



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



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98th birth anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto observed

The programmes of 98th birth anniversary of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto started with the recitation of Holy Quran at his grave in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh after which floral wreaths laid at the grave of founding father of PPP and special prayers held for the departed soul.



Trump renews push to annex Greenland after Venezuela strike

US President Donald Trump has renewed his push to acquire Greenland, citing national security needs, a move that has been met with protests from Denmark and Greenland's leaders. Speaking to reporters aboard Air Force One on Sunday, President Trump said Greenland is "so strategic" and claimed that it is currently surrounded by Russian and Chinese ships.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting regarding SMEDA, on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM orders fast-track, easy loans for SMEs to boost growth and exports

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting to review the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority's business plan. Radio Pakistan

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed relevant institutions to fast-track the provision of loans for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) on easy terms through banks and other financial institutions.

Chairing a meeting to review the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority's (SMEDA) business plan, the prime minister said SMEs were the backbone of the national economy and held vast potential to increase

Pakistan's exports.

A three-year roadmap for SME promotion was presented during the meeting, outlining measures to address key challenges faced by the sector.

The plan includes steps to integrate SMEs into national export supply chains and strengthen their presence in international markets through enhanced cooperation with foreign partners.

The meeting was attended by Information and Broadcasting Minister Attaullah Tarar, Special Assistant Haroon Akhtar, State Bank of Pakistan Governor Jameel Ahmad, chief secretaries of all four provinces, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, and Gilgit-Baltistan, members of the newly appointed SMEDA board, and

Govt decides to summon National Assembly session on Jan 12



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: To mark the advent of the New Year, the government has decided to convene the National Assembly session on January 12, 2026. The Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has already forwarded an advice which will be forwarded to the Aiwan-e-Sadr for approval.

After approval from the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the National Assembly Secretariat will issue a notification in this regard.

Legislation, question hour, and other important issues

will be part of the agenda in the National Assembly session.

Moreover, National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has said that the opposition had not yet made formal contact for initiating talks with the government.

He made the remarks while speaking to the media, according to a handout issued by the NA Secretariat. It quoted him as saying that the "opposition had not yet made any formal contact to initiate a dialogue".

"My role in the talks is only that of a facilitator," he said.

Pakistan, China strengthen strategic partnership in Beijing dialogue

Spokesman Report

BEIJING: Pakistan and China agreed to strengthen high-level exchanges and interactions at all levels, deepen strategic communication and coordination of actions, fully implement the action plan for building a China-Pakistan community with a shared future, and strive to achieve a number of early harvest outcomes.

During the Seventh Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue between Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi held here, both countries will advance the development of the upgraded "CPEC 2.0," enhance cooperation in industry, agriculture, and mining, jointly commemorate the 75th anniversary of diplomatic relations to consolidate the

public support for China-Pakistan friendship, unite the Global South to safeguard common interests, uphold the purposes and principles of the UN Charter, and oppose bullying acts that infringe upon the sovereignty of other countries, according to a read out issued by Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Sunday night.

The two sides also conducted comprehensive and in-depth

strategic communication on international and regional issues of common concern and reached a broad consensus.

DPM/FM Ishaq Dar conveyed the warm greetings of the Pakistani leadership to the Chinese leaders and congratulated the Communist Party of China on the adoption of the proposals for the 15th Five-Year Plan at the Fourth Plenary Session of the 20th CPC Central Committee, stressing that

China's path to modernization is an important force for safeguarding world peace and development.

He said that friendship with China is the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and a consensus shared by all political parties and all sectors of Pakistani society. This year, the two sides will jointly witness 75 years of brotherly and iron-clad friendship.

Major terror plot foiled in Karachi as CTD seizes massive explosives cache



Bureau Report

KARACHI: Law enforcement agencies in Karachi have thwarted a major terrorist plot through a timely operation, recovering a large quantity of explosives and arresting three suspected terrorists.

Addressing a press conference on Monday, Additional Inspector General of Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Zulfiqar Lark and Deputy Inspector General Ghulam Azfar Mahesar said a raid was conducted in Rais Goth on Karachi's outskirts following intelligence reports about the presence of terrorists in the area.

During the operation, a significant amount of explosive material was recovered.

According to Additional IG Zulfiqar Lark, the suspects had prepared around 2,000 kilograms of explosives which were stored

in plastic drums.

One suspect was arrested at the scene, while others initially managed to escape. However, based on information provided by the arrested suspect, two more suspects were later taken into custody.

The arrested individuals were identified as Jalil Ahmed alias Fareed, son of Muhammad Noor; Niaz Qadir alias King, son of Qadir Bakhsh; and Hamdan alias Fareed, son of Muhammad Ali.

Officials said the suspects are affiliated with Indian terror proxy Fitna Al Hindustan, adding that efforts are ongoing to arrest additional members of the network.

Providing further details, DIG Ghulam Azfar Mahesar said the suspects were planning attacks on civilian targets in Karachi and had rented a house approximately 40 kilometres outside the city.

Mohsin Naqvi slams criminal UN silence on Indian atrocities in Occupied Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Monday vowed that Pakistan will continue to extend full support to Kashmiris on Right to Self-Determination Day. In his message on Monday, Mohsin Naqvi

said that January 5 is a historic day on which the United Nations recognized Kashmiris' rights of self-determination.

He said, despite the passage of 77 years, Kashmiris are still being denied from their rights and facing brutalities and oppression.

Mohsin Naqvi said, "Occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a disputed territory and a global issue that has been unresolved for seven decades."

He said that people of Kashmir are looking at the United Nations for the resolution of their right of self-determination issue, and this

wait is weighing on the consciences of the United Nations, the international community, and human rights-loving countries. The Interior Minister said that Indian Occupied Kashmir is currently a picture of helplessness and oppression that questions claims of global justice.



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AJK PM Rathore urges UN Action on Kashmir Self-Determination Resolutions

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that it was high time that the United Nations should help implement its resolutions that guarantee the right to self-determination to the people of Kashmir.

He made these assertions while speaking at a seminar organized by Friends of Kashmir at the Pakistan Institute of Parliamentary Studies on the occasion of the Right to Self-Determination Day today.

The Prime Minister said that 5th January, observed by Kashmiris as Right to Self-Determination Day, serves as a reminder of the UN's promises to the Kashmiri people.

Urging the United Nations to take effective notice of the continued bloodshed and violence in Indian illegally occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "The world needs to confront the bitter reality that the people of Kashmir continue to reel under India's oppression and tyranny



despite the passage of decades." Paying tribute to the Kashmiri people's struggle and their resilience in the face of India's state terrorism, PM Rathore stated that India must bear in mind the fact that genuine movements involving sacrifice never fail.

The event was also addressed by Chairman of the Parliamentary Kashmir Committee, Rana Qasim Noon. Mr. Noon said that Kashmir is a noble cause for Pakistan and that

Kashmiris have the right to decide their own future.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Kashmir are inseparable and recalled that Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah had called Kashmir Pakistan's jugular vein.

Other speakers on the occasion sought the United Nation's urgent attention towards Kashmir issue, urging it to fulfill its commitments and ensure the right to self-determination

for the Kashmiri people.

The seminar was attended and addressed, among others, by AJK government ministers Chaudhry Rafiq Nair and Ms. Nabila Ayub, Foreign Office spokesperson Tahir Andarabi, Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader Brigadier (Retd.) Dr. Muhammad Khan, Pakistan Peoples Party Khyber Pakhtunkhwa leader Dr. Swera Prakash, former Foreign Office spokesperson Nafees Zakaria, and others.

Birth anniversary of Shaheed Bhutto

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Senior Minister Abdul Waheed and others cutting the cake of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his 98th birth anniversary at a grand ceremony held at Kashmir house.



Photo: Sultan Bashir

Kashmir Right to Self-Determination Day marked in Islamabad, leaders stress UN resolutions

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: A programme to mark January 5 – Right to Self-Determination Day was organized by the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference at the National Press Club, Islamabad.

Addressing the gathering, President of the Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan said that the right to self-determination is the fundamental and inalienable right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He stated that the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination is linked with the principles of the Partition of the Subcontinent, and deviation from international resolutions or any unilateral attempt at so-called "absolute freedom" could lead to new regional crises.



He warned that deviation from the principles of the independence of the Subcontinent could push the entire region into a fresh process of re-division. Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan emphasized that the sacrifices of more than 600,000 martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir can never go in vain. He said that a durable and lasting solution to the Kashmir dispute can only be

achieved on the basis of the final United Nations resolutions, which provide a clear and viable roadmap.

The programme was presided over by former President of the Muslim Conference Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jarral, Advocate, while the stage proceedings were conducted by senior legal expert Sardar Abdul Razzaq Khan, Advocate.

The event was also addressed by Muslim Conference Secretary General Madam Mehr-un-Nisa, former President Mirza Shafiq Jarral Advocate, Hurriyat leader Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Madam Shamim Ali Malik, Sajid Qureshi Advocate, Asim Zahid Abbasi, Raja Zaki Jabbar, and other speakers.

AJK Commemorates Bhutto's 98th Birth Anniversary with Ideological Zeal



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: 98th birth anniversary of the Founder Chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), former Prime Minister of Pakistan and Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, was observed across Azad Jammu and Kashmir with great reverence, respect and ideological enthusiasm, in line with celebrations held throughout Pakistan.

On the occasion, a renewed pledge was made to continue the struggle for a strong federation, an exploitation-free society and the complete elimination of the class system, in accordance with the revolutionary vision of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Political Affairs Chairperson Mohtarma Faryal Talpur, Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, PPP AJK President Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar and senior party leader Chaudhry Riaz.

The largest ceremony in the capital city was held at the Central Press Club, Muzaffarabad. The chief guest was Central Deputy Secretary Information PPP, candidate for Legislative Assembly Constituency-7 and Spokesperson to the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Shaukat Javed Mir, while the session was presided over by former Chairman Development Authority Asad Habib Awan.

Speaking to the media after cutting the cake, Shaukat Javed Mir said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto rendered historic services for Pakistan's security, national prosperity and the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. On the occasion, former Chairman Development Authority Asad Habib Awan, Kaleem Qureshi, Mohsin Khokhar, Mehtab Abbasi, Mirza Ammar, Ghulam Rabbani Mir and Muqaddas Iqbal Khawaja also addressed the gathering.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, prayers were offered for the security of Pakistan, the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir, martyrs of democracy, martyrs of the Pakistan Armed Forces and martyrs of Kashmir. Tribute was paid to the people-friendly initiatives of the government led by Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, while reaffirming unwavering confidence in the party leadership.

Kashmiri Leaders Reaffirm Right to Self-Determination at Lahore Observance

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Under the auspices of Kashmir Center Lahore, the Kashmiri people's Right to Self-Determination Day was observed. The purpose of marking this day was to remind the world of the Kashmiri people's fundamental and inalienable right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions, which grant them the authority to freely decide their political future.

Former Member of the Legislative Assembly Maulana Shafi Josh, Senior Vice President PML-N Lawyers Wing Manzoor Hussain Gilani Advocate, Incharge Kashmir Center Inam ul Hassan, senior leader of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Engineer Mushtaq Mahmood, Central Joint Secretary PTI Azad Kashmir Mirza Sadiq Jarral, Secretary Kashmir Action Committee Farooq Azad, Vice President PML-N Azad Kashmir Lahore Division Chaudhry Muhammad Sadiq, leader of the Muhaaz e RaeShumari Aftab Nazki, renowned religious scholar Allama Mushtaq Qadri, Qari Khalid Mahmood, intellectual Professor Nazar Bhinder, prominent social leader and world traveler Maqsood Chughtai, social activist Faisal Fabbani, Sheikh Amjad, Qazi Anwar, Mazhar Baig Advocate, Nisar Baig, Ehtesham Fabbani, and Nazir Baig addressed the gathering.

DC Attock distribution of sewing machines among Women

Raza Naqvi

ATTOC: Deputy Commissioner Attock, Rao Atif Raza, has stated that the Government of Punjab is taking all possible measures for the development, empowerment, and welfare of women so that they can become economically self-reliant. He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony for the distribution of sewing machines among women at the District Council Hall, Attock.

The Deputy Commissioner said that providing women with skills and respectable employment opportunities is among the top priorities of the Government of Punjab. He added that the provision of sewing machines would enable women to contribute to the economic betterment of their families while working from home and help them move towards an independent life.

The ceremony was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Finance and Planning, Nosheen Israr; Deputy Director Social Welfare, Haseeb Khalid; District Director TEVTA, Syed Zawar Hussain Shah; Principal TEVTA Institute, Muhammad Shakir; Muhammad Nadeem from Qurban Welfare Trust; and other concerned officers and dignitaries.

On this occasion, Additional Deputy Commissioner Nosheen Israr said that the Government of Punjab is implementing various projects for the promotion of women's technical training and employment, and such initiatives play an important role in leading women towards self-reliance.

Self-Determination Day: Massive Protest Rally Organized by All Parties Hurriyat Conference in Muzaffarabad

Abdul Majeed Tahir Muzaffarabad: On the occasion of 5 January – Self-Determination Day, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) organized a grand, peaceful and well-attended protest demonstration and rally in Muzaffarabad. The rally commenced from Shaheed Afzal Guru Chowk, Domel, and witnessed the participation of a large number of people from all walks of life.

Prominent participants included Speaker Legislative Assembly Azad Jammu and

Kashmir Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Secretary Information APHC Mushtaq Ahmed Butt, Deputy Commissioner Muzaffarabad Munir Qureshi, Spokesperson to the Prime Minister of AJK (Shaukat Javed Mir, Samia Sajid Chairperson Women Wing, All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference), senior Hurriyat leaders Syed Gulshan, Syed Mushtaq Hussain, Mushtaq-ul-Islam, Chairman Tehreek Shabab-ul-Muslimeen Jammu and Kashmir Munir Kunshi, President EPCA Muhammad

Ramzan, Engineer Abdul Hameed, Ameer Jamaat City Muzaffarabad, Syed Karamat Sabzwari, Advocate Sardar Ramzan, Chaudhry Feroz Din, Asif Makhdoomi, President Seerat Committee Ateeq Kiyani, Naseer Mir, Tanzeer Iqbal, Syed Mahmood Shah, along with other APHC leaders, pro-freedom activists, Kashmiri refugees, political and social figures, students' organizations, lawyers, youth and representatives of civil society.

During the rally, the atmos-

phere of Muzaffarabad resonated with slogans in favor of Kashmir's freedom and the right to self-determination. The enthusiasm and commitment of the youth were particularly evident, as they reaffirmed their resolve that the Kashmiri people would never relinquish their legitimate, internationally recognized and inalienable right to self-determination. The strong participation of the younger generation reflected their deep attachment to the ideology of the Kashmir freedom movement.





Islamabad

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SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:13 pm
Asr 3:35 pm
Maghrib 5:13 pm
Isha 6:42 pm

EMERGENCY

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

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

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

COMPLAINTS

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

*CM pays rich
tribute to
Shaheed Zulfikar
Ali Bhutto on
his 98th birth
anniversary*



KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah paid glowing tribute to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, describing him as a visionary, charismatic and people-centric leader, who transformed Pakistan's political, constitutional and defence landscape.

Addressing a ceremony at the People's Secretariat on the occasion of the 98th birth anniversary of Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the chief minister thanked the organisers from District East for inviting him to the event and congratulated party workers and supporters on the birth anniversary of the founding chairman of the Pakistan Peoples Party.

The event was attended by Minister of Labour Saeed Ghani, Senator Waqar Mahdi and others in large numbers.

Murad Ali Shah said that Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was born on January 5, 1928, in Larkana, adding that at the time no one could have imagined that the child born that day would emerge as a leader of extraordinary abilities who would leave behind achievements remembered for generations.

Recalling Bhutto's early life, the chief minister said that even during his student days, Shaheed Bhutto had written a letter to Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, expressing his willingness to sacrifice his life for the country. He added that as Prime Minister, Shaheed Bhutto had openly declared his readiness to lay down his life – and even his children – for the sake of Pakistan.

The chief minister paid tribute to the sacrifices of the Bhutto family, recalling that Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shaheed Shah Nawaz Bhutto all embraced martyrdom in the struggle for democracy and public rights.

Lawyers have played a key role in Pakistan's democratic development: Governor Faisal Karim Kundi

Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi has said that lawyers have always played a vital role in Pakistan's democratic development, adding that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has consistently stood by the legal community.

He expressed these views while addressing a ceremony held for the distribution of grant cheques amounting to a total of Rs 4.5 million for the District Bar Association Dera Ismail Khan, Tehsil Bar Daraban, and Kalachi Bar Association.

During the ceremony, he presented a grant cheque of Rs 2.5 million to Qaisar Khan Mian Khel, President of the District Bar Association Dera Ismail Khan; Rs 1 million to Yasir Khan, Presi-



dent of Kalachi Bar Association; and Rs 1 million to Gul Rehman Khan, President of Daraban Bar Association. He further announced that grants for Paroa

and Paharpur Bar Associations would also be ensured soon.

Speaking on the occasion, District Bar Association Dera Ismail Khan

President and PPP Divisional President Qaisar Khan Mian Khel said that Governor Faisal Karim Kundi had previously played an important role in

resolving issues faced by the High Court Bar and District Bar.

He expressed gratitude for the provision of cheques not only to the District Bar but also to the Tehsil Bars, adding that as this was the governor's home district, they were hopeful that he would continue to play a positive role in resolving further issues.

The ceremony was attended by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Bar Council Member Sardar Hashmat Rehman Sadozai Advocate, District Bar General Secretary Sardar Adnan Saeed Sadozai, Finance Secretary Sheikh Mahmood-ul-Hassan Advocate, Habibullah Khan Advocate, PPP District General Secretary Abid Awan Advocate, Peoples Lawyers Forum leader Shah Fahd Ansari Advocate, and Sardar Hizbullah Khan Gandapur Advocate, among others.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of UAE to Pakistan, H.E. Mr. Salem Mohammed Salem Al Bawab Al Zaabi called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters Islamabad



SAU launches transparent, merit-based Undergraduate Admissions System

Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

TANDOJAM: Sindh Agriculture University (SAU), Tandojam has introduced a transparent, modern and student-friendly undergraduate admissions system by initiating a structured admission process that enables candidates to select degree programs according to their merit, aptitude and personal preferences. The initiative marks a significant reform in the university's admission framework.

Vice Chancellor Engr Prof Dr Altaf Ali Siyal visited the ongoing admission activities to review the arrangements and personally interacted with students and their parents to obtain feedback on the procedures. Parents and candidates expressed complete satisfaction with the open and trans-



parent admission system.

Dean Faculty of Crop Production Dr Inayatullah Rajper, Registrar Ghulam Mohiuddin Qureshi and other senior university officials were also present on the occasion.

The admission process will continue until January

9. According to the schedule, candidates from Umerkot, Tharparkar and Mirpurkhas will be facilitated on January 6; Hyderabad, Thatta and Sujawal on January 7; Jamshoro, Matiari and Tando Allahyar on January 8; while applicants from Karachi,

Tando Muhammad Khan and Badin will be entertained on January 9. Earlier, admissions under the same transparent system were successfully completed at SAU's Umerkot Campus and the Khairpur College of Agriculture and Management Sciences.

The Kashmiri People's Right to Self-Determination Is Recognized Globally, says Chaudhry Inaam



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Political and social leader Chaudhry Inaam Zafar said that the continued denial of the Kashmiri people's internationally recognized right to self-determination, even after more than seven decades, raises serious questions about the role of global institutions. He urged the United Nations and international human rights organizations to ensure the implementation of their resolutions.

He stated that January 5, 1949, marked the adoption of a historic UNCIP resolution granting the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to decide their political future through a free and impartial plebiscite. He added that Kashmiris worldwide observe January 5 as "Right to Self-Determination Day" to highlight the long-pending plebiscite and call for justice for the Kashmiri people.

DC Umar Abbas Mela visits under revamping bus stand at TT Singh

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, initiatives to enhance urban beautification and improve public facilities are being carried out on a continuous basis in Toba Tek Singh district. In this connection, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela visited the General Bus Stand Toba Tek Singh to review the ongoing revamping work. He was accompanied by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Zeshan Labbah Masih and Chief Officer, Municipal Committee Toba Tek Singh Waleed Usman.

The deputy commissioner inspected various sections of the bus stand and conducted a detailed review of the pace and quality of the development work in progress. Briefing the officials, the chief officer said that the passenger waiting area was being upgraded, while development work was also underway at the entry and exit points of the bus stand. He added that wall art, plantation and other beautification measures would be introduced at the facility. For the convenience of passengers, cleanliness of washrooms, water supply and the overall condition of the bus stand were also being improved.

The deputy commissioner directed that all development work be completed within the stipulated time frame, with no compromise on quality and emphasised that cleanliness and administrative arrangements be ensured on a daily basis to provide better facilities to citizens and travellers.

Lawyers Forum Declares Zulfikar Ali Bhutto's Execution a Judicial Murder

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: President People's Lawyers Forum South Punjab Sheikh Ghayasul Haq, District President People's Lawyers Forum Barrister Faiz Rasool Labar, Rana Javed Akhtar, Chaudhry Saeed Ahmed, Khawaja Qaiser Butt, Feroza Faiz, Aisha Ali, Wajid Rizvi, Hasnain Gilani, Nafees Ansari and Adnan Haideri addressed the cake cutting ceremony of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed organized by People's Lawyers Forum South Punjab at District Bar Association Hall Multan and said that the historic decision of the Supreme Court in the Bhutto reference proved that Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was a judicial murder. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto was emerging as a great leader in the Islamic world.

He brought the Islamic world together on one platform and organized a historic Islamic conference in Lahore. The decision to declare the minority and the 73 constitution are also due to Bhutto. Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto organized the Faisal Mosque in Islamabad. Kamra Rebuild Factory. Pakistan Steel Mill. And the Islamic Summit Conference in Lahore. Shaheed Zulfikar Bhutto preferred martyrdom instead of bowing down to dictator Zia-ul-Haq and became immortal in the history of Pakistan. Giving Nishan-e-Pakistan to Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed is also a recognition of his services. He further said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the close friend of Shaheed Bhutto Shaheed and is a smart politician and the future Prime Minister will also be Bilawal Bhutto. Finally, a cake was cut for the 98th birthday of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed.

Pakistani Workers Facing Starvation and Suicide Despite Minimum Wage Laws

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Workers are being crushed in Pakistan. Workers and their families are forced to starve due to poverty. Workers, fed up with poverty, are committing suicide.

The government of Pakistan had fixed the minimum monthly salary of workers at Rs 34,000, but unfortunately, mills and factory owners are committing economic murder of workers.

The government should work on an emergency basis for the welfare of working women. Speaking at an awareness session on the Home Based Workers Act 2023 organized by Revit Learning



and Sangi Development, Home Based Workers Union President Mehak Butt and Labor Union President Ashiq Bhatta said.

They added that the Punjab government has

started registration for home based workers. From which all home based workers can benefit.

In which one can benefit from medical facilities, minimum wage, insurance,

holiday facilities and grants. In the form of accidental deaths of workers, the government provides assistance of one million to their survivors.

The government considers these workers as assets and is trying to provide facilities to their homes for their betterment. Which also includes providing interest-free loans to increase business. This law still needs a lot of improvement.

The government should announce incentives for workers on May 1. The law should be fully implemented for home-based workers. On this occasion, Sahar Maqbool, Nasira Sahar also spoke to the participants

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Pakistan develops 400 advanced chickpea breeding lines

Pakistan has developed 400 advanced chickpea breeding lines under a newly established Speed Breeding Facility, aimed at accelerating the development of climate-resilient and high-yield pulse varieties.

Dr Shahid Riaz Malik, Head of the Pulses Research Program at the National Agricultural Research Centre, told Wealth Pakistan that the advanced breeding lines have been developed using controlled-environment speed breeding techniques and are now being prepared for field testing.

He said the new facility allows researchers to reduce the development cycle of pulse varieties by nearly half. "Traditionally, it takes 12 to 15 years to develop a new pulse variety, but through speed breeding, we can now release a new variety in seven to eight years," he said.

The facility focuses on key pulse crops including chickpeas, lentils, mung beans, black gram and other beans, which play a critical role in food security and farm incomes. Using precisely controlled temperature, humidity and light conditions, scientists are able to grow pulse crops every two months instead of once a year.

"In open-field conditions, chickpea takes about six months and can be grown only once a year. In our chambers, we can achieve five to six generations annually," Dr Shahid explained.

He said the speed breeding approach enables rapid screening of plants for traits such as drought tolerance, heat resistance and disease resistance, which are increasingly important due to climate change. Promising lines are quickly advanced through hybridisation before moving to field trials.

The facility is Pakistan's first dedicated speed breeding centre for pulses and the largest of its kind in South Asia. While similar facilities exist in other countries, Dr Shahid said they usually focus on multiple crops rather than pulses alone.

He said chickpea research under the programme is nearing completion, while work on lentils is around 70 to 75 per cent finalised. Breeding protocols for mung bean and black gram are also being optimised, particularly as limited global research exists for these crops.

Following field testing, national yield trials and approval by seed councils, the newly developed pulse varieties are expected to be released to farmers within the next few years.

The programme has also expanded to include peanuts, millet and other crops, reflecting a broader multi-crop research approach. Capacity building is another major component, with scientists from across the national agricultural research system receiving training in speed breeding techniques, alongside university students engaged in advanced research.

How Trump Normalized Abducting Foreign Leaders

The abduction and prosecution of a sitting head of state is not merely a criminal case. It is a constitutional moment for the international system. With the dramatic seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro and his transfer to the Southern District of New York to face drug-trafficking and weapons conspiracy charges, the United States has crossed a threshold that international law has traditionally treated as inviolable: a sitting head of state is not subject to the criminal jurisdiction of another state's courts.

Under customary international law, confirmed most famously by the International Court of Justice in the Arrest Warrant Case (2002), a sitting head of state enjoys immunity *ratione personae*—absolute immunity from foreign criminal proceedings, arrest, and detention. The basis is not personal privilege, but sovereignty itself. If the head of state can be arrested like a common suspect, then the state itself is no longer sovereign.

And here lies the danger. Imagine the mirror case. Suppose Venezuela indicted a sitting U. S. president—say Donald Trump—on charges of mass civilian casualties, illegal blockade, or extrajudicial destruction of vessels at sea. Suppose further that Venezuelan agents abducted him abroad and transported him to Caracas for trial. Under the very logic now applied to Maduro, Venezuela could insist its criminal statutes have extraterritorial reach, that Trump's actions were criminal rather than "official," and that its courts therefore possess jurisdiction.

How would the United States

respond?. Not by arguing immunity in court, but by invoking force. A national emergency would be declared. Military forces would mobilize. The U. S. would demand immediate release and—if refused—would act unilaterally, claiming self-defense under the U. N. Charter. Washington would not accept the idea that a foreign domestic judge could lawfully sit in judgment over a sitting U. S. president. Nor would any American

The reality, then, is not that law permits the United States what it forbids others, but that power determines whose law prevails. When China pursues influence, it does so primarily through economic integration and diplomatic leverage, binding states into webs of trade and dependence. The United States once did the same. But as its economic leverage erodes and its diplomatic authority is increasingly contested, military and coercive instruments have become more visible tools of statecraft. The Maduro case is not an isolated legal proceeding; it is an expression of power through law—what scholars call "lawfare."

The timing reinforces this interpretation. Senior U. S. military officials have openly acknowledged that operational planning for the mission began many months before the final raid, using intelligence mapping, maritime blockade, tanker seizures, and legal narrative to sculpt a justification. That sequence suggests the decision

to neutralize Maduro came first; the legal story followed. Declaring drugs a "weapon of mass destruction," escalating maritime enforcement, and ultimately seizing a sitting president were phases of a single strategy—not spontaneous responses. It is no coincidence that Venezuela controls the world's largest proven oil reserves.

Yet the legal stakes stretch far beyond Venezuela. If abducting a sitting president becomes normalized practice, the Pandora's box is open. Russia could seize the Ukrainian president. Ukraine could attempt to capture the Russian leader. India and Pakistan could abduct each other's heads of government under rival criminal indictments. Every major power could claim universal criminal jurisdiction over its geopolitical adversaries. The international system would slide from law-based coexistence into unrestrained strategic kidnapping.

This is why head-of-state immunity exists in the first place. Not because leaders should be above the law—but because there must be a lawful, international forum for accountability, not unilateral justice imposed by strength. International tribunals, or trials after a leader leaves office, are the established routes. Anything else destabilizes the sovereign equality that prevents chaos.

It is also essential to note that the same immunity doctrine protects U. S. presidents, including Donald Trump. Under

international law, he cannot be arrested or tried abroad while in office, nor prosecuted for official acts thereafter. If the United States disregards these principles when dealing with weaker states, it cannot coherently object when others attempt the same logic against it.

The charges against Maduro in New York—drug trafficking and weapons conspiracy—were shaped precisely because those are the statutes that grant U. S. courts extraterritorial jurisdiction. They were not chosen for factual accuracy alone but to manufacture legal standing. If conviction follows, it will rest on a foundation that may be domestically valid yet internationally corrosive.

The world should be under no illusion: this is not only a criminal case. It is a test of whether law restrains power, or power bends law to its will. If the precedent stands unchecked, the guardrails that have prevented interstate retribution through legalized kidnapping will weaken. The result will not be justice—but a colder, more dangerous world where states resolve grievances by force wrapped in court filings.

For the sake of order, sovereignty, and genuine international justice, this Pandora's box must be closed—quickly and decisively. Otherwise the rule of law will not have been advanced by the Maduro prosecution. It will have been mortally wounded.

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

Analysis



Qamar Bashir



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

January 5: Right of Self-Determination in Jammu and Kashmir

Policy Perspective on United Nations Commitments and Contemporary Leadership"

The unresolved dispute of Jammu and Kashmir remains one of the longest-standing items on the agenda of the United Nations. Despite clear commitments made through United Nations Security Council resolutions, the right of the people of Jammu and Kashmir to self-determination has yet to be realized. Observed annually on 5 January, the Right of Self-Determination Day underscores the legal, moral, and political obligations of the international community.

1. Background and Internationalization of the Kashmir Dispute

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute emerged following the partition of the Indian subcontinent in 1947. The resulting conflict between India and Pakistan prompted the matter's referral to the United Nations, thereby internationalizing the issue. Since then, the status of Jammu and Kashmir has remained legally unresolved.

2. Legal Basis: Self-Determination as a Binding International Norm

The right to self-determination is enshrined in:

- Article 1 of the UN Charter
- International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)
- International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)

3. Human Rights Situation and International Humanitarian Law

Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir is widely regarded as one of the most militarized regions in the world. Reports by international human rights organizations document:

- Extrajudicial killings

- Enforced disappearances
- Arbitrary detentions
- Restrictions on freedom of expression and media
- Collective punishment and demographic engineering

4. Contemporary Leadership and Policy Advocacy

Under the leadership of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir government has adopted a policy-oriented approach emphasizing:

- International legal advocacy
- Engagement with UN bodies and human rights mechanisms
- Evidence-based documentation of human rights violations
- Peaceful political mobilization in line with UN principles

This leadership approach reframes the Kashmir issue as a matter of unfinished UN responsibility, rather than a regional political dispute. The emphasis has remained on peaceful resolution, adherence to international law, and multilateral engagement.

5. Observance of 5 January: Policy Relevance

The annual observance of Right of Self-Determination Day on 5 January serves as a policy reminder of:

- Outstanding UN obligations
- The credibility of multilateral conflict-resolution mechanisms
- The need for consistency in applying international norms

6. Implications for Regional and Global Peace

The continued denial of self-determination in Jammu and Kashmir has implications beyond the region:

- It undermines long-term peace and stability in South Asia

- It weakens global confidence in UN conflict-resolution frameworks
- It exacerbates humanitarian and human rights challenges

A resolution in accordance with UN resolutions would contribute significantly to regional stability and reinforce the legitimacy of international law.

7. Policy Recommendations

- Reaffirmation of UN Commitments**
The UN Security Council should formally reaffirm the continued validity of its resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir.
- Enhanced UN Engagement**
Appointment of a UN Special Envoy or enhanced reporting by existing UN mechanisms on Kashmir.
- Human Rights Monitoring**
Unrestricted access for UN human rights bodies to all parts of Jammu and Kashmir.
- Confidence-Building Measures**
Support for demilitarization, release of political detainees, and restoration of civil liberties.
- Facilitation of a Political Process**
Initiation of a structured roadmap toward the realization of the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination

The case of Jammu and Kashmir represents a critical test of the international community's commitment to the principles of self-determination, human rights, and peaceful conflict resolution. The leadership of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore reflects a policy-driven effort to align the Kashmiri struggle with international norms and UN mechanisms.

Until the promises made on 5 January 1949 are fulfilled, the Kashmir dispute will remain an open challenge to global governance. The implementation of UN resolutions is not a political concession—it is a legal obligation.

The writer is Information Officer Kotli

Pashtun Belt of Balochistan: The Heart of Trade, Culture, and Connectivity

The Pashtun tribes of Balochistan have lived in Northern Balochistan for centuries, long before the partition of United India in 1947. After independence, Balochistan emerged as Pakistan's largest province by area (44%) but smallest in population, with 15 million people. It is located in the southwestern part of the country. Around 40% of the population

speaks Balochi, the most widely spoken language in the province. Administratively, the province is divided into 8 divisions and 36 districts.

Northern Balochistan, commonly known as the Pashtun Belt, which spans approximately 3 divisions and 14 districts located in the northern and northwestern parts of Balochistan. It is home to 34.3% of the Pashto-speaking (Kandahari dialects) population, making Pashto the second most spoken language in the province after Balochi, according to the 2023 Census of Pakistan (the first digital Census in Pakistan). The Pashtun Belt includes around three divisions: Quetta, Zhob, and Loralai. These 3 divisions consist of about 14 districts such as: Quetta, Pishin, Karezat, Killa Abdullah, Chaman, Zhob, Killa Saifullah, Sherani, Loralai, Musakhel, Duki, Barkhan, Ziarat and Harnai. Together, these districts are referred to as the Pashtun-majority areas of Northern Balochistan. The literacy rate here is higher than in the rest of the province, particularly in Quetta, Ziarat, and Loralai. Quetta is considered the educational hub of Balochistan.

Politically, the Pashtun Belt was influential and strategically important even before the Partition of 1947. After the independence,

Qazi Muhammad Isa, a representative of the Balochistan Muslim League from the Pashtun Belt region (Pishin district) in Balochistan, was among the first to support the creation of Pakistan. Currently, the Pashtun belt wields significant influence in Pakistan's politics. Political parties such as the Pakhtunkhwa Milli Awami Party (PkMAP), Awami National Party (ANP), and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) have strong roots here. These parties play a vital role in Pakistan's political landscape and democratic struggle.

In conclusion, Northern Balochistan (the Pashtun Belt), with its strategic location, economic potential and political influence, remains an important region for Pakistan's development. To fully harness its potential, the government should strengthen infrastructure and ensure political stability. The government should also invest in mining, agriculture, and local industries, while supporting education and skill development. By taking these steps, the Pashtun Belt can emerge as a successful hub of economic activity, social progress, and cultural pride, contributing significantly to Pakistan's overall growth and regional influence. In a nutshell, investing in the Pashtun belt means investing in peace, progress, and prosperity... not just for Balochistan, but for the future of Pakistan and the entire region of southwest Asia.

The writer is belongs from Loralai, Balochistan, and holds a degree in Pakistan Studies from Quaid-i-Azam University, Islamabad. His academic interests include geopolitics and international relations. He can be contacted at: shehrazshahzadai@gmail.com

Analysis



Shehraz Khan

Analysis



Shaukat Ali Malik

Government Operations Room and Ministry of Public Works and Housing Launch “#RightToShelterGaza” Campaign

Spokesman Report

RAMALLAH: The Government Operations Room for Emergency Interventions in the Gaza Strip, in partnership with the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, have launched the “#Right-ToShelterGaza” campaign. The effort comes amidst the worsening suffering of hundreds of thousands of displaced people, who are living in poorly equipped tents that provide no protection from cold and rain. The campaign calls on the international community to pressure the Israeli occupation to allow the immediate entry of prefabricated housing units as an urgent humanitarian solution.

The Government Operations Room and the Ministry of Public Works and Housing affirmed that the recent weather depressions have clearly exposed the failure of tents to provide adequate protection for displaced people, as thousands of tents were flooded or blown away by heavy rain-fall and strong winds. This has placed the lives of children and older people at direct risk amid the absence of safe heating methods. They further noted that more than 53,000 tents for displaced families were damaged during the recent weather depressions across various areas of the Gaza Strip, exacerbating the suffering of displaced

households and expanding urgent humanitarian needs.

The launch of the campaign comes amid deeply alarming humanitarian figures. Approximately two million people are currently displaced in the Gaza Strip, including nearly one million children, most of whom are living in harsh conditions inside inadequately equipped tents. Data indicate that, prior to the aggression, the number of persons with disabilities in Gaza stood at approximately 55,000. In addition, a report issued by the World Health Organization in September 2025 estimated that around 42,000 people sustained severe, life-altering injuries requiring long-term rehabilitation. This brings the total number of persons with disabilities and those affected by serious injuries to around 97,000 people. Many of whom are currently living in tents that lack basic safety standards and fail to accommodate their specific needs, further compounding their suffering and undermining their dignity.

Data from the Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics also indicate that there are approximately 60,000 pregnant women in the Gaza Strip. The majority face acute shelter shortages and are living in inadequate tents that provide neither protection from the cold nor the necessary privacy, significantly increasing the health and

humanitarian risks they face amid extremely harsh living conditions.

According to data from the Ministry of Public Works and Housing, Israeli aggression has destroyed Gaza's housing sector. Approximately 90% of civilian infrastructure has been destroyed, with more than 355,000 housing units damaged to varying degrees, including around 295,000 units that were either completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. This widespread destruction has significantly exacerbated displacement and deepened the shelter crisis.

The Government Operations Room is saying that humanitarian organizations and relevant authorities are unable to fully meet urgent shelter needs, due to shortages of shelter materials; and due to severe lack of fuel which hampers the operation of heavy machinery required to open roads, remove rubble, and drain rain-water. The Israeli occupation continues to prevent the entry of prefabricated housing units into Gaza, allowing only small quantities of tents, further increasing the vulnerability of displaced people and placing their lives at risk.

The Ministry of Public Works and Housing has indicated that prefabricated housing units are the most appropriate option for temporary shelter, given the prolonged recon-

struction timeline and ongoing harsh weather conditions. Gaza needs 200,000 prefabricated housing units as an urgent humanitarian measure. However, Israel does not allow the entry of the needed housing units, which compels the humanitarian actors to rely on tents as a temporary and unsafe alternative. Prefabricated housing units are a necessary interim solution during this exceptional phase, and are not a permanent substitute for housing, pending the start of reconstruction.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), tents are suitable only for immediate emergency response during the initial phase of displacement and are not appropriate for winter shelter, as they cannot withstand rain and wind and are difficult to heat.

According to the Government Operations Room, the “#RightToShelter-Gaza” campaign seeks to generate media and political pressure, underscore that safe shelter is an urgent human right that cannot be delayed; and that the obstruction of prefabricated housing units puts the lives of hundreds of thousands of people at risk, particularly children and the elderly.

The “#RightToShelterGaza” campaign calls on the United Nations, international institutions, and states party to the Geneva Conventions to



uphold their legal and humanitarian responsibilities, to urgently pressure the Israeli occupation, and to allow the immediate entry of prefabricated housing units into the Gaza Strip as an emergency humanitarian solution to

provide safe shelter, protect lives, and ensure a minimum standard of human dignity amid harsh weather conditions and the displacement crisis.



City Desk

ISB/LHR/KHI: The Virtual University of Pakistan Announces the Commencement of Spring 2026 Admissions Worldwide

and Across Pakistan, Including Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan, with effect from January 5, 2026, while the last date to apply is February 20, 2026.

At present, thousands of overseas Pakistanis are pursuing their studies at VU while serving the homeland from across the borders. Admissions are being offered

Virtual University Opens Spring 2026 Admissions Globally and Locally

in a wide range of undergraduate, associate degree, diploma, and certificate programs, including various BS programs, Associate Degree Programs (ADP), and professional diploma and certificate courses.

Rector Virtual University of Pakistan, Prof. Dr. Nasir Mehmood, stated that the University provides quality higher education at the most economical cost, not only in Pakistan but across South Asia, leveraging modern technology

to make education accessible to all segments of society. He highlighted that Virtual University's campuses are present in all major cities of Pakistan, from Skardu to Gwadar, covering nearly 140 cities, ensuring academic and administrative support to students nationwide.

Students can apply through a simple and fully online admission process, completing all admission formalities from home. Those seeking guidance or information may visit the nearest Virtual

University campus, where facilitation is available free of cost.

The Virtual University currently has the trust of over 160,000 active students. The University said that the Spring 2026 admissions provide a valuable opportunity for job holders, professionals, and individuals who cannot attend conventional on-campus classes due to time or location constraints.

Prospectus and admission application forms for all programs are available on the

University's official website (www.vu.edu.pk/apply). All admissions are being processed through the online admission system.

Students may call the admission helpline at 1288, email at info@vu.edu.pk

, or contact the University via all official social media channels for assistance and information. Further details regarding eligibility criteria, programs, and the admission process can also be obtained from the University website.

PKCERT and Kaspersky Join Forces to Strengthen Cybersecurity Across Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Computer Emergency Response Team of Pakistan (PKCERT), Government of Pakistan, and global cybersecurity company Kaspersky have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). The agreement marks a major step toward enhancing Pakistan's national cybersecurity posture through collaboration in threat detection, mitigation, and prevention.

The partnership between PKCERT and Kaspersky focuses

on strengthening the country's cyber resilience through a series of coordinated efforts. These include extensive training and awareness programs designed to enhance operational readiness across all levels of government, industry, academia, and civil society. The collaboration also focuses on capacity development to cultivate a skilled cybersecurity workforce aligned with both national and international standards. Additionally, the two organizations will ensure the timely dissemination of actionable cyber threat intelligence to relevant stakeholders

across Pakistan.

Under the MoU, PKCERT and Kaspersky will cooperate across a wide range of cybersecurity areas, including legislative and regulatory issues, incident detection and response, prevention and mitigation strategies, cybersecurity education, research and development, and professional exchanges. The two organizations will exchange relevant technical information, threat intelligence, and data feeds related to cyberthreats and cyberattacks affecting citizens, businesses, and government institutions in

Pakistan.

The MoU was signed by Dr. Haider Abbas, TI, Director General, National CERT, Government of Pakistan, and Rashed Al Momani, General Manager for the Middle East and Pakistan at Kaspersky, in the presence of Eugene Kaspersky, CEO of Kaspersky, and Ms. Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal IT Minister, Government of Pakistan.

“Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a vital role in socio-economic development of a country; however, they have also intro-

duced new challenges such as cyber espionage, hacktivism, ransomware, data breaches, identity theft, attacks on critical infrastructure, financial and supply chain disruptions, and disinformation campaigns. Our collaboration with Kaspersky, a global leader with expertise in these domains, represents another important step toward strengthening national cybersecurity,” said Dr. Haider Abbas, TI, Director General, National CERT, Government of Pakistan.

“Safeguarding digital development requires robust cybersecurity, founded on deep



and continuous partnerships between public authorities and private companies. Kaspersky has a long and fruitful history of working with global and regional organizations such as INTERPOL and AFRIPOL, as well as local computer emergency response teams around

the world. We highly value this cooperation with PKCERT as an important step in consolidating Pakistan's secure digital transformation for the entire nation,” commented Rashed Al Momani, General Manager for the Middle East and Pakistan at Kaspersky.

Police Performance in Multan: The Widening Gap Between Claims and Reality

The widening gulf between the claims of Multan police and the bitter realities faced by citizens is no longer a mere administrative lapse; it has become a moment of serious reflection for our collective conscience. Amid the dazzle of social media posts and the echo of press conferences, tales of alleged recoveries worth millions are narrated as if crime has been eradicated from the city. On the ground, however, reality bluntly contradicts this narrative.

The ordinary citizen continues to lose motorcycles, cash and valuables, standing at police station doors with little more than hope for justice. Fahim Hasan Bhatti, personal assistant to Malik Muhammad Akmal Wains Editor Roznama Badalta Zamana Multan and CEO of Mux News — was robbed of Rs100,000 in cash and a mobile phone outside his home. FIR No 2218/25 was registered at New Multan police station, yet recovery remains zero. Computer engineer Muhammad Ashan Rohani was deprived of his mobile phone and motorcycle within the jurisdiction of BZ police station, with the same outcome; no recovery. My class fellow, Dr Javed Akhtar, had his motorcycle stolen from outside Nishtar Hospital hostel; FIR No 391/21 was registered at Chehlik police station, but years later

the file remains frozen where hope goes to die.

Similarly, Muhammad Aftab, an employee of SM Food Factory, lost his Honda 125 motorcycle in Old Kotwali's area. Despite approaching SP Saif ullah Gujjar Gulgash and filing complaints on 1787 and the Pakistan Citizen Portal, and FIR No 884/24 being registered, the result remains unchanged. Zafar Iqbal's case (FIR No 833/25, Shah Shams police station) tells the same story — the recovery column still blank. IG Punjab, these are only a handful of cases all involving our close friends and employees. Beyond these lie countless untold stories scattered across every street of this city, unheard and unattended. The question is not why FIRs are registered. The real question is: to whom are recoveries actually handed over? Whose losses are compensated, and who is left holding nothing but receipts and hollow assurances? On this distinction, the police have never issued a clear or transparent explanation.

As long as performance is measured through press releases and publicity, and the redress of a citizen's loss is reduced to the mere entry “FIR registered”, recoveries worth millions will remain paper victories. True success will come the day the common man gets back his stolen motorcycle, looted cash and, most importantly, his lost

trust. Until then, questions will persist and silence itself will stand as a grave answer.

The contrast between truth and the image projected on social media has become the core reason for the erosion of public trust in the police. On one side, drums are beaten over the recovery of cars, tractors and motorcycles, with success stories piled high and performance portrayed as exemplary. On the other, the ground reality is that these recoveries benefit only a select few, while deprivation remains the lot of the ordinary citizen.

On a daily basis, a large number of cases are consigned to files under the pretext of “no clue”. On paper, the case is closed; in reality, the victim's wounds remain fresh. The question is not whether the police are taking action, but for whom these actions are taken. Is the rule of law equal for all, or has justice itself become dependent on influence and connections?

Another alarming aspect is the conduct witnessed in Multan police's khuli katcheries. Instead of acting as representatives of the public, some journalists appear as recommenders. The police oblige them, files begin to

move, and what is impossible for an ordinary citizen becomes achievable within moments. This practice not only undermines the very concept of justice but further weakens the police's public credibility.

This situation raises a fundamental question: have the institutions responsible for protecting citizens' lives and property failed, or are they functioning only for a chosen few? Until this question is answered honestly and practically, social media glamour will not be able to rebuild public trust. Trust is not born of advertisements or press releases; it emerges from equal access to justice — and that is the yardstick by which police performance is being judged today.

A silent yet extremely damaging practice within senior police offices, particularly SP offices, has hollowed out public trust from within. Complaints lodged through the Pakistan Citizen Portal or police helpline 1787 filed with the hope that at least higher authorities will listen — are often “dropped” with misleading, vague and factually contradictory comments. This is not the discretion of a station house officer; it is a process carried out at the SP office



level, where a single stroke of the pen shuts the door on a citizen's plea for justice.

This is not mere administrative apathy; it is a mockery of state trust. When complainants are told that “action has been completed” or that “the complainant is satisfied”, while in reality no recovery has taken place and no meaningful contact has been made, one must ask: who are these reports meant to satisfy — the public or the higher-ups?

This disparity — between glowing performance claims on social media and the silent burial of complaints in offices — is inflicting irreparable damage on the police's credibility, not just in Multan but across the province. When citizens see their complaints vanish into the system, they lose faith not only in the police but in state institutions as a whole.

Direct intervention by the IG Punjab Police has now become unavoidable. The entire mechanism needs to be reviewed afresh to end the practice of “disposing” complaints under the guise of resolution, and to ensure that the people of Multan get back their valuable property — motorcycles, vehicles, cash — and their trust.

Steps to restore trust include:

Independent audit system: Quarterly independent audits of decisions taken on complaints filed via the

Citizen Portal and 1787 to determine on what basis cases were dropped.

Mandatory written justification: SP offices must provide detailed, written and evidence-based reasons before dropping any complaint — visible to the complainant as well.

Complainant verification: No case should be marked “satisfied” without written or digital confirmation from the complainant; internal notes should not suffice.

Recovery tracking dashboard: A public dashboard in every district showing FIR numbers, nature of crime and recovery progress to expose the gap between claims and reality.

Officer accountability: Where it is proven that misleading comments were deliberately used to drop complaints, exemplary departmental action must follow.

Reforming khuli katcheries: These forums should serve public accountability, not recommendations, with decisions formally recorded and compliance reports issued.

If the true purpose of policing is the protection of citizens' lives and property, then the police must move beyond promotional narratives to deliver practical justice. Otherwise, every complaint quietly marked “dropped” will continue to widen the distance between the police and the public — a distance no press conference can ever bridge.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
182,408.23	179,034.93
Day's High	Day's Low
183,964.37	179,535.46
Index Value	Change
63,239,512,244	+3373.30
Percentage	Time
+1.88%	5 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,004.57	+53.43
Percentage	Time
+0.54%	5 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,111.47	+729.08
Percentage	Time
+1.51%	5 Jan, 12:27 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
51,832.80	+1,493.32
Percentage	Time
+2.97%	5 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186	190
Bahrain Dinar	744	754
Canadian Dollar	202.50	206.50
China Yuan	39.58	39.98
Danish Krone	43.72	44.12
Euro	328	331.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.03	3.12
Japanese Yen	1.7750	1.8750
Kuwaiti Dinar	908	918
Malaysian Ringgit	68.6	69.20
NewZealand \$	161.24	163.24
Norwegians Krone	27.66	27.96
Omani Riyal	728.6	738.6
Qatari Riyal	76.26	76.96
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.5
Singapore Dollar	216.5	221.5
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	351.82	354.57
Thai Bhat	8.88	9.03
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77.5
UK Pound Sterling	376.65	380.5
US Dollar	281	282.75

MG offers Start
Smart For
Consumers!



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: MG Motor Pakistan has announced the launch of its new consumer initiative, “Start Smart This Year,” aimed at making advanced hybrid vehicle technology more accessible to Pakistani customers at a time when affordability and fuel efficiency are top priorities for car buyers.

As part of the campaign, MG Pakistan is offering value benefits of up to PKR 600,000 on its MG HS Plug-in Hybrid Electric Vehicle (PHEV).

The initiative includes a combination of wave-off registration charges, a fuel card, and complimentary charging solutions, reflecting the company's broader effort to lower the entry barrier to new-energy vehicles in Pakistan.

Industry observers note that hybrid and plug-in hybrid vehicles are increasingly being viewed as a practical transition technology in Pakistan, offering fuel savings and reduced emissions without relying entirely on charging infrastructure.

MG Pakistan's latest campaign aligns with this shift by supporting consumers through both cost relief and technology enablement.

Under the “Start Smart” campaign, customers purchasing the MG HS PHEV will receive free vehicle registration worth 250,000, reducing upfront ownership costs, a fuel card worth Rs. 100,000, to support immediate driving needs, a 7kW home charger with installation, along with a portable charger, enhancing day-to-day usability.

Commenting on the initiative, MG Pakistan emphasized that the campaign reflects the brand's customer-centric approach and its long-term commitment to introducing globally relevant automotive technologies to the local market.

The offer is available for a limited period and applies to select bookings nationwide.

Zong and NADRA Partner
to Advance Pakistan’s Digital
Transformation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Zong, Pakistan's leading information services and technology innovation company, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the National Database & Registration Authority (NADRA) to support national digitalization efforts under the Government of Pakistan's ‘Digital Pakistan’ vision. The collaboration aligns with the Prime Minister's agenda for citizen-centric technological advancement and aims to enhance secure, inclusive digital services nationwide.

Under this partnership, Zong will introduce NADRA's Multi-Biometric Verification solution, including facial recognition as an alternative to fingerprint-based verification. To further enhance customer facilitation, Zong has already deployed the first dedicated SIM kiosk at NADRA's Rawalpindi Mega Center. This pilot serves as a scalable model for nationwide rollout, designed to establish a fraud-resistant, citizen-centric verification process while ensuring compliance with national security requirements



and international best practices. The initiative brings Pakistan in line with global digital

leaders such as China, Malaysia and the UAE, where facial verification is widely adopted to combat identity fraud.

Commenting on the collaboration, Tauseef ur Rahman Khan, Director Sales & Distribution, Zong, said “Our collaboration with NADRA reflects a shared commitment to advancing Pakistan's digital transformation through secure, citizen-centric technologies. By working closely with national institutions, we aim to enable inclusive access to digital services for all segments of society. These initiatives are designed to enhance service accessibility, strengthen data integrity and contribute to a safer, more resilient digital infrastructure that supports national security and socio-economic development.”

Looking ahead, Zong and NADRA will also explore cooperation on Single Sign-On (SSO) and the National Data Exchange Layer (NDEL) to develop an interoperable and trusted verification framework, supporting a secure, inclusive and resilient digital ecosystem for Pakistani citizens.

Flea market

ISLAMABAD: A view of the flea market on green belt along the Jinnah Avenue as people are buying woolen stuff to counter coldness in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Top Scholar Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman Launches Construction of Charitable Medical Complex



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: In a landmark step towards strengthening welfare-driven healthcare

in Pakistan, renowned religious scholar Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman on Sunday formally inaugurated the construction of the University Medical Complex

(UMC)—a state-of-the-art charitable hospital project off University Road in Gulistan-e-Jauhar—which aims to provide free medical treatment to over needy 200,000 patients after its completion.

The UMC is being developed by Imamia Medics International (IMI), a United Nations-accredited organisation comprising Pakistani-origin medical professionals, predominantly based in North America, with a longstanding record of humanitarian medical services in Pakistan and abroad.

Addressing the groundbreaking ceremony at the project site, Mufti Muneeb-ur-Rehman lauded the initiative, stating that the University Medical Complex would serve humanity without discrimination.

He emphasised that providing quality healthcare to deprived segments of society was fully aligned with the teachings of Islam and the message of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (SAW).

SECP revamps REIT Regulations, 2022, to Enhance Growth and Transparency

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (“SECP”) has notified amendments to the Real Estate Investment Trust Regulations, 2022 (“REIT Regulations”) to simplify procedures, improve governance and control mechanisms, and encourage greater transparency and objectivity in the operations of REIT Schemes.

The amended regulations establish clearer timelines for the transfer of real estate and shares of special purpose vehicles, promoting early listing of REIT Schemes to enhance their visibility and development as a capital market asset class. In addition to strengthening the roles and responsibilities of REIT Management Companies (RMCs) and trustees, the amendments address regulatory



latory arbitrage across different REIT structures and enable better synchronization with the Shariah governance framework. The SECP has also streamlined procedures for the registration of trust deeds and the approval for registration of REIT Schemes.

The amendments follow an exhaustive stakeholder consultation process, which included the issuance of a consultation paper, multiple in-person sessions and

virtual meetings with key stakeholders—such as RMCs, trustees, banks, mutual funds, law firms, and consultants—further consultations based on the notification of draft amendments, and a conclusive consultation session in Karachi.

The REIT Regulations provide the framework for the establishment, operation, and management of REIT Schemes by RMCs. A REIT Scheme is a fund in which an RMC pools money from investors for investment in real estate projects. By becoming unitholders of a REIT Scheme, investors gain a proportional share in the ownership of income-generating real estate projects, entitling them to rental income and/or capital gains.

The notification of amendments to the REIT Regulations can be accessed on the SECP website.

Customs Enforcement
Quetta seizes
smuggled goods worth
Rs. 183.23 Million

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Collectorate of Customs Enforcement Quetta, in a series of successful intelligence-based operations (IBOs), seized large consignments of smuggled goods worth Rs. 183.23 million. The operations were conducted in Quetta and Mangochar, District Kalat, with the assistance of the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and Frontier Corps (FC).

The seized items include foreign-origin betel nuts, cigarettes, tyres, cloth, and computer servers. The total tentative CIF value of the recovered smuggled goods has been estimated at Rs. 183.23 million.

These operations were carried out on the basis of credible and actionable intelligence, reflecting the unwavering commitment of Customs Enforcement Quetta to curb smuggling and safeguard the national economy. The timely support and effective coordination with law enforcement agencies in Balochistan played a pivotal role in the successful execution of these operations.

The FBR reiterates its resolve to continue strict enforcement actions against smuggling, illegal trade and corrupt practices to ensure compliance with the law and protection of national economic interests.

Rici Melion expands
its footprint with the
grand launch of new
store at Packages Mall,
Lahore



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan — Rici Melion, the international luxury menswear label known for refined craftsmanship and contemporary elegance, has officially opened its newest and largest flagship store at Packages Mall, Lahore. The expanded space marks a significant milestone for the brand, offering a more immersive and elevated shopping experience.

Designed to reflect Rici Melion's evolving luxury philosophy, the new store showcases the brand's commitment to international production standards, premium fabrics, and expert tailoring. The brand offers an exclusive range of western and eastern menswear, including both ready-

to-wear and bespoke collections tailored for the modern gentleman.

Over the years, Rici Melion has become a preferred choice among influential Pakistani personalities across media, entertainment, business, and sports. The brand has been worn and endorsed by figures such as Peshawar Zalmi, actor and TV host Imran Ashraf, and other prominent leaders, reinforcing its position as a symbol of confidence, refinement, and modern masculinity.

The Packages Mall outlet introduces enhanced bespoke services, a wider product selection, and a luxurious retail environment, underscoring Rici Melion's continued growth and long-term vision to redefine luxury menswear in Pakistan.

‘5 January: The Call for Self-Determination in Jammu and Kashmir’

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: To commemorate and highlight the importance of United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolution of 5th January 1949, the India Study Centre at the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad (ISSI) organised a round table event titled “5 January: The Call for Self-Determination in Jammu and Kashmir” in collaboration with Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC).

Speaking at the occasion, Chairman Board of Governance, ISSI, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood said that the 5 January 1949 resolution established the principle that the fate of Jammu and Kashmir would be decided by the people of Jammu and Kashmir through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations (UN). India used to claim that Jammu and Kashmir is a bilateral issue, and lately, it has started saying that it is an internal issue, as it is an integral part of India.

In his introductory remarks, the

Director of the India Study Centre, Dr Khurram Abbas, said that on this date in 1949, the UNCIP acknowledged the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people. However, after almost 78 years, the people of Jammu and Kashmir are still waiting to exercise their right of self-determination. He said that the relevance of this resolution increased manifold post August 5, 2019.

Mr Altaf Hussain Wani, Chairman of the Kashmir Institute of International Relations, Islamabad, said there are a number of UN resolutions on Kashmir, but the UNCIP resolution of 5 January 1949 gave a roadmap towards a solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. India knew from the outset that it would forcefully occupy this princely state with a Muslim majority. It thought that it would go to the UN, saying that the Maharaja had already signed an accession with India and would get Pakistan declared an aggressor.

Mr Farooq Rehmani, senior leader and former convener of the All Parties Hurriyet Conference, said that India never wanted to implement UN reso-

lutions and therefore, it complicated the procedure by raising one objection or another.

Ambassador Riffat Masood, Pakistan's Representative to the OIC-Independent Permanent Human Rights Commission (IPHRC), opined that the right of self-determination was an important component of the freedom movement of India and Pakistan from British Raj. It is ironic that after its independence, India was not willing to give the same right to the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Several global examples exist, such as Kosovo, South Sudan, and East Timor, where people have successfully exercised their right to self-determination.

Members of the think tank community, intellectuals, and a large number of students attended the event. While concluding the event, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood saluted the resilience of the Kashmiri people who refuse to give up on the just and principled demand of their right of self-determination. He reiterated Pakistan's unflinching political, moral and diplomatic support to the Kashmir cause.



BoK Islamabad Women League U-19 Concludes with a Thrilling Final Thunder Crowned Champions

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The BoK Islamabad Women League U-19 came to an exciting conclusion today as Thunder lifted the championship trophy after defeating Striker by 29 runs in a thrilling final at the COMSATS University Cricket Stadium, Islamabad.

A total of 56 young players participated in the tournament and were divided into four competitive teams, highlighting the growing depth of female cricketing talent in the country.

The final match showcased exceptional skill, passion and competitive spirit, reflecting the bright future of women's cricket in Pakistan. Batting first Thunder posted a total of 105 runs for the loss of 5 wickets. In response, Striker were all out for 76 runs.

The champions demonstrated outstanding teamwork and resilience throughout the tournament, setting a strong example for aspiring young female cricketers nationwide.

Rozina Akram was named Player of the Match for her stellar performance, scoring 30 runs in 30 balls while she took 3 wickets for 10 runs in 3.3 overs. Nosheen Khushal was adjudged Player of the Tournament for her consistent performances.

The BoK Islamabad Women League U-19 proved to be a resounding success and marked a significant milestone in the development and promotion of women's cricket in Pakistan. The tournament was



organized by Cric19.com and sponsored by Bank of Khyber, Qabeelah and Lake Shore City.

Speaking at the conclusion of the final, Mr. Ali Hemani, CEO, Islamabad Women League, reaffirmed his commitment to the growth of women's cricket in the country.

“By providing a competitive platform, professional exposure, and media coverage, Cric19.com aims to bridge the gap between grassroots talent and higher-level cricket opportunities.

This final was not just about winning a trophy; it was about giving young girls the confidence, visibility, and belief that

they belong on the cricket field. Pakistan has immense female cricketing talent, and our goal is to nurture it.”

Following the successful completion of the Under-19 tournament, plans are already underway to launch a senior women's league, further strengthening the pathway for female cricketers in Pakistan.

Why Socrates’ Way of Asking Questions Can Fix Today’s Toxic Politics

Qandeel Ashique

Modern politics has become a theatre of noise. Voices are louder, tempers are shorter, and certainty is treated as a badge of honour. Whether on television screens, political rallies, or social media, the aim today is not to understand but to dominate. Facts are replaced with emotions, dialogue with humiliation, and disagreement with hostility. In this increasingly toxic political climate, an ancient thinker who died 2,400 years ago offers a surprisingly modern remedy: Socrates. His simple but profound method—asking sincere, logical questions—may be exactly what our politics needs to breathe again.

Socrates lived in a time of political turmoil, public distrust, and moral confusion. Yet, unlike many philosophers, he did not respond through speeches or manifestos. He walked through the streets of Athens asking ordinary people questions about justice, truth, courage, and leadership. He believed that when people explain their beliefs, they discover how much they do not know. This humility, he argued, is the beginning of wisdom. Today, when every political side claims absolute certainty, Socrates’ humility feels revolutionary.

The Socratic method works through quiet disruption. It does not attack; it exposes. It does not humiliate; it clarifies. A simple question—“What do you mean by this?”—can reveal whether an opinion is built on evidence or simply on emotion. Imagine, for a moment, applying this method to modern political speeches. When a leader promises

“change,” a Socratic question would follow: “What change? How will it happen? Who benefits?” Many political arguments collapse when forced to explain themselves.

What makes today's politics toxic is not disagreement; it is the unwillingness to question ourselves. Political identities have turned into tribal identities. People defend their leaders even when they are wrong, attack opponents even when they are right, and choose loyalty over logic. Socrates warned that unexamined beliefs are dangerous—they turn people into instruments of manipulation. If we begin questioning our own assumptions, we weaken the hold of propaganda. Socratic dialogue transforms citizens from followers into thinkers.

One of the biggest drivers of political toxicity today is misinformation—news that is fast, emotional, and false. In this environment, Socratic questioning is a powerful shield. Before believing a claim, one asks: “Who said this?” “Is the source credible?” “Why should I trust this information?”

These questions interrupt the cycle of instant belief and instant outrage. A society that thinks before reacting is much harder to mislead. Political manipulation depends on citizens who accept everything without examination. Socrates teaches us to pause.

Another element missing from contemporary politics is genuine dialogue. Modern debates—whether on TV or social media—are not about exchanging ideas; they are about winning. People interrupt, mock, exaggerate, and twist arguments. The goal is not clarity but dominance. In contrast,

the Socratic method is slow, attentive, and cooperative. It assumes that people can disagree without dehumanizing each other. It seeks understanding, not victory. If this mindset entered our political culture, disagreement would become healthier, and polarization would weaken.

This is not an idealistic dream; history proves it. The Athenians executed Socrates because he challenged powerful people with difficult questions. But even his enemies admitted one thing—he forced society to think. Today's politics also needs someone who slows the speed of outrage and increases the depth of conversation. Socratic questioning can act as a filter: it keeps what is logical and washes away what is empty.

Leadership, too, would change under the Socratic approach. Today, leaders are expected to appear certain even when they are uninformed. Admitting doubt is seen as weakness. Socrates flips this idea. A leader who acknowledges uncertainty is not weak but wise. A leader who asks questions makes fewer reckless decisions. A leader who listens creates space for truth. If political leaders accepted that they “do not know everything,” governance would become more ethical, transparent, and human.

But the Socratic method is not only for politicians; it is for citizens. A democracy becomes toxic when its people stop thinking critically. If voters begin asking questions—real questions—the quality of political discourse will rise. Instead of defending political parties blindly, people will evaluate policies. Instead of reacting emotionally, they will reason. Instead of treating opponents as enemies, they will treat them as partners in a shared search for

truth.

At the heart of Socrates’ method lies moral courage. Asking honest questions is not easy; it exposes weakness and challenges ego. But political healing requires this courage. Citizens must be brave enough to ask: “Why do I believe what I believe?” “What if I am wrong?” “What if the truth lies somewhere in the middle?”

This shift—from defending opinions to examining them—can transform national politics into a space of learning rather than conflict.

Socrates does not promise a world without disagreement. Differences will always exist, and they should. But he offers a way to disagree without hatred. He teaches that dialogue is stronger than division, clarity is better than noise, and humility is wiser than certainty. Socratic questioning is not old-fashioned; it is urgently modern. In a world addicted to outrage, it is a method of recovery.

Perhaps, more than anything, Socrates asks us to adopt one fundamental habit: to think before we speak, listen before we judge, and question before we believe. If we begin doing this, political noise will soften, political hatred will decline, and political understanding will grow.

In a time when politics is tearing societies apart, Socrates reminds us of a simple truth: a healthier political world begins with a single honest question. And maybe that question is the one we are most afraid to ask—“What if the problem is not just the politicians, but also the way we think?”

The writer is student of Political Science in International Islamic University Islamabad

Government’s Decision to Reduce Solar Net Metering Rates is Disappointing, Aman Pracha



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Aman Pracha, Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), has strongly criticized the government's decision to reduce the solar net metering rate from 29 rupees to 11 rupees, stating that this move will severely impact new investments in the country. He further added that the business community will be disappointed, and billions of rupees invested could be wasted, as many consumers may shift to hybrid systems. In this case, they will also lose out on the electricity they currently consume.

Aman Pracha emphasized that while NEPRA (National Electric Power Regulatory Authority) has presented this as the “Solar Consumer Regulations 2025” and claimed that it had consulted with stakeholders, the reality is that the country's largest business community representative body, FPCCI, was not consulted. The decision to change the net metering policy for all solar consumers is detrimental to investment and could lead to significant losses.

He also pointed out that under the new system, the period for solar agreements has been reduced from 7 years to 5 years. Additionally, the proposed payment to consumers has been reduced to 10 rupees per unit instead of 22 rupees, which will be unacceptable for many. As a result, the benefits of the previous net metering system would disappear under the new policy.

AJK’s Syed Iftikhar Kazmi Honoured at Global Leadership Summit



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD/BANGKOK: The Global Leadership Summit (GLS) 2025, held in Bangkok, Thailand, brought together international leaders, educationists, and civil society representatives to deliberate on global peace, leadership, and social responsibility.

Syed Iftikhar Hussain Kazmi, Chairman of the Scholars Foundation, represented Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan at the summit. Participating as an educationist and peace advocate, he highlighted the importance of education and humanitarian engagement in promoting sustainable peace.

Kazmi was awarded the Global Leadership Medal and Certificate in recognition of his contributions in the fields of education, philanthropy, and community service. He also participated in volunteer training sessions focusing on youth engagement, volunteerism, and social responsibility.

Addressing the gathering, Kazmi underscored the role of the United Nations in maintaining global peace and drew attention to the Kashmir issue, describing it as a humanitarian concern and a continuing challenge to peace and stability in South Asia. His remarks were noted by international participants.

He was also conferred the Peace and Philanthropist Award in acknowledgment of his ongoing efforts toward peace-building and humanitarian initiatives.

Kazmi acknowledged the guidance of Syed Ahtesham Naqvi, Founder Chairman of World Islamic Scouting, and appreciated the support of international partners. He also commended the organizers, including the UN Peacekeeping Federal Council (UNPKFC), for hosting the summit and the associated volunteer training programme, held in connection with the 80th anniversary of the United Nations.



President reaffirms Pakistan’s support for Kashmiris’ right to self-determination

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President, Asif Ali Zardari, on Right to Self-Determination Day reaffirmed Pakistan’s unwavering moral, political and diplomatic support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, urging the international community to play an effective role in ensuring the implementation of United Nations resolutions on the dispute.

In his message issued on the occasion, the President said that on January 5, the people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir to commemorate the adoption of a 1949 UN resolution that recognised the disputed status of the territory and affirmed the Kashmiri people’s right to determine their future through a free and impartial plebiscite.

He noted that more than seven decades later, the commitment made by the United Nations remained unfulfilled, adding that the passage of time had neither weakened the validity of UN resolutions nor diminished the legitimacy of the Kashmiri people’s demand for self-determination. The continued denial of this right, he said, was in clear contradiction to the UN Charter and international law.

President Zardari expressed serious concern over the prevailing situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, pointing to restrictions on political activity and freedom of expression, prolonged detentions and the use of coercive laws, which he said had created an atmosphere of fear and impunity. He added that civilians continued to suffer, with families displaced and livelihoods disrupted.

The President also highlighted emerging challenges related to control over rivers originating in Jammu and Kashmir, warning that India’s unilateral suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty was a grave development with serious implications for the lives of Kashmiris and regional stability. He termed the move an attempt to weaponise water, threatening livelihoods, food security and peace for millions dependent on shared resources.



Ayaz Sadiq says Indian delegation tried to stop him from attending Khaleda Zia’s funeral

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has claimed that the Indian delegation attempted to prevent him from attending the funeral prayers of former Bangladeshi prime minister Khaleda Zia during his visit to Dhaka recently.

However, the Speaker maintained that he offered prayers alongside the Bangladeshi public despite pressure and security objections.

In a statement, Sadiq said he travelled to Dhaka to attend Khaleda Zia’s funeral, where delegations from Pakistan, the Maldives, Nepal and Bhutan were transported to the funeral venue in a single bus.

He said the front seats of the bus were occupied by India’s External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar and the Indian high commissioner, who had the bus windows covered with curtains.

Ayaz Sadiq said he was seated at the back of the bus with the Pakistan high commissioner.

According to the speaker, he pulled aside the curtains during the journey and waved in response to slogans raised by members of the Bangladeshi public along the route.

Sadiq said that upon arrival at the funeral venue, the Indian high commissioner stood at the bus door and, as he prepared to disembark, Indian officials advised him not to get off, citing security concerns.

“I made it clear that I had come to attend the funeral and that the door should be opened,” Sadiq said, adding that he insisted forcefully before the door was eventually opened.



DPM Dar for ensuring just, peaceful resolution of Jammu & Kashmir dispute

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Monday called upon the international community, particularly the United Nations, to honour its long-standing commitment with the Kashmiri people and play its mandated role in ensuring a just and peaceful resolution of the Jammu & Kashmir dispute.

In his message on the occasion of Right to Self-Determination Day, the deputy PM said that this day commemorated the landmark adoption of the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) resolution on January 5, 1949, a pivotal document that formally guaranteed a free and impartial plebiscite for the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

“On this ‘Right to Self-Determination Day’, the Government and people of Pakistan stand in unwavering solidarity with the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK). We express our solemn commitment to their just struggle to achieve the inalienable right to self-determination.”

Ishaq Dar said this commitment was enshrined through multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions on the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, and is reaffirmed annually by the United Nations General Assembly in its resolutions upholding the right to self-determination.

The international law, he said recognized the right to self-determination as a cornerstone principle enshrined in the UN Charter. However, the people of IIOJK have been denied this right by India for over seven decades. “The illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir by India stands as a stark tragedy of our times as the people of IIOJK continue to endure systematic repression, widespread human rights violations and denial of their fundamental rights and dignity.”

He expressed the resolve that unity is essential for addressing the Kashmir issue.

Dr Tariq Fazal said the agreement finalized with the Joint Action Committee in October 2025 had already been shared in detail with the media. He said that points related to approximately 15 departments of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir government were presented comprehensively.

He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif had constituted a high-level special committee to address the issues of Azad Kashmir. The committee included Engineer Amir Muqam, Ahsan Iqbal, Rana Sanaullah, Sardar Yousaf, and Raja Pervaiz Ashraf, Qamar Zaman Kaira, and others.

As a result of three days of negotiations, he said, an agreement on 36 points was reached.



PM visits Bangladesh High Commission to condole Khaleda Zia’s death



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday visited the Bangladesh High Commission here to express his condolences on the passing away of Begum Khaleda Zia, former Prime Minister of Bangladesh and Chairperson of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party.

The prime minister conveyed his condolences to the Charge d’Affaires of Bangladesh, recorded a message in the condolence book, and also offered Fateha for the departed soul.

In his condolence message, he paid rich tribute to Begum Khaleda Zia, describing her as a visionary leader and an eminent political figure who devoted her life to public service.

Remembering the late Begum Khaleda Zia as a sincere friend of Pakistan, the prime minister noted that she had left behind an enduring and inspirational legacy.

On behalf of the government and people of Pakistan, Prime Minister Shehbaz extended heartfelt condolences to Begum Zia’s family, her admirers, and the people of Bangladesh, and prayed that Almighty Allah blessed her soul with the highest place in Jannah.

The prime minister was accompanied by Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar and Special Assistance to the PM Tariq Fatemi.

Rathore leads ceremony celebrating visionary legacy of Zulfikar Ali Bhutto



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore cut the birthday cake of former Prime Minister of Pakistan Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto on his 98th birth anniversary at a grand ceremony held at Kashmir house today.

On the occasion, glowing tributes were paid to the founder of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP), while highlighting his visionary leadership, indomitable role and unmatched contributions to the development, progress, and prosperity of Pakistan.

They also paid homage to Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto for his lifelong struggle and dedicated services to the people of Pakistan, particularly his steadfast commitment to the Kashmiri people and their just cause of the right to self-determination.

Besides a large number of PPP activists, the function was attended by Senior Minister Mian Abdul Waheed, Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Auqaf Chaudhry Rafique Nayyar, DG Political Affairs Aamir Zeeshan Jaral, Special Assistant Syed Azadar Hussain Kazmi, Chairman Ulema and Mashaikh Sahibzada Zulfikar, and others.

Govt determined to address AJK problems: Dr Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Monday said the government is not only serious but also fully determined to resolve the problems of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

Addressing a press conference, the minister said that AJK and its people are very close to the hearts of the people of Pakistan.

He said all issues can only be resolved through dialogue, adding that the federal government is spending Rs 35 billion to meet the demands of the people of AJK.

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