



Daily The Spokesman

Presidents Xi, Putin exchange New Year greetings

Chinese President Xi Jinping on Wednesday exchanged New Year greetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin. In his message, Xi extended warm greetings to President Putin and the Russian people on behalf of the Chinese government and people.



New Year Message from President Asif Ali Zardari

As we enter 2026 and the second quarter of this century, I convey my warm greetings to you, the people of Pakistan including our overseas Pakistanis and the international community. Beyond individual New Year resolutions, we must recommit ourselves as custodians of Pakistan's shared future.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rajab-ul-Murajjah 11, Thursday, January 1, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 256

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Addressed

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir addressing to participants of the 18th National Workshop on Balochistan.



Photo: ISPR

Field Marshal Asim Munir Addresses Balochistan Workshop, Stresses People-Centric Development and Security

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, interacted with the participants of the 18th National Workshop on Balochistan at General Headquarters (GHQ). The workshop focused on exploring Balochistan's socio-economic development and its strategic importance for Pakistan.

During his address, the COAS & CDF appreciated the resilience and patriotism of the people of Balochistan while high-

lighting Balochistan's pivotal importance for Pakistan's prosperity and development. He lauded the wide ranging initiatives being undertaken by the federal and provincial governments, underscoring a people-centric approach that aims to improve the socio-economic conditions of the province and unlock its vast economic potential for the benefit of its people.

The COAS & CDF acknowledged the constructive role of civil society, particularly in debunking propaganda, and highlighted their crucial part in driving

sustainable development. He stressed the importance of rejecting vested political agendas to ensure that Balochistan's future is shaped by long-term prosperity for all its residents.

Highlighting the security challenges, the COAS & CDF remarked that Indian-sponsored proxies continue to propagate violence and disrupt development in Balochistan. He reaffirmed that such inimical designs will be thwarted through stern actions by Security Forces to rid the province of terrorism and unrest.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to regional peace and stability, the COAS & CDF also emphasized that any violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity, whether direct or indirect, will be met with a firm and decisive response. Pakistan Armed Forces remain committed to protect the lives and well-being of its citizens.

The session concluded with a candid interactive Q&A, where the COAS & CDF answered questions and provided further insights into ongoing efforts for Balochistan's development and security.

Economy moving to right direction: Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday said that Pakistan's economy is moving to right direc-

tion. International credit rating agencies have also acknowledged the efforts of Pakistan

in the economic sector, he said while talking to a private television channel.

In reply to a question, he said that all

coalition partners are united for country's development. To a question, he said that the government will complete its constitutional tenure.

Commenting on dialogue with Oppo-

sition, he said that Pakistan Tehreek e

Insaf (PTI), should bring the delegation for resolving political issues through talks. To a question, he said that government is taking all possible steps

to achieve more progress in the next year.

Federal Minister launches roadmap for quality education in FDE schools

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, launched the FDE quality education and innovation roadmap based on five interconnected pillars.

Federal Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Nadeem Mahbub, Director General, Federal Directorate Education (FDE), Syed Junaid Akhlaq, along with senior officials and representatives of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), were also present on the occasion, said a press release.

Speaking on the occasion, Federal Secretary Nadeem Mahbub stated that the roadmap is aligned with the national vision of ensuring equity and quality in education.

He explained that the roadmap is structured around five interconnected pillars designed to ensure systemic and sustainable reforms. These pillars included Digital and Innovative Learning, Policy Formulation and Review, Enabling Learning Environment

Dar to visit Beijing to co-chair Pak-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar will visit China to co-chair the 7th round of the Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, scheduled to be held in Beijing on January 4, 2026.

The deputy prime minister will visit China at the invitation of Wang Yi, Member of the Politburo of the Communist Party of China, Director of the Office of the Central Commission for Foreign Affairs, and Minister for Foreign Affairs of China.

The Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue is the highest consultative mechanism between Pakistan and China, providing a structured platform to review the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international developments of mutual interest.

During the Dialogue, the two foreign

ministers will also announce a series of initiatives and commemorative activities to mark the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Pakistan and China in 2026.

The visit forms an important part of the regular high-level exchanges between the two countries and reflects

their shared determination to broaden and deepen the All-Weather Strategic Cooperative Partnership, while reaffirming their mutual commitment to regional peace, stability, and sustainable development.



ASIAN STAR
a name you can trust

perfect Solution For your Cold Morning

with Asian star Room Heaters



A Leading National Daily

ABC Certified

فرمان رسوی

ہم سے احمد بن یوسف نے بیان کیا، کبھی
سے ابو حمید بن عیاش نے بیان کیا، کبھی
سے ابو حسن نے بیان کیا، کبھی
ڈیوان نے اور ان سے ابو حمید بن عیاش
نے بیان کیا کبھی رحیم بن علیہ السلام
فرمان رسوی کی کمی ملکی علیہ السلام
بکھر امیری یہی ہے کہ مسلمان زیادہ تو
بکھر امیری یہی ہے کہ دل نہیں
(جی ٹی ایچ سی سٹ نمبر 6446)

Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

PM launches Economic Governance Reforms

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday launched the government's Economic Governance Reforms, declaring that Pakistan has exited the phase of economic firefighting after two years of politically difficult but structurally necessary decisions that restored macroeconomic stability and credibility with a record drop in inflation to 4.5 per cent and a substantial surge in the foreign exchange reserves of upto \$21 billion.

He said the scale of the crisis left no room for shortcuts or populism.

"Restoring the economy required hard choices that spared no political constituency," the prime minister said, adding that unsustainable subsidies were withdrawn, fiscal discipline restored, public financial management strengthened and long-delayed privatisation reforms initiated. "These were not cosmetic fixes but unavoidable structural reforms," he added.

Continued on Page 7

Tarar warns KP, advisor over disrespectful comments

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday cautioned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Advisor on Information Shafiqullah Jan to exercise restraint and show respect towards women, warning that failure to do so would invite an appropriate response.

Reacting strongly to a remark made by the Advisor about PML-N leader Azma Bukhari, the minister wrote on X: "Otherwise, we also know how to ensure respect is accorded."

"Extremely inappropriate language was used in the past and is still being used," the

minister remarked, stressing that such conduct was unacceptable from an official of the Information Department.

He reiterated that the use of

indecent language was unbecoming of a person serving as Information Adviser and

cautioned that repetition of

such remarks would invite an appropriate response.

minister remarked, stressing that such conduct was unacceptable from an official of the Information Department.

He reiterated that the use of

indecent language was unbecoming of a person serving as Information Adviser and

cautioned that repetition of

such remarks would invite an appropriate response.

Rathore Touts Haveli Development, Promises Danish School After Inducting New PPP Members

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that it was a matter of pride and privilege for the people of Haveli that a representative elected from their constituency has been entrusted with the responsibility of leading the government at a very crucial time.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held in honor of new entrants who joined the Pakistan Peoples Party. Speaking on the occasion, the PM Rathore said that the effects of his assumption of office can be seen from Taobat to Haveli.

He stated that establishing Haveli University was once considered impossible, but Allah made it possible at a time when not even a single



primary school had been established across the state during the previous government, yet Haveli was granted a university. PM Rathore added that

the Prime Minister of Pakistan Mr. Shehbaz Sharif announced the gift of a Danish School for Haveli soon after he assumed the office.

On the occasion, the Prime Minister's Special Assistant, Mubashir Munir Awan, and a close associate of former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, the late Mumtaz Hussain Rathore, Havaldar Muhammad Sadiq Sheikh, were also present. During the ceremony Muhammad Bashir Farooqi, Muhammad Shakoor Farooqi, Ahmed Farooqi, Farooq Farooqi, Muhammad Rafiq Farooqi, Muhammad Hasseb Farooqi, Muhammad Sajjad, Muhammad Farid Farooqi, Khawaja Mukhtar, Numberdar Zulfiqar Awan, Muhammad Shafi, Murtaza Awan and others bid farewell to Pakistan Muslim League (N), joined the Pakistan Peoples Party, and expressed confidence in Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore.

Fateha

TANDO MUHAMMAD KHAN: President Asif Ali Zardari offered Fateha for the departed soul of former Provincial Minister Syed Qabool Muhammad Shah, along with the sons of the deceased.



Photo: Online

Awareness Walk held in Rawalpindi against kite flying and aerial firing

 City Desk

RAWALPINDI: An awareness walk was organized in Rawalpindi through the joint efforts of the Rawalpindi Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market and New Town Police Station to discourage illegal kite flying and aerial firing on the occasion of the New Year. The purpose of the walk was to raise awareness among citizens about respect for the law, public safety, and social responsibility.

The walk was led by General Secretary of Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market Raja Zafar Yousaf and SHO New Town Police Station Malik Shahid Mahmood. Vice Chairman Hamad Qureshi, Executive Body Member Haji Mumtaz Ahmed, Joint Secre-



tary Tahir Ismail, Mehoofz Rashid Mahmood, Zubair Sheikh Raheel, Waqar Bhatti, Khan, Vice President Raja Abbas, Arshad Mughal, Abbas, Owais Butt, Chaudhry

Imran, Iftikhar Ali, Ali Raza, Qari Sahib, along with other trader leaders and citizens, also participated. Addressing the participants, speakers said that illegal and life-threatening activities such as kite flying and aerial firing not only endanger precious human lives but also disrupt social peace and public order. They urged citizens to celebrate the New Year responsibly, with caution and within the bounds of the law, and to discourage elements that pose a threat to public safety.

On the occasion, the police and the trader community reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthen mutual cooperation and continue joint efforts to ensure peace, law and order, and the safety of citizens in the city.

Educated Minds, Fragile Values

 Irsa Bibi

Education is widely regarded as a driver of social mobility and national development. Policymakers continue to invest in expanding access to schools and universities, confident that learning will lead to progress. Yet as educational attainment rises, concerns are growing about what is being lost along the way: the ethical foundations that once shaped responsible citizenship. "While modern education has expanded access to knowledge and skills, its failure to integrate ethics and moral responsibility has weakened its role in shaping socially responsible and ethically grounded citizens."

Contemporary education systems place strong emphasis on measurable outcomes. Examination scores, professional qualifications and employment statistics dominate assessments of success. While these indicators reflect academic performance, they offer little insight into the values students carry beyond the classroom. Education that focuses narrowly on achievement risks neglecting the moral and civic responsibilities that accompany knowledge.

The consequences of this imbalance are increasingly apparent. Incidents of academic dishonesty, intolerance and misuse of authority are no longer exceptional, even within highly educated environments. Knowledge, when separated from ethical reflection, can be used to advance individual interests at the expense of collective trust. Education, in such cases, becomes transactional rather than transformative.

This challenge extends into public and professional life. Many decisions with far-reaching social, economic and environmental implications are made by individuals with strong technical expertise but limited ethical awareness. The problem facing societies today is not a shortage of information, but a lack of moral direction. Intelligence alone does not guarantee sound judgment or responsible leadership.

Global discussions on education increasingly recognise this gap. Sustainable development, social cohesion and democratic accountability depend not only on skills but also on values such as fairness, responsibility and respect. Without these, educational progress remains incomplete and fragile, unable to address deeper social challenges.

Addressing this issue requires more than curricular adjustments.

Ethical learning must be embedded in everyday educational practice. Classroom environments that encourage respect, dialogue and accountability play a crucial role in shaping behaviour. Educators, as much as institutions, influence how values are internalised by students.

Education should prepare individuals not only for employment but also for participation in society. A system that sharpens intellect while neglecting conscience risks producing advancement without direction.

If education is to serve the broader public good, ethical reflection must return to the centre of learning.

Irsa Bibi is a writer and independent researcher focusing on education, ethics and social development. Her work examines the relationship between moral responsibility and contemporary.

Strict action ordered against one-wheeling, aerial firing on New Year's Night

LAHORE: Punjab Health Minister and Chairman Cabinet Committee on Law and Order Khawaja Salman Rafique has directed strict action against one-wheeling, hooliganism and aerial firing on New Year's Night to ensure public safety and maintain peace across the province.

He issued these directives while presiding over the 46th meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Law and Order held at the Punjab Home Department on Wednesday. Secretary Home Dr. Ahmed Javed Qazi and representatives of various law enforcement agencies briefed the meeting on the prevailing law and order situation.

The meeting conducted a detailed review of security arrangements across Punjab and finalized comprehensive measures for New Year's Night as well as other key issues. It was decided to continue the deployment of Rangers in Mianwali, Attock and Dera Ghazi Khan. The committee also expressed serious concern over incidents of illegal kite flying in certain areas of the province.

Indian Court declares three Kashmiris proclaimed offenders



 Abdul Majeed Tahir

NEW DELHI: An Indian court has declared three Kashmiris as proclaimed offenders for raising their voices against alleged Indian atrocities through social media platforms. According to Kashmir Media Service

A special court of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir declared Mubeen Ahmad Shah and Aziz-ul-Hassan, residents of Jawahar Nagar, Srinagar, along with Riffat Wani, a woman activist from the Trehgam area of Kupwara, as proclaimed offenders due to their social media activities.

It is pertinent to mention that following the revocation of the special status of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, the BJP-led Indian government under Prime Minister Narendra Modi has intensified its crackdown on dissent. Kashmiris raising their voices against alleged repression are frequently detained under black laws such as the Public Safety Act (PSA) and UAPA, drawing serious concerns from human rights observers.

Sardar Attique Khan Receives Enthusiastic Welcome During Dhir Kot Visit

 Bureau Report

GAZI ABAD / DHIR KOT: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, paid an extensive visit to Dhir Kot, where he received a warm and enthusiastic welcome at various locations. He participated in several party events during the visit.



On this occasion, a review meeting of senior office-bearers and workers from Western Bagh was held at Mujahid-e-Awal House, Ghazi Abad, under the chairmanship of Sardar Attiq Ahmed Khan. Detailed consultations were held on the prevailing political situation in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The meeting was also addressed by Major (R) Nasrullah Khan, Sardar Sajid Iqbal Abbasi, District Council Members Raja Tabarak Ali, Sardar Shaukat Afzal, Malik Arman, Saleem Abbasi, Nasreen Akhtar Raja, Sardar Yasir Luqman, Raja Munir Khan, Asim Abbasi, and other senior workers and office-bearers from Western Bagh. They expressed complete confidence in the leadership of Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan and pledged to convey the message of Mujahid-e-Awal to every home. They also vowed to strengthen and activate the party, complete organizational structure at the grassroots level, and begin preparations for the upcoming elections in line with the party president's directives.

Meanwhile, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan also met party workers at various locations including Kalian Chamati and Keri Chamankot. At Gali Bithari, he was accorded a grand welcome amid raised slogans and exchange of flower petals. The atmosphere resonated with slogans of "Kashmir Banega Pakistan," "Raees-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas Zindabad," "Mujahid-e-Awal Sardar Abdul Qayum Khan Zindabad," and "Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan Zindabad," reflecting strong enthusiasm and support among party workers.

Plandri Muslim Conference Affirms Full Faith in Party President Khan



 Bureau Report

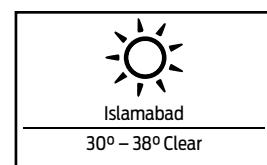
PALANDRI: A meeting of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Plandri, was held in which participants expressed full confidence in the leadership of the Party President, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan. The meeting decided to hold new elections for the Palandri City and District organizations to further strengthen the party structure.

The meeting congratulated the newly elected office-bearers of the Press Club Sudhnoti. Participants also expressed deep condolences on the demise of the aunt of Press Club President Sardar Tasneem Ahmed Khan and the respected father of Press Club General Secretary Raja Abdul Hameed, and offered Fateha for the departed souls.

During the meeting, veteran politician Chairman Sardar Altaf Hussain Khan and his family were paid rich tribute for their longstanding political and social services.

The meeting was presided over by President Constituency Plandri, Sardar Saeed Sultan. Addresses were delivered by Additional Secretary General Raja Muhammad Latif Hasrat, Central Vice President Sardar Abid Razaq Khan, Senior Vice President Poonch Sardar Shabbir Abbasi Advocate, Central Working Committee Member Sardar Tasneem Ahmed Khan, Deputy General Secretary Sardar Shehzad Abbasi, Senior Vice President of the constituency Subedar Noor Hussain, and Information Secretary Sardar Asad Abbasi.

Party workers from various areas also attended the meeting, including Muhammad Shoaib Khan and Asadullah Farooq from Mang Union Council; former candidate Sardar Muhammad Ismail from Gorah; and from Panyali, Zafar Iqbal, Adnan Ilyas, Jameel Abbasi, Nisar Akhtar, Shafeek Abbasi, Muhammad Farooq, along with several other workers.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

| | |
|---------|----------|
| Fajr | 5:43 am |
| Zohr | 12:11 pm |
| Asr | 3:32 pm |
| Maghrab | 5:10 pm |
| Isha | 6:39 pm |

EMERGENCY

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-------------|
| Rescue (Police) | 15 |
| Bomb Disposal | 15 |
| Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad | 1122 & 16 |
| Emergency Ambulance | 1122 & 1121 |
| & Rescue Services | 4451122 |
| Motorway Police | 9266044 |
| Motorway Police | 9270601-20 |

ENQUIRY

| | |
|------------------|-----------|
| Edhi Ambulance | 115 |
| PIA Flight Info | 114 |
| PIA Cargo | 9280979 |
| Railway Inquiry | 117 |
| Railway Exchange | 9270831-5 |
| WASA Rawalpindi | 5555489 |
| CAA | 926170-79 |

HOSPITALS

| | |
|---------------------|------------|
| CMH | 561111 |
| MH | 561116 |
| MH | 561116 |
| Cantt Hospital | 9270907-11 |
| DHQ | 5556311-4 |
| RGH | 9290301-7 |
| Holy Family | 9290322-7 |
| PIMS | 926170-79 |
| Polyclinic | 9218300-09 |
| Shifa International | 4603666 |

DEPARTMENTS

| | |
|------------------------------------|------------|
| CDA | 921334-43 |
| CDA | 9208301-04 |
| Met Office | 9250360-6 |
| RDA | 5555864 |
| TMA | 5770886 |
| Cantonment Board | 9270151-3 |
| Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation | 9209224 |

Faisalabad
Photographers
Celebrate
Christmas and
New Year with
Special Ceremony

By Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Professional Photographers Association Faisalabad organized a ceremony for Christian photographers on the occasion of December 25 and the arrival of the new year. In which Chairman Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi, President Muhammad Ahmed, General Secretary Qasur Munir Sheikh, Vice Chairman Muhammad Shahid, Senior Vice Presidents Saeed Ahmed, Muhammad Asif Makhian, Vice Presidents Kashif Hameed, Muhammad Afzal, Media Secretary Raw Mubashir, Treasurer Khurram Shahzad and Usman Zaidi welcomed the guests. The office bearers of Lyallpur City Photographers Association and Christian Community Photographers Association were the guests of honor, including President Shahzad Bhatti, Chairman Muhammad Tariq and Malik Sohail Sardar, Vice Chairman Sheikh Muhammad Nadeem and Ta Ya Bala, Senior Members Sohail Raza, Malik Amjad, Muzammil Hira, Muhammad Tariq, Semi Mau Ashar, Shahid Afridi. In this ceremony, Chairman Professional Photographers Association Faisalabad Syed Tanveer Hussain Zaidi, President Muhammad Ahmed and members of the cabinet distributed commemorative shields among the guests. A cake was gifted by Muhammad Shahid Baig (Paradise Dyes) and Muhammad Shafiq (Friends Color Lab) and it was enjoyed by Christian photographers and videographers. At the end of the ceremony, prayers were offered for the progress of the Pak Army and the country of Pakistan.

Sadiq Sanjrani called on Federal Minister Communications

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan has stated that providing better connectivity and developing a high-quality road network Balochistan is the fundamental right of their people. He announced that the Karachi-Quetta-Chaman Highway (N-25) will be completed within two years and it will be constructed in accordance with international standards. He expressed these views while talking to the former Chairman Senate and Member of the Provincial Assembly from Balochistan Mir Muhammad Sadiq Khan Sanjrani who called on him today in his office.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan said that instructions have been issued to the National Highway Authority (NHA) to commence work at the earliest on the Dalbandin-Chaghi Road in Balochistan. He emphasized that the development of Balochistan is the Government's top priority and a comprehensive network of roads will be laid across the province to achieve this objective. Abdul Aleem Khan further stated that the NHA is working on a special road package for Balochistan as the largest province of the country by area, Balochistan requires a modern and



high-standard road network to facilitate trade and tourism with Afghanistan, Iran and other countries. He assured that he is personally ensuring the best performance

of the NHA in the province. During the meeting, former Chairman Senate and MPA Mir Muhammad Sadiq Khan Sanjrani thanked Federal Minister Abdul

Aleem Khan and said that the NHA's special initiatives for Balochistan would prove to be a valuable gift for the people of the province. He added that these projects

would significantly improve transportation facilities and provide much-needed relief from existing difficulties.

Awesome

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the Faisal Mosque during rainy weather in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan Army is world best army in the world, students say

By Asim Tanveer



BAHAWALPUR: Cholistan University of Veterinary and Animal Sciences Bahawalpur students went on an informative and memorable day organized by the Pakistan Army. On this occasion, the students visited the Khairpur Tamiyali Firing Range. The students were given a first-hand look at tank firing, practical demonstrations of modern weapons and military equipment. The students were given a detailed briefing about the professionalism, modern defense capabilities and war preparedness of the Pakistan Army. The students appreciated the high level of training, discipline and professionalism of the Pakistan Army and termed the experience as very impressive. On this occasion, the students paid tribute to the historic victory of the Battle of Haq (Operation Banyan Al-Marsoos) and expressed their solidarity with the Pakistan Army. The students reiterated their commitment to play their full role for national development and defense. On this occasion, the students said that the Pakistani army is among the top 5 armies in the world. They further said that the brave and fearless Pakistani army is defending the security

of Pakistan and its people day and night in the harshest heat and cold, be it deserts, mountains, seas or air; the officers and soldiers of the Pakistani army are risking their lives to defend Pakistan with every inch and bravery. The Pakistani army has defeated the enemies on the eastern and western borders. The students of Cholistan University of Bahawalpur said that on May 7 and May 10, Pakistan's biggest enemy,

India, attacked different cities of Pakistan in the darkness of night. In response to this enemy attack, the Pakistani army shot down 7 of India's most advanced aircraft in broad daylight, while Pakistan had destroyed and destroyed India's air defense. The students said that the entire nation is proud of the bravery and greatness of the officers and soldiers of the Pakistani army.

UAE's business-friendly policies will help promote bilateral trade and investment

News Desk



KARACHI/QUETTA: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of the Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, warmly and enthusiastically welcomed the arrival of the President of the United Arab Emirates, H. E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, to Pakistan. He stated that this visit reflects the deep, historic, and brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE and holds great significance for the shared development and prosperity of both countries.

He said that the Emirati leadership's continuous engagement, cooperation, and goodwill toward Pakistan are a clear reflection of strong mutual trust and sincerity between the two brotherly nations. Under the visionary leadership of H. E. Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, the United Arab Emirates has set an outstanding example of development, stability, and economic prosperity, from which not only the region but the global community is benefiting.

Dr Rafia addresses training session at Kamalia THQ hospital



By Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: An important training session was held today at Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Kamalia, in which renowned clinical histopathologist from Lahore, Dr. Rafia participated. All consultant doctors, medical officers, operation theatre staff and nursing staff of the hospital actively attended the session. The training focused on FNAC (Fine Needle Aspiration Cytology), the correct method of taking biopsies and the proper procedures for preserving samples and transporting them to the laboratory. Dr. Rafia briefed the participants in detail and emphasized that preserving samples correctly and ensuring their timely delivery to the histopathology laboratory is a crucial step. She explained that improper preservation of samples can lead to substandard, inaccurate, or misleading test results. Speaking on the occasion, Medical Superintendent Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Kamalia, Dr. Mian Adeel Arif said that such training sessions play a vital role in enhancing the clinical skills of doctors and medical staff, which directly benefits patients through improved treatment. He further stressed that the continuous organization of such training programs is the need of the hour.

PTI Leader Dr. Robina Akhtar pushes for political harmony as nation rings in new year

By Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader and candidate for NA-148, Dr. Robina Akhtar, has called for national unity and political harmony as the nation enters the New Year. Extending her greetings to the public, she prayed that 2026 becomes a landmark year for political reconciliation, economic development, and national prosperity.

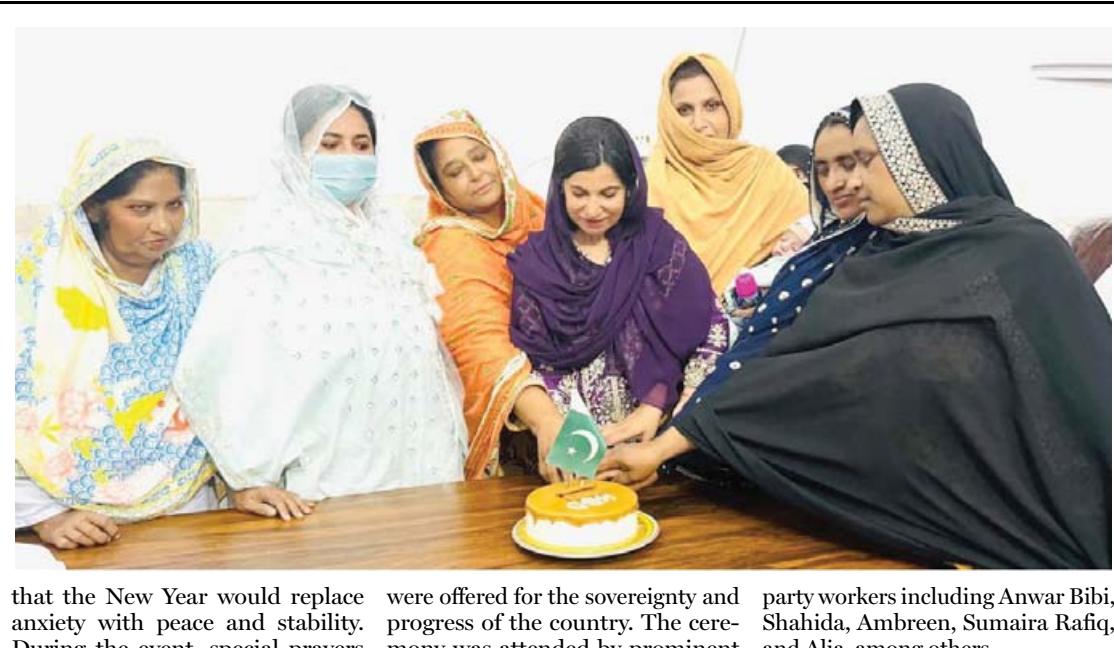
Addressing party workers during

a New Year's cake-cutting ceremony, Dr. Akhtar noted that while 2025 was a year of mixed emotions and significant political tension, it also brought moments of immense national pride. She specifically highlighted Pakistan's military triumph over India during the year, stating that the "crushing defeat" dealt to the adversary boosted the nation's morale and demonstrated Pakistan's formidable defense capabilities to the global community. Dr. Akhtar emphasized that the

prevailing public unrest can only be addressed through constructive engagement.

"The solution to political crises does not lie in confrontation, but in meaningful dialogue conducted with mutual consent from all sides," she asserted. She urged all political entities to set aside differences and work in tandem with the Pakistan Armed Forces to navigate the country through its current challenges.

The PTI leader expressed her hope



that the New Year would replace anxiety with peace and stability. During the event, special prayers

were offered for the sovereignty and progress of the country. The ceremony was attended by prominent

party workers including Anwar Bibi, Shahida, Ambreen, Sumaira Rafiq, and Alia, among others.

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: Almass Ayoub Sabir
 Vice Chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad
 Editor: Naveed Ahmad Khan
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: Amjad Mehmood
 Bureau Chief Karachi: Khurram Jaffrani (jaffrani@adplus.pk)
 Bureau Chief Lahore: Syed Afraz Ali Nazish (afrazalishah@gmail.com)
 Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad. spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com
 Phone: +92 51 2227123, WhatsApp +92 346 5008408
 Karachi Office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS, Karachi Phone: 021-33399390 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com
 Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town. spokesmanlahore@gmail.com
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

Over 7 Million visitors recorded at Old Doha Port in 2025

Old Doha Port unveiled its key milestones in 2025, concluding an exceptional year across tourism performance and maritime operations, with record figures across key indicators.

During the year, the Port expanded its international presence and implemented tourism initiatives that contributed to increased visitor demand. These achievements were accompanied by strategic developments that strengthened Old Doha Port's position as a leading maritime tourism destination, in line with Qatar's national vision for tourism sector growth and marine tourism development.

CEO of Old Doha Port Eng. Mohammed Abdulla Al Mulla said, "This year represents a major milestone in the evolution of Old Doha Port as a premier maritime tourism destination. We welcomed more than 7 million visitors and achieved a 97 percent occupancy rate, alongside implementing a range of qualitative developments across the Port's facilities, including the implementation of an air-conditioned promenade, and the expansion of the marina and yachting services."

"The increase in cruise ship passengers and luxury yacht visits reflects the growing status of Old Doha Port on the global maritime tourism map. We remain committed to further strengthening our international presence through major events and strategic partnerships," he added.

Old Doha Port recorded strong growth in maritime tourism during the 2024-2025 season, welcoming 87 cruise ships and more than 396,000 passengers, reinforcing its role as Qatar's primary maritime gateway.

Leasing and commercial activity continued to perform strongly throughout the year, with occupancy rates reaching 97 percent across Old Doha Port. The activation of over 60 pop-up retail outlets reinforced the Port's role as an enabling commercial environment that supports emerging businesses and local investors.

On the local front, Qatar Boat Show 2025 achieved unprecedented success, welcoming more than 27,000 visitors and recording a 33 percent increase in participating entities compared to its inaugural edition. The four-day exhibition featured 505 brands and more than 65 yachts valued at QAR 880 million, with participation from 105 countries and strong representation from Qatari companies.

The exhibition hosted over 30 exhibitors and showcased more than 150 local and regional fishing brands. Additionally, one of the leading events on the Port's calendar, the Mina Pre-Owned Boat Show, hosted over 70 marine vessels and six inspection companies to facilitate sales, attracting a large number of visitors and marine enthusiasts.

Politics, Shiv Sena's Threats and Downfall of IPL

Sports have traditionally served as a unifying arena where intense competition could exist without hatred, allowing rivals to engage with dignity while affirming shared human values like fairness, resilience, and mutual respect. In India, this ideal is increasingly under strain as extremist political forces intrude into sporting spaces, turning them into platforms for exclusion and ideological signaling. The threat to block Bangladeshi players from the Indian Premier League exemplifies how merit and inclusivity are being challenged by nationalism and political conformity, undermining the principles of neutrality and hospitality that underpin international sport and damaging India's global sporting reputation.

This politicization has become deeply embedded, with cricket recast as a vehicle for nationalist ideology rather than an autonomous sporting pursuit. The close intertwining of political power and cricket administration has fueled perceptions that governance decisions are driven by political calculations instead of transparency and sporting ethics. These dynamics have produced tangible consequences, particularly for the IPL, which is facing a serious decline in brand value and investor confidence. As perceptions of instability, political interference, and reputational risk grow, sponsors, investors, and international players are increasingly cautious, threatening the league's long-term credibility, commercial sustainability, and role as a globally trusted sporting platform.

If a decisive, institutional separation is not urgently effected between the autonomous sphere of sports and the advancing political-ideological agenda of Hindutva nationalism, the long-term consequences for Indian

sport promise to be culturally and economically devastating. World-class athletes, premier international sporting leagues, and global governing bodies like the International Cricket Council may progressively distance themselves from India, unwilling to expose their players and their commercial interests to an environment increasingly perceived to be shaped by political hostility and unpredictability. This potential exodus of talent, events, and capital would not only severely diminish India's stature, influence, and soft power in the global sports arena but would also deprive an entire generation of aspiring young Indian athletes of vital exposure, international mentorship, and the invaluable opportunity to compete at the very highest levels alongside and against the world's best. The profound, multi-layered tragedy inherent in this evolving situation lies in the stark fact that sports, which possess a unique and extensively documented power to soften political boundaries, humanize rival nations, and foster genuine mutual understanding, are being systematically repurposed and weaponized to deepen pre-existing societal divisions, normalize exclusionary practices, and entrench a paradigm of intolerance.

The steady erosion of sportsmanship and sporting autonomy in India mirrors a broader, more profound crisis of societal and civic values, where the short-term pursuit of ideological dominance and partisan advantage is increasingly prioritized over enduring national unity and social harmony, and where symbolic political gestures are publicly valued more highly than substantive, ethical principles of conduct and governance. Sports are stripped of their soul, their essential elan vital, when they are

converted from expressions of shared humanity and collective aspiration into sterile instruments for channeling societal hatred and reinforcing Us-versus-Them dichotomies. If India aspires to reclaim its former position as a respected, influential, and sought-after hub in the global sporting landscape, it must urgently undertake concrete steps to restore the genuine, operational autonomy of its sporting institutions, rigorously protect all athletes from all forms of political threat and coercion through legal and institutional means, and publicly reaffirm, through consistent action, the enduring cosmopolitan idea that intense, glorious competition can and must coexist with a framework of respectful coexistence and universal dignity. Failure to do so will ensure that playgrounds and stadiums continue to merely reflect, rather than transcend, the bitterness of political strife, thereby irreversibly damaging one of humanity's most potent and historically proven instruments for fostering peace, dialogue, and transcending conflict.

India's current failure to insulate its games from the encroachments of divisive politics and narrow nationalism serves as a cautionary revelation for the entire world about the fragility of civil spheres in the face of majoritarian pressures. The carefully cultivated, historically resonant image of India as a so-called secular, pluralistic, and constitutionally liberal state has been critically damaged by such extremist actions and the official acquiescence to them, leading the international community to increasingly question its maturity, stability, and responsibility as a state actor, a direct consequence perceived to be from the ideological paths championed by the Modi government and allied groups like Shiv Sena, a sobering reality that should indeed prompt serious, deep, and collective introspection among the Indian people themselves about the future character of their society and its place in the world.



Abdul Basit Alvi



Abdul Basit Alvi

Power Over Peace: The Trump-Netanyahu Equation

In the closing days of December 2025, a surge of diplomatic and political activity in the United States once again placed Israel at the center of global controversy. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, under severe legal and political pressure at home, traveled to Florida to meet U.S. President Donald Trump in an encounter that went far beyond routine diplomacy. What emerged was not merely a reaffirmation of alliance, but a troubling fusion of personal political survival with the fate of nations, carrying consequences that extend well beyond Gaza and into the broader Middle East.

Netanyahu arrived in the United States facing corruption charges, public discontent, and an increasingly fractured Israeli political landscape. President Trump's public embrace of him as an indispensable "wartime prime minister" elevated Netanyahu's domestic crisis into an international narrative. By suggesting—implicitly and at times explicitly—that Israel's very existence is inseparable from Netanyahu's leadership, Trump blurred a fundamental democratic boundary, placing individual political longevity above institutional accountability. His subsequent claim that he had urged Israel's president to pardon Netanyahu, though promptly denied, reinforced the perception that legal norms were being subordinated to geopolitical convenience.

This maneuver effectively shifts the unfinished business of the war onto Muslim armies, insulating both Israel and the United States from further direct confrontation. The irony is stark. After years of overwhelming Israeli military force, backed unconditionally by Washington, Hamas remains intact, operational, and central to negotiations that

produced the ceasefire itself. Unable to dismantle Hamas militarily, the architects of the war now appear intent on outsourcing the risk, bloodshed, and political fallout to others.

The consequences of such a strategy could be profound. Hamas has already made clear that it will not disarm unless Israel fully complies with the ceasefire and pursues the peace plan objectively and without violations—conditions Israel has historically resisted. If Muslim forces are deployed under these circumstances, they risk being drawn into direct confrontation with Hamas, igniting backlash not only on the battlefield but within their own societies. What is presented as an international stabilization effort thus carries the seeds of a broader regional rupture, transforming a Palestinian struggle into an intra-Muslim conflict while those who failed to resolve it step aside.

Parallel to Gaza, Netanyahu used the Washington stage to revive and intensify a familiar and increasingly toxic narrative about Iran. Despite more than fifteen years of sanctions, covert operations, regional confrontations, and direct military attacks—including recent U.S. strikes on Iranian nuclear facilities that Trump openly defended as having "obliterated" Iran's nuclear program—Netanyahu showed no sign of restraint. He once again warned that Iran remains on the brink of producing a nuclear bomb and is expanding missile capabilities that could allegedly reach the United States itself, framing Iran not only as a regional threat

but as a direct danger to American security.

This rhetoric is strikingly familiar. Similar claims were made about Iraq, Libya, Syria, and other states, each time serving as justification for intervention, destabilization, or regime collapse. In each case, the aftermath brought prolonged chaos rather than security. Yet the pattern appears to be repeating. Netanyahu's renewed alarmism suggests that another chapter is already being written, one aimed not merely at containment but at regime change in Iran.

Recent developments inside Iran add weight to these concerns. Widespread strikes and protests have erupted over sharp economic deterioration, with Iran's currency reportedly losing around 40 percent of its value in the wake of the recent Israel-Iran confrontation. While Iran's internal economic challenges are complex and longstanding, the timing underscores how economic pressure is increasingly being weaponized as a tool of coercion. The tightening grip of sanctions, financial isolation, and strategic pressure points to a coordinated effort by the United States and Israel to use economic collapse as a lever to provoke internal unrest and ultimately reshape Iran's political order.

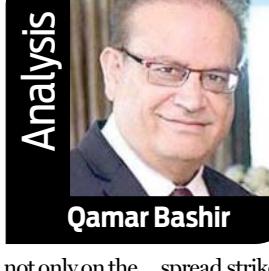
Globally, reaction to this convergence of military threats and economic warfare has been far from uniform. European governments and international institutions have called for de-escalation and renewed diplomacy, warning that perpetual coercion undermines global stability and the non-proliferation regime itself. Several Arab states, once cautiously open to

normalization with Israel, are growing increasingly uneasy with policies that appear dismissive of humanitarian law and regional balance.

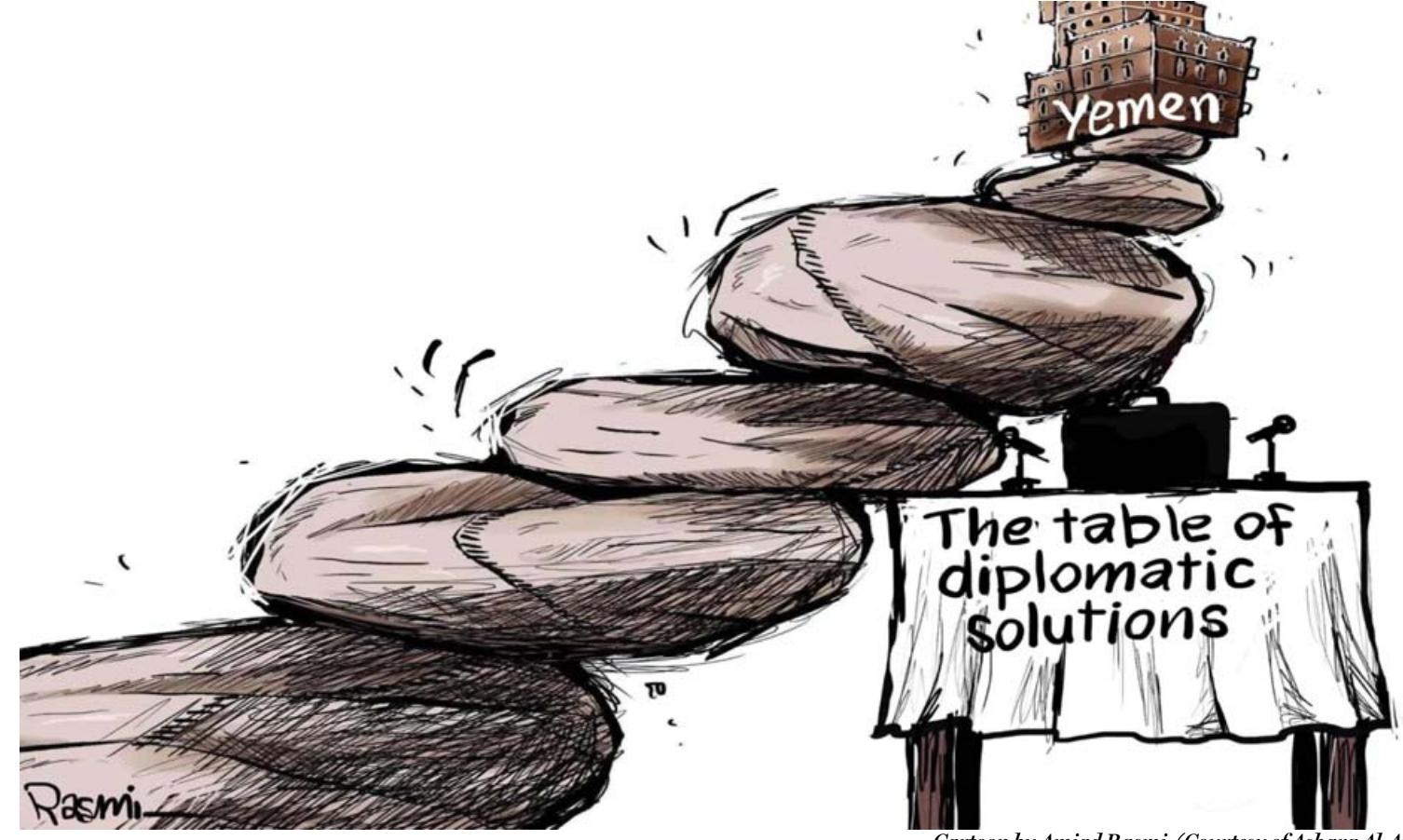
Within the United States, divisions are also sharpening. While Trump's political base applauds his unyielding support for Israel, critics argue that unconditional backing and escalating threats weaken America's credibility and entangle it in conflicts with no clear exit. The gap between Washington's rhetoric and the broader international mood continues to widen. The Trump-Netanyahu nexus thus represents more than a personal alliance; it reflects a strategic mindset that prioritizes force over diplomacy, personalities over institutions, and short-term political survival over long-term regional stability. By personalizing national destiny, outsourcing unresolved wars, and reviving discredited threat narratives, this approach risks deepening instability rather than resolving it.

If the Middle East is to escape its cycle of destruction, the international community—particularly the Muslim world and multilateral institutions—must resist being drawn into this trap. National interests cannot be subordinated to individual political preservation, nor can peace be built on coercion alone. Without a genuine commitment to accountability, political inclusion, and humanitarian justice, the region will remain hostage to alliances that promise security but consistently deliver ruin.

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



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

Politics, Shiv Sena's Threats and Downfall of IPL

Sports have traditionally served as a unifying arena where intense competition could exist without hatred, allowing rivals to engage with dignity while affirming shared human values like fairness, resilience, and mutual respect. In India, this ideal is increasingly under strain as extremist political forces intrude into sporting spaces, turning them into platforms for exclusion and ideological signaling. The threat to block Bangladeshi players from the Indian Premier League exemplifies how merit and inclusivity are being challenged by nationalism and political conformity, undermining the principles of neutrality and hospitality that underpin international sport and damaging India's global sporting reputation.

This politicization has become deeply embedded, with cricket recast as a vehicle for nationalist ideology rather than an autonomous sporting pursuit. The close intertwining of political power and cricket administration has fueled perceptions that governance decisions are driven by political calculations instead of transparency and sporting ethics. These dynamics have produced tangible consequences, particularly for the IPL, which is facing a serious decline in brand value and investor confidence. As perceptions of instability, political interference, and reputational risk grow, sponsors, investors, and international players are increasingly cautious, threatening the league's long-term credibility, commercial sustainability, and role as a globally trusted sporting platform.

If a decisive, institutional separation is not urgently effected between the autonomous sphere of sports and the advancing political-ideological agenda of Hindutva nationalism, the long-term consequences for Indian

sport promise to be culturally and economically devastating. World-class athletes, premier international sporting leagues, and global governing bodies like the International Cricket Council may progressively distance themselves from India, unwilling to expose their players and their commercial interests to an environment increasingly perceived to be shaped by political hostility and unpredictability. This potential exodus of talent, events, and capital would not only severely diminish India's stature, influence, and soft power in the global sports arena but would also deprive an entire generation of aspiring young Indian athletes of vital exposure, international mentorship, and the invaluable opportunity to compete at the very highest levels alongside and against the world's best. The profound, multi-layered tragedy inherent in this evolving situation lies in the stark fact that sports, which possess a unique and extensively documented power to soften political boundaries, humanize rival nations, and foster genuine mutual understanding, are being systematically repurposed and weaponized to deepen pre-existing societal divisions, normalize exclusionary practices, and entrench a paradigm of intolerance.

The steady erosion of sportsmanship and sporting autonomy in India mirrors a broader, more profound crisis of societal and civic values, where the short-term pursuit of ideological dominance and partisan advantage is increasingly prioritized over enduring national unity and social harmony, and where symbolic political gestures are publicly valued more highly than substantive, ethical principles of conduct and governance. Sports are stripped of their soul, their essential elan vital, when they are

Pakistan and Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's Vision

Every chapter of Pakistan's history is incomplete without the vision, leadership, and foresight of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah. The dream of an independent, dignified, and well-governed homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent was realized through his political wisdom and principled struggle. His vision for Pakistan was not limited to geographical separation; rather, he envisioned an Islamic, democratic, and welfare-oriented state where justice, equality, tolerance, constitutional supremacy, freedom of expression, and the rights of minorities were fully protected. Today, as Pakistan faces political instability, economic crises, institutional weaknesses, and social divisions, Jinnah's vision becomes even more relevant. A strong, peaceful, and progressive Pakistan can only emerge from embracing the foundational principles he laid down.

Education was also a core component of Jinnah's philosophy. He considered education not only a tool of enlightenment but the foundation of national development. He repeatedly urged the youth to acquire modern knowledge, science, technology, economics, and administrative skills to ensure Pakistan's global advancement. In today's world, where nations progress through digital literacy and knowledge economies, Jinnah's emphasis on education is a timeless guide for Pakistan's future.

Another profound aspect of Jinnah's vision was a strong, dignified, and peaceful foreign policy. He wanted Pakistan to build relationships with the international community based on equality, mutual respect, and peace. He firmly believed that Pakistan should remain free from global power blocs and make deci-

sions aligned solely with its national interest. His principle-based approach offers valuable guidance today as Pakistan navigates regional tensions, global politics, and economic dependencies.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah has declared the Holy Quran as the constitution for the Islamic nation. In fact, this has been the basic point of political thought of Muslims throughout Islamic history and there has never been any doubt or mental reservations about it. Among the distinguished figures in Islamic history who have written on the political thought of Islam, the names of Al-Mawardi, Nizam-ul-Mulk Tusi, Imam Ghazali, Mujaddid Alf Sani, Ibn Taymiyah, and Shah Waliullah Dehlvi (may Allah have mercy on them) are worth mentioning. All these Islamic thinkers have declared the Holy Quran as the axis and center of the political thought and state system of Islam. Allama Muhammad Iqbal and Quaid-e-Azam were the bearers of this radiant thought of their predecessors.

In essence, Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's vision was a comprehensive, moral, and practical blueprint for building a just, democratic, and progressive state. His principles hold the solutions to Pakistan's political, economic, and social challenges. Today, Pakistan urgently needs to prioritize national unity, ethical policies, constitutional supremacy, economic justice, religious harmony, and modern education all core elements of Jinnah's philosophy. This is the same path he laid out for the nation, and it remains the only road that can secure a stable, prosperous, and dignified future for Pakistan.



Muhammad Asif

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

Seed Reforms Vital for Self-Reliant Agriculture: Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum

By Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Chairman SM Group of Industries and Member National Export Development Board, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, has said that agriculture remains the backbone of Pakistan's economy, but its true foundation lies in the availability of quality, certified seed.

Highlighting the need for urgent reforms in the seed sector, he said weak and substandard seed not only reduces crop yields but also undermines farmers' livelihoods, state policies and national food security. He termed seed reform essential for national self-reliance, food security and the promotion of agricultural exports.

"Seed is not merely an agricultural input; it is a pillar of national sovereignty and economic stability," he said, adding that without placing the seed sector on modern scientific lines, all claims of agricultural development would remain superficial. While acknowledging the Ministry of National Food Security and Research's efforts toward reform, he maintained

that the current measures were still insufficient in view of the gravity of the problem.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum stressed that Pakistan urgently needs high-quality, certified seeds with natural resistance to diseases and the capacity to withstand climate change challenges. He underlined that sustainable agricultural growth is impossible without a strong linkage between research, regulation and practical farming.

Calling the Seed (Amendment) Act 2024 a decisive opportunity, he said that its transparent and sincere implementation could end decades of mismanagement, weak oversight and outdated certification systems.

According to him, the true spirit of the law lies in transforming the seed sector from a loosely regulated structure into a modern, transparent and performance-based regulatory framework.

He also emphasised the effective revival of the Variety Evaluation Committee, noting that its proper functioning would shorten lengthy

approval processes and bridge the gap between scientific research and farmers' fields. He warned that without digital systems, strict monitoring and institutional coordination, reforms would remain limited to announcements.

Pointing to poor-quality seed as a major cause of low agricultural output, he cited the continued decline of the cotton crop as a clear example. In contrast, he described the development of hybrid seeds by private companies in the rice sector as a successful model that has led to significant gains in production and exports.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum said agricultural exports have the potential to support the national economy far more rapidly than industrial exports, provided reforms are pursued consistently and in good faith. He urged the government to facilitate credible and quality-driven seed companies while decisively eliminating substandard and dishonest players from the sector, stating that this was the only path toward a strong, self-sufficient and sustainable agricultural economy.



Selective Justice and Political Incarceration Undermine Constitution, Democracy, and Human Rights

By Dr Safdar Ali Abbas

Pakistan Peoples Party Workers express deep concern and strongly condemn the recent convictions and harsh sentences awarded by NAB courts to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Chairman and former Prime Minister Mr Imran Khan, and his spouse Ms Bushra Bibi, in the Toshakhana case.

We are further concerned by the severe sentences awarded by Anti-Terrorists Courts to senior PTI leaders, including Mr Mehmoodur Rasheed, Dr Yasmin Rashid, a senior political leader battling cancer, and Mr Umar Cheema, former Governor of Punjab.

The use of Anti-Terrorists Courts for political cases, coupled with extraordinary punishments, raises serious questions about due process, proportionality, and the protection of fundamental human rights, including the

constitutional right to peaceful political dissent.

The selective application of accountability laws and the widespread perception of hand-picked benches undermine public confidence in the justice system. Such actions project an image of political victimisation rather than impartial justice, and send a deeply disturbing message to the people of Pakistan as well as to the international community.

History bears painful witness to the consequences of judicial decisions delivered under political pressure. In 1977, Prime Minister Shaheed Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was arrested, and in 1979 he was awarded the death sentence under a military regime, a verdict later described by jurists and historians as a judicial murder.

Decades later, a former Chief Justice of Pakistan publicly acknowledged the pressure under which that decision was made. If such a grave miscarriage



of justice is now part of our acknowledged history, Pakistan must ask: mistakes?

If the Toshakhana laws are to be enforced, accountability must

be universal, transparent, and non-discriminatory. Every individual civilian or military, past or present, who benefited from Toshakhana items must be treated equally under the law. The complete record of Toshakhana beneficiaries, including the market value of items, the price paid, and the legal basis of such transactions, must be made public to ensure the credibility and fairness of the judicial process.

The continued incarceration of a former Prime Minister and leader of a major political party, along with the prolonged imprisonment of senior political leaders, is not merely a domestic issue. It raises serious concerns about democratic norms, political pluralism, and the rule of law in Pakistan. The question that confronts us all is: what message are we giving to the world when political conflict is resolved through prisons instead of parliament?

The Pakistan Peoples Party Workers

firmly believes that political differences must be resolved through dialogue, negotiation, constitutionalism, and ultimately through the ballot by holding free, fair, and transparent elections, not through selective justice and coercive incarceration. Sustainable democracy demands restraint, fairness, and respect for fundamental human rights.

We urge all state institutions to uphold the spirit of the Constitution of 1973, ensure equal application of the law, and prevent the repetition of historical injustices that have caused this nation immense suffering.

Pakistan needs reconciliation, not retribution.

Justice, not revenge.
Democracy, not dictatorship.
The writer is President, Pakistan Peoples Party Workers and husband of Naheed Khan, (Political Assistant to Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto)

Islamic finance posts double-digit growth in 2025

The global Islamic finance industry has steadily evolved from a niche, alternative financial system into a systemically important component of the international financial architecture. Grounded in Shariah principles that emphasise risk sharing, asset-backed transactions, and social justice, Islamic finance today represents a diversified ecosystem encompassing banking, capital markets, insurance (takaful), FinTech, and social finance instruments. Its expansion has been propelled not only by the demographic momentum of a global Muslim population exceeding two billion, representing more than 25% of the world's population, but also by rising interest from non-Muslim markets seeking ethical, resilient, and values-based financial solutions. In recent years, Islamic finance has demonstrated a notable capacity to sustain growth despite global macroeconomic tightening, elevated inflation, geopolitical disruptions, and financial market volatility, reinforcing its growing relevance within the global financial system.

As of the most recent industry assessments, total global Islamic finance assets reached at 5.2 trillion USD and continue to expand at a pace that compares favorably with, and in some cases exceeds, the conventional financial sector growth average pace. According to international standard-setting and industry monitoring institutions, global Islamic finance assets grew by approximately 14.9% year-on-year in 2025, reaching nearly USD 5.2 trillion, compared to average single-digit growth in many conventional banking markets. Forward-looking projections suggest that total assets are on track to cross USD 6 trillion by the end of 2026, supported by strong balance-sheet expansion in Islamic banking, accelerating Sukuk issuance volumes, and the rapid digitalization of Shariah-compliant financial services. The Islamic Financial Services Industry entered 2025 with renewed momentum, recording double-digit growth across its core sectors and benefiting from regulatory reforms, stronger prudential oversight, and the gradual opening of new jurisdictions, particularly across Africa and selected European markets. This sustained performance underscores the intrinsic resilience of Islamic finance, derived from its close linkage to the real economy and its structural avoidance of excess

leverage, speculation, and interest-based transactions.

Despite this positive trajectory, the structure of the Islamic finance industry remains highly concentrated. Islamic banking continues to dominate the landscape, accounting for approximately 72% of total industry assets, equivalent to more than USD 2.7 trillion globally. While this dominance provides scale and systemic depth, it also highlights persistent structural imbalances. Sukuk represents the second-largest segment, with an estimated share of 18% depending on classification, corresponding to more than USD 900 billion in outstanding value globally. Sukuk has become a critical funding and liquidity management instrument for sovereigns and corporations, particularly in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Southeast Asia.

Islamic FinTech, although still modest

in absolute terms, accounts for roughly 3% of industry activity and has emerged as the fastest-growing subsector, with annual growth rates consistently exceeding those of traditional Islamic finance segments. Islamic capital markets beyond Sukuk, including Islamic funds, asset management, pension funds, and Islamic REITs, collectively represent around 3% of total assets, while Takaful and Islamic microfinance and social finance each contribute approximately 2%. The remaining 1% comprises miscellaneous activities such as Islamic leasing entities and Mudarabah-based investment pools as illustrated in the below chart. This composition illustrates both the strength and vulnerability of the industry: while banking provides stability and scale, excessive reliance on a single segment limits diversification, constrains liquidity management options, and exposes the system to concentration risks over the long term.

Industry performance during 2025 reflected both continuity and transition. Islamic banking remained the backbone of the system, supported by steady financing growth of over 17% year-on-year and sustained deposit expansion approaching 9% globally. Several African jurisdictions recorded compound annual growth rates well above the global average, in some cases exceeding 20%, signaling a gradual but meaningful geographical rebalancing of Islamic banking activity. At the same time, structural challenges persisted, most notably the limited availability of Shariah-compliant liquidity instruments

and the continued dependence of Islamic banks on sovereign Sukuk for liquidity and balance-sheet management. International regulators and standard-setting bodies have increasingly stressed that without deeper and more liquid Islamic capital markets, banking-led growth alone may not be sufficient to ensure long-term financial resilience.

The Sukuk market emerged as one of the most dynamic segments of the industry during 2025. Global Sukuk issuance rose sharply, with total issuance volumes exceeding USD 230 billion in 2024, reflecting annual growth of more than 25%. This momentum carried into 2025, driven by sovereign funding needs, infrastructure investment requirements, and growing corporate participation. Importantly, new Sukuk markets emerged in Tanzania, Zambia, and Kenya, marking a significant milestone in Africa's integration into global Islamic capital markets. These issuances underscore increasing confidence among African policymakers in Sukuk as a tool for infrastructure financing, fiscal diversification, and capital market development. However, despite strong

primary market performance, Sukuk markets continue to face structural limitations, including shallow secondary market liquidity, limited benchmark yield curves, and a relatively concentrated investor base dominated by buy-and-hold institutions. Addressing these challenges remains essential if Sukuk is to function more effectively as a liquidity management, pricing, and risk-management instrument within the global financial system.

Beyond Sukuk, Islamic capital markets recorded moderate but uneven growth. Islamic funds and asset management benefited from improved global equity market conditions and growing investor interest in sustainability-linked investments. Nevertheless, the sector remains fragmented, with a large number of small-scale funds limiting economies of scale and cross-border competitiveness. Sustainability-themed Islamic funds and green Sukuk gained visibility during 2025, aligning Islamic finance more closely with global ESG trends, yet they still account for a relatively small proportion of total market activity, highlighting considerable untapped potential.

The takaful sector experienced steady growth during 2025, with global takaful assets expanding at an estimated rate of 15-17% annually. Markets in the Gulf Cooperation Council and Southeast Asia continued to dominate, supported by stronger regulatory frameworks, higher insurance penetration, and more developed investment markets. In contrast, Takaful development in Africa and Central Asia remains constrained by regulatory capacity gaps, limited re-takaful availability, and shallow domestic capital markets. Strengthening institutional frameworks and expanding Shariah-compliant investment avenues will be critical to sustaining Takaful growth beyond core markets.

Among all subsectors, Islamic FinTech stands out as the most rapidly expanding and strategically transformative. According to the State of the Global Islamic Economy Report 2024/25, Islamic FinTech growth has consistently outpaced most traditional Islamic finance segments, supported by digital payments, Shariah-compliant buy-now-pay-later solutions, embedded finance, and the application of artificial intelligence and blockchain technologies to enhance transparency, compliance, and operational efficiency.

Several Islamic FinTech platforms have achieved regional scale, while transaction volumes in Islamic digital finance have grown at double-digit rates annually. These platforms increasingly target underbanked and unbanked populations, particularly across Africa and South Asia, positioning Islamic FinTech as a critical driver of financial inclusion and market expansion. Although Islamic FinTech currently represents a small share of total industry assets, its strategic significance far exceeds its size and is expected to increase materially by 2026.

Geographically, Asia continues to dominate the global Islamic finance landscape, accounting for more than 50% of global Islamic finance assets when combined with GCC markets, led by Malaysia, Indonesia, Pakistan, and the Gulf economies. However, this dominance is expected to gradually diminish as Africa and Western markets attract a growing share of capital flows. Africa has emerged

as the most promising frontier for Islamic finance expansion, supported by favorable demographics, infrastructure financing needs, and increasing regulatory openness. In addition to Sukuk issuances in East and Southern Africa, Islamic banking has begun to take root in countries such as Eswatini, Zimbabwe, Ghana, and Uganda. Looking ahead to 2026, new African entrants are expected to include Ethiopia, Ghana, Uganda, and Somalia or Somaliland, reflecting rising demand for Shariah-compliant financial services and broader financial inclusion objectives.

Europe is also moving from cautious experimentation toward more structured engagement with Islamic finance. The anticipated entry of Italy, Switzerland, Portugal, and the Netherlands into Islamic banking and capital market frameworks signals growing recognition of Islamic finance as a credible component of ethical and sustainable finance strategies. While not all of these jurisdictions are expected to operationalize Islamic finance simultaneously, at least two European markets are likely to emerge as active participants by 2026. Albania has already established itself as a functioning Islamic banking market, further reinforcing Europe's gradual integration into the global Islamic finance ecosystem.

The year 2026 presents a wide range of strategic opportunities for the Islamic finance industry. Deepening Islamic capital markets remains a central priority, particularly through the development of liquid Sukuk secondary markets and more standardized issuance structures that support price discovery and broader investor participation. Islamic FinTech offers strong potential for cross-border scaling, cost reduction, and inclusion-driven growth, especially when supported by regulatory sandboxes and greater international harmonization. Africa-focused



Zubair Mughal

Islamic infrastructure finance, particularly Sukuk-backed projects in energy, transport, and agriculture, represents another high-impact opportunity. At the same time, the growing convergence between Islamic finance and ESG principles positions the industry favorably within global sustainability and climate-finance agendas.

Nevertheless, risks remain. Structural overreliance on Islamic banking, persistent liquidity management constraints, regulatory capacity limitations in frontier markets, and market fragmentation across jurisdictions could undermine long-term resilience if left unaddressed. Coordinated policy action, wider adoption of international prudential standards, and sustained investment in market infrastructure will be essential to navigating these challenges.

In conclusion, the global Islamic finance industry stands at a critical juncture. With total assets exceeding USD 5.2 trillion and a clear trajectory towards USD 6 trillion by 2026, the industry is transitioning from regional concentration to genuine global relevance. While Asia remains the dominant hub, Africa and Western markets are increasingly reshaping geographical market shares. The rise of Islamic FinTech, continued expansion of Sukuk markets, and growing emphasis on sustainability collectively signal the onset of a new phase of development. If structural imbalances are addressed and innovation is effectively harnessed, Islamic finance is well-positioned to emerge as a mainstream pillar of resilient, ethical, and inclusive global finance in the years ahead.

Zubair Mughal is a prominent

global expert in Islamic Banking and

Economics (UAE). He can be

reached at (zubair.mughal@ahudacibe.com)

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

| Current | Prev. Close |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 174,054.32 | 174,472.79 |
| Day's High | Day's Low |
| 175,232.90 | 173,564.33 |
| Index Value | Change |
| 33,337,857,698 | -418.47 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.24% | 31 Dec, 2025 4:30 pm |

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

| Index Value | Change |
|-------------|-------------------------|
| 9,931.38 | -9.33 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.094% | 31 Dec, 12:35 pm GMT |

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

| Index Value | Change |
|-------------|---------------------------|
| 48,210.63 | -156.43 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.32% | 31 Dec, 12:29 pm GMT-5 |

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

| Index Value | Change |
|-------------|--------------------------|
| 50,339.48 | -187.44 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.37% | 30 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9 |

Open Market Forex Rates

| Currency | Buying | Selling |
|-------------------|--------|---------|
| Australian Dollar | 186.4 | 190.4 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 743 | 753 |
| Canadian Dollar | 203.55 | 207.55 |
| China Yuan | 39.58 | 39.98 |
| Danish Krone | 43.72 | 44.12 |
| Euro | 330 | 333.5 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 35.69 | 36.04 |
| Indian Rupee | 3.03 | 3.12 |
| Japanese Yen | 1.7850 | 1.8850 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 910.75 | 920.75 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 68.6 | 69.20 |
| New Zealand \$ | 161.24 | 163.24 |
| Norwegians Krone | 27.66 | 27.96 |
| Omani Riyal | 727.75 | 737.75 |
| Qatari Riyal | 76.26 | 76.96 |
| Saudi Riyal | 74.8 | 75.45 |
| Singapore Dollar | 217.1 | 222.1 |
| Swedish Korona | 30.25 | 30.55 |
| Swiss Franc | 351.82 | 354.57 |
| Thai Bhat | 8.88 | 9.03 |
| U.A.E Dirham | 76.45 | 77.4 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 378.75 | 382.75 |
| US Dollar | 281 | 283 |

PIDE Hosts Policy Dialogue on Transforming Pakistan's Fisheries and Aquaculture Sector

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) organized a policy seminar on Pakistan's Fisheries and Aquaculture Policy 2025-2035, moderated by Dr. Muhammad Faisal, Research Fellow at PIDE, bringing together policymakers, researchers, and sector experts to deliberate on a long-term framework for green growth, food security, export development, and sustainable livelihoods.

The keynote address was delivered by Dr. Kanwar Muhammad Javed Iqbal, Senior Policy Specialist at the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), who highlighted that the policy represents one of Pakistan's most comprehensive and participatory reform efforts in recent years. Developed through a bottom-up consultative process involving provinces, federal institutions, international experts, and technical working groups, the policy seeks to establish coherence across federal and provincial mandates.

Mr. Iqbal emphasized that responsible resource use and sound governance form the foundation of the policy, aligning Pakistan's fisheries management with international standards, including FAO's Code of Conduct for Responsible Fisheries. He stressed the urgent need to address data deficiencies, overfishing, illegal and unreported fishing practices, and inadequate infrastructure that have constrained the sector's sustainability and export competitiveness.

The session concluded with reflections on implementation challenges and the way forward. It was noted that the draft policy has been validated through a Technical Working Group and is currently in the final stages of review for submission to the Federal Cabinet for approval. The seminar reaffirmed PIDE's commitment to evidence-based policy dialogue and institutional reform aimed at promoting sustainable development, economic resilience, and food security in Pakistan.

Telenor Pakistan joins PTCL fold: A new era for Pakistan Telecom begins

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) today marks a defining moment in the evolution of Pakistan's telecom sector, as it formally completes the acquisition of 100 percent of the issued share capital of Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers from 31st December 2025 onwards, ushering in a new era of digital enablement and transformation across the country.

Today onwards, Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers will operate as 100% owned subsidiaries of PTCL, alongside Pak Telecom Mobile Limited (PTML) commonly known as Ufone 4G, and U Microfinance Bank. Telenor Pakistan will continue to operate as a separate legal entity during the transition period, following which PTML and Telenor Pakistan are planned to be integrated as merged entity (MergeCo) in due course of time, subject to regulatory approvals.

PTCL acknowledges the contribution of Telenor ASA to Pakistan's telecom landscape.

As a competitor and industry peer, Telenor played a defining role in elevating service quality and expanding connectivity over nearly two decades.

This milestone brings together complementary strengths to create a platform with a stronger focus on customer centricity, broader reach, and accelerated innovation.



ISLAMABAD: President and CEO of PTCL and Ufone, Hatem Bamratraf, addressing a press conference at a local hotel in the Federal Capital. Online

Commenting on the occasion, Hatem Bamratraf, President & Chief Executive Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G, said: "This is a proud moment for PTCL and a significant milestone for Pakistan's telecom sector. Our focus remains on delivering a customer-centric, seamless, and high-quality

services for improvement in user experience as we bring combined strengths at scale upon completion of regulatory approvals". He further added, "I warmly welcome our colleagues and want to assure them that this transition is rooted in respect for people, continuity of



Islamabad: Naveed Ahmad Khan, Editor, Daily The Spokesman congratulating Hatem Bamratraf, President & Chief Executive Officer, PTCL & Ufone 4G.

talent, and thoughtful integration of industry best practices. Together, we will build a stronger, future-ready organization that serves customers better, empowers its people, and advances Pakistan's digital future."

Preparing tea

LAHORE: A vendor is preparing tea for customers as due to the cold weather people rush towards such hotels in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Zong Advances Autonomous Network Capabilities with Pilot Launch of Self-Intelligent RAN Optimization Platform

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading information services and technology innovation company, has successfully completed the pilot launch of its Self-Intelligent Radio Access Network (RAN) Optimization Platform, marking a significant milestone in the evolution toward autonomous network operations.

Commenting on the development, Waqas Munim, Head of Digital Intelligence, Zong said, "At Zong, we are transforming Pakistan's telecom landscape and deliver reliable, future-ready connectivity nationwide.

aik by BankIslami's leadership team meets KPK governor to promote financial inclusion

Commerce Desk

PESHAWAR: Committed to its mission to advance Riba-free banking, the leadership of aik by BankIslami, led by Chief Officer Ashfaque Ahmed, met Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Governor Faisal Karim Kundi to discuss the potential of Islamic digital banking and its role in supporting Pakistan's transition to a cashless economy.

During the meeting, the officials highlighted aik's efforts to advance Islamic banking in Pakistan and uphold the central bank's vision to increase financial inclusion in the country. They emphasized the necessity of promoting Shariah-compliant and digitally-enabled banking solutions to make it easier for the underserved to join the formal economy. The participants also discussed the importance of leveraging technology to drive innovation within the Islamic banking ecosystem. The governor lauded aik's vision and initiatives in digital Islamic banking and extended support for future collaborations aligned with broader economic development objectives.

Commenting on the meeting, Chief Officer Ashfaque Ahmed said: "At aik, our primary goal is to make Shariah-com-



pliant, innovative digital financing accessible across Pakistan. This will help bring more people into the formal economy while supporting the shift toward a modern, cashless financial system."

With 'aik' at the forefront, BankIslami

continues to advance its mission of "Saving Humanity by Providing Riba-Free Islamic Banking Solutions" by combining modern technology with Islamic values to make Shariah-compliant banking simple, accessible, and relevant for generations to come.



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Enforcement Collectorate Gadani, in a major intelligence-based anti-smuggling operations with the support from FC and local police seized 30.5 metric tons of smuggled betel nuts of foreign origin along with four passenger buses near Ashok Pump, District Hub, with the total estimated value of the seized goods and conveyances amounting to Rs. 252.5 million.

The operation was carried out on the basis of credible intelligence received through the Chief Collector (Enforcement). Acting promptly, a

Dr. Syed Amir Ali takes charge as President & CEO, Meezan Bank

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank has appointed Dr. Syed Amir Ali as its new President and Chief Executive Officer, effective December 30, 2025. Dr. Amir Ali has assumed leadership of the Bank following the retirement of Mr. Irfan Siddiqui, Founder, President and Chief Executive Officer of Meezan

Bank. Mr. Irfan Siddiqui leaves behind a distinguished legacy, having pioneered Islamic banking in Pakistan and led Meezan Bank from its inception to its position as one of the country's leading financial institutions, widely recognized for its performance, including being a five-time winner of the 'Best Bank' award at the Pakistan Banking Awards, the

country's most prestigious banking recognition. Dr. Amir Ali brings over two decades of extensive experience in banking and finance. He joined Meezan Bank in 2006, where he played a pivotal role in leading the Corporate and Investment Banking Group. In 2018, he was appointed President and Chief Executive Officer of

BankIslami Pakistan Limited. He rejoined Meezan Bank in 2023 as President (Designate) and Deputy Chief Executive Officer, reflecting the Bank's strong commitment to succession planning.

Following the legacy of

the founding CEO who has served the Bank right from inception, Dr. Amir Ali will be responsible for steering the Bank's strategic direction and advancing its Vision of establishing 'Islamic banking as banking of first choice...'. He will continue to uphold the Bank's core values, with a strong emphasis on Shariah-compliant banking, sound governance, and excellence in digital transformation.

Second National Sepaktakraw Workshop Conclude

Over 150 Players Join Sepaktakraw Workshop to Promote Sport in Punjab

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Second National Sepaktakraw Workshop was successfully organized at the University of Lahore under the auspices of the Punjab Sepaktakraw Association, in collaboration with the Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation, and the University's Sports and Culture Department.

More than 150 male and female players participated enthusiastically, with the aim of further promoting Sepaktakraw across Punjab. Secretary General of the Pakistan Sepaktakraw Federation, Noushad Ahmed Khan, briefed players on official rules, while international athletes Muhammad Khalid and Deedar Rani conducted practical training sessions.

Distinguished guests included University of Lahore Director and Punjab Sepaktakraw Association Chairperson Farzana Rauf, Deputy Director Planning Punjab Sports Board Muhammad Tariq Khanzada, and the Association's



President. Addressing participants, Tariq Khanzada praised the successful organization of the workshop, thanked Noushad Ahmed Khan for his support, and congratulated Secretary Aamir Latif and his team for excellent arrangements. He also announced plans to hold a Punjab Sepaktakraw Championship soon. Pakistan's first female

cricket umpire, Dr. Humaira Farah, highlighted the sport's growing popularity and encouraged players to actively participate. Other speakers included Muhammad Javed, Muhammad Mubashir, Madam Shagufta, Aftab Ahmed Khan Niazi, and Urooj Naz. At the closing ceremony, certificates were distributed among players and shields

presented to guests. Sindh Sepaktakraw Association Chairman Dr. Muhammad Arif Hafeez and President Shabbir Ahmed congratulated the organizers.

In his concluding remarks, Punjab Sepaktakraw Association Secretary Aamir Latif expressed gratitude to all participants and supporters.

Quetta Clinches Title in PBCC T-20 Blind Cricket Trophy 2025 (Grade-II)

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Quetta registered a commanding victory in the final of the PBCC T-20 Blind Cricket Trophy 2025 (Grade-II), defeating Attock by 54 runs in a thrilling encounter at the Boranwali Cricket Ground, Faisalabad.

Attock won the toss and elected to field first. Making full use of the conditions, Quetta posted a mammoth total of 223/7 in 20 overs. Niamat Ullah played a sensational innings, scoring 88 off 44 balls, while Naseeb Ullah provided solid support with 42 off 31 balls. For Attock, M. Sohail picked up 2 wickets and Bashir Khan claimed 1 wicket. In reply, Allock mounted a spirited chase but were eventually bowled out for 169 in 19 overs, falling 54 runs short of the target. Muhammad Raheel top-scored with an impressive 71 off 38 balls, while Zeshan Ali contributed 27 off 22 balls. For Quetta, Fazal-e-Hadi led the bowing attack with 2 wickets, supported by Niamat Ullah, M. Shaharyar, and Syed Ehsan Ullah, who took one wicket each.

Result: Quetta won by 54 runs

Man of the Match: Niamat Ullah

The final prize distribution ceremony was graced by several distinguished guests, including:

Syed Sultan Shah, President, World Blind Cricket Ltd. & Chairman, Pakistan Blind Cricket Council
Col (R) Faisal, Director HR, Serena



Hotel Faisalabad
Syed M. Salman Bukhari, Director Marketing, PBCC
Dr. Anwar Ali Sial, Director Finance, PBCC
Mr. Muhammad Bilal, President, ICCB

Mr. Dawood Saleem, General Secretary, FCCB
The dignitaries presented trophies and individual awards to the players in recognition of their outstanding performances
Player of the Tournament Awards

B1 Category: Muhammad Sohal (Allock)
B2 Category: Ayoub Khan (Karachi)
B3 Category: Niamat Ullah (Quetta)
Best Wicketkeeper: Naseeb Ullah (Quetta)

Hazara University Hosts Vibrant Three-Day Art and Design Showcase

Spokesman Report

MANSEHRA: The Final Display & Thesis Show has started at the Art and Design Department of Hazara University Mansehra. In the three-day display, students of Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Design are showcasing their art and creative activities in Graphic Design, Textile Design, Visual Art, Interior Design, and other related fields.

This display is part of the academic activities of Fine Arts students. Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan inaugurated the display and inspected the skill-based stalls of students, inquiring about their academic activities.

On this occasion, Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Ikramullah Khan said that creative departments like Art and Design



play an important role in enhancing

students' intellectual, aesthetic, and professional abilities. He said that these displays provide an excellent opportunity for students to showcase their creative skills in a practical form.

The Vice Chancellor praised the artworks of students, calling them beautiful and of high quality, and appreciated the efforts of Asiya Shah, Head of the Art and Design Department, and other faculty members. He expressed hope that the young students of Art and Design will bring glory to Hazara University and the country at the national and international levels in the future.

The students of Art and Design successfully defended their projects in related fields at the display. On this occasion, Dean Faculty of Arts and Humanities Professor Dr. Shakerullah, faculty members, and other administrative officials were also present.

PM launches Economic Governance Reforms

Continued from Page 1

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said inflation had fallen sharply from 29.2 per cent to 4.5 per cent, while foreign exchange reserves more than doubled from \$9.2 billion to over \$21 billion. He said the current account position improved from a \$3.3 billion deficit to a \$1.9 billion surplus, with Pakistan also moving from a primary deficit to a primary surplus and narrowing its overall fiscal deficit.

The prime minister said revenue reforms had begun to correct long-standing distortions, with the tax-to-GDP ratio rising

from around 8 per cent to over 10 per cent and more than one million new taxpayers brought into the formal economy. Tax collection grew by 26 per cent in 2025, supported by large-scale digitisation of government systems. He highlighted that the e-procurement platform, ePADS, now covers over 1,000 federal agencies and more than half a million contracts, integrated in real time with FBR, NADRA and SECP.

PM Shehbaz said the successful privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines and First Women Bank marked a break

from decades of inaction, with further state-owned enterprise reforms underway. He said Pakistan's stabilisation and reform momentum had been acknowledged by international credit rating agencies and development partners.

"With macroeconomic indicators stabilised, our focus now shifts to accelerating growth, expanding exports and making Pakistan a far easier place to do business," he said, adding that the reform agenda represented a shift from crisis management to institution building.

The prime minister under-

scored that the Economic Governance Reforms comprised 142 actions, including 59 priority reforms and 83 complementary measures to be implemented by 58 institutions within defined timelines. Key focus areas include taxation, energy, privatisation, SOEs, pensions, tariff rationalisation, regulatory simplification, rightsizing of the federal government and digital governance.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said the reforms were a home-grown, irreversible agenda aimed at embedding stability into institutions and enabling sustainable, private-sector-led growth. "The

people of Pakistan have paid a heavy price," he said. "We cannot return to business as usual, and we will not look back."

Earlier, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb presented a detailed overview of the reform framework and economic performance indicators. He said GDP growth reached 3.1 per cent in FY25 and accelerated to 3.71 per cent in the first quarter of FY26, while inflation remained contained at around 5 per cent in the first five months of FY26 despite climate-related shocks.

The finance minister said fiscal discipline had been reinforced through consecutive primary surpluses, including a 2.7 per cent surplus of GDP, while the tax-to-GDP ratio rose to 10.2 per cent in FY25, the highest in 25 years. Public debt declined to about 70 per cent of GDP from 75 per cent in FY23, while early debt repayments generated interest savings of Rs3.5 trillion.

He noted that the policy rate had been reduced to 10.5 per cent from 22 per cent in June 2024.

On the external front, Senator Aurangzeb said State Bank reserves had reached \$15.9 billion, a four-year high, with import cover improving to 2.6 months. The current account deficit stood at \$812 million in the first five months of FY26, well within targets, while remittances reached \$38 billion in FY25 and Roshan Digital Account inflows rose to \$11.5 billion.

He said renewed investor confidence was reflected in a stable exchange rate, expanding private sector credit, a 52 per cent rise in the Pakistan Stock Exchange in dollar terms during 2025, a surge in IPOs and near-complete digitalisation of company registrations.

Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League

Sports Desk

KARACHI: One more match decided in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament when D Cattle Farms beat Pak Saudi International by 4 Wickets at CAA Cricket Stadium.

The highlights of the day's play was another brilliant century by Saifullah Khan 112, Fine Unbeaten 88 by Noor Wali, Musa Azad 67 and Fahad Nadeem 61.

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

Scores in Brief:

D Cattle Farms defeated Pak Saudi International by 4 Wickets at CAA Cricket Stadium. Pak Saudi International 269/7 in 40 overs, Saifullah Khan 112 13 x4 5x6, Fahad Nadeem 61 8x4 2x6, Ali Hassan 33, Kumar Kumar 23, Muhammad Sikandar (rlb) 3/39, Ahmed Khan 2/46.

In reply D Cattle Farms 270/6 in 37.5 overs. Noor Wali 8810x4 2x6 not out, Musa Azad 67 7x4 2x6, Ahmed Ghaziani 48 7x4 2x6, Aliyan Mahmood 33 not out. Muhammad Abbas 2/38, Ali Shanwari 2/44.

Alleged interference forces postponement of PFF Congress, KP EXCO elections stalled

LAHORE: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) Congress meeting was postponed due to allegations of interference, resulting in further delays to the elections for two Executive Committee (EXCO) seats from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to sources, the PFF Congress meeting was held on Sunday, December 28, 2025, at a local hotel in Lahore and was attended by 12 members, including representatives from Punjab and Sindh, the Referees Association, women Congress members, and women clubs. The meeting was convened to conduct elections for two EXCO seats representing Khyber Pakhtunkhwa; however, serious allegations and objections raised by the attending Congress members led to its postponement.

Sources revealed that prior to the meeting, Sindh's representative Azam Khan informed the Congress that two members of the Sindh Football Association, Muhammad Siddique and Kifayatullah, were allegedly illegally detained by police on the directions of influential individuals, with the aim of preventing them from exercising their voting rights. The Sindh delegation strongly protested the incident and demanded an investigation by FIFA authorities and the PFF Disciplinary Committee, calling for strict action against those found responsible.

It was further pointed out that on the day of the Electoral Congress, several members remained absent despite the PFF having provided full travel and accommodation arrangements. This absence, sources said, undermined the FIFA-supported electoral process. Some members were allegedly pressured to stay away by individuals facing disciplinary bans from the PFF, along with certain elements seeking influential positions within the federation.

Meanwhile, candidates from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa also raised objections, alleging that their right to contest the elections had been obstructed. They appealed to FIFA and PFF leadership to ensure justice and to conduct the elections in a fair, transparent, and interference-free manner. Sources added that FIFA is expected to closely examine the matter, with the possibility of further action following its review.

Brazil great Roberto Carlos hospitalized

Brazil legend Roberto Carlos has been hospitalized after a heart attack, Spanish media reported on Wednesday.

The former Real Madrid star has undergone unexpected but successful heart surgery, and is now in recovery.

The 52-year-old former left back was on vacation in Brazil when he was rushed to a hospital in Sao Paulo for what was described as a routine medical check-up.

Later on, Doctors discovered a severe underlying issue: a blood clot that had significantly reduced his heart's pumping capacity.

According to Marca, sources close to the 2002 World Cup winner say he is currently recovering.

Roberto Carlos himself reportedly told AS: "I'm doing well now and I'm under close observation."

After the three-hour operation, he is expected to remain under observation in the hospital for another two days.

For the unversed, Roberto Carlos enjoyed a joyous career with 127 caps for Brazil and was a crucial figure in their 2002 World Cup triumph, held in South Korea and Japan.

At the club level, he became a global icon during his time at Real Madrid, where he played 527 competitive matches between 1996 and 2007.

Major Blow for Real Madrid as Kylian Mbappe suffers injury

Real Madrid on Wednesday said that Kylian Mbappe had suffered a knee sprain, delivering a blow to their bid to rein in LaLiga leaders Barcelona.

"After the tests carried out today on our player Kylian Mbappe by Real Madrid's medical services, he was diagnosed with a sprain in his left knee. Awaiting evolution," the club said in a statement.

Real Madrid did not indicate how long the 27-year-old striker would be out for, but a source close to the France superstar told AFP that he would be absent for at least three weeks.

Mbappe, the leading scorer in La Liga this season with 18 goals, is therefore a major doubt for Sunday's league match at home to Real Betis, Los Merengues' first after the winter break as they trail Barcelona by four points.

Condolence

DHAKA: Speaker Ayaz Sadiq called on Professor Muhammad Yunus, Honorable Chief Adviser of Bangladesh. He conveyed heartfelt condolences to the brotherly people and Government of Bangladesh on the demise of Begum Zia.



PM Shehbaz, Saudi Crown Prince discuss regional developments, stress peace through dialogue

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday held a telephone conversation with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and discussed and exchanged views on the regional situation and current developments.

While expressing Pakistan's complete solidarity with the Kingdom, the prime minister said that it was imperative to

maintain regional peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy.

The prime minister also emphasized the need to maintain unity and harmony among the ranks of the Ummah, in the midst of various current challenges, according to a press statement issued by the PM House.

During their very warm and cordial discussion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif conveyed his respectful regards and good wishes for the Custodian of the Two

Holy Mosques, His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as well as for His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. Prime Minister thanked Saudi Crown Prince for his warmth and affection towards Pakistan.



Both leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening the long-standing fraternal bonds between both countries, which had attained new heights during recent months.

Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman thanked the prime minister for the telephone call and reiterated the Kingdom's desire to expand cooperation with Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest. He also expressed his desire to undertake an official visit to Pakistan in the coming year.

Saudi Ambassador calls on Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, bilateral ties discussed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif received Saudi Ambassador to Pakistan, His Excellency Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmed Al-Maliki, at the Prime Minister's House on Wednesday evening.

During the meeting, the Prime Minister conveyed his respect and good wishes for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, as well as the Saudi Prime Minister and Crown Prince, Muhammad bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud.

He expressed satisfaction with the strong bilateral relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia and

reaffirmed his commitment to further strengthening the longstanding brotherly ties between the two nations.



Prime Minister Sharif highlighted his previous meet-

ings with the Crown Prince, describing them as fruitful in advancing Pak-Saudi relations, and appreciated Saudi Arabia's consistent support to Pakistan in times of need, as well as its constructive role in promoting regional peace and stability.

The discussions also covered recent regional and global developments, with the Prime Minister emphasizing the importance of maintaining peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy.

The Saudi Ambassador conveyed a congratulatory message from King Salman and Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman and reiterated Saudi Arabia's desire to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in all areas of mutual interest.

Amir Muqam reviews progress on AJK Joint Action Committee agreement

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review progress on the implementation of the agreement reached with the Joint Action Committee of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Officials from relevant ministries briefed the meeting on the steps taken so far, while the

Chief Secretary AJK shared a detailed update on the implementation process, said a press release here.

The federal minister expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved to date and directed all concerned departments to speed up the implementation work. He said that Azad Jammu and Kashmir is a top priority of the Prime Minister and providing relief to the people is a joint responsibility of the federal and AJK



governments. assured that, in line with the

Engineer Amir Muqam Prime Minister's instructions,

full and effective implementation of the agreement with the Joint Action Committee would be ensured.

The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Kashmir Affairs Division, AJK government and representatives of Civil Aviation, National Health Services, Communications, National Highway Authority (NHA), Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA), Power Division, Water Resources and Federal Education.

hearing on a petition of citizen Eltashamul Haq. The court said that according to the petitioner, he was forcibly offloaded from a flight to Azerbaijan. The petitioner has requested to declare the offloading as illegal, it said.

It said that the petitioner has requested to remove the stamp of offloading from the passport and related records. The order said that the petitioner also requested to pay damages and an independent inquiry into the allegations of demanding bribes.

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq calls on Bangladesh Chief Adviser Muhammad Yunus

Spokesman Report

DHAKA: Speaker of the National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq met Chief Adviser of Bangladesh Professor Muhammad Yunus and offered his condolences on the sad demise of former prime minister Begum Khaleda Zia.

According to the spokesperson of the Pakistani High Commission in Bangladesh, Yunus thanked the Pakistani leadership and the people of Pakistan for expressing solidarity with the brotherly people of Bangladesh in this moment of deep sorrow. Both leaders paid tribute to the tall political position of Begum Khaleda Zia and described her as a distinguished political leader.

In the evening, the Speaker called on Professor Muhammad Yunus, Honorable Chief Adviser of Bangla-

desh. He conveyed heartfelt condolences to the brotherly people and Government of Bangladesh on the demise of Begum Zia. The two leaders recalled her stature as a distinguished political leader whose resilience and contributions to the democratic evolution of Bangladesh are recognised and appreciated across the world. They lauded her dedication to public service which changed the lives of millions of Bangladeshis for good. Both sides also appreciated her vision for peace, progress and connectivity of the region.

The Chief Adviser thanked the Speaker for visiting and expressing solidarity with the people of Bangladesh at this juncture. He profoundly recalled his meetings with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and DPM/FM Ishaq Dar and appreciated their messages of condolences.

Pakistan expresses concern over resurgence of violence in Yemen

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan expresses deep concern over resurgence of violence in Yemen. Pakistan reiterates its support for the unity and territorial integrity of Yemen, as well as all efforts aimed at establishing lasting peace and stability in the country.

In this regard, Pakistan strongly opposes unilateral steps by any Yemeni party that may further escalate the situation, undermine peace efforts, and threaten the peace and stability of Yemen as well as that of

the region.

Pakistan welcomes regional efforts for de-escalating the situation and maintaining peace and stability in Yemen. Pakistan expresses complete solidarity with the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia and reaffirms its commitment to security of the Kingdom. Pakistan maintains its firm support for the resolution of Yemen issue through dialogue and diplomacy and hopes that Yemen's people and regional powers work together towards inclusive and enduring settlement of the issue, safeguarding regional stability.

Pak Army soldiers give a brave message to nation from LoC front lines



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The brave soldiers of the Pakistan Army have expressed their unwavering determination, sacrifice and selfless love for the homeland in their message to the nation on the arrival of the New Year.

The soldiers of the Pakistan Army say that even the severe cold, snowy weather and difficult geography cannot dampen their spirits.

We consider the protection of the beloved homeland as our first duty, standing on the front lines in the snow, away from our homes and families. The soldiers of the Pakistan Army made it clear in their

messages that the presence of the Pakistan Army on the borders is the guarantee of the peace and security of the nation.

No enemy will be allowed to look at it with a dirty eye from across the border. The soldiers of the Pakistan Army also gave a clear message to the enemy that the victory of the battle of truth is proof that we are capable of breaking the enemy's teeth together.

The soldiers of the Pakistan Army and all the youth of Pakistan are performing their professional responsibilities day and night for the sake of their beloved homeland in a very courageous manner.

IHC orders inquiry regarding alleged illegal offloading of citizen

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Wednesday sent a matter to the Director Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) regarding the forcible offloading of the citizen from a flight of Azerbaijan, and disposed of the case. The case of a citizen allegedly being offloaded from a flight to Azerbaijan has reached the court.

The court said that the DG FIA should take action on this request as per the law and submit a report.

Justice Arbab Muhammad Tahir issued a written order regarding