

PM Rathore assures minorities of equal rights, priority problem resolution

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, attended a special ceremony organized in honor of the Christian community on the occasion of Christmas.

The purpose of the ceremony was to highlight the promotion of interfaith harmony, religious tolerance, and brotherhood.

In his address, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore appreciated the Christian community's constructive role in society, saying that minorities constitute an indispensable part of the state and have a pivotal role in the socio-economic development of Azad Kashmir.

He said that followers of all religions in the state enjoy complete religious freedom and equal rights.

The PPP government, he said, was taking all possible steps to promote interfaith harmony, tolerance, and brotherhood.



He assured that the problems of minorities would be resolved on priority basis and that the doors of the government were open to all.

On the occasion, the PM cut the Christmas cake along with members of the Christian community.

The ceremony was attended by

Senior Minister and Minister for Law, Mian Abdul Waheed, Secretary Information Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Pastor Faizan; Mayor of Muzaffarabad Syed Sikandar Gilani and a large number of members of the Christian community.

Security

FAISALABAD: Police personnel stand alert during a Christmas Mass outside a church in the city.



Photo: Online

'Kashmir Will Become Pakistan': Sardar Attique Addresses Bhimber Convention

 Abdul Majeed Tahir

BHIMBER: President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, while addressing the "Kashmir Banega Pakistan" Workers' Convention organized under the auspices of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference in Bhimber, paid rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and all the leaders of the Pakistani Movement.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that Pakistan came into existence due to the farsighted vision, faith-driven wisdom, and inspiring leadership of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He reaffirmed the pledge to adopt the principles laid down by Quaid-e-Azam as guiding ideals. He noted that Quaid-e-Azam organized the Muslim League across the Indian subcontinent and declared the Muslim League as his party in the State of Jammu and Kashmir. Recalling history, he said that during his address

in Srinagar, Quaid-e-Azam stated that the nation was fortunate to be led by Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas, whom he appointed as his political successor. He emphasized that the Muslim Conference would continue to uphold and strengthen this historic bond.

The Workers' Convention was also

addressed by former President of the Muslim Conference Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Ahmed Jarjal Advocate, Secretary General Mehar-un-Nisa, Vice President Raja Zafar, Raja Tahir Iqbal, Chaudhry Shaukat Ali, Chaudhry Hazar Hayat, along with other party office-bearers.



Founder of Pakistan Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah 149th Birthday Celebrating in Multan

 Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: A grand cake cutting ceremony was held at Rajwana House, Multan, on the occasion of the birthdays of the founder of Pakistan, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the leader of the Muslim League (N), Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He said that the current Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shahbaz Sharif is working day and night to ensure that Pakistan reaches new heights of development at the economic, political and diplomatic levels.

He further said that the performance of the PML-N government in Punjab province is commendable and public welfare projects are rapidly reaching completion.

Other speakers also addressed the ceremony and paid tribute to the national and political services of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif. Later, the birthday cake was

cut and special prayers were offered for the progress, stability and prosperity of the country and nation.

The ceremony was attended by Sheikh Tariq Rashid Chaudhry, Waheed Arain, Rana Ijaz Noon, Shaukat Bosan, Rai Mansab Ali, Malik Ijaz Rajwana, Malik Anwar Ali, Saad Khurshid Kanju, Aqeel Ansari, Umar Farooq Bhatti, Malik Zulfiqar Dogar, Munawar Ehsan Qureshi, Aslam Dogar, Sheikh Athar Mumtaz, Sultan Shaheen, Saad Khurshid Kanju, Sarwat Khan, Shahid Mukhtar Lodhi, Chaudhry Qaiser Mahmood Gujjar, Usman Khan Babar, Mushtaq Ansari, Malik Akram Sagu, Ehsanul Haq, Jalil Khan Babar, Khalil Rana Ishraq, Malik Asif Bohana, Zia Haider Zaidi, Kasur Bhatti, Mian Muhammad

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Razaq, Munir Langah, Tariq Amir Abbasi, Abdul Rehman Free, Nasir Kamboh, Talal Siddiqui, Rumi Butt, Dr. Javed Atanhagal, Chaudhry Ijaz Fakhar, Sheikh Umar, Akhtar Rasool Faridi, Zafar Qadri, Fehmida Chohan, Chaudhry Naveed Zafar, Malik Hammad Rajwana, Imran Aslam Ansari, Arif Badar Qureshi, Faheem Shahra, Anees-ur-Rehman, Chaudhry Hamza Tahir, Hamid Khan, Mazhar Rajwana, Saifullah, Sheikh Munir, Imran Yousaf, Raja Nasir, Sajid Qureshi, Atiya Rab Nawaz, Ghulam Muhammad Kamboh, Rizwan Wasir, Asif Kamboh, Sheikh Omar, Aamir Nawaz, Malik Nadeem, Ehsan Khan Saduzai, Rana Mukhtar Ahmed Noon, Zunir Rajwana, and other officials, workers and dignitaries participated.



Pakistan-US Ties See Exponential Growth: Expert Assesses Diplomatic Leap

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: This year marks a series of major successes in Pakistan's relations with the United States, with a dramatic and measurable shift that reflects exponential growth rather than incremental change, said Sardar Masood Khan, former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States and former Permanent Representative to the United Nations, while assessing recent diplomatic, economic, and strategic developments on a broadcasting platform.

Ambassador Khan said that Pakistan-U.S. ties began improving even before the pivotal "the India - Pakistan war" in May this year but gained significant momentum afterward, particularly following the landmark meeting between Field Marshal Asim Munir and U.S. President Donald Trump. "That engagement established a new tradition at the White House and became a catalyst for sustained diplomatic closeness," he noted, adding that bilateral relations have since strengthened across multiple fronts.

He highlighted concrete economic and financial cooperation as evidence of this shift, including agreements involving the Crypto Council and World Bank, positioning Pakistan toward the tokenization of sovereign bonds and treasury instruments. Ambassador Khan further noted that U.S. tariff reductions on Pakistani goods and the recent approval of a \$686 million F-16 sustainment and upgrade package reflect renewed strategic confidence. "The United States has explicitly stated that this package will enhance Pakistan's existing F-16 fleet for combat readiness, training, and joint military exercises," he said.

Kashmiri Women's Leader Slams India Over Confiscation of Dr. Fai's Properties

 Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: Ms Samia Sajid, Central Chairperson of the Muslim Conference Women's Wing and Chairperson of the Kashmir Women Alert Forum, has strongly condemned, in the harshest possible terms, the Indian action of confiscating the properties of prominent Kashmiri leader of the Kashmir freedom movement residing in the United States, Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai, along with other Kashmiris. She stated that the actions taken against Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai are, in fact, a conspiracy against the collective voice of the Kashmiri people. She made it clear that these petty tactics by India reflect political revenge, open aggression, and state oppression, aimed at silencing voices that highlight the Kashmir issue at the global level.

Ms. Samia Sajid said that Kashmiri women, in particular, have been the worst victims of Indian state repression. Mothers have lost their sons, sisters have lost their husbands, and daughters have been orphaned, yet Kashmiri women have never lost courage. She stated that India must understand that the Kashmir freedom movement is not limited to any single individual or leadership, but is a mass movement alive in the heart of every Kashmiri. Whether it is Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai or anyone else, if one voice is silenced, a thousand more voices will rise.

International fraud ring busted in Muzaffarabad after failed bank scam

 Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: An attempt to encash a fake pay order worth PKR 6 million at Habib Metro Bank in Muzaffarabad was successfully foiled, resulting in the arrest of an international fraud gang. Civil society and the general public have paid glowing tribute to the vigilant efforts of Police Post Jalalabad, Police Post Kohala, and the management and staff of Habib Metro Bank, particularly Branch Manager Khawaja Faizan War and Operations Manager Raja Munir Iqbal, for their exemplary professionalism.



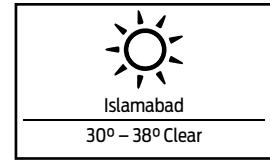
The incident occurred at the Habib Metro Bank branch located in Domel, Ghari Pan, Muzaffarabad, where an international fraud group with links to Pakistan attempted to pass a counterfeit pay order of PKR 6 million. According to details, the group was wanted in multiple police stations across Pakistan and had gone into hiding after arriving in Muzaffarabad.

Branch Manager Khawaja Faizan War and Operations Manager Raja Munir Iqbal exercised timely judgment by obtaining immediate verification of the suspicious pay order. Their prompt action and professional vigilance successfully thwarted the fraud attempt. During the operation, one suspect was apprehended inside the bank premises, while another was arrested outside the bank while attempting to flee. Both suspects were handed over to Police Post Jalalabad.

Meanwhile, three additional suspects attempting to escape towards Pakistan were arrested by Police Post Kohala. Khawaja Faizan War immediately informed Police Post Jalalabad, which initiated swift action and alerted Police Posts Kohala and Barar Kot. Subsequently, the police teams from these posts, displaying high professional competence, arrested the remaining members of the fraud gang, placed them behind bars, and registered a formal case.

Bank officers Raja Munir Iqbal and Shehzad Maqbool also played an effective role in exposing the fraud and assisting law enforcement agencies.

Police officials stated that investigations are underway and further significant disclosures are expected. The entire operation was closely supervised by the SSP Muzaffarabad and DSP City Raja Faisal Shafiq, ensuring effective coordination and successful execution of the action.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:41 am
Zohr	12:08 pm
Asr	3:28 pm
Maghrib	5:06 pm
Isha	6:35 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police
Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
POLYCLINIC	9218300-99
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	921234-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224

Quaid-e-Azam Day Observed Across Pakistan and Abroad
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan today commemorated the birth anniversary of its founding father, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, paying tribute to his visionary leadership, sincerity, and selfless struggle that led to the creation of an independent homeland for Muslims of the subcontinent.

On this occasion, prayers were offered for the departed soul of Quaid-e-Azam and for all those who sacrificed their lives for the independence of Pakistan. Speakers highlighted that Pakistan is currently facing significant challenges; however, with faith in Allah and the continued sacrifices of the armed forces, the nation will overcome these difficulties.

Tributes and salutations were paid to the Shaheeds and Ghazis who are guarding the country day and night and ensuring the defense of the motherland. The unwavering commitment and sacrifices of Pakistan's armed forces were acknowledged and appreciated.

Extending his greetings, Khursheed Ahmed Hashmi, Senior Vice President of the Pak-UK Trade Forum, stated that Quaid-e-Azam Day serves as a reminder of unity, faith, and discipline, urging the nation to stand together for a stronger and prosperous Pakistan.

The day concluded with prayers for the safety, strength, and success of Pakistan and its armed forces.

Book Launch Ceremony of "Koha: Empowering Libraries with Open Source Software"

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The book launch ceremony of "Koha: Empowering Libraries with Open Source Software" by Dr. Liaquat Ali Rahoo, Information Technology Officer, Central Library, Mehran University of Engineering and Technology (MUET), Jamshoro, was held at the LEJ (Latif Ebrahim Jamal) Auditorium, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences (ICCBS), University of Karachi. The event was jointly organized by the Society for the Promotion of Reading and Improvement of Libraries (SPRIL), ICCBS, and the National Library Association (NLA).

The chief guest of the ceremony, Dr. Raza Shah, Director, International Center for Chemical and Biological Sciences, appreciated the scholarly



initiative of authoring the book and congratulated Dr. Liaquat Ali Rao on this remarkable achievement.

The guest of honor, Dr. Saad bin Abdulaziz, Founding Partner of the Karachi International Books and Educational Technology Fair, emphasized in his address the need for an effective platform that could serve as a bridge

between academia, the publishing industry, and libraries.

Dr. Liaquat Ali Rahoo shared his professional journey, highlighting his extensive experience in library automation and digitization, which ultimately inspired and shaped the writing of "Koha: Empowering Libraries with Open Source Software".



tional, participated in the program as a Keynote Speaker. Her engagement focused on the importance of interfaith harmony, gender equity, inclusive leadership, and cultural understanding within Pakistan's diverse social context.

The event brought together faculty members, students, and representatives from multiple faith traditions, providing an inclusive academic platform for dialogue and shared learning.

The celebration of Christmas with members of the Christian commu-

nity added a meaningful and symbolic dimension to the gathering, reinforcing universal values of compassion, unity, and coexistence. The event demonstrated how universities can function as effective spaces for peace-building and constructive engagement across communities.

The program was organized by the Faculty of Social Studies, GCWUF. Brilliance extends appreciation to Vice Chancellor Dr. Kanwal Ameen, Dr. Sadaf Naqvi, Ms. Sadia (Head, Department of Sociology), and the faculty

members and students for their leadership, hospitality, and commitment to fostering thoughtful and respectful dialogue.

Brilliance Consulting USA and Brilliance Foundation International reaffirm their commitment to strengthening international academic and community partnerships, and to advancing inter-

faith understanding, gender equality, and shared human values across borders.

National Flags

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the Pakistan Monument illuminated with colors of National Flags of Pakistan and UAE, to welcome the President of UAE Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, Who is arriving today.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Punjab Arts Council Honors Jinnah's 149th Birthday with "Quaid Kay Shab-o-Rooz"

City Desk

To commemorate the 149th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Punjab Arts Council (PAC) Rawalpindi Information & Culture Department Govt. of the Punjab organized a beautiful photo exhibition titled "Quaid Kay Shab-o-Rooz" at its state of Art Gallery. The exhibition featured more than 150 rare photographs depicting the life, struggle, and enduring legacy of the Father of the Nation.

The objective of the exhibition was to educate the younger generation about Quaid-e-



Azam's monumental struggle, visionary leadership, and sacrifices for the creation of Pakistan. As part of the commemorative activities, a documentary film highlighting various

aspects of his life and achievements was also screened.

The event was inaugurated by Parliamentary Secretary for Information and Culture Department Govt. of the

Punjab, Mst Shazia Rizwan, Director Punjab Arts Council Muhammad Shakoor, and renowned senior calligrapher Azeem Iqbal was present.

Speaking on the occasion,

the Chief Guest addressed that Quaid-e-Azam led the Muslims of the Subcontinent on the basis of the Two-Nation Theory. Under his dynamic leadership, Pakistan emerged as an independent state. She stated that the nation pays rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah for his unparalleled services and unwavering commitment to the cause of freedom.

SP Investigation Zainab Ayyub reviews Christmas Security at Churches

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: On the directives of District Police Officer (DPO) Attock, Sardar Mavarhan Khan, SP Investigation Attock, Zainab Ayyub, visited churches in Attock city on Wednesday to review security arrangements on the occasion of Christmas.

During the visit, she inspected the police officers and personnel deployed on security duty and briefed them on maintaining a high level of alertness in view of the prevailing national security situation. She directed the deployed force to perform their duties vigilantly, ensure strict checking, and remain fully prepared to deal with any emergency.

SP Zainab Ayyub further emphasized effective coordination, discipline, and prompt reporting to ensure that members of the Christian community could celebrate Christmas in a safe and peaceful environment.

IEEE Karachi Section successfully hosts prestigious All Pakistan PSYWSC 2025 Congress


Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The IEEE Karachi Section successfully organized the IEEE PSYWSC 2025 (All Pakistan Congress) at DHA Suffa University, Karachi. The congress was held under the leadership of Prof. Dr. Tariq R. Soomro, Chair IEEE Karachi Section; Prof. Dr. Muhammad Shahid Shaikh, Elected Chair IEEE Karachi Section; Engr. Parkash Lohana, Chair PSYWSC'25 Committee; and Dr. Umair Ahmed Korai, Chair IEEE ComSoc Karachi Chapter.

Mr. Kashif Bashir, Chair of the IEEE ComSoc Lahore Chapter and Senior Manager at KICS UET Lahore, attended the congress as well as the All Pakistan IEEE Sections meeting. At the closing ceremony, Prof. Dr. Bhawani Shankar Chowdhry, Distinguished National Professor, along with Air Cdre Zahid Ul Hassan (Retd), Registrar DHA Suffa University, presented a souvenir to Mr. Kashif Bashir in recognition of his valuable services toward enhancing the international outreach of Pakistan through IEEE.

Hyderabad Commissioner Extends Christmas Greetings, Vows Equal Rights for Minorities


Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

HYDERABAD: Divisional Commissioner Hyderabad, Fayyaz Hussain Abbasi, while extending Christmas greetings to the Christian community, said that the Constitution of Pakistan guarantees fundamental rights to every citizen without any discrimination of color, race, or religion, and that every citizen of the country is fully free to perform religious rituals and celebrate festivals.

He was addressing a Christmas cake-cutting ceremony held at the office of Bishop Samson Shukardin, President of the Pakistan Catholic Bishops' Conference and Chairman of the Commission for Justice and Peace. Commissioner Abbasi further said that the administration believes in serving citizens without discrimination and that the coordination mechanism will be further improved to resolve the issues of minorities on a priority basis.

Addressing the ceremony, DIG Hyderabad Tariq Razzaq Dharejo said that the police are committed to providing services to minorities without discrimination, just like other citizens of Pakistan. Deputy Commissioner Hyderabad Zain-ul-Abideen Memon informed that a meeting had been held with the Christian community in which the provision of facilities according to the schedule of places of worship was discussed.

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Pakistan's Winter shoe crazes

Winter is in full swing across Pakistan, including Islamabad, driving shoppers to malls and markets to secure the season's hottest shoes before they run out. Leather boots, suede shoes, fur-lined loafers, insulated joggers, and trekking shoes are flying off shelves.

The sudden chill and December discounts have created a shopping frenzy. People of all ages are visiting malls, markets, and online stores in Islamabad. Retailers report fast-moving stock and high footfall. Young buyers are driving the demand, while parents shop for children and older buyers look for comfort. Winter shoes are now a must-have, not a luxury.

When it comes to colors, classic shades are dominating this winter. Black leather and brown suede boots are the top choice across all age groups because they are versatile and match almost every outfit. Dark grey and navy shoes are also popular among young adults who want a modern yet understated look. Women are adding a touch of style with deep burgundy or olive boots, while children gravitate toward bright and playful tones such as red and blue. Retailers say neutral colors are selling fastest, making black and brown the undisputed favorites this season.

Retailers say the eighteen-to-thirty-five age group leads sales. Buyers aged eighteen to twenty-five go for chunky sneakers, suede boots, and trekking shoes. Those aged twenty-six to thirty-five prefer leather ankle boots and waterproof shoes. Families are buying school shoes for children. Older buyers focus on soft leather and cushioned loafers for comfort.

Ahmed Ali, a shopkeeper in Jinnah Super, said boots and joggers are disappearing fast. Rehan Mirza, a Centaur shoe store manager, added that young buyers want shoes that are stylish and warm. Local craftsmen in Abbottabad said buyers prefer real leather for long-lasting quality.

Buyers say seasonal discounts are irresistible. A mother in F-10 said she planned to buy one pair but ended up buying two. A university student said chunky sneakers match almost every winter outfit. An office worker said warm boots are essential for cold mornings.

In December, brands began offering twenty to fifty percent discounts. Online stores are also seeing strong sales in leather boots, warm joggers, and trekking shoes. Retailers restock daily. Local craftsmen work late to meet demand. Social media is full of winter shoe videos and reviews. Shoppers want to secure their favorite styles before stock runs out. Real leather, genuine suede, and soft fur remain the most sought-after materials.

Winter shoes now combine warmth, comfort, style, and durability.

Christmas, Islam, and the Lost Message of Peace

Christmas is one of the most cherished moments in the global calendar, marking the birth of Jesus Christ — one of the greatest prophets in human history. According to Christian belief, he was born in Bethlehem, a humble town in the West Bank that today remains under Israeli occupation. From that land emerged a message that still echoes across centuries: love your neighbor, seek truth, forgive freely, and show mercy even in hardship.

For Muslims, Jesus — Isa ibn Maryam (peace be upon him) — is not only respected but deeply revered. The Qur'an dedicates an entire chapter to his miraculous birth and to the purity and piety of his mother, Mary. Islam affirms that Mary conceived Jesus by the will of God, without a biological father, and that the infant Jesus spoke in her defense — a miracle highlighting divine power and mercy.

Islam teaches that God sent many prophets — Abraham, Moses, Jesus, and finally Muhammad (peace be upon them all) — as guides for humanity. Belief in all of them is a core Islamic principle. The foundational faith includes belief in all prophets, revealed scriptures, angels, the Day of Judgment, and God's decree. This reflects Islam's spiritual inclusiveness: a Muslim cannot reject Jesus or Moses and still claim faith. The Qur'an presents Jesus as a noble prophet who healed the sick, defended the weak, and called people to righteousness.

Christians and Muslims share deep respect for his moral example. Islamic tradition also teaches that Jesus will return near the end of time as a sign of God's justice. That belief strengthens the spiritual connection between the two faiths rather than weakening it.

Across much of the Muslim world,

Christmas is acknowledged with warmth and respect. In Malaysia, Indonesia, the Gulf states, and elsewhere, public spaces display Christmas decorations, and citizens of different faiths greet one another sincerely. That spirit of coexistence reflects the higher purpose of religion: to bring people closer to God and to one another.

Yet the world today stands painfully distant from the teachings of Jesus. The message of humility has been overshadowed by arrogance; compassion has been replaced with dominance; and the defense of the weak has too often yielded to the pursuit of wealth, territory, and power.

From Europe to the Middle East to Africa, wars continue to scar humanity. The conflict between Russia and Ukraine has dragged on with staggering human cost — soldiers and civilians alike suffering displacement, injury, and death while entire cities are destroyed and generations traumatized.

In Gaza and the broader Israeli-Palestinian conflict, tens of thousands of civilians have been killed or wounded, and families live under unimaginable loss and fear. The civil war in Sudan has unleashed famine, displacement, and brutality on a massive scale.

Tensions between Armenia and Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh have uprooted communities and shattered lives. Border friction between Thailand and Cambodia periodically flares, affecting vulnerable border populations. And the Caribbean region is witnessing rising confrontation involving Venezuela and the United States — another reminder of how competition over resources and

power can spiral toward conflict.

Looming over all of this is the dangerous and often-overlooked nuclear risk in South Asia. India and Pakistan — both nuclear-armed neighbors — have fought multiple wars and experienced repeated crises. Any future conflict between them, if it were ever to escalate to nuclear exchange, could kill millions in minutes and devastate the region for generations. It is a sobering reminder that war today carries consequences far beyond the battlefield — consequences that threaten the survival of entire nations.

Behind many of these conflicts lie the same driving forces: greed, the hunger for dominance, the thirst for hegemony, disrespect for international law, and a chilling indifference to human suffering. Power becomes a prize rather than a responsibility. Neighbors become enemies rather than fellow human beings. War, sanctions, and blockades punish ordinary people — the poor, the elderly, and especially children — while the powerful speak in cold language about strategy and national interest.

This reality stands in total contradiction to what Jesus taught. His message condemned arrogance. He challenged the tyranny of wealth over conscience. He uplifted the marginalized, called for humility, and insisted that the moral worth of a society is measured by how it treats the weakest among it.

Christmas should therefore be more than a seasonal ritual. It should be a moment of moral awakening. A time when Christians and Muslims — who together make up over half of humanity — reflect on their shared spiritual founda-

tion: belief in one God, devotion to truth, compassion, justice, humility, and service to others.

Today, the sacred books that once guided civilizations often sit unread on shelves, gathering dust while nations prepare for war instead of peace. Christmas is the time to wipe away that dust — literally and symbolically — and return to the message inside: love your neighbor, protect the innocent, feed the hungry, forgive the offender, and speak truth to power.

If even a fraction of that message were followed, wars would not be waged for land, oil, minerals, or geopolitical advantage. The enormous resources consumed by conflict could instead lift millions out of poverty, build schools and hospitals, and restore dignity to forgotten communities. True greatness lies not in the size of a nation's military, but in the depth of its compassion and the justice of its actions. This is the heart of the matter: Faith without justice is empty, worship without mercy is incomplete and peace without humility is impossible.

When humanity redisovers this shared spiritual core — not as slogan, but as living practice — peace will no longer remain a distant ideal. It will become a real and achievable way of life. And perhaps then, Christmas will not simply mark the birth of a prophet. It will mark the rebirth of the values he taught — compassion over cruelty, humility over arrogance, and peace over war — lighting a path forward for all humanity.

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



Qamar Bashir

Rasmi



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

Role of Military Alliances In Shaping Regional Security Dynamics in South Asia

Falak Sajid

South Asia, home to nearly a quarter of the world's population, remains one of the most strategically sensitive regions globally. Marked by historical rivalries, disputed borders, nuclear-armed neighbors, and competing great-power interests, the region's security environment is constantly evolving. Within this complex landscape, military alliances and security partnerships play a pivotal role in shaping interstate relations, defense strategies, and regional stability. These alliances, ranging from formal defense treaties to informal strategic alignments, function not only as deterrence mechanisms but also as tools for power projection, conflict management, and geopolitical balancing.

Understanding how these military partnerships influence South Asian security is essential to grasp the broader dynamics at play between regional actors such as India, Pakistan, China, and the external powers that engage with them. The presence of military alliances in South Asia has several implications for the region's stability. On the one hand, these alliances often lead to increased militarization and arms

buildups. While this strengthens national defense, it can also provoke an arms race, particularly between India and Pakistan, and can involve China indirectly. Both India and Pakistan are modernizing their forces in response to one another, creating a potentially volatile security environment.

Another risk posed by military alliances is the potential for smaller states to become overly dependent on external powers. This dependency can undermine their strategic autonomy, as they may feel pressured to align with the security agendas of their larger partners. Additionally, alliances often create spheres of influence,

which can exacerbate geopolitical competition and polarization, further complicating regional diplomacy.

On the other hand, military alliances can also provide opportunities for regional cooperation. For instance, while alliances may be seen as tools of competition, they can also serve as platforms for joint initiatives such as peacekeeping, disaster response, counterterrorism operations, and maritime security. These cooperative engagements may foster confidence-building measures, reduce misunderstandings, and provide a counterweight to military escalation.

Military alliances in South Asia play a critical role in shaping the region's security architecture. They serve as mechanisms of deterrence, power projection, and strategic balancing in a region defined by historical rivalries and emerging geopolitical challenges. For India and Pakistan, alliances are vital to their defense strategies, ensuring a delicate balance of power despite their intense rivalry. Smaller states in the region, meanwhile, navigate these alliances to maximize their security options in a competitive environment. However, while these partnerships offer certain security guarantees, they also introduce the risk of exacerbating rivalries, fueling arms races, and deepening dependency on external powers.

Moving forward, South Asia's long-term stability will hinge not just on the strategic configuration of these alliances, but also on the region's ability to foster dialogue, cooperation, and multilateral frameworks that prioritize collective security over competition. Ultimately, the path to a peaceful and stable South Asia will require both the major powers and smaller states to balance their security interests with a commitment to regional stability.

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Karachi: A Human Tragedy Wrapped in Statistics

Karachi is not merely a city; it is an entire universe. Millions of dreams move along its roads, countless hopes breathe in its alleys, and the pulse of a national economy resonates along its coastline. Yet when this city begins to speak in the language of statistics, dreams shatter, hopes collapse, and that pulse grows disturbingly faint.

The latest report released by the Chhipa Foundation for the year 2025 is not just a compilation of figures; it is a knock on the collective conscience. It holds up a mirror before us, but the real question is whether we possess the courage to look at our own reflection.

Citizens are increasingly forced to choose between surrendering their belongings in silence or resisting and risking death. This is a dangerous threshold for any state. When the law grows weak and criminals grow powerful, daily survival becomes a test for ordinary citizens.

The recovery of tortured bodies and bodies stuffed in sacks marks the lowest point of social decay. These are not just murders; they are symptoms of a society in moral freefall. A society where human beings can be discarded like objects inevitably raises serious questions about justice, dignity, and the rule of law. Such conditions demand that state institutions move beyond mere data collection and focus on dismantling the structures that breed violence and fear.

Another painful dimension of accidental deaths involves electrocution, falls into gutters and drains, collapsing roofs, and burn injuries. The death of 131 people due to electrocution alone exposes the dangerous state of the city's power infrastructure. Drownings in open drains are not natural disasters; they are the direct result

of administrative neglect. Modern urban planning is founded on a simple principle: infrastructure must serve human beings, not endanger them. In Karachi, this principle appears to have been turned upside down.

Suicides and drug-related deaths reveal an equally grave but often ignored crisis. The loss of 119 lives to suicide and the recovery of hundreds of unclaimed bodies linked to drug abuse signal a city under immense psychological strain. Economic pressure, unemployment, insecurity, the breakdown of family structures, and a pervasive sense of hopelessness hollow individuals from within. This crisis cannot be resolved through policing alone; it demands that mental health be recognized as

a national priority.

Taken together, these statistics point toward a single, unavoidable question: Is Karachi still a livable city? And if not, who will accept responsibility? The state, the government, institutions, and citizens alike must confront this question honestly. Issuing reports is not enough; the real test lies in learning from them and translating insight into action.

To pull Karachi out of this quagmire, emotional slogans must give way to decisions grounded in science, technology, and sound administration. Data-driven governance, modern urban planning, strict yet fair enforcement of laws, and an unconditional respect for human life are no longer optional. Without these principles, the city cannot bear any further burden. If we continue to avert our eyes today, tomorrow's statistics will be even grimmer, and regret may be all that remains.

Karachi does not scream in protest; it suffers silently through statistics. The question is: is anyone listening?



Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

Nation celebrates Quaid-e-Azam's birth anniversary with patriotic zeal

 Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The nation on Thursday observed the 149th birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the Founder of Pakistan, with patriotic zeal, paying tribute to his visionary leadership and renewing the pledge to uphold his guiding principles of faith, unity and discipline.

President Asif Ali Zardari, in his message, stressed the enduring relevance of Quaid-e-Azam's leadership and called upon the nation to recommit itself to the democratic, inclusive and constitutional ideals laid down by the Founder of Pakistan.

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tribute to Quaid-e-Azam, urging citizens to follow his principles of democracy, constitutionalism, social justice and religious harmony to steer the country towards stability and progress.



Federal ministers, governors and chief ministers also issued messages highlighting Quaid-e-Azam's historic struggle, unwavering principles and farsighted statesmanship.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, Science and Technology Minister Khalid Hussain Magsi and Overseas Pakistanis Minister Chaudhry Salik Hussain emphasised national unity,

tolerance and adherence to constitutional values.

Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah visited Mazar-e-Qauaid to pay homage, while governors of Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan underscored the need to follow the Founder's vision in letter and spirit.

The armed forces' leadership, including Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, also paid tribute to the Father of the Nation.

Messages were also issued by the leadership of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, while media outlets across the country aired special programmes highlighting Quaid-e-Azam's role in the creation of Pakistan and the continued relevance of his ideals for national unity, peace and progress.

US Nuclear Sub's Arrival in South Korea Escalates Regional Tensions, Says DPRK

 KCNA

PYONGYANG: A spokesperson for the Ministry of National Defense of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea released the following statement on the 24th:

Recently, the United States' attempts to permanently entrench serious nuclear instability in our nation's security environment have become more blatant.

On the 23rd, a U. S. Navy nuclear attack submarine entered the Busan Operational Base in South Korea under the pretext of crew rest and supply replenishment.

The repeated appearance of US strategic assets 46 days after the USS George Washington nuclear-powered aircraft carrier strike group of the US 7th Fleet entered South Korea on November 7th constitutes a serious act of destabilization that heightens military tensions on the Korean Peninsula and in the region.



The fact that the United States, which reaffirmed its commitment to providing South Korea with "extended deterrence" by mobilizing all defense capabilities, including nuclear weapons, at the 5th U. S.-ROK Nuclear Talks Group meeting held recently in Washington, D. C., has given South Korea a green light for its nuclear submarine development and is now frequently deploying its own nuclear submarine force has clear implications for the regional security structure.

This serves as a warning that the United States' attempt to gain strategic advantage in the region by further solidifying its military alliance with South Korea into a nuclear confrontation bloc sharing American nuclear weapons is nearing a critical juncture.

In line with the reaffirmation of the United States' confrontational intentions to solidify a nuclear-on-nuclear confrontation with our country, our practical will to vigorously strengthen our defense capabilities to secure our national interests and safeguard our security, both present and future, remains absolutely unchangeable.

Nothing will change even if the United States deploys nuclear submarines to highlight the visibility of its nuclear strike force.

The constant presence of the US nuclear threat around our country urges us to secure strategic retaliatory capabilities capable of eliminating such threats within our maritime sovereignty.

We will consider corresponding countermeasures to US nuclear force demonstrations in accordance with the doctrine of mutual restraint among nuclear powers, and the method and timing of such actions will be chosen based on the principles of symmetry and asymmetry.

Solar Rush in Textiles: Study Maps Potential for 237 MW Capacity Amid Regulatory Hurdles

 Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan needs urgent structural reforms to reduce its reliance on fossil fuels, enhance export competitiveness, and accelerate the pace of industrial growth in order to effectively respond to the challenges posed by climate change. These views were expressed by experts from various sectors while speaking at a seminar titled "Driving a Just Industrial Transition: Role of Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs) and Solar Rush in Pakistan's Textile Sector."

The seminar was organized by Alternate Development Services (ADS), an organization working to promote clean energy in Pakistan. Hosted by ADS CEO Amjad Nazeer, the event brought together more than 50 policymakers, industrial professionals, economists, and civil society experts.

The speakers emphasized the need to align MDB financing with national

priorities, accelerated solar adoption in the textile sector, and broader calls for climate justice, including debt relief and/or concessional finance to prevent further burdening debt-stressed and debt-trapped nations like Pakistan.

Dr. Ali Abbas Kazmi (Head of the Energy System Engineering, USPCASE, NUST) and Usman Bin Ahmad (ETO, ADS) unveiled a scoping study based on primary data from 80 textile mills in Faisalabad and Multan, mapping 82 textile industries with 237 MW of installed solar capacity.

Afterward, the first session, titled Solar Barriers under the Competitive Trading Bilateral Contract Market (CTBCM), featured panellists Dr. Afia Malik, Qurat-ul-Ain Cheema (CEO, GEN II), and Aamir Imran (Manager Compliance & Sustainability, Kohinoor Textile Mills) discussed regulatory hurdles like high Use of System Charges (UoS) and legacy power purchase agreements (PPAs). Imran

highlighted decarbonization challenges for SMEs, including global pressures like CBAM, and industry responses through hybrid solar systems with a case study of Kohinoor.

The second session, which examined Multilateral Development Banks' (MDBs) priorities, brought together Dr. Afia Malik (Energy Expert, Economist), Zubair Faisal Abbasi (Development and Public Policy Advisor), and Abdul Khalique (Debt and Development Expert). Abbasi praised the study's "menu card" for civil society interventions but urged micro-level surveys and restorative justice in transitions, critiquing MDBs' neoliberal approaches. Khalique emphasized that 70% of climate financing comes as loans, not grants, trapping Global South countries in debt. He called for a parliamentary debt audit commission and reframing "climate finance" as "climate justice."

At the conclusion of the seminar, ADS CEO Amjad Nazeer thanked the participants and contextualising



Pakistan's energy crisis and calling for coordinated policy efforts. "Our studies provide an evidence base to steer MDB financing toward inclusive decarbonization," he said. "With

experts highlighting debt justice as essential for climate action, we must advocate for grants over loans to avoid deepening Pakistan's \$2 billion monthly repayment burden."

The interactive session and networking lunch reinforced commitments to joint advocacy, including provincial integration and SME support.

'Shaam-e-December': A Graceful Literary Evening Held in Riyadh Under the Banner of Aalami Halqa-e-Fikr-o-Fun

RIYADH: A distinguished literary and poetic gathering titled Shaam-e-December was organized in Riyadh under the auspices of the renowned representative literary body of Pakistani writers in Saudi Arabia, Aalami Halqa-e-Fikr-o-Fun. The event drew a large number of literature enthusiasts and the atmosphere remained enriched with poetic expression, intellectual discourse, and cultural vibrance.

The session was presided over by noted poet and writer Syed Tayyab Raza Kazmi, who, in his presidential address, said that the mushaira is an essential part of our cultural heritage and a powerful medium of knowledge and enlightenment.

He added that such gatherings promote intellectual growth and encourage positive literary trends within society.

President of Aalami Halqa-e-Fikr-o-Fun, Waqar Naseem Wamiq, stated in his address that poetic sittings and mushairas not only introduce new dimensions of poetry but also play a vital role in guiding and nurturing the younger generation. He emphasized that the mission of Fikr-o-Fun is to promote Pakistani literature abroad in an organized and dignified manner.

The distinguished guests of the evening renowned poet Shuja-uz-Zaman Shad from Karachi and social leader Aziz-ur-Rehman Mujahid from

Islamabad praised the work of young poets, noting the maturity and intellectual depth evident in the poetry of overseas Pakistanis. They commended the literary services of Aalami Halqa-e-Fikr-o-Fun, calling it one of the finest representative

platforms for Pakistani literature abroad. Guest of Honour, poet Muzammil Banday from Tabuk, appreciated the literary initiatives of the organization, expressing his delight that Fikr-o-Fun is playing a prominent role in promoting

poetry and literature overseas particularly in Saudi Arabia while providing a strong platform for both senior and emerging poets. Earlier, Vice Chairman Adnan Iqbal Butt and Convener Makhdoom Amin Tajir also addressed the audience, highlighting

the organization's ongoing literary activities and upcoming programs. The event commenced with the recitation of the Holy Qur'an by Malik Ishtiaq Heera, followed by a soulful naat presented by Taimoor Nawaz.

During the gathering, Deputy Secretary General of Fikr-o-Fun and young poet Kamran Hassan presented his poetry collection Gul-e-Taaza as a special gift to Shuja-uz-Zaman Shad, Aziz-ur-Rehman Mujahid, and Muzammil Banday. Poets of Fikr-o-Fun including Prof. Sajid Mahmood, Muzammil Banday, Kamran Hassan, Uneeb Arshad, Zawwaq Ali Zaki, Muhammad Zareen Majboor, Waqar Naseem Wamiq, Shuja-uz-Zaman Khan Shad, Syed Tayyab Raza Kazmi and others, captivated the audience with their unique and compelling verses. Each poet added a distinct intellectual and artistic flavour to the evening.

Quaid-e-Azam's leadership is a guiding light for us: FPCCI Vice President Aman Paracha

KARACHI: Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Aman Paracha, while paying tribute to the services of the Father of the Nation Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah on his birth anniversary, said that Quaid-e-Azam's leadership is a guiding light for us, and by following his golden principles, Pakistan can be transformed into a developed Asian Tiger country.



Talking to a delegation of traders in connection with the birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, Aman Paracha said that the Pakistan given to us by Quaid-e-Azam and his companions who participated in the struggle for the creation of Pakistan must be strengthened collectively through honest efforts by all of us.

He said that just as the Pakistan Armed Forces made sacrifices for the defense and security of the country and achieved success against a powerful enemy, the nation takes pride in its armed forces. He added that under the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan's success has been acknowledged by the world.

He further stated that if the government takes more positive decisions and privatizes other loss-making institutions like PIA, the country's valuable treasury will no longer be spent on providing subsidies to such failed institutions. As a result, Pakistan will emerge as a strong country in the region—fulfilling the dream envisioned by Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and his companions. He emphasized that it is now the responsibility of the rulers to steer Pakistan towards stability and progress.

Port performance will improve through the reform package: Tariq Haleem

KARACHI: Former Chairman of the Pakistan Ship Agents Association (PSAA), former Vice President of FPCCI and Member Core Committee of the United Business Group, Tariq Haleem, while commenting on the reform package introduced by the federal government to improve the performance of ports, said that the reform package will further enhance coordination among various institutions linked with ports and help minimize cargo dwell time.



Tariq Haleem stated that the objective of the comprehensive reform package announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is to improve systems at Pakistan's ports, reduce cargo delays, lower the cost of doing business and promote economic growth. He added that these reforms focus on key aspects such as coordination, infrastructure and transparency, with the aim of making the country's trade and logistics system more efficient and enhancing Pakistan's global competitiveness. The package was announced after a meeting of the private-sector working group formed to prepare recommendations for port-related reforms.

He said it is a fact that the country's economic prosperity is directly linked to the performance of ports, through which the system of major imports and exports operates. Ports are the foundation of business expansion and economic growth, and improved coordination among various port-related institutions will significantly reduce cargo dwell time.

The former PSAA Chairman emphasized that the role of ports in promoting business and economic growth is extremely important, and effective coordination among all institutions working at ports will accelerate cargo handling operations.

He appreciated the Prime Minister's directive to introduce a transparent system for auctioning abandoned cargo lying at ports. He also welcomed the proposal to establish separate yards for abandoned cargo at various ports across the country and to engage internationally renowned companies for this purpose. Tariq Haleem further stressed the need to make the country's third port, Gwadar Port, more functional and to take more effective measures to attract cargo there, adding that increased investment in Gwadar is essential.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
170,830.22	171,073.73
Day's High	Day's Low
171,587.32	170,641.13
Index Value	Change
19,822,559,750	-243.51
Percentage	Time
-0.14%	24 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
9,870.68	-18.54
Percentage	Time
-0.19%	24 Dec, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
48,716.54	+274.13
Percentage	Time
+0.57%	24 Dec, 12:18 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
50,344.10	-68.77
Percentage	Time
+0.14%	24 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187	190
Bahrain Dinar	743.95	753.95
Canadian Dollar	204	207.5
China Yuan	39.39	39.79
Danish Krone	43.81	44.21
Euro	331	334.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.8	36.15
Indian Rupee	3.02	3.11
Japanese Yen	1.7850	1.8850
Kuwaiti Dinar	911.9	921.9
Malaysian Ringgit	67.75	68.35
New Zealand \$	161.43	163.43
Norwegian Krone	27.6	27.90
Omani Riyal	729.1	739.1
Qatari Riyal	76.47	77.17
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.5
Singapore Dollar	217.25	222.25
Swedish Korona	30.11	30.41
Swiss Franc	351.34	354.09
Thai Bhat	8.73	8.88
U.A.E Dirham	76.6	77.45
UK Pound Sterling	379.5	383
US Dollar	281.05	283.1

Seafood exports to EU states unlikely to resume next year



KARACHI: Pakistan's full-fledged seafood exports to European Union (EU) countries are unlikely to resume next year, as the EU has not included Pakistan in its inspection plan for 2026, effectively extending the ban for at least another year, sources said on Wednesday.

Pakistan's seafood exports to the EU have remained delisted since 2007.

However, government officials said they are still hopeful that an EU inspection team may visit Pakistan next year, most likely in the first quarter, following several rounds of meetings held on the issue.

According to sources, the EU's proposed inspection plan for 2026 does not list Pakistan for evaluating seafood facilities, particularly at Karachi Fish Harbour. As a result, hopes of enlisting more seafood processing companies have been dashed. Exporters, however, appeared largely unfazed by the development.

"There are already four companies exporting seafood to EU countries, and most others are not prepared to seek enlistment because EU regulations are extremely strict and difficult to maintain," said Saeed Farid, Senior Vice Chairman of the Pakistan Fisheries Export Association (PAKEA).

He regretted the Sindh government's poor handling of fish harbour maintenance and fisheries management, noting that the core issue lies in the lack of effective support from official partners to facilitate EU inspections.

Saeed Farid said fisheries landings have declined over time, which he linked to limited exports to the EU.

"New entrants are less interested," he observed, while expressing satisfaction that China has emerged as Pakistan's largest seafood importer, accounting for about 65 percent of total exports.

Fauji Fertiliser joins Arif Habib-led consortium for PIA acquisition

Board approves participation as consortium moves closer to acquiring 75% stake

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Fauji Fertiliser Company (FFC) has joined the Arif Habib-led consortium that has emerged as the successful bidder for the acquisition of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

According to Business Recorder, the decision to become part of the Arif Habib consortium was approved by the Fauji Fertiliser Company's board of directors during a recent meeting.

The Privatisation Commission approved the qualification statement of Fauji Fertiliser Company in July 2025, after which the company became eligible to participate in the bidding process for a majority stake in PIA.

Later, in the auction held on December 23, 2025, a consortium led by Arif Habib Corporation placed the highest bid and secured the right to acquire a 75 per cent stake in PIA.



In addition to Fauji Fertiliser Company, the consortium includes Fatima Fertiliser Company Limited, Lake City Holdings (Private) Limited, AKD Group Holdings (Private) Limited, and The City Schools (Private) Limited.

The FFC board has also authorised the company to sign all necessary agreements and documents with the consortium, the Privatisation Commission, and other relevant parties.

According to the report, Fauji Fertiliser may acquire its stake in PIA either directly or through a special purpose vehicle.

It may be noted that the transaction has not yet reached final completion.

The deal remains subject to the issuance of a Letter of Acceptance by the Privatisation Commission, the execution of final agreements among all parties, and the completion of all required regulatory, corporate, and legal approvals.

Free Medical Camp

CHINIOT: Islamia Hospital arranged a Free Medical Camp on the order of Federal Minister Board of Investment Board Qaiser Ahmad Sheikh in Chak # 132 Dhamraya where hundreds of patients got free checkup, medicine and lab tests.



Mehria Town Distributes Christmas Gifts Worth Millions to Christian Community in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Chairman Mehria Town (Pvt) Limited, Malik Javed Akhtar, has said that Christmas is not merely a religious festival but a universal message of peace, love, brotherhood and service to humanity, reflecting shared societal values.

He expressed these views while speaking to the media after a ceremony held at Municipal Hall Attock, where Mehria Town distributed ration packages and gifts worth millions of rupees among members of the Christian community.

Malik Javed Akhtar said that the Chris-

tian community has consistently played a positive role in promoting peace, harmony and mutual respect in Attock and would continue to do so in the future. He added that Mehria Town equally shares the joy of Christmas with the Christian community.

Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Aneel Saeed, Chief Officer Municipal Committee Sardar Afتاب Ahmed Khan, PA to Chairman Mehria Town Babar Abbasi, representatives of the Christian community, members of civil society and officials from various departments were present on the occasion.

Representatives of the Christian commu-

nity expressed happiness and satisfaction over the initiative and paid rich tributes to Malik Javed Akhtar for his continued support, reaffirming their commitment to promoting interfaith harmony, peace and mutual respect in the district.

ADCG Aneel Saeed termed the annual distribution of Christmas gifts by Mehria Town a commendable and exemplary initiative, stating that Malik Javed Akhtar has set a shining example of social responsibility, humanitarianism and solidarity with minority communities. He said such practices serve as a beacon for other institutions.

PTA makes SIM registration in user's name mandatory

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) has made it mandatory for all mobile SIM cards to be registered in the name of the actual user.

In a statement, the PTA said that using a SIM registered in another person's name is a violation of the law.

The authority clarified that the registered user will

be held fully responsible for any misuse of a SIM.

According to the PTA, consumers are personally accountable for the use of their SIM cards and telecom connections.

The authority stressed that compliance with regulations governing calls, messages and data usage is compulsory.

The PTA warned that legal action may be taken in case of any violation of these rules.

Major General Tariq lauds FESCO's Record Line Loss Reduction and Flood Response

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A special meeting was held at the Commissioner Office, Faisalabad, which was chaired by the General Officer Commanding (GOC), Major General Tariq. During the meeting, the outstanding performance of FESCO Chief Executive Engineer Muhammad Aamer was highly appreciated.

It was highlighted that FESCO's progressive line losses up to November, which were 6.01% last year, have been reduced to 4.99% this year, reflecting a record decrease of 1.02%. Satisfaction was expressed over FESCO's effective strategy and administrative capabilities. The GOC stated that despite the severe flood situation in the districts of Jhang and Chiniot, FESCO's recovery performance remained excellent, which is a clear reflection of the high efficiency of FESCO's recovery teams. Achieving recovery targets even under difficult circumstances demonstrated FESCO's discipline, professional competence, and teamwork.

Major General Tariq praised the leadership and effective strategies of FESCO Chief Executive Engineer Muhammad Aamer, stating that due to his effective measures, significant improvement in recovery and a

notable reduction in line losses were made possible, enabling FESCO to attain a prominent and stable position among all Distribution Companies.

During the meeting, he also appreciated FESCO's timely and comprehensive response in flood-affected areas, which not only ensured the prompt restoration of electricity but also facilitated the immediate resolution of electricity-related complaints of flood victims. He commended Engineer Muhammad Aamer for providing relief to flood victims by including subsidies in their electricity bills and allowing payment in six

installments, in accordance with the directives of the Ministry of Energy (Power Division).

Major General Tariq also expressed satisfaction over the use of modern resources for the prompt and timely redressal of consumers' complaints. On this occasion, the Commissioner of Faisalabad and other district administrative officers were also present. All participants appreciated FESCO's exemplary performance and expressed hope that FESCO would continue to serve the public with the same dedication and commitment and achieve its set targets in the future as well.

Pakistan, ADB sign \$730m financing for power transmission, SOE reforms

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday signed agreements worth \$730 million for two key projects aimed at strengthening the power sector and advancing reforms of state-owned enterprises (SOEs), the Economic Affairs Division said.

According to an official spokesperson, the agreements include a \$300 million Second Power Transmission Project, designed to improve the reliability of electricity transmission and enable the evacuation of up to 2,300 megawatts of hydro-power.

The second agreement covers a \$400 million SOE Transformation Programme, which aims to support effective implementation of the SOE Act and policy framework, improve governance and strengthen the financial sustainability of state-owned entities.

Officials said the power transmission project would help reduce system constraints and enhance grid stability, while the reform programme would underpin the government's broader institutional and policy reforms.

ADB Country Director Emma Fan welcomed the agreements and praised the government of Pakistan's strong commitment to the reform agenda and infrastructure upgrades.

The projects are part of Pakistan's ongoing engagement with multilateral partners to address energy sector challenges and improve public-sector performance, officials said.



FESCO

12 parties file bids for two new Pakistan Super League teams

 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced an exceptional and encouraging response to the tender issued for the sale of two new franchises of the Pakistan Super League (PSL). Within the stipulated deadline, 12 parties have formally submitted their bids.

These bidders belong to five countries, including the United States, Australia, Canada, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Pakistan, which clearly reflects the PSL's growing global popularity and commercial appeal.

According to the PCB, the results of this phase of the bidding process will be announced on December 27.

In the next stage, technically qualified bidders will be given the opportunity to purchase the two new teams through an open competition bidding process.

This stage will be held on January 8 at the Islamabad Convention Centre.

The Pakistan Cricket Board is committed to completing this process in a transparent and competitive manner



in line with international standards, to ensure the continued expansion and growth of the Pakistan Super League.

Pakistan MMA makes mark in Central Asia as Ismail Khan secures statement win

 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's growing presence on the global MMA stage was on full display as its athletes delivered high-impact performances at BRAVE 103, one of Central Asia's premier combat sports events.

In a commanding showing, Ismail Khan secured a second-round submission victory, showcasing composure, technical dominance, and championship-level awareness. Competing against a seasoned regional contender, Ismail controlled the fight before closing it decisively on the ground, a performance that underlined the rapid rise of Pakistani fighters on the international circuit.

The night also marked a significant moment for Rizwan Ali, who headlined the event in front of a packed Uzbek crowd. Facing the hometown favourite in hostile territory, Rizwan fought with trademark grit and heart.

Despite a valiant effort, he suffered the first professional loss of his career. Post-fight, Rizwan confirmed that he entered the bout carrying an injury sustained during camp but chose to compete regardless, demonstrating the warrior mindset that has defined his rise. "This is part of the journey," he said after the fight. "I'll recover, reset, and come back stronger."

The atmosphere inside the arena reflected the magnitude of the occasion, with a partisan crowd rallying behind their local hero and witnessing elite-level competition rarely seen in the region. For Pakistan MMA, the night marked another major milestone, competing, and winning, on one of Central Asia's biggest stages.

With continued international exposure and structured development through the Pakistan Mixed Martial Arts Federation, the trajectory is clear: Pakistani fighters are no longer outsiders on the global stage, they are contenders.



KRL win President's Cup One-Day Tournament

 News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Khan Research Laboratories (KRL) Thursday won the President's Cup One-Day Tournament after defeating Pakistan Television (PTV) by 4 wickets in the final played at the National Bank Stadium in Karachi.

PTV captain Shamil Hussain won the toss and decided to bat first. PTV were bowled out for 164 runs in 40.2 overs.

In reply, KRL achieved the required score in 34.4 overs for the loss of 6 wickets.

In PTV's innings, Shamil Hussain scored 50 runs with the help of 6 fours and 2 sixes. He scored a total of 452 runs in this tournament, including 2 centuries and 3 half-centuries.

Imad Butt scored 24, Taimur Khan 23 and Muhammad Mohsin 22.

For KRL, Sufyan Muqeem and Ahmed Hassan took three wickets for 23 and 25 runs, respectively.

Sufyan Muqeem remained the leading wicket-taker of the tournament



with 20 scalps to his credit.

In the KRL innings, Shahzеб Khan scored 53 runs with the help of 4 fours

and a six before being bowled lbw by Ali Usman.

He also topped the scoring charts

of the tournament with 485 runs, including a century and 5 half-centuries.

Shahzеб Khan and Iftikhar Ahmed added 51 runs in the fifth wicket partnership. Iftikhar Ahmed played an innings of 25 runs with the help of 4 fours and was bowled by Faisal Akram, who had earlier taken the wickets of Waqar Ahmed (11) and Sarmad Bhatti (0).

Saad Baig was dismissed for 23 runs with the help of 5 fours. Mohammad Amir was not out for 21 and Hamza Nazar was not out for 10.

For PTV, Faisal Akram took 3 wickets for 51 runs. Ali Usman took 2 wickets for 19 runs.

Shahzеб Khan was also declared the Player of the Final and the Best Batsman of the Tournament.

Sufyan Muqeem (KRL) named the Best Bowler of the Tournament and Mohammad Taimur Khan (PTV) the Best Wicketkeeper.

Iftikhar Ahmed (KRL) was declared the Best Player of the Tournament.

President, PM laud Security Forces for successful anti-terror operation in Qalat and DI Khan

 Continued from Page 1

In a separate statement from the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif also commended the security forces for their successful operation against Fatah-al-Hindustan terrorists in Qalat district.

The prime minister lauded the forces for neutralizing terrorists during the operation and said that under the government's Azm-e-Istehkam vision, security forces were achieving major successes against terrorism.

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif said the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan's armed forces in the war against terrorism. He reaffirmed the government's firm resolve to eliminate terrorism in all its forms and manifestations and to continue decisive action against elements threatening the country's peace and stability.

The prime minister emphasized that the sacrifices of security personnel would not go in vain and that the government remained fully committed to ensuring lasting peace, security, and stability across Pakistan.

President Asif Ali

Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday paid tribute to Pakistan's security forces for carrying out an effective intelligence-based operation against Khawarij in the Kulachi area of Dera Ismail Khan and reaffirmed the state's resolve to eliminate terrorism and ensure lasting peace in the country.

In a statement issued by the Presidency, President Asif Ali Zardari praised the security forces for their professionalism and bravery, stating that bringing the killers of innocent civilians and security personnel to justice remains the state's

foremost priority. He said operations against Khawarij, who are operating with external backing, are vital for safeguarding public order and strengthening public confidence in state institutions.

The president underscored that decisive action against such elements reflects the state's unwavering commitment to protecting citizens and maintaining stability, particularly in areas affected by militancy.

In a separate statement by the Prime Minister's Office, Prime Minister Muhammad

Shehbaz Sharif also lauded the security forces for the successful operation, in which two Khawarij were neutralized. He said the security forces are achieving significant successes in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

The prime minister reiterated that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with Pakistan's armed forces in this war against terrorism and vowed that the country would be cleansed of all forms of terrorism. He emphasized that sustained operations against militant groups are essential to ensure peace, security, and development.

major strategic developments, particularly highlighting a significant mutual defence agreement signed with Saudi Arabia.

Foreign Policy said Pakistan quietly but decisively rebuilt its influence in Washington during the Trump era, reshaping the regional diplomatic landscape.

The magazine noted that Pakistan not only secured its place in Washington but also asserted its influence.

According to Foreign Policy, Pakistan's improved ties were partly driven by personal engagement at the highest levels, including interactions involving senior US officials and Pakistan's military leadership.

Fahad Ansari and Tariq Bakht hit tons in Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League

 Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Century 163 with the help of 24 boundaries and Sixes, Dashing 72 by Afnan Khan with 4 boundaries and 7 Sixes helped Medicam Group to beat Custom Academy by 130 runs in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament here at CAA Cricket Stadium. Tariq Bakht also scored 100 but could not save their team from defeat.

The Tournament is being organized by Regional Cricket Association Karachi with the collaboration of Wing 999 Sports.

Scores in Brief:

Medicam Group beat Custom Academy by 130 runs at CAA Cricket Stadium. Medicam Group 324/6 in 40 Overs. Fahad Ansari 163 24x4 2x6, Afnan Khan 72 4x4 7x4, Ali Butt 30, Muhammad Yaseen 25. Rehain Shah (mf) 2/54.

In reply Custom Academy 194 all-out in 36.5 overs. Tariq Bakht 100 16x4 1x6, Akbar Babar 30, Rehain Shah 21, Ali Butt 2/27, Asadullah Khan 2/28, Naimat Khan 2/31, Hamza Qureshi 2/45.

President, PM call for renewed commitment to Quaid-e-Azam's ideals

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On the occasion, President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in their separate messages, paid glowing tributes to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Both the president and the prime minister called for adherence to the guiding principles of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah to effectively address the challenges facing the country.

The leaders said that the Quaid-e-Azam promoted the values of religious harmony, tolerance, justice, democracy and equality, and transformed the dream of an independent state into reality.

President Asif Ali Zardari said that Quaid-e-Azam's principles of democracy, justice and equality remain a guiding light for the nation.

Both leaders said that Quaid-e-Azam's golden principles of faith, unity and discipline continue to serve as a beacon for national progress, social harmony and confidence.

The president noted that the message of unity, faith and discipline provides a clear direction for the country, adding that national challenges can be overcome through unity and solidarity.

They reaffirmed their resolve to work with sincerity and dedication by following in the footsteps of the Father of the Nation for the country's development and stability.

10 India-sponsored terrorists killed in D. I. Khan, Kalat operations: ISPR

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Eight terrorists killed in Kalat

In a separate statement, the ISPR said that the security forces killed eight Indian-sponsored terrorists in the Kalat district of Balochistan on December 24.

According to the ISPR, the operation was conducted after receiving reports about the presence of militants affiliated with Fatah Al Hindustan in the area.

During the operation, a fierce exchange of fire took place between security forces and the armed militants, resulting in the killing of eight terrorists.

Their hideout was also effectively targeted and destroyed.

The killed militants were linked to the Indian-spon-

sored terror network and were involved in activities against security forces.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the terrorists, the ISPR stated.

"Sanitisation operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision 'Azm-e-Istehkam' (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full

pace to wipe out the menace of foreign-sponsored and supported terrorism from the country," the statement said.

US media praises Pakistan's military leadership for firm stand against extremism

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The article noted that throughout 2025, Pakistan's military leadership played a crucial role in strengthening the writ of the state and protecting the country's national interests.

The publication said Pakistan's armed forces effectively countered Indian military adventurism, strengthened strategic credibility and deterrence, and enhanced Pakistan's standing on the global stage.

It added that India's relations with Washington came under pressure during this period.

The Diplomat also described Pakistan's defence engagements in the Middle East as

Christmas ceremony

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif cuts a cake at the Christmas ceremony at PM House, in Islamabad on Thursday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz hails Christian community's national contributions at Christmas ceremony

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday reaffirmed the government's firm commitment to safeguarding the constitutional rights of minorities, declaring that Pakistan belongs equally to all its citizens irrespective of faith.

The prime minister was addressing a Christmas ceremony held here at the Prime

Minister's Office.

Speaking at the event, the prime minister highlighted the teachings of Jesus Christ (Hazrat Isa A. S.), describing him as a symbol of peace, compassion and service to humanity. He said the message of love, justice and tolerance preached by Jesus Christ was deeply relevant in the present age and aligned with the core principles of Islam and Pakistan's founding vision.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif paid rich tribute to the Christian community's historic and ongoing contributions to Pakistan's development, particularly in the fields of education, healthcare, defence and the justice system. He specifically acknowledged Justice A. R. Cornelius, former Chief Justice of Pakistan, for his exemplary role in strengthening the country's judicial system; Air Commodore

Cecil Chaudhry (Shaheed) for his valour and services in the defence of Pakistan; and Dr. Ruth Pfau for her extraordinary humanitarian work in healthcare, especially her life-long fight against leprosy in the country.

Extending warm greetings to Christian citizens on Christmas, the prime minister noted the special significance of December 25, which marks not only the birth of Jesus

Christ but also the birthday of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. He prayed for peace, prosperity and harmony in the country and congratulated the Christian community on the festive occasion.

The ceremony was attended by Archbishop Dr. Joseph Arshad, bishops, clergy members, diplomats including the Ambassador of the Vatican, federal ministers, parliamentarians and other dignitaries.

AJK PM vows priority resolution for all teachers' issues

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that all issues faced by teachers will be resolved on a priority basis and that the government is taking serious and effective measures in this regard.

The Prime Minister expressed these views while addressing a convention organized by the Azad Jammu

and Kashmir School Teachers Organization here today.

He said that under the present government, teachers will not need to take to the streets to press for their legitimate demands.

The government, he said, will engage directly with teachers to resolve their issues.

Highlighting the significance of education and health, prime minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that these sectors form the foundation of social

development.

He added that the present government enjoys public confidence, which is its greatest strength. He said that the government believes that dialogue is the only civilized way to resolve issues no matter how complex they are.

Expressing satisfaction at interacting directly with teachers, Prime Minister Rathore said the government will continue to take effective steps to resolve their issues.

The convention was attended and addressed among others included Senior Minister Mian Abdul Waheed, Minister Chaudhry Rashid, President Teachers Organization Sardar Tasif Shaheen and others.

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Maryam Nawaz raises minority cards to 100,000 on Christmas

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Thursday announced an increase in minority cards from 75,000 to 100,000, calling it a Christmas gift for the Christian community and reaffirming the government's commitment to protect minority rights.

Addressing a Christmas ceremony at the Cathedral Church in Lahore, the chief minister congratulated the Christian community and said issues related to minority graveyards across Punjab would be resolved on a priority basis.

"If any injustice is committed against a minority, the state will act with its full authority," she said, stressing zero tolerance for abuse or discrimination.



CM Maryam said Pakistan's strength lies in unity, adding that citizens should be seen not as Muslims, Christians, Sikhs or Hindus, but as Pakistanis, to improve welfare and inclusion of religious minorities.

She praised the role of the Christian community in the country's development and said her decisions were guided by humanity and justice.

Referring to road safety rules, the chief minister said helmet laws were enforced to protect lives but acknowledged the Sikh community's religious concerns. She said exemptions were granted after Sikh leaders said they could not remove their turbans.

During the ceremony, the chief minister also distributed minority cards and cheques for Christmas grants among members of the Christian community.

Officials said the measures were part of the provincial government's broader policy to improve welfare and inclusion of religious minorities.

US media praises Pakistan's military leadership for firm stand against extremism

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Leading US publications have described Pakistan as a winner in US President Donald Trump's new foreign policy approach, while India has been termed a clear loser.

According to an analysis published by Foreign Policy, the balance of power in Washington has tilted in Pakistan's favour, marking what the magazine described as a strategic comeback for Islamabad.

The report said Pakistan has regained trust and access in Washington — something even some long-standing US allies have struggled to achieve — once again becoming a valuable and effective partner for the United States.

Meanwhile, another prominent US magazine, The Diplomat, has declared Pakistan the centre of global attention in 2025 after several years on the sidelines.

The publication said 2025 proved to be a year of strategic return and renewed military confidence for Pakistan.

In its analysis, The Diplomat praised Pakistan's military leadership for sending a clear and unequivocal message against extremism, emphasising that the authority to declare jihad lies solely with the state.

The report described the military chief's stance as a turning point in the fight against extremism, saying it helped reinforce the state's authority and clarify national policy.

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Armed forces pay tribute to Quaid-e-Azam on birth anniversary

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: On the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, the armed forces paid rich tribute to the Father of the Nation and renewed their resolve to safeguard Pakistan's sovereignty, security and stability.

The statement said that Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Asim Munir, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, Chief of the Naval Staff, and Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, on behalf of the armed forces, paid tribute to the Father of the Nation.

The armed forces reaffirmed their commitment to fulfilling their responsibilities for the defence of national security, sovereignty and territorial integrity in line with Quaid-e-Azam's principles of unity, faith and discipline.

The armed forces reaffirmed their unwavering commitment to Quaid-e-Azam's vision of a strong, sovereign, democratic, and prosperous Pakistan, founded on the principles of unity, faith and discipline.

DPM Dar reaffirms commitment to equality, pluralism on Quaid-e-Azam's birth anniversary, Christmas

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister (DPM/FM), Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday said the coinciding occasions of the birth anniversary of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and the celebration of Christmas reflected Pakistan's inclusive vision and strong moral foundations, rooted in equality, pluralism and respect for fundamental rights.

The DPM/FM paid tribute to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, describing him as not only the architect of Pakistan's independence but also a statesman of unwavering principles and exceptional clarity of vision, a statement from the DPM's Office news said.

He said the Quaid had envisioned Pakistan as a democratic state based

on equality, pluralism and respect for the rights of all citizens, without distinction of religion, race or ethnicity.

Recalling Quaid-e-Azam's historic address of August 11, 1947, the DPM/FM noted that the founder of the nation had categorically affirmed that the state would make no distinction between its citizens. He said Pakistan's commitment to protecting minority rights, equality and religious freedom remained a cornerstone of the Constitution and the country's national ethos.

Extending warm Christmas greetings to the Christian community, the DPM/FM reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to religious freedom, equality and pluralism, as envisioned by the founding fathers and enshrined in the Constitution.

World stands with Pakistan as diplomacy gains traction, says Khawaja Asif

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Thursday welcomed a report by the US magazine Foreign Policy describing Pakistan as a diplomatic "winner" under President Donald Trump's new foreign policy, saying it reflected the growing global acceptance of Islamabad's stance.

Speaking to Aaj News, Asif said the world today stood with Pakistan, and the impact of its foreign policy was clearly visible, calling it a major national success.

He said recognition by a credible international publication underscored the positive effects of Pakistan's diplomacy at the global level.

Asif said Pakistan's foreign policy footprint was increasingly evident in Washington, describing the shift as a significant breakthrough for Islamabad. He added that Pakistan was now being acknowledged as a frontline state in the fight against terrorism.

Referring to regional dynamics, the defence minister said Pakistan had demonstrated its military strength against a country "five times its size," a reality he said had been acknowledged by the United States and other countries.

He added that the international community was also supporting Pakistan's position on terrorism emanating from Afghanistan, terming it an important diplomatic development.