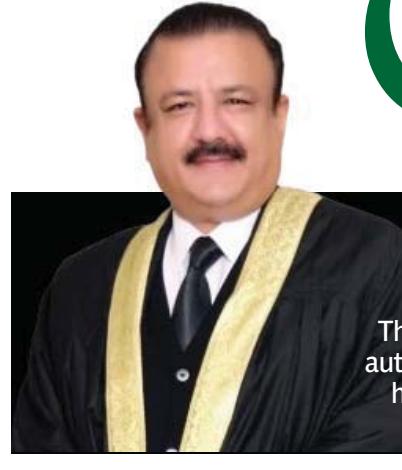




# Daily The Spokesman



## IHC hears degree case as Justice Jahangiri objects to chief justice

The Islamabad High Court on Monday conducted a hearing in a case related to the authenticity of the law degree of Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri. Justice Tariq Mahmood Jahangiri appeared as a defendant before the two-member bench headed by Chief Justice Sarfraz Dogar, with Justice Azam also part of the bench.



## PSX hits new record as KSE-100 closes above 170,000 points

Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) extended its rally on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index closing at a new all-time high amid strong investor participation. The index gained 876 points to settle at a record 170,741, after remaining in positive territory throughout the trading session.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Jamadi-us-Sani 24, Tuesday, December 16, 2025

[www.dailyspokesman.net](http://www.dailyspokesman.net)



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Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 240

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the Board of Trustees of Danish University, in Federal Capital on Monday.



Photo: Online

## PM orders fast-track privatisation of power sector

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed authorities to accelerate the privatisation of electricity distribution and generation companies, calling it essential for long-term power sector stability.

Chairing a review meeting on power sector reforms in Islamabad, the prime minister said a competitive electricity market,

driven by privatisation, was the only sustainable solution to the country's energy challenges.

He ordered priority completion of projects aimed at upgrading the electricity transmission system. The prime minister also directed officials to initiate the Battery Energy Storage System through public-private partnerships,

Officials briefed the meeting on progress in power generation, transmission, and the privatisation of DISCOs and GENCOs, along with other reform measures.

The meeting was told that steps were underway to privatise three distribution companies – IESCO, FESCO and GEPCO – with Expressions of Interest to be issued shortly.

Participants were informed that the PC-1 for the 500

kV Ghazi Barotha-Faisalabad transmission line was in the approval stage, aimed at strengthening the national grid.

The meeting was also briefed that technical feasibility for converting power plants from imported coal to Thar coal had been completed, while work on a railway line to transport Thar coal was in progress.

Officials said line losses had declined compared to last year due to sustained reform efforts.

The concept clearance for the Battery Energy Storage System project has been approved, and a feasibility study is currently underway.

The meeting was attended by Federal Ministers Muhammad Aurangzeb, Ahad Khan Cheema, Sardar Awais Ahmed Leghari, Advisor Muhammad Ali, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani and other senior officials of the relevant departments.

## Finance minister engages SPDC leadership on structural reforms, fiscal federalism

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday held a detailed meeting with a delegation of the Social Policy and Development Centre (SPDC), led by its Chairman Javed Jabbar, to discuss key

structural, fiscal and socio-economic challenges and explore avenues for sustained, evidence-based policy support.

The delegation included SPDC Board Members Ahmed

Farooq Bazai, Ms. Mahtab Akbar Rashdi, Naveed Kamran Baloch, and Dr. Saba Gul Khattak.

The Finance Minister welcomed the SPDC delegation and appreciated the Centre's three decades of independent and non-partisan research contributions to national policy discourse.

During the discussion, the Minister shared an overview of the government's ongoing institutional reform and right-sizing agenda, explaining that the process is being implemented

in phases to ensure depth, transparency, and manageability.

He highlighted that the focus of reforms was not on reducing employment but on addressing inefficiencies, fiscal leakages, excessive subsidies, and structural weaknesses in state-owned entities that impose a significant burden on the national exchequer.

He noted that recommendations emerging from the right-sizing process are being reviewed by the Cabinet for approval and implementation, with an



emphasis on improving service delivery and fiscal sustainability.

## Sri Lankan High Commissioner calls on Defence Minister

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Rear Admiral (Retd) Fre Seneviratne, called on Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif here on Monday.

The Minister appreciated the long-standing friendship between Pakistan-Sri Lanka, said a press release issued.

He stated that considering the proximity of views on major issues and in the regional context, both countries need to further cement existing ties by capitalizing on the positive trajectory of multifaceted relations, the press release said.

The Minister highlighted that Paki-



stan considers Sri Lanka as an important regional country, contributing significantly towards regional and global peace, and also expressed that Pakistan respects and supports the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Sri Lanka.

The Sri Lankan High Commissioner expressed his deep gratitude for the timely humanitarian assistance and support provided by the Government of Pakistan.

Visiting dignitary praised the professionalism of Pak Armed Forces, acknowledging their achievements in counter-terrorism.

Both sides expressed satisfaction over ongoing collaboration between two countries and aimed at strengthening the cooperation in mutually beneficial fields.

A Leading National Daily

ABC Certified

فرمان رسوی  
تمہارے بیان کیا ان سے سام  
نے اور ان سے عزم اور بیان کیا  
تی کے کوئی کارکرے نہیں  
ایجھے بیان کیا جائے میں پر اس اور  
کہ پر اس کی خوبی شاہزادی پر اس اور  
تی کے ایک بیان کی جائے میں اس کے  
تی کے کچھ دو کچھ جیا ایک بیان سے ہے  
کے پھر دو کچھ جیا ایک بیان سے ہے  
(6118) سے مدد  
Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

## PSX hits new record as KSE-100 closes above 170,000 points

Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) extended its rally on Monday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index closing at a new all-time high amid strong investor participation. The index gained 876 points to settle at a record 170,741, after remaining in positive territory throughout the trading session.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

## Soldier martyred, seven terrorists killed in DI Khan IBO

### News Desk

Security Forces Monday conducted an intelligence-based operation in general area Kulachi, Dera Ismail Khan District, on reported presence of khwarji belonging to Indian Proxy, Fitna al Khwarji. During the conduct of the operation, own troops effectively engaged the khwarji location and after an intense fire exchange, seven khwarji were sent to hell.



remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi lauds security forces for a successful operation against Khwarji militants.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday paid tribute to the security forces for a successful operation against Khwarji militants.

Weapons and ammunition were also recovered from Indian sponsored killed khwarji, who

area of Dera Ismail Khan.

## President, PM laud security forces for successful counterterrorism operation in DI Khan

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday paid rich tribute to the security forces for a successful operation against Indian-backed Fitna al-Khwarji in Dera Ismail Khan, terming it a strong manifestation of the state's resolve to enforce its writ and safeguard national security.

In a statement issued by the Presidency, the president commended the forces for eliminating seven terrorists during the operation, describing the action as a clear reflection of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to combating terrorism. He also paid homage to Naik Yasir Khan Shaheed, who embraced martyrdom in the line of duty, and said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the bereaved family in their hour of grief.

## Smart meters prices slashed by 40 pc, resulting in nationwide savings of Rs 150 bln: Leghari

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Monday said that due to consistent efforts and timely actions by the Power Division to promote transparency and competition, the prices of smart meters for power distribution companies (DISCOs) have been reduced by up to 40 percent, resulting in estimated annual savings of Rs 150 billion at the national level.

The minister made these remarks after a comprehensive report regarding smart meters was presented, said a press release.

He stated that the adoption of transparent and internationally competitive procurement processes has reduced the price of a three-phase smart meter from around Rs. 45,000 to less than Rs. 25,000, bringing it close to the price of a conventional three-phase meter. Similarly, the price of a single-phase smart meter has been reduced by Rs. 7,000. These prices are exclusive of applicable taxes.

According to the Federal Minister, the estimated annual savings of Rs. 150 billion are based on the replacement of defective and outdated meters by power distribution companies. In addition, the installation of new meters will provide further financial relief to electricity consumers. This benefit will be reflected in lower costs shown in demand notices for new connections.

# PM AJK Faisal Rathore prioritizes agreement with Awami Action Committee in Muzaffarabad

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that implementation of the recently signed Agreement with Awami Action Committee is one among his government's foremost priorities. Speaking at a reception hosted in his honour by Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leader and former Legislative Assembly candidate Sardar Mukhtar Ahmed Abbasi, prime minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore assured that the basic issues faced by the residents of the capital city, Muzaffarabad, will be addressed on a priority basis. Regarding the implementation of the agreement, the PM said he had raised the implementation of the agreement at all relevant forums, including in his meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. He added that PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari had also expressed his keenness in resolving matters relating to Azad Kashmir. On the occasion, the prime minister



announced a series of development projects for Muzaffarabad, including expansion and upgradation of CMH Muzaffarabad, improvement of the city's electricity system, Lohar Gali Bypass Tunnel, construction of Dolem Sayan-Manak Piyan Road, Rashedab Ambar Bypass, Chehla Bypass, and water supply schemes for Gujra and Bararkot. He also announced the establishment of a town committee, a

Basic Health Unit (BHU), and a girls' degree college in Bararkot. He added that during his meeting with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, he would demand the establishment of a Danish School in Muzaffarabad.

"Hamara Nara Sab Pe Bhari, Raye Shumari Raye Shumari" has gained popularity among the Kashmiri masses", he remarked. The PM further said, "Our love for Pakistan is eternal;

we are Pakistanis, and Pakistan belongs to us". The reception was attended by Senior Minister Mian Abdul Waheed, ministers Sardar Javed Ayub, Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi, Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Sardar Zia Qamar, Chaudhry Muhammad Rasheed, Member of the Legislative Assembly Ms. Taqdees Gilani, government adviser Ahmad Sagheer, PPP leader Mubashir Munir Awan, and others.

## Grand welcome

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore is being given a grand welcome at a reception given by Sardar Mukhtar Abbasi.



## Adjournment of Shah's bail plea, a deliberate attempt to linger the case for a longer period: DFP

 Abdul Majed Tahir

SRINAGAR: Jammu Kashmir Democratic Freedom Party has voiced serious concern over the Indian court's decision to adjourn the bail plea of its incarcerated party chairman, Shabir Ahmed Shah, pending before the Delhi High Court.

Terming it an age-old tactic, the DFP spokesman advocate Arshad Iqbal said that the repeated adjournments are a deliberate attempt to linger the case for a longer period

of time.

He maintained that such delays reflect the Indian courts' biased and discriminatory approach toward cases involving Kashmiri political prisoners, where due process is routinely compromised.

The spokesman alleged that prolonged incarceration without timely adjudication has become a systematic tool to punish Kashmiri leaders for their political beliefs, denying them basic legal rights guaranteed under law.

He further said that instead of dispensing justice impartially, Indian courts often facilitate state narratives, turning legal proceedings into instruments of political repression against the Kashmiri leadership.

The spokesman said that the overall situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir has continued to worsen, with thousands of political activists and youth languishing in far-off jails under draconian laws. The DFP spokesman appealed to international human rights organi-



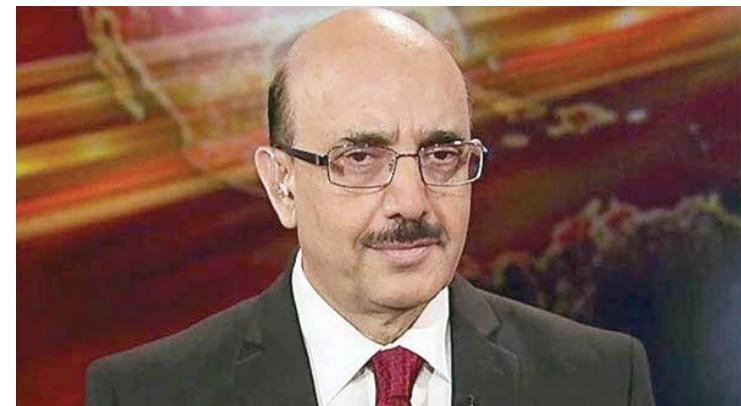
zations, including the United Nations and global civil society groups, to take serious notice of the grave human rights violations in Kashmir.

## Ambassador Khan highlights resilience amid Indian disinformation campaign

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has emerged as a major geopolitical pivot for the United States, China, and Russia, and India's renewed disinformation campaign is a reaction to this strategic reality, said Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations. While commenting on recent misrepresentation of facts by Indian state-linked media networks, Ambassador Khan described India's information warfare as "systemic, state-sponsored, and ideologically driven," noting that misinformation and propaganda have long been employed by the BJP and RSS to malign Pakistan.

"This is not new. Indian disinformation has previously been exposed in Europe and elsewhere. It is a weapon they repeatedly use—but one that increasingly fails," he said, adding that recent false narratives, including



those propagated by RT India and Indian-sponsored outlets, have once again collapsed under scrutiny.

Ambassador Khan underscored that 2025 marks a breakthrough year for Pakistan's diplomacy, catalysed by Pakistan's measured and responsible conduct during and after the May 2025 conflict with India. He

noted that Pakistan's dignified acceptance of U.S.-led ceasefire diplomacy, contrasted sharply with India's belligerence, significantly enhanced Islamabad's credibility in key global capitals. "Our relations with Washington were already improving, but after the war they grew exponentially," he stated.

## KP Governor commends security forces for successful operation in DI Khan

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundis on Monday lauded the security forces for a successful operation against Fitna al-Khawarij in the Kulachi area of Dera Ismail Khan, in which seven Indian proxy militants were killed.

The Governor praised the courage, professionalism, and unwavering resolve of the security personnel for their effective action against the militants.

The Governor paid rich tribute to Naik Yasir Khan, who embraced martyrdom during the exchange of fire, acknowledging his supreme sacrifice in the fight against terrorism. He also expressed heartfelt condolences and solidarity with the bereaved family, praying for patience and strength for them in this difficult time.

## Sahibzada Hussain Ahmed Bakoti Expresses Deep Grief over the Demise of Pir Zubair Ahmed Naqshbandi

 Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: The Sajjada Nashin of Darbar-e-Aalia Bakot Sharif, Sahibzada Hussain Ahmed Bakoti, has expressed profound sorrow and grief over the passing of the renowned spiritual leader and religious scholar Pir Zubair Ahmed Naqshbandi.



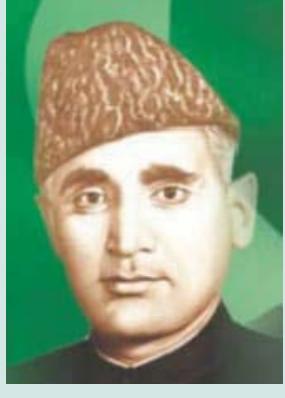
In his condolence message, Sahibzada Hussain Ahmed Bakoti said that with the demise of Pir Zubair Ahmed Naqshbandi, the Muslim Ummah has lost a great spiritual reformer, man of piety, and distinguished religious guide. He said that the late Pir Sahib dedicated his life to the promotion of Islamic teachings and spiritual guidance, and his departure has created a significant void in the religious and spiritual leadership.

He prayed to Almighty Allah to elevate the ranks of the departed soul in Jamnāh and to grant patience and strength to the bereaved family to bear this irreparable loss.

## Commemoration of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas: Muslim Conference Honors Legacy on 58th Death Anniversary

 Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI/MUZAFFARABAD: Under the auspices of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, the three-day commemorative events marking the 58th death anniversary of Rais-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas commence today. All arrangements for the anniversary have been finalized.



On the directives of the President of the Muslim Conference, party workers will today lay floral wreaths on the graves of former Presidents and General Secretaries of the Muslim Conference and offer Fateha for the departed souls.

On 17 December, from 11:00 am to 1:00 pm, a special Quran Khwani will be held at Faizabad, the mausoleum of Quaid-e-Millat Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas.

On the occasion of the death anniversary, the Muslim Conference will also pay homage to other party martyrs and senior leaders. Floral wreaths will be laid and Fateha will be offered at the graves of party leaders and martyrs across Azad Kashmir, Pakistan, and abroad, including prominent personalities from the Poonch, Mirpur, and Muzaffarabad divisions, as well as in Islamabad, Rawalpindi, and other locations. Tribute will also be paid at the mausoleum of Sheikh Muhammad Abdullah in Srinagar (Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir) and to Maulana Muhammad Yaqoob Chishti in the United Kingdom.

The Muslim Conference leadership and workers will participate in these commemorative activities to honor the invaluable services and sacrifices of Rais-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas and other leaders of the freedom movement.

## Sardar Attique Remembers APS Tragedy: 'December 16, 2014, a Black Day for Pakistan'

 Bureau Report

DHIRKOT/ GHAZI ABAD: President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, has said that 16 December 2014 will always be remembered as a black day in the history of Pakistan. He paid rich tribute to the innocent children and teachers who were martyred in the tragic Army Public School (APS), Peshawar attack, stating that their sacrifices will never be forgotten.

He expressed these views in his message on the occasion of the 11th anniversary of the APS tragedy. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the heartbreaking incident shook the entire nation and left deep scars on the collective conscience of the country.

Earlier, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan attended the Chehlim (fortieth-day memorial) ceremony of Pir Syed Baseer Ahmed Gardezi at Sohawa Sharif. While addressing the gathering, he said that Pir Syed Baseer Ahmed Gardezi was a pious and God-fearing personality, steadfast in prayers and devoted to the service of humanity in the light of the teachings of Allah and His Messenger (peace be upon him). He added that the late scholar not only upheld the sanctity of the pulpit and the mosque but also consistently stood for truth and righteousness. He remarked that the void created by his demise would not be filled for many years.

Later, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan visited the grave of Pir Syed Baseer Ahmed Gardezi and offered Fateha. Subsequently, political workers of the Muslim Conference and other parties met him at the residence of Pir Syed Zulqadar Shah Gardezi in Sohawa Sharif, where special prayers were offered on the occasion.

## FJMU overseas alumni call on Governor Punjab

LAHORE: A delegation of Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU) alumni based in the United Kingdom (UK) and United States of America (USA) called on Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan at the Governor's House here on Monday.

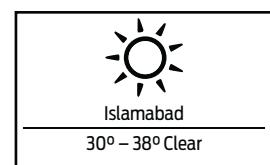
The delegation also comprised Deans Committee FJMU and was led by Vice Chancellor FJMU Prof. Dr. Khalid Masood Gondal.

The discussion centered on the latest advancements in medicine, significance of mental health, and the evolving role of artificial intelligence in the medical field.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan directed Vice Chancellor Khalid Masood Gondal to provide best health care facilities to patients at Sir Ganga Ram Hospital attached to the university. He said special attention should be paid to providing treatment facilities to poor and deserving patients.

He stressed the importance of extending medical services to rural areas in Punjab, ensuring healthcare access for all.

The Punjab Governor said that research is very important for development in this modern era and universities are the center of research. He further said that Fatima Jinnah Medical University is doing excellent work under the leadership of Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Masood Gondal. He also appreciated the performance of FJMU in various fields.


**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:36 am
Zohr	12:03 pm
Asr	3:23 pm
Maghrib	5:01 pm
Isha	6:30 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 &
& Rescue Services	445122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police**
**Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

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CAA	9281092

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MH	561116
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DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
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PIMS	9261170-79
Policlinic	9218300-99
Shifa International	4603666

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CDA	9208301-04
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RDA	5555864
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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	92266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

**Kamalia**  
**AC and MC**  
**CO Reviews**  
**Arrangements**  
**for Model**  
**Rehri Bazar on**  
**Rajana Road**

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Commissioner Kamalia Iqra Nasir along with Chief Officer Municipal Committee Ali Raza visited Rajana Road to review the arrangements for the establishment of a Model Rehri Bazar. During the visit, she inspected the layout and organization of stalls, cleanliness arrangements, security measures and facilities being provided to the public.

On the occasion, the Assistant Commissioner directed the concerned officers to ensure that the Model Rehri Bazar is made operational in a timely manner in accordance with the prescribed standards. She emphasized that the initiative aims to provide citizens with quality food items at affordable prices in a clean, organized and secure environment. She further stated that all necessary facilities should be ensured to facilitate both vendors and the general public, making the Model Rehri Bazar a practical and beneficial project for the residents of Kamalia.

# Bahria University Lahore Campus Holds 4th Convocation

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: Bahria University Lahore Campus held its 4th Convocation. Chief of the Naval Staff and Pro-Chancellor of Bahria University, Admiral Naved Ashraf graced the occasion as Chief Guest and conferred degrees upon graduates.

Addressing the ceremony, Admiral Naved Ashraf praised Bahria University's dedication to academic excellence, innovation and character-building. He commended the graduates for their hard work, discipline and perseverance and congratulated their families.

A total of 564 graduates from the Departments of Computer Science, Management Sciences and Professional Psychology were awarded PhD, MS and BS degrees. In recognition of exceptional academic achievement, 36 gold medals and 29 silver medals were presented to high-performing students.

The ceremony was attended by graduating students, their proud families, senior officials, faculty members and distinguished guests from academia.



## Meeting on welfare of Journalists

LAHORE: Mr. Mubashir Hassan, Principal Information Officer along with Shafqat Abbas Khan, DG PID Lahore held a meeting on the welfare of journalistic community with the Governing body of Lahore Press Club under the leadership of Arshad Ansari, President LPC on Monday.



Photo: PID

## Increasing rate of Heart diseases can be controlled by eliminating iTFA consumption

**City Desk**


ISLAMABAD: The Department of Food Science and Technology, University of Karachi, in collaboration with Nutrition International, organized a specialized training session in Islamabad held at Margalla Hotel focusing on the elimination of industrially produced trans fatty acids (iTFA) from edible fats and oils. The session brought together manufacturers from leading edible fat industries, as well as officials from the Islamabad Food Authority, AJ&K Food Authority, GB, Baluchistan Food Authority, PANAH delegation and Heart File.

The program opened with remarks from Dr. Khawaja Masood Ahmed, renowned Fortification Expert, who emphasized the national importance of reducing iTFA levels to protect public health and align with WHO recommendations.

Mr. Abdul Hameed Kiyani, Secretary Food and Director General, AJ&K Food Authority was the Chief Guest.

Mr. Sana Ullah Ghumman, General Secretary PANAH, has attended and reiterated the urgency of eliminating harmful fats from the food supply. He said that the rapid increase in non-communicable diseases in Pakistan is very worrying. The consumption of trans fats is a major reason for the increase in these diseases.

Dr. S. M. Ghulran Saeed, Associate Professor, and Dr. M. Abdul Haq, Chairman, Department of Food Science and Technology, Moin Qureshi, Dr. Seema Ashraf and Dr. Syed Arsalan Ali, Dr. Saba Amjad, Heartfile also speak on the occasion.

*Serving the country and the nation is my top priority, says Chaudhry Inaam Zafar*

**City Desk**

Political and social leader Chaudhry Inaam Zafar stated that upholding the rule of law, ensuring equal rights for citizens, improving education, healthcare, and the economy, adhering to constitutional principles, and empowering the people are the core pillars of the vision of the Awaam Pakistan Party. He said that the sole focus of their politics is public service. He also paid tribute to the selfless services of the Pakistan Armed Forces.



In an important statement, he said that the Pakistan Armed Forces are the guarantors of the defense of the country and the nation, and that they stand shoulder to shoulder with them. Chaudhry Inaam Zafar added that former Prime Minister and Central Convener Shahid Khaqan Abbasi, Secretary General Miftah Ismail, and the entire leadership of the Awaam Pakistan Party believe in serving the people. He said that the prosperity of Pakistan is the true purpose of their struggle. He further stated that the party's mission is to ensure equal rights for all citizens, improve education and healthcare, create employment opportunities, stabilize the economy, enforce constitutional principles, and empower the people. Along with this, the welfare of the underprivileged, reforms in the tax and revenue systems, and the elimination of personal political interests and unnecessary influence are also among their top priorities.

## DC Mela visits to DHQ Hospital TT Singh



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the district administration is actively working to ensure the provision of quality and timely healthcare facilities to the public. In this regard, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela conducted a detailed visit to DHQ Hospital Toba Tek Singh.

During the visit, the Medical Superintendent of DHQ Hospital briefed the Deputy Commissioner on the hospital's current performance, available facilities and the standard of medical treatment being provided to patients. The Deputy Commissioner inspected the Emergency Department, OPD and other wards and held direct interactions with patients as well as hospital staff.

The Deputy Commissioner also inspected the Oxygen Generation Plant, where he reviewed the oxygen supply system and backup arrangements in detail to ensure uninterrupted availability during emergency situations. The Deputy Commissioner further instructed the staff of all hospital departments to take all possible measures to enhance patient facilitation and further improve the standard of healthcare services. On this Occasion, CEO health Dr. Kashif and DHO Dr. Faizan Arshad were also present.

## Government Land Loot in Broad Daylight: Citizens Demand Action in Layyah District

**Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Despite orders from the Chief Minister of Punjab, while operations against illegal occupiers continue in some areas, the administration in District Layyah appears to be facilitating the land mafia in taking over government property.

The construction of an illegal residential colony under the supervision of the land mafia on government land worth billions of rupees in District Layyah has raised serious questions about the performance of the local administration. Citizens have urged the Commissioner of Dera Ghazi Khan

and the Chief Minister of Punjab to take immediate notice and initiate strict action.

According to details, the government land located at Chak No. 430 near the Girls Degree College Mehran at Dhori Adda, which has legally been transferred in favor of the state, has been put up for sale by the land mafia under the name "Ahmed Colony." So called builder/ dealers names Noor Mehmood and Amir Ghafoor are reportedly selling plots in this unauthorized colony, causing losses worth millions of rupees to the Punjab government, while law enforcement agencies remain silent spectators.

According to local residents, written complaints regarding this serious illegal activity were submitted to the office of the Assistant Commissioner Layyah, but no tangible action has been taken so far. Citizens allege that Noor Mehmood and Amir Ghafoor are deceiving poor and unsuspecting people by selling plots on illegally occupied govern-



ment land. Residents have demanded the immediate halt of unauthorized constructions, recovery of government land, and strict, prompt action against the land mafia to prevent further losses to the national treasury and ensure the enforcement of law.

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@adplus.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  
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## UN Chief slams deadly attack on Jewish holiday celebration in Sydney

United Nations (UN) Secretary-General Antonio Guterres has strongly condemned the "heinous deadly attack" on Sunday against Jewish families gathered in Sydney, Australia, to celebrate Hanukkah, a religious festival of lights.

In a social media post, the UN chief said he was "horrified" by the incident.

"My heart is with the Jewish community worldwide on this first day of Hanukkah, a festival celebrating the miracle of peace and light vanquishing darkness," Guterres wrote.

At least 15 people were killed when two gunmen opened fire on the Hanukkah celebration on Bondi Beach in Sydney, which authorities have called a terrorist attack.

Two of the victims were police officers, according to media reports. One of the gunmen was killed and the other was taken into custody.

The Secretary-General expressed solidarity with the people and Government of Australia, and with the Jewish community in the country and worldwide, UN Deputy Spokesperson Farhan Haq said in a statement issued Sunday evening.

He "unequivocally condemns antisemitism in all its forms and reiterates that attacks on religious communities and peaceful celebrations strike at the core values of tolerance, coexistence and human dignity," it said.

The Secretary-General was in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, on Sunday, where he addressed the opening of the 11th World Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC).

The Alliance was established 20 years ago to promote respect and understanding between cultures and religions.

In a post on social media, UNAOC High Representative Miguel A'ngel Moratinos said he was "appalled" at the attack and added his voice to the condemnation.

"I extend my deepest condolences to the families of the victims and wish a speedy recovery to those injured," he said in a tweet.

Meanwhile, the American Pakistani Public Affairs Committee (APPAC), a prominent Pakistani political group, also condemned the terrorist attack.

"Such acts of hatred and intimidation are morally reprehensible and absolutely unacceptable, regardless of geography or political context," APPAC said in a statement.

"Violence against civilians—especially those targeted for their faith—has no justification and must be confronted with zero tolerance.

"We call for swift accountability, justice, and the strongest possible response against those responsible. Silence or hesitation in the face of antisemitism and religious hatred only emboldens extremism," APPAC added.

## From Gaza to Bondi Beach: How Israel's War Fuels Global Rage

**O**n December 14, 2025, Australia was jolted out of its sense of safety. At Bondi Beach in Sydney, a space synonymous with openness, community, and peaceful coexistence, gunmen opened fire on members of the Jewish community gathered to celebrate Hanukkah. Eleven people were killed and many more injured. Families, children, and elders—people with no role in war, policy, or geopolitics—were turned into victims of terror.

The attack was immediately and rightly condemned by Australia and the world. There can be no ambiguity: the killing of civilians anywhere is criminal, immoral, and indefensible. No grievance, no ideology, no historical wound justifies such an act. The Jewish community in Australia, like Jewish communities everywhere, deserves safety, dignity, and protection.

Yet condemnation alone does not prevent recurrence. If the world wishes to stop such horrors from repeating, it must confront a harder truth: violence does not arise in isolation. It is shaped, amplified, and redirected by global political behavior—especially when power is exercised without accountability.

The Bondi Beach massacre occurred in a world already saturated with unresolved wars, mass civilian suffering, and a growing perception that international law is applied selectively. This perception—whether ignored or dismissed by those in power—has consequences. When pain is denied in one place, it does not disappear. It travels. It mutates. And it eventually erupts where the innocent live.

This refusal was starkly illustrated in the aftermath of the Bondi Beach killings. Instead of engaging in self-reflection or acknowledging how Israel's actions in Gaza have heightened global tensions and

endangered Jewish communities abroad, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu publicly criticized the Australian government, accusing it of failing to provide adequate security to the Jewish community.

In doing so, Netanyahu acted not as a statesman grappling with consequences, but as if he were a ruler passing judgment on sovereign nations—assigning blame outward while absolving himself entirely. There was no acknowledgment that the relentless violence in Gaza, the images of starving children, and the dismissal of international law have contributed to an environment in which rage is exported globally. There was no recognition that leadership carries responsibility not only for battlefield outcomes, but for the safety of one's people everywhere.

By placing the burden solely on Australia's security apparatus, Netanyahu effectively treated the Bondi Beach massacre as an isolated policing failure—rather than as a symptom of a wider moral and political breakdown. This posture is not only arrogant; it is dangerous. It ignores the simple reality that actions taken in the Middle East now reverberate instantly across the world.

A similar warning emerged just one day earlier, on December 13, 2025, in Palmyra, Syria. A lone suspected Islamic State gunman attacked a convoy of U.S. and Syrian partner forces during a key leader engagement. The assault killed two U.S. Army soldiers and a civilian interpreter, and wounded three others. Partner forces killed the attacker at the scene. President Donald Trump vowed serious retaliation.

That attack, like Bondi Beach, underscored the same truth: wars fought far from home do not remain distant. They return—sometimes as direct attacks, sometimes as unpredictable consequences. Soldiers, interpreters, and civilians pay the price for conflicts whose political roots remain unresolved.

This reality struck even closer to home in Washington, D. C., where a lone Afghan gunman killed one U. S. soldier and critically wounded another. His act

was criminal and indefensible. But it was also a reminder that decades of war leave behind trauma and grievances that do not end with troop withdrawals. When conflicts are managed through force rather than resolution, the aftershocks linger in human lives.

Today, the same pattern threatens to repeat itself in the Western Hemisphere. Tensions between the United States and Venezuela, and increasingly involving Colombia, are escalating. Once again, familiar language is resurfacing—delegitimization, sanctions, pressure, and whispers of regime change. The narrative being constructed against Venezuela echoes the one once built against Iraq: moral urgency, existential threat, inevitability of action.

We know how that story ended. Iraq was destabilized. Libya collapsed. Syria fractured. The Middle East was turned upside down. Millions were displaced. Extremism flourished. And the consequences spilled into Europe, North America, and beyond.

Venezuela may be weaker than the United States militarily, but modern conflict teaches a clear lesson: retaliation does not strike power centers; it

strikes soft targets. It does not reach presidents; it reaches soldiers, worshippers, commuters, and children. Innocent Americans—both civilians and service members—become exposed to the revenge of those whose loved ones were killed far away.

This is not justification. It is a historical reality. Violence creates memory. Memory creates resentment. Resentment seeks release—often against those least responsible.

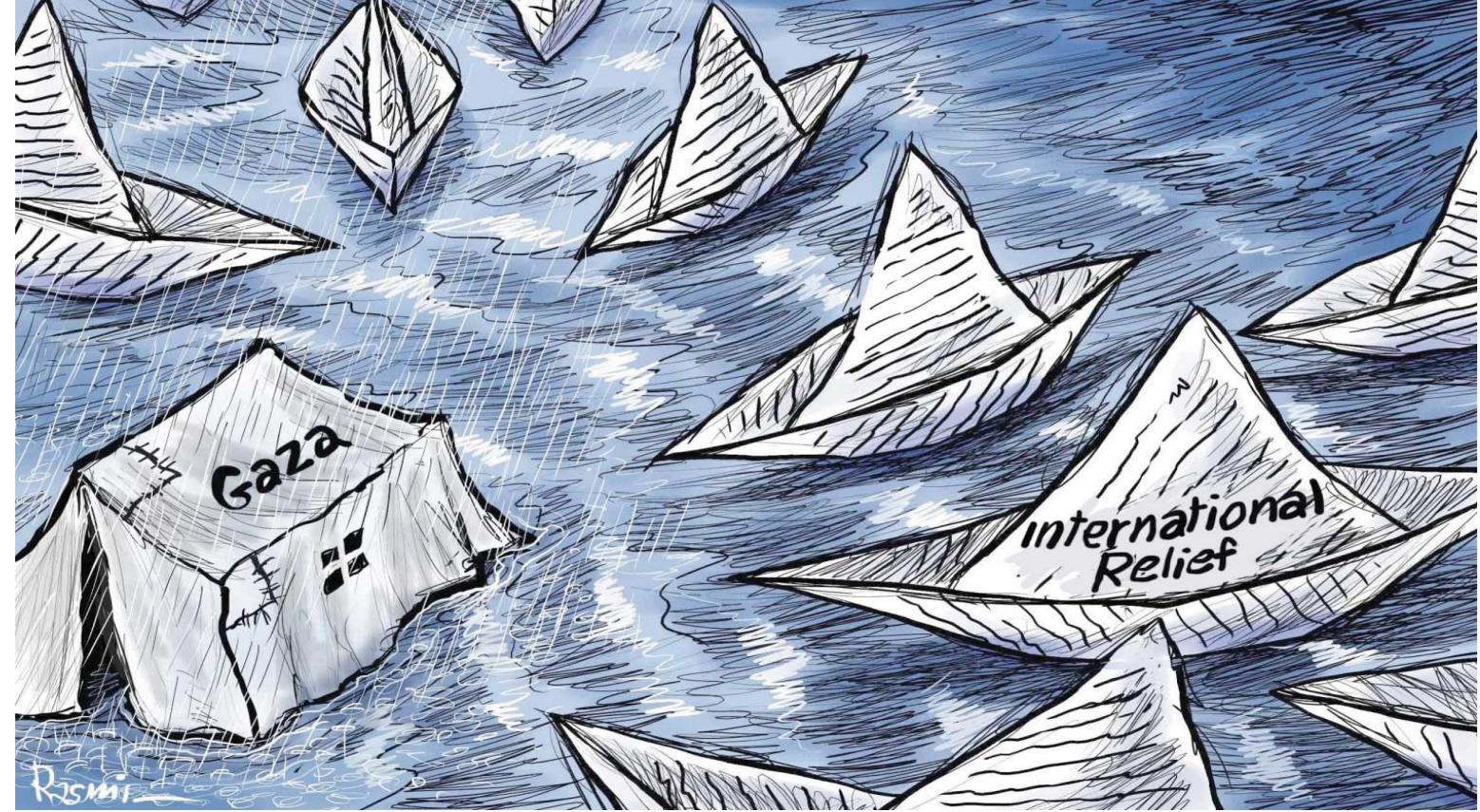
The tragedies at Bondi Beach, in Palmyra, in Washington, and the looming risks in Venezuela and Colombia all point to the same conclusion: when leaders refuse accountability, insecurity becomes global. No border, no ocean, no alliance can contain the consequences.

The only alternative is restraint, diplomacy, and genuine multilateral engagement. Institutions like the United Nations exist to prevent this chain reaction—to replace unilateral force with collective responsibility. They are imperfect, but by bypassing them guarantees repetition of failure.

If humanity continues to normalize collective punishment, regime-change wars, and selective morality, the violence will keep returning—again and again—against people who never chose these conflicts. Peace is not a moral luxury. It is a strategic necessity.

Only by choosing introspection over arrogance, law over impunity, and dialogue over domination can the world hope to prevent the next Bondi Beach—and the next innocent life lost to a war they never owned.

*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 Rasmie. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)*

## When Silence Becomes Safe

**I**n every era of human history, the struggle for free expression has been tied to the struggle for dignity, identity, and power, yet perhaps at no point has this struggle been as complex and quietly dangerous as it is today. The modern world, adorned with the language of rights, democracy, and digital empowerment, ironically finds itself witnessing an unprecedented war on free speech, one that is subtle, multilayered, and often disguised as protection, national interest, social harmony, or public morality. This war does not always involve jails, guns, or dictators; instead, it unfolds through canceled culture, digital manipulation, selective outrage, online mobs, sophisticated surveillance systems, and legal loopholes that redefine dissent as disloyalty. In such an environment, silence becomes safer than speaking, conformity becomes easier than questioning, and survival becomes more important than truth. At the heart of this global shift lies a troubling realization: in many societies, people are not silenced by force, but by fear. Fear of losing jobs, fear of being misquoted, fear of misinterpretation, fear of digital character assassination, fear of legal repercussions, and even fear of social isolation. Where once oppressive regimes required physical force to silence their people, today societies produce silence voluntarily, shaped by invisible pressures and internalized censorship.

Technology once believed to be the greatest liberator of speech has paradoxically become a powerful tool for suppression. Social media platforms that promised democracy of voices have instead become battlefields of manipulation where algorithms amplify hatred, governments monitor dissent, corporations gather private data, and mobs enforce ideological purity. In many cases, a single post can cost someone their reputation, livelihood, or safety.

The danger of this silent world is profound. When people stop speaking, societies stop thinking. Innovation, justice, and reform all depend on the ability to question, criticize, and imagine alternatives. Silence allows falsehood to flourish, corruption to deepen, and oppres-

When public opinion weaponizes outrage, free speech becomes a privilege of the brave and a danger for the ordinary.

Democracies, too, are not immune. Laws framed to curb "misinformation," "hate speech" or "security threats" are increasingly used to target activists, journalists, and critics. The line between legitimate regulation and political censorship has blurred dangerously. Governments often claim to protect citizens from harmful content while subtly filtering anything that exposes corruption, misgovernance, or abuse of power. As the digital public square becomes more regulated than the physical one, speaking freely is no longer a right exercised without calculation; it is a risk measured carefully.

Beyond governments and media platforms, society itself has become a silent enforcer. Social polarization has created echo chambers where dissent is treated as betrayal. People increasingly surround themselves with like-minded voices, and any deviation from group opinion invites hostility. The fear of being misunderstood or attacked has pushed many thoughtful individuals into silence not because they lack opinions, but because they no longer see the value or safety in expressing them. Intellectual humility has been replaced by ideological absolutism; dialogue has been replaced by digital shouting matches. As a result, even well-intentioned debates collapse under the weight of aggression, sarcasm, and intolerance. When every disagreement is interpreted as a personal attack or political offense, honest conversation dies.

The danger of this silent world is profound. When people stop speaking, societies stop thinking. Innovation, justice, and reform all depend on the ability to question, criticize, and imagine alternatives. Silence allows falsehood to flourish, corruption to deepen, and oppres-

sion to normalize itself. History shows that no great progress scientific, political, or moral has ever emerged from societies where people were afraid to speak. The suppression of free speech ultimately leads to intellectual stagnation and dysfunctional governance. A society that fears words eventually fears truth, and a society that fears truth becomes easy to manipulate.

Yet, despite the bleakness, the war on free speech is not irreversible. Courage remains the strongest antidote. Around the world, journalists risk their lives to report the truth; activists challenge unjust laws; writers and thinkers use metaphors, satire, and art to say what cannot be said directly; ordinary citizens raise their voices despite threats and pressure. The resilience of human conscience is greater than any system of censorship. But courage alone cannot bear the burden. Societies must relearn the value of listening, debating, and disagreeing respectfully. Governments must recognize that suppressing speech, even under noble pretexts, ultimately weakens nations by depriving them of critical thought. Educational systems must teach students not what to think, but how to think. Media platforms must prioritize transparency and fairness over algorithmic manipulation and profit. Above all, people must reclaim the forgotten truth that freedom of speech is not merely the right to speak, it is also the responsibility to protect the right of others to speak, even when we disagree with them.

The war on free speech will not end with a single law, revolution, or technological invention. It will end when societies realize that silence is not safety but surrender. It will end when people understand that speaking the truth may be risky, but abandoning truth is fatal. In the end, the cost of silence is far greater than the cost of speech. The moment we choose silence because it feels safer is the moment we begin losing not only our voice but also our humanity.

*The writer is a senior analyst. He can be reached at sirasif786@gmail.com*

## The Perils of Black-and-White Thinking and the Urgent Need for Intellectual Balance

**I**n an age increasingly shaped by polarization and oversimplified narratives, black-and-white thinking has emerged as a silent but pervasive threat. It compresses complex realities into rigid binaries, undermines critical thought, and leaves young minds dangerously exposed to manipulation. Today, many of our youth find themselves entangled in narratives of victimhood and ideological absolutism—fertile ground for actors who exploit frustration and confusion to advance extremist agendas.

My concern with this phenomenon is deeply personal. Years ago, I chronicled my own transformation in an article published in the Daily Times, titled "My Intellectual Journey from Extremism to Tolerance." In that piece, I traced my gradual shift from rigidity to reflection, from unquestioned certainty to a more humane and balanced worldview. The response from academics, policymakers, and informed citizens was both encouraging and humbling, affirming the broader relevance of such a journey in today's fractured environment.

In continuation of this effort, I recently launched a series of awareness posters designed to counter the troubling rise of binary thinking. These posters translate complex ideas into visually engaging prompts that encourage viewers to pause, reflect, and reconsider their assumptions. Earlier posters in the campaign—focusing on dialogue, nuance, and intellectual courage—were widely appreciated by educators, civil servants, and policy experts. The most recent addition challenges the accelerating drift toward simplistic interpretations of social and political realities, reminding young people that life unfolds in shades

of grey, not in stark contrasts of black and white.

Through this ongoing work—blending personal reflection, academic writing, public communication, and visual advocacy—I have come to a simple and enduring conclusion: the most effective defense against extremism is not force, but intellectual balance rooted in humility, critical reasoning, and respectful dialogue.

### Call to Action

This is not a moment for silence or hesitation; it is a moment for committed, collective effort. Parents must engage their children in meaningful conversations, teachers must nurture inquiry instead of conformity, and policymakers must prioritize curricula that strengthen critical thinking and digital discernment. Our media and opinion-shaping institutions must reject the easy appeal of divisive narratives and instead champion balance and responsibility. But the greatest responsibility rests with each of us. We must model the intellectual honesty, humility, and moderation we hope to see in the next generation. Extremism takes root where minds are left unguided; tolerance flourishes where minds are encouraged to think.

Let us, therefore, resolve—firmly and without delay—to guide our youth toward nuance, empathy, and informed judgment. In doing so, we protect not only their future, but the stability and moral conscience of our society.

*The writer is a teacher, corporate communicator, and advocate of intellectual moderation working to counter absolutist narratives in society. He can be reached at rabnawazminhaj@gmail.com. His X handle is Tolerance Advocate.*

# Government Operations Room reviews the strategic recovery plan of the Palestinian Pension Agency in Gaza

WAFA

RAMALLAH: The Government Operations Room for Emergency Interventions in the Gaza Strip reviewed today the strategic recovery plan of the Palestinian Pension Agency in the Gaza Strip, as part of relief and early recovery efforts aimed at ensuring the continuity of essential services and strengthening the social protection system amid the humanitarian and economic repercussions of the war.

The Head of the Agency, Majed Al-Helo, stated that the total monthly value of pension payments in the Gaza Strip exceeds 97 million Israeli shekels, benefiting more than 36,000 retirees and heirs. He noted that the agency continued disbursing pensions and processing thousands of requests throughout the war, despite damage to its main headquarters and the loss of a significant portion of its technical infrastructure and archival systems.

He added that pension entitlements are a priority for social stability, explaining that actuarial studies highlight the serious risks associated with the non-transfer of pension contributions for all covered sectors in Gaza, particularly in light of increasing monthly pension obligations. He further noted that the statutory pension duration extends until the age of seventy, and that any child born to a retiree may result in pension payments continuing for up to an additional 30 years.

Meanwhile, Nabil Hamdan, Assistant Head of the Agency, outlined the plan's three main phases. The first is the early recovery and emergency phase, lasting six months, which focuses on restoring basic operations, ensuring the continuity of pension payments, and receiving applications from retirees, as well as files related to martyrs and heirs. This is followed by the reconstruction and recovery phase, span-



## Occupation forces uproot around 400 olive trees, level 35 dunums in village west of Ramallah

WAFA

RAMALLAH: Israeli forces on Monday uprooted around 400 olive trees after launching land-leveling operations on vast tracts of Palestinian citizens' land in the village of Budrus, west of Ramallah, affecting nearly 35 dunums of agricultural land adjacent to the separation wall.

Abdel Nasser Marar, Head of the Budrus Village Council, told WAFA that Israeli bulldozers stormed the western side of the village along the wall and began extensive bulldozing of lands planted with decades-old olive trees, under heavy protection by occupation forces, who prevented landowners from accessing their property or protesting what was taking place.

Marar said the village council had previously received notices from the occupation authorities ordering



the leveling of lands along the wall, and that implementation began on Monday, targeting 35 dunums planted with decades-old olive trees. He noted the area is a key olive-growing zone in the village and a primary source of livelihood for its residents.

He added that the bulldozing was carried out pursuant to a decision by the occupation authorities under the pretext of "security purposes," a justification repeatedly invoked to take over agricultural land near the wall, deprive farmers of their property, and

restrict access to it. He noted that the targeted plots belong to several village families who largely depend on the olive harvest.

Marar emphasized that targeting lands adjacent to the separation wall forms part of a systematic policy to expand buffer zones around the wall and shrink Palestinian agricultural areas, inflicting heavy economic losses on farmers and undermining the livelihood security of affected families.

The village of Budrus has for years been subjected to ongoing violations by Israeli occupation forces, largely concentrated in areas adjacent to the separation wall. These include land-leveling, tree uprooting, and barring farmers from reaching their lands, as part of a policy aimed at imposing new facts on the ground and eroding the Palestinian agricultural presence.

## Engineer Amjad Nawaz Bhatti elected President and Muhammad Ali Yasir as a General Secretary

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: In the elections of WAPDA Employees Cooperative Housing Society (WAPDA Town) for the year 2025-28, WAPDA and Residence Group (Chand Tara) won a historic victory. Engineer Amjad Nawaz Bhatti elected President with a huge majority, Muhammad Arsalan Khan Vice President, Engineer Muhammad Ali Yasir General Secretary and Sardar Rafique Ahmed Khan Finance Secretary.

The panel of WAPDA and Residence Group won all 15 seats and made a clean sweep. WAPDA Group

got a total of 865 votes, WAPDA Volunteer Group got 478 votes, while WAPDA Town Sinarwo Group got 216 votes. WAPDA Volunteer Group (Pankha Group) and WAPDA Town Swaro Group (Phul) were defeated.

According to the official results, Engineer Amjad Nawaz Bhatti secured 865 votes for the presidency seat, while his opponent Chaudhry Nasir Mahmood secured 478 and Chaudhry Ali Nawaz Warraich secured 210 votes. For the vice-presidential seat, Muhammad Arsalan Khan secured 842 votes, Mahmood Hussain Bhatti secured 454 votes, and Dr. Muhammad Athar Iqbal Arain secured 263 votes.

Among the newly elected members of the management committee,

Muhammad Asghar Hashmi got 840 votes, Amjad Siddique Khan got 827 votes, Khalid Pervez Chahdar got 815 votes, Taj Mahmood Qamar got 812 votes, Jam Zahid Abbas got 811 votes, Muhammad Ilyas Jamil got 811 votes, Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad got 808 votes, Engineer Babar Ali Sarwar Gujjar got 804 votes, union leader Rana Muhammad Anwar got 800 votes and Nasir Awan got 76 votes and won the election. Multan Police made excellent arrangements for the peaceful conduct of the election and police teams led by SP Gulgasht Saifullah Gujjar made excellent arrangements.

## Minor Reduction in Interest Rate Is Like a Drop in the Ocean: Syed Aman Shah

City Desk

KARACHI: Provincial Convenor Balochistan of Awaam Pakistan Party (APP) and prominent business leader Syed Aman Shah has expressed strong reaction to the State Bank of Pakistan's marginal reduction in the policy interest rate, stating that under the prevailing economic conditions, this cut is like a drop in the ocean and will not provide any meaningful relief to industry, trade or any other sector of the economy.



Syed Aman Shah said that the persistently high interest rate has already crippled business activities, led to a decline in industrial production, and brought new investment almost to a halt. In such circumstances, a minor reduction will neither restore the confidence of the business community nor bring any visible improvement in overall economic momentum.

He further stated that despite a relative decline in inflation, maintaining an unusually high interest rate is contrary to ground realities. There is an urgent need for the State Bank to announce a substantial and continuous reduction in the interest rate so that industrialists and traders can access affordable financing, employment opportunities can be generated, and exports can be boosted.

Syed Aman Shah urged the government to take into account the difficulties faced by the business community and formulate a comprehensive, business-friendly monetary policy, as a strong economy is the only guarantee for the country's development and stability.

## Tragic Traffic Accident: Eight School Children Injured in Faisalabad Collision

Bureau Report

FAISALABAD: Eight children were seriously injured in a traffic accident at Chak No. 412 GB, Okara Road, Tandlianwala City. According to the report of Rescue 1122, a rickshaw going to school collided with a wagon coming from the front. As a result of the accident, 08 children riding in the rickshaw were injured. They include Asma daughter of Ramzan Ali, 13 years old, Abdul Rehman son of Sakhi Muhammad, 11 years old, Ahmed son of Shahbaz, 08 years old, Areeba daughter of Zakir Hussain, 16 years old, Owais son of Ramzan, 14 years old, Shamila daughter of Shahbaz, 13 years old, Shahryar son of Ahmed, 11 years old, Farzana daughter of Mushtaq, 12 years old. The rescue team took immediate action and provided first aid to 4 children on the spot. While the remaining 4 injured children were shifted to THQ Hospital.

## ISSI holds Bilateral Think Tank Dialogue with Shanghai Institutes of International Studies (SIIS)

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) hosted Bilateral Dialogue with China's premier think-tank, the Shanghai Institutes for International Studies (SIIS). The thematic focus of the Dialogue was "Strengthening Think Tank and Academic Exchanges Between China and Pakistan and Deepening the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership."

The Dialogue was attended by a high-level Chinese delegation comprising Prof. Chen Dongxiao, President, SIIS; Prof. Liu Zongyi, Senior Research Fellow and Director, Centre for South Asia Studies, SIIS; Dr. Tan Chenyi; and Dr. Zhang Xiaoyin, Research Fellows at SIIS, along with Mr.

Shi Yuanqiang, Deputy Head of Mission, Chinese Embassy in Islamabad, while the speakers from Pakistani side included Ambassador Masood Khalid, Ambassador Zamir Akram, and Ambassador Asif Durran, reflecting the depth and diversity of Pakistan's scholarly and policy engagement in advancing China-Pakistan cooperation. Mr. Iftikhar Akil, DG(China) at the Foreign Office, also joined.

The meeting focused on deliberations over recent developments in China-Pakistan relations, the evolving U.S. global engagement, regional dynamics, and developments vis-a-vis Afghanistan.

In the opening remarks, Director General ISSI Ambassador Sohail Mahmood reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to peaceful coexistence, dialogue,

and regional stability, while safeguarding its sovereignty and core national interests. He expressed confidence that enhanced think-tank collaboration between ISSI and SIIS would generate valuable insights to further strengthen Pakistan-China relations as both countries approach the 75th anniversary of diplomatic ties.

Prof. Chen Dongxiao in his remarks said that the Pakistan-China strategic partnership has become even more vital amid profound global change and growing challenges to international order. He reaffirmed China's strong interest in peace, stability, and development in South Asia, describing Pakistan as a trusted strategic partner. He highlighted the importance of deepening people-to-people, academic, and



think-tank cooperation as a key pillar of bilateral relations. Prof. Chen expressed confidence that closer collaboration between SIIS and ISSI would make a positive contribution to regional stability and a more cooperative global order. Earlier, Dr. Talat Shabbir, Director, CPSC, delivered introductory remarks and moderated the working sessions. He highlighted the value of the ISSI-SIIS academic partnership in strengthening long-term intellectual cooperation.

The Dialogue concluded with closing remarks and a vote of thanks by Ambassador Khalid

Mahmood, Chairman, Board of Governors, ISSI, who appreciated the SIIS delegation's valuable contributions and expressed confidence that sustained think-tank engagement would further strengthen Pakistan-China ties and promote shared goals of peace, cooperation, and regional stability.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
170,741.34	169,864.52
Day's High	Day's Low
171,001.71	170,292.95
Index Value	Change
27,006,552,833	+876.82
Percentage	Time
+0.52%	15 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm
Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
9,751.31	+102.28
Percentage	Time
+1.06%	15 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

## USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change	
48,332.19	-125.86	
Percentage	Time	
-0.26%	5 Dec, 12:15 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
50,168.11	-668.44	
Percentage	Time	
-1.31%	15 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	185.5	189
Bahrain Dinar	743.5	753.5
Canadian Dollar	202	204.5
China Yuan	39.39	39.79
Danish Krone	43.81	44.21
Euro	329	332
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.02	3.11
Japanese Yen	1.7900	1.8900
Kuwaiti Dinar	911.4	921.4
Malaysian Ringgit	67.75	68.35
New Zealand \$	161.43	163.43
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.90
Omani Riyal	728.25	738.25
Qatari Riyal	76.47	77.17
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.45
Singapore Dollar	216	221
Swedish Korona	30.11	30.41
Swiss Franc	351.34	354.09
Thai Bhat	8.73	8.88
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.25
UK Pound Sterling	375.25	378.5
US Dollar	281	283.25

## PCDMA Calls for Single-Digit Interest Rates to Revive Economy



### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Chairman of the Pakistan Chemicals & Dyes Merchants Association (PCDMA), Salim Valimohammad, has expressed strong disapproval over the recent 50 basis points reduction in the interest rate, calling it insufficient. He urged the government to reduce the interest rate to single digits in order to address the growing economic challenges the country is facing.

In a statement, Salim Valimohammad stated that the current rate cut is not adequate given the state of the economy. "This reduction is not enough to create a meaningful impact. The economy cannot improve unless the interest rate is brought down to single digits," he emphasized.

He further explained that reducing the interest rate to a single-digit level is essential for stabilizing the national economy. "If the interest rate remains at this level, it will be impossible for businesses to grow, and the overall economic growth will continue to slow down," he added.

Salim Valimohammad strongly believes that unless the interest rate is brought down to single digits, there will be little hope for the improvement of the economy. "We need to take urgent and positive steps to stimulate the economy. Lower interest rates are vital to boosting business activities and driving economic recovery," he said.

# Industrialists, traders express dismay over slight cut in policy rates

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Industrialists and traders regretted the decision of Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) to cut slightly the policy rate by 50 basis points, terming the reduction as too little, too late for economic growth and expansion.

The MPC announced the policy rates reduced the policy rate to 10.50 percent after keeping the status quo unchanged for the fourth consecutive times, on the other hand, businessmen community was not happy for the slight cut due to over-cautious policy of

the central bank.

President Federal B Area Association of Trade and Industry (FBATI) Shaikh Muhammad Tehseen said that policy rate should be reduced drastically to a single digit if the real change is achieved in the growth of business and economy.

The policy rate is higher in Pakistan among regional countries and comparable economies hence, Pakistan's exporters have no edge to grow their business in a significant way, he added.

He pointed out the cost of doing business

and production remain increasing in the country, which is depicting the closure and departure of foreign and local companies in Pakistan.

President FBATI demanded that amid low policy rate, the government should actively reduce the cost of production, including taxes and undue duties to promote local investment and attract FDI.

Ibrahim Amin, a banking and financial expert and Chairman Dellsons Associates, said that the slight reduction in policy rate reflects the cautious move of the government towards

macroeconomic stability.

Dr Norman Ahmad, a tech entrepreneur, said that the growth in exports of services and commodities could be encouraged through incentivized businesses expansion and low interest rate is the long-term option, which is not available in Pakistan, unfortunately.

Lowering down the interest rates will help tech companies and SMEs to stretch their businesses, and enhance their contribution through increasing exports receipts, and ultimately reducing the current account deficit of the country, he added.

## Meeting for Resolution of Issues

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan along with Minister of State for Finance, Bilal Azhar Kayani chairing a Zoom Meeting for amicable resolution of issues with Goods Transport Alliance on Monday.



Photo: PID

## Team Infinix Rules PMGC Stage with an Unforgettable Victory



### Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Infinix has always stood for gaming enthusiasts, pushing the limits of performance and immersive gameplay with the GT 30 Pro Esports Edition. True to this spirit, the brand has made history by securing a victory at the PUBG Mobile Global Championship (PMGC), one of the most prestigious tournaments in the

global PUBG Mobile arena.

Commenting on this achievement, Simon Feng, CEO of Infinix Pakistan, said: "The PMGC victory marks an important moment for Infinix. It stands as a testament to our commitment to building a progressive esports ecosystem globally. Going forward, we aim to continue empowering our youth to make their mark on the international

stage."

With esports becoming an integral part of youth culture, Infinix Pakistan continues to strengthen its presence in competitive mobile gaming. The GT 30 Pro delivers smooth, immersive gameplay, featuring a high-refresh-rate display and fast response times, enabling players to perform at their best in high-intensity gaming environments.

## Diwan Fakhrudin rejects marginal cut in high interest rates, expresses serious concerns

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Renowned industrialist and businessman Diwan Fakhrudin has outrightly rejected the marginal reduction in the prevailing high interest rate, expressing serious concerns over its negative impact on the national economy. He stated that such minor adjustments are insufficient to address the severe challenges being faced by the industrial and business sectors.



Diwan Fakhrudin said that the current monetary policies have placed the industrial sector under immense pressure, resulting in a noticeable slowdown in business activities. Due to high interest rates, bank financing has become both costly and difficult to obtain, significantly increasing the cost of production.

As a result, not only has the establishment of new industries come to a halt, but existing manufacturing units are also being forced to operate below capacity, leading to rising unemployment.

In conclusion, Diwan Fakhrudin reaffirmed that the country's industrialists are fully prepared to play their role in strengthening the national economy, provided the government adopts business-friendly, realistic, and long-term economic policies.

## SITE industrialists disappointed over mere 50bps cut in policy rate

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Ahmed Azeez Alvi, President of the SITE Association of Industry (SAI) has expressed disappointment over the State Bank of Pakistan's decision to reduce the policy rate by only 50 basis points, terming the move insufficient to provide any meaningful relief to the struggling industrial sector.



In a statement, SAI President said that given the severity of the current economic challenges, such a marginal cut would do little to ease the pressure on businesses. He stressed that the government must adopt a clear and coherent strategy if it intends to keep domestic industries afloat.

Mr Alvi said that local industries were already under immense strain, while imports had come to a standstill. At the same time, he added, persistently high interest rates had trapped both businesses and the public in a cycle of inflation and unemployment. "People are losing jobs every day. The government must bring the policy rate down to single digits so that the economy can breathe and employment opportunities can grow," he said.

## Zalmi Developments Expands Legacy with Commitment to Sustainable Growth, Quality and Transparency

### Commerce Desk

LAHORE: JW SEZ Group & Shalimar Group officially announced the launch of Zalmi Developments today, marking a strategic debut poised to redefine Pakistan's property sector by introducing global-standard urban innovation. The launch was celebrated at an MoU signing event held on Monday, December 15, 2025, at The Nishat Hotel, Emporium, Lahore. This venture expands the winning legacy of Peshawar Zalmi "from the cricket stadium to the skyline", with a commitment to adopting International Construction Standards and integrating green technologies.

The Chairman Zalmi Group Mr. Javed



Afridi shared that "Zalmi Developments has been part of the Group's long-term vision. He added that this strategic move into the development sector reinforces Zalmi Group's philosophy of purposeful growth, sustainability, and excellence."

Mr. Asad Afridi, CEO of Zalmi Developments, stated, "Zalmi Developments is committed to redefining Pakistan's

real estate standards through innovative practices, customer-centric development, and strict adherence to quality and transparency.

Malik Khizar Hayat Awan, Chairman of Shalimar Group, commented on the strategic partnership with JW Group: "Joining hands with the JW Group to launch Zalmi Developments is a monumental step that leverages our collective strength to revolutionize the property sector."

The launch of Zalmi Developments by the JW SEZ Group & Shalimar Group of Companies represents a profound commitment to transforming Pakistan's urban landscape through innovation and adherence to international standards.

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# NUML, Russian Embassy Advance Strategic Partnership in Language Education & Cultural Cooperation

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Russian Ambassador Albert Khorev visited the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) today and called on Rector NUML, Maj Gen (R) Shahid Mahmood Kayani, HI (M). The meeting marked a significant step toward strengthening long-term and short-term collaboration in Russian language education, academic exchange, and cultural promotion.

During the discussion, both sides explored an ambitious long-term vision to introduce the Russian language from early schooling up to Class XII. Under this initiative, qualified Russian teachers, supported by the Russian Federation, would teach in Pakistan to build strong linguistic foundations and deepen cultural understanding among students.

In the short term, the focus remained on enhancing Russian language education for students of Classes XI and XII. This initiative aims to prepare Pakistani students for higher education opportunities in Russia, including scholarships, academic placements, and smooth admission pathways.

The Rector emphasized NUML's strong commitment to promoting the Russian language and culture, noting that with its extensive student body and specialized expertise in foreign languages, NUML is fully equipped to expand Russian language teaching, provided that qualified Russian instructors are made available. He added that students could complete undergraduate studies in Pakistan and later pursue advanced degrees in Russia, ensuring a secure and well-guided academic transition.

Following the meeting, both sides signed an Act of Acceptance of books and printed materials. This gesture reaffirmed the enduring partnership between the Russian Embassy and NUML, reflecting a shared commitment to cultural dialogue and academic cooperation between the Russian Federation and the Islamic Republic of Pakistan. Under the agreement, the Embassy formally transferred, and NUML accepted, a collection of books and printed resources.

Towards the end of the visit, Rector NUML presented a souvenir to the Russian Ambassador. DG NUML, Brig Muhammad Rafiq Khan, Director Academics Dr. Nadeem Talib, Dean Faculty of Languages Dr. Jameel Asghar Jami, and Director NILO Dr. Atif were also present on the occasion.



## Punjab Taekwondo Association, Vice President M. Syed Ali Imran to join Global Traditional Taekwondo Federation

### Tahir Amin Malik

M. Syed Ali Imran, CEO of Bizman Education and Immigration Lawyer, attended the Global Traditional Taekwondo Annual Summit 2025 in Korea. He stated, "I was truly impressed by the vision of Great Grand Master Sir Jun Lee. After studying his remarkable professional journey in Taekwondo, I decided to join the Global Traditional Taekwondo Federation as a Global Officer on the President's Advisory Committee."

He further added, "Grand Master Jun Lee is like a one-man army. He possesses true sportsman qualities and is exceptionally supportive in every aspect."

Mr. Ali Imran also expressed his keen interest in opening a GTTF Branch Office in Pakistan.

The Global Traditional Taekwondo Association is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting deserving students. Its mission is to help young practitioners develop strength, discipline, and morality—values that benefit them not only in the sport of Traditional Taekwondo but also in their everyday lives.



## National Tennis Icon Aisam-ul-Haq Kicks Off PSO's 'RISE' Employee Wellness Program

### News Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan State Oil (PSO), the nation's leading energy company, has launched RISE, a nationwide employee wellness initiative aimed at energizing employees and promoting healthier, more active lifestyles across all levels of the organization. The program aligns with PSO's commitment to employee wellbeing, recognizing that healthier and more engaged staff contribute directly to organizational productivity, innovation, and long-term growth.

RISE encourages staff to adopt

sustainable habits that improve physical and mental wellbeing, including daily activity, balanced nutrition, stress management, and mindfulness practices. By nurturing a resilient and engaged workforce, PSO aims to strengthen its capacity to meet the evolving demands of the energy sector and deliver consistent value to stakeholders.

The initiative was kicked off by Pakistan's internationally acclaimed tennis star Aisam-ul-Haq, whose participation reinforces the importance of discipline, focus, and self-care. Speaking about RISE, he highlighted that main-



taining an active and balanced lifestyle enhances both physical fitness and mental sharpness, helping individuals remain confident, energized, and productive. He commended PSO for prioritizing employee wellbeing and encouraged participants to fully

embrace the program as a step toward long-term personal and professional growth.

RISE lays the groundwork for a healthier, motivated, and high-performing workforce, supporting long-term personal and professional growth.

## Pakistan Commemorates World AIDS Day 2025 with Focus on Youth Leadership and Inclusive HIV Response

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Common Management Unit for AIDS, TB & Malaria- Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, in collaboration with UNFPA, UNAIDS & ACT International, hosted a national event today to mark World AIDS Day 2025, under the theme "Overcoming Disruption, Transforming the AIDS Response."

The event brought together government officials, development partners, youth representatives, and community leaders to

highlight the importance of resilient HIV responses and community-driven solutions.

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Representative of UNFPA, delivered the welcome remarks, emphasizing the role of partnerships in achieving national HIV goals.

A key session titled "Empowering Youth Through Inclusive Life Skills Education for HIV Prevention" was delivered by Mr. Mubashar Nabi, Founder President of ACT, highlighting the critical role of youth engagement and education in HIV prevention.

Following this, the DG Health (MoNHSR&C)/ Deputy National Coordinator (CMU), Dr Abdul Wali stated that it is estimated that 350,000 people are living with HIV in Pakistan, but almost 8 in 10 persons affected do not know their status. Children are increasingly affected, with new cases among those aged 0-14 years surging from 530 cases in 2010 to 1,800 in 2023.

National Coordinator, CMU presented an overview of the HIV response in Pakistan, showcasing progress, challenges, and strategic priorities. He said over the last

decade, Pakistan has increased eightfold the number of persons living with HIV who receive antiretroviral therapy (ART) – from around 6,500 in 2013 to 55,500 in 2024 – thanks to joint efforts by the Government, UN entities, and partners. The country has also increased the number of antiretroviral therapy centres from 13 in 2010 to 96 in 2025.

The Chief Guest, Special Secretary of Ministry National Health Services, Regulations & Coordination, Mr Muhammad Aslam Ghouri, delivered remarks

underscoring the government's continued commitment to ending the HIV epidemic and supporting inclusive, people-centered interventions. He said despite progress, in 2024, in Pakistan only an estimated 21% of people living with HIV knew their status, 16% of them were on treatment, and 7% had achieved viral load suppression. Over 1,100 AIDS-related deaths were reported in 2024.

The surge in new cases and recent outbreaks that have particularly affected children – jeopardizing their future and

Pakistan's future – are a stark reminder of the urgent need to intensify joint efforts and mobilize both international and domestic resources to end the public threat of AIDS for good.

Voices from the community were at the forefront of the discussions, including a presentation by a young member of the transgender community, sharing grassroots experience in community mobilization and HIV prevention among key populations.

There was a panel discussion on Youth Leadership and the

Role of Education in HIV Prevention, fostering dialogue between policymakers, educators, and youth leaders. The programme concluded with a theatrical presentation on HIV stigma reduction, aimed at raising awareness and promoting empathy, followed by closing remarks.

World AIDS Day 2025 serves as a reminder that, despite disruptions and challenges, collective action, community engagement, and transformative strategies are key to ending AIDS and ensuring no one is left behind.

## Save Future

KARACHI: A health worker administers a polio vaccine to a child at the door way of his home, while going house to house checking on children who need the vaccine, during Polio eradicating Campaign in Provincial Capital on Monday.



Photo: Online

## Pakistan shifts focus from aid to trade and investment for sustainable growth: Finance Minister

## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb has said that Pakistan is no longer seeking aid-based support and is firmly transitioning towards trade- and investment-led engagement to ensure long-term economic sustainability and mutually beneficial partnerships, particularly with the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) countries.

In an interview with CNN Business Arabia, the Finance Minister underscored that this strategic shift, clearly articulated by the Prime Minister, reflects Pakistan's renewed economic confidence and



reform momentum.

The Finance Minister highlighted that over the past 18 months, Pakistan has remained on a comprehensive macroeconomic stabilization program, which has delivered tangible and measurable

results. Inflation, which had peaked at an unprecedented 38 percent, has now declined to single-digit levels.

On the fiscal front, Pakistan has achieved primary surpluses, while the current account deficit remains

well within targeted limits. He further noted that the exchange rate has stabilized and foreign exchange reserves have improved to approximately 2.5 months of import cover, reflecting strengthening external buffers.

Senator Aurangzeb pointed to two major external validations of Pakistan's improving economic outlook. Firstly, all three international credit rating agencies have aligned their assessments this year by upgrading Pakistan's ratings and outlook.

Secondly, Pakistan has successfully completed the second review under the IMF Extended Fund Facility, with the IMF Executive Board

granting its approval earlier this week. These developments, he said, demonstrate growing international confidence in Pakistan's economic management and reform trajectory.

The Minister emphasized that macroeconomic stabilization has been achieved through a coordinated approach combining disciplined monetary and fiscal policies with an ambitious structural reform agenda. Reforms are being implemented across key areas including taxation, energy, state-owned enterprises, public financial management, and privatization, aimed at consolidating stability and laying the foundation for sustainable growth.

## Qatar military attaché meets defence minister

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Qatar Military Attaché in Pakistan, Brig Gen Abdul Hadi Mohammed Arhib Al Hajri on Monday called on Minister for Defence Dr Khawaja Muhammad Asif here at his office.

The Minister for Defence welcomed the dignitary and conveyed that Pakistan attached great value to its relations with Qatar, said a press release issued here.

Qatar military attaché meets defence

minister

"Qatar is an important country for us and has a key role to play in the region. Our relations with Qatar are very smooth governed by mutual respect and cooperation," Khawaja said.

The Minister said that both sides need to work closely to further extend their cooperation beyond the economic domain to defence, military exercises and training of personals and joint ventures. "Our military institutions are



open for Qatari Armed Forces to avail maximum training facilities."

The visiting dignitary acknowledged

the existing scope and scale of cooperation in the field of defence between the two countries.

## Gold, cheques recovered as Abbottabad police tighten net in Dr Warda murder case

## Correspondent

ABBOTTABAD: Abbottabad police on Monday said they had recovered gold, financial documents and the alleged murder weapon in the abduction and killing of Dr Warda, as investigators pressed for extended custody of the suspects. Police said gold and 10 receipts were recovered from the possession of Waheed Billa, the husband of alleged mastermind Rida Jadoon.

Investigators also seized cheques worth Rs123 million from the suspects.

According to police, the murder weapon — a rope allegedly used to strangle Dr Warda — was recovered from the suspects' identification.

Investigation officers said all legal requirements, including identification of the crime scene and planning locations, had been completed. Police said the



initial plan to abduct and kill Dr Warda was prepared at Waheed Billa's house, involving Waheed, Rida and Nadeem.

A second planning meeting was held at Waheed's shop, attended by Waheed, Nadeem and Shamraiz. The final plan was drawn up at Sheikh Dheri, where Shamraiz, Nadeem and Parvez allegedly gave it final shape.

Police said Parvez, one of the accused, has confessed to his role in the murder.

Investigators have filed an appeal in the Peshawar High Court seeking renewed physical remand of the suspects, citing the sensitivity of the case.

Police said all evidence and witnesses have been presented before the court.

Dr Warda, a doctor at Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Hospital in Abbottabad, was abducted on December 4, and her body was found four days later in a suburban area of the district.

## NIH issues advisory as H3N2 influenza risk rises

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Institute of Health (NIH) has issued an advisory warning of a rising risk of seasonal influenza H3N2, citing an increase in cases in Pakistan and across several regions worldwide.

According to the NIH, the influenza A(H3N2) subclade K has emerged globally during the 2025-26 season. A sharp rise in H3N2 cases has been reported in multiple regions since August 2025.

The advisory said South Asia recorded a significant increase in influenza cases between May and November 2025, with H3N2 accounting for 66 per cent of reported infections. Australia and New Zealand have also reported notable

H3N2 activity.

In Pakistan, the NIH observed an increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory infection (SARI) cases. Between epidemiological weeks 44 and 49, a total of 340,856 suspected cases were reported. Of the samples tested, 12 per cent were found positive for H3N2.

The institute warned that older adults, pregnant women, children and people with chronic illnesses are at higher risk of severe illness from the virus.

The NIH described influenza vaccination as the most effective preventive measure. It also advised regular hand-washing, observing cough and sneeze etiquette, and avoiding unnecessary crowding to reduce transmission.

## PM emphasises Daanish University to concentrate promoting technology, modern scientific disciplines



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday while chairing the Daanish University Board of Trustees meeting emphasized that Daanish University would concentrate on promoting technology and modern scientific disciplines.

The meeting focused on the university's development, future plans, and the establishment of an

inclusive and world-class institution aimed at promoting modern education and technological advancements, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The prime minister further directed that the university's architecture should be designed in a simple yet dignified manner, reflecting its commitment to excellence.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif welcomed the Chairman and members of the Board, extending his best wishes for their efforts. "Your endeavors will play a vital role in spreading the light of knowledge," said the prime minister, highlighting the critical role of education in transforming the nation's future.

The prime minister stressed the importance of appointing high-quality research faculty and staff. "A well-thought-out strategy should be devised to hire the best talent in research and teaching," he said, underscoring the need for academic excellence.

## Pakistan calls for universal justice, renewed multilateralism at UNAOC forum



## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik on Monday warned that the global order is becoming increasingly fragmented, urging world leaders to recommit to dialogue, justice and multilateral cooperation.

Addressing the 11th Global Forum of the United Nations Alliance of Civilizations (UNAOC) in Riyadh, held under the theme "UNAOC: Two Decades of Dialogue for Humanity," the minister said the vision of a shared "global village" was giving way to unilateralism, conflict and weakened multilateral institutions.

The high-level forum marked the 20th anniversary of the UNAOC and brought together global leaders, policymakers and civil society representatives.

Dr Malik noted that multilateralism was under strain amid rising conflicts, trade and tariff disputes, and shrinking global funding for environmental and development priorities.

He cautioned that the growing shift from bilateralism to unilateral actions was undermining global peace and justice.

Emphasising the need for the universal application of rights, the minister said he remained firmly committed to women's rights, minority rights, environmental rights and children's rights, describing them as "fundamental and non-negotiable".

He questioned what he termed the selective application of these principles, drawing attention to the situations in Palestine and Kashmir, and stressed that the rights of Palestinians and Kashmiris must be upheld in accordance with international norms.

## National Wheat Oversight Committee meets



## Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The first meeting of the National Wheat Oversight Committee, constituted under the Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26, was held on Monday with Minister for National Food Security and Research, Rana Tanveer Hussain in chair.

The meeting was attended by provincial and regional secretaries of food and agriculture, along with senior officials from relevant departments, said a press release.

The session focused on the objectives and implementation framework of the Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26.

During the meeting, the Federal

Minister highlighted the strategic importance of wheat in meeting the country's food requirements and emphasized the need to increase wheat cultivation to ensure national food security.

Detailed deliberations were held on the procurement mechanism for the upcoming wheat crop in line with the policy's objectives.

The Interim National Wheat Policy 2025-26 aims to transition from a state-dominated procurement system to a market-based wheat economy, ensure price stability through market-consistent indicative prices, and build and manage strategic reserves sufficient to safeguard food security.