

Kashmir Day Preparations Finalized: Sirens, Seminars, and Solidarity Planned



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A meeting of the National Ceremonies Committee was held under the chairmanship of Senior Most Minister and Chairman National Ceremonies Committee, Mian Abdul Waheed, to review the arrangements for Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 and Black Day on January 26.

The meeting was attended by

Minister for Higher Education Zafar Iqbal Malik, Secretary Services and General Administration Chaudhry Iftikhar Ahmed, Secretary Higher Education Ms. Tehzeeb-un-Nisa, Secretary Information Sardar Adnan Khurshid, Secretary Sports, Youth and Culture Qazi Inayat, Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Rafaqat Mughal, along with officers from other concerned departments.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman Mian Abdul Waheed said that Kashmir Solidarity Day will be observed with full national spirit and enthusiasm. He emphasized that the bond between Pakistan and Kashmir is unbreakable and invincible. He directed all departments to ensure timely and effective arrangements for the events.

He further stated that India's Republic Day is a Black Day for the

people of Kashmir. On January 26, Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and across the world will observe Black Day. Worldwide protests and demonstrations will be held to raise a strong voice against India's unconstitutional, illegal, and immoral occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, and to highlight the grave human rights violations being committed in the occupied territory.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: High Commissioner of Australia Mr. Timothy Kane called on Speaker National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq at Parliament House on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Dera Police Foil Major Arms Smuggling Attempt, Huge Cache Recovered

Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Dera Ismail Khan Police have achieved a major success by foiling an attempt to smuggle a large consignment of arms and ammunition from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Balochistan. A huge quantity of weapons was recovered from secret compartments of a double-cabin pickup, and the accused was arrested.

District Police Officer (DPO) Dera Ismail Khan, Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada, while briefing the media at Ejaz Shaheed Police Lines, stated that Sub-Division Perburb Circle Police, under the supervision of SDPO Kashif Sattar and SHO Asghar Khan Wazir, received secret information about the presence of a large quantity of arms and ammunition in a double-cabin vehicle.

Acting swiftly, the police set up a checkpoint on Dera Ismail Khan/Bannu Road and stopped a silver-



colored double-cabin pickup (Registration No. RE-314) coming from Peshawar towards Dera Ismail Khan. Upon thorough checking, a huge cache of arms and ammunition was recovered from hidden compartments of the vehicle.

The recovered weapons included 3

er-type 30 bore pistols, 2 M4 rifles, 4 nine-mm pistols, 340 SMG magazines, and 16,430 rounds of ammunition of different calibers.

The accused, identified as Hamidullah son of Khan Faqir, belonging to the Yousafzai tribe and resident of district Mardan, was arrested on the spot, and the vehicle along with

the weapons was taken into police custody.

The DPO said that the seized arms are worth millions of rupees and were being smuggled from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to Balochistan. He added that Dera Police, through timely and effective action, successfully foiled a major attempt of arms smuggling.

AJK minister vows PPP govt will tackle public woes head-on

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Minister for Information, Auqaf and Religious Affairs, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nair, has said that the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) government is fully aware of the long-standing deprivations and public issues and is determined to address them on a priority basis.

He stated that Azad Kashmir enjoys exemplary sectarian harmony, the credit for which goes to the scholars and religious leaders of all schools of thought who have always promoted tolerance, patience, unity, and mutual respect. He added that under the leadership of Prime Minister Chaudhry Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the AJK government is working day and night

to provide relief to the people and resolve the problems of the common man.

Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nair expressed these views while talking to former Minister for Information Sardar Abid Hussain Abid, religious scholars, media representatives, and various public delegations in his office chamber on Wednesday.

He said that although the present PPP government has been in power for only a few months, its performance and practical measures are already visible to the public and will serve as a foundation for further positive changes in the future. He appreciated the constructive role of religious scholars, stating that all schools of thought have always cooperated with the government and played a central

role in maintaining peace, promoting religious tolerance, and ensuring social harmony.

The Minister further said that the government is not only striving to reduce the difficulties faced by ordinary citizens but is also taking concrete steps to facilitate social and religious segments of society. He emphasized that resolving the issues of Qaris and Imams has been placed among the government's top priorities.

Speaking about the arrangements for the annual Urs of Darbar Sain Saheli Sarkar, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nair said that all possible efforts have been made to provide the best facilities to the devotees and visitors. He added that the government is determined to come up to the expectations of the people and that in the



coming days the public will witness more positive outcomes and tangible relief.

Supreme Court Seeks "Concrete Evidence" from NIA to Justify Detention of Shabbir Shah

Abdul Majeed Tahir

NEW DELHI: The Supreme Court of India has directed the National Investigation Agency (NIA) to place "concrete and credible evidence" on record to justify the continued detention of Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Shabbir Ahmad Shah in a terror funding case. After a detailed hearing on his bail application, the Court announced that it would pronounce its final decision on February 10.



A Bench comprising Justice Vikram Nath and Justice Sandeep Mehta questioned the NIA's reliance on the statement of a co-accused, Wani, who has already been acquitted in the same case. Justice Mehta observed that while the sensitivity of such cases is fully understood, allegations must be supported by facts and solid evidence, particularly when a person has remained in custody for more than six years.

"Show us strong material to justify such prolonged incarceration. If the money trail and the co-accused's role no longer survive, what remains in the case?" Justice Mehta remarked, while seeking clarification from the NIA on how Wani's statement could still be used against Shabbir Shah after his acquittal.

Senior Advocate Colin Gonsalves, appearing for Shabbir Shah, submitted that the 74-year-old leader is in poor health and has been in custody for nearly six and a half years in the present case.

Referring to the Supreme Court judgment in Union of India vs. K. A. Najeeb Gonsalves contended that prolonged incarceration without conclusion of trial violates the fundamental right to personal liberty, noting that bail was granted in that case after a much shorter period of custody.

The NIA, represented by Senior Advocate Siddharth Luthra, informed the Court that the trial is in progress, with 34 witnesses already examined out of a total of around 150.

Women Commission Head Visits AJK President in Hospital

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Women Commission, Ms. Rehana Khan, visited Al-Shifa International Hospital, Islamabad, yesterday to inquire after the health of the President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.



According to details, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, who is currently seriously ill, is undergoing treatment at Al-Shifa International Hospital. Ms. Rehana Khan reached the hospital to express her concern and goodwill, where she met his son and Minister for Housing, Yasir Sultan Chaudhry, and inquired about the health condition of the President.

On the occasion, she offered special prayers for the speedy recovery of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, expressing her heartfelt wishes that Allah Almighty grant him complete and early restoration of health.

Ms. Rehana Khan stated that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry is a towering political figure of Azad Kashmir whose invaluable and unforgettable services for the Kashmir Freedom Movement will always be remembered. She prayed that Allah Almighty bless him with long life, good health, and complete recovery at the earliest.

RPO Faisalabad urges police-local coordination against crime



FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Mr. Sohail Akhtar Sukhera, chaired a high-level meeting with local government representatives at the Police Lines Complex, aimed at enhancing coordination between the police and elected local bodies to ensure effective crime control and public service delivery.

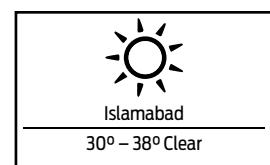
The meeting was attended by SSP Investigation Saleem Abbas, along with senior police officers from across the region. Detailed deliberations were held on ongoing police operations, particularly the crackdown against drug peddlers, land-grabbing mafias, organized crime networks and traffic management challenges within the region.

RPO Faisalabad Sohail Akhtar directed police officers to intensify intelligence-based operations, maintain zero tolerance against drugs and land mafias and adopt a citizen-centric approach in resolving public complaints. He reiterated that community engagement and institutional accountability are essential to building public trust and achieving long-term security objectives.

The meeting concluded with a renewed commitment from both police leadership and local representatives to work collectively for a crime-free, safe and orderly Faisalabad region.



Reaffirming his commitment, the Minister stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party government will set new examples of development, welfare, and transparent governance in the region.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:45 am
Zohr	12:17 pm
Asr	3:43 pm
Maghrab	5:21 pm
Isha	6:49 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police
Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	9212334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	570886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	9204654
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	9263316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Wasa Water Tank	9218300-99
Rawalpindi	0331-502215

None is worthy of worship except Allah Almighty: Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, said that Allah Almighty alone is the Light of the heavens and the earth, and that due to the limitations of human intellect, complete understanding of the Creator is beyond mankind; therefore, obedience and servitude to Allah are the only path to salvation.

He expressed these views while addressing a Zikr and Dars-e-Quran gathering in Rawalpindi, hosted by Sheikh Muhammad Qasim, Deputy Director, and attended by a large number of devotees of the Holy Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). Explaining the Quranic verse "Allah is the Light of the heavens and the earth," he cited Allama Baidhawi, Allama Tantawi's Tafsir al-Jawahir, and scientific research to emphasize Allah Almighty's greatness and human limitations. Quoting the Hadith "I am the city of knowledge, and Ali (RA) is its gate," he said all spiritual chains of Sufism trace back to Hazrat Ali (RA), and highlighted the scholarly and scientific contributions of Hazrat Imam Jafar Sadiq (RA). At the end of the gathering, he led a collective prayer for national security, progress, prosperity, and unity.

Hero Mudan: Pak-China Exhibition Showcases Art as a Language of Pluralism

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan China Friendship Calligraphy and Painting Exhibition, titled Hero Mudan, was hosted at the Islamabad Museum,

celebrating China's rich artistic legacy while reaffirming the deep rooted friendship between Pakistan and China. Jointly organized by Dr. Shaista Hyder and Ms. Wang Chenping, the exhibition brought together diverse



artistic traditions and offered a compelling cultural dialogue through visual expression.

A central highlight of the exhibition was the work of Dr. Shaista Hyder, an emerging artist whose practice reflects a unique and intellectually grounded perspective. Her calligraphic compositions, predominantly executed in the historic Kufic script, demonstrated both technical mastery and a contem-

porary sensibility.

The exhibition was inaugurated in

the presence of a distinguished group of guests and dignitaries. The Director General of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Mr. Aman Ullah, formally welcomed the attendees, which included Ms. Farah Naz Akbar, Parliamentary Secretary; Mr. Wang Shengjie, Counsellor at the Chinese Embassy in Pakistan; Mr. Wang Chen-

ping, CEO of Hero Boss; and renowned artist Mr. Jamal Shah.

The ceremony was further graced by the presence of H. E. Rear Admiral (Rtd.) Fred Seneviratne, Sri Lankan Ambassador to Pakistan; H. E. Mr. Pham Anh Tuan, Vietnamese Ambassador to Pakistan; Mr. Ayub Jamali, Director General of PNCA; and other distinguished representatives from the diplomatic and cultural community.

Everyday problems

ISLAMABAD: A view of the massive traffic jam at PIIMS Chowk in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

ISSI Delegation Undertakes Study Visit to National Radio Telecommunication Corporation


City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI) undertook an official study visit to the National Radio Telecommunication Corporation (NRTC) on January 13 2026.

Led by Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, ISSI, the delegation sought to gain

firsthand insights into Pakistan's indigenous radio and telecommunication capabilities, with a focus on innovation, self-reliance, and their strategic relevance to national security.

In his remarks, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood lauded NRTC's sustained efforts in advancing indigenous technological capabilities and acknowledged its pivotal role in reinforcing Pakistan's defence and security architecture through innovation and technological excellence. He further underscored that secure, resilient, and indigenous communication systems constitute a vital pillar of national security, enabling effective command, control, and informed strategic decision-making.

Brigadier Azmat Shabbir,

Managing Director, NRTC, provided a comprehensive overview of the organization's mandate, core functions, and ongoing projects. He highlighted NRTC's contributions to both defence and civilian communication infrastructure, while also outlining emerging technological trends, challenges facing the telecom sector, and future directions for innovation.

EV Charging Rollout Faces Hurdles: NEECA and Malik Group Tackle Bureaucratic Delays


City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A productive and forward-looking meeting was held in the office of Mr. Humayon Khan, Additional Secretary & Managing Director, NEECA, with Mr. Malik Khuda Baksh, CEO, Malik Group of Companies, to address critical challenges delaying the nationwide rollout of Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging Stations.

The discussion centered on procedural bottlenecks, including delays in electricity connections, prolonged separate meter installations, and NOC approvals from relevant DISCOs and Oil Marketing Companies—despite the issuance of 13 NEECA licenses and the arrival of 5 EV charging units at designated sites.

Mr. Malik shared the approved roadmap for installing 3,000 EV Charging Stations across Pakistan. In response, Mr. Humayon Khan assured full institutional support and expressed strong commitment to scaling the initiative further to 6,000 EV Charging Stations nationwide.

The meeting also covered key aspects of EV charger imports, including customs duties, regulatory documentation, and inter-agency coordination. Mr. Humayon Khan welcomed the proposal and requested recommendations for internationally compliant EV charger brands, along with a detailed issue-and-solutions report within three days, to ensure timely facilitation and effective implementation of this national green mobility initiative.

Public Must Work Together with Institutions to Build a Clean and Healthy Pakistan: Abdul Rehman

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of the Rawalpindi Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets and Bakers Association, a ceremony was held in Gujranwala to discuss the issues of the local trading community and their solutions. The event was hosted by Association President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and Chairman Mumtaz

Ahmed. Abdul Rehman, Regional Director Punjab Food Authority, was the chief guest, while Deputy Director Umair Arshad, other officials, and stage secretary Raja Jawad were also present. The program began with recitation of the Holy Quran and Naat.

Trader representatives Muhammad Aslam, Khan Khurram Shehzad,

Mazhar Qureshi, Yasir, Mazhar Iqbal, Sain Qadeer, Sheikh Arshad, Mirza Khalid, Ahsan Raja, Shehzad Kamran, Ahsan Ali, Shahid Warsi, Abdul Mannan, Zubair, and Shehzad Qureshi highlighted concerns over heavy fines, non-acceptance of government laboratory certificates, and mental stress, and called for reasonable penalties and better awareness of regulations.

Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and Mumtaz Ahmed assured full

cooperation with the Punjab Food Authority and requested guidance and avoidance of unnecessary fines, especially in January. Abdul Rehman announced that awareness seminars would be held and that no fines would be imposed on Gujranwala traders during January, provided cleanliness and regulations are observed, emphasizing that public health protection remains the Food Authority's top



priority. At the end, Mumtaz Ahmed led a collective prayer for national progress, institutional prosperity, and unity.

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Education, health among top priorities of Baluchistan Government

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Wednesday said that education and health are among the top priorities of the provincial government and sustainable development could not be achieved without improvements in these sectors.

He said this while talking to Luay Shabaneh, Country Representative of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), a subsidiary of the United Nations called on him here.

The meeting discussed in detail the challenges being faced by Balochistan related to population, maternal and child health, youth and women's welfare, and promotion of data-based policy making.

The meeting was attended by Parliamentary Secretary Population Agha Umar Khan Ahmadzai, Chief Secretary Balochistan Shakeel Qadir Khan, Secretary Population Zafar Khan Buledi, Principal Secretary to Chief Minister Babar Khan, and Head of UNFPA Quetta Sadia Atta.

During the meeting, it was agreed that a coordinated and effective provincial task force for population-related matters would be established in Balochistan, which would ensure coordination among different departments and monitor the effective implementation of policies related to population, health, and education.

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti said that policy making would be aligned with modern requirements through advocacy and a strong data governance framework so that all decisions related to population could be made based on authentic data and evidence.

He clarified that education and health are among the top priorities of the provincial government and sustainable development could not be achieved without improvements in these sectors.

The CM stressed that institutional reforms are indispensable for improving maternal and child health indicators, while calling the welfare of youth and women the foundation of the province's socio-economic development.

He said that investment in human development is the guarantee of a bright future for Balochistan.

While appreciating the policy priorities and reform initiatives of the Balochistan government, Luay Shabaneh expressed his determination that UNFPA would further strengthen its cooperation in projects related to population, health and human development in Balochistan and could continue to work in close collaboration with the provincial government.

CDF's Strict Warning to India and Afghanistan

The Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, has announced a decisive shift in Pakistan's defense doctrine, introducing a firm and uncompromising national security framework focused on protecting sovereignty and territorial integrity. His vision signals a clear break from past strategic restraint, emphasizing national unity, clarity of purpose, and a more assertive posture to counter evolving internal and external threats. This transformation reflects a consolidated national resolve and redefines Pakistan's security approach as proactive and deterrence-driven.

Central to this doctrine is a dual warning directed at Afghanistan and India. Field Marshal Munir has issued a non-negotiable ultimatum to the Afghan Taliban, demanding an end to all support for militant groups operating against Pakistan, asserting that cross-border terrorism poses an existential threat and that appeasement has failed. Simultaneously, he has delivered a firm warning to India against any military miscalculation, stating that future aggression would be met with faster and far stronger retaliation. Together, these messages underscore Pakistan's readiness to defend itself decisively on both fronts and establish credible deterrence as a cornerstone of its new security architecture.

The elevation and subsequent installation of Field Marshal Munir as the Chief of Defence Forces, a recently established and highly significant unified command position that strategically concentrates the nation's highest and most complete military authority, has successfully infused the entire national security establishment with a renewed sense of unified purpose, laser-like focus, seamless operational

coordination, and institutional strength. He has consistently and solemnly reiterated the foundational national principle that Pakistan is inherently a peace-loving country, a declaration of principled and civilized intent that is nonetheless delivered with the unwavering and non-negotiable caveat that absolutely no regional or ideological actor will be allowed to casually test Pakistan's sovereignty, territorial integrity, or its resolute national will. This entire strategic stance is a powerful, real-world articulation of the classic strategic concept of "peace through strength," wherein the inherent and sincere desire for regional and global stability is perpetually and robustly backed by a demonstrated, overwhelming capacity for immediate, decisive, and strategically conclusive military action. The evidence is now clear and overwhelmingly abundant: the Pakistan army has proved its full, unquestionable, and overwhelming strength to defend the homeland against a complex, two-front spectrum of existential threats, showcasing its elite competence, professional superiority, and resolute national will in simultaneous confrontations with both the covert, ideologically driven enemy in the west and the overt, conventional competitor in the east, thereby affirming that it has effectively defeated them in terms of achieving its strategic objectives and securing enduring battlefield outcomes. The remarkable and highly advanced ability of the military apparatus to seamlessly manage and effectively respond to complex, simultaneous security challenges on two vastly different and active borders—utilizing sophisti-

cated, conventional deterrents against the Indian conventional threat and surgical, highly mobile, and doctrinally advanced counter-insurgency tactics against the Khawarij—is a clear, compelling, and indisputable testament to its unparalleled training, seamless multi-domain integration, and advanced operational readiness. This sustained and consistent display of military prowess and strategic acumen means the Pakistan Army has unequivocally proved itself as the true and effective defender of the country and has consistently and repeatedly shown outclass performance and professionalism in defending the country against all enemies, both foreign and domestic, thereby guaranteeing the nation's survival, stability, and future.

In the crucial face of these grave, intricate, and complex external and internal security challenges, the Field Marshal's definitive and uncompromising articulation of national defense policy has served as a powerful and much-needed catalyst, effectively fostering an extraordinary, widespread, and profound wave of national cohesion and patriotic unity across the entirety of the nation. The leadership's unambiguous, transparent, and unwavering stand on these existential issues has profoundly galvanized the populace, leading to a unified national situation where the whole nation is vociferously welcoming, celebrating, and wholly endorsing the clear and resolute stance of Field Marshal and his unequivocal warnings to both India and the Afghan Taliban regime. This resolute, non-negotiable strategic direction

is now universally understood and widely acknowledged as the single most essential form of principled, decisive, and necessary leadership required to successfully navigate a complex, volatile, and perpetually fraught geopolitical environment. From the vibrant, bustling metropolitan centers and influential media outlets to the most remote, highly strategic, and sensitive border towns, the entirety of the Field Marshal's message has been embraced as an unconditional guarantee of national dignity, long-term security, and existential survival. The resounding and unified voice of the country confirms and fully ratifies this new strategic direction, declaring with one voice that the whole nation stands unconditionally with the Pakistan Army to defend each and every inch of the country's sacred territory and to ensure its future as a peaceful, secure, and prosperous land. This absolute and unwavering national endorsement of the military's firm and crystal-clear policy provides an insurmountable moral, political, and strategic foundation for the armed forces to execute their mandate with zero hesitation, thereby guaranteeing that all necessary measures, regardless of how severe, unprecedented, or unconventional they may be, will be taken to safeguard Pakistan's future and decisively secure it against all regional and ideological actors who seek to undermine its stability or threaten its very existence. The Field Marshal's comprehensive strategic vision—a future intricately defined by sovereign integrity, domestic stability, and regional peace achieved through strategic strength and decisive action—is now the definitive, non-negotiable directive of the state, irrevocably marking a new, resolute chapter in Pakistan's long and challenging journey towards enduring and permanent security.



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

The Mosque and the Panopticon: Religious freedom under siege in Indian occupied Kashmir

In the Kashmir Valley, faith now comes with a barcode. The Jammu and Kashmir Police's unprecedented surveillance exercise—collecting granular data on every mosque, imam, muezzin, and management committee member—represents not merely a security protocol but the architectural blueprint of a religious police state. This is the quantification of devotion, the bureaucratization of belief, and the ultimate expression of a project that seeks to subjugate Kashmir's Muslim identity under the weight of spreadsheets and suspicion.

The four-page form circulated across the Valley is a masterpiece of totalitarian data harvesting. It demands not just the sectarian identity of a mosque—whether Barevi, Deobandi, or Ahle-Hadith or shia—but its physical dimensions, construction costs, funding sources, and monthly budgets. It strips bare the financial anatomy of religious life. But the true violence lies in the three pages devoted to personal information: IMEI numbers, social media handles, ATM and credit card details, educational qualifications, and complete family profiles of those who serve the faith. This is not routine intelligence-gathering; it is the creation of a religious registry, a database of Muslim leadership designed for

control, not security.

The ideological scaffolding behind this surveillance is transparent. As Kashmir's religious leaders have warned, this is "a project of a particular right-wing ideology which wants to control religions that do not conform to the RSS worldview." The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's vision of a Hindu Rashtra cannot tolerate autonomous Muslim religious institutions. Mosques, in this calculus, are not places of worship but potential "anti-national" incubators that must be mapped, monitored, and managed. The state that facilitates massive, state-sponsored Hindu pilgrimages to Amarnath with military precision simultaneously treats Muslim religious expression as a national security threat requiring biometric-level surveillance.

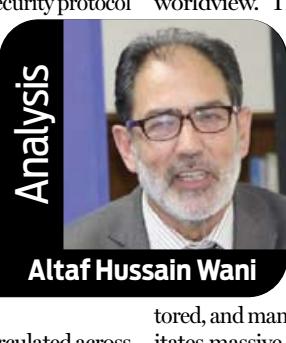
Resistance must become transnational. Kashmiri diaspora communities must file parallel complaints with the UN Human Rights Committee. Islamic human rights organizations should pursue cases at the International Court of Justice. Digital rights groups must expose how this data integrates with India's larger surveillance architecture, including the Aadhaar biometric system and facial recognition networks, creating a totalitarian ecosystem where

religious identity is algorithmically criminalized.

Ultimately, the mosque forms are not about gathering information; they are about demonstrating power. They announce that in Modi's India, Muslim faith is a problem to be solved through data analytics and ideological re-education. They signal that Kashmiri Muslim identity must be digitized, dissected, and domesticated. But faith, unlike data, cannot be contained. The same mosques that police now catalog have survived empires and resisted colonizers. The muezzin's call, now monitored by IMEI trackers, still echoes across the Valley five times a day, a reminder that some frequencies remain beyond the state's capacity to jam.

The question for the world is stark: Will we allow the 21st century's largest democracy to become its most sophisticated religious surveillance state? The forms are printed, the data collection begun. But the final entry in this database has yet to be written. It will be written by those who refuse to comply, by those who turn their mosques into fortresses of freedom, and by a generation that chooses faith over fear. In that choice lies Kashmir's liberation—and perhaps ours.

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Altaf Hussain Wani

Murree Sets a New Benchmark in Snowfall Management and Public Safety

Murree, Pakistan's most famous hill station, has long been a winter retreat for tourists from the twin cities of Islamabad and Rawalpindi, as well as visitors from other parts of the country and abroad. Nestled in the Pir Panjal range, the town transforms into a white wonderland during winter snowfall, attracting thousands of families eager to experience snow, scenic beauty, and festive celebrations. However, this natural charm has, in the past, also exposed serious governance and management challenges that turned joy into tragedy.

A few years ago, Murree witnessed one of the most painful incidents in its history when several tourist families lost their lives during heavy snowfall. The tragedy was widely attributed to poor planning, weak coordination among government departments, unregulated tourism, the commercial greed of some hotel owners, and the general unawareness of tourists regarding harsh weather conditions. Roads remained blocked, vehicles were stranded for hours, heating arrangements inside cars proved fatal, and rescue operations were slow and inadequate. The incident raised serious questions about crisis management, rule of law, and the capacity of local administration to handle emergencies in one of Punjab's most sensitive districts.

Against this backdrop, the snowfall that began on the midnight of December 31, 2025, was viewed as a critical test for the district administration of Murree. As snow started falling, thousands of families were already present in the town to celebrate New Year's night and enjoy the winter spectacle. Unlike previous years, however, the situation was managed with remarkable foresight, discipline, and professionalism, reflecting a clear shift in administrative approach.

Deputy Commissioner Mr. Syed Zaheer Abbas Sherazi's leadership stood out as a defining factor in this successful operation. His administrative decisions reflected not only

authority but also empathy for public safety and awareness of past mistakes. By prioritizing human life over commercial interests and enforcing regulations without discrimination, the district administration sent a strong message about the supremacy of rule of law.

Moreover, these arrangements underscored the importance of good governance in crisis-prone areas. Good governance is not merely about responding to emergencies but about anticipating risks, educating the public, regulating stakeholders, and ensuring accountability. In this regard, Murree's New Year snowfall management serves as a model for other tourist destinations in Pakistan that face similar seasonal pressures.

It is also important to acknowledge that tourists themselves played a role by cooperating with authorities, following instructions, and showing greater awareness. This mutual cooperation between citizens and state institutions is essential for sustainable tourism and long-term safety.

In conclusion, the safe and orderly management of Murree during the snowfall of December 31, 2025, marked a significant departure from the tragic memories of the past. The extraordinary administrative arrangements under Deputy Commissioner Syed Zaheer Abbas Sherazi, supported by police, medical teams, and municipal workers, transformed a potentially high-risk situation into a secure and enjoyable experience for families. These actions stand as a practical example of rule of law, responsible administration, and good governance in one of Punjab's most challenging districts. If sustained and institutionalized, such governance can ensure that Murree remains a safe winter destination where beauty and safety go hand in hand.

The writer is an experienced development practitioner with over 20 years of expertise in the development sector. He is a resident of Bajah, Azad Jammu & Kashmir. He can be reached at: i.gardazi@gmail.com

PIDE Seminar unveils urgent need for urban reform amidst explosive growth in Pakistan's Cities

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Institute of Development Economics (PIDE) hosted a timely and insightful seminar titled "Infrastructure Imbalances Amid Rapid Urbanization in Pakistan" today, bringing together leading experts to discuss the challenges and opportunities posed by rapid urban growth in Pakistan.

The seminar, held at A. R. Kemal Hall, explored the complex interplay between urbanization, infrastructure development, and governance, with a particular focus on how the growing urban population is outpacing the expansion of vital services and infrastructure.

Dr. M. Shafaat Nawaz, RASTA Fellow and Fulbright PhD from the University of Illinois Chicago, opened the discussion with a thought-pro-

voking presentation that reframed Pakistan's urbanization narrative. Dr. Nawaz challenged the conventional perception that Pakistan's urbanization is a gradual process, suggesting that the nation may already be highly urbanized, with 88% of the population living in urbanized areas, according to a recent study by the World Bank.

He highlighted the mismatch between the urban reality and the official urbanization statistics, which suggest only 39% of the population is urban. This discrepancy has led to significant infrastructural imbalances, exacerbating issues such as housing shortages, water scarcity, traffic congestion, and waste accumulation.

Ms. Fauzia Rizwan, Director of The Urban Solutions Pvt Ltd, and Ms. Risham Amjad, Consultant at the Asian Development Bank,

further elaborated on these challenges, emphasizing the need for a unified approach to urban planning that addresses not only the physical infrastructure but also social infrastructure, such as healthcare and education.

Mr. Bilal Aftab, Staff Economist at PIDE, moderated the session and concluded with a call for integrated policy reforms. He stressed the importance of aligning fiscal resources with urban realities, ensuring that infrastructure investments are not just concentrated in megacities but also spread across secondary and smaller cities, where the need for development is equally urgent.

PIDE remains committed to fostering meaningful dialogues on urban development and will continue to lead discussions on policy-relevant issues affecting Pakistan's cities.



Clean and Green Movement Aids Families of Gas Tragedy Victims

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Sharing the grief of the families affected by the tragic gas cylinder explosion in G-7, the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement expressed heartfelt sympathy, condolences, and practical support. The movement stood by the affected families in this difficult time, offered moral support, and provided relief cheques, stating that while financial assistance can never compensate for the loss of precious lives, it is a small gesture of solidarity and practical support to help the affected households cope with this painful tragedy.

In this regard, Chairman of the Clean and Green Islamabad Movement, Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari, visited the affected house in G-7 Islamabad. He extended heartfelt condolences to the families of those who lost their lives in the tragic incident, expressed solidarity with the bereaved families, and offered special prayers for the speedy recovery of the injured.

Speaking on the occasion, Ahsan



Zafar Bakhtawari said that the incident was extremely heartbreaking and had plunged not only the affected families but the entire city into deep sorrow. He stated that the untimely demise of groom Sherry Hanif, bride Mehak, Joraan Bibi, Sanbal, Naeem,

and Waseem was an irreparable loss that could not be expressed in words. While talking to the bereaved families, he said that they were not alone in this time of grief and prayed that Almighty Allah grant them patience and strength.

He also prayed for the early recovery of those injured in the incident, including Kashif, Salma, Mukhtaran Bibi, Aamir, Farzana, Maryam, Rita, Aryan, Ejaz, Aina, and the minor daughter of Sanbal, and said that the entire nation was praying for their health and well-being.

Ahsan Zafar Bakhtawari further provided relief cheques to the affected families and emphasized that strict implementation of safety measures, proper usage of gas cylinders, and quality checks were essential to prevent such tragic incidents in the future so that no other family would have to endure such a painful loss.

On the occasion, ICCI Executive Members Roheel Anwar Butt and Malik Mohsin Khalid, former ICCI Vice Presidents Nisar Mirza and Nasir Qureshi were also present. The delegation expressed deep sorrow and condolences to the affected families. Former Federal Minister J. Salik was also present at the site and shared his condolences with the bereaved families.

Lawyers are Working Hard Day and Night to Provide Justice to the Oppressed Class

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Newly elected President of the District Bar Association Multan, Ms. Syeda Bushra Naqvi, has said that the bar is inseparable and will further strengthen its relations with the bench and will use all its capabilities and resources for the welfare of lawyers, especially the problems of young lawyers on priority basis and will provide legal advisory to young lawyers in various departments. The entry of a large number of women lawyers into the legal profession is a manifestation of confidence in the legal profession. The primary goal is to solve the problems faced by women lawyers. She expressed these views on the occasion of being congratulated by former PPP member of the provincial assembly Dr. Javed Siddiqui, Tahir Khan Khakwani, Muhammad Yousuf Rongha Presented Flowers and Bouquets and on this occasion and best wishes were expressed. Syeda Bushra Naqvi further said that lawyers are working hard Day and Night to provide justice to the oppressed class.

Inner Wheel Clubs Drive Social Improvement Through Focus On Education, Health, and Women's Welfare

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Mrs Jina Ijaz Chair Women of Inner Wheel Club District 343, has said that members of inner Wheel Clubs are actively working for social improvement through practical measures in the fields of education, health and women's welfare. Quality education is the foundation of a developed society, while sustainable development is not possible without improvement in the health sector. Empowering women is one of the top priorities of Inner Wheel Club, and work is underway on various welfare projects for this purpose. She expressed these views while speaking on the occasion of Inner Wheel Day. Inner Wheel Club District Secretary Sadia Kirmani said that women are the foundation of any society, their education and training are the guarantee of a better future. He said that Enrol Day is not just a day of activity, but it is a day of respect for women's rights and self-confidence and social and welfare service. The ceremony was attended by former chairman Mrs. Shaheen Moazzam Khakwani, secretary Mrs. Shaheen Langrial, Mrs. Tahira Najam, Rifat Shahid, Yasmin Khakwani, Shamim Akhtar, Noreen Nishat Daha, Hanachughtai, Shafiq Salman, Lubni, Fawzia Ayub, Qaisra, as well as all the office bearers of Inner Wheel District 343 clubs. Appreciating the social services of the organization, he said that Inner Wheel District Club 343 is continuously working for the welfare of women, promotion of their rights and their professional training, so that they can be economically and socially strong. He expressed his determination to further expand welfare activities in the future.

64 tonnes of smuggled wheat, flour seized in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: The district administration, in coordination with paramilitary forces, seized approximately 64 tonnes of wheat and flour being smuggled without permits during the last 24 hours, Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Anil Saeed said on Wednesday.

Speaking to the media, the ADC said the seized wheat and flour would be auctioned in accordance with Punjab government regulations, ensuring that all dealers can purchase these commodities at officially notified rates. He said the operation was carried out to curb illegal smuggling and to ensure the availability of wheat and flour for the public at government-fixed prices.

Anil Saeed appreciated the timely action of the DSP, SP Paramilitary, and their teams for successfully foiling the smuggling attempt. He also lauded the role of assistant commissioners and other officers, saying their collective efforts were contributing to improved governance and better conditions in the district.

The ADC emphasized that transporting wheat, flour, or other essential commodities without a valid permit is a clear violation of the law. "Our vision is to serve the public. Strict action will be taken against those who fail to sell essential items at government-notified rates," he warned.

He added that such operations would continue across the district to prevent hoarding, profiteering, and illegal movement of essential goods, and to provide maximum relief to citizens amid rising prices.

Japan PM Takaichi, South Korea's Lee visit World Heritage temple in Nara

NARA, JAPAN: Japanese Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi and South Korean President Lee Jae Myung on Wednesday toured Horyuji, a World Heritage Buddhist temple in the western Japan prefecture of Nara, to deepen their personal ties.

The visit to the temple complex, home to the world's oldest surviving wooden structure said to date to 607, caps off the latest reciprocal visit between the two leaders.

DC Multan visits New Public Relations Department Building Project

Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Deputy Commissioner Multan, Muhammad Nauman Siddiq, visited the under-construction project of the new building of the Public Relations Department (PRD) Multan. On this occasion, Deputy Director Public Relations Waseem Yousaf and Deputy Director Development Muhammad Irfan were also present with him.

During the visit, the Deputy Commissioner conducted a detailed inspection of various sections of the building and reviewed the pace and quality of the ongoing development work. He directed the concerned officers to further expedite the construction process to ensure the project's completion within the stipulated timeframe, while strictly maintaining quality standards without any compromise.

On the occasion, Deputy Director Public Relations Waseem Yousaf briefed the Deputy Commissioner, stating that the new PRD building is being equipped with modern facilities in line with contemporary requirements. The new building will include a state-of-the-art media studio,



conference rooms, and other essential facilities for journalists to ensure timely and effective dissemination of information.

According to a handout issued

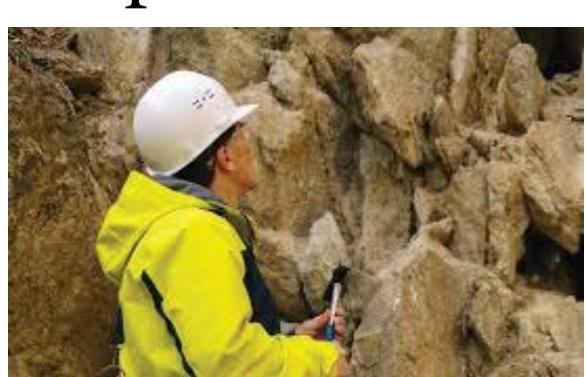
by the Director Public Relations, Multan Division, Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Nauman Siddiq termed the project highly significant for enhancing the capacity of the

Public Relations Department and expressed the hope that upon completion, the new building would further strengthen coordination between the media and the district administration.

Kazakhstan to channel 240 bln tenge for geological exploration

ASTANA: In line with the Kazakh President's tasks to expand geological study of the country using modern exploration methods, the Government is set to launch a new stage of subsurface research at a more detailed scale, Qazininform News Agency reports.

Last year, 20 projects were developed to conduct geological mapping at a 1:50,000 scale over an area of 100,000 km², with plans to cover 30,000 km² annually in the most promising regions. For comparison, Soviet-era mapping was carried out at a 1:200,000 scale.



240 billion tenge, or nearly 500 million US dollars, will be channeled for implementing these projects, seismic surveys in underexplored sedimentary basins, and building modern geological infrastructure, against 469 million US dollars invested in geological exploration over the past 15 years. When selecting sites, factors such as resource depletion, lack or minimal presence of subsoil users, and potential for priority minerals were considered.

It is planned to conduct seismic surveys in the underexplored oil and gas basins such as North Torgai, Shu-Sarysu, and Syrdarya. Additional plans include the modernization of laboratory and analytical facilities and the digitization of geological data. To note, Kazakhstan attracted over \$70mln worth of investment to exploration for next 6 years.

As a result, areas with high potential for deposits of copper, gold, lead, zinc, rare earth elements, barite, and bauxite were identified.

The ADC emphasized that transporting wheat, flour, or other essential commodities without a valid permit is a clear violation of the law. "Our vision is to serve the public. Strict action will be taken against those who fail to sell essential items at government-notified rates," he warned.

He added that such operations would continue across the district to prevent hoarding, profiteering, and illegal movement of essential goods, and to provide maximum relief to citizens amid rising prices.

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Bull & Bears
 PSX 100-Share
 Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
182,569.81	183,951.50
Day's High	Day's Low
184,726.60	182,369.86
Index Value	Change
49,014,086,309	-1381.69
Percentage	Time
-0.75%	14 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,184.35	+47.00
Percentage	Time
+0.46%	14 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
48,928.14	-263.85
Percentage	Time
-0.54%	14 Jan, 12:12 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
54,341.23	+792.07
Percentage	Time
+1.48%	14 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	187	191
Bahrain Dinar	744	754
Canadian Dollar	200.50	204.85
China Yuan	39.59	39.99
Danish Krone	43.75	44.15
Euro	327.25	330
Hong Kong Dollar	35.75	36.10
Indian Rupee	3.04	3.13
Japanese Yen	1.7525	1.8525
Kuwaiti Dinar	908	918
Malaysian Ringgit	68.6	69.20
New Zealand \$	161.24	163.24
Norwegians Krone	27.66	27.96
Omani Riyal	728.60	738.60
Qatari Riyal	76.26	76.96
Saudi Riyal	74.8	75.3
Singapore Dollar	216.5	221.5
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	351.82	354.57
Thai Bhat	8.89	9.04
U.A.E Dirham	76.5	77
UK Pound Sterling	377.75	381
US Dollar	280.65	282.75

ITCN Asia 2026,
 Supported by SIFC and
 STZA, Set to Spotlight
 Pakistan's Digital and
 Startup Ecosystem

■ Tahir Amin Malik

ISLAMABAD: The 27th ITCN Asia, Pakistan's largest and most influential technology and innovation exhibition, will take place from 17 to 19 January 2026 at the Expo Centre Lahore, convening the country's digital, technology and startup ecosystem for a flagship three-day event. Organized by Ecommerce Gateway Pakistan with Tech Destination Pakistan as the presenting partner and held under the patronage of the Special Investment Facilitation Council (SIFC) with strategic support from the Special Technology Zones Authority (STZA), the exhibition reflects strong institutional backing for Pakistan's technology-led growth and digital economy ambitions.

Commenting on the upcoming edition, Umair Nizam, Group Director, Ecommerce Gateway Group said, "The 27th ITCN Asia is more than an exhibition; it is a strategic convergence of policy, innovation, investment and enterprise."

Ishaq Dar Calls for Policy Continuity and Economic Confidence at Pakistan Policy Dialogue

■ Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Senator Muhammad Ishaq Dar, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs of Pakistan, was the Chief Guest at the Pakistan Policy Dialogue, Correcting Course: Pakistan's Economic Reset, held in Islamabad. Speaking on the need for an economic reset anchored in realism, reform discipline, and constructive collaboration, he said, "Resetting and correcting course is about strengthening the foundations of the economy itself. This requires responsible governance, consistent policies, and institutions that operate with continuity beyond political cycles. What is now required is a technology-enabled approach to governance that reforms public service delivery and ensures policy intent translates into measurable outcomes."

Highlighting the government's achievements



on the diplomatic front, the Deputy Prime Minister said "All diplomatic efforts are geared

towards helping business boost exports and

BankIslami

as Platinum and Gold Partners, respectively

interests."

The Dialogue convened senior policymakers, corporate leaders, and development experts to deliberate on pragmatic reform pathways, growth-oriented policy choices, digitization, and institutional strengthening at a critical juncture for Pakistan's economy. Organized by the Policy Research and Advisory Council (PRAC) in collaboration with the CORPORATE PAKISTAN GROUP (CPG) and Nutshell Group as Strategic Partner, with the Ministry of Commerce (MoC) and Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) as Founding Partners, the Pakistan Policy Dialogue is envisioned as a recurring national platform for evidence-based policy discourse. The Dialogue was supported by Bank Alfalah and

Kyrgyz carpet

Ambassador of the Kyrgyzstan Republic to Pakistan, H.E. Kylychbek Sultan, presented a beautifully hand-crafted Kyrgyz carpet to Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Division Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Pakistan-UAE CEPA Nears Final Stage, Opening a New Era of Trade and Investment



■ Abdul Waheed Khan

ISLAMABAD: Technical negotiations between Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates on the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA) have entered their final phase, raising hopes that this landmark accord will soon be signed.

The development came during an important meeting between Pakistan's Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, and the UAE Ambassador to Pakistan, Salem Mohammed Al Zaabi, where both sides discussed expanding bilateral

economic cooperation, boosting trade and investment, and promoting joint initiatives at the regional level.

UAE Ambassador Salem Mohammed Al Zaabi, while appreciating Pakistan's ongoing economic reforms, said that these measures were helping restore investor confidence and creating new business opportunities in the country.

He acknowledged that in recent years Pakistan has adopted a more positive economic direction by ensuring better financial discipline, increasing exports, and introducing investor-friendly policies.

Data Vault, US Company plan sovereign AI cloud initiatives in Pakistan

■ Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Data Vault Pakistan signed a strategic partnership with the US-based Rafay Systems, to enhance features of Pakistan's first sovereign AI cloud, targeting telcos, banks, cloud providers, and large enterprises seeking to deploy AI at scale while keeping sensitive workloads under country's borders.

Mehwish Salman Ali, Founder and CEO of Data Vault Pakistan, stated that the partnership aims to make sovereign AI consumption as easy to consume as any hyper-scale cloud, while ensuring that sensitive workloads remain securely within the country.

Haseeb Budhani, CEO of



Rafay Systems, emphasized the balance of speed and control, noting, "Companies want AI outcomes quickly without

compromising security or control."

The joint offering will include GPU-as-a-Service and AI-as-a-Service capabilities for training, fine-tuning, and inference, along with managed Kubernetes and platform services covering lifecycle management, security policy enforcement, and observability. It will also provide self-service consumption with built-in guardrails, allowing rapid access for development teams while maintaining centralized governance and cost control. Furthermore, the partnership will enable infrastructure providers to monetize AI resources through multi-tenant service delivery models.

■ Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Appellate Tribunal has upheld the Competition Commission of Pakistan's findings against Unilever Pakistan and Friesland Campina Engro for misleading consumers by advertising their frozen desserts as ice cream.

The CCP had initiated proceedings on a complaint filed by Pakistan Fruit Juice Company Private Limited, the maker of Hico ice cream. The complaint alleged that Unilever and Friesland Campina Engro were engaged in deceptive marketing by portraying their frozen desserts as ice cream through television and social media advertisements.

However, the tribunal reduced the penalty on each company from PKR 75 million to PKR 15 million. In Unilever Pakistan's case, an additional penalty for running advertisements that falsely compared its frozen dessert as healthier than dairy ice cream was reduced from PKR 20 million to PKR 5 million.

German Ambassador, ICCI President agree to act as bridge between German investors, Pakistani enterprises

■ Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, H. E. Ina Lepel accompanied by Ms. Janine Rohwer, Counsellor Political and Economic Affairs and Climate Change visited the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held an interactive session with the business community of Islamabad, reaffirming Germany's strong commitment to further strengthening bilateral economic relations with Pakistan.

Addressing the gathering, Ambassador Ina Lepel reiterated Germany's readiness to enhance cooperation with Pakistan in key areas including climate change, health and social protection, private sector development, and the

upgradation of vocational and technical education institutions. She emphasized that these collaborative efforts would contribute significantly to sustainable economic growth and deeper economic ties between the two countries.

The ICCI President added that the Chamber represents a vibrant and diverse business community comprising SMEs, exporters, startups, and industrial stakeholders. He expressed firm belief that enhanced engagement between German and Pakistani businesses could unlock new opportunities for trade expansion, technology transfer, and investment cooperation. Reaffirming ICCI's commitment, he stated that the Chamber stands ready to act as a bridge between German investors and Pakistani enter-

prises to facilitate meaningful and mutually beneficial collaboration.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairman ICCI Committee on Diplomatic Affairs, Zafar Bakhtawari, assured the Ambassador of ICCI's full support to the German Embassy in promoting bilateral trade and investment. He underlined the need for direct flights between Pakistan and Germany to enhance people-to-people and business-to-business linkages. He also proposed convening a grand session on Pakistan-Germany multilateral relations at the ICCI auditorium.

Former President ICCI, Mian Akram Farid, Senior Vice President ICCI Tahir Ayub and Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, in their remarks, emphasized the need for sustained institu-

tional collaboration between chambers of commerce of both countries. Prominent participants at the session included Council Member

Chaudhry Waheed-ud-Din; Executive Members Malik Mohsin Khalid, Abdur Rehman Siddiqui, Chaudhry Nadeem Ahmed, Ishaq Sial, and Zulqurnain Abbasi; former Vice President Ashfaq Chhattah, along with a large number of representatives from the business community.



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Financial and HR Issues Addressed in High-Level Rawalpindi Sports Meeting

 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali has presided over an important meeting at the Punjab Stadium on Wednesday to review financial affairs, human resources sports issues and other matters of Rawalpindi Division in detail.

Director General Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Khizar Afzaal Chaudhry, Additional Secretary Sports Shabbir Hussain Cheema and Deputy Director Planning Mirza Nadeem attended the meeting in person while Divisional Sports Officer Rawalpindi M Waheed, District Sports Officer Shams Taheen Abbasi and all sports officers of the division participated in the meeting through video link.

Addressing the meeting, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali said that the work is



in progress on 13 sports development schemes in Rawalpindi. "Rawalpindi Division has the best sports infrastructure including several world class sports facilities and complexes".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali directed the sports officers to make all possible efforts to incline youngsters to the grounds so that fresh talented athletes could be identified for future sports competitions. "It is obligation of all sports officers to utilize all sports facilities in the best possible manner".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali instructed the sports officers to keep the grounds and other sports facilities including sports complexes and stadiums in the best possible condition. "Any negligence regarding the maintenance of sports facilities will not be tolerated and in this regard all issues should be resolved immediately without wasting any time".

UMT Hosts Special Meet & Greet Session with Lahore Qalandars



 Sports Desk

LAHORE: The University of Management and Technology (UMT), in collaboration with Lahore Qalandars, hosted a special Meet & Greet session for students, which witnessed enthusiastic participation of a large number of cricket-loving students. The memorable event aimed to provide students with an interactive opportunity to engage directly with renowned national cricket players and learn from their experiences on and off the field.

The event was attended by CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana and Sameen Rana as chief guests, while

former Provincial Minister and President UMT Ibrahim Hasan Murad also graced the occasion with his presence. Lahore Qalandars captain Shaheen Shah Afridi, along with Fakhar Zaman, Salman Mirza and Muhammad Naem, added immense excitement to the event through their participation. Syed Yahya Hussaini was also present on the occasion. UMT Provost Dr. Asghar Zaidi, along with a large number of students from various departments, attended the session.

Addressing the gathering, President UMT Ibrahim Hasan Murad said that we are proud of our cricket stars and hoped that they will continue to

elevate the country's image through their dedication and outstanding performance. He added that UMT students will wholeheartedly support Lahore Qalandars in upcoming tournaments. Encouraging the youth, he emphasized that youth must also work with commitment, discipline and passion to bring pride to Pakistan and contribute meaningfully to national development.

The event also featured a special question-and-answer session with Shaheen Shah Afridi and other players, during which they shared insights from their professional journeys, highlighting the importance of hard work,

discipline, resilience and self-belief in achieving success.

During the ceremony, signed bats, balls and shirts were distributed among students by Lahore Qalandars, further enhancing the excitement and engagement of the event. The session proved to be a truly memorable experience for students, offering them valuable guidance on sportsmanship, leadership and professional excellence.

At the end of the event, President UMT Ibrahim Hasan Murad presented souvenirs and gifts to CEO Lahore Qalandars Atif Rana, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Fakhar Zaman, and other distinguished guests.

District Account Officer-I Toba Tek Singh Rai Sabir Performance is Commendable

 Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: District Account Officer-I Toba Tek Singh, Rai Muhammad Sabir is widely recognized as an honest, sincere and highly hardworking officer. He is not only fulfilling his official duties with dedication and professionalism but is also playing a key role in making the overall functioning of the office transparent, well-organized and public-friendly. Rai Muhammad Sabir is regarded among those officers who



consider integrity and professional competence as their true identity. His attitude towards his subordinate staff is polite, cooperative and supportive, providing guidance whenever needed. As a result, the office environment remains pleasant and conducive to efficient work. His conduct with visitors and complainants coming to the office is equally exemplary. He listens to public issues attentively and makes every effort to resolve them promptly and transparently while remaining within the legal frame-

work. According to citizens, since his posting at the District Accounts Office-I, there has been a noticeable improvement in the pace of official work along with a significant reduction in corruption and unnecessary delays.

His performance is being highly appreciated by the public, civil circles and relevant departments. There is optimism that under his leadership, the District Accounts Office-I Toba Tek Singh will continue to move towards greater efficiency, transparency and public trust.

Asian Champions Pakistan U-19 Cricket Team Begin World Cup Campaign from 16 January: PCB Official Says

 Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: Asian Champions Pakistan U19 will take on England in the opening match of the ICC Men's U19 Cricket World Cup 2026 on Friday at the Takashina Sports Club in Harare. Pakistan, who recently won the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup in Dubai beating India by 191 runs and the tri-series in Zimbabwe beating the hosts by nine wickets, will look to carry their winning momentum and add a third trophy to their cabinet.

Pakistan, the winners of the 2004 and 2006 editions of the ICC Men's U19 Cricket World Cup, will also be eyeing for their third ICC U19 titles.

Ahead of the mega event, Pakistan U19 took part in training

sessions and played two warm-up matches to fine-tune their preparations. The first warm-up match against Bangladesh on Saturday was washed out, with only 36.3 overs of Bangladeshi innings possible at the Masvingo Sports Club. Pakistan then defeated USA by 69 runs in their second warm-up match at the Bulawayo Athletic Club on Tuesday.

Among the 15-member squad, which will be led by Farhan Yousaf, only Ali Raza featured in the 2024 edition of the ICC Men's U19 World Cup. The right-arm fast bowler took nine wickets in the event, where Pakistan lost to Australia by one wicket in the semi-final.

Talking to PCB Digital, Paki-

stan U19 captain Farhan Yousaf said "The U19 camp in Multan helped us perform well in the Asia Cup and the tri-series. The same support staff has been working with us for the last six months and it is now paying dividends ahead of the ICC event.

"We have prepared well for the mega event. The players share a strong bond as we have been together for the last six months.

The tri-series and the

warm-up match against USA helped us understand the conditions here and we are now all set to do well in the World Cup."

15-member squad:

Farhan Yousaf (captain), Usman Khan (vice-captain), Abdul Subhan, Ahmed Hussain, Ali Hasan Baloch, Ali Raza, Daniyal Ali Khan, Hamza Zahoor

(wk), Huzaifa Ahsan, Momin Qamar, Mohammad Sayyam, Mohammad Shayan (wk), Niqab Shafiq, Sameer Minhas and Umar Zaib

Non-traveling reserves:

Abdul Qadir, Farhanullah, Hassan Khan, Ibtisam Azhar and Mohammad Huzaifa

Support staff:

Sarfaraz Ahmed (manager/mentor), Shahid Anwar (head coach/batting coach), Rao Iftikhar (bowling coach), Mansoor Amjad (fielding coach), Abrar Ahmed (trainer), Syed Nazir Ahmed (media manager), Dr Ali Aun (doctor), Ubaidullah (physio), Ali Hamza (analyst)

ICC U19 World Cup Pakistan fixtures:

16 January - Pakistan v

England, Takashina Sports Club, Harare

24 January to 1 February - Super 6 matches

19 January - Pakistan v Scotland, Takashina Sports Club, Harare

3 February - First semi-final, Queens Sports Club, Bulawayo

22 January - Zimbabwe v Pakistan, Takashina Sports Club, Harare

4 February - Second semi-final, Harare Sports Club, Harare

6 February - Final, Harare Sports Club, Harare

Two more matches Conclude in Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament.

 Sports Desk

KARACHI: Two more matches were decided in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament here at various Grounds of the City.

The highlights of the days play was all-round Performance by Hanan Khan first got 4/29 as slow left arm spinner and then He brilliant Century Unbeaten with 111, some good batting by also Aun Abbas 57, Farooq Hassan 57 and Ali Zaidi Unbeaten with 55.

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

Scores in Brief:

Pakistan Stallions beat Appie Farms by 7 wickets at Eid Gah Ground Korangi. Appie Farms 169 all-out in 31.3 overs. Zeeshan Iqbal 42 5x4 2x6, Shayan Ahmed 39, Sunny Nazir 33, Naveed Ullah (sla) 4/50, Khalid ul Nabi (sla) 3/30, Fawad 2/28.

In reply Pakistan Stallions 173/3 in 18.5 overs. Ali Zaidi 55 9x4 1x6, Abdur Rehman 38, Muhammad Hussain 33, Zaid Omar 30.

In the 2nd Match Sindh Police beat Custom Academy by 8 Wickets at Gulberg Gymkhana Ground. Custom Academy 191/9 in 40 overs. Aun Abbas 57 4x4 1x6, Zain Jaffery 31, Umar Farooq 28, Hashin Nawaz 21, Hanan Khan (sla) 4/29.

In reply Sindh Police 197/2 in 19.2 overs. Hanan Khan 111 10x4 8x6 not out, Farooq Hassan 57 6x4 5x6. Mubashir Ali 2/54.

Pakistan Chess Federation rocked by embezzlement allegations against suspended president

 Special Correspondent

MULTAN: A storm of serious financial corruption allegations has engulfed the Chess Federation of Pakistan (CFP), with its suspended President, Hanif Qureshi, at the center of a massive embezzlement scandal. Detailed official petitions and audit directives reveal a pattern of systematic plunder, suggesting that funds meant for the development of chess and the support of national athletes were instead diverted for personal gain by Qureshi and a close circle of his associates. The scale of the alleged theft runs into millions of rupees, comprising international grants, player fees, and public donations, shaking the very foundations of the sport's governing body in the country.

The most damning accusations point to the outright theft of international development funds. Hanif Qureshi is alleged to have personally received a sum of PKR 2.55 million from the World Chess Federation (FIDE) designated for Pakistan's participation in the 2022 Chess Olympiad, followed by another PKR 5.2 million for other events. Investigative documents assert that this money never entered the official federation accounts and was instead siphoned off, leaving players and officials unpaid and the funds entirely unaccounted for. Beyond international grants, Qureshi's operations are accused of pressuring the federation's treasury to release a further PKR 2.4 million for unspecified purposes, with no paper trail to justify the withdrawal.

Further compounding the scandal is the alleged operation of an extortion racket targeting the very athletes the federation is meant to serve. Under Qureshi's leadership, players were reportedly forced to pay illegal fees for essential services. This included charging for FIDE IDs, which are issued globally free of charge, and demanding up to PKR 30,000 for mandatory No-Objection Certificates from the Pakistan Sports Board, which are also provided without cost. These illicit charges, along with tournament entry fees, were funneled into the private bank accounts of Qureshi's frontmen, including Muhammad Waqar, Arsalan Mir, and the previously impeached Senior Vice President, Saleem Akhtar. The total amount misappropriated through these schemes is conservatively estimated to exceed PKR 17 million, funds allegedly used to finance a lifestyle of international travel and luxury for the accused.

The overwhelming evidence of misconduct forced the Pakistan Sports Board to take drastic action. To pave the way for a complete forensic investigation, the PSB Adjudicator suspended the entire top leadership of the CFP, including Hanif Qureshi, and handed over the federation's affairs to a neutral oversight committee. The Board has formally requested the Auditor General of Pakistan to conduct a supreme audit of all CFP accounts from the last four years, freezing all federation bank accounts until the process is complete. This move underscores the severity of the breaches and the state's commitment to uncovering the truth.

This scandal serves as a critical alert to the international community. Foreign embassies, private corporate sponsors, and international sports bodies like FIDE and the Asian Chess Federation are urged to exercise extreme caution. Any past or potential future funding directed towards Pakistani chess initiatives under the recent administration risks having been or being diverted. Stakeholders are advised to seek direct verification from the Pakistan Sports Board and to channel support only through the newly appointed, verified oversight committee to ensure their contributions genuinely benefit the sport. The future of chess in Pakistan now hinges on the outcomes of the federal audit and the ensuing legal accountability for what appears to be a profound betrayal of trust.



New Era

Manama: 14 January 2026 — President Asif Ali Zardari addressing delegates at a banquet at Al-Qudaibiya Palace, with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa and First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari also present.



Photo: PID

President Zardari meets King of Bahrain, discusses bilateral cooperation, trade

News Desk

MANAMA: President Asif Ali Zardari met King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa of Bahrain in Manama today and held comprehensive discussions aimed at further strengthening fraternal relationship between the two countries.

The talks reflected a shared resolve to deepen cooperation and give practical momentum to bilateral engagement.

First Lady, Bibi Aseefa

Bhutto Zardari, Senator Saleem Mandviwalla and Agriculture Minister Balochistan, Mir Ali Hassan Zehri accompanied the President.

Upon arrival at Al-Qudaiya Palace, the President was accorded a Guard of Honour.

King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa conferred upon President Asif Ali Zardari the Order of Shaikh Isa Bin Salman Al Khalifa First Class, highest Award of Bahrain, in

recognition of his services and contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Bahrain relations.

The President also wrote his remarks in the visitors' book at the palace.

The President first held a one-on-one meeting with King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa.

The two leaders reviewed the overall state of Pakistan-Bahrain relations and expressed satisfaction over their positive trajectory.

Speaking at the banquet

hosted in honour of President Zardari, King Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa described Pakistan and Bahrain as brotherly countries bound by historic relations rooted in mutual respect, Islamic brotherhood and shared interests.

The King termed the President's visit a significant milestone in further strengthening bilateral ties. He reaffirmed Bahrain's commitment to expanding cooperation with Pakistan across political, economic, commercial and developmental fields. He appreciated Pakistan's consistent support for Bahrain, lauded the positive contribution of the Pakistani community to the Kingdom's development. He also acknowledged Pakistan's role in supporting the causes of the Arab and Islamic nations, as well as its efforts to promote regional and international peace and stability.

Devolution vital for democratic trust, effective governance: Gilani

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Acting President and Chairman of the Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Wednesday underscored that devolution was not a threat to national cohesion but one of its strongest safeguards, stressing that a confident federation empowered its constituent units while remaining united by shared constitutional values.

Addressing the concluding session of Islamabad Devolution Summit, Acting President Gilani said authority exercised closer to the people deepened democratic participation, addressed grievances at an early stage and strengthened trust in democratic institutions.

He said the two-day forum brought together parliamentarians, constitutional experts, public administrators, economists, and representatives of civil society to engage in serious and structured reflection on one of the most consequential questions confronting Pakistan today: how to make devolution durable, functional, and truly responsive to the needs of our citizens.

He reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to advancing cooperative federalism, provincial equity and effective devolution, describing the upper house as a guardian of constitutional balance and a forum for dialogue among federating units.

As regards governance challenges, Acting President Gilani said weak fiscal coordination, limited sub-provincial revenue authority and outdated civil service structures continued to undermine service delivery. He called for predictable, rule-based fiscal arrangements, civil service reforms aligned with a three-tier constitutional order and



stronger local governments, describing them as the most visible expression of the state in citizens' daily lives.

Welcoming the Islamabad Devolution Summit Charter, he said its real value would lie in sustained advocacy and implementation through legislative and executive action.

Speaker of Punjab Assembly Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan also spoke on the occasion.

JF-17 fighter jet gaining more int'l recognition: Expert

BEIJING: A Chinese expert said on Wednesday that JF-17 is an outstanding warplane with advanced radar and weapon systems, and foreign interest reflects that it is gaining more international recognition.

Wang Yan'an, chief editor of the Beijing-based Aerospace Knowledge magazine, told the Global Times that the JF-17 fighter jet has attracted more foreign interest, primarily due to its outstanding performance.

The JF-17 is a top-level

Federal Cabinet constitutes body to deliberate on new design of currency notes

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Cabinet has constituted a cabinet committee to deliberate on the new design of currency notes.

The Cabinet, which met in Islamabad today with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in the chair, was briefed by the Ministry of Finance on the proposed designs of banknotes to be issued by the State Bank of Pakistan.

It was informed that the new currency notes are being designed in accordance with modern requirements. The cabinet was further apprised that international experts have been engaged for this purpose.

The Cabinet also referred the draft Private Hajj Policy 2027-2030, presented by the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, to the Hajj Policy Committee for further consideration.

Yan Wenbin appointed SCO special representative of China

BEIJING: The Chinese government has appointed ambassador Yan Wenbin as the special representative of the Chinese government on SCO affairs and SCO national coordinator of China, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Mao Ning said on Wednesday. She said that the special representative of the Chinese government on SCO affairs and the SCO national coordinator of China is an important post China set up to deepen exchanges and cooperation with the SCO countries.

DPM reaffirms govt commitment to transparency in energy markets



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Wednesday chaired a meeting of the Inter-Ministerial Committee to review the existing pricing structure of the oil and gas sector.

The deputy prime minister reaffirmed the government's commitment to ensuring transparency and efficiency in Pakistan's energy markets.

The committee discussed the pricing framework under the appli-

cable petroleum policy regime. The members examined current mechanisms and explored reform options aimed at improving affordability, sustainability, and sectoral performance.

The meeting was attended by federal ministers for inter-provincial coordination, power and petroleum, special assistants to PM Tariq Bajwa and Bilal Kayani, Advisor on Privatisation, National Coordinator of Special Investment Facilitation Council, Head of Power Sector Task Force, and Chairman of Federal Board of Revenue.

Minister lauds University of London as partner in strengthening education

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday praised the University of London for its academic excellence and enduring role in strengthening higher education in Pakistan.



Speaking at a reception held in honour of a visiting delegation led by University of London Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Phil Allmendinger, the minister highlighted the institution's rich academic legacy and its global reputation.

Tarar, himself an alumnus of the university, said his degree had greatly benefited him, underscoring the value of its teaching centres in nurturing both faculty and students.

He lauded the university's steadfast commitment and meaningful partnership with Pakistan's education sector.

The minister noted that the University of London had set high standards that were difficult to

match, while its teaching centres had played a vital role in academic development over the years.

He added that the partnership had grown stronger and more productive, with the introduction of innovation, creativity, and new modules.

Emphasizing the university's focus on research and development, Tarar said continuous improvement and innovation remain its defining hallmarks.

He stressed that the government of Pakistan deeply appreciated the institution's contributions to higher education.

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