Barkat Rice Mills

APC to be held in Karachi on Dec 22 against 'un-islamic' legislation: Maulana Fazl

Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Thursday announced that an all-party conference (APC) would be held in Karachi on December 22 to oppose what he termed "un-Islamic legislation" in the



Pakistan greatly values its close and fraternal relations with Bahrain:

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

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Meeting ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting of the working group on IT, on Thursday.

PM inaugurates T Chowk flyover, Islamabad Expressway Signal Free Corridor projects

👺 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Thursday inaugurated the T Chowk flyover and Islamabad Expressway Signal Free Corridor projects aimed at substanfic on the roads of Islamabad and Rawalpindi.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony of the projects, named as Iqbal Chowk flyover ency and quality in projects and he said the team led by Inte-

rior Minister Mohsin Naqvi of 77 days at a cost of Rs. 1.4 completed a number of infrastructure projects to facilitate the general public and transporters using roads of Islam-

He commended the Interior Minister, Chairman Capital tially improving the flow of traf- Development Authority (CDA) and their team for completing all the projects in record time.

After the completion of

billion.

flyover projects and due to Islamabad expressway signal free corridor the issue of congestion of traffic coming from GT road to Islamabad and Rawalpindi will be resolved

The Prime Minister assured that the government would The T chowk flyer project also continue to ensure transparwas completed in record time the journey of public service will

He also appreciated the officers who removed encroachments in the city and resolved the issue of illegal constructions

lingering on for decades. "The illegal encroachments are a hurdle in the designing and implementation of projects in

the city," he added. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Interior Mohsin Nagvi briefed about the completed flyover projects that

will enhance flow of traffic in Islamabad.

He said issue of water for residents of Islamabad would also be resolved.

He also unveiled a broader development blueprint, Vision 2027 for Islamabad which is a catalogue of projects for improving infrastructure in the capital.

Federal ministers, parliamentarians and high ranking officers also attended the event.

Munir meets Libyan Military Leadership to boost defense ties

Field Marshal Asim



Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI,: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, who is on a official visit to Libya, called on Field Marshal Khalifa Belqasim Haftar, Commanderin-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces and Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Deputy Commanderin-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces

On arrival, the Field Marshal was accorded a Haftar appreciated the Guard of Honour by a smartly professionalism of the Pakiturned-out contingent of the Libyan Armed Forces.

and avenues for enhancing bilateral defence and military-to-military cooperation were discussed during the meeting with Field Marshal Khalifa Haftar. Both sides underscored the importance of collaboration in training, capacity building, and counter-terrorism domains.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening defence ties with Libya, based on shared interests.

Field Marshal Khalifa stan Armed Forces and expressed his desire to further Matters of mutual interest, expand defence cooperation regional security dynamics, between the two countries.

Armed Forces pay tribute to Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed's ultimate sacrifice

跨 City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces; Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), Chief of the Naval Staff; and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Air Staff, on behalf of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, pay profound homage to the immortal legacy of Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider, on his martyrdom anniversary.

Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed stands as a towering symbol of valor, sacrifice, and unvielding devotion to the motherland. During the 1971 war at the Wagah sector, he displayed extraordinary courage in the face of overwhelming enemy resistance. Undeterred by severe injuries and relentless fire, he pressed ultimately laying down his they are sworn to defend.



life in the highest tradition of military honor. His gallantry in battle remains one of the most luminous chapters in the history of the Pakistan Armed

His supreme sacrifice embodies the indomitable spirit, professional excellence, and selflessness that define Pakistan's Armed Forces. Lance Naik Muhammad Mehfooz Shaheed's heroism transcends time, serving as an enduring source of inspiration for generations of soldiers and citizens alike, reinforcing the sacred bond between the forward with fearless resolve, armed forces and the nation

President, PM pay tribute to Lance Naik Mahfuz on his martyrdom anniversary

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Lance Naik Mahfuz Shaheed (Nishan-i-Haider) on anniversary of his martyrdom, recognizing his valor and sacrifice to safeguard the country.

The president and prime minister, in their separately issued statements, lauded the exemplary gallantry of Lance Wagah Border. Naik Mahfuz Shaheed in the 1971 war when he repelled the enemy at the the elevation of the rank of Lance Naik



They prayed to Allah Almighty for

Mahfuz Shaheed in paradise.

Shaheed is a symbol of bravery, sacrifice, and unwavering loyalty to the nation. During the 1971 war, despite being severely wounded at the Wahga front, Muhammad Mahfuz Shaheed's steadfastness in confronting the enemy is a testament to his extraordinary courage," the president said.

Prime Minister Shehbaz said that Lance Naik Mahfuz Shaheed defeated the enemy despite its overwhelming

He said brave soldiers like Lance Naik "Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz Muhammad Mahfuz Shaheed were the guarantee of Pakistan's invincible

> In 1971, he said Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz Shaheed proved with his courage, bravery, and valor that the entire nation stood as a solid wall in defense of the homeland.

defense.

The prime minister emphasized that the historic bravery of Lance Naik Muhammad Mahfuz Shaheed in the battlefield will continue to inspire future

Raast playing key role in promotion of financial inclusion, cashless economy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday emphasized that Raast- Pakistan's national payment systemwas playing key role in promotion of cashless economy and financial inclusion in the country.

The prime minister stressed the need to further expediting ulated the board members on efforts aimed at encouraging the country's businessmen to use Raast platform for their payments.

He was talking to the members of Raast board who called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister congratassuming their new responsi-He hoped that the board

members will help improve the working of this important department.

During the meeting, the board Aurangzeb, Minister for Infor-

members briefed the prime minister about the performance of Raast and informed him that so far, some three billion transactions worth of Rs 80 trillion had been completed in the country.

The meeting was attended by Minister for Finance Muhammad

mation Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Khan Cheema, Minister for Information Technology Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani, Governor SBP, Raast Board members, CEO and other relevant senior officers.

Info Minister seeks proposals to protect creative professions from AI disruption

跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Thursday has called for proposals to address challenges posed by artificial intelligence in the advertising industry, emphasizing the need to safeguard creative profession-

als from redundancy. In a post on X, the minister noted that the growing use of

AI in Pakistan's advertising sector is creating employment concerns for creative roles. Professions including

content creators, graphic designers, editors, creative directors, actors, models, technical staff and cameramen are particularly at risk. Authorities have invited the public to share recommendations to protect these professions. Suggestions can be submitted via email to pio@pid.gov.pk.

Friday, December 19, 2025

PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore honors legacy of Raees-ul-Ahrar with floral tribute in Rawalpindi

跨 Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore visited the mausoleum of Raees-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas at Faizabad in Rawalpindi on Thursday. The Prime Minister laid a floral wreath at the mausoleum and offered Fateha for the departed soul. On the occasion, a smartly turned out police contingent presented a salute to the Prime Minister upon his arrival.

Former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, Government minister Ms. Nabila Ayub, Secretary Services and General Administration Chaudhry Imtiaz Ahmed, Secretary Information Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Director Information Muhammad Bashir Mirza and other senior officials were also present on the occasion



Stunning View

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the sculptures of Horses in the premises of Convention Center in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

DARE-RC International Education Summit Concludes

Example 2 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The second and concluding day of the DARE-RC International Education Summit 2025 focused on translating research evidence into effective teaching practices, accountable governance, and system-wide education reform in Pakistan. Senior policymakers, academic together during the academic sessions teacher development, and enhance

large-scale education delivery.

The Day 2 opening reflections by Saima Anwer, Programme Director DARE-RC, emphasised the urgency of moving "from evidence to action," followed by a spotlight session by Dr Irfan Muzaffar from LUMS on reconnecting classroom realities with system-level reform. Panel discussions throughout the day featured leading leaders, and international experts came international scholars including Dr Ricardo Sabates (University of to explore how using evidence can Cambridge), Dr Aliya Khalid (Univerimprove classroom teaching, support sity of Oxford), and Heather Kayton (What Works Hub for Global Educa-

The sessions focused on evidencebased teaching practices, teacher recruitment and professionalisation, accountability and performance monitoring, and system-level governance reforms. Interactive roundtables in workshop style enabled deeper engagement on inclusion, climate resilience. teacher professional standards, and inter-provincial governance.

The two-day education summit was inaugurated with a keynote address by Professor Kamal Munir,

tion), alongside senior government Pro Vice-Chancellor, University of officials from all provinces of Pakistan. Cambridge, who set the agenda for advancing equity-driven, evidence-informed education reform in Pakistan.

The closing plenary focused on building a national culture of research. chaired by Dr Farid Panjwani, AKU, bringing together Vice Chancellor, AIOU and deans of education from various Pakistani varsities. The concluding session reinforced the role of universities in shaping policy-relevant research and future education

Prime Minister Rathore Empowers New Political Assistant Kazmi with Key Responsibilities

ISLAMABAD: After assuming office, the Political Assistant to the AJK Premier, Syed Azadar Hussain Kazmi, called on Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore here today. On this occasion, the Prime Minister Rathore issued special instructions to Mr. Kazmi



regarding the discharge of his duties in line with the government's policies. Mr. Kazmi expressed his profound gratitude to the Prime Minister for entrusting him with these responsibilities and assured that he would perform all his duties to the best of his capacity, with full dedication, hard work, and a strong sense of responsibility, in accordance with the government's policies and the Prime Minister's instructions.

Core Five Alliance unlikely due to diverging interests, warns Ambassador Masood Khan

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The so-called 'Core Five Alliance' cannot materialise as a formal alliance because the economic, military, and strategic interests of the proposed states fundamentally diverge, said Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, while analysing evolving global power dynamics during a televised interview.

Ambassador Khan explained that although reports and leaks from the detailed version of the U.S. National Security Strategy suggest exploratory division of labour among the United States, China, Russia, India, and Japan, the concept reflects dialogue and selective coordination rather than a structured bloc or alliance. "Alliance is a very big word. These countries do not share common strategic objectives, nor do they trust each other enough to form a unified front," he said.

He noted that the United States' latest strategic thinking under President Donald Trump points toward strategic retrenchment rather than global pre-eminence, with Washington increasingly focused on its own hemisphere. Ambassador Khan highlighted that the revised approach echoes a modernised version of the Monroe Doctrine—seeking to prevent large-scale military, technological, or economic encroachment in North and Latin America from other continents while urging Europe to shoulder greater responsibility for its own defence and development.

On China, Ambassador Khan observed that despite toned-down language in the National Security Strategy—where Beijing is framed as an economic and technological competitor rather than an outright enemy-serious fault lines remain, particularly over Taiwan and maritime control in the Western Pacific. "The idea that regional states can collectively contain China is easier said than done," he said, noting that Southeast Asian countries, despite some disputes with Beijing, lack the appetite or capacity for direct confrontation," he said.

VC-AIOU Urges Adoption of the Teachings of All Prophets for Peace and Tolerance



跨 City Desk

ISLAMABAD:"Our beliefs and religions may be different but there is no difference in the teachings of the Prophets (peace be upon them). All Prophets taught us the principles of living—patience, peace, tolerance, forbearance and the understanding of rights and responsibilities. Today we should pledge to make these teachings part of our lives and to walk the path they showed us" said the Vice Chancellor of Allama Iqbal Open University, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood while addressing a Christmas ceremony as the chief guest.

Dr. Nasir further stated that Hazrat Isa (Jesus) peace be upon him is a chosen Prophet of Allah, and that the Holy Qur'an clearly explains his greatness and status. He added that one cannot become a complete believer unless one accepts the Prophet-hood and teachings of all the Prophets (peace be upon them).

He said, "Let us begin a new commitment today: adopt the teachings of the Prophets in our lives; not only fulfill our own duties but also respect the rights of our neighbors, society, and every human being. This is where true peace, love, and the success of humanity lie."

The Christmas ceremony was held at the university's central auditorium, where more than eighty (80) Christian employees along with their families participated. On the occasion, the Executive Director of the United Council of Churches, Pastor Samson Sohail, recited selected verses from the Bible and highlighted interfaith harmony, national security, and the welfare of the global human community.

The event was also attended by the university's Registrar, Raja Umar Younas, faculty members, and principal officers. At the conclusion of the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Nasir Mahmood shared Christmas cake with the participants and children.

Sardar Attique Honors Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas as True Successor of Jinnah at Memorial Ceremony

Abdul Majeed Tahir

RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Confer-Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was the true and vision. ideological successor of Quaid-e-Azam accession of Jammu and Kashmir to

Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas. Sardar steadfastness. Attique Ahmad Khan said that Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas was a pious, leader who remained aligned with the of Pakistan Shahid Khaqan Abbasi

objectives of the Kashmir Freedom Movement and the Pakistan Movement even before the formal establishment of the Muslim Conference. ence and former Prime Minister of From day one, the Young Men's Muslim Association, Muslim Conference, and Attique Ahmad Khan, has said that Muslim League shared common goals

He said that despite remaining Muhammad Ali Jinnah, whose entire far from power, Chaudhry Ghulam life was devoted to the ideology of the Abbas earned more respect than many rulers. The Muslim Conference and Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas stood as a He expressed these views while major obstacle against any attempt to addressing a ceremony held on the divide Kashmir. Despite facing indifoccasion of the 58th death anniver- ference from both friends and foes, he sary of Rais-ul-Ahrar, Quaid-e-Millat continued his ideological struggle with

The ceremony was attended and addressed by distinguished leaders, principled, and God-fearing political including former Prime Minister



(Chief Guest), Chairman All Parties Hurrivat Conference Zahid Mahmood Safi, President PML-N AJK Shah Ghulam Qadir, former President

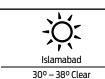
Shafiq Jarral Advocate, Senior Vice President Muslim Conference Sardar Abdul Rasheed Chughtai Advocate, Secretary General Muslim Confer-Muslim Conference Mirza Muhammad ence Mehar-un-Nisa, former Minister Ali Khan, Chairperson Women Wing and legal figures.



Shamim Ali Malik, Major (R) Sardar Samia Sajid Raja, Chairperson Demo-Nasrullah Khan, Sardar Sajid Advocate, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Noor-ul-Bari,

cratic Party Nabila Irshad Advocate, Liberation Front leader Rafiq Ahmed Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Dar, and several other political, social,





Namaz Timings Maghrib .. 5:02 pm 6:31 pm

EMEDGENCY

	RUEN	I J
Rescue (Poli	ce)	15
Bomb Dispo	sal	15
Fire Services	Rawalpind	i/
Islamabad		1122 & 16
Emergency A	Ambulance.	1122 &
& Rescue Se	rvices	4451122
Motorway Po	olice	9266044
Motorway Po	olice9	270601-20
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Women Police Ctations

Statio	113
Islamabad	9222590
Rawalpindi	. 9270601-20

ENQUIRY
hi Ambulance
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PIA Flight Info	114
PIA Cargo	9280979
Railway Inquiry	117
Railway Exchange .	9270831-5
WASA Rawalpindi .	5555489
CAA	9281092
HUCDI.	TAIC

позгі	IALJ
CMH	5611111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEDADTMENTS

DEPAR I	MEHIƏ
CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	d 9270151-3
Islamabad Metrop	olitan
Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8 ..9266316

Talagang's Own Muhammad Munib Tariq Turns Academic *Excellence* into Mastery at Capital University



TALAGANG: Son of soil of Talagang, Muhammad Munib Tariq achieved masters degree in BBA from Capital University of Science and technology Islamabad. During the studies not only Munib maintained high academic scores but also completed many international certifications including in consumer behaviour and market research and in digital marketing. Moreover, malik munib also did extensive internship in corporate world, including in Defence Housing Authority as finance internee while also working voluntarily in Al-Khidmat foundation for community welfare of underprivileged sections of society.

Aleem Khan Honors Martyrs at Christmas Ceremony, Salutes the Valor of Pakistan Armed Forces

LAHORE: "Today, our freedom and national survival are indebted to the Pakistan Army and the blood of every martyr is a debt on all of us. Every Pakistani pays tributes to the martyrs and their families who sacrificed their lives for our beloved homeland." These remarks were made by Federal Minister for Communications & President of the Istehkam Pakistan Party Abdul Aleem Khan while speaking as the chief guest at a ceremony held on the occasion of Christmas. He said that during the aggression by the enemy in May, the personnel of Pakistan's Army, Navy and Air Force responded with outstanding valor. "For the first time in national and global history, someone shot down seven enemy's aircraft while not a single one of ours was affected," he added. He offered high praise for the Pakistan Armed Forces, especially Field Marshal and Chief of Defense Forces Hafiz Syed Asim Munir and led slogans in support of the Pak Army.

The event was attended by IPP Punjab President Rana Nazir Ahmed Khan, General Secretary Mian Khalid Mahmood, Information Secretary Syed Samsam Ali Bukhari, Punjab General Secretary & MPA Shoaib Siddiqui, Lahore President Zulfqar, and members of the Women's nity and citizens.



President and former MPA Haroon Imran

Malik Zaman Naseeb, Minority Wing Wingincluding Tehseen Khakwani, Rubina Salhari, Dr. Jaweria Sehrawardi along with Gul, Punjab Vice President Mian Junaid a large gathering of the Christian commu-

IST Convocation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi, Executive Director Prof. Sohail Afzal and Vice Chancellor Dr. Mansoor awarding Jinnah Gold Medal to student in convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology held on Thursday.



Wedding Industry Leaders Demand Relief from Restrictions and Rising Taxes

RAWALPINDI: Khalid Idrees Bhatti, President of the Punjab Marriage Halls, Marquees and Lawn Owners Association; Rao Tariq Islam, General Secretary; Malik Zahoor Advocate, President of the Rawalpindi Marriage Hall Association; along with Asif Iqbal, Hamid Abbasi, Khalid and others, stated during a press conference at the National Press Club, Islamabad, that thousands of people are directly and indirectly employed in this industry. Due to restrictions on traditions and unjustified limitations on working hours, the industry is under severe pressure. It is a matter of serious concern that wedding ceremonies are being restricted under the guise of various laws and



affecting businesses but is also is being enforced only on causing inconvenience to the halls. Moreover, marriage hall

owners are facing various taxes They further pointed out and notices from the Federal are not limited to marriage addition, there has been a halls alone but are also held sharp increase in property

gas, and other utility bills. The FBR has also issued orders for tax deductions under Sections 236C and 236CB, further that wedding ceremonies Board of Revenue (FBR). In worsening business conditions. Various taxes are already imposed on goods and services regulations, which is not only at homes; however, the law tax, PRA charges, electricity, used in wedding ceremonies.

Graduates Awarded Degrees at **CUST Convocation**

ISLAMABAD: The Convocation of Capital University of Science and Technology for Graduates of year 2025 held at Convention Centre wherein 1323 graduates were awarded degress in their respective fields.

Cust university commenced degreess in programs of BBA, MBA, BS, PharmD, MS and PhD in the fields of Management Sciences, Electrical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering, Computer Engineering, Engineering Management, Project Management, Computer Science, Software Engineering, Biosciences, Biotechnology, Microbiology and Doctor in Pharmacy PharmD awarded

Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi grace the occasion as chief guest while Executive Director prof Sohail Afzal presided the ceremony

Prof. Dr Mansoor Ahmed, Vice Chancellor of University in his inaugural speech, welcomed the graduates and highlighted the contribution made by the University in the field of higher education. Education plays a vital role in economic development of country and raises the productivity and efficiency of individuals and thus produces skilled manpower that is capable of leading the economy of the country he added.

Hayat College Students Shine at Nutrition Awareness Exhibition in Timergara



Example 2 Correspondent

TIMERGARA: The students of Hayat College of Health Management Sciences, Institute of Nursing, Timergara, organized an awareness exhibition on nutrition, in which a large number of students participated. On this occasion, the exhibition was inaugurated by Principal Zahid Ullah, Director Rahmat Hayat, and other guests of Hayat College of Health Management Sciences, Institute of Nursing, Timergara. They showed keen interest in the nutrition exhibition organized by the students and visited the stalls, where the students provided detailed briefings about their respective stalls. The guests appreciated the students for setting up excellent stalls and raising awareness on the topic. Awards were also distributed among the students who secured top positions in the exhi-

Dr. Faizan Arshad gave detailed briefing on the progress of the campaign in meeting



Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Anti-Polio Campaign Continues on the Directives of Punjab Chief Minister Marvam Nawaz Sharif.

A review meeting regarding the performance of the anti-polio campaign on its second day was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela. District Health Officer (DHO) Dr. Faizan Arshad gave a detailed briefing on the progress of the campaign. He informed the meeting that on the second day, 135,522 children were administered polio drops across the district. It was reported that 95 percent of the second day target had been achieved and the Deputy Commissioner appreciated the dedication and hard work of the field teams, especially for performing their duties efficiently despite severe cold weather. Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela emphasized that reaching every child with polio drops is the top priority of the district administration. He directed the concerned officers and field teams to immediately cover all missed children and ensure complete vaccination. He also appealed to parents to fully cooperate with polio vaccination teams and play their role in making the district polio free.

Punjab to witness rain, snowfall from Dec 20: PDMA

LAHORE: Punjab's Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) has said that rainfall and snowfall are likely to be witnessed in Murree, Rawalpindi and other parts of Punjab from December 20.

Citing the entry of a western disturbance in Balochistan on December 19 (tomorrow), the PDMA said that rain and thunderstorms were expected in the Potohar region, Mianwali, Bhakkat, Poorpurthal, Layyah and Galliyat till December 21.

Senator Anusha Rehman visits NSIT City: Calls for Acceleration of Pakistan's Premier IT Development **Project**

👺 Bureau Report

LAHORE: Thursday, Decem-CM, Senator Anusha Rehman tion of work underway at the economic growth and inno-

Punjab flagship technology project. She emphasized the need to fast track the project ber 18,2025. Senior Advisor to in accordance with the vision and direction of CM Punjab visited Pakistan's first and larg- Maryam Nawaz Sharif and est IT-focused development to speed up the work using project, NSIT City, to review all advanced technologies the quality, and strategic direc- forwarding the agenda of

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin, along with COO Brigadier (R) Mansoor Janjua and other Senior officials were present included Riaz Hussain, Executive Director Technical, Waseem Siddiq, Director Marketing, Ali Waqar Shah, Director Business Develop-



tions and Asif Iqbal, Director Management & Planning.

Senator Anusha Rehman

completing the infrastructure

ated the government's commitemphasized the need to latory authorities to overcome ecosystem linking industry futuristic needs.

ment & Investment Rela- deploy advanced technol- all hurdles in completing 1st and academia, keeping focus ogies for construction and phase of the NSIT She reiter- on emerging technologies and development of comprehensive and liaise with relevant regument to strengthening the IT infrastructure prompting the

Editorial/Opinion

Friday, December 19, 2025

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Pakistan Advocates for Effective Implementation of Digital Promises at **WSIS+20 Review**

nited Nations member states Wednesday pledged to narrow widening digital divides and put stronger safeguards around artificial intelligence (AI), with Pakistan calling for "effective" implementation of those promises at the UN General Assembly, which concluded a major review of how the world manages the Internet and digital technologies.

"While digital technologies have expanded opportunities, they have also introduced new inequalities that demand urgent collective action," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, told the high-level meeting.

The two-day meeting marked the conclusion of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS+20), a process launched in the early 2000s to guide global cooperation on digital development, access and inclusion, at a time when the internet was only starting to become an essential part of everyday life.

Two decades later, delegates said the challenge is no longer simply getting people online but ensuring that digital technologies – including AI – are governed in ways that protect human rights, build trust and close widening digital gaps.

WSIS was created in 2003 to help countries work together on the opportunities and risks posed by information and communication

It brought governments together with businesses, civil society and technical experts – a multistakeholder approach that remains central to digital governance today.

At this year's review, participants reflected on how deeply digital tools now shape the economy, education, healthcare and daily life, while warning that millions remain excluded.

In remarks to the General Assembly on Tuesday, its President, Annalena Baerbock, said access to the internet has become essential - from telemedicine in remote villages to online education and digital financial services – yet progress is sluggish.

While global Internet access stands at around two-thirds of the world's population, she noted that in developing countries it is far lower, and women and girls continue to be disproportionately left behind. "Two decades later, our shared vision of a people-centred, inclusive and development-oriented information society remains unfinished," she said.

She warned that access alone is not enough, stressing the need for responsible governance of emerging technologies such as AI, particularly as innovation often moves faster than regulation.

The meeting concluded with the adoption of an outcome document reaffirming countries' commitment to a people-centred digital future grounded in human rights and the principles of the UN

The text calls for faster action to close digital divides, greater investment in digital infrastructure and skills, and more predictable policy environments to support digital development. It also highlights the importance of trustworthy governance of data and AI, building on commitments already made under the Global Digital

Shariah Courts in the UK and the USA: A False Alarm?

talk shows, and now even in parliamenhearing a rising cry that "Sharia must be banned" in the United Kingdom and the United States. The claim is repeated with an air of urgency, as if a parallel state is quietly taking over, as if Western civilisa- repeatable political brand tion is under legal siege, as if courts have been replaced and constitutions have been hijacked. It sounds dramatic. It sounds mobilising. It sounds like a culture war slogan designed to trigger fear. Yet when looks different, but the one pauses and asks the basic question what does "Sharia" mean in the UK or the USA in real, legal terms?—the entire narrative starts to collapse under its own exaggerations.

First, Sharia as it exists for Muslims living in non-Muslim countries is not a state law, not a criminal code, not a government "replacement" for British or American law. In practice, what is most often being discussed are voluntary religious opinions and community-based mediation on personal matters such as marriage, divorce, family disputes, and inheritance issues that Muslims want resolved in a way that aligns with their faith while still living fully under the law of the land. Even in the UK debate, reputable fact-checking has repeatedly stressed that these bodies are not "courts" in the sense of legal authority; they do not override national law, and the word "court" itself misleads the public into imagining a sovereign parallel judiciary.

The names behind these pushes matter because the user asked for "renowned politicians," and because the political mainstreaming of suspicion is precisely the engine of Islamophobia. In the United

strange new alarm is States, Senator John Cornyn and Senator into clothing, prayer, diet, family life, tion, strengthen legal aid and awareness, being manufactured in Tommy Tuberville publicly announced neighbourhoods, and identity—turning our time—an alarm that a "No Sharia Act" in October 2025. On travels faster than facts. the House side, public communications pathway to radicalisation. In this climate, coercion or abuse wherever it occurs— In social media clips, in around "No Sharia" legislation have been even the most basic Islamic principle for promoted by figures such as Congressman tary and congressional messaging, we are Randy Fine, with references to support erased: Muslims are religiously obligated to from other lawmakers. Separately, Congressman Chip Roy has promoted a "Preserving a Sharia-Free America Act,"

> rather than a response to a real legal takeover.

In the United Kingdom, the roster pattern is the same: claims about large numbers, claims about demographic replacement, claims about enclaves, and claims that Britain is

"becoming" something else. Petitions have demanded bans on the basis of "85 courts," illustrating how figures—accurate or not—become a rallying device. The Times has described the UK as a "western capital" for these councils and repeated the figure of 85 in its own framing, which then further recirculates through social media as "proof" that a parallel state exists. Meanwhile, fact-checkers and parliamentary materials keep insisting on what the public debate keeps forgetting: there is no legal authority here that outranks national law, and the uncertainty of numbers is routinely exploited by those who want certainty of

All of this is producing something far more dangerous than the imaginary menace it claims to prevent: a widening social permission structure for hostility toward ordinary Muslims. The suspicion is no longer only about "law." It bleeds

everyday religiosity into a presumed minorities living in non-Muslim lands is respect the law of the land they live in, and if a society forbids core worship entirely, classical teachings emphasise either complireflecting how the phrase has become a ance with law or relocation rather than

rebellion. The modern anti-Sharia campaign, however, behaves as if Muslims are secretly trained to undermine constitutions—when, in reality, most Muslims are simply trying to preserve family norms, marry, divorce, and distribute inheritance in a manner

consistent with faith while remaining loyal citizens bound by national law.

And here is the tragedy of misunderstanding that your narrative rightly points to: Western publics are often told that Islam is "incompatible" with Western civilisation, as if Islam is built on hatred of the West. But the deeper truth is that Islam obliges belief in the prophets revered in Judaism and Christianity, including Jesus (peace be upon him) and Maryan interfaith common ground that is rarely highlighted in angry soundbites. When that commonality is buried, fear fills the vacuum. Demagogues then sell the public a simplified enemy: "Sharia." It becomes a code-word, not for a real legal system in London or Texas, but for the presence of Muslims themselves.

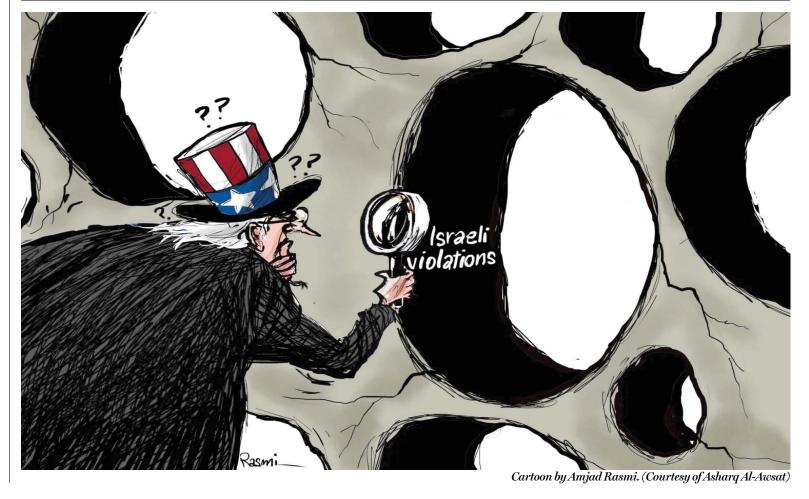
If the aim is genuinely to protect women's rights and protect citizens from coercion, then the honest path is specific reform: ensure civil marriage registra-

clarify that any religious mediation cannot pretend to be a state court, and prosecute without turning an entire faith into a suspect class. That is what serious governance looks like. What we are watching instead is the conversion of ignorance into policy branding, and policy branding into social hostility.

This is why the new "ban Sharia" wave must be confronted with calm, verified facts and moral clarity. In the UK, we do not have "300 Sharia courts": we have contested estimates of voluntary councils—often described in the range of about 30 to 85 in England and Wales, with no confirmed presence in Scotland in the cited independent review. In the United States, we do not have Sharia-governed towns; we have recurring anti-Sharia bills and rhetoric that treats Muslims as a fifth column even while the Constitution already governs the courts.

The time has come for philosophers, thinkers, and religious scholars—Muslim, Christian, and Jewish-to raise the level of discourse in public spaces, especially on social media where fear spreads fastest. If the West can learn once more to distinguish between a citizen's private religious ethics and the public law of the state, then Muslims who live in the UK and the USA—obeying the law, contributing to society, paying taxes, raising families, and pursuing dreams—can continue to live in peace, with dignity, and with the freedom that Western civilisation itself claims to cherish.

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



The Fabric of Faith, Torn by the State

n the long and painful history of the subcontinent, power has often asserted itself through the humiliation of the vulnerof this dynamic is the targeted persecu- enacted a form of educational apartheid, tion of Muslim women, whose choice sabotaging futures and violating fundaof religious attire—the hijab—has been mental rights to non-discriminatory transformed from a personal expression schooling as enshrined in both Indian of faith into a site of state-sanctioned and international law. coercion and public degradation. From

within the bureaucracy of Bihar, a clear and chilling message is being enforced: the autonomy of the Muslim woman's body is subordinate to the whims of majoritarian

authority. The hijab, an act of conscience and iden-

tity for millions, is being systematically tity, aligning with a broader project of criminalised and politicised. Its presence assimilation and subjugation. It is the is treated as a provocation, its wearers subjected to scrutiny and punishment, and its removal demanded as a token of compliance. This is not the maintenance hijab is a visible, daily reminder of diverof public order; it is a concerted campaign of psychological intimidation, leveraging a woman's most personal choices

to enforce a political and social hierarchy. At checkpoints, women report being forced to unveil under the guise of secuof occupation.

The now-infamous hijab ban in Karnataka's educational institutions weaponized policy to enact exclusion. By forcing Muslim girls to choose between able. Today, a disturbing metric their faith and their education, the state

This war on the hijab is thinly veiled. educational institutions in Karnataka
It has little to do with secularism to the militarised landscape of Indian and everything to do with a patriaroccupied Kashmir, and now, starkly, chal, majoritarian ideology that views

the Muslim woman as a symbol to be conquered. Her body becomes a battleground where political dominance is asserted. Forcing unveiling is intended to symbolize the stripping away of a distinct religious and cultural iden-

same logic that fuels violence over food, legislation questioning citizenship, and the destruction of places of worship. The sity that this ideology seeks to erase.

The international response to this systematic targeting has been marked by a profound and telling silence. Western Bihar is not an isolated event but a nations quick to invoke women's rights point within a continuum of oppression. elsewhere offer little more than muted In Indian-occupied Kashmir, the hijab diplomacy, prioritising strategic partis often treated as a marker of suspicion. nership over principle. Global feminist movements, often vocal on issues of bodily autonomy, have largely failed rity, a practice that blurs the line between to amplify this specific struggle against surveillance and sexualised humiliation, state-coerced unveiling. This silence is turning the female body into a territory not passive; it is a form of complicity that grants impunity to the perpetrators.

United Nations resolutions like UNSCR 1325 on Women, Peace and Security, and UNSCR 1820 on sexual violence in conflict, outline clear obligations to protect women from targeted violence and humiliation. The treatment of Muslim women in India, particularly in conflict zones like Kashmir, meets the criteria these resolutions were designed to address. Yet, geopolitical calculations consistently override human rights imperatives. Nitish Kumar's act demands legal accountability, not just political criticism. The Karnataka ban must be permanently rescinded. The patterns of harassment in Kashmir must be independently investigated. But ultimately, India faces a moral reckoning that transcends individual incidents.

A nation that allows its agents to publicly violate the religious dignity of its citizens erodes its own constitutional soul. A world that watches such violations for political convenience abandons its professed values. The flames of intolerance consuming the rights of Muslim women in India are fed by policy, oxygenated by impunity, and shielded by global indifference.

Justice is indivisible. The right to personal faith and autonomy is universal. Until the hijab is respected as a legitimate choice, until Dr. Nusrat Parveen receives concrete justice, and until the international community finds its voice, these violations will continue to expose not the faces of the women targeted, but the true, eroded visage of power and the tragic cost of collective silence.

 $The \,writer\,is\,an\,academic, TV and$ radio broadcaster, and is currently associated with the Kashmir Institute of International Relations as a content editor. She can be reached at rasoolsara134@gmail.com

Nawaz Sharif himself to oversee AJK, GB Pols campaign

s Pakistan's political horizon begins to turn economic management, the party appears intent on reclaiming toward the 2026 electoral cycle, Pakistan Muslim League (N) President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif has sent a clear and calculated signal by assuming a direct role in shaping the party's political strategy for Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) and Gilgit-Baltistan (GB). Chairing a high-level consultative experience lend weight to the party's campaign in a manner

meeting in Lahore, Nawaz Sharif indicated that he intends to personally oversee and lead the party's campaign in both regions—a move that carries strategic, political, and symbolic

The meeting brought together senior leadership from the federal government, Punjab, AJK, and Gilgit-Baltistan, reflecting the seriousness with which the PML-N is approaching the upcoming elections. Among those present were PML-N Secretary General and Federal Minister for Planning Professor

Ahsan Iqbal, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam, Prime Minister's Senior Adviser Senator Rana Sanaullah, Senator Pervaiz Rashid, and Senator Anosha Rehman. Former Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Chaudhry Muhammad Barjees Tahir also attended, along with Senior Punjab Minister Maryam Aurangzeb and Special Assistant to the Punjab Chief Minister Rashid Iqbal Nasrullah.

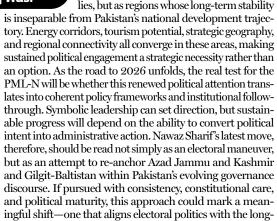
The question is constitutionally sensitive and politically nuanced. However, its inclusion in high-level political dialogue marks a shift from symbolic engagement toward structural thinking. Proponents argue that without predictable, needsbased fiscal arrangements, development planning in AJK and GB remains constrained, dependent on discretionary allocations rather than institutional participation. Any movement in this direction would require careful legal, political, and diplomatic calibration, yet the willingness to revisit the debate itself represents a notable departure from past inertia.

Strategically, Nawaz Sharif's personal involvement also serves to consolidate the PML-N's political narrative at a time when Pakistan's politics remains polarized and institutionally strained. By foregrounding governance, merit, and

its traditional identity as a vehicle of administrative competence—an identity that resonates strongly in regions where service delivery, infrastructure development, and employment opportunities remain pressing concerns.

Political observers note that Nawaz Sharif's stature and

few leaders can replicate. His hands-on role is expected to energize party workers, mitigate internal divisions, and sharpen the party's competitive edge. More importantly, it signals continuity of leadership at a moment when voters increasingly seek predictability and institutional stability over political improvisation. The broader implication of this renewed focus is that AJK and Gilgit-Baltistan are gradually being reframed—not merely as electoral territories or constitutional anoma-



overdue imperative of inclusive and equitable development. The writer is a seasoned columnist, policy analyst, and advocate for Pakistani diaspora engagement. His writings focus on national development, geopolitical strategy, and the role of overseas Pakistanis in shaping a prosperous future.

PC Hospitality and Global Palace Mark a New Era of Hospitality with PC Legacy Hyderabad

👺 Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Hashoo Group's Hospitality Division has formally launched PC Legacy Hyderabad, a four-star hotel developed in strategic partnership with Global Palace. The launch marks a significant milestone for the city's hospitality sector, introducing an internationally benchmarked lifestyle destination aimed at strengthening Hyderabad's tourism and business infrastructure.

The launch ceremony, held at PC Legacy Hyderabad, was attended by distinguished guests including Mr. Chela Ram Kewlani, Director, Global Palace; Mr. Muhammad Aslam Siddiqui; Mr. Muhammad Hassan; Mr. Ali Hassan; Ms. Ramnani Hari Simran; Mr. Aakash Kumar; Mr. Ratan Kumar; and the Global Palace team, along with Mr. Bastien Blanc, Chief Executive Officer, Hospitality Division - Hashoo Group, and senior leadership from both organizations. Prominent figures from leisure tourists, and families seeking Pakistan's business and social circles were also present, reflecting the significance of this landmark development

Strategically located on the Hyderthe city's major attractions, PC Legacy Hyderabad offers exceptional connec-



tivity to cultural, commercial, and resipowered by Google Nest, enabling corporate events, weddings, and largedential hubs. The hotel is ideally positioned to cater to business travelers, comfort, convenience, and contemporary hospitality.

PC Legacy Hyderabad features 40 well-appointed rooms and suites, designed to deliver a refined, technoloabad Bypass, just five minutes from gy-driven guest experience. The property is the first hotel in Hyderabad to introduce smart room technology

guests to enjoy enhanced comfort, control, and efficiency throughout

The hotel sets a new benchmark for events and celebrations in the city with the largest combined banquet facilities in Hyderabad, capable of hosting up to 3,000 guests. These expansive spaces are complemented by modern meeting rooms and conference facilities, making the property a preferred destination for

scale social gatherings.

Guests can also enjoy a curated culinary experience at the hotel's all-day dining restaurant, offering seating for up to 80 guests and a thoughtfully crafted menu that blends local flavors with international cuisine.

Commenting on the partnership, Mr. Chela Ram Kewlani, Director, Global

vision of redefining hospitality in Hyderabad. Collaborating with Hashoo Group to introduce PC Legacy Hyderabad allows us to deliver memorable experiences while setting new standards of service, quality, and innovation for the

Mr. Bastien Blanc, Chief Executive Officer, Hospitality Division - Hashoo Group, added:

"Hyderabad holds immense cultural "This partnership reflects our shared and economic significance, making it

an ideal destination for the PC Legacy brand. Our collaboration with Global Palace brings together strong local presence and PC Hospitality excellence. PC Legacy Hyderabad is poised to become a benchmark upscale hotel for the region."

In addition to accommodation and events, the hotel offers a state-of-the-art gym and fitness center, along with 24/7room service, concierge support, secure parking, and valet services, ensuring a seamless and comfortable experience for all guests.

PC Legacy is an upscale hotel brand by Pearl-Continental Hospitality, Hashoo Group, positioned between the luxury 5-star Pearl-Continental Hotels and the value-driven Hotel One portfolio. The brand delivers a balanced offering of quality, comfort, and value for discerning travelers.

Following the successful launch of PC Legacy properties in Hunza and Skardu, the opening of PC Legacy Hyderabad represents another key step in the brand's national expansion. With its prime location, smart room technology. and the largest banquet capacity in the city, the hotel is poised to set new standards for upscale hospitality in the region, as PC Legacy continues its growth with planned openings in Lahore, Naran, and

Learning from Setbacks: Educational Leaders | Senator Dr. Shehzad Waseem Inspire Students at Bait-ul-Hikmah Event

👺 Bureau Report

KARACHI: President of Hamdard Foundation Pakistan, Ms. Sadia Rashid, has said that failure is not an enemy but the greatest teacher of human life. She expressed these views while addressing students at the Hamdard Nounahal Assembly held at Bait-ul-Hikmah

the topic "Failure is Not a Downfall, It Is a Teacher." She said that despite hard work and sincerity, results are sometimes not as expected, but such moments strengthen character. Citing the life of Hakim Mohammed Said, she emphasized that continu-

ing success.

Chief Guest and renowned educationist Ms. Fatima Obaid highlighted the role of parents and teachers, stressing that children should be encouraged and supported after failure rather than scolded. She under-

Auditorium, Madinat-ul-Hikmah, on ous struggle turns failures into last- lined the importance of reflective practice and self-accountability, saying that learning from mistakes is the true path

> Earlier, Leader of the House Avesha Fawad said that the journey of life is full of ups and downs, and real success lies in moving forward despite failures.

She remarked that failure should be considered the first step towards success.

Leader of the Opposition Jaisha Ahmer said that failure is an important life experience and urged parents and teachers to motivate children, reminding them that failure is not a crime but a signal to change

strategy. She quoted the Quranic verse, "Indeed, with hardship comes ease."

The program included speeches by student speakers, recitation of the Holy Quran, Naat, tableaus, national songs. A large number of students, teachers, parents, and guests attended

visits the Japanese Embassy in Pakistan



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Former Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Senator Dr. Shehzad Waseem, visited the Japanese Embassy in Pakistan and wrote his impressions in the guest book. While writing his impressions, Dr. Shehzad Waseem said that Pakistan and Japan's bilateral friendly relations are highly valued, and there is a need to further enhance these relations in trade, cultural, and social sectors. The Pakistani people see Japan as a developed, organized, and hardworking nation. Japanese technology, punctuality, cleanliness, and

collective discipline are highly appreciated in Pakistan. In Pakistani circles, Japan is considered a friend who does not interfere in Pakistan's internal affairs and maintains relations with diplomatic courtesy and respect.

AlHuda CIBE Awards Shariah Compliance Certificate to AL BARAKAH MCSI

Spokesman Report

ciples across its cooperative and financial activities and marks a significant milestone in strengthening Islamic finance practices in Mauritius.

a high-level engagement between H. DUBAI - UAE: AlHuda Centre of E. Mr. Munsoo Kurrimbaccus, High Islamic Banking and Economics Commissioner of Mauritius to Paki-(AlHuda CIBE) has officially awarded stan and President of AL BARAKAH, a Shariah Compliance Certificate to AL and Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal, BARAKAH Multi-purpose Co-opera- Chief Executive Officer of AlHuda CIBE. tive Society Limited, Mauritius, follow- During his visit to Pakistan, H. E. Mr. ing a comprehensive Shariah review of Kurrimbaccus also visited the AlHuda its operations, products, and governance CIBE Lahore office, where discussions framework. The certification reflects AL focused on expanding cooperation in BARAKAH's adherence to Shariah prin- Islamic finance between Pakistan and Mauritius.

Mr. Muhammad Zubair Mughal

The development coincided with icate to AL BARAKAH Multi-purpose Co-operative Society Limited after a thorough review of its operations, products, and governance framework. He added that the certification reflects AL BARAKAH's commitment to Shariah principles and international best practices in Islamic finance. He further stated that AlHuda CIBE remains committed to supporting institutions across Africa and other regions in strengthening Asia. Shariah governance, ethical finance, and sustainable financial systems.

H. E. Mr. Munsoo Kurrimbaccus stated that AlHuda CIBE is pleased to stated that the Shariah certification award the Shariah Compliance Certif- awarded by AlHuda CIBE is an impor- where Mauritius' role in Islamic finance

tant milestone for AL BARAKAH and reinforces confidence in its cooperative and financial activities. He stated that Mauritius continues to position itself as an emerging hub for Islamic finance and welcomes collaboration with international institutions to promote Shariah-compliant finance, knowledge exchange, and cross-border partnerships, particularly between Africa and

Building on this momentum, both sides discussed collaboration around upcoming global forums, including the 12th African Islamic Finance Summit,



tion is expected to feature prominently.

The engagement reflects AlHuda CIBE's continued mission to promote Shariah-compliant finance globally

through advisory services, certification, training, and international dialogue, while supporting institutions like AL BARAKAH in building strong and credible Islamic finance ecosystems.

Japan and UNDP Partner to Strengthen Local Governance and Public Service Delivery in the Merged Districts

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan, through the ening the institutional capacity Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), and the Local Governments (TLGs) to United Nations Development deliver essential public services Programme (UNDP), in partnership with the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP), have launched a new initiative titled "The Project for Development of Public Service Infrastructure in the Merged Districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa" to strengthen local governance and improve access KP's Merged Districts. Implemented under UNDP's Merged Areas Governance Programme (MAGP), the partnership was formalized through a signing ceremony in Islamabad.

Following their merger with KP in 2018, the Merged Districts are undergoing a critical transition toward decentralized governance and localized service delivery. While notable progress has been made, newly established local systems continue to cope with the adjustments required by the merger, needing support to

and expand access to basic public services. This project aims to address these gaps by strengthof the first-ever elected Tehsil and promote community-responsive governance.

With a contribution of 518 million Japanese Yen (approximately US\$3.5 million), the project will support 19 TLGs across eight Merged Districts to deliver essential services through small-scale infrastructo essential public services in ture schemes, directly benefiting approximately 18,000 people and indirectly reaching an estimated 500,000 community members. Working closely with local administrations, the initiative will help identify and implement community-driven projects based on local needs, strengthening coordination, accountability, and community engagement.

The signing ceremony brought together senior representatives from the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Government of KP, the Embassy of Japan, JICA, and UNDP, reflecting a shared strengthen administrative mech- commitment to improving service anisms, improve civil response delivery and local governance in and development to the province



a region with historically limited exposure to formal administrative systems.

Addressing the ceremony, H. E. Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, said: "We see that the merged areas are the one of the most challenging, yet a very key entry point that will bring sustainable peace

as well as the country of Pakistan. This project will not only support the recovery of essential community infrastructure and local service delivery, but also foster inclusive and participatory local governance to ensure the whole of society approach toward the outcomes.

Mr. NAKATSU Masaaki, Senior Representative of JICA Pakistan Office, added: "As the JICA's technical cooperation

project for TLGs (2022-2026) has formulated Tehsil Development Plans through a participatory approach, this new projectcollaboration between UNDP and JICA, will play a crucial role in implementing these Plans and responding to the needs of local communities. We are confident that this project is not merely about implementing infrastructural schemes, but also about promoting mutual trust between

local governments and commu- ment of Japan and UNDP-two of nities, thereby strengthening the our most steadfast partners in the foundation for sustainable development in the region."

Capacity of Local Government Officers in Newly Merged Districts in KP, which identi- year strategy for inclusive and fied locally prioritized schemes

Mahmood Khan, Joint Secre-Affairs, Government of Paki-Districts present both complex Programmes I & II. challenges and opportunities for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. By strengthening local governments for improved service delivery, this project supports in action: to deliver services to our vision of sustainable development, unlocking the potential of local communities as key drivers for achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals support of the Government of (SDGs)."

Department, Government of KP, welcome the support of Govern- the Merged Districts."

Merged District's development journey, and are confident that The initiative builds on together we can make tangible the JICA's technical coopera- progress in improving service tion project for Strengthening delivery, local institutions, and public trust in the region." Aligned with UNDP's five-

accountable governance in Pakithrough participatory approach. stan, the project also supports Speaking at the occasion, Mr. provincial and federal governments' development plans for tary (UN), Ministry of Economic the Merged Districts, including the Tribal Decade Strategy and stan, highlighted: "The Merged Accelerated Implementation

Speaking at the ceremony, Dr. Samuel Rizk, Resident Representative for UNDP Pakistan, said: "This is our commitment communities that need them most, strengthen institutions that endure, and rebuild trust where it matters most. With the Japan and JICA and working Dr. Ehtisham-ul-Haq, Chief closely with the Government, International Development we are translating this commit-Section, Planning & Development ment into concrete plans and steady progress that delivers remarked: "We whole-heartedly tangible change for the people of

Friday, December 19, 2025



Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
171,960.64	170,313.85	
Day's High	Day's Low	
172,248.94	170,804.65	
Index Value	Change	
40,431,562,360	+1646.79	
Percentage	Time	
+0.97%	18 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
9,837.77	+63.45	
Percentage	Time	
+0.65%	18 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones I	ndustrial Average	
Index Value	Change	
47,893.48	+7.51	
Percentage	Time	
+0.016%	18 Dec, 12:24 pm GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikk	ei Stocks Average	

Index Value

49,001.50

Percentage

-1.03%

Change

Time 18 Dec. 3:45 pm

GMT+9

-510.78

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	184.05	188.05
Bahrain Dinar	743.55	753.55
Canadian Dollar	202.25	205
China Yuan	39.39	39.79
Danish Krone	43.81	44.21
Euro	330.05	333.05
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.02	3.11
Japanese Yen	1.7900	1.8900
Kuwaiti Dinar	911.25	921.25
Malaysian Ringgit	67.75	68.35
NewZealand \$	161.43	163.43
Norwegians Krone	27.6	27.90
Omani Riyal	728	738
Qatari Riyal	76.47	77.17
Saudi Riyal	74.8	75.3
Singapore Dollar	216	221
Swedish Korona	30.11	30.41
Swiss Franc	351.34	354.09
Thai Bhat	8.73	8.88

foodpanda strengthens merchant care with record onboarding milestone in Asia

77.4

281.05 283.15

№ Commerce Desk

U.A.E Dirham

LIK Pound Sterling

ISLAMABAD: foodpanda recently announced a double-digit year-on-year increase in merchant sign-ups across Asia, underscoring its growing role as a trusted growth partner for local businesses. The milestone reflects foodpanda's ongoing commitment to merchant care and success across Asia Pacific (APAC).

To help merchants navigate an increasingly competitive environment, foodpanda has introduced a range of initiatives across

Local businesses across the region are finding new ways to thrive. Across foodpanda's network, merchant growth continues to accelerate, with the number of active partners steadily rising — and many reporting significant sales uplift after joining the platform.

These stories reflect foodpanda's role as a trusted growth partner - combining smart technology with human connection to help businesses stay competitive and future-ready in a digital-first world.

Gold per tola gains Rs2,200 in Pakistan

Gold prices in Pakistan increased on Thursday in line with their gain in the international market. In the local market, gold price per tola reached Rs455,762 after a gain of Rs2,200 during the day.

Similarly, 10-gram gold was sold at Rs390,742 after it increased by Rs1,800, according to rates shared by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association (APGJSA).

On Wednesday, in the local market, gold price per tola reached Rs453,562 after a gain of Rs2,700 during the day.

The international rate of gold was up by \$22 to reach \$4,334 per ounce (with a premium of \$20).

Meanwhile, the price of silver increased by Rs78 to reach Rs6,900 per tola.

PTCL Showcases Long-Term Digital Infrastructure Vision at Connect 2025

KARACHI: PTCL Business Solutions hosted Connect 2025, its flagship corporate event, bringing together customers, partners, and industry leaders to present its expanding enterprise portfolio, upcoming product pipeline, and continued focus on strengthening Pakistan's digital infrastructure.

Held at a Movenpick Karachi, Connect 2025 attracted senior executives and decision-makers from across Pakistan's corporate sector. The day-long event featured interactive solution demonstrations, networking sessions, and in-depth presentations on PTCL's cloud services, data centres, cybersecurity offerings, international connectivity solutions, and managed digital platforms currently serving enterprises nationwide.

President & Group CEO, PTCL & Ufone 4G, Hatem Bamatraf, said, "PTCL Business Solutions Connect 2025 reflects our longterm commitment to strengthening Pakistan's



digital foundation. As enterprises navigate an era defined by cloud adoption, cybersecurity, AI, and resilient connectivity, PTCL is evolving into a comprehensive technology partner that enables secure, scalable, and future-ready growth. Through sustained investment in infrastructure, innovation, and strategic partnerships, we are focused on empowering businesses to compete globally while supporting the country's broader economic transforma-

The event also showcased PTCL's strategic collaborations with global technology partners, reflecting its approach to delivering enterprise solutions that align international standards with local expertise and support infrastructure.

Through Connect 2025, PTCL Business Solutions reaffirmed its position as Pakistan's leading enterprise technology enabler, committed to powering business growth and national competitiveness.

Signing Ceremony

Mr. Ayub Ghauri, Chief Executive Officer of Nora Tech (Private) Limited, and Mr. Malik Khuda Baksh, Chief Executive and Chairman of Malik Group of Companies, signing the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU).



BYD-MMC leads climate action dialogue, urges shift to clean mobility

跨 Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Pakistan continues to grapple with hazardous air pollution, ranking as the world's third-most polluted country according to IQAir data with average PM2.5 concentrations of 73.7 μg/m*, far exceeding World Health Organization (WHO) guidelines. In urban centers such as Lahore, winter smog regularly pushes PM2.5 levels beyond 145 μg/m*, a reality that guided much of the discussion at the Climate Action Dialogue hosted by BYD Pakistan-Mega Motor Company (MMC) in Lahore this week.

As Pakistan continues to battle worsening smog each year, driven by multiple structural factors, BYD-MMC brought together energy researcher Dr. Naveed Arshad, climate expert Ali Tauqeer Shaikh, and climate finance expert Mehak Masood to examine how clean mobility solutions can be deployed at scale.

Opening the discussion, Danish Khaliq, VP Sales & Strategy at BYD - MMC, said that NEVs significantly reduce tailpipe emissions, which are a major contributor to smog in urban cities. He particularly highlighted the impact developing the NEV



industry can have on the Country's GDP, "At just 30% adoption, clean mobility could add nearly PKR 1.3 trillion to Pakistan's direct and indirect jobs, according to independent research, before even accounting for the significant health and air-quality

Khaliq pointed out that global leaders like BYD can play a pivotal role in bridging ecosystem gaps by bringing technical expereconomy and support up to 1.5 million tise, supporting charging infrastructure, and sharing learnings from international markets while simultaneously building local capabilities that make clean mobility scalable and sustainable in Pakistan.

Pakistan-Kuwait **Business Expo to** Promote Pakistani **Products, Tariq Haleem**

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Pakistan-Kuwait Business Expo will be held in Kuwait from December 11 to 13, with the aim of promoting Pakistani products and further strengthening economic relations between Pakistan and Kuwait.

Former Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) and former Chairman of the Pakistan Shipping Agents Association, Tariq Haleem, organization of the Kuwait-Pakistan Business Expo 2025, said that this platform will provide an excellent opportunity for Pakistani investors, industrialists, and traders to strengthen ties with their Kuwaiti and Gulf countries should initiate

fforts should be made to opportunities.



establish a strong market for Pakistani products in Kuwait, and in this regard, the Kuwait-Pakistan Business Expo 2025 will prove to be a golden opportunity for while appreciating the Pakistani traders to showcase their capabilities to the world and strengthen their foothold in the Gulf market.

He further added that Pakistan and Kuwait share historical and friendly relations, and traders from both joint ventures to benefit from Tariq Haleem stated that mutual trade and investment

End of goods transporters strike will also end uncertainty, Zubair Tufail, Aman Paracha

S Commerce Desk

KARACHI: United Business Group (UBG) President Zubair Tufail and Vice President of the Federaof Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Aman Paracha, in their separate statements, termed the announcement by goods transporters to end their 10-day strike as a positive development. They said that due to the strike, the country's exports had come to a standstill, while importcontainers at ports, including food items.

the past 10 days, the textile sector alone had suffered losses of approximately USD 500 million, while demurrage and detention charges were also imposed tion of Pakistan Chambers on consignments stranded at ports and factory premises. He added that disruptions in the supply of raw materials and the dispatch of finished goods forced production processes to slow down or shut down, increasing the risk of missed vessel sailings and the cancellation of international orders. Due ed goods remained stuck in to the strike, the movement of industrial raw materials from seaports to factories FPCCI Vice President across the country was also Aman Paracha said that over adversely affected.

LHC refuses to halt CAT proceedings in fresh poultry cartel case

(LHC) has refused to stay proceedings of the Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) in the PKR 155 million cartelizaprice-fixing of day-old broiler chicks

The petitions were filed by M/s Supreme Farms (Private) Limited and M/s Sabir Poultry, seeking to halt CAT proceedings on appeals filed by poultry hatcheries and the poultry association against CCP's order. The petitioners requested the court to restrain CAT from deciding the appeals during the pendency of their constitutional chal-

M/s Supreme Farms challenged the constitutionality of Section 34

empowers CCP to enter and search premises, and Section 53, which allows CCP to seek assistance from tion case against eight poultry compa- other authorities and agencies for the nies and the poultry association for collection of evidence. The petitioner also sought a stay on CAT proceedings and requested that the Tribunal be barred from relying on forensic reports prepared by the Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) and data obtained from the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA), which were relied upon in its order.

It is pertinent to note that during search and inspection operations, the CCP teams recovered electronic material evidence from the offices of the poultry association and several hatcheries. The materials were later forensically analyzed

ISLAMABAD: The Lahore High Court of the Competition Act, 2010, which and used by the CCP to pass its order.

M/s Sabir Poultry filed a separate petition before the LHC on similar grounds, requesting the court to restrain CAT from issuing a decision based on evidence obtained from cellular phones and PTA data. The Lahore High Court did not accept the pleas seeking a stay or suspension of CAT proceedings. However, the court will continue to hear the petitions on their merits.

Earlier, in April this year, the CCP imposed a cumulative penalty of PKR 155 million on eight major poultry hatcheries and the poultry association for cartelization and price-fixing of day-old broiler chicks. The action followed a suo motu inquiry initiated

by CCP into the DOC market. The inquiry concluded that major



Hi-Tech Group, Islamabad Group, Olympia Group, Jadeed Group, Supreme Farms (Seasons Group), Big tion Act, 2010.

hatcheries, including Sadiq Poultry, Bird Group, and Sabir's Group were engaged in coordinated price-fixing, in violation of Section 4 of the Competi-

MNA Syeda Amnah Batool appointed to FIFA Institutional **Reforms Committee**

ISLAMABAD: Syeda Amnah Batool, a member of the National Assembly (MNA), has been appointed to FIFA's esteemed Institutional Reforms Committee, marking a significant turning point for Pakistan's in sport's arena.

In a statement issued here on Thursday, the appointment marks a significant achievement for Pakistan in both the sporting and diplomatic spheres, as Syeda Amna Batool becomes the sole Pakistani representative currently serving on various FIFA committees.

Her inclusion in the high-level body reflects FIFA's renewed confidence in Pakistan's institutional direction and acknowledges the country's positive and constructive role in global football governance.

The development is being seen as a direct outcome of the sustained and serious efforts of the current government to promote football and strengthen sports institutions in the



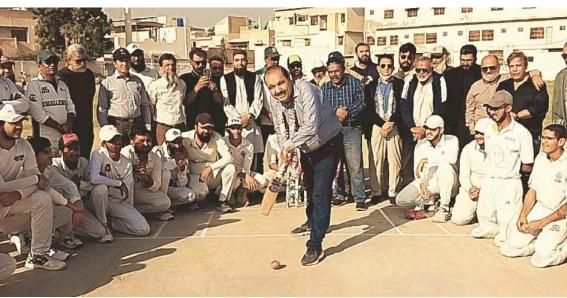
Nadeem Omar is doing everything possible to promote cricket in Karachi: Azam Khan

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Nadeem Omar is doing everything possible to promote cricket in Karachi and will continue to do so in the future, expressed Azam Khan, Coordinator Regional Cricket Association Karachi, while addressing the players and zonal officials at the inauguration ceremony of the Asadullah Memorial T20 Cricket Tournament Zone Two at TMC Ground.

On this occasion, Muhammad Tauseef Siddiqui, Joint Secretary, RCAK, said that Karachi Region is achieving a prominent position in cricket under the leadership of Nadeem Omar, which is gratifying. Addressing the ceremony, Khalid Nafees, Chairman, Tournament Committee, RCAK, said that the amount of cricket played in Karachi in the last two and a half years under the leadership of Nadeem Umar is There is no precedent in the past for Nadeem Omar Sahib, the only president of Karachi who is not fond of publicity.

He wants the players of Karachi to bring ory to their country and city with their performance. He said that the players of other gifts. Karachi Blues have won the biggest tour-



is organizing a ceremony at a local hotel the future too. Nadeem Omar's services in Muhammad Ahmed Naqvi, Arif Waheed very soon. In the ceremony, the players cricket are not hidden. Nadeem Omar has Khan Secretary Zone One, Muhammad will be given a prize of Rs. 9.5 million and a name and place in the world of cricket. Taria Hafeez Treasurer Zone One Shahba

Host Nusratullah Secretary Zone II said Ansari Assistant Secretary RCAK, Ajmal Nizamuddin, Afzal Shree, Muhammad nament of the country with their brilliant that we have been with Nadeem Omar in Naseeb President Zone one, Zafar Khan Azam Khan and other dignitaries were play. In their honor, Nadeem Omar Sahib the past and will be with Nadeem Omar in Treasurer Zone ll, Hassan Khan, Syed present.

The ceremony was attended by Wisal Qureshi, Rehan Siddiqui, Muhammad

Zong Drives Pakistan's Digital Future by Pioneering National Blockchain Degree Attestation System with HEC

Example 2 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading Information Services and Technology Innovation Company, is set to launch the nation's first-ever Blockchain-based Degree Attestation System in a landmark strategic partnership with the Higher Education Commission (HEC).

Leveraging the immense experience and technological expertise of its parent organization, China Mobile, Zong's new system will replace legacy, paper-driven processes with a secure, transparent, and fully digital ecosystem. The platform ensures that academic records are 100% tamper-proof using the core strengths of blockchain; immutability, transparency, and decentralized security. This enables



instant verification for employers and overseas Pakistanis. It will also eliminate institutions globally, especially benefitting the need for physical visits or long waiting

times due to administrative delays. The technology will make this process seamless for over 6 million students and alumni, with approximately 400,000 students being added to this number each year.

Speaking about the launch, Mr. Farooq Raza Khan, Executive Director & Country Head of Business Solutions at Zong, stated: "In collaboration with HEC, we are building a foundation of trust at scale. This is a first-ofits-kind project in the industry, and an apt demonstration of our capability to deliver complex, large-scale digital transformation. By utilizing blockchain, we provide a lifelong guarantee of authenticity, setting a new benchmark for digital public services that we intend to scale

TikTok launches self-serve advertising in Pakistan

TikTok:

Example 2 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: TikTok has rolled out a new self-serve advertising solution in Pakistan to empower small and mid-size businesses (SMBs) to tap into the power of the platform to grow their brand. TikTok For Business Ads Manager, a self-service advertising platform, gives SMBs the tools to tap into the creativity of the TikTok community, reach new audiences and optimize their marketing campaigns with an easy-to-use platform.

The move marks an important step in expanding TikTok in Pakistan, giving local entrepreneurs, homegrown brands and growing businesses simple, flexible and cost-effective tools to connect with the platform's highly engaged community.

'Pakistan's small businesses are some of the most creative in the region, and TikTok is proud to support their growth," said Baris Aldanmaz, Head of Global Business Solutions Türkiye, Central and Southern Asia, TikTok. "On TikTok, brands can create meaningful content that sparks conversation and connects with communities. With TikTok for Business Ads Manager, it's now easier that ever for SMBs to reach new audiences, tell their stories and grow, whether they're a neighbourhood store, a fashion label, or an online start-up."

SUMMAT Makes Its Brand Debut Welcomed by Fashion Leaders and Creative **Trailblazers**



LAHOARE: SUMMAT, the contemporary luxury label led by Creative Director Summat Iqbal, marked its official launch with a high-profile event at Fuoco, Lahore, drawing some of the country's most influential names in fashion, design, curation and digital culture.

An intimate preview of SUMMAT's inaugural collections was presented to leading figures from Pakistan's fashion and creative landscape, including Kamiar Rokhni, Mohsin Naveed Ranjha, Rehan Bashir, Fawad Khan, and Sadaf Fawad, alongside prominent stylists, models, fashion tastemakers, and socialites.

Guests explored the collection through curated installations and a couture craft table; a multi-dimensional introduction to SUMMAT's precision-led tailoring and architectural design codes. Throughout the evening, Iqbal guided attendees through the process behind the pieces, highlighting the brand's belief in clarity of form and the integrity of handcraft.

"SUMMAT is built on intention," said Creative Director Summat Iqbal, "My vision has always been to create clothing defined by structure, craft and presence rather than trend cycles. I am proud to share my fashion journey in the presence of people who understand the intimacy of craft and the beauty of thoughtfully made clothing."

The preview highlighted the label's signature craftsmanship, including artisanal handwork, sculptural silhouettes and a colour palette ranging from ice blue and pistachio mint to deep teal, pearl nude and midnight black. Every piece reflects days of meticulous construction, resulting in one-of-one couture pieces

The launch marks SUMMAT's first major engagement with Pakistan's fashion community, establishing a strong foundation for the brand's growth in a market increasingly receptive to contemporary, globally aligned luxury. Following the event, the SUMMAT studio is now open to the public at 4-B, H Block, College Road, Gulberg, Lahore, offering a dedicated space to experience the brand's design philosophy firsthand.

Senator Aurangzeb highlights digital banking

Continued from Page 8

The Finance Minister noted that policy coordination and implementation have been strengthened through high-level ownership to ensure that cross-cutting decisions are taken swiftly and executed effectively, enabling faster progress in broadening digital acceptance and reducing reliance on cash.

During the discussion, Senator Aurangzeb emphasized the role that digital banks and fintech platforms can play in enabling inclusive credit and under-served segments such as reach a broader base of smallplatforms can help improve tional know-how gained across

particularly in initiatives aimed at expanding access to finance.

He also highlighted the importance of diversifying the investor base for domestic public debt and reducing friction costs in distribution by facilitating retail participation through digital platforms, enabling citizens to invest in secure and liquid government securities through accessible channels.

Speaking on the occasion, Douglas Feagin conveyed appreciation for the opportunity to engage with the Finance targeted lending, including for Minister and reaffirmed Ant International and Ant Group's small farmers. He noted that commitment to supporting Pakiagriculture lending needs to stan's digital economy agenda by bringing global experience, techholders and that scalable digital nology capabilities, and opera-

outreach and sustainability, Asia to help expand cashless investment products requires payment adoption and digital financial services.

He highlighted that the licensing of Easypaisa as a digital bank presents an important opportunity to accelerate capability building, deepen outreach, and advance the shift towards digital transactions, while acknowledging that cash remains prevalent and that sustained efforts are required to expand nationwide adoption.

Irfan Wahab Khan shared that Easypaisa is progressively transitioning from payments to broader financial services, with a focus on financial inclusion, customer education, and the development of savings and wealth management offerings.

It was noted that expanding distribution of regulated

sustained awareness-building among retail customers, and that digital platforms can provide an potential for regulated, technoleffective channel for such educa-

The discussion also covered ongoing enhancements in cross-border and wallet-based payment capabilities leveraging international networks to improve convenience and reduce transaction frictions for users.

Senator Aurangzeb also shared the government's perspective on the increasing scale of virtual asset activity and the importance of bringing such activity into a regulated framework to address risk management, compliance considerations, and consumer protection, while enabling innovation in

emerging financial technologies.

exchange on opportunities related to tokenization and the ogy-enabled channels to support secure and accessible financial products, including in areas such as government securities and broader capital market development.

addition, Senator Aurangzeb briefed the delegation on progress achieved on macroeconomic stabilization. including advancements on structural reforms and external validation milestones.

He emphasized Pakistan's intention to leverage its strategic economic relationships to unlock further investment and to build a foundation for longterm, sustainable growth.

Mr. Douglas Feagin shared

The meeting included an that expanding digital payments usability, including through riskand digital finance can support stronger documentation of economic activity and contribute tion tiers. to tax base expansion, based on observed outcomes in multiple international markets.

He reiterated Easypaisa's and Ant International's commitment to scaling QR-code merchant acceptance and consumer adoption through practical use cases, while highlighting operational considerations linked to biometric-based customer onboarding, compliance requirements, and the cost of authentication and verifica-

shared understanding that regulations should strengthen integrity of the financial system while

based approaches that encourage adoption at entry-level transac-

The meeting concluded with both sides expressing confidence in continued engagement and coordination on priority initiatives, including merchant digitization, customer education, enabling broader access to regulated savings and investment products, and supporting national objectives for payments modernization and financial inclusion.

Senator Aurangzeb appreciated the delegation's commitment and encouraged submis-The discussion reflected a sion of specific proposals for coordination with relevant stakeholders to advance shared priorities under the governalso supporting inclusion and ment's digitization agend.

The Spokesman

Group photo of high-level delegation ISLAMABAD: December 18, 2025: A high-level delegation from the Sultanate of Oman, led by H.E. Major General Abdullah bin Ali Al Harthi, Assistant Inspector General of Police, visited National Emergencies Operation Center at NDMA Headquarter on Thursday.

UN report backs Pakistan on Afghan terror sanctuaries: FO Spokesperson

not only threatens regional

Afghanistan's own stability and

development.

Tarar warns fake news on social media

posses biggest challenge of digital age

👺 City Desk

Pakistan's Foreign Office on Thursday said a recent UN Security Council report confirming the presence of terrorist groups in Afghanistan supports Islamabad's longheld position, warning that such elements pose a grave threat to regional peace and stability.

At a weekly news briefing, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andarabi said Pakistan has credible and verifiable evidence that terrorist groups are operating from Afghan soil with support.

He said Islamabad has forums. also received fresh intelli-

Information and Broadcast-

ing Attaullah Tarar on Thursday cautioned that fake news

has become the greatest chal-

today's world, it is vital to use

social media responsibly and

to strike a balance in the face

of rapidly evolving technol-

lenge of the digital era.



gence, including details of presence of militant groups militants' numbers, identities and financing, which can security but also undermines be presented at international

The spokesperson said the

underscored that a grasp of

Pakistan's digital landscape,

he noted, encompasses more

users, 148 million mobile

broadband subscribers, and

He said, digital life today

is split along a generational

demographic realities.

social media accounts.

ISLAMABAD: Minister for cybersecurity must start with

circulating on social media than 117 million internet

He emphasized that in upwards of 79 million active

Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other foreign terrorist elements active in Afghanistan.

Addressing Pakistan-Afghanistan ties, Andarabi said diplomatic engagement remains intact, with ambassadors posted in both capitals and bilateral issues discussed through diplomatic channels. He stressed the need for sustained dialogue to resolve outstanding matters.

He also referred to a recent regional meeting in Tehran, where the issue of terrorist groups, including the TTP, was He added that UN reports discussed in a broader regional conveyed.

Speaking on the divide

specifically mention the context. He said the meeting of special envoys from neighbouring countries was part of a regional mechanism aimed at consultation and consensus-building.

The spokesperson said terrorist elements remain the biggest obstacle in Pakistan-Afghanistan relations and are linked to border tensions, lack of ceasefire, border closures and trade disruptions.

Commenting on discussions in some global capitals about an international stabilisation force, he said Pakistan has not received any specific request, nor has any final decision been

tend to navigate technology

instinctively, while digital immigrants are still learning

to use social media respon-

He stressed the need for

balance, noting that no single

awareness policy fits all. Each

social media platform requires

tailored approaches, he said,

acknowledging the challenge

but voicing optimism that

with initiatives like today's

and collaboration among

PTA, UNDP, and the Govern-

Senator Aurangzeb highlights digital banking, financial inclusion and cashless economy drive



S Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Thursday said that the national drive towards digitization has gathered strong momentum, including at the highest level and that clear performance targets are being pursued through a coordinated approach across key pillars covering digital infrastructure, payment systems and rails and digitization of government-related payments.

He stated this while, talking to a delegation comprising on Douglas Feagin, President Ant Interna-

tional and Senior Vice President. Ant Group; Irfan Wahab Khan, Chairman, Easypaisa Digital Bank; Jahabzeb Khan, President and Chief Executive Officer, Easypaisa Digital Bank, said a press release.

The meeting focused on accelerating Pakistan's transition towards a cashless and digitally enabled economy, with particular emphasis on expanding financial inclusion, strengthening digital payments and leveraging technology to widen access to formal financial services for individuals and small businesses across

Continued on Page 7

AI is future, education is foundation: Barrister Danyal



E City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Broadcasting Barrister Danyal Chaudhry on Wednesday stressed the urgent need for Pakistan to adopt Artificial Intelligence in a strategic and phased manner to accelerate national development, while addressing the AI X Future Summit 2025 as chief guest at Bahria University, Islamabad.

The summit brought together policymakers, educators, media professionals, technology experts, and students to discuss the role of AI in governance, education, media, and innovation.

Speaking to the audience, Barrister and leadership.

Danyal Chaudhry said Artificial Intelligence is no longer a distant idea but a defining force of the present that can reshape Pakistan's economy, governance systems, and information landscape if adopted responsibly and thoughtfully.

Drawing a parallel with education and human development, he remarked that life progresses in phases, from crawling to walking and then running, and no stage can be skipped. He said the education system, particularly at university level, is designed to build these foundations gradually, enabling students to develop skills step by step before moving toward advanced innovation

CM Maryam to give next year 01 lac scholarships & 01 lac laptops to talented students

Speaking at the closing who stepped into the online generation born into cyber- between generations, he ment of Pakistan, the right

session of the National Cyber world later in life, adapting space, fluent in its language noted that digital natives strategy can overcome it.

fault line. On one side are the to its rapid evolution. On the from the start.

digital immigrants—those other are the digital natives—a

👺 Kiran Asim

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif attended the largest-ever Honhaar Scholarship and Laptop Distribution Ceremony in the history of Lodhran. A total of 7,000 male and female students from Multan and Bahawalpur divisions participated in the ceremony. Students from Multan and Bahawalpur divisions welcomed Chief Minister Punjab with great enthusiasm upon her arrival, chanting slogans in her honour. She waved in response, walked over to the female students and greeted them warmly. She also met members of the provincial assembly, exchanged greetings and as per tradition sat among the female students.

On the request of students from Islamia University, Chief Minister Punjab joined them in singing the national anthem. She embraced reciting Naat-e-Rasool-e-Maqbool (SAW). Students of Islamia University also presented a national song, "Charta Sooraj Hai Apna Pakistan, Duniya Dekhay Hai Pakistani Department, Urooj Fatima, emotion-



ated. At the start of the ceremony, a smartly turned-out police contingent presented a salute in honour of the students. A student of Saraiki

Saraiki, prompting Chief Minister her. When Sadiq Women Univer-

a student who had the honour of Shaan," which was greatly apprecially addressed the gathering in again approached her to offer encouragement. Christian student Maryam Punjab to come forward and hug Javed shared her educational journey in English, highlighting that "Laptop sity student Qamar Fatima became is a gateway," which drew praise and emotional during her speech, she affection from Chief Minister Punjab.

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Pakistani intelligence strikes major blow to Daesh-K with arrest of spokesperson

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistani intelligence agencies have struck a significant blow against Daesh-Khorasan (Daesh-K) by arresting the group's spokesperson, Sultan Aziz Azam, officials confirmed on Thursday.

Authorities said Azam was a key figure in Daesh-K's recruitment and operational network, heading the Azam Foundation, the central body responsible for mobilising and activating militants.

His arrest has effectively halted the group's media activities and disrupted recruitment operations.



on Daesh-K, which has led to several high-profile detentions, including Azam's arrest on May 16, 2025.

Pakistani officials noted that this is part of a series of high-profile counterterrorism actions against Daesh-K, aimed at dismantling the terrorist group's network and Pakistani authorities said the preventing attacks within the arrest is part of a broader crackdown region.