



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے سفیان نے بیان کیا ان سے عبدالمک
نے انہوں نے کہا ہم سے ابو سلمہ نے اور ان
سے ابو ہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے کہ نبی کریم صلی
اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ شہرہ کے کام میں
سے سچا کھل لید کا مصرعہ جو یہ ہے کہ اللہ
کے سوا اور کچھ ہے سب معدوم و فنا ہوئے والا
ہے۔ امین بن ابی الصلت شاعر قرقریہ تھا
کہ مسلمان ہو جائے۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6147)
**Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited**



Fazl to address JUI rally at Karachi's Kakri Ground on Dec 21

A large religious congregation is set to take place in Lyari on December 21 as Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (JUI) leader Maulana Fazlur Rehman prepares to address a public meeting at the historic Kakri Ground, officially known as Maulana Muhammad Ali Jauhar Park.



Allama Raghbir Hussain Naeemi notified as CII Chairman

Renowned scholar Allama Muhammad Raghbir Hussain Naeemi has been appointed as the chairman of the Council of Islamic Ideology (CII), the Ministry of Law and Justice said on Saturday. The Council of Islamic Ideology is a constitutional body that advises the parliament on how to align legislation with the principles of the Holy Quran and the Sunnah of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jamadi-us-Sani 15, Sunday, December 7, 2025

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 231 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Groundbreaking ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif unveils the plaque of the groundbreaking ceremony of the Gujranwala Mass Transit System in Gujranwala on Saturday.



Photo: PID

With delivery, mega projects, hard work, PML-N to get pleasant results in next general elections: PM

Bureau Report

GUJRANWALA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, while appreciating Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for the successful launch of diverse public-oriented mega projects across the province, said after completion of their current mandate, the PML-N under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif would 'get historic results

in the next general elections'.

Addressing a ground breaking ceremony of mass transport system here, the prime minister said the recent election results in Punjab reflected the public trust in the PML-N leadership.

"In the next three year, the incumbent government of PML-N has the mandate to serve the people," he said stressing that they should work tirelessly under the leadership of Muhammad

Nawaz Sharif.

In his remarks, broadcast live on national TV channels, he expressed the optimism that on the basis of hard work and launch of development projects, the next election results across the country would be pleasant ones for the PML-N.

"The journey of progress and prosperity has just commenced and we will move on the path of development rapidly. In the next

election, owing to this hard work, PML-N will get historic results," he added.

The ceremony was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, federal and provincial ministers, parliamentarians, members of parliament and assembly, relevant authorities and a large number of people.

The prime minister termed the

groundbreaking of mass transport system, a major initiative to facilitate the city dwellers, besides facilitating the other areas, a key initiative to provide public relief.

He said the project was a gift from the Punjab CM which would transform the entire district, providing immense relief to the commuters, including students, patients, labours, lawyers and other people from different walks of life.

Security forces kill nine terrorists in Tank and Lakki Marwat operations

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Security forces eliminated nine terrorists affiliated with Fitna Al Khawarij in intelligence-based operations in two Khyber Pakhtunkhwa districts, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) reported on Saturday. According to the ISPR, seven terrorists were killed in Tank during an operation based on secret intelligence.

The area was cleared, and a significant cache of weapons and ammunition was recovered.

In a separate operation in



Lakki Marwat, security forces killed two more terrorists and seized additional arms and explosive materials.

The ISPR statement emphasised that the operations demonstrate the armed forces' determination to maintain peace across the country.

Security forces will continue operations against terrorism until its complete eradication.

President, PM commend security forces for eliminating Khwarij in Tank, Lakki Marwat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, lauded the security forces for successful operations against the India-backed Fitna-al-Khawarij in Tank and Lakki Marwat districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The president appreciated the timely and effective action of the security forces that resulted in the killing of Khwarij, President Secretariat Press Wing said in a press release.

Paying homage to the sacrifices of the Shuhada and the Ghazis, he reiterated that the resolve of the nation and the security forces would remain firm till complete elimination of this menace.

The president praised the morale of the forces for foiling the nefarious designs of the Fitna-al-Khawarij operating



under Indian patronage.

The prime minister commended the security forces for eliminating 9 terrorists belonging to Fitna-al-Khawarij in these operations.

Under the vision of Azm-e-Istehkam, the security forces were achieving major successes in the fight against terrorism, he added.

"The entire nation stands with Pakistan's armed forces in this war against terrorism," PM Office Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the prime minister as saying.

He also expressed the resolve to completely eradicating all forms of terrorism from the country.

PTI using foul language against state institutions: Khawaja Asif

Faisal Khawar Butt

SIALKOT: Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif on Saturday said the PTI leadership and its foreign-based elements are using foul language while ignoring the sacrifices of the country's armed forces and martyrs.

Speaking to the media, he said that the attitude adopted by Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's leadership after the general elections

is against political decency. He said that some PTI leaders and office-bearers openly used indecent language on social media.

He said the current PTI leadership—whether outside prison, in parliament, or anywhere else—uses the same indecent tone.

The PTI elements who are abroad also use extremely harsh and irresponsible language. Although they claim that they are not associated with PTI, in

practice both groups promote the same narrative and the same abusive language.

The defence minister said that when such language is used against individuals and institutions, a reaction is natural.

He said identity of PTI has become the identity of the enemies of Pakistan. If they want to do politics or protest, they may do so, but they must not dare to challenge Pakistan's land, honour, or dignity.



PTI closes negotiation window, extremism not to be allowed: Rana Sanaullah

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister's Adviser on Political Affairs Senator Rana Sanaullah declared on Saturday that the possibility for talks with PTI has ended and emphasized that there will be no discussions with those supporting chaos, violence, or radical thinking.

"Our nation's sovereignty and dignity are non-negotiable. While we welcome dialogue, our decisions are firmly guided by



the need to safeguard our core national interests and values," he

stated in an interview with local media.

He further asserted that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) has squandered the crucial opportunity for meaningful dialogue.

He emphasized that there is no tolerance for negotiations with individuals or groups promoting violence, disorder, or extremist ideologies, highlighting the government's unwavering commitment to safeguarding national stability.

He noted that Prime Minister

Shehbaz Sharif had extended a formal invitation to PTI for talks in Parliament and stressed that the Prime Minister has neither withdrawn nor intends to withdraw that offer.

Responding to a query, the Advisor stated that deadlocks do not occur in a true democracy, but emphasized that dialogue is always the proper way forward.

He added that PTI's current attitude and propaganda reflect a disregard for this principle and cannot be tolerated.

Pakistan rapidly advancing toward clean energy, says Energy Minister

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmad Khan Leghari has said that Pakistan is playing a leading role in the region by implementing fast-paced reforms in the energy sector and promoting clean and renewable energy. He said the government is introducing large-scale measures for the restoration, modernization, and transparency of the power sector.

He was addressing the Second Asia Energy Transition Summit via Zoom on Saturday at the Lahore University of Management Sciences (LUMS). The summit was jointly organized by the Pakistan Renewable Energy Coalition LUMS and the Alliance for Climate Justice and Clean Energy.

Awais Leghari said that global energy diplomacy and economic dynamics are

changing rapidly, deeply impacting developing countries—especially Asia. Citing reports from the International Energy Agency and the United Nations, he said the world is currently standing at a critical turning point in energy and climate governance.

At the end of his address, the energy minister thanked the organizers, international partners, and participants, saying that the summit would not only serve as a platform for sharing experiences but also act as an important milestone toward collective regional action and a sustainable energy future.

Former Federal Finance Minister Dr Shamshad Akhtar, former Supreme Court Judge Justice Mansoor Ali Shah, Dr. Tariq Jadoon, Program Director Mustafa Amjad, Dr Amais Abdur Rahman, Hamza Ali Haroon, as well as a large number of national and international experts and students were present.

5 major initiatives announced by PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore for Hajira’s Future

 Bureau Report

HAJIRA: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that the key to resolving the state's long-pending problems lies with the Pakistan Peoples Party.

He expressed these views while addressing a reception hosted in his honour by Sardar Saud Khan at the PWD Guest House at Hajira. "The issues that could not be addressed in the last two and a half years have been resolved by the present government in just two and a half weeks", he said.

The Prime Minister, on the occasion, announced several important administrative and development initiatives, including the approval of permanent posts for ADC and XEN in Hajira, the construction of a bridge over the Rangar Stream, addressing the shortage of doctors at THQ, inclusion of the Tarar Khal Water Supply Scheme in the next financial year, immediate commencement of the Hajira Bypass, and granting Dhar Bazaar the status



of subdivision.

He reiterated that the agreement with the Public Action Committee would be implemented under all circumstances, and the government would not delay any matter that concerns public interest.

In his address, the PM highlighted

the historic relationship between Kashmir and Pakistan saying that this unbreakable bond is rooted in the Kalima Tayyiba.

He said that the PPP won't allow anyone to weaken this bond under any circumstances. He also praised the party chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari

for effectively advocating Kashmiris' just cause.

The event was attended by former Prime Minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas, Kashmir Council member Adnan Ayub, PPP leaders Saud Sadiq and Sardar Abid Hussain Abid, along with a large number of people.

After implementing the laws

FAISALABAD: People are buying helmets from a shop on Satyana Road to get rid from traffic challan in City.



Photo: Online

Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, called on the Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, called on the Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, at his residence today. The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, with detailed discussions on the Kashmir cause and future strategies to highlight it at national and international levels.

The Federal Minister briefed the Chairman Senate on the ongoing initiatives of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, including engagements with national leadership, Kashmiri



representatives, and the international community. He emphasized that effective institutional cooperation is essential for projecting the Kashmir issue

more robustly.


Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani appreciated these efforts and assured full support, reiterating that

the Senate of Pakistan will continue to play its role in amplifying the voice of the Kashmiri people.

During the meeting, the Chairman Senate also formally approved the establishment of a special "Kashmir Corner" in the Senate Library. The dedicated section will compile historical documents, books, research material, and parliamentary records related to Kashmir, contributing to enhanced awareness at both national and global levels.


Both leaders agreed to further strengthen coordination and collaboration to reinforce Pakistan's national stance on Kashmir and effectively raise the issue at international forums.

Journalism plays a vital role in shaping the direction of society: PM AJK

 Bureau Report

HAJIRA: Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, while terming journalism as the fourth pillar of the state, has said that responsible, and constructive journalism plays a vital role in shaping the direction of society. He said this while addressing at an oath taking ceremony of the newly elected office bearers of the Hajira Press Club here today. Reiterating his government's firm belief in freedom of the press, he said that the PPP government will extend full cooperation to resolve the issues faced by the journalist community. The Prime Minister congratulated the newly elected office bearers and expressed confidence that they would fulfill their journalistic responsibilities with integrity, impartiality, and professional excellence. He stressed the need for highlighting issues of public interest. On this occasion, the PM announced a grant of five hundred thousand rupees for the Hajira Press Club. During the ceremony, Muhammad Shaukat Butt took oath as Patron-in-Chief, Parvez Chughtai as President, Muhammad Naeem Khan as General Secretary, Muhammad Manawar Khan as Senior Vice President, Malik Muhammad Zulfiqar as Vice President, Muhammad Latif Awan as Deputy General Secretary, Shaukat Hayat as Finance Secretary, and Salman Chaudhry as Secretary Information & Publication.

Sardar Attique extends heartfelt congratulations to Field Marshal on his appointment as CDF

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: President of the All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, has extended heartfelt congratulations to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir on his appointment as the Chief of Defence Forces.



Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the professional services, military experience, and invaluable contributions of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir to the defence of Pakistan make him the most deserving and suitable choice for this key position. He expressed confidence that his appointment will further strengthen the defence institutions and enhance the country's national security framework in accordance with modern requirements.

He added that the nation has complete confidence in the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, who, with his strategic vision, exceptional decision-making, and steadfastness, will continue to play a vital role in safeguarding the country and its people.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan prayed for the success of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir in fulfilling his responsibilities with excellence and for further strengthening the defence of Pakistan.

Asif Rsthore appointed as press Secretary to PM AJK

 Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD/MIRPUR: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has appointed the Central Coordination Secretary of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Kashmir, Mr. Aamir Zeeshan Jarral, as Director General, Political Affairs (Grade B-20) in the Prime Minister's Secretariat. The Services and General Administration Department has formally issued the notification in this regard.



Meanwhile in another move well seasoned journalist Mr Asif Rsthore has appoited as press Secretary to Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore Mr Asif is internationally recognized journalist

People of every walks of life particularly journalistic community welcomed the step of Mr Asif Rathore appointment

Armed assailants attempt to attack High School Headmaster in Sujawal

 Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

SUJAWAL: In a shocking incident, two armed assailants attempted to attack a high school headmaster in broad daylight on Friday outside his village. According to local villagers, the four men, two of them identified as Shah Nawaz Jatoi and Sawan Jatoi, arrived outside village Hussainabad, located on the main Jati-Sujawal road, and inquired about Aziz Allah Dino Khowaja. When he arrived, one of the assailants pulled out a pistol and attempted to overpower him.

The local villagers and pedestrians present at the scene tried to intervene, but the assailants began manhandling the teacher and his fellow villagers. As soon as the miscreants saw a police mobile heading towards them, they resorted to indiscriminate firing on local villagers and police in an attempt to create fear.

A local villager requesting anonymity said that the assailants were apprehended near the shrine of Shah Hussain Shah, and the police recovered two motorcycle and a pistol from their possession.

When contacted, Aziz Allah Dino, the victim, revealed that men from the Jatoi tribe had been after him for the past few weeks following a land dispute and had been issuing threats of dire consequences. He had informed the heads of the local community about the threats.

University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir 21st Convocation held

 Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu & Kashmir held its 21st Convocation, conferring degrees upon more than 7,500 graduating students at the King Abdullah Campus, Chattar Klass, on Saturday. During the prestigious ceremony, 51 outstanding students were awarded gold medals, while 28 PhD scholars received their doctoral degrees.

The chief guest of the ceremony was the Acting President of Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Chancellor of the University, Chaudhry Latif Akbar. Congratulating the graduating students, he emphasized that students are the nation's future and should uphold the principles of honesty, discipline, and innovation in their academic and professional lives. He stated that the

prosperity of the region lies in the hands of educated, responsible youth.

The Chancellor lauded the university's progress in academics, research, infrastructure development, and student support services. He highlighted the introduction of new departments—including Artificial Intelligence, Cybersecurity, Biotechnology, Nursing, and Pharmacy—as a reflection of the university's commitment to modern and globally competitive education. Addressing financial challenges, he assured that the Government of AJK will take practical measures to strengthen the university. He also urged the faculty to maintain high academic standards, promote scholarly integrity, and prepare students to become future leaders.

Vice Chancellor Professor Nasir Jamal Khattak, in his welcome address, stated that the day marked pride,

achievement, and hope for the graduates and their families. He described the University of AJK as the region's largest and oldest higher education institution, serving students from Neelum, Bhimber, Kotli, Haveli, Leepa, Rawalakot, and other remote areas with quality education.

The Vice Chancellor highlighted the university's financial deficit exceeding Rs. 1 billion, attributing it to inflation, rising operational costs, and pension obligations. He noted that the university has initiated several steps, including the establishment of an endowment fund and strengthening the pension fund. He appealed to the government for support to ensure the university's sustainability and growth.

The ceremony was attended by government officials, educationists, media representatives, and parents.



Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:30 am
Zohr 11:59 am
Asr 3:21 pm
Maghrib 4:59 pm
Isha 6:28 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service
E-7, F-10 & F-11 9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8 9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 9266316
Wapda Islamabad 9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint 119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank
Rawalpindi 0331-5022125

Consumer Protection Council established in TT Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Following the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a Consumer Protection Council has been established in Toba Tek Singh to safeguard the fundamental rights of consumers. The council, headed by Deputy Commissioner Umar Mela, has commenced its operations and includes nine government and eleven non-government members. The Consumer Protection Council will protect consumers from substandard goods and fraudulent practices and will hold regular monthly meetings. It will also work to raise awareness among consumers and provide them with necessary information. To resolve consumer issues, the council will submit recommendations to provincial authorities and serve as an effective platform for coordination between manufacturers, suppliers and consumers. Deputy Commissioner Umar Mela said the council will establish an efficient mechanism to ensure timely redressal of public complaints. He added that ensuring access to quality products at fair prices remains a top priority of the Punjab government.

Hashoo Foundation moves Diamer toward climate-resilient and incentive-based natural resource stewardship through stakeholder capacity-building

Saif ur Rehman

GILGIT: Hashoo Foundation (HF) organized a multi-stakeholder capacity-building workshop in Gilgit to equip local institutions and communities with practical methods for climate-resilient ecosystem services management. Organized under the PPAF-funded Gilgit-Baltistan Local Area Development Programme (GBLADP), locally implemented by HF, the workshop introduced community stakeholders to market-based environmental instruments and demonstrated how these approaches can help reduce deforestation, improve environmental integrity, and offer new livelihood incentives. Participants also shared recommendations on how a localized Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES) model could be integrated into existing policies.

Diamer District contains 71% of Gilgit-Baltistan's total forest cover, making it one of Pakistan's most ecologically critical regions. This concentration of forests highlights the importance of incentive-based conser-



vation, as unsustainable practices in the region can have disproportionate environmental and socio-economic impacts.

Uzma Nomani, Manager Resource Mobilisation & Climate Change at the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund, outlined PPAF's approach to poverty graduation and climate resilience,

stressing that by aligning economic incentives with conservation goals, communities can be empowered to lead their own development. She noted that this is precisely what we aim to achieve in the target areas—supporting communities to protect their forests today while safeguarding their futures for generations to come.

Iftikhar Hussain, Range Forest Officer (RFO) Forest Department Gilgit-Baltistan, voiced support: "If we are paid for protecting our trees, not cutting them, we can think twice. This is good for our families and for nature."

Hashoo Foundation highlighted its enduring commitment to driving sustainable development and

climate-resilient resource management in Gilgit-Baltistan. Through the GBLADP, the Foundation is working closely with communities and local institutions to introduce incentive-based conservation approaches, strengthen local capacity, and ensure that both forests and livelihoods are safeguarded for the long term.

Inauguration

ISLAMABAD: Chargé d'Affaires of U.S. Embassy in Pakistan Natalie A. Baker cut the ribbon along with President of the Islamabad Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (IWCCI) Samina Fazil to inaugurate "Islamabad Expo 2025" at Pak China Friendship Center as organized by IWCCI in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Jahangir Khan Tareen visits under construction IT institute in Lodhran

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Jahangir Khan Tareen attended the closing ceremony of the 5th South Punjab Mathematics Contest organized by the Tareen Education Foundation (TEF). Addressing the ceremony, he said that mathematics forms the foundation of IT and technology, and only the youth skilled in these fields can bring about a revolution in Pakistan's digital economy. He added that such competitions serve as an important milestone in equipping children with modern-era skills.

At the end of the ceremony, Jahangir Khan Tareen distributed cash prizes and appreciation shields among the position-holding students.

Jahangir Khan Tareen also visited the under-construction TICER, South Punjab's first modern IT institute being built in Lodhran. During the visit, TEF CEO Akbar Khan briefed him in detail



about the university's various blocks, state-of-the-art IT labs, smart classrooms, digital library, and the overall design and completion stages of different sections.

Once completed, TICER will provide thousands of students with access to advanced IT education and open new

avenues of progress for the youth of South Punjab.

On the occasion, Jahangir Khan Tareen also visited the art exhibition set up by students from TEF-supported schools. He appreciated the creative artwork and design projects displayed by the students and lauded their skills and efforts.

Kamalia Tehsildar Ch. Shakeel vows to uphold merit

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Tehsildar Kamalia, Chaudhry Hafiz Muhammad Shakeel Gujar said that following the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, giving top priority to merit-based work is his core responsibility.

He stated that all applicants visiting the Tehsil office for property registry and mutation (intiqal) services will be facilitated strictly on merit. Ensuring that citizens get their lawful rights without any delay or discrimination is my foremost duty and priority, he added.

Tehsildar Ch. Hafiz Shakeel Gujar further emphasized that there will be zero tolerance for any kind of illegal registries or unlawful mutations. He made it clear that no compromise will be made in cases involving fake or unauthorized property transfers. He reiterated that the Tehsil administration is committed to transparency, public service, and the implementation of government policies aimed at improving governance and ensuring justice at the grassroots level.



Postgraduate Institute of Allied Health Sciences hosted a Traffic Awareness Seminar



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The Postgraduate Institute of Allied Health Sciences Faisalabad hosted a Traffic Awareness Seminar with the Worthy CPO Faisalabad, DIG Sahibzada Bilal Umar as the chief guest. Chief Traffic Officer Nasir Javed Rana and the Education Unit of City Traffic Police Faisalabad were also present.

During the seminar, the CPO addressed staff and students on traffic rules, new traffic laws, and accident prevention, while the CTO emphasized the importance of traffic regulations and answered participants' questions.

The initiative was highly appreciated by all attendees for promoting road safety and responsible driving.

Millions Recovered as ACE Multan cracks down on corruption in 2025 performance report

Zain khan Malghani

MULTAN: The Anti-Corruption Establishment (ACE) Region Multan has released its performance report for the fiscal year 2025, highlighting extensive operations carried out across Multan, Khanewal, Vehari, and Lodhran against corruption. According to Regional Director ACE Multan, Basharat Nabi, a total of 775 inquiries involving corruption in various government

departments led to the registration of cases against government officials and their private facilitators.

The report states that 253 government employees and private facilitators were arrested and sent to jail, while 64 corrupt officials—including officers of Grade 19, 18, and 17—were caught red-handed taking bribes during raids conducted in coordination with a first-class magistrate. An amount of Rs. 2.225 million was

recovered during these operations. Additionally, 27 proclaimed offenders were also arrested.

According to the Regional Director, during the fiscal year, 264 challans were completed and submitted to the courts, 267 inquiries were settled through compromise, and 67 inquiries were transferred to the relevant departments.

Basharat Nabi disclosed that the biggest corruption case of the year involved the insulin medi-

cine theft scandal at Nishtar Hospital Multan and Shehbaz Sharif Hospital. Apart from this, inquiries remained under process against multiple departments including Police, Revenue, Sub-Registrar, Irrigation, Municipal Corporation, PHA, Housing & Building, Highways, Education, Excise, Labour, MDA, and Food Department.

ACE Multan also took action against land grabbers, successfully retrieving 16 marlas of valu-

able government land worth approximately Rs. 10 million. In addition, the region achieved direct recoveries amounting to Rs. 148.411 million in various cases.

Director General Anti-Corruption Punjab, Sohail Zafar Chatha, appreciated the outstanding performance and significant recoveries, congratulating Director Basharat Nabi and the regional team for their effective efforts.



Group Chairman/Chief Editor: Almass Ayoub Sabir
Vice Chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad
Editor: Naveed Ahmad Khan
Head Editorial Advisory Board: Amjad Mehmood
Bureau Chief Karachi: Khurram Jaffrani
(jaffrani@adpluse.pk)
Bureau Chief Lahore: Syed Afraz Ali Nazish
(afrazalishah@gmail.com)

Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad.
spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
Phone: +92 51 2227123,
WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
Karachi office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS,
Karachi Phone:021-33399390
Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
Lahore Office: 7-E,Samanberg, Johar Town.
spokesmanlahore@gmail.com

Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

New Provinces Now

Pakistan is currently grappling with political uncertainty, administrative dysfunction, and a severe economic crisis. A recent Governance and Corruption Diagnostic Assessment (GCDA) issued by the IMF revealed that the country’s political and economic elite have virtually captured the state’s policymaking process, effectively blocking the path to genuine economic progress. The report projects that implementing structural reforms to make Pakistan’s governance structure transparent and effective could potentially boost the economy by 5 to 6.5 percent over the next five years, leading to sustained GDP growth.

The fundamental question, however, remains: How can Pakistan’s chronic governance issues be resolved? What revolutionary reforms are needed to streamline the administrative structure and ensure easy, affordable, and timely service delivery, transparency, effective accountability, uniform application of law, and socio-economic justice for the public? A major constitutional change has already occurred with the 27th judicial amendment, and the demand for administrative structural reforms is now louder than ever.

Experts contend that without the creation of new administrative units, it is impossible to achieve meaningful governance improvement, transfer powers to the grassroots level, foster social development, or ensure equitable distribution of funds. Mustafa Kamal of MQM has proposed an amendment to the constitutional procedure for creating new provinces, as Article 239 of the Constitution currently requires approval by a two-thirds majority of the concerned provincial assembly a major hurdle. Nearly all major political parties have historically supported the creation of new provinces, yet today, many are obstructing the process. The question is: why are political parties hesitant to move forward?

Political and partisan interest’s aside, the core issue is that the existing provincial structure has become ineffective for public service delivery. Even the World Bank’s (anticipated) 2025 report is said to classify Pakistan’s current economic model as a failure. Better governance can only be achieved when powers and funds are genuinely devolved downwards, local governments are empowered, and administrative units are manageable in size. The 18th Amendment transferred powers from the federation to the provinces, but it failed to create a practical mechanism for further devolution within the provinces. As a result, power remained concentrated with the Chief Minister and the cabinet, and the benefits of the NFC funds did not reach the backward districts.

The benefits of strong local government and power decentralization are globally recognized as crucial for effective state functioning. Decentralization ensures that decisions are made closer to the people, leading to more responsive public services tailored to specific local needs, greater transparency, and enhanced accountability of elected officials to their immediate constituents. It breaks the cycle of “elite capture” by empowering local communities to directly manage their affairs. Global Examples: Germany’s federal system grants its Länder (states) significant fiscal and legislative autonomy, ensuring robust regional economies and targeted service delivery. Similarly, the Philippines enacted the Local Government Code of 1991, devolving substantial powers including health, agriculture, and public works from the central government to local units (LGUs), which has been credited with improving local infrastructure and service efficiency. These models demonstrate that a robust local tier is not a threat to the federation but the very foundation of national stability and prosperity.

Separation of Powers and the History of Judicial Independence in Pakistan

The doctrine of separation of powers is one of the central pillars of democratic governance. It envisions a political structure in which the three branches of the state legislature, executive, and judiciary operate independently yet harmoniously to maintain checks and balances. This system prevents the concentration of power in any single institution and protects citizens’ rights through an impartial and autonomous judiciary. In the context of Pakistan, the principle of separation of powers has had a complex and often turbulent history. Since the country’s inception, the struggle for judicial independence has been deeply intertwined with political instability, constitutional crises, and alternating periods of civilian and military rule. Understanding this history is crucial to analyzing Pakistan’s democratic evolution and the challenges it continues to face in ensuring a functional balance among the pillars of the state.

This constitution clearly articulated the independence of the judiciary and established a comprehensive legal framework governing judicial appointments, terms of service, and constitutional jurisdiction. For the first time, the judiciary received constitutional protection as a co-equal branch of the state. The Supreme Court was also granted original jurisdiction to enforce fundamental rights, enhancing its role as a guardian of the Constitution.

Another pivotal moment in the history of judicial independence came in the 1990s, a decade marked by repeated dissolutions of elected governments. During this period, the judiciary occasionally took a stand against executive overreach. In 1993, the Supreme Court restored the dissolved National Assembly, demonstrating that

the judiciary could challenge executive authority when necessary. However, political interference and pressures persisted, preventing the judiciary from functioning as a fully independent institution.

The most dramatic and defining chapter in the struggle for judicial independence occurred during General Musharraf’s regime. In 2007, when Chief Justice Iftikhar Muhammad Chaudhry refused to resign on the orders of the military ruler, it ignited the historic Lawyers’ Movement. The nationwide protests that followed mobilized lawyers, civil society, media, and political activists, all demanding the restoration of judicial independence. This movement succeeded in reinstating Chaudhry and marked a rare moment in Pakistan’s history

where the judiciary emerged as a symbol of resistance against authoritarian rule. The lawyers’ movement also demonstrated the public’s growing recognition of the importance of judicial autonomy in safeguarding democratic values.

In the years following this movement, the judiciary asserted itself more boldly. Through judicial activism, public interest litigation, and Suo motu notices, the courts sought to hold politicians, bureaucrats, and even military officials accountable. While some praised this as an expression of judicial independence, others criticized it as judicial overreach that threatened the balance of powers. Nonetheless, this period highlighted the judiciary’s newly acquired confidence and society’s heightened expectations for legal accountability.

Significant institutional reforms also strengthened separation of powers during this time. The 18th Amendment (2010), for example, redefined judicial appointments by establishing a Judicial

Commission and a Parliamentary Committee, reducing the possibility of executive interference. This amendment reaffirmed the principle that the judiciary should function independently of the legislature and executive, thereby fortifying constitutional democracy.

Despite these achievements, challenges to judicial independence remain. The 26th and then 27th Amendments have added to the challenges. Political polarization, inconsistent judicial standards, pressure from powerful institutions, and occasional strains in civil-military relations continue to shape Pakistan’s legal landscape. Some critics argue that the judiciary sometimes becomes politicized, undermining its neutrality. Others point to delays, inefficiencies, and a backlog of cases that weaken public trust in the judicial system. Ensuring true separation of powers requires not only constitutional guarantees but also institutional maturity, political stability, and a sustained commitment to democratic norms.

Ultimately, it can be said that the history of judicial independence in Pakistan is a mixed journey of struggle, failures, successes and evolution. From the weak decisions of 1954 to the successes of the lawyers’ movement, and since the 18th Amendment, the judiciary has tried to establish itself as a more dignified institution. While the current judicial functioning, the 26th and then the 27th Amendment, have raised many doubts. And many lawyers have interpreted it as an attack on the independence of the judiciary. Separation of powers is not only a constitutional principle but also a basic requirement for the survival of democracy and state balance. The independence of the judiciary is a guarantee that protects fundamental rights, limits government power and plays a central role in creating a just and trustworthy society.

The writer is senior analyst,he can be reached at sirasif786@gmail.com



Analysis

Muhammad Asif

When Europe Bowed to Beijing

President Emmanuel Macron’s visit to China from December 3 to December 5, 2025 is not merely a diplomatic formality; it is a geopolitical confession wrapped in ceremony. For decades, European leaders dealt with Beijing from a position of moral superiority, economic egoism, and political arrogance. They lectured China on values while depending on its factories, restrained engagement while depending on its imports, and pretended equality while dismissing China’s vision. Yet today, Macron stands in Beijing in what resembles a symbolic pilgrimage—an acknowledgment that the global center of gravity has shifted, and that Europe can no longer pretend otherwise. His presence in China marks a moment when Europe openly recognizes China as a world power shaping the contours of the twenty-first century.

Through roads, railways, ports, fiber-optic networks, energy corridors, industrial parks, and digital highways connecting 152 countries across every inhabited continent, China has woven together the most extensive development network the world has ever seen. Rome captured territories. Britain controlled the seas. The United States built alliances. But China has done something none of them imagined: it has physically and economically connected more than half of humanity into a shared infrastructure and trading system, peacefully and voluntarily.

When Macron arrived in Beijing on December 3, he did so not as a leader offering lectures, but as a leader seeking partnership. His discussions with President Xi Jinping quietly acknowledged that China’s influence is no longer a projection or a forecast but a living reality. The Belt and Road Initiative, once mocked by Western commentators as overly ambitious, has matured

into the most successful development program ever undertaken by a single nation. Through respect, partnership, and non-interference, China has offered world development without humiliation, loans without political diktats, and cooperation without exploitation. It has provided infrastructure to the neglected, dignity to the marginalized, and economic hope to nations locked out of Western financial systems. This is the geopolitical architecture that Macron is walking into, not as a skeptic but as a participant.

Macron’s visit was driven not by ceremony but by necessity. Europe’s economy has weakened under the weight of global shocks, strategic overdependence, and America’s increasingly punitive tariff regime. President Donald Trump’s imposition of heavy tariffs on the European Union has rattled industries across the continent, from steel to aviation, from agriculture to automobiles. Europe finds itself wedged between American economic nationalism and its own industrial fragility. At this moment, Europe needs new markets, new partnerships, new supply pathways, and new investment ecosystems. China, with its immense consumer base, advanced technological capabilities, and resilient manufacturing structure, is the only country with the scale and stability to offer Europe a lifeline.

During the three-day visit, Macron and Xi discussed trade, green technologies, electric vehicles, aviation, nuclear cooperation, cultural exchanges, and the stabilization of global supply chains. Agreements were signed in areas ranging from energy and research to industrial collaboration and environmental commitments. Though the details were not broadcast

loudly, the essence was unmistakable: Europe seeks economic security, industrial revival, and strategic autonomy, and it sees China as an indispensable partner in each of these domains. These discussions were not superficial. They were rooted in Europe’s urgent need to recalibrate its future at a time when American unpredictability has left Europe exposed.

What makes this visit even more striking is not the content of the agreements but the symbolism behind them. Macron may have spoken publicly of strategic balance, but his mere presence in China—touring cultural sites with Xi, engaging business leaders, and emphasizing cooperation—conveyed a deeper truth: Europe is shifting. No longer does Europe see China only through the prism of competition. It sees China as a stabilizing force in a world where the old order is disintegrating. It recognizes that China’s diplomacy, unlike America’s, is grounded in stability, continuity, and long-term planning. It acknowledges that China solves conflicts with time and patience rather than sanctions and threats.

Macron also raised global issues such as the crisis in Ukraine, knowing that China’s influence over Russia could become a valuable lever in future negotiations. Though China did not commit to any specific position, its willingness to listen, engage, and mediate reflects a country increasingly shaping, not reacting to, international affairs. Macron’s hope that China could play a constructive role in resolving global crises mirrors Europe’s growing realization that the world’s diplomatic balance is tilting East, not West.

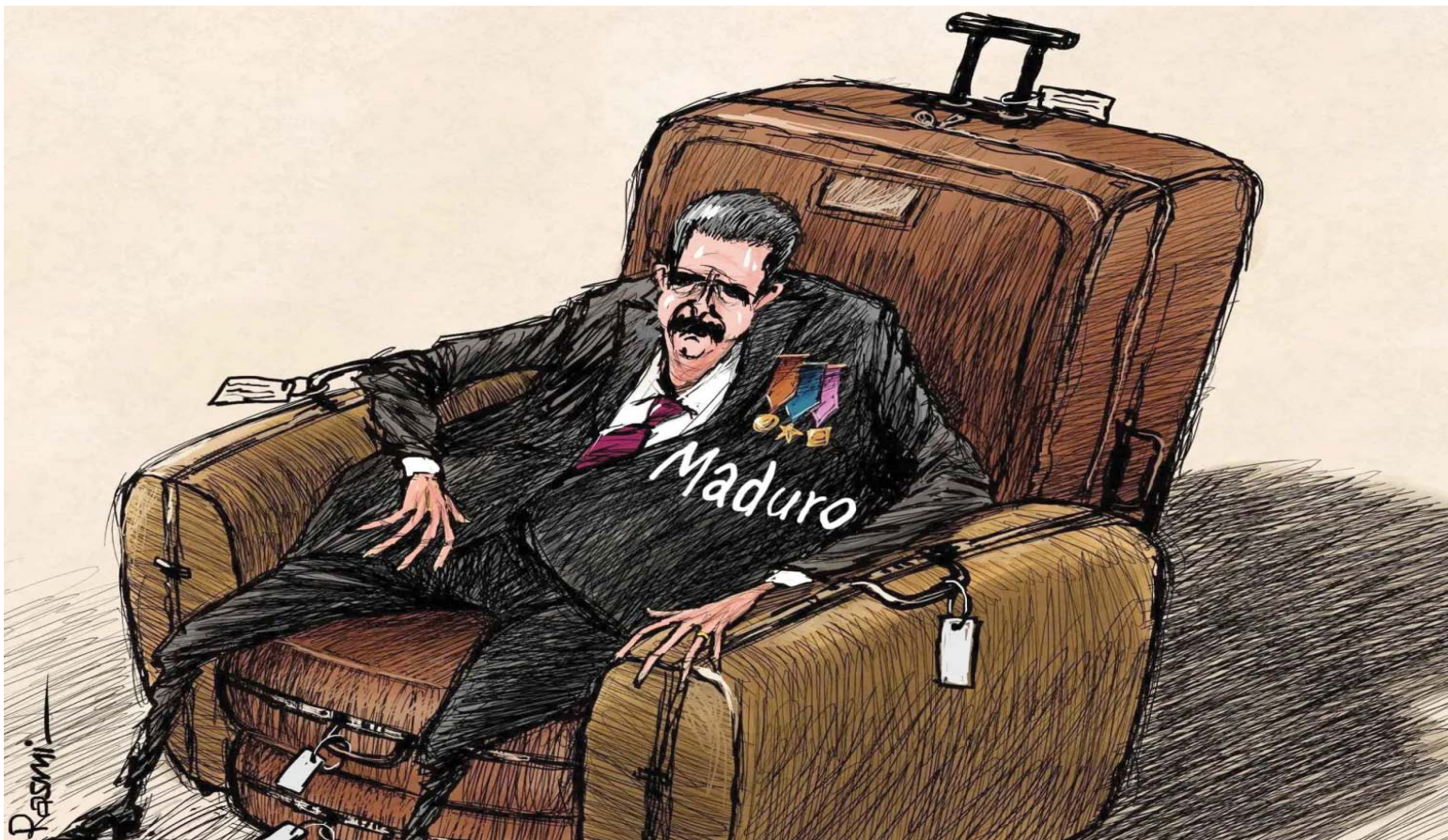
The deeper meaning of Macron’s

journey lies in what it signals for the future of Europe. This visit crystallized a shift that had long been whispered but never openly acknowledged: Europe is no longer willing to tie its destiny exclusively to the United States. It is exploring alternatives, recalibrating partnerships, and seeking new economic anchors. China offers what Europe desperately needs—markets, investments, technologies, supply-chain security, and a predictable strategic partner that seeks cooperation rather than subordination.

Macron’s journey to China was short in duration but enormous in implication. It marked the moment when Europe, confronted with economic pressure from the United States and geopolitical instability across the West, turned toward China not out of ideological sympathy but out of necessity, realism, and strategic foresight. The three days Macron spent in China may well shape the next three decades of European foreign policy.

This visit did not elevate China; China was already elevated. What it did was expose Europe’s recognition of that rise. It revealed a world in transition—a world where China is the gravitational center, where the Belt and Road has redrawn economic maps, where development is measured in corridors rather than conflicts, and where Europe must choose between decline through dependency or renewal through diversification. Macron chose renewal. And by choosing China, he has signaled to the world that the era of unquestioned American primacy is slipping away, replaced by a multipolar reality where China stands at the forefront.

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



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

A New Age of Artificial Intelligence: Trump Launches the “Genesis Mission”

In the turbulent landscape of American politics, decisions that define the direction of technology often lay the foundation for new global races. In recent days, President Donald Trump’s executive order inaugurating the “National AI Genesis Mission” is being described as one such decisive step one that has ignited renewed debate not only within the political corridors of Washington but across the international scientific community as well. Many now ask whether the world is entering an era of artificial intelligence in which science, statecraft, economics, and strategic power will be measured primarily through data, algorithms, and computational capacity.

At its core, Trump’s mission seeks to accelerate scientific progress by transforming it from a domain restricted to specialized research institutions and corporate laboratories into an integrated, nationwide infrastructure. According to the White House, the initiative aims to bring all major American scientific and research centers onto a unified AI platform, enabling breakthroughs particularly in energy, biology, climate science, molecular research, and national security at a pace demanded by the emerging age of digital power. The administration asserts that this platform will possess such breadth and coherence that it could redraw the map of future innovation in a matter of years, compressing processes that traditionally required decades.

This vision is being described as the emergence of a “super-speed laboratory,” capable of producing results within moments that once demanded years of human effort.

Predictably, the initiative has also faced criticism. Some experts warn that creating such an extensive digital network at breakneck speed may introduce new security vulnerabilities. Entrusting vast scientific datasets to AI systems could increase the risk of errors or systemic drift. Likewise, incorporating private corporations into this network could subject sensitive scientific agendas to commercial imperatives.

Nevertheless, critics concede that if the United States lags in this global race, it may forfeit technological leadership within a few years.

The word “Genesis” itself encapsulates the philosophical essence of the mission: a new creation, a new beginning, and a new order within the scientific world. The initiative seeks to elevate the pace

of scientific advancement to a level at which research becomes a continuous, largely autonomous process one in which discovery transcends temporal constraints and the state cultivates a technological environment capable of reaffirming American leadership on the world stage.

It is still premature to predict how effectively the “Genesis Mission” will revitalize American power. Yet it is clear that this executive decision marks the dawn of a new era in which technology will no longer remain confined to tools and computers, but will govern the trajectories of nations, the speed of economies, and the structure of global politics. In this context, Trump’s initiative may well represent the first definitive line in the strategic blueprint that will shape the scientific contests of the twenty-first century.



Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singharvi

Nawaz Sharif’s Legacy continues in development of Punjab: CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of Gujranwala Mass Transit System, Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that on November 23, Haripur gave a verdict in favor of PML-N because lies have a shelf life. She added that the reason for the verdict in favor of lion in Haripur is the history of inability. The people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa voted for PML-N by saying goodbye to the politics of lies. She highlighted that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif had created history in public service and development in Punjab, and now his daughter, who was entrusted with the responsibility of CM Punjab, has started work from where he has left off. She noted that people have always appreciated the leadership and hard work of Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. She added that being aware of the service rendered by Nawaz Sharif and

Shahbaz Sharif, she is moving forward with this legacy. She highlighted that he built the first metro in Lahore, then in Rawalpindi and Multan, and now continuing his work, two more metro projects will be built. After Gujranwala, Faisalabad Metro project will also be launched in a few days. Chief Minister Punjab said that Nawaz Sharif’s legacy continues in Punjab even today, as development projects are being developed by learning from his vision. She added that every development project in Punjab has the seal of Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif. In Lahore, names of Nawaz Sharif and Shahbaz Sharif are visible on PIC, Children’s Hospital, PKLI, Metro, Orange Train and other projects. She underscored when she visited PFDA, it was in ruins, now it has been completed, in a few days she will invite the Prime Minister to inaugurate it. Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif noted that Pakistan’s economy,

having recovered from the threat of default, is becoming stable now. She said that in the 04 years of mismanagement and inefficiency, Punjab and the country were destroyed. She said that on the other hand, Nawaz Sharif and Shehbaz Sharif did remarkably well in public service and development. She added that she is also in this line now, but she cannot find the fourth name in this regard. She flagged that from atomic bombs to motorways, from being protector of the Haram to the Holy Mosque, and from darkness to light, PML-N is visible everywhere. She regretted that people of DG Khan, Mianwali and Gujarat held the highest positions but could not solve problems of their cities. Signs of development had to be found in DG Khan, Mianwali, and the entire Gujarat was submerged in rainwater. She highlighted that now roads, overhead bridges, and green bus projects have started in Mianwali;



and in Gujarat, a sewerage system for the entire city is being built at a cost of Rs 30 billion.

Palestinian Oscar-Winning Film “No Other Land” Takes Spotlight at World Culture Festival

Bureau Report

KARACHI: On the 37th day of the world Culture festival featured a presentation on “Graphic Design & Performing Arts” by Italian graphic designer Goffredo Puccetti, a theatre workshop “Scalambra”, the screening of the Palestinian Oscar-winning film “No Other Land,” four short theatre performances by a Sri Lankan theatre group under the title “Gathering Dust,” an energetic Dance Night 4.0 featured National and international Dancer’s. During the film session, Palestinian Ambassador Dr Zuhair Mohammad Hamadallah Zaid and, Dr. Umair and President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmed Shah held a detailed discussion on the current situation in Palestine. Dr Zaid said that he had wished to visit the Arts Council earlier, but circumstances did not allow. He thanked Ahmed Shah for inviting him to the festival, adding that Palestine belongs not only to Arabs but to



the entire Muslim Ummah. Speaking about the film, he said, “No Other Land” portrays the struggle, history, culture, and sacrifices of the Palestinian people, emphasizing that the fight is not only for land but for identity and heritage.

He recalled his father’s role in the Palestinian resistance during a time when there was no media or publication to record history. Expressing deep emotion towards Pakistan, the Ambassador said that since his posting in Pakistan, he felt he was among his



own people. Describing public affection, he said that when Pakistanis learn he is Palestinian, their attitude instantly changes, embracing him warmly and offering help. “We have received immense love from Pakistan,” he said, adding that Pakistanis have always stood by Palestine even before the creation

of Pakistan. President Arts Council Muhammad Ahmed Shah reiterated Pakistan’s unwavering stance, saying that the global youth now stands with Palestine and that the Palestinians situation is the most critical global issue today. Earlier in the day, Italian designer Goffredo Puccetti introduced students

to the concept of global monograms and visual identity, stressing the need to design logos that are both meaningful and visually compelling. The Italian theatre workshop “Scalambra”, led by actress Francesca Bizzari, focused on acting techniques, expression, and stage performance. The Sri Lankan theatre segment “Gathering Dust” presented four plays, including Patterns of Our Genocides (on Palestine), Last Bus Eke Kathawa, Girls at Checkpoints, and The Certificate. Audiences applauded the diverse narratives and powerful performances. The evening concluded with Dance Night 4.0, featuring dynamic performances by Alina Belyagina (Germany), Abdul Ghani (Pakistan), Jay C Val (Cameroon), Shaam (Syria) and Sovapa students, who captivated the audience with their collective stage presence and artistic energy, receiving prolonged applause at the packed auditorium.

Violence Against Women is the Red Line of CM Punjab: says Hina Pervaiz Butt

Kiran Tanveer

MULTAN: Chairperson Punjab Women Protection Authority Hina Pervaiz Butt Talking to Media Her Visited in Multan She said that violence against women is the red line of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. She has clear orders that no mercy should be shown to those who commit violence against women and violate their rights. She Further talking to media representatives at the Anti-Violence Center for Women in Multan. On this occasion, she also attended a ceremony organized in connection with the 16-day campaign against violence against women. Director General Punjab Women Protection Authority Kulsoom

Saqib and District Women Protection Officer Multan Muneeza Butt also addressed the ceremony. Hina Pervaiz Butt said that the Anti-Violence Center for Women of Multan has been active since 2017 and all services are being provided to women victims of violence under one roof. On the orders of the Chief Minister, this center is being made more active. He said that the Sania Zahra murder case was a challenge case for the Punjab Women Protection Authority which was solved in three months and the drama of suicide by the victim’s in-laws was proved wrong and the killers were punished. He said that we have to change our social behavior and instead of advising women who are victims of

oppression to remain silent, we should provide them with legal help. On this occasion, Asad Abbas Shah, the father of the victim Sania Zahra, also spoke. He said that my daughter cannot come back, but I have set an example for other daughters by bringing her killers to justice. He said that daughters should stand up against violence in their in-laws instead of tolerating it. This is my message to parents and daughters. Director General Punjab Women Protection Authority Kulsoom Saqib said that domestic violence is not anyone’s private matter but a crime and the law will come into play on it. It should be our national duty to help a woman who is a victim of any kind of oppression.

IBA Karachi Awards 1046 Degrees at Convocation 2025

Commerce Desk

DECEMBER: IBA Karachi held its Convocation for the Class of 2025 at the Main Campus. It marked a Momentous Occasion as 1046 Graduates were conferred degrees in several disciplines. The Graduating Batch included 780 Graduates from Undergraduate Programs, 259 graduates from Postgraduate Programs, and 07 PhD Graduates. Convocation 2025 also celebrated the first graduating cohorts of the MS Data Science and MS Marketing programs. The Chief Guest of this ceremony was Honorable Minister for Universities and Boards, Sindh, Mr. Muhammad Ismail Rahoo. Dr. Muhammad Amjad Saqib, Founder, Akhuwat Foundation, attended as a Guest of Honor. Dr. S Akbar Zaidi, Executive Director, IBA, applauded the graduating students for achieving this remarkable milestone which is a testament to their dedication and perseverance. Dr. Zaidi stated, “We are now a very diverse community of faculty and students — a coherent group working towards better knowledge and shaping every IBA graduate”. He further added, “IBA is building value in



outstanding students who join our institution, and it is our responsibility to ensure that the best minds in Pakistan receive the best education in Pakistan.” Dr. Amjad Saqib praised IBA as an institution that has produced exceptional young individuals — nurturing them and helping transform them into the best versions of themselves. He added, “Today is a day of joy and celebration for these young graduates. It marks the rise of a new dawn — the recognition of a milestone achieved.” Mr. Ismail Rahoo expressed that it was an honor to be part of an occasion that celebrates



excellence and the promise of a bright future. He stated that IBA Karachi has long upheld its reputation as one of Pakistan’s premier institutions — known for academic distinction, innovation, and the nurturing of future leaders. He noted that IBA’s AACSB accreditation places it among the top 6% of business schools worldwide. The Convocation Ceremony featured the position holders in various degree programs who were awarded Medals, Shields, and Merit Certificates. Archery & Shooting Champion, Muhammad Ahmad (BS Account & Finance Student, Class of 2024), was awarded the ‘Excellence in Sports’ Award.

Government of Canada and Kashf Foundation Launch ‘Aik Aur Pakeezah’

City Desk

LAHORE: Kashf Foundation, in partnership with the Government of Canada, launched its latest socially driven drama, Aik Aur Pakeezah. The launch brought together policymakers, women’s rights advocates, senior legal experts, media professionals, and members of the cast and creative team to spotlight the urgent and evolving challenges Pakistani women face in the digital age. The series explores the real-world challenges faced by women navigating cyber harassment,

coerced marriage, reputational harm and the legal gaps that shape their access to justice in Pakistan. The cast of the series include Nameer Khan, Sehar Khan, Mirza Gohar Rasheed, Amna Ilyas, Nimra Zakaria Khan, Hina Khawaja Butt, Adeel Butt, Umer Dar, Nadia Afghan, Muhammad Noor-ul-Hassan Malik, Davar Mehfooz, Ali Aftab, Kiran Waseem, Sarah Ahmed and Muhammad Ali Jan. The afternoon, moderated by Barrister Fatima Shaheen, opened with an introduction to the event and the cast and crew, paving the way for a powerful set

of reflections and discussions. In her welcome address, Roshaneh Zafar, Founder and Managing Director of Kashf Foundation, noted, “According to the Digital Rights Foundation, Pakistan has 72 million internet users, and nearly 40 percent of women report facing online harassment. Aik Aur Pakeezah speaks to this lived reality—the cyber harassment, social coercion, and legal barriers women navigate every day. The launch also underscored Canada’s continued support for gender equality and women’s protection initiatives in Pakistan.



Delivering the opening address, Counsellor (Development) and Head of Cooperation, Government of Canada, Ms. Harriet Roos, reaffirmed Canada’s support, “Canada is a longtime supporter of women’s rights and empowerment, and a partner of Kashf for more than 10 years. I am happy to join Kashf and their creative partners today to celebrate their next drama series, and the important discussion it will

spark across the country.” Senator Ali Zafar underscored that society cannot progress without guaranteeing women equitable access to justice, which he described as a foundational pillar of gender equality. The first panel, “Access to Justice in the Age of Cyber-Crime,” moderated by Reema Omar, brought together Khawar Mumtaz, Fauzia Waqar, Usama Khilji and Barrister Khadija



Siddiqi, where they discussed the rise of online harassment, gaps in investigation and prosecution, and the reforms needed to strengthen women’s legal safeguards in Pakistan’s rapidly shifting digital landscape. The second panel, “From Script to Screen: Bringing Aik Aur Pakeezah to Life,” included cast members Sehar Khan, Nameer Khan, Amna Ilyas, Hina Bayaati, director Kashif Nissar and writer Beegul. The team discussed the creative process, the responsibility

of portraying sensitive subjects with accuracy and empathy, and how the drama seeks to humanize survivors while pushing for wider societal reflection. The event also featured the premiere of the official trailer, Aik Aur Pakeezah, offering audiences a first glimpse into the emotionally charged narrative. The launch concluded with an overview of how the series aims to support public understanding of women’s rights and the broader implications of digital harm.

Bull & Bears

PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
167,085.58	166,283.55
Day's High	Day's Low
167,923.45	166,369.72
Index Value	Change
28,450,057,135	+802.03
Percentage	Time
+0.48%	5 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
9,667.01	−43.86
Percentage	Time
−0.45%	5 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
47,986.78	+135.84
Percentage	Time
+0.28%	5 Dec, 12:54 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
50,491.87	+ −536.55
Percentage	Time
−1.05%	5 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.5	188.5
Bahrain Dinar	744.5	754.5
Canadian Dollar	200.05	204.75
China Yuan	39.26	39.66
Danish Krone	43.17	43.57
Euro	327.5	330.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.05	3.14
Japanese Yen	1.8025	1.9025
Kuwaiti Dinar	912.5	922.5
Malaysian Ringgit	67.31	67.91
NewZealand \$	158.95	160.95
Norwegians Krone	27.42	27.72
Omani Riyal	728.75	738.75
Qatari Riyal	76.39	77.09
Saudi Riyal	74.9	75.4
Singapore Dollar	215.5	220.5
Swedish Korona	29.39	29.69
Swiss Franc	346.63	349.38
Thai Bhat	8.59	8.74
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.35
UK Pound Sterling	374.5	378
US Dollar	281.3	283.2

Attock Women Chambers and Mehriya Town organized colorful Campbellpur Women Expo 2025

Hussain Raza

ATTOCK: Under the patronage of the Attock Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry, and with the cooperation of Mehriya Town Pvt. Ltd., the colorful Campbellpur Women Expo 2025 was organized for the first time at the University of Education, Attock Campus. The event took place on the green lawns of the campus, where more than 70 stalls were set up, including food stalls featuring traditional Peshawari Hotel's seekh kebab, chicken roast, koko, dahi bhalla, fruit chaat, pakoras, samosas, chips, gol gappay, a variety of bakery items, ice cream, soft drinks, and various other foods.

There were also stalls with handmade embroidered clothing, children's toys, shampoos, face and hand paints, beautiful handmade paintings, and henna designs. From morning till evening, the stalls were crowded with women and female students. A stall displaying exquisite calligraphy through embroidery—featuring the 99 names of Allah, the four Quls, Surah Yaseen, Surah Al-Hamd, and other Quranic verses—also attracted great interest among the women.

The Campbellpur Women Expo 2025 was inaugurated by former President of Attock Chamber of Commerce and Industry Tariq Mahmood; Founder President of Attock Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry, Chairperson of SAARC Chambers Women Entrepreneur Council (SCWEC), Hina Mansab Khan; and Principal of the University of Education Attock Campus, Dr. Abid Zia. On this occasion, President of Attock Women Chamber of Commerce & Industry Erum Khan, Chief Executive Rizwana Nadeem, Islamabad-based journalist Urooj Mansab Khan, Rabia Gul, Romana Jabeen, Shumaila Sarfraz, Sameera Naseer, Shireen Khan, Nabeela Shaheen, and many other women were present.

Hina Mansab Khan's important announcements regarding the Chief Minister of Punjab Maryam Nawaz's vision for women's economic empowerment

Multan Chambers demands immediate implementation of industrial concessional tariff announced by PM

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: President of Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Tanveer Sheikh has expressed deep concern and disappointment over the non-implementation of the industrial concessional tariff announced by the Prime Minister of Pakistan. Despite the clear announcement by the Prime Minister of providing

necessary relief in electricity bills for the industrial sector from November 2025 and onwards, the promised reduction in bills has not been made. Instead, the bills of industries for November 2025, which were received in December, have been increased by Rs 2 per unit, which has further increased the already existing cost of production.

Mian Bakhtawar Tanveer Sheikh said that the business and industrial community

wholeheartedly welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement, as it brought a ray of hope amidst severe economic challenges and skyrocketing energy prices. However, the continuous delay in implementing the promised relief, along with additional charges, has led to widespread frustration and loss of confidence.

The Multan Chamber appeals to the government to provide relief without any



delay as per its promise so that the industrial sector can breathe a sigh of relief and contribute more effectively to the national economy.

Inauguration ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for Science and Technology Shahid Iqbal Baloch and KOICA President Mr. CHANG Won Sam inaugurated the Pakistan—Korea PV Modules Testing Laboratory on 6th December.



Photo: PID

It will take time to fix a system that has been stuck for decades, says Salma Butt



Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Member of the Provincial Assembly and Chairperson/ Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab, Salma Butt, while addressing the meeting of the Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets, and Bakers Association, said that improving a system that has been gridlocked for decades will take time, and for this, the government and the business community must work together. She said that traders are the backbone of

the economy and that it is the government's responsibility to protect their dignity.

Salma Butt made it clear that the government will stand with traders wherever they face injustice, but action will also be taken where laws are violated. She said that traders will be given representation in the PFA/ PERA Force committee. She added that unnecessary fines and humiliation will not be tolerated, and action has already been taken against officials who misbehaved.

She mentioned the unusual rise in

wheat prices and the actions taken against hoarding, adding that strict checks and balances will be maintained for price lists and quality control.

Association President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed, President of Anjuman-e-Tajran Shahid Ghafoor Pracha, and other office-bearers also shared their views and urged the government to simplify the tax system and improve the behavior of relevant departments.

Country's First CDF General Asim Munir is a National Hero, Aman Pracha

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and a renowned businessman of the country, Aman Pracha, paid tribute to General Syed Asim Munir for becoming the first Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), calling him a national hero.



Pracha stated that Field Marshal General Asim Munir had elevated the nation's pride by defeating India. He further praised General Asim Munir and his team's efforts, which have brought the country back on track and set it on a path to development. He expressed optimism that no one could stop Pakistan from achieving progress in the future.

The FPCCI Vice President emphasized that whenever General Asim Munir meets with the business community, a new ray of hope emerges that the issues will

soon be resolved. However, he expressed concerns that the bureaucracy is not willing to address many of these issues, with countless files still buried under desks.

Pracha urged Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif to urgently meet with representatives of the business community to gain insights into the challenges they are facing, so that the barriers in business operations can be removed and the national economy can be strengthened.

Satta Gadai Election Controversial, Election Commission Halts Results

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: On Friday, polling was held from 2 PM to 4 PM, during which a tough contest took place between two groups. On one side was the Ghulam Bilal group, whose presidential candidate was Muhammad Shoaib, while on the other side Akhtar Shehzad was the presidential candidate.

conducted in a good environment. However, some shop owners, who were property owners, cast their votes themselves, whereas the vote technically belonged to the respective tenants. Both groups submitted their objections on this issue to the Election Commission, after which the election was



Initially, former president Sahibzada Shakeel had also submitted nomination papers for the presidency from the Ghulam Bilal group. However, later—after consultation with Ahmadullah Durrani and Muhammad Nauman—he withdrew his papers in favor of Muhammad Shoaib.

The election was generally

declared controversial and the results were withheld.

Election Commission members Mr. Haider Raza and Mr. Anwar Ali Javid immediately halted the results and requested a few days to announce a final decision

President ICCI highlights significance of Stronger Institutional Linkages with Poland

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Poland enjoy longstanding, warm and cooperative relations with vast untapped economic potential that both sides must work together to unlock. This was underlined by Pawel Mokrzycki, Economic Secretary of the Polish Embassy, during a meeting with Sardar Tahir Mehmood, President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (ICCI).

Mokrzycki said that Polish firms

operating in oil & gas, green technologies, wastewater treatment, IT, textiles and particularly agricultural machinery are eager to develop joint ventures with Pakistani businesses for mutual economic growth. He emphasized the need to establish sectoral working groups and enhance two-way business delegations to build awareness and tap emerging opportunities.

ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood appreciated Poland's advanced capabilities in engineering

machinery manufacturing, mining equipment, renewable energy, agriculture technologies and industrial machinery. He said the Preferential Trade Arrangement (PTA) between Pakistan and Poland has supported Pakistan's export growth through improved access to EU markets.

ICCI Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub, ICCI Executive Member Ms. Fatima Azim, Secretary General Ghulam Murtaza and Vice President Irfan Chaudhry also speak on the occasion.



Stars aim successive Women's One-Day titles as Conquerors look to finally lift trophy

A prize pot of PKR 3.55 million is up for grabs as winners will bag PKR 1.5 million

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Sidra Amin's Stars and Fatima Sana's Conquerors will lock horns once again as the latter look to turn the tables this time around in the National Women's One-Day Tournament final at the Iqbal Stadium, Faisalabad on Sunday.

The 50-over match will begin at 9.30am with the toss scheduled to take place at 9am. The game will be broadcast live on PTV Sports and PTV National and streamed on PCB YouTube channel (outside Pakistan) and Tapmad (Pakistan).

The winners will pocket PKR 1.5 million, while runners up will take away PKR 1 million. Player of the tournament will be awarded PKR 200,000.

Defending champions Stars will be without their regular captain, who will miss the final due to family commitments and will be replaced by previous year's winning captain Sidra Amin.

Meanwhile, Fatima Sana, whose Conquerors went down against the same opposition by five wickets in previous edition's final, will be hopeful to lift the trophy this time.

In the ongoing tournament, Conquerors finished top of the table with six wins out of eight league-stage games, just as the second-placed Stars did but with lesser net run-rate. Interestingly, Stars' both losses in the tournament have come against Conquerors as they registered 111-run and two-wicket losses.



The Conquerors went down against Strikers and Invincibles by three wickets and 66 runs, respectively. Stars' Sidra Amin (421) and Omaira Sohail (391) are the top two run-scorers in the tournament, while Conquerors' Gull Feroza (354) sits third.

Among the bowlers, left-arm spinners Anam Amin (19) of Stars and Momina Riasat (19) of Invincibles occupy the top position, while Conquerors' spin twins Ayesha Bilal and Umm-e-Hani are joint-second on the list with 14 wickets.

Stars' Anosha Nasir is joint-fifth with

her teammate Syeda Aroob Shah, Challengers' Rameen Shamim and Invincibles' Tasminia Rubab. Aroob has also scored 174 runs in her all-round effort for the Stars.

The 21-match 50-over tournament started on Friday, 14 November with five teams playing double-round robin before top two qualified for the final.

Fatima Sana, captain Conquerors "It is always exciting to face Stars as they are a strong team that can challenge you. We will do our best to win the tournament this time around.

"Gull Feroza and Saira Jabeen have been really good at the top of the order for us. The starts that they have provided have really boosted our batting line-up. I'm also impressed by the way our pacers have stepped up."

Sidra Amin, captain Conquerors "We will miss our regular captain Omaira Sohail but we look forward to winning the game and tournament. The team has put in their best efforts in each match and I expect the players to do the same in the final as well.

"Conquerors and Stars know each very well given that we played the last One-Day final as well so I think it is going to be a good game between the two teams."

15-member squads for the final Conquerors

Fatima Sana (captain), Amber Kainat, Aqsa Bibi, Ayesha Bilal, Eisha Naem, Farzana Farooq (wicketkeeper), Gull Feroza, Iram Javed, Lubna Behram, Maham Anees, Saima Malik, Saira Jabeen, Sidra Nawaz (wicketkeeper), Umm-e-Hani and Zunash Abdul Sattar

Stars Sidra Amin (captain), Anam Amin, Anosha Nasir, Arijah Haseeb, Diana Baig, Fatima Zahra, Gull Rukh, Haniah Ahmer, Kaynat Hafeez, Manahil Rafiq, Noor-ul-Iman, Seema Gul, Shabnam Hayat (wicketkeeper), Soha Fatima (wicketkeeper), Syeda Aroob Shah, Syeda Masooma, Syeda Tashy Fatima, Warda Yousaf and Yusra Ehtesham

Long Beach Tennis Center USA inaugurated in Lahore with vision to develop international-level players

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: A significant milestone in the development of tennis in Pakistan was achieved with the inauguration of the Long Beach Tennis Center USA at the Central Park Sports Complex under the Central Park Housing Scheme, during a grand opening ceremony held on Saturday.

The event was organised by Urban Developers Group and showcased an international-standard sports initiative featuring multiple sporting facilities including tennis, cricket, padel courts, football, and badminton.

The ceremony was graced by the chief guest, Mr. Mian Tahir Javed, Chairman of Urban Developers Group. Distinguished guests included Punjab Secretary Sports Mudassar Riaz Malik, guest of honor Mr. Sid Siddiqui, chairman and owner of the Long Beach Tennis Center USA, as well as special guests from the United States including Mr. Amir Rausal and Mr. Safder Qureshi. Renowned international cricket umpire Aleem Dar and several American coaches were also in attendance.

The newly launched academy will



operate under the supervision of foreign-qualified coaches from the United States, who will provide modern training techniques, fitness programs, and professional mentorship to young Pakistani players. Open trials will soon be conducted to identify skilled and promising athletes from across Punjab and beyond.

Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Sid Siddiqui, chairman and owner of Long Beach Tennis Center USA, shared the vision behind launching the academy

in Pakistan: "I have been coaching tennis in the USA for a long time and have the honor of producing a good number of tennis players there. Now, the love of my homeland has compelled me to serve the game of tennis here too."

He further stated: "That's why I have established a same US-level academy in Central Park Society, where highly qualified coaches will train the raw talent of Pakistan and transform them into true champions."

Highlighting the long-term goal,

Siddiqui added. "We have a vision and goals to produce international-level players here who will represent the Pakistani flag across the globe. With proper training and guidance, Pakistan will soon witness a new generation of tennis stars who will take national tennis to new heights."

New Punjab Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Mudassar Riaz Malik emphasised the importance of structured development in sports: "Pakistan does not lack talent. What we need is proper identification and grooming at the grassroots level."

He added that schools and colleges must play a more active role in identifying and nurturing sports talent: "Punjab is full of natural potential, but we must focus on educational institutions to find and polish talented athletes." He appreciated the efforts of the organisers and termed the project a landmark step for promoting tennis culture in Pakistan.

Sid Siddiqui also announced that an International Tennis Tournament would be organised in Lahore within a year, providing Pakistani players with international exposure and competition experience.

Jaiswal hits ton as India thrash S. Africa to clinch ODI series

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Opener Yashasvi Jaiswal hit his maiden one-day international century as India clinched the three-match series 2-1 with a crushing nine-wicket win over South Africa on Saturday.

Chasing 271 for victory, India rode on Jaiswal's unbeaten 116 and his opening stand of 155 with Rohit Sharma, who hit 75, to achieve the target with 10.1 overs to spare in Visakhapatnam.

The left-handed Jaiswal reached his hundred in 111 balls as he jumped in joy and raised the bat to soak in the applause in just his fourth ODI since his debut earlier this year.

"I really enjoyed and I'm really grateful and blessed," said player of the match Jaiswal.

"(The) Last two games I couldn't convert and I was thinking how I can balance the innings. Sometimes I was thinking of attacking, then run the singles. I have to control my thoughts on what shots I can play."

Virat Kohli, who struck back-to-back hundreds in the previous two matches, hit the winning boundary to finish 65 not out



from 45 balls.

The 23-year-old Jaiswal, who now has tons in all three international formats, struggled at the start with Rohit leading the batting charge to raise his 61st ODI half-century.

Rohit got past 20,000 international runs during the knock to be only the fourth Indian after Sachin Tendulkar, Kohli and Rahul Dravid to achieve the feat.

Left-arm spinner Keshav Maharaj cut short Rohit's innings after seven fours and

three sixes in his 73-ball knock.

Jaiswal switched gears after his fifty and hit a string of boundaries to ease into the target.

In-form Kohli bossed the opposition bowling with six fours and three sixes to end the series with 302 runs and the player of the series award.

Toss jinx

The bowlers set up victory after left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav and fast bowler Prasidh Krishna took four wickets each to bowl out South

Africa for 270 in 47.5 overs.

With the series level on 1-1, India finally won an ODI toss after losing 20 in a row as skipper KL Rahul broke the scarcely believable jinx and put South Africa in to bat.

Opener Quinton de Kock made 106 off 89 balls and put on 113 runs with skipper Temba Bavuma, who made 48, as South Africa looked set for a big total at 168-2 but the batting collapsed.

"We probably should have been smarter as we gifted

wickets," said Bavuma. "The Indian team showed their quality, kudos to them."

Left-handed De Kock raised his seventh ODI ton against India with a six off Harshit Rana and finished his knock with eight fours and six hits over the fence.

Krishna struck twice in one over including Matthew Breetzke for 24 and Aiden Markram for one, before he bowled De Kock soon after the batsman's attacking hundred.

Dewald Brevis, who hit 29, and Marco Jansen (17) attempted to rebuild the innings in their stand of 35 but Kuldeep sent the two back in the space of three deliveries to swing the momentum once again in India's favour.

Kuldeep (4-41) and Krishna combined to bowl out the opposition with Maharaj unbeaten on 20.

The ODI series win is some consolation for the 2-0 Test whitewash by the Proteas although it was achieved after the team was boosted by the presence of veterans Kohli and Rohit who now play just the 50-over format.

The two teams now head into five T20 matches starting Tuesday in Cuttack.

WWE legend John Cena to face Gunther in retirement bout



Sports Desk

LAHORE: Seventeen-time world champion John Cena is set to bid farewell to in-ring competition on December 13 at Saturday Night's Main Event, where he will take on Gunther in what promises to be an emotional farewell match.

Gunther earned his place in Cena's retirement bout by defeating LA Knight in the final of WWE's "The Last Time is Now" tournament, aired on the December 5 episode of SmackDown.

The month-long, 16-man tournament was designed to determine Cena's final opponent, with Gunther, known as the "Ring General", emerging as the overwhelming favourite.

Renowned for his technical mastery and intimidating presence, Gunther has already earned a reputation as a legend-ender, having handed Goldberg a memorable final match earlier this year.

Defeating Cena would only further solidify his status as one of the defining figures of the modern WWE era.

For Cena, the match marks the culmination of a two-decade career filled with championships, historic rivalries, and unparalleled longevity at the top.

Whether he chooses to leave with a final victory or elevates Gunther in his farewell, the December 13 bout promises to be highly emotional for fans and performers alike.

In the tournament final, Gunther and LA Knight delivered a high-stakes contest reminiscent of a championship bout. Gunther initially locked Knight in a Rear-Naked Choke, only for Knight to escape.

The Austrian powerhouse then applied a Modified STF, forcing Knight to submit and sending a strong warning to Cena ahead of their historic encounter.

Fans can expect an unforgettable farewell as John Cena closes one of the most storied careers in WWE history.

FIFA unveils groups for the World Cup 2026

The path to glory at the FIFA World Cup 2026 has now been laid out after the final groups were revealed during Friday's draw ceremony in Washington.

The US President Donald Trump received FIFA's new peace prize on stage at the Kennedy Centre before the draw for the first 48-team World Cup, which offered kind starts to the tournament for holders Argentina and much-fancied Spain in particular.

While the make-up of the groups was revealed along with the potential path through the knockout rounds for all the potential winners, the precise schedule for the competition will only be confirmed later on Saturday.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino will unveil the venues and kick-off times for all games from 1700 GMT, after which the teams will be able to focus on fine-tuning their preparations with barely six months left until the World Cup kicks off on June 11.

Lionel Messi's Argentina will begin their defense of the trophy they won in Qatar in 2022 by facing Algeria, and will also play Austria and debutants Jordan in Group J.

Reigning European champions Spain will kick off their campaign against first-time qualifiers Cape Verde before also taking on Uruguay and Saudi Arabia in Group H.

Thomas Tuchel's England, seeking to win a first World Cup since 1966, will be expected to top Group L ahead of 2018 finalists Croatia, Ghana and Panama.

Two-time winners France face awkward tests against Senegal and Erling Haaland's Norway in Group I, which will be completed by a play-off winner from either Iraq, Bolivia or Suriname.

For the first time, the draw was done in such a way as to ensure the four highest-ranked nations were kept apart. Spain, Argentina, France and England cannot meet before the semi-finals, if all top their groups.

However, the path to that stage, with an extra knockout round now following the group phase, looks perilous.

If the top seeds all win their groups, England could find themselves playing co-hosts Mexico in Mexico City in the last 16 and then Brazil in the quarter-finals, before a semi against Argentina.

Other possible match-ups include France and Germany being on a last-16 collision course and a potential meeting between Messi's Argentina and Cristiano Ronaldo's Portugal in the quarter-finals.

The tournament will be held across the USA, Mexico and Canada from June 11 to July 19, with 16 more teams added to the global showpiece, up from the 32 nations involved in 2022.

While the US will host most matches, including the final at MetLife Stadium outside New York, three of the 16 venues will be in Mexico and two in Canada.

The opening game sees Mexico play South Africa at the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City.

Carlo Ancelotti's Brazil and surprise 2022 semi-finalists Morocco will meet in Group C, which also features Scotland and Haiti.

Notably, Scotland and Brazil will meet for the fifth time at a World Cup.

Germany's opponents in Group E will be the Ivory Coast, Ecuador and Caribbean minnows Curacao, while Portugal face Uzbekistan, Colombia and a play-off winner.

The United States got a manageable draw, with Paraguay, Australia and a European play-off winner in Group D.

The top two teams in each group advance to the last 32, joined by the eight best third-placed teams.

FIFA World Cup 2026 Group Stage Draw

Group A: Mexico, South Africa, South Korea, Winner of UEFA play-off D*

Group B: Canada, Winner of UEFA play-off A*, Qatar, Switzerland

Group C: Brazil, Morocco, Haiti, Scotland

Group D: USA, Paraguay, Australia, Winner of UEFA play-off C*

Group E: Germany, Curacao, Ivory Coast, Ecuador

Group F: Netherlands, Japan, Winner of UEFA play-off B*, Tunisia

Group G: Belgium, Egypt, Iran, New Zealand

Group H: Spain, Cape Verde, Saudi Arabia, Uruguay

Group I: France, Senegal, Winner of Fifa play-off 2*, Norway

Group J: Argentina, Algeria, Austria, Jordan

Group K: Portugal, Winner of Fifa play-off 1*, Uzbekistan, Colombia

Group L: England, Croatia, Ghana, Panama

*UEFA play-off A: Italy, Wales, Bosnia-Herzegovina or Northern Ireland

*UEFA play-off B: Ukraine, Poland, Albania or Sweden

*UEFA play-off C: Turkey, Slovakia, Kosovo or Romania

*UEFA play-off D: Denmark, Czech Republic, Republic of Ireland or North Macedonia

*Fifa play-off 1: DR Congo, Jamaica or New Caledonia

*Fifa play-off 2: Iraq, Bolivia or Suriname

High level engagement

Senior leadership from Binance, including Global CEO Richard Teng, visited Islamabad for high level engagements with the country's top leadership. Both the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir attended the meeting.. Chairman PVARA also attended the meeting and gave a briefing on his organization.



Photo: PID

Pakistan, US discuss boosting anti-narcotics cooperation, pledge stronger ties

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the United States have agreed to intensify cooperation on counter-narcotics and security matters, following a meeting in Islamabad on Saturday between Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Acting US Ambassador Natalie Baker.

Natalie Baker, met Minister Mohsin Naqvi in the ministry, with both sides discussing ways to enhance bilateral cooperation in counter-narcotics, security, and the prevention of illegal immigration.

The meeting focused on strengthening collaboration in intelligence sharing, curbing drug trafficking, and expanding joint measures to stop illegal migration. The US envoy offered full technical assistance to Pakistan in combating narcotics and preventing unauthorized cross-border movement. "Our policy on illegal immigration is very clear," Naqvi stated, emphasizing the government's firm stance on the issue.

He said the identification of drug trafficking cases at airports remains a top priority, adding that state-of-the-art

scanning machines are being installed at all major airports across the country.

Naqvi reaffirmed that Pakistan is strictly implementing a zero-tolerance policy against narcotics. "Even today, drugs originating from Afghanistan are reaching dozens of countries and destroying young generations," he noted, welcoming US technical support to bolster Pakistan's counter-narcotics capabilities.

The interior minister informed the envoy that, on the prime minister's directive, the National Narcotics Coordination Centre would be established soon.

During the meeting, officials presented a detailed briefing on the performance of the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and ongoing nationwide operations. Under this year's annual counter-narcotics campaign, 134 tonnes of drugs were seized, 2,001 suspects — including 75 foreigners — were arrested, and narcotics worth \$12.797 billion were confiscated. Additionally, 110 Afghan nationals were arrested in Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Sindh, while 40,659 acres of land were cleared to maintain "poppy-free" status.

Acting Ambassador Baker

praised ANF's performance and reiterated that the United States attaches special importance to its relations with Pakistan and will continue cooperation across all sectors.

Minister Naqvi said Pakistan and the United States share an important partnership for promoting peace and stability in the region. "We are committed to further strengthening our longstanding bilateral ties," he added.

The meeting was also attended by the federal interior secretary, DG ANF, director enforcement, representatives of the US Embassy, and other senior officials.

Royal Navy of Oman participates in THAMAR AL TAYYIB (TAT) 2025

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Royal Navy of Oman (RNO) flotilla, comprising ROYAL NAVY OF OMAN VESSEL AL RASIKH and AL SHINAS, visited Karachi to participate in the 12th edition of Bilateral Exercise THAMAR AL TAYYIB (TAT) 2025. Exercise aimed at strengthening maritime security cooperation and deepening longstanding bonds of friendship between Pakistan and Oman.

Exercise TAT-2025 served as an important platform for mutual learning, enhanced interoperability and professional development. Pakistan Navy and Royal Navy of Oman have been conducting the TAT series of exercises regularly



since 1980 and TAT-2023 was conducted in Omani waters. The visit included call-ons

with senior Pakistan Navy leadership, onboard receptions and visits to key naval

installations and training facilities. Personnel from both navies engaged in professional

dialogues, operational discussions and exchange of experiences across various maritime domains.

Visit culminated in the sea phase, where naval ships from both forces conducted advanced operational maneuvers and joint exercises encompassing major facets of modern maritime warfare.

Pakistan Navy remains committed to fostering regional maritime cooperation and strengthening ties with partner navies worldwide. Royal Navy of Oman's participation in TAT-2025 reflects the growing defence partnership between the two friendly nations and their shared resolve to promote regional peace, stability, and maritime collaboration.

Qatar interested in working with Pakistan on AI strategy, capability development: FinMin Aurangzeb

Commerce Desk

DOHA: Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb on Saturday reiterated Pakistan's commitment to continue structural reforms for a sustainable transition from stabilization to growth.

Addressing a session titled "Global Trade Tensions: Economic Impact and Policy Responses in MENA" at the 23rd edition of the Doha Forum, Aurangzeb underlined the importance of sustained structural reforms in taxation, energy, state-owned enterprises, and private-sector development.

Speaking on the occasion,

Finance Minister of Qatar Ali Bin Ahmed Al Kuwari highlighted Qatar's strong and expanding partnership and bilateral trade relations with Pakistan, particularly in LNG supply and Qatari imports of agricultural and textile goods. He highlighted Qatar's keen interest in collaborating with Pakistan on AI strategy and capability development.

IMF Deputy Managing Director Bo Li lauded Pakistan's reform trajectory and resilience-building efforts, terming it a very good example of embarking on the right path of reform and resilience. He highlighted that in addition to the 7 billion dollar stabiliza-



tion programme, the IMF is extending 1.3 billion dollars to Pakistan under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility aimed at strengthening fiscal, financial, and physical resilience to climate-related risks.

He elaborated that the programme will support Pakistan in advancing green budgeting, integrating climate-risk assessments into financial regulation, improving climate-related data disclosure,

and enhancing climate-resilient infrastructure planning. The discussion also touched on Pakistan's evolving relationships with China and the United States.

Aurangzeb reaffirmed that Pakistan's approach remains pragmatic and nationally focused. He said Pakistan views its partnerships with both China and the United States as complementary. He highlighted CPEC Phase 2.0 with China, shifting from government-to-government infrastructure to business-to-business investment, and emerging collaboration with the United States in minerals, mining and digital technologies.

Binance leadership visits Pakistan, govt signals commitment to digital asset regulation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Binance senior leadership Saturday visited Pakistan as the government signaled strong commitment to digital asset regulation.

Senior leadership from Binance including Global CEO Richard Teng, visited Islamabad for high level engagements with the country's top

leadership.

Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and the Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ attended the meeting.

Bilal bin Saqib, Chairman Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority (PVARA) attended the meeting and gave a briefing on his organization.

Security forces kill 5 India-backed terrorists in Dera Bugti operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Security forces carried out a successful intelligence-based operation in Dera Bugti, targeting terrorists linked to the Indian proxy group Fitna al-Hindustan, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Saturday.

According to ISPR, during the operation on Friday, forces effectively targeted terrorists' hideouts. In a heavy exchange of fire, five India-sponsored terrorists were

killed.

Weapons, ammunition, and explosive materials were recovered from the terrorists' possession.

The ISPR stated that the killed terrorists were involved in multiple terrorist acts in the area.

A clearance operation is ongoing to eliminate any remaining India-backed terrorists in the region.

Security forces and law enforcement agencies are continuing operations under the "Azm-e-Istiqamat" vision to eradicate terrorism and maintain stability in Balochistan.

Gaza talks at critical moment, ceasefire not complete: Qatar prime minister



Reuters

DOHA: Negotiations on consolidating the US-backed truce in the war in Gaza are at a "critical" moment, Qatar's Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman Al Thani said on Saturday.

Mediators are working to force the next phase of the ceasefire forward, the Qatari prime minister, whose country has been a key mediator in the war, said during a panel at the Doha Forum conference in Qatar.

"We are at a critical moment. It's not yet there. So what we have just done is a pause," Al Thani said, referring to violence subsiding after the Gaza truce took effect nearly a month ago.

"We cannot consider it yet a ceasefire. A ceasefire cannot be completed unless there is a full withdrawal of the Israeli forces - (until) there is stability back in Gaza, people can go in and out - which is not the case today."

Talks on achieving the next stages of US President Donald Trump's plan to end the two-year war in the Palestinian enclave have been ongoing.

The plan calls for an interim technocratic Palestinian government in Gaza, overseen by an international "board of peace" and backed by an international security force.

Agreeing on the makeup and mandate of the international security force has been particularly challenging.

Strengthening democracy essential for national progress: Ayaz Sadiq

ISLAMABAD: Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has emphasized that the vote is a sacred trust and a national duty through which citizens not only express their will but also determine the direction and future of the country.

He said that democracy is rooted in the opinion of the people, who, by exercising their right to vote, entrust their representatives with the mandate to serve them in the legislative forums.

He expressed these views in his special message on the occasion of National Voters Day, observed annually on 7 December.

Ayaz Sadiq underscored that the active and meaningful participation of citizens is indispensable for a strong, stable, and effective democracy.

He said that abstaining from voting amounts to neglecting one's constitutional rights and national responsibilities.

While commending the role of the Election Commission of Pakistan in conducting free, fair, and transparent

elections, Ayaz Sadiq said that only representatives elected through the people's vote can frame effective laws and policies that align with the aspirations of the nation and contribute to its development and welfare.

Highlighting the crucial role of youth in the democratic process, NA Speaker stressed the need to raise awareness among young people about the importance of voting.

He said that their robust participation will not only strengthen the democratic system but also pave the way for national development and institutional stability.

He reaffirmed that Parliament remains committed to promoting democratic values and enhancing public awareness regarding the significance of voting.

In his message on National Voters Day, Deputy Speaker National Assembly, Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah, said that casting a vote is the constitutional right of every citizen and a vital means of strengthening democracy.