



# Daily The Spokesman



## DPM Dar arrives in Jeddah to attend OIC Council of Foreign Ministers meeting

He will attend the extraordinary session of OIC Council of Foreign Ministers and will also inaugurate the new chancery building of the Pakistan Consulate in Jeddah.



## Ex-Senator Mushtaq launches new political party

Former senator Mushtaq Ahmed Khan has formally announced the launch of a new political party Pakistan Rights Movement with an aim to bring constitutional reforms and restore public trust in governance. The formal founding ceremony of the Pakistan Rights Movement was held at a private hotel in Islamabad and was attended by the party's central leadership, workers, associates and members of civil society.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Rajab-ul-Murajjah 21, Sunday, January 11, 2026



www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily\_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 266 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## Allahu Akbar

Pakistan Navy Ship conducts Live Weapon Firing of LY-80 (N) Surface to Air Missile



Photo: Online

## Timely completion of federal funded projects, resolution of public issues, among top priorities: PM

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, said that timely completion of ongoing federal government funded development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province and the resolution of public issues were among the top priorities of the incumbent federal

government.

He said that the federal government was fully cognizant of the problems faced by the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and it was taking tangible steps, within its jurisdiction, to ensure sustainable resolutions to these issues.

The prime minister expressed these views during a meeting with political representatives belonging

to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, PM Office Media Wing said in a press release.

During the meeting, a detailed discussion was held on the overall political situation in the province and the issues faced by the public.

Matters related to public welfare, development projects and governance were also discussed.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Minister for Information Attaullah Tarar, Minister for Law Azam Nazeer Tarar, Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry, Minister Amir Muqam, Adviser to the Prime Minister Rana Sanaullah, Captain (Retd.) Safdar, MNAs

Babar Nawaz and Samar Bilour, Ikhtiar Wali (Coordinator to the Prime Minister), former deputy speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi, former senator Zahid Khan, MPA Dr Ibadullah, Pir Sabir Shah, former MNA Sardar Mushtaq, former MNA Shah Jee Gul Afzil, Shahabuddin Khan, Rehmat Salam Khattak and Behramand Tangi.

## PM praises security forces for successful operations against terrorists in KP

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister (PM) Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday lauded the officers and soldiers of the security forces for carrying out successful opera-

tions against Fitna-al-Khawarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in North Waziristan and Kurram.

In a statement, the PM appreciated the professional capabilities and bravery of the security forces for neutralizing 11 terrorists during

the operations.

He reaffirmed the government's resolve to continue the fight against terrorism until its complete eradication from the country.

Shehbaz Sharif said that the personnel of the Pakistan Armed

Forces and the police were fighting day and night against anti-state elements and making immense sacrifices to safeguard the nation.

"With our brave and dutiful officers and soldiers, the enemy does not have the courage to cast

an evil eye on Pakistan," he said.

PM Shehbaz further stated that the entire nation, including himself, stands shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in their unwavering commitment to defend the motherland.

## Atta Tarar along with his uncle & Mohsin Naqvi visit Jamia Ashrafia for condolences

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar along with his uncle Amir Rafiq Tarar and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited Jamia Ashrafia on Saturday to offer condolences on the sad demise of Sheikh-ul-Hadith Maulana Fazal ur Raheem Ashrafi.

They met with senior members and scholars of Jamia Ashrafia to condole



demise of the Mohtamim of the prestigious madrasa in Lahore Maulana Fazal ur

Raheem Ashrafi.

The federal ministers expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to Maulana Fazal ur Raheem's son, Maulana Zubair Hassan, Jamia Ashrafia Principal Maulana Qari Arshad Ubaid and Vice Principal Hafiz Asad Ubaid. "Fateha" (prayers) was also offered for the departed soul.

Maulana Owais Hassan, Maulana Mujeeb ur Rahman Inqilabi, and Maulana Ajwad Ubaid were also present on the occa-

sion. On this occasion, Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said that late Maulana Hafiz Fazal ur Raheem Ashrafi was a very kind person. He said that late Maulana Hafiz Fazal ur Raheem had done a lot of work for the Jamia Ashrafia and the institute would continue to follow his footsteps.

He said the Maulana Hafiz Fazal ur Raheem Ashrafi made the Jamia a full-fledged institute where a variety of subjects were taught.

## PML-N working for better governance, institutional reforms in KP: Amir Muqam

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam on Saturday emphasized that the Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-

N) was standing with the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and working for better governance and institutional reforms in the province.

In a statement, the President of PML-N Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

ongoing protest of teachers of the University of Peshawar for their salaries and strongly criticized the KP government and the Chief Minister.

Amir Muqam said that teachers of the largest university in the province were protesting on the

streets for their legitimate rights, while on the other hand, the Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was busy visiting Karachi for political activities. He highlighted that educational institutions of the province were facing financial crisis and teachers were not

getting their salaries.

The minister said that the 13-year government of PTI in KP had given the province nothing but a pile of problems. "Basic sectors like education, health, employment and law and order are in the worst condition."

فرمان رسوی  
فیصلہ علیہ  
تمہے اب اور جو بے کاری کرے گے  
میر کاروباری خرچوں میں سے ان  
کے والدیوں کی شرکی خلیلہ منے  
کے نبی کے مکان اشیاء سامنے فریبا کر ایک  
میمنوں کو سر من کے لیے اس طرح  
بچے ہوئے گئے جسے حکومت  
حکومت سے رہتا ہے (جسے نیز جو) پر  
آپ نے اپنی انگلی کو چینی طرح کر لیا  
جگہ جو کہ میرے 6026  
Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

A Leading National Daily

ABC Certified

تمہے اب اور جو بے کاری کرے گے  
میر کاروباری خرچوں میں سے ان  
کے والدیوں کی شرکی خلیلہ منے  
کے نبی کے مکان اشیاء سامنے فریبا کر ایک  
میمنوں کو سر من کے لیے اس طرح  
بچے ہوئے گئے جسے حکومت  
حکومت سے رہتا ہے (جسے نیز جو) پر  
آپ نے اپنی انگلی کو چینی طرح کر لیا  
جگہ جو کہ میرے 6026  
Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

showcasing its effectiveness in modern naval warfare. Successful open-sea trials of Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) were also conducted, marking a significant leap in autonomous naval technology. The trials validated the platform's ability to combine high-speed performance with mission-critical durability. Key capabilities demonstrated include extreme maneuverability, precision navigation and weather resilience. USV offers a low-risk, high-impact solution with the stealth of a tactical interceptor.

Commander Pakistan Fleet witnessed the exercise, which showcased Pakistan Navy's ability to employ advanced systems.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff, commanded officers and men of Pakistan Navy for their professionalism and operational competence.

The exercise also featured the successful engagement of surface targets using Loitering Munition (LM), demonstrating Pakistan Navy's precision strike capabilities. Loitering Munition (LM) successfully engaged and neutralized an aerial target, demonstrating Pakistan Navy's robust air defence capabilities.

The exercise included the successful live firing of LY-80(N) Surface to Air Missile (SAM) from Vertical Launching System at extended range, validating the long-range capabilities of Pakistan Navy's modern air defence systems.

LY-80(N) SAM successfully engaged and neutralized an aerial target, demonstrating Pakistan Navy's robust air defence capabilities.

Commander Pakistan Fleet witnessed the exercise, which showcased Pakistan Navy's ability to employ advanced systems.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf, NI, NI (M), T Bt, Chief of the Naval Staff, commanded officers and men of Pakistan Navy for their professionalism and operational competence.

He reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's resolve to ensure seaward defence of Pakistan and safeguard national maritime interests under all circumstances.

## Eleven Indian Proxy Terrorists Killed in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Security Operations

### City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 8 January 2026, eleven khawarij belonging to Indian Proxy Fitna Al Khawarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.

On reported presence of khawarij, an intelligence based operation was conducted by the Security Forces in North Waziristan District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khawarij location and after an intense fire exchange, six khawarij were sent to hell.

Another joint intelligence based operation by Police and security forces was conducted in Kurram District. In ensuing fire exchange, five khawarij were effectively neutralised.

Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored khawarij found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehtak" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

actively involved in numerous terrorist activities against the Security Forces, Law Enforcement agencies and target killing of innocent civilians.

Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored khawarij found in the area as relentless Counter Terrorism campaign under vision "Azm e Istehtak" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by Security Forces and Law Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country.

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

# Rathore lays wreath, praises Quaid as beacon for Pakistan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, visited the mausoleum of the founder of Pakistan, Hazrat Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, here today, where he was presented a guard of honour by a smartly turned-out contingent of the armed forces.

He laid a floral wreath and offered Fataha for the soul of Quaid-e-Azam.

On this occasion, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, while recording his remarks in the guest book, paid rich tribute to Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

He said that Quaid-e-Azam was a great leader of the Muslims of the subcontinent, a wise politician, and a practical embodiment of principles.

"Pakistan came into existence due to his relentless struggle, perseverance, and vision," he remarked.

"Quaid-e-Azam's vision of Pakistan still serves as a beacon of hope and guidance for us," the prime minister said, adding that his teachings of



unity, faith, and discipline provide a firm basis for sustainable growth, development, and stability.

He expressed his resolve that the government of Azad Jammu and

Kashmir would continue its struggle for public welfare, good governance, and the promotion of merit in the light of Quaid-e-Azam's vision.

Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz

Rathore also prayed for the security, progress, and stability of the country. The prime minister was accompanied by Senior Minister Mian Abdul Waheed.

## Annual exams

KARACHI: Religious students take their annual exams sitting on the floor of the Jamia Binoria as Binoria is one of the model seminaries and its modified curriculum and added contemporary subjects like computer, mathematics and science makes it system exemplary comparing others.



Photo: Online

## Kamalia Tاجر ittehad a Positive Sign for Business Community

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Patron-in-Chief of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad, Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and President Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rehmani have said that the coming together of all traders of Kamalia on a single

platform is a highly encouraging and welcome development. They stated that the traders have clearly proven that unity and collective strength are the real sources of success and that the business community of Kamalia stands united. Speaking on the occasion, Chaudhry Kamran

Ahmad Nusrat said that unity among traders is the need of the hour, especially in challenging economic conditions. He emphasized that when traders raise their voice collectively, their concerns are heard more effectively and their rights can be protected in a better manner. He appreciated

the role of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad in bringing traders from different markets and sectors together under one umbrella. President Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rehmani said that the core manifesto of Kamalia Tاجر ittehad is to gather all traders on a single platform without discrimination.

"Our mission has always been to unite the business community and work collectively for the protection of traders' rights," he said. He added that the organization stands shoulder to shoulder with traders in every difficult time and will continue to play its role as a strong representative body.

Both leaders assured the traders that they are not alone and that Kamalia Tاجر ittehad will remain a strong voice for their issues,

including business-friendly policies, protection from harassment and the promotion of a stable and supportive trading environment.

## The Saffron Shadow Over Education: How Hindutva Uses State Institutions to Discriminate

**T**he recent de-recognition of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi Institute of Medical Excellence in Reasi is not merely about failing infrastructure or inadequate faculty. It is a chilling testament to how the machinery of the Indian state, under the spell of Hindutva ideology, actively participates in the systematic disempowerment of Indian occupied Kashmir Muslims. When 42 out of 50 MBBS seats in a college administered by a Hindu shrine board went to Muslim students from the Indian occupied Kashmir Valley, the institution's academic "deficiencies" mysteriously became intolerable. The timing reveals the truth: this is punishment disguised as regulation, vengeance masquerading as vigilance.

The National Medical Commission's sudden discovery of "lapses" follows a familiar pattern. Right-wing groups protested the demographic composition of the student body, claiming betrayal of the shrine board's "Hindu character." Within months, an "uninformed inspection" materializes, and the college stands decertified. The message is unambiguous: Muslim excellence will not be tolerated, especially not when it challenges the demographic hierarchies Hindutva seeks to entrench. That the BJP swiftly circulated the NMC order suggests coordination, not coincidence. State power and majoritarian vigilance have merged into a single, seamless weapon.

This is not about educational standards. If it were, the NMC would have acted when the deficiencies first appeared, not after right-wing outrage. It would have worked with the institution to remedy shortcomings, not immediately condemned it to closure.

The commission's own language—warning of "serious impact on quality of Medical education"—rings hollow when the solution is to scatter students rather than salvage the college. The real deficiency was never infrastructural; it was ideological. The college failed the test of Hindutva, not medicine.

The Shrine Board's administration of a medical college was always a political project, not an educational one. By placing a religious body in charge of secular education, the state seeded the ground for exactly this conflict. The board's implicit mandate was never to serve all of Indian occupied Kashmir's students equally, but to create a Hindu

institutional stronghold in a region whose Muslim majority identity has been under assault since Article 370's abrogation. When students from Indian occupied Kashmir is dared to excel and claim their rightful seats through merit, they disrupted this sectarian calculus. The state's response was surgical: eliminate the institution, punish the students, and ensure no such "imbalance" recurs.

Chief Minister Omar Abdullah's prescient warning about student safety highlights the deeper crisis. He understood that right-wing protests were not mere demonstrations but threats of violence that the state would implicitly sanction. In today's India, Muslim students on campuses face not just discrimination but physical danger—from mobs emboldened by official silence, from institutional bias dressed as neutrality, from a system that pathologizes their success as conspiracy. The NMC's order validates this vigilanism, proving that the state will dismantle



Shazia Ashraf Khawaja

Analysis

Shazia Ashraf Khawaja



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

## \$80m seafood processing zone planned at Korangi harbour

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Juaid Anwar Chaudhry announced plans to establish a 100-acre, \$80 million Seafood Processing and Export Zone at Korangi Fisheries Harbour Authority (KoHFA), aimed at boosting blue economy and global seafood trade.

The minister in a statement on Saturday said the proposed project aims to develop, finance and operate a modern seafood processing and value addition complex under KoHFA, positioning the harbour as a regional hub for sustainable, technology-driven seafood processing linked to high-value international markets.

Junaid Chaudhry said the initiative would bridge medium-scale seafood processors and value-added plants with global buyers by providing modern infrastructure, certification standards and efficient export logistics. He added that the project reflects the government's intent to move away from raw seafood exports towards higher-value processed products.

The minister noted the project would cover 100 acres of dedicated seafood processing and export infrastructure at Korangi Fisheries Harbour in Karachi. He said the estimated project cost ranges between 60 million and 80 million dollars, based on regional benchmarks from countries such as Vietnam, China and Ecuador, which have developed similar seafood parks.

He said the planned facilities would include multi-tenant seafood processing units, large-scale cold storage, packaging facilities, logistics and export terminals, and a wastewater treatment plant to ensure environmentally compliant operations. The zone would be used exclusively for commercial seafood processing, packaging, cold storage and export-oriented activities.

Minister Chaudhry said the project is proposed under a public-private partnership or build-operate-transfer concession model, under which private investors would develop, operate and maintain the processing zone, while KoHFA would retain regulatory oversight and provide facilitation.

Elaborating on the development components, the minister said the zone would host between 20 and 25 mediums to large-scale seafood processing units designed for fish, shrimp and cephalopod processing, value addition and export-grade packaging. He said these units would support a wide range of products, from primary processing to ready-for-market seafood items.

He said the project would include a cold storage and blast freezing complex with multi-temperature storage ranging from minus 18 to minus 40 degrees Celsius, allowing safe handling of fresh, processed and unprocessed seafood. Ice plants and flake ice stations with a daily capacity of 50 to 100 tons would support fish landing, processing and transportation needs.

The minister said dedicated value addition and ready-to-eat units would be established for filleting, marinated products, breaded seafood and export-oriented convenience foods, enabling Pakistani exporters to tap premium retail and food service markets abroad.

## Israel-U.S. Fixation on Regime Change in Iran

**D**uring the height of the Israel-Iran confrontation, Benjamin Netanyahu once again returned to his most familiar refrain: that peace in the Middle East—and by extension global stability—requires “regime change” in Iran. It was not a new idea, nor even a new sentence. It was the same narrative he had relentlessly promoted against Saddam Hussein, Muammar Gaddafi, Bashar al-Assad, and Palestinian leaders such as Ismail Haniyeh.

In every case, the promise was identical: remove the leader, and peace will follow. In every case, the result was the opposite—state collapse, prolonged civil war, regional destabilization, mass displacement, and the rise of extremism. Iraq did not become peaceful after Saddam Hussein; it descended into sectarian violence that killed hundreds of thousands. Libya did not stabilize after Gaddafi; it fractured into rival militias and became a transit hub for arms and human trafficking. Syria’s attempted regime change ignited one of the worst humanitarian disasters of the 21st century. Gaza, after repeated leadership assassinations, remains trapped in endless cycles of war.

Yet Netanyahu now repeats the same formula for Iran—this time targeting not merely political leadership but the entire ideological structure of the Islamic Republic, including its supreme leadership and the Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps.

At one critical moment, even Netanyahu himself acknowledged that Israel’s military apparatus had Iran’s leadership “locked in.” According to public statements later echoed in Western media, Israeli intelligence and strike capabilities were ready, awaiting only political clearance. That final authorization, however,

never came. Donald Trump, despite his otherwise confrontational posture toward Iran, reportedly withheld the green light. Whether due to fear of uncontrollable escalation, economic consequences, or intelligence assessments predicting catastrophic regional blowback, the decision spared Iran’s leadership—and possibly the region—from immediate catastrophe.

Today, however, the situation appears far more dangerous. Protests inside Iran—some organic, some amplified—are now being framed internationally as the prelude to regime collapse. Western intelligence narratives increasingly mirror those seen before Iraq in 2003 or Libya in 2011. The Central Intelligence Agency has historically played such roles before, and Iran itself is no stranger to this pattern.

The first modern regime change in Iran occurred in 1953, when the CIA and Britain’s MI6 overthrew Prime Minister Mohammad Mossadegh after he nationalized Iran’s oil industry, expelling Anglo-American corporate control. The result was the installation of the Shah, whose authoritarian rule—backed by Western security services—lasted until 1979. When the Shah later attempted to reclaim economic sovereignty and assert independence, he too became expendable. The Islamic Revolution that followed did not emerge in a vacuum; it was the direct outcome of decades of foreign manipulation.

Since 1979, hostility between Iran and Israel has remained constant, driven by ideology, regional rivalry, and competing security doctrines. But the current moment feels different. It is not merely

about Iran. It is about a global order unraveling.

The second term of President Trump has accelerated this breakdown dramatically. In just over a year, Washington has openly undermined the United Nations, weakened NATO, and normalized threats of territorial acquisition—from Greenland

to Venezuela. The seizure of assets, the weaponization of sanctions, and the use of military force outside UN authorization have become routine rather than exceptional.

Recent U. S. naval seizures in the Caribbean—targeting vessels carrying oil allegedly destined for China, some flying Russian or Chinese flags—represent a dangerous escalation. This is not law enforcement; it is strategic provocation. By intercepting energy supplies linked to China and Russia, Washington is signaling willingness to internationalize conflict zones and draw both powers into kinetic confrontation.

This shift reflects a deeper reality: the United States has failed to contain China economically and has been unable to decisively defeat Russia militarily through proxy war in Ukraine. As economic and diplomatic leverage erodes, kinetic power becomes the last remaining tool. The danger is that military reach replaces strategic wisdom.

Europe, meanwhile, stands weaker than at any time since World War II. Decades of dependency on U. S. security guarantees have hollowed out independent defense capacity. If Washington chooses to act unilaterally—whether in the Arctic, Greenland, or beyond—Europe has little capacity to resist or even influence the consequences.

Let us hope sanity prevails—before repetition becomes annihilation.

*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 Rasmie. (Courtesy of Asharq Al-Awsat)

## The New Provinces Debate in Pakistan: Is It Necessary or a Distraction?

**T**he suggestion to form new provincial organizations in Pakistan is a long-term and controversial debate. Proponents argue that this reorganisation would optimize governance and be able to get more proximate representation as well as concentrate development where it historically has been under-invested.

They contend that the breaking down of large provinces into small administrative bodies may have a better resource-management effectiveness and allow to better address the diverse needs of different districts. On the contrary, critics warn that the establishment of new provinces can create further division, heighten ethnic conflict and subject the state to extra administrative overheads. In such a complex discussion, it is essential to conduct a strict analysis of future benefits in comparison with the risks of disunity and inefficiency.

Such pressure as the demand of a Hazara province in KPK has attracted opposition among Pashtun leaders who believe that the move will divide the Pashtun polity. On the same note, a suggested Seraiki province in the southern part of Punjab has elicited backlash on the part of other ethnic groups in the region. These developments highlight the possibility of new ethnic-based provinces to enhance regional tensions and make the preservation of the national unity more complex.

Economic consequences of the new provinces should be examined with a lot of care. Small provinces may be in a more advantageous position to address the localized economic issues and to jumpstart development in less developed areas.

As an illustration, the southern Punjab and northern Sindh which have had a long history of being underdeveloped in respect of develop-



**Muhammad Sohail Hassan**

mental investments can benefit out of a governance concept that focuses on sector-specific policies that would deal with the lack of infrastructure, lack of health, or education.

In addition, the development of smaller administrative units would make the foreign investors more desirable in the hitherto underutilized regions, and hence trigger economic development.

On the other hand, the opening of new provinces comes at a high administrative cost. Forming new provincial governments, bloating bureaucracies, and building necessary physical infrastructure will require large financial expenditures.

The financial feasibility of such a venture is uncertain in the country already facing acute debt obligations and a financial constraint. The administrative expenses of dividing current provinces may further overburden the already limited national resources, and the possible overlapping of services (a different healthcare, education and infrastructure system) may result in inefficiency and financial wastefulness.

Partisan politics influence the reorganisation discussion. Political groups often support new provinces to be formed in case such practices favour their electoral interests. Another example of Southern Punjab political leaders is a long-standing support of provincial separation to gain momentum in that area. Similarly, KPK leaders have shown support to have a Hazara province as a way of strengthening their position in the province.

This politicisation makes the discussion more difficult since the motivation behind new provincialism can be against governing principles rather than partisan interests. Therefore, coming to an agreement on provincial reform is a major chal-

lenge when there is a dispute in the agenda of the various political parties.

Constitutional amendments also create an extra layer of legal complexity as the procedural components of the establishment of new provinces also require them. It is not just an administrative decision but must be approved by the federal executive and in many cases changes to the constitutional structure.

It should therefore be approached with caution any manifestation on provincial reorganisation considering the long legislative and judicial deliberations that such reforms may require. To these complexities, any move towards the creation of new provinces should consider extensive consultation of the stakeholders, including elected officials, ethnic groups, and the general citizens.

The discussions of the creation of new provinces in Pakistan are multi-dimensional and require a rigorous evaluation of possible advantages and the associated threats. Although the idea of introducing new provinces is likely to strengthen their governing, reduce ethnic and regional conflicts and enliven underdeveloped regions, it also comes with significant financial and political problems.

The drawing of ethnic or linguistic lines between provinces could lead to successful entrenching of divisions which will compromise national unity. Finally, any provincial restructuring decision must be founded on a comprehensive evaluation of the ultimate effects of such a decision on long term political stability, economic well being, and social integrity. The key to any administrative realignment is a wise, moderate, and evidence-based approach so that every realignment in the administrative system is in the best interest of the people.

*The writer is a final-year student of BS Political Science at the University of Sargodha. He is a regular opinion writer for an English newspaper in Islamabad.*

## The Return of Genghis Khan, The Only Difference is He is Dressed in Suit This Time Around

**T**he Mongol conquests of the 13th century under Genghis Khan and his successors were defined by a brutal clarity of purpose: rapid, overwhelming campaigns of military force; psychological domination; and a transactional relationship with conquered peoples in which submission was preferred over annihilation, but fear was the principal means of securing obedience. Mounted on horses with unmatched mobility, Mongol armies struck with lightning speed across Eurasia, not to settle and govern every conquered province personally, but to enforce compliance, extract tribute and secure strategic advantage. Their authority did not rest on law or shared norms—there was no broader civilizational order they were obliged to respect—but on might and the perception that resistance was futile.

Viewed through this lens, the ongoing threats against other nations—whether Colombia, Mexico, or European allies like Denmark over Greenland—function less as diplomatic negotiation and more as a replay of steppe logic in modern guise. The Mongol strategy was always to assure that any defiance would trigger overwhelming reprisal, making overarching fear a mechanism of order. Today’s rhetoric of “all options are on the table” and the dismissal of international legal restraints serve a similar psychological function: to convince adversaries and allies alike that resisting U. S. demands carries unacceptable costs.

What distinguishes this contemporary variant from its historical antecedent is not the underlying logic so much as its instruments and consequences. The Mongols razed cities and slaughtered populations; modern states operate under international scrutiny, mass media, and interconnected economies. But the conceptual throughline—power wielded unilaterally, enforced through force and fear rather than shared norms and mutual obligations—is unmistakable. And Trump’s own admission that his morality, rather than international law, guides his decisions places him in a historical company where the boundary between law and will is dissolved, and global power is asserted on the basis of capability and imagination rather than codified restraint.

In this sense, what we are witnessing may be less a series of isolated interventions and more a systemic shift toward what might be termed “neo-steppie hegemony”—a pattern where dominant states treat international boundaries and norms not as limits but as instruments to be shaped in service of strategic advantage, calibrated through fear, economic leverage, and the explicit threat of violence rather than mutual legal frameworks. Whether this approach will yield lasting influence or provoke global backlash remains an open question; what is clear is that drawing analogies to the Mongol model helps illuminate the structural logic behind a foreign policy that increasingly prizes unilateral power over shared order.



**Malik Zohaib Tariq**

The author is a graduate of London School of Economics and holds a gold medal in International Relations & Politics. He can be reached at malikzohaibtariq786@gmail.com

First Lady meets Indonesian Vice Minister of Trade

# Highlights Sindh's world-record climate-resilient housing, women's empowerment and shared commitment to Palestine

## Bureau Report

KARACHI: First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, MNA, met Vice Minister of Trade of Indonesia Dyah Roro Esti Widya and discussed ways to further strengthen cooperation between Pakistan and Indonesia, with a particular focus on women's empowerment, climate resilience, social welfare, sustainable development and people-to-people ties.

The First Lady conveyed heartfelt condolences over the loss of lives and damage caused by recent landslides and floods in Sumatra. She expressed sympathy with the affected families and prayed for the swift recovery of the injured.

Welcoming the Vice Minister to Pakistan, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari said her visit reflects the warmth, trust and depth of longstanding relations between Pakistan and Indonesia. She also noted the Vice Minister's ancestral links to Pakistan and said this personal connection adds a meaningful and symbolic dimension to bilateral engagement.

Recalling the unprecedented floods that struck Sindh in 2022, the First Lady shared that, under the leadership and vision of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, the Government of Sindh has since constructed over two million flood-resistant and climate-resilient homes, setting a world record in post-disaster recovery and adaptation. She underscored



that the land titles of these homes have been transferred in the names of women heads of households, a landmark step aimed at deepening women's empowerment, economic security and social dignity in Sindh.

The First Lady also highlighted Sindh's successful public-private partnership (PPP) model, through which the provincial government has delivered sustainable and scalable projects in healthcare, education, renewable energy and infrastructure development, noting that this model has strengthened service delivery while ensuring long-term fiscal and environmental sustainability.

On regional and global issues, the First Lady praised the principled and consistent stance of Indonesian President Prabowo Subianto on the Gaza crisis, particularly Indonesia's support for the legitimate rights of the

Palestinian people to self-determination and a two-state solution. She reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to supporting Gaza's reconstruction and the establishment of a free, independent Palestinian state with Al-Quds as its capital, stressing that the scale of human suffering demands sustained international engagement, protection of civilians and unhindered humanitarian access.

Highlighting climate change as a shared global challenge, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari emphasised that vulnerable communities are increasingly exposed to extreme weather events. She stressed the importance of climate-resilient, climate-friendly housing solutions, particularly for low-income populations, as a critical tool for disaster preparedness, recovery and long-term sustainability.

Expressing appreciation for



Indonesia's progress, the First Lady said she was encouraged to see roles in senior leadership roles and looked forward to closer collaboration with Indonesia to exchange best practices and undertake joint initiatives promoting gender equality and inclusive development.

The Indonesian Vice Minister

expressed deep interest in learning from Sindh's experience in large-scale climate-resilient housing and welcomed the opportunity to explore structured cooperation in this area. She also conveyed Indonesia's interest in expanding collaboration in palm oil plantation, edible oil production and investment, including potential partnerships aimed at enhancing food security and

value-chain development.

The meeting also reviewed recent high-level exchanges between the two countries. The First Lady welcomed President Prabowo Subianto's recent visit to Pakistan and appreciated Indonesia's social welfare initiatives, including programmes focused on nutrition for women and children. She noted that Pakistan

is pursuing similar objectives through flagship initiatives such as the Benazir Income Support Programme.

Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further strengthening Pakistan-Indonesia relations through sustained dialogue, mutual understanding and practical cooperation across areas of shared interest.

## Doctors Decry Pakistan's Alarming Rise in Cesarean Sections



## Bureau Report

KARACHI: Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi's Medical & Social Welfare Committee organized a seminar titled "The Rising Trend of Cesarean Section During Childbirth in Pakistan? ... Reasons, Causes and Solutions?" at Haseena Moin Hall. Renowned gynaecologist Professor Dr Shershah Syed, Prof. Shabeen Naz Masood, Professor Dr Sonia Naqvi, and Dr Bushra Mohsin spoke on the occasion. Renowned doctors, including Arts Council President Muhammad Ahmad Shah, attended the event. Speaking at the seminar, gynaecologist Dr Sher-

shah Syed said that it is a serious question why such a large number of cesarean sections are being performed on women. "Was a woman created so that her abdomen could be cut?" he asked. He said that more than 20,000 women die every year in Pakistan due to complications during childbirth, which is a shameful reality for any civilized society. Professor Dr Shabeen Naz Masood said that as the use of modern equipment and gadgets is increasing, the trend of cesarean sections is also rising. Unfortunately, at times, doctors' behaviour with patients is harsh, due to which patients start demanding cesarean sections. Professor Dr Sonia Naqvi

said that in our society, there are people who put up boards of gynaecologists and run clinics without any authentic degree, earning money unlawfully. "I personally know many such individuals," she said. Dr Bushra Mohsin said that they always try their best to ensure normal delivery and avoid cesarean sections, but in some women, complications arise where a cesarean section becomes unavoidable. She said that gynaecologists are also human beings, and sometimes doctors are threatened with violence or vandalism by the patient's family, due to which they are forced to decide in favor of a cesarean section.

## 7 Secrets to a Happy Life - Lessons from Harvard's 85-Year Study

**H**appiness is something we all desire, but it can often seem elusive to find. Interestingly, an 85-year study by Harvard University has revealed important secrets about what truly makes life happy and fulfilling.

Dr. Thomas Fumke explains the 7 Secrets to a Happy Life, which can guide anyone toward better health, stronger relationships, and greater peace of mind.

### 1. Build Strong Relationships

People who had reliable and close relationships lived longer, stayed healthier, and felt more fulfilled. Strong connections with family and friends are the foundation of happiness.

### 2. Share Your Feelings

Opening up emotionally is very important. People who shared their feelings had better mental health, less anxiety, and stronger resilience. Talking about what's inside helps us feel lighter and closer to others.

### 3. Avoid Long-Term Isolation

Chronic isolation is dangerous. It was linked to immune decline, sleep problems, and an increased risk of illness. Staying connected with people protects both physical and emotional health.

### 4. Stay Socially Active

Those who stayed socially active

### Analysis



Dr. Mushtaque Ahmed Rahu

through calls, visits, and conversations aged more healthily and kept their minds sharper. Social activities make life meaningful and prevent loneliness.

### 5. Money Doesn't Buy Happiness

After meeting basic needs, extra income does not improve long-term happiness or emotional well-being. True joy comes from relationships, purpose, and meaningful living, not just from money.

### 6. Stick to Daily Routines

Simple habits like daily walks, shared meals, and regular routines had more impact on mood than big life milestones. Consistency in small things creates a steady sense of happiness.

### 7. Nurture Childhood Connections

Supportive childhood relationships

predicted stronger emotional health and career outcomes decades later. Building warm, positive connections early in life has long-lasting effects on happiness.

The Harvard study makes it clear: happiness is not about wealth or big achievements. Instead, it comes from strong bonds, emotional openness, healthy routines, and staying socially connected. By following these seven secrets, anyone can live a longer, healthier, and truly happy life.

## PPCBL Engages AlHuda CIBE for Islamic Banking Transformation

### Spokesman Report

LAHORE: AlHuda Center of Islamic Banking and Economics (AlHuda CIBE), a leading Islamic finance consultancy and advisory institution, has been formally engaged by Punjab Provincial Cooperative Bank Limited (PPCBL) to provide consultancy and advisory services for the conversion of the Bank's conventional banking operations into Shariah-compliant operations. He noted that PPCBL's cooperative banking structure presents a unique opportunity to extend Islamic banking services to a wider segment of society. He expressed confidence that, with a well-planned and disciplined approach, PPCBL will successfully migrate toward Islamic banking operations.

The consultancy engagement was formalized through the signing of an agreement between Mr. Muhammad Zubair, Chief Executive Officer of AlHuda CIBE, and Mr. Shahraam Raza Bakhtari, President of Punjab Provincial Cooperative Bank Limited. The engagement marks an important step in PPCBL's strategic journey toward Islamic banking.

Under this engagement, AlHuda CIBE will provide comprehensive advisory support covering the design and implementation of a Shariah governance, development of Islamic

banking products, preparation of operational policies and manuals, regulatory alignment, and structured staff training and capacity-building programs to ensure a smooth and compliant transition.

Commenting on the engagement, Mr. Muhammad Zubair, CEO of AlHuda CIBE, stated that AlHuda CIBE is committed to serving the Islamic banking and finance industry and supporting financial institutions in their transition toward Shariah-compliant operations. He noted that PPCBL's cooperative banking structure presents a unique opportunity to extend Islamic banking services to a wider segment of society. He expressed confidence that, with a well-planned and disciplined approach, PPCBL will successfully migrate toward Islamic banking operations.

Mr. Shahraam Raza Bakhtari, President of PPCBL, stated that the Bank has engaged AlHuda CIBE to support a gradual and structured transformation process. He emphasized that a key focus of this initiative will be strengthening staff capacity and institutional readiness so



that Islamic banking is implemented in its true spirit. He reaffirmed the Bank's commitment to completing the transition within the agreed timeframe, with the objective of becoming a fully

fledged Islamic bank. Islamic banking in Pakistan continues to gain momentum, supported by a strong policy direction from the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Securities and

Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). Both regulators have introduced wide-ranging initiatives aimed at promoting a Shariah-compliant and interest-free financial system. These include

the enhancement of Shariah governance, expansion of Islamic banking market share, development of Shariah-compliant liquidity management instruments such as Sukuk, and promotion

of Islamic capital market and Takaful sectors. These measures align with constitutional and judicial directives to transform Pakistan's economy in accordance with Islamic principles.

Islamic banking and finance promote transparent, and inclusive financial intermediation by emphasizing risk-sharing, asset-backed transactions, and real economic activity. By prohibiting interest (Riba) and excessive uncertainty (Gharar), Islamic finance enhances financial stability and supports sustainable economic development. These features make Islamic banking particularly relevant for cooperative and community-based financial institutions such as PPCBL.

The engagement of AlHuda CIBE as a consulting advisor reflects PPCBL's commitment to aligning with national regulatory objectives and contributing to Pakistan's broader transition toward a Shariah-compliant financial system before 2028. The initiative is expected to serve as a reference model for other banks considering conversion to Islamic banking operations.

**Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index**

Current	Prev. Close	
184,409.67	185,543.01	
Day's High	Day's Low	
186,180.32	183,700.83	
Index Value	Change	
36,715,643,369	-1133.34	
Percentage	Time	
-0.61%	9 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,130.55	+85.86	
Percentage	Time	
+0.86%	9 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
49,418.06	+151.95	
Percentage	Time	
+0.31%	9 Jan, 11:12 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
51,939.89	+822.63	
Percentage	Time	
+1.61%	9 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	186.5	191
Bahrain Dinar	744	754
Canadian Dollar	201	205
China Yuan	39.58	39.98
Danish Krone	43.72	44.12
Euro	327	330.5
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.03	3.12
Japanese Yen	1.7775	1.8775
Kuwaiti Dinar	908	918
Malaysian Ringgit	68.6	69.20
New Zealand \$	161.24	163.24
Norwegian Krone	27.66	27.96
Omani Riyal	728.5	738.5
Qatari Riyal	76.26	76.96
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.5
Singapore Dollar	217.5	221.5
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	351.82	354.57
Thai Bhat	8.88	9.03
U.A.E Dirham	76.45	77.35
UK Pound Sterling	377	381
US Dollar	280.8	282.75

**PEC Mobilizes  
Pakistan's  
Industrial Giants  
to Power the  
National GET  
Revolution**
**Commerce Desk**

Karachi witnessed a landmark moment in Pakistan's engineering history. Yesterday as the Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) signed strategic MoUs with the country's leading public and private sector organizations to launch the Graduate Engineer Trainee (GET) Placement Program at scale. The MoU signing ceremony was held at the Pearl Continental Hotel, Karachi, under the chairmanship of PEC Chairman Engr. Waseem Nazir, and was attended by Vice Chairman Sindh Engr. Mukhtar Sheikh, PEC Governing Body Members, senior PEC officials, and representatives of partner organizations.

The private sector coalition—Dewan Cement, H. Nizam Din & Sons, Mak Power, Alsone Industries, Harbin Electric, Energico, Pakistan Cables, Yunus Textile Mills, and Inbox Business Technologies—represents a broad spectrum of energy, manufacturing, ICT, textiles, and industrial innovation.

Addressing the ceremony, Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir said that the Graduate Engineer Trainee (GET) Placement Program is a structured, fully PEC-funded initiative designed to provide real-world exposure and hands-on professional training to fresh engineering graduates.

AVM Zeeshan Saeed, Director General Pakistan Airports Authority, lauded PEC's leadership and termed the GET Program a "national investment in engineering excellence" while presenting a commemorative shield to Chairman PEC. Rear Admiral Kashif Munir, General Manager Karachi Port Trust, reaffirmed KPT's full institutional support for the initiative, stating that industry participation is critical for developing an industry-ready engineering workforce.



# Hanif Abbasi, Kamran Tessori discuss \$2b plan to upgrade Karachi-Rohri rail track

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Saturday called on Sindh Governor Kamran Khan Tessori and discussed the upgradation of 480 kilometers of railway track between Karachi to Rohri with a cost \$2 billion.

During the meeting, both dignitaries agreed to provide more facilities to Pakistan Railways.

The Federal Minister and Sindh Governor visited the Complaint Cell and the Ration Marquee. Hanif Abbasi also visited the historical office used by Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah.

The Federal Minister Hanif Abbasi and Governor Tessori also discussed on overall situation of the country.

Earlier, Federal Railways Minister Hanif Abbasi and Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah also pledged to immediately allo-



cate Rs6.6 billion to replace 100 of the province's 308 manned railway crossings and carry out a

comprehensive rehabilitation of the rail system.

The chief minister said that the govern-

ment's objective was to connect remote areas of Sindh with modern, affordable, and safe transport facilities. "The railways project will reduce traffic pressure on roads and provide safe city centre to city centre connectivity for commuters and employees," he said.

Murad allocates Rs6.6bn for comprehensive rehabilitation of railway system; Hanif Abbasi says Centre-Sindh cooperation will open a new chapter in PR history.

Minister Abbasi said that cooperation between the federal and Sindh governments would open a new chapter in the history of Pakistan Railways, adding that the railways ministry would extend full technical support and provide the required right of way for the project.

The two sides also agreed to finalise and sign a 25-year partnership framework agreement for long-term collaboration on railway development projects.

## Maintenance

ISLAMABAD: Workers are busy in maintenance of CCTV Cameras along the Constitution Avenue in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

# Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu appointed as SECP chairman

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has appointed Dr Kabir Ahmed Sidhu as the chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP).

A notification has been issued by the Finance Division.

Dr Sidhu is currently serving as the chairman of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) since August 2023.

The CCP made significant institutional turnarounds in its history under his leadership.

Within two years, the CCP reduced its court case backlog by over 70 per cent, with 434 cases decided out of 567 pending matters, helping restore the regulator's credibility and enforcement capacity.

During Dr Sidhu's tenure, the CCP recovered approximately Rs1.36 billion in penalties. In contrast, its total recoveries in the last 20 years were merely Rs200 million. The regulator also imposed over Rs2bn in fresh penalties through new enforcement actions.

As CCP head, Dr Sidhu launched a



renewed crackdown on cartels and market abuse, initiating major investigations and actions against cartels in poultry, sugar, edible oil, telecom, and medical services. Several of these actions were upheld by the Supreme Court and the Competition Appellate Tribunal, providing strong judicial validation to CCP's enforcement work.

Dr Sidhu also placed strong emphasis on consumer protection and deceptive marketing enforcement. The CCP imposed significant penalties on companies operating in real estate, FMCG, education, pharmaceuticals, and automobile sectors.

stan's power sector. Chief Executive Officer FESCO Engineer Muhammad Amir congratulated Director HSE FESCO Kaleemullah, Additional Director Muhammad Amjad, Assistant Director Umar Fazal Chatha, Safety Inspectors especially Ahmed Adeel Sajid, Muhammad Israr, Muhammad Amjad, Muhammad Usman, Muhammad Sarwar, Muhammad Adeel and Hafiz Naseer and other staff Irfan Chishti, Bashir Ahmed, Muhammad Sufyan, Ali Raza and Mazhar Rasool on this remarkable achievement and paid tribute to the professionalism and tireless work of the entire team of FESCO Safety Directorate. The Chief Executive said that this success of FESCO is purely the result of teamwork, hard work and institutional harmony.

# Pakistan Petroleum Limited notifies appointment of new CEO and director

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Pakistan Petroleum Limited (PPL) announced on Saturday the appointment of Mohammad Khalid Rehman as Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Mirza Nasiruddin Mashhood Ahmad as a new director.

The company informed the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) about the new appointment.

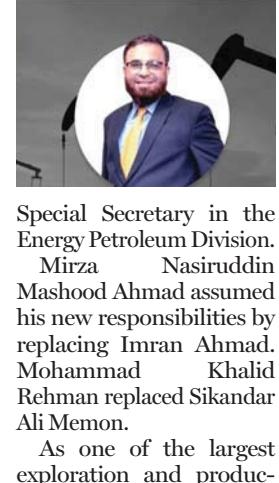
It said that the Board of Directors of the Company, at its meeting held on 9th January 2026, as an interim arrangement, had approved the appointment.

Before his current assignment, Mirza Nasiruddin Mashhood Ahmad was performing his duties as

Special Secretary in the Energy Petroleum Division.

Mirza Nasiruddin Mashhood Ahmad assumed his new responsibilities by replacing Imran Ahmad. Mohammad Khalid Rehman replaced Sikandar Ali Memon.

As one of the largest exploration and production companies in Pakistan, PPL plays a pivotal role in exploring, prospecting, developing, and producing oil and natural gas resources.



# NLC starts work on Dedicated Freight Corridor & Multimodal Logistics Park, Pipri

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Due to absence of rail-based freight transportation system at Karachi Port, congestion of containers has become a routine problem resulting in slow cargo movement and negative impact on economic activities. Heavy road traffic has also led to increased environmental pollution and damage to road infrastructure.

The construction of Dedi-

cated Freight Corridor and Multimodal Logistics Park at Pipri offers a long-term solution to these challenges. Ground breaking ceremony of Dedicated Freight Corridor was held with Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi and Group Chairman and CEO DP World, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem attending as chief guests.

DP World, Sultan Ahmed bin Sulayem attending as chief

guests.

with USD 400 million Foreign Direct Investment. The first phase is scheduled for completion within four months. The project includes rehabilitation of a 52-kilometer railway corridor from Karachi Port to Pipri Marshalling Yard along with development of a modern Multimodal Logistics Park. It is aligned with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and Pakistan Railways' ML-1 Project.

Upon completion, import containers will be transported directly by rail from Karachi Port to Pipri and onward to destinations across Pakistan, China, Central Asia and other regional countries. The project is expected to significantly reduce container congestion at Karachi Port, streamline cargo movement, accelerate economic activity and bring marked improvements in traffic management and environmental conditions.



# PSL Sialkot franchise owner Hamza Majeed unveils vision, infrastructure plans and player strategy

Hamza Majid, owner of the newly awarded Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise based in Sialkot, on Wednesday outlined his ambitious vision for the team, stressing long-term development, infrastructure investment, merit-based selection, and international collaboration.

Addressing a press conference in Lahore, Hamza Majeed revealed that naming the franchise after Sialkot had been his intention from the very first day. "We visited Sialkot and interacted with the local people. The passion for cricket there was overwhelming," he said, adding that Sialkot's deep cricketing heritage and identity as the city of Allama Iqbal made the decision even more meaningful.

However, he also expressed concern over the current state of facilities. "The Sialkot Test Centre looked neglected. That further strengthened our resolve to contribute to the city's cricketing revival. We are aiming to involve sports traders and community there to establish state-of-art stadiums and infrastructure for the youth of Sialkot," he remarked.

Hamza Majeed confirmed that the franchise is in the final stages of planning and that the team name, branding, and other key details will

be announced within the next week. He also disclosed that PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi has offered the Faisalabad Cricket Stadium as an additional venue option. "Our priority is to establish Sialkot as our home ground, but we are also open to using Faisalabad Stadium. Our goal is to develop Sialkot's infrastructure while utilizing available venues effectively," he explained.

Speaking about squad formation, Hamza Majeed said: "Discussions are ongoing regarding player drafts, retention policies, and coordination with existing PSL franchises. This franchise has arrived with a clear business and cricketing plan, focusing equally on performance and sustainability, and we can foresee a bright future of it as well as of Sialkot's youth."

The franchise owner revealed that his management is in contact with six to seven Australian cricketers, with plans to sign at least three to four foreign players for the upcoming season. "At the same time, talented cricketers from Sialkot will be given opportunities," he added. "Our first priority will always be national players. Beyond that, all selections will be strictly on merit. There will be no personal likes or dislikes, only winning

matters," he explained.

Highlighting Pakistan's street cricket culture, he said the franchise also intends to contribute to the development of tape-ball cricket, which enjoys immense popularity across the country. One of the franchise's most significant commitments is infrastructure development. "Our very first task is to establish a proper home ground in Sialkot. Within the next ten days, we will begin working at a high-performance centre," he announced.

Hamza Majeed also pledged to honour legendary cricketers associated with Sialkot, including Zaheer Abbas, acknowledging their contributions to Pakistan cricket. Regarding leadership and coaching, he said both captain and coaching staff will be appointed on merit, with a preference for local professionals, while also benefiting from Australian expertise where required.

"We are planning to do things that have never been done in Pakistan cricket before," Hamza Majeed said confidently, adding that continuous consultation is underway with PSL management and all stakeholders to ensure transparency and success. "We began this journey with the determination to give our very best, and with the



passage of time, our ambition is clear: to build a franchise capable of rising to the very top of the PSL," he concluded.

## Poland reach United Cup final despite Swiatek loss to Gauff

**Sports Desk**

Poland took revenge on holders the USA to set up a United Cup final against Switzerland in Sydney despite Iga Swiatek suffering defeat to Coco Gauff on Saturday.

The Swiss beat Belgium by the same 2-1 scoreline in the other semi-final, with Belinda Bencic playing a starring role.

Hubert Hurkacz beat Taylor Fritz 7-6 (7/1), 7-6 (7/2) to put Poland, beaten by the United States in last year's final, ahead in the tie.

World number four Gauff struck back for the Americans with a dominant 6-4, 6-2 win over Swiatek.

It was Gauff's fourth consecutive victory over the world number two and a statement win with the Australian Open just over a week away.

Gauff reappeared soon after to team up with Christian Harrison in the deciding mixed-doubles match, only to go down 7-6 (7-5), 7-6 (7/3) to Katarzyna Kawa and Jan Zielinski and put Poland in the final.

In the other last-four clash, Stan



Wawrinka lost in three sets in a gruelling heat of more than 40C but Switzerland beat Belgium.

The Tokyo Olympic champion Bencic had put Switzerland in front with a

battling 6-3, 4-6, 7-6 (7/0) victory over Elise Mertens in two hours and 37 minutes.

"It feels like 170 kilos fell off my shoulders — I was so stressed, I really wanted

to do well and today I felt so much pressure to not let my team down," Bencic said.

Then it was over to the 40-year-old Wawrinka, a three-time Grand Slam champion who was on Friday handed a wildcard to the Australian Open starting on January 18.

Wawrinka, playing his final year before retirement, fought back to force a deciding set against Zizou Bergs, but the Belgian ultimately won 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in two-and-a-half hours.

That meant the semi-final went down to the mixed doubles, with Bencic and Jakub Paul defeating Bergs and Mertens in another tight battle.

"The team spirit is amazing and it starts with the captain," Bencic said, referring to Wawrinka.

"He's supporting all throughout my match and then he goes out to play his own match and then he's back to support the doubles.

"It starts with him but then with all the energy from our bench it gives us such a spirit to win."

## Pakistan women's cricket team intensifies training in Karachi

**Sports Desk**

KARACHI: The Pakistan Women's Cricket Team is undergoing intensive training at the National Stadium, Karachi, under the guidance of mentor Wahab Riaz.

The focus of the camp is on enhancing the players' batting, bowling, and fielding skills.

In addition to on-field practice, the players are



improving their fitness and stamina through gym sessions, jogging, and swimming.

Wahab Riaz, together with his coaching team, conducts daily four- to five-hour sessions to fine-tune

the players' technical skills.

These efforts aim to strengthen the team's performance and prepare them for upcoming international competitions.

## Asian Mas-Wrestling Championship 2026 to be held in Lahore

**Sports Desk**

MULTAN: The Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation has announced that the Asian Mas-Wrestling Championship 2026 will be hosted in Lahore from May 10 to 15, bringing together leading athletes from across the continent to compete in one of Asia's fastest-growing traditional sports.



President of the Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation and Vice President of the Asian Mas-Wrestling Federation, Nawab Furqan Khan, said Pakistan was honoured to host the prestigious championship in Lahore. He described the event as a significant opportunity for national athletes to demonstrate their strength, skill, and dedication at the continental level. He urged aspiring wrestlers to begin preparations for the national trials and represent Pakistan with pride, adding that the championship would help showcase Pakistan's talent and Mas-Wrestling tradition to Asia and the world.

According to the federation, trials for Team Pakistan will be held in the last week of March 2026. In the senior category (18+), three teams will represent Pakistan, while two teams will compete in the youth category (16-17 years).

The weight divisions include senior men's categories of 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 85, 90, 105, 125, and 125+ kg, and senior women's categories of 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 85, and 85+ kg. Youth men's divisions will be 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, 75, 80, 90, and 90+ kg, while youth women's divisions will include 40, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 70, and 70+ kg.

The Absolute Category will feature men weighing 90 kg and above and women weighing 75 kg and above. The main competition is scheduled to take place in Lahore on May 13 and 14, 2026.

In a press release issued here, the Pakistan Mas-Wrestling Federation called upon athletes and relevant departments to make full preparations for the championship and proudly project Pakistan's strength and sporting talent on the Asian stage.

## PHF extends hockey club registration

**Sports Desk**

MULTAN: Pakistan Hockey Federation (PHF) on Saturday extended the deadline for the registration of hockey clubs across the country. PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti announced that the registration process has been reopened from 10 to 14 January 2026 (Saturday-Wednesday), up to 12:00 midnight.

According to the federation, the extension aims to provide another opportunity to all male and female hockey clubs that were unable to complete their online registration earlier.

The PHF stated that it wants every active club in the country to become part of the formal registration process. The decision was taken following a request from the Pakistan Sports Board.

After mutual consultation, PHF President Mir Tariq Hussain Bugti and Secretary General Olympian Rana Mujahid Ali Khan approved the extension.

## Thought Paper: The Role of the United Nations in Maintaining Global Security

**Emama Batool**

World organization (UN) was founded in the aftermath of the war, World War II and it was hoped that the world would never meet such devastation in future. It is basically created to ensure peace and security in nations. Whenever I consider the current job of the UN, I imagine it to be an organization, which, despite the good intentions, good results has evident flaws. By knowing the strong points as well as the weak points of the UN, we become able to re-evaluate our thoughts regarding the way the world security is formed and how much it

has already contributed to the global security. When we consider some of the successful peacekeeping's, the positive contribution of the UN to the safety of our world is seen. As an illustration, the presence of the UN in Sierra Leone during the early years of the 2000s is credited with the end of a vicious civil war. Peacekeepers were employed, disarmament programs were initiated and the nation slowly settled on its feet. Likewise, the activity of the UN in Liberia assisted in the reconstruction of political order and prevented the violence in the country. These examples demonstrate that with the assistance of major powers, the UN can facilitate peace among the areas that were dismantled by the war. The

other positive domain is that of diplomacy- it is through UN platforms that tensions between nations are likely to be diminished. An example is that the UN has a significant role in the diplomacy between the Iran and the world governments over the nuclear program of Iran and it assisted them in negotiating the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA). The UN, by way of discussions, monitoring systems and negotiations, has contributed to the minimization of the possibility of a potential war in the Middle East. The above examples demonstrate that UN can offer a platform where nations can negotiate rather than engage in conflict.

There is however also the bad or the shadowy side of the UN

particularly when the mighty countries exercise their might to shield their interests. The Syrian conflict is one example evident in which the Security Council has been divided over years. The decision to veto resolutions were frequently employed by countries such as the United States, Russia, and China that could have led to less violence. Through this, millions of people were affected and the UN could not be stern. The struggle between Ukraine and Russia can be described as another example. Although the UN general assembly was shown to condemn the invasion, the Security council was unable to do anything that mattered since Russia herself is a permanent member and has the power of veto. This fact creates some

doubts on the subject of fairness and effectiveness, how could an organization uphold international security when created with an ability to block action against one of the states participating in a conflict? In previous African conflicts, including Democratic Republic of Congo, peacekeepers of the UN have on other occasions been accused of not protecting the civilians or being very slow. These collapses indicate that the UN is not necessarily resourceful, powerful, or unified to respond to rapid crises.

As I consider the two aspects of the good and bad roles of the UN, I know global security cannot rely on this organization. When national interests conflict with world accountability, the UN is weak since countries will operate

in cooperation and international laws, but when there is willingness to assume international responsibility, it becomes magnified. The experience of Sierra Leone, Liberia and Iran nuclear deal demonstrates that peace can be achieved when countries unite. However, the cases in Syria and Ukraine remind us about the fact that the UN is often simply not able to do anything due to the structure of this institution, in particular, the veto system. These hues and shades of both success and failure make the UN a symbol of both hope and limitation.

To conclude, the United Nations is a role that is significant yet has flaws in ensuring world peace. It has assisted in the destruction of wars, peace

processes, and it has offered a platform through which dialogue can be held among countries.

Meanwhile, its shortcomings have enabled protracted battles to persist and innocent people to perish. My conclusion on this is that the UN is needed though it should be reformed, more united among major nations, and less politicking about. It can only do that at that time as the protector of world peace. Nevertheless, I do not think that the problems that the UN has been facing justify the disregard of its work, still, it is one of the very few organizations that can show the world the way to cooperate, but not compete, and that is why its activity still has a lot of depth and meaning.

The writer is Student of BSIR-4 in IUI

## Called on

BAGHDAD: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force meeting with Lieutenant General Staff Pilot Mohanad Ghalib Mohammed Radi Al-Asadi, Commander of the Iraqi Air Force on Saturday.



## TTAP leaders continue Lahore outreach, vow nationwide drive for Constitution's restoration

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: Leaders of the Tehreek-e-Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) on Saturday continued their public outreach campaign in Lahore for the third consecutive day, vowing to take the movement to all provinces for the restoration of the Constitution and civil liberties.

Addressing a news conference at the Lahore Press Club, TTAP President Mahmood Khan Achakzai said the country could be pulled out of the current crisis through collective wisdom, not by what he called the artificial elevation of a few individuals.

He said TTAP leaders would visit Sindh and other provinces to mobilise public support for constitutional supremacy and fundamental freedoms.



Referring to recent constitutional amendments, Achakzai said the 26th and 27th amendments could not have been passed without the support of smaller provinces in the Senate.

Calling on citizens to participate in political activity, he urged people to come out on

February 8, saying the movement was not aimed at abusing anyone or seeking favours, but at reclaiming constitutional rights.

PTAP leader Raja Nasir Abbas said Parliament had been rendered ineffective and the judiciary weakened through the 26th constitutional amendment, warning that if people were forced to stand up for their rights on their own, the situation could worsen.

Mustafa Nawaz Khokhar said strict adherence to the Constitution was the only viable way out of the prevailing political and governance crisis.

Meanwhile, the Haqq-e-Khalq Party announced its decision to join the PTAP during the Lahore visit.

Earlier, TTAP leaders visited the SAFMA office, where they had breakfast, and later toured Minar-e-Pakistan, Mazar-e-Iqbal and the shrine of Bibi Pak Daman as part of their public outreach activities.

## Federal Constitutional Court orders EOBI to pay pensions to private employees

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Constitutional Court has directed the Employees' Old-Age Benefits Institution (EOBI) to pay pensions to private-sector employees who completed 14 and a half years of service.

A three-member bench, headed by Chief Justice Ameenuddin Khan, ruled that



employees who have completed less than 15 years but at least 14 and a half years of service are entitled to a pension.

The court dismissed all appeals filed by EOBI and

upheld the Lahore High Court's verdicts of 2024 and 2025.

In a written judgment issued by Justice Hasan Azhar Rizvi, the court stated that any service period of six months or more would be treated as a full year. It declared the Lahore High Court's decisions to be correct and said there was no room for interference.

The constitutional court

further ruled that EOBI's 2022 circular could not override pension rights. It observed that depriving employees of pensions through a rigid interpretation of welfare laws was unjust.

The court clarified that employees with more than 14 and a half years of service would be considered as having completed 15 years, and the principle of rounding off would apply in pension matters.

## Emergency water plan approved as Islamabad faces deepening shortage

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The government on Saturday approved an emergency action plan to address the worsening water shortage in Islamabad, as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired a high-level meeting to review immediate and long-term measures to strengthen water supply for the federal capital and Rawalpindi.

The meeting was attended by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Adviser to the Prime Minister Syed Tauseef Shah, and senior officials from the Ministry of Interior, the Capital Development Authority (CDA), WAPDA and the Rawalpindi administration. Participants reviewed proposals to expand water storage capacity and improve the efficiency of the existing distribution system.



Naqvi announced that the CDA, in coordination with the Punjab government, would jointly construct new dams to meet the long-term water requirements of the twin cities.

Officials also briefed the meeting on progress related to planned small

dams and reservoirs, including the Chirah, Dotara and Shahdara projects.

WAPDA and CDA officials presented feasibility reports, proposed timelines and various options aimed at increasing water supply to both urban and rural areas of Islamabad.

The Dotara Dam, designed to store 110 million gallons per day, was approved with a completion target of two years.

The interior minister expressed concern over shortcomings in the existing water-supply system and underscored the need for a comprehensive overhaul of the distribution network.

He directed relevant departments to immediately identify system flaws and introduce effective mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted water delivery.

## Pakistan Air Force Chief strengthens ties with Iraqi counterpart in Baghdad visit

## City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, during his official visit to Iraq, called on Lieutenant General Staff Pilot Mohanad Ghalib Mohammed Radi Al-Asadi, Commander of the Iraqi Air Force.

The Air Chief was accorded a Guard of Honour at Iraqi Air Force Headquarters, symbolizing the strong bond of mutual respect. Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral military cooperation, with emphasis on joint training, capacity building and improving operational cooperation.

The Air Chief highlighted the deep-rooted religious, cultural, and

historical ties between Pakistan and Iraq and reaffirmed PAF's commitment to support the Iraqi Air Force in training and capacity development. Both commanders agreed to pursue joint exercises and training initiatives to strengthen interoperability.

The Iraqi Air Chief praised PAF's professionalism and technological advancement, expressed interest in benefiting from PAF's world-class training and expressed keen interest in JF-17 Thunder fighter jets, Super Mushshak trainer aircraft. He also appreciated Pakistan's role in regional stability.

The visit underscored the shared resolve of both Air Forces to further strengthen defence ties and professional collaboration.

## US and Pakistan Launch 13th Counter-Terrorism Exercise 'Inspired Gambit-2026'

## News Desk

RAWALPINDI: The 13th Pakistan-United States bilateral joint exercise, "Inspired Gambit-2026", commenced on 09 January 2026 at the National Counter Terrorism Centre (NCTC), Pabbi. The two-week-long exercise is being conducted in the Counter Terrorism (CT) domain, involving professional contingents from the Armies of Pakistan and the United States.

Officials from both sides attended the opening ceremony.

The exercise is aimed at enhancing mutual understanding and interoperability through the sharing of counter-terrorism experiences, while

further refining tactics, techniques, and procedures essential for effective CT operations. Emphasis is being laid on marksmanship skills during urban warfare, as well as on understanding each other's operational doctrines and best practices.

Such joint training exercises are of vital importance in addressing evolving security challenges, improving professional military standards, and strengthening the capacity of both forces to operate in complex counter-terrorism environments. Inspired Gambit-2026 reflects the continued commitment of Pakistan and the United States towards collaborative efforts for peace and stability.

## Punjab bans mobile phone use in government hospitals during duty hours

## Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab government has imposed a complete ban on the use of mobile phones in government hospitals during duty hours, barring staff below grade 18 from using phones while on duty.

The Department of Specialised Healthcare issued a formal notification stating that, despite earlier instructions, mobile phone usage continued in hospitals, affecting patient care and official work.

The department said the ban has now been strictly enforced.

According to the notification, only

officers of grade 18 and above will be allowed to use mobile phones, and that too only in designated administrative areas.

If the ban is not implemented effectively, CCTV cameras will be installed in hospitals.

The department has also directed that body cameras be provided to pharmacy staff.

Recordings from these body cameras will be preserved for 30 days and monitored through a central control room.

Medical superintendents of hospitals have been instructed to ensure strict implementation of the ban.

## PM Shehbaz Sharif appreciates Pak Navy on successful test of missile

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday

appreciated the Pakistan Navy on the successful test of the LY-80 (N) missile and loitering munition and

conducted in the North Arabian Sea. Under the leadership of Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf, the Pakistan Navy had become a force demonstrating modern capabilities and the highest standards of professionalism, he added.

The prime minister said: "With its professional expertise and modern technology, the Pakistan Navy is making Pakistan's maritime borders increasingly impregnable with each passing day."

PM Shehbaz Sharif said that effective performance of the Pakistan Navy's modern air defense, surface-to-air strike, and autonomous systems was of key importance in ensuring Pakistan's security.

He said: "The successful open-sea trial of an Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) is also a significant milestone in the defense of the country's maritime borders."



commended the efforts of the team involved in development of the missile and munition.

The prime minister congratulated the leadership, officers and sailors of the Pakistan Navy on the successful and comprehensive exercise