMEMBER. WE STAND. WE SUPPORT.

5 August is not just a date – it is a promise that we will never forget our brothers and sisters in Kashmir, who for decades have been fighting for their fundamental rights to freedom and self-determination.

Let the world hear their voice.

Let justice prevail.

Let Kashmir be free.

Sumblina Hassan

Former Secretary to
Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto

In charge of office 10 UK,
RCC Bilawal Bhutto

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Wishes the Nation

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HAPPY 14TH AUGUST

INDEPENDENCE DAY OF PAKISTAN

“

Let us honor the past, celebrate the present and build a stronger, prosperous Pakistan for the future.

”

Freedom Our Right

Unity Our Strength

Progress Our Goal

UNITED WE STAND
STRONGER WE PROSPER

Walk & Fitness Group Meets Newly Elected President of WAPDA Town Cooperative Housing Society, Discusses Community Development

By ANI Correspondent:

RAWALPINDI-- Members of the Walk & Fitness Group, Media Town Islamabad, set a positive example of community engagement and social harmony by meeting the newly elected President of WAPDA Town Cooperative Housing Society, Malik Tariq, under the leadership of Haji Malik Ayub.

The delegation, comprising Aftab Alam, Malik Azam, Akbar Din, and Shahid Usman Ghani, congratulated Malik Tariq on his election and presented him with a bouquet of flowers as a gesture of goodwill.

During the cordial meeting, the delegation highlighted various issues faced by residents and shared suggestions regarding community welfare, infrastructure development, and public services. They emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to improve the quality of life within the society.



Malik Tariq thanked the delegation for their visit and assured them that transparency, efficient administration, and public service would remain his top priorities. He pledged to carefully consider the proposals presented and take practical steps to address residents' concerns and enhance civic facilities.

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing confidence that mutual cooperation, constructive dialogue, and a shared commitment to community development would help transform WAPDA Town Cooperative Housing Society into a modern, well-managed, and exemplary residential community.

Pakistan Awaami Quwat will continue its struggle for quality education and educational justice: Khakan Waheed Khawaja

By FT Correspondent

ISLAMABAD--- Chairman of the Pakistan Awaami Quwat Party, Rawal General and Dental Hospital, and Rawal Foundation, Khaan Waheed Khawaja, has stressed that ensuring quality education for every child is the state's responsibility, calling for urgent measures to improve academic standards, particularly in the field of medical education.

Speaking to students from various schools and colleges, Khawaja said education is a fundamental right of every child and that a strong, pro-

gressive, and prosperous Pakistan can only be built on the foundation of quality education.

During the interaction, students, particularly those enrolled in FSc (Pre-Medical) and Medical Technology programmes, expressed serious concerns over the quality of teaching, practical training, and academic facilities. They said existing shortcomings were adversely affecting their academic performance and future professional careers.

Khawaja termed the students' concerns legitimate and urged the relevant regulatory bodies and education

authorities to take effective steps to maintain the highest academic standards across all disciplines, especially in medical education. He said that without quality education, not only would students' futures suffer, but the country's healthcare system would also be weakened.

He reaffirmed that the Pakistan Awaami Quwat Party would continue to raise its voice for every child's right to education, educational justice, and the promotion of quality medical education, while playing its role in achieving these objectives.

HEC Commission Approves 2026-27 Budget, Reviews Key Higher Education Policies

By FT Correspondent

ISLAMABAD-- -The 48th meeting of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Pakistan's Commission, the apex governing body of the HEC, was held on Monday at the HEC Secretariat in Islamabad under the chairmanship of HEC Chairman Dr. Niaz Ahmad Akhtar.

The Commission approved the recommendations of the Finance and Planning Committee regarding the HEC's Budget Estimates for the fiscal year 2026-27. The approved budget includes the Federal Recurring Grant for public sector universities, budgetary allocations for the HEC Secretariat, and the Development Grant under the Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP).

The Commission also endorsed several financial and administrative measures aimed at strengthening institutional governance and improving organizational efficiency.

Reaffirming its commitment to the development of Pakistan's higher education sector, the Commission



emphasized prudent financial management and sustained public investment to enable universities to continue delivering quality education, research, innovation, and human resource development. It also reviewed a number of academic, regulatory, and administrative matters concerning the higher education sector and took decisions in accordance with the meeting agenda.

The meeting was attended by

Executive Director HEC Dr. Zia Ul Haq, Additional Secretary, Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Hassan Saqlain, representatives of the Ministries of Science and Technology and provincial Higher Education Departments, Vice Chancellors' Committee representative Dr. Zahoor Ahmed Bazai, and other distinguished members of the Commission from academia, government, and the private sector.

Hindko Literary Event in Abbottabad Celebrates Launch of Two Autobiographies

By ANI Correspondent:

ABBOTTABAD-- A literary ceremony was held in Abbottabad to launch and honour two important Hindko autobiographies, Main Kon Hoon by Hafiz Usman Khan and Yadan Di Kahanri by Malik Azeem Nashad Awan, with writers, scholars and literature enthusiasts in attendance. The event was chaired by Professor Mumtaz Haider, with Qazi Nasir Bakhtiar as the chief guest and

Muhammad Akhtar Naeem as the guest of honour. Held under the patronage of Professor Malik Nasir Daud and hosted by Dr Qamar Zaman, the ceremony featured speeches delivered entirely in Hindko, highlighting the language's literary richness.

Speakers emphasized the promotion of Hindko language and literature, discussing its script, creative standards, literary significance and future prospects. The authors shared

their writing journeys and the inspiration behind their autobiographies, while literary experts underscored the importance of autobiographical writing in contemporary literature.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, commemorative shields were presented to Hafiz Usman Khan and Malik Azeem Nashad Awan in recognition of their contributions to Hindko literature, and complimentary copies of the books were distributed among participants.

Centrum Air to Launch Direct Tashkent-Karachi Flights from September 3

BY: FT Correspondent:

KARACHI--- Uzbekistan's private airline Centrum Air will launch direct scheduled flights between Tashkent and Karachi from September 3, 2026, marking a significant step toward enhancing air connectivity between Uzbekistan and Pakistan.

The new service, made possible through the joint efforts of the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Pakistan and the aviation and transport authorities of both countries, will operate twice a week, every Thursday and Sunday.

The direct Tashkent-Karachi-Tashkent route is expected to facilitate faster and more convenient travel for businesspeople, tourists, students, and pilgrims, while strengthening



bilateral trade and people-to-people ties.

The route is also expected to serve as an important transportation corridor linking not only Uzbekistan but the wider Central Asian region with Karachi, Pakistan's principal seaport. Currently, six scheduled flights

operate weekly between Pakistan and Uzbekistan, including four flights on the Tashkent-Lahore route and two flights on the Islamabad-Tashkent route. The addition of the Karachi service will further expand air connectivity between the two countries.



Governor of Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail meets a delegation led by Pakistan Muslim League-N Central leader Mir Ataullah Muhammadzai at the Governor House.

Rawalpindi Declares Local Holiday on August 4 for Chehlum Procession

BY: IRUM SHEHZADI/ANI

RAWALPINDI-- Deputy Commissioner Rawalpindi Captain (R) Nadeem Nasir has announced a local holiday on Tuesday, August 4, 2026, for all public and private educational institutions, including schools,

colleges and universities, located within the municipal limits of Rawalpindi Tehsil in view of the central Chehlum procession. The holiday will not apply to cantonment areas.

According to the official notification, all markets and commercial centers situated on or adjacent to the Chehlum

procession route will remain closed during the procession to help maintain law and order. The district administration has urged citizens to cooperate with authorities by following the traffic management plan and official instructions to ensure the peaceful conduct of the procession.

BZU Employees Protest Delay in Promotions, Allege Administrative Negligence

By ANI Reporter :

MULTAN--- Employees of Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) staged a protest sit-in outside the Administration Block on Monday against what they described as years of delay in promotions across several administrative cadres. The demonstration was organised by the BZU Employees' Union and attended by Union President Malik Safdar, General Secretary Rana Mudassir Mushtaq, and a large number of employees.

The protesters alleged that promotion cases in various administrative cadres had remained pending for years, causing financial losses and hindering the career progression of eligible employees. They claimed that despite repeated assurances, the administration had failed to resolve the issue. However, these allegations could not be independently verified.

Union leaders said the prolonged delays had negatively affected employees' professional growth and described the situation as a serious



administrative concern.

The union particularly highlighted the promotion cases of stenographers, assistants, senior clerks, junior clerks and administrative officers, alleging that many eligible employees had been waiting for promotions for years, while some had retired without receiving them. According to the union, two serving stenographers had completed PhD degrees, but their promotion cases were still pending.

The protesters demanded that the Vice Chancellor and the relevant authorities immediately convene promotion committees, announce a

clear timetable for deciding pending cases, and process promotions strictly on the basis of seniority, eligibility, merit and the applicable university rules.

Addressing the gathering, Union President Malik Safdar warned that the protest movement would continue until the employees' demands were met. He said the union could consider further action, including locking administrative offices, if concrete steps were not taken.

The university administration has not issued any official statement on the matter so far.

University of Balochistan Ranking Improves from 42% to 82%, Reflecting Significant Academic Progress: Governor

By FT Correspondent:

QUETTA--- Balochistan Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail has hailed the improvement in the University of Balochistan's ranking and scoring from 42 percent to 82 percent, describing it as a remarkable achievement that reflects effective leadership, improved administrative strategy, and continuous enhancement in academic standards.

He expressed these views while chairing the 13th Senate meeting of the University of Balochistan, attended by Chief Justice of the Balochistan High Court Justice Kamran Khan Malakhail, Provincial Education Minister Raheela Hameed Khan Durrani, Vice Chancellor Dr. Zahoor Ahmad Bazai, senior government officials, and members of the university senate.

The Governor urged the Vice Chancellor and his team to continue focusing on improving academic quality, reducing unnecessary expenditures, and strengthening financial discipline. He noted that the University of Balochistan is the first university in the province to implement a completely paperless administrative system under its digital transformation initiative, calling it an environmentally friendly and exemplary achievement.

Mandokhail also announced plans



to make the Governor's Secretariat paperless and to extend the successful model to all public sector universities across Balochistan. He further emphasized the need to strengthen collaboration with industries, pharmaceutical companies, agricultural research institutions, and other sectors to increase the university's revenue through research, innovation, and employment opportunities. He also announced a special letter of appreciation for Director IT Muhammad Salal Khan in recognition of his contribution to the digital transformation initiative.

Addressing the meeting, Chief Justice Justice Kamran Khan

Malakhail said that while the introduction of the BS programme was an important step in modernizing higher education, the discontinuation of FA and BA programmes had deprived thousands of private candidates of access to higher education. He stressed the need to restore educational opportunities for private students so that everyone, regardless of financial or social circumstances, can pursue higher education.

The Senate meeting concluded with several important decisions and recommendations aimed at further improving the university's academic, administrative, and financial performance.

Trainee Civil Service Officers Visit Jhelum Deputy Commissioner's Office for Administrative Exposure

By: ANI Correspondent :

JHELUM--- A delegation of trainee civil service officers undergoing practical training visited the Deputy Commissioner's Office in Jhelum to gain firsthand insight into the district's administrative structure and governance system.

During the visit, Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Jhelum, Alizay Rehan, welcomed the delegation and delivered a comprehensive briefing on the functions of the district administration and the implementation of government policies at the local level.

She highlighted the importance of field inspections, effective public service delivery, and the prompt resolution of citizens' grievances. She stressed that field officers should ensure easy public access to government offices and regularly hold open public forums (Khuli Katcheries) to address public complaints efficiently.



The trainee officers were also briefed on tehsil-level price control mechanisms, routine market inspections, enforcement actions against profiteering, anti-encroachment drives, monitoring of development projects, the functioning of Land Record Centers, and administrative measures aimed at achieving revenue recovery targets.

Concluding the session, ADCG Alizay Rehan extended her best wishes to the trainee Assistant Commissioners and expressed confidence that the educational visit would strengthen their professional capabilities. She urged the officers to uphold integrity, transparency, and public service as the core values of their careers.