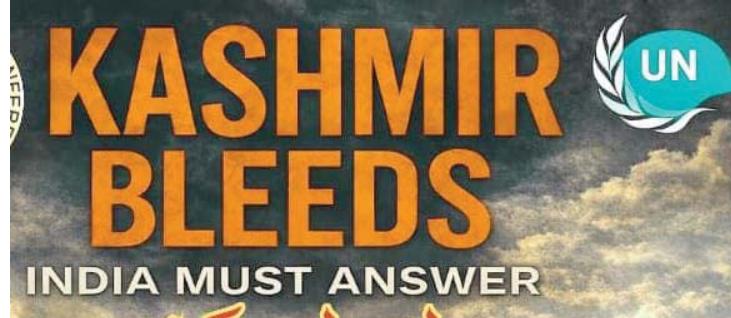


January 26 to be observed as Black Day, protest rally against India at Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Chairman Pasban-e-Hurriyat, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali, has announced that January 26 will be observed as Black Day and Day of Protest in Muzaffarabad. A strong protest demonstration against India will be held at Burhan Wani Shaheed Chowk to expose India's so-called democracy and its continued oppression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

While talking to the media in Muzaffarabad, Uzair Ahmad Ghazali said that



India is not a democratic country but a terrorist state, which is brutally suppressing

the Kashmiri people for demanding freedom, justice, and their internationally recognized right to self-determination. He stated that on January 26, a massive protest will be organized in the capital to condemn India's state terrorism and its fake democratic claims.

He said that the month of January is remembered in Kashmir as a "month of massacres" because on several occasions the Indian government carried out collective killings of innocent civilians in IOJK, resulting in the martyrdom of hundreds of unarmed Kashmiris.

Snow fall

ABBOTTABAD: A view of the mountain of Gallyat turned into white color after massive snow fall last night.



Photo: Online

AJK issues urgent travel advisory amid heavy rains and snowfall

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) Azad Jammu & Kashmir has issued safety instructions for the public, tourists, and travelers in view of ongoing heavy rains and snowfall. Citizens and visitors are advised to adopt precautionary measures and avoid unnecessary travel.

Tourists and travelers are instructed to regularly check the latest weather updates and forecasts issued by the Pakistan Meteorological Department through the NDMA/SDMA web portals and official social media handles (Twitter and Instagram) before starting their journey.

Due to heavy snowfall, travel to Muzaffarabad (Pir Chinasi), Neelum Valley, Jhelum Valley (Chakar, Leepa), Bagh (Sudhan Gali, Lasdanna), Poonch (Toli Pir), Haveli, and other tourist destinations is strongly discouraged unless absolutely necessary. For special alerts and guidance,

travelers should consult the concerned district administration and Tourist Police.

For information regarding possible road closures and guidance, travelers should remain in contact with Traffic Police and Tourist Police. In case of any emergency, the following helplines may be contacted:

State Emergency Operation Center, Muzaffarabad: 05822-921643
DDMA Muzaffarabad: 05822-920055
DDMA Jhelum Valley: 05822-922607
DDMA Neelum: 05821-920001
DDMA Bagh: 05823-920046
DDMA Rawalakot: 05824-920052
DDMA Haveli: 05823-921708
DDMA Sudhanoti: 05825-920011
DDMA Bhimber: 05828-920220
DDMA Kotli: 05826-920163
DDMA Mirpur: 05827-921270
Tourist Police: 1422
Rescue 1122 Helpline: 1122

The public is requested to remain vigilant, cooperate with authorities, and strictly follow all safety guidelines to protect lives and property during adverse weather conditions.



and property during adverse weather conditions.

Commissioner Daud chairs meeting on ongoing public health engineering projects

 Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A meeting regarding the ongoing projects of the Public Health Engineering Department was held under the chairmanship of Commissioner Dera Division, Daud Khan.

According to details, the meeting was attended by Superintending Engineer Public Health Engineering (PHE) Dera, Engineer Junaid Hafeez, Assistant to Commissioner Political and Development Sajjad Baloch, along with other officers and representatives of the department.

During the meeting, a detailed briefing was given on the ongoing water supply



and sewerage line projects in Dera district.

Superintending Engineer Junaid Hafeez

informed the Commissioner that the Public Health Department is working on various development projects to ensure the provision of clean drinking water across the district. He said that new water supply schemes, installation of pipelines, and repair of old lines are being carried out at a fast pace in both urban and rural areas to facilitate the public.

The Commissioner also instructed the concerned officers to further improve field monitoring and ensure timely redressal of public complaints.

At the end of the meeting, it was reaffirmed that efforts will continue to improve the water supply and sewerage system in Dera Ismail Khan to provide better basic facilities to the public.

Kashmir issue is 'Life and Death' for millions, Sardar Attique

 Spokesman Report



SIALKOT, PASUR: "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" Workers Convention Held under the Auspices of All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference

A "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" Workers Convention was held in Pasur under the auspices of the All Jammu & Kashmir Muslim Conference. Addressing the convention, President of Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, said that the Kashmir issue is not a border dispute but a matter of life and death for more than 20 million people. He emphasized

that the secure future of South Asia is directly linked with a peaceful, political, and negotiated settlement of the Kashmir issue. Without resolving the Kashmir dispute, no power in the world can bring lasting improvement in relations between Pakistan and India.

He added that the Muslim Conference enjoys the mandate, support, and backing of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Allama Iqbal. Allama Iqbal, he said, described the Muslim Conference as the true manifestation of the spirit of Kashmir's freedom.

The convention was also addressed by former President of Muslim Conference Mirza Muhammad Shafiq Jafar Advocate, Chaudhry Muhammad Javed, Waheed-ul-Haq Hashmi Advocate, Haji Afzal Darala (Member Punjab Bar Council), Mujtaba Hassan, Ahsan Elahi Advocate, Liaqat Ali (former Nazim Shakargarh), Abrar Hussain Salhari, Zeeshan Raza Ansari, Abdul Latif Salhari, Muhammad Ijaz Noori, Madam Naheen Akhtar, and other speakers.

The proceedings of the convention were conducted by Stage Secretary Muhammad Javed Salhari, while the session was presided over by former Member District Council, Chaudhry Muhammad Javed Hussain.

Muslim Conference Show of Strength in Muzaffarabad Signals Political Resurgence

DHIRKOT: Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan, Central Senior Vice Chairman, Publicity Wing, has extended heartfelt congratulations to the people of Muzaffarabad Division on the successful and powerful public show of the "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan Convention."



In his statement, Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan congratulated the Leader of Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, and the people of Muzaffarabad for organizing and making the convention a great success. He said that the successful convention is clear proof that the Muslim Conference still holds a strong presence not only across Azad Jammu and Kashmir but also throughout Pakistan.

He stated that the Muslim Conference is the true custodian and representative of the political and ideological vision of Raees-ul-Ahrar Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas (late) and Mujahid-e-Awal Sardar Muhammad Abdul Qayyum Khan (late). Although the party was weakened in the past by prioritizing personal interests over collective and ideological values, the Muslim Conference remains a symbol of ideology, vision, and political consciousness.

Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan said that under the directions of the Leader of the Muslim Conference, Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan, successful "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" conventions are being held across Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. The enthusiastic participation of party workers reflects that the Muslim Conference still lives in the hearts of the people, just as it did during the eras of Chaudhry Ghulam Abbas (late), Sardar Abdul Qayyum Khan (late), and Sardar Sikandar Hayat Khan (late).

Four People Died Due to Suffocation in Tehsil Kabirwala in District Khanewal

 Waqr Paracha

KHANEWAL: Four people died of suffocation in Nawanshahr, Basti Balochanwala in a suburb of Tehsil Kabirwala in District Khanewal. A generator was run in a room of the house when the electricity went out at night. The deceased include a husband and wife and two children. According to the incident, a tragic incident took place in Nawanshahr, Basti Balochanwala, a suburb of Kabirwala tehsil of Khanewal. Last night, during the cold and rain, the electricity went out, on which a generator was run in a room of the house, but its smoke gathered in the room. Four people died in this accident, including a husband and wife and two children. Rescue 1122 staff have shifted the bodies to Tehsil Hospital Kabirwala. Milk seller Asif Baloch, his wife Nadia and two young sons Azeem and Daniyal died on the spot in the accident.

The fear of Pakistan becoming a virtually uninvestable country is spreading. Khawaja Shahid Razzak Sikka

 Abdul Majid

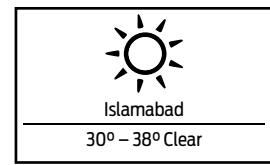
FAISALABAD: Experts and investors say that Pakistan is no longer investable for investment. It has now become uninvestable. Markazi Tanzeem Tajran Pakistan and Anjuman Tajran City Register Faisalabad have demanded the government to impose an unprecedented industrial emergency in the country and have warned that the country's manufacturing base is standing on a structural fault line that may prove irreversible. Khawaja Shahid Razzak Sikka has said that we are not talking about setting up new factories, we are talking about running old factories with the government. New ones are a distant dream. Every day an industry is falling, every day a factory is closing. 34 percent is the highest in our cost region. We will compete. We have been talking about this for two years. If we don't do it now, when will it happen? This entire system will collapse. Foreign investors say that Pakistan is uninvestable-friendly, it is not suitable for investment, it cannot be invested in. Khawaja Shahid Razzak Sikka has said that why do you change the policy? When a policy is made, let it run. The new government comes and abolishes the previous policy. We need a new industrial policy now that will last at least ten years. The government should give a new policy that will last for ten to fifteen years. The government should tell us what the minimum cost of electricity will be and who will provide what facilities. Until this is done, the industry will not function. Investors have lost confidence and will not set up the industry. The government will not compromise on the trust, minimum price of electricity and taxation. The industry will not function or be set up. Khawaja Shahid Razak Sikka has appealed to the government to rescue the industry. Those who go on ventilators will not come back to life.

MoU singed to upgrade National Museum of Pakistan

KARACHI: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi on Friday witnessed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signing ceremony to upgrade the National Museum of Pakistan.

The MoU signing ceremony was held between the Federal Ministry of National Heritage and Culture and the Aga Khan University for the upgradation of the National Museum of Pakistan at the University Center of Agha Khan University (AKU).

The MoU aimed at formalizing a strategic partnership for revitalizing the National Museum of Pakistan through institutional strengthening, conservation and enhanced public engagement. This collaboration represents a significant investment in safeguarding Pakistan's shared history while reimagining the museum experience for future generations.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:43 am
Zohr	12:19 pm
Asr	3:52 pm
Magrib	5:30 pm
Isha	6:56 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 &
& Rescue Services	445122
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

Pakistan's Digital Export Boom: How Payment Reliability Is Turning Talent into Revenue
Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan's digital and IT services exports reached a record \$4.6 billion in FY 2024-25, fueled by a maturing ecosystem of small and medium-sized enterprises, gaming studios, and service providers increasingly competing on global stages, according to Nagesh Devata, Senior Vice President for Asia Pacific at Payoneer.

"Pakistan is becoming more competitive on talent and cost, and payment reliability is improving," Devata said during a recent media interaction in Pakistan. "The momentum is no longer limited to a single segment; it spans software development, gaming, digital creative services, and business process outsourcing."

With over 5 million SMEs contributing nearly 40% to Pakistan's GDP, the shift toward services-led exports marks a critical inflection point. However, structural barriers remain. Cross-border payment complexities, FX volatility, and long settlement cycles have historically constrained Pakistani businesses from scaling internationally.

Payoneer, operates across more than 190 countries and territories. It provides multi-currency accounts, streamlined collections, and tools that help exporters manage cash flow and currency risk. "Global clients expect structured invoicing and predictable settlements," Devata explained. "Reliable payment flows are a key enabler as businesses move from one-off projects to long-term, recurring international contracts."

Dr. Faisal Mushtaq honoured as Entrepreneur of the Year at LUMS

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Millennium Education Group Pakistan continues to consolidate its leadership in the nation's education landscape, having earlier been recognized as the Fastest Growing Brand of the Year in the category of school systems.

Further strengthening this momentum, its Chairman and CEO, Dr. Faisal Mushtaq TI, was recently honoured with the prestigious Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Lahore University of Management Sciences LUMS says a press release.

The award was conferred in recognition of Dr. Faisal Mushtaq's outstanding contributions to educational entrepreneurship, innovation, and sustainable institutional growth.

His visionary leadership has played a pivotal role in redefining education delivery and expanding access to modern, future-ready learning models across Pakistan.

The recognition at LUMS reflects Dr. Faisal Mushtaq's continued efforts to

promote education-led entrepreneurship and systemic innovation. Under his stewardship, The Millennium Education Group has introduced cutting-edge academic programmes, technology-enabled classrooms, and international academic collaborations, with a strong focus on fostering critical thinking, creativity, and digital literacy. These initiatives have not only supported the group's rapid expansion nationwide but have also reinforced its reputation for academic excellence and system-wide innovation.

Speaking on the occasion, Dr. Faisal Mushtaq highlighted the critical link between entrepreneurship and education in Pakistan, stating that educational institutions must play a proactive role in nurturing entrepreneurial minds, innovation, and problem-solving skills among young people.

He emphasized that empowering students with entrepreneurial thinking, practical skills, and global exposure is essential for driving economic growth, job creation, and long-term national development.



Decode Entrepreneur's Conference

After road closing

ISLAMABAD: A large number of vehicles are waiting for the clearance of roads to reach Murree as traffic police closed the Murree Expressway for public entry due to the massive snowfall last night.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Capacity-Building Course for Investigation Officers held in Faisalabad

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: A capacity-building course aimed at enhancing the professional skills of investigation officers from across the Faisalabad region was held at the Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan Auditorium under the chairmanship of Regional Police Officer (RPO) Faisalabad, Sohail Akhtar Sukhera.

Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar, City Police Officer Faisalabad Sahibzada Bilal Umer, SSP Investigation, Town SPs, SDPOs, and prosecution officers were also present on the occasion.

Addressing the participants, RPO Sohail Akhtar Sukhera said the objective of the course was to improve the investigative capacity and professional competence of police officers. He emphasized that strong



challans and quality investigations were essential for the timely disposal of cases, adding that only well-trained investigation officers could prepare solid cases and ensure convictions through the courts.

Speaking on the occasion,

Commissioner Faisalabad Raja Jahangir Anwar appreciated the initiatives taken by the RPO, stating that memorandums of understanding (MOUs) had been signed with leading higher education institutions including DPS, DMC, Chenab

colleges to provide fee concessions and registration relief to the children of martyrs, ghazis and serving police officers. He added that similar capacity-building courses would also be organized in the future for civil administration officers.

other shrines and mosques will be completed.

On this occasion, the Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab appreciated Director Projects Auqaf Rafiq Noor Wattoo and the Engineering Wing of Auqaf for completing the renovation and beautification of the medical ward within the stipulated timeline.

A special ceremony was also organized in honor of Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, during which Medical Superintendent Data Darbar Hospital, Dr. Gul Zaman, presented a souvenir in recognition of his services for the restoration of the medical ward and other initiatives.

Additionally, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta distributed honorary shields and certificates among the administrative and medical staff of Data Darbar Hospital in appreciation of their services.

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Pakistan Salutes Youth on International Day of Education, Champions Co-Creation

On the occasion of the International Day of Education President of Islamic Republic Pakistan Mr. Asif Ali Zardari said in his message I extend my sincere greetings to the people of Pakistan, particularly our students, teachers, parents, scholars and all those engaged in the pursuit of education and learning.

This year's theme, "The Power of Youth in Co-Creating Education," highlights the importance of recognizing young people not only as learners, but as thinkers, innovators and responsible citizens whose ideas strengthen educational systems and democratic societies.

Pakistan's future is closely linked with its youth. As a nation with a rich cultural heritage and a large young population, we must ensure that education nurtures curiosity, competence and character. It should enable young people to think critically, act ethically and contribute positively to their communities. The constitutional guarantee of free and compulsory education under Article 25-A reflects our shared commitment to this fundamental right.

In a rapidly changing and interconnected world, education must combine academic excellence with practical skills, digital literacy, ethical values and respect for diversity. Efforts to strengthen higher education, promote research and innovation and expand digital learning reflect this evolving vision.

Measures such as expanded access to higher education, merit-based student support and improved access to technology are helping young people engage meaningfully with the knowledge economy.

Technical and vocational education and training play a vital role in equipping youth with employable skills and affirming the dignity of labour. National skills development initiatives are preparing young people for emerging technologies while aligning training with international standards, opening pathways for employment, entrepreneurship and global engagement.

Inclusive approaches that extend opportunities to women, madrasa students and youth from underserved regions promote social cohesion and ensure that progress is shared more equitably.

Education flourishes when families, communities, educators, institutions and the private sector work together, and when students themselves are meaningfully involved in shaping their learning environments.

On this day, I urge all stakeholders to reaffirm education as a national priority and to empower our youth as partners in building a skilled, enlightened and resilient Pakistan.

May our collective efforts continue to promote peace, progress and prosperity for generations to come.

Pakistan Zindabad!

Trump's 'Board of Peace' or a New Global Order?

When U.S. President Donald Trump introduced the "Board of Peace," it was presented not merely as a response to the war in Gaza, but as the foundation of a broader international mechanism for managing conflict and reconstruction across the world. Official charter documents describe a dual mandate: an immediate role in stabilizing Gaza through humanitarian coordination, institutional rebuilding, and transitional security oversight, and a longer-term ambition to evolve into a standing platform capable of engaging future post-conflict environments beyond the Middle East. This framing, reinforced by policy statements and diplomatic briefings, has placed the board at the center of a debate that extends far beyond one devastated territory.

The legal and institutional anchor for the board's Gaza mission is a United Nations Security Council resolution adopted in November, which welcomed the initiative as a transitional administration through 2027. That resolution authorized the deployment of a temporary International Stabilization Force, required regular reporting to the Council, and framed the board's role as preparatory to the return of authority to a reformed Palestinian administration. Yet the board's own charter language leaves open the possibility of expansion into other conflicts, effectively positioning Gaza as the first test case for a wider experiment in global peace governance.

Several close U.S. allies have declined or hesitated. Norway and Sweden have refused. France has indicated it will not participate, citing constitutional and institutional concerns. Canada has agreed in principle but is seeking clar-

ification. Britain, Germany, and Japan have not taken definitive public positions. Ukraine has acknowledged the invitation while expressing unease about a forum with Russia. Russia and China, both permanent members of the UN Security Council, have not committed, reflecting caution toward initiatives that could be seen as diluting the UN's central role in global conflict resolution.

For the states that have joined, participation carries implications at home and abroad. In Israel, the prospect of a multilateral board shaping Gaza's transition and potentially influencing security arrangements has sparked intense political debate. Some lawmakers and coalition partners view external oversight as a constraint on Israel's freedom of action, particularly on sensitive issues such as border control and any future discussion of disarming Hamas. Others see international involvement as a way to share responsibility for Gaza's future rather than leaving Israel isolated with the burden of governance and reconstruction.

In Iran, the board is widely interpreted through the lens of strategic rivalry with Washington. Political figures and media outlets have portrayed it as an extension of U.S. influence rather than a neutral peace mechanism, warning that participation by regional states could be read as endorsement of an American-led security architecture. This perception matters for governments in the Gulf and beyond that must balance relations with both Washington and Tehran.

One of the most sensitive issues

surrounding the board's Gaza mandate is the question of disarmament, particularly with regard to Hamas. Official frameworks emphasize stabilization and the return of governance to a reformed Palestinian authority, but they are less explicit about how armed groups would be neutralized. The reality is that even the combined military and intelligence capabilities of the United States and Israel have not eliminated Hamas's operational capacity.

Its influence is practical rather than juridical, flowing from its ability to coordinate funds, support transitional administrations, and shape policy frameworks through diplomacy and expertise. Yet practical influence can shift the balance of global governance if major donors and diplomatic energy flow through a selective forum rather than the UN's universal framework. The tension is between efficiency and legitimacy, between the speed of smaller, well-funded bodies and the broad acceptance conferred by universal institutions.

Whether the board will collapse or endure is likely to depend on how it navigates this tension. Without sustained participation from all major power centers, it may find its role narrowed to technical coordination and reconstruction rather than political settlement in the world's most contentious conflicts. A hybrid approach, pairing a transparent, multi-donor reconstruction fund with a rotating and inclusive governance structure while recognizing major contributors without granting permanent political control, offers a possible path toward balance.

The Board of Peace now stands as a test of how global governance adapts to a changing balance of power. Its legacy will not be measured only by what it achieves in Gaza, but by whether it can persuade a divided world that peace can be pursued with both effectiveness and legitimacy, rooted in cooperation rather than ownership, and in shared authority rather than exclusive influence.

Formally, the Board of Peace does not replace the United Nations. It lacks treaty-based authority to issue binding resolutions or to authorize force beyond

what the Security Council permits. Its influence is practical rather than juridical, flowing from its ability to coordinate funds, support transitional administrations, and shape policy frameworks through diplomacy and expertise. Yet practical influence can shift the balance of global governance if major donors and diplomatic energy flow through a selective forum rather than the UN's universal framework. The tension is between efficiency and legitimacy, between the speed of smaller, well-funded bodies and the broad acceptance conferred by universal institutions.

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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



Qamar Bashir



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

Pakistan's Re-emergence as a Global Player

Pakistan's place in global politics has always been linked to its geographic importance, complex political history, and evolving economic and security challenges. After several years of internal instability, economic pressure, and diplomatic difficulties, Pakistan is once again striving to establish itself as an effective global player. This re-emergence is not sudden; rather, it is the result of gradual changes in foreign policy, the promotion of regional connectivity, economic diplomacy, and active participation in multilateral global forums. In a global system where competition among major powers and regional alignments are rapidly shifting, Pakistan's role is also taking on a new form, reflecting both its constraints and its enduring strategic significance.

Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous has emerged as a decisive turning point in Pakistan's recent history, bringing about a notable change in how Pakistan is perceived internationally. This operation gave a clear and organized expression to the state's resolve, with its effects visible across security, politics, the economy, and social psychology. In this context, it is fair to say that Pakistan has entered a new era after Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous. The state's message was clear: no compromise would be made on national security. Politically as well, the effects of the operation are evident. Despite political differences, the national security narrative helped generate a sense of national consensus.

At the same time, Pakistan has sought to restore and expand its relations with major global powers. Although relations with the United States have experienced ups and downs, they remain important in areas such as trade, environmental cooperation, and regional security. Pakistan's diplomatic engagement with the European Union, particularly through trade arrangements like GSP Plus, has helped strengthen economic

ties and highlight Pakistan's role in global supply chains. A cautious improvement in relations with Russia can also be seen, reflecting Pakistan's multipolar foreign policy in line with shifting global power balances.

Pakistan's active participation in international organizations further underscores the revival of its global role. Its involvement in the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) provides platforms to present its views on global affairs, whether related to conflict resolution or economic development. By hosting and participating in multilateral dialogues, Pakistan is presenting itself as a responsible state committed to international cooperation and the collective resolution of shared challenges.

Pakistan's contribution to global peace and security is another important aspect of its growing international significance. Pakistan has been among the largest contributors of troops to United Nations peacekeeping missions, earning recognition for its professionalism and commitment. This role enhances Pakistan's soft power and portrays it as an active contributor to global stability. In addition, Pakistan's counterterrorism measures and its evolving strategy regarding peace in Afghanistan also shape its strategic role on the global stage.

Economic stability and reforms are fundamental to Pakistan's global ambitions. Although the country continues to face serious challenges such as debt, inflation, and structural weaknesses, recent measures to stabilize the economy reflect an effort to restore confidence in international financial markets. Engagement with international financial institutions and efforts to attract foreign investment indicate an understanding that sustainable economic growth is essential for lasting global influence.

Environmental diplomacy has also emerged as

a new arena in which Pakistan is raising its voice globally. As one of the countries most affected by climate change, Pakistan has sought to highlight issues of environmental injustice and global responsibility for adaptation. Following devastating floods, Pakistan's advocacy at international environmental forums has drawn global attention and strengthened its moral standing in climate negotiations. By presenting itself as both a vulnerable country and an active partner, Pakistan is expanding the scope of its global role.

Thus, Pakistan's re-emergence as a global player is not a one-dimensional or sudden shift, but a multifaceted process. It involves the reconfiguration of diplomatic strategy, strategic partnerships, economic linkages, and active participation in global governance. Although challenges such as political instability and economic fragility remain, Pakistan's efforts to redefine its role demonstrate a serious attempt to move from the periphery of global politics toward a more central position.

In conclusion, Pakistan's increasing engagement with the world is the result of both necessity and opportunity. In this era of global uncertainty and regional change, Pakistan's geographic importance, diplomatic balance, and growing emphasis on economic and environmental diplomacy give it the potential to become more prominent internationally. How far this re-emergence translates into sustainable influence will depend on internal stability, policy continuity, and the alignment of domestic reforms with global ambitions. Nevertheless, clear signs of Pakistan's renewed activity on the global stage are visible, signaling a cautious yet meaningful return to international relevance. If Pakistan had not inflicted a humiliating defeat on India in Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsous, it is possible that Pakistan would not be viewed today in the way it is by the world and major global powers. May God always keep Pakistan dominant over its enemies.

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Muhammad Asif

Chalk Dust to Clicks: Economy Finds a New Voice

The transition from traditional economies based on physical goods and services to digital economies driven by technology has been a defining feature of the 21st century. In this age of rapid technological advancement, the economy has found a new voice, moving from the tangible remnants of chalk dust in business rooms to the virtual realm of clicks and online transactions. This shift has not only transformed the way businesses operate but has also revolutionized how consumers engage with products and services. The implications of this transition, analyzing the impact on various sectors of the economy and examining the opportunities and challenges that come with this digital transformation.

The rise of e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems has revolutionized the way businesses reach their customers and conduct transactions. With just a few clicks, consumers can now purchase goods and services from anywhere in the world, opening up a world of possibilities for businesses to expand their reach and tap into global markets.

Furthermore, the digital divide remains a persistent barrier to full participation in the digital economy. While online transactions offer unparalleled convenience and accessibility, there are still segments of the population lacking the necessary skills or resources to take full advantage of digital opportunities. Bridging this gap requires investment in digital literacy programs, affordable internet access, and inclusive technology solutions to ensure that everyone can benefit from the fruits of the digital age.

Start-ups and small businesses now have the opportunity to reach a global audience through online platforms, leveling the playing field and

democratizing access to markets. This has led to a wave of innovation and creativity, with entrepreneurs harnessing the power of technology to disrupt traditional industries and offer unique solutions to contemporary challenges.

In addition to its impact on businesses, the digital economy has also transformed the way we work and interact with each other. The rise of remote work and digital collaboration tools has enabled individuals to connect and collaborate on projects regardless of their location, leading to a more decentralized and flexible work environment. This has not only increased productivity but has also allowed for greater work-life balance and autonomy.

However, with these opportunities come challenges. The digital economy has raised concerns about data privacy and security, as the proliferation of online transactions and interactions has made individuals more vulnerable to cyber threats. Additionally, the digital divide has created a divide between those who have access to technology and those who do not, remains a pressing issue, with marginalized communities being left behind in the fast-paced digital world.

The shift from chalk dust to clicks marks a significant transformation in the economy, ushering in a new era of digital innovation and connectivity. While this transition has presented numerous opportunities for growth and development, it has also brought about challenges that must be addressed to ensure a more inclusive and sustainable digital future. By embracing technology, fostering innovation, and prioritizing digital literacy and inclusivity, we can harness the full potential of the digital economy and build a more resilient and equitable society.

The writer is Post-Doctorate (Peace Education) in International Islamic University Islamabad



Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

CASS Lahore Explores Paradigm Shift: Pakistan's Strategic Roadmap Post-2025 US NSS

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace and Security Studies (CASS) Lahore organised a talk titled "A Paradigm Shift in US National Security Strategy (NSS): Implications for South Asia and the Middle East" on 22 January 2026. As an independent think tank, CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in national security in its wider context. The event was attended by academics, intellectuals, and domain experts. Ambassador Muhammad Haroon Shaukat (Retd), Director, CASS Lahore, delivered the opening address.

Dr Moed Yusuf, Vice Chancellor of the Beaconhouse National University, stated that the 2025 NSS, very different from previous ones, sets out President Trump's vision of the world. As a reflection of the 1904 Roosevelt Doctrine, the strategy has upended the liberal free trade order. He asserted that this would lead to the rise of middle powers, coming together on issue-based part-



nerships. Pakistan's geographic location at the nexus of the Asia-Pacific, Middle East, Central Asia, and South Asia provides a strategic opportunity. In that regard, he emphasised that Pakistan needs to adopt three key measures:

become a regional connectivity hub, move from an assistance-based model to geopolitics, and adopt no-camp policies. Moving forward, he stressed that Pakistan must navigate the global morass by strengthening the mili-

tary without undermining economic growth and resolving political schisms.

In his concluding remarks, Air Marshal Asim Suleiman (Retd), President, CASS, Lahore, stated that the 2025 NSS signals a shift in the US's global outlook. He said that this change matters and could have effects in the future across key regions. He further stated that the Indo-US relations are at a historic low, with India's diminished role in the Indo-Pacific. He explained that although Pakistan features soberly in the NSS, its relations with the US have improved following Pakistan's success in Marka-e-Haq, which has boosted its global standing and credibility. Moreover, opportunities have emerged for Pakistan to deepen engagements with the Middle East.

The event concluded with a lively interactive session. It highlighted Pakistan's defence exports, the National Security Policy, and engagements with the Middle East. The participants appreciated CASS Lahore's initiative in hosting an engaging and thought-provoking discussion.

FTO Zafar-ul-Haq Hijazi visits Rawalpindi Chambers, addresses business community

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO) Mr. Zafar-ul-Haq Hijazi paid an official visit to the Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) and addressed the business community, assuring them of full protection of taxpayers' rights and relief-oriented measures. This was Mr. Hijazi's maiden visit to any chamber after assuming charge as Federal Tax Ombudsman.

Speaking on the occasion, Mr. Hijazi said that every possible step would be taken to safeguard the rights of taxpayers. He emphasized that upcoming budget proposals would ensure an end to harassment of tax filers. He informed the participants that the time for registering complaints against the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and filing appeals has been reduced to just one day. "Now complaints will be reviewed and appeals will be fixed within a single



day," he stated, adding that his priority is to provide maximum relief to businesses.

Almas Ali Jovindah Advisor (Legal) FTO informed that FTO has received more than 38000 complaints against the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR)

during 2025 and 98 percent of the FTO's recommendations were implemented by the FBR.

RCCI President Mr. Usman Shaukat, in his address, highlighted the importance of the Federal Tax Ombudsman as a key institution, deterrence and

appreciated its role in timely resolution of traders' complaints. He said that the FTO has played an effective role in addressing issues faced by the business community.

Group Leader RCCI Mr. Sohail Altaf said that the confidence of the business community in the FTO office has significantly increased. He clarified that traders have no objection to paying taxes; rather, their concerns relate to the procedures adopted by FBR. He pointed out that as withholding agents, the business community collects and deposits taxes for FBR free of cost, yet no credit or recognition is given. He demanded that businessmen should be given the status of partners of FBR in tax collection.

Senior Vice President Mr. Khalid Farooq Qazi, Vice President Mr. Fahad Barlas, former presidents of RCCI, Vice President FPCCI Mr. Tariq Jadoon, Executive Committee members, and a large number of chamber members were also present on the occasion.

Attock's new PPP District President Malik Riasat Sudhryal hailed as unparalleled public servant

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Former candidate for the Punjab Assembly constituency PP-4 and newly elected District President, Malik Riasat Sudhryal, has no parallel when it comes to public service. During the previous tenure, he secured 8000s worth of rupees for his constituency with the support of former Federal Minister Sheikh Aftab Ahmed.

Examples of Malik Riasat Sudhryal's exceptional public service and participation in welfare activities cannot be

found anywhere else in Attock district. He has made public service his guiding principle and kept the doors of his home and office open to the public 24 hours a day.

In recognition of these capabilities, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari issued his notification as District President, which sparked a wave of happiness among party workers. These views were expressed by senior Pakistan Peoples Party worker Mujahid Hussain, popularly known as Kaku, while talking to journalists.

He said that Malik Riasat Ali

Sudhryal's struggle has played a key role in making the Pakistan Peoples Party a major political force in Attock. This is why the people of Attock district have full confidence in the PPP, believing it to be the only party that can address public deprivations.

He further stated that Malik Riasat Sudhryal will spare no effort in fulfilling the responsibility entrusted to him by Chairman Bilawal Bhutto. He is a political leader who works day and night for public welfare and development.

The trust of the people of Attock in Malik Riasat Sudhryal is proof that

the coming era belongs to the Pakistan Peoples Party. Since former National Assembly candidate Malik Sher Khan Sudhryal and former Punjab Assembly candidate Malik Riasat Sudhryal joined the PPP, they have been striving to raise the party's prestige, and today the PPP has become the hope of the people of Attock.

He added that Malik Riasat Sudhryal is an energetic, active, hardworking political leader who maintains constant contact with the public. His appointment as District President is a new ray of hope for the people of Attock.

When the Guardians of Law Turn Into Agents of Brutality: Ritrarh Police Torture Exposes Systemic Failure

Law in their own hands" This question is once again knocking on the conscience of our society with full force. When the force meant to uphold the law violates it, when a uniform outweighs humanity, and when police stations become centers of fear rather than justice, the moral foundations of the state begin to shake.

The recent incident at the Ritrarh Police Station in Taunsa Sharif is not just an isolated event—it is a story that exposes the face of an entire system. Two young men were falsely named in a theft case (FIR No. 9/26, Section 380) over a land dispute, taken into the forest, and subjected to brutal torture. Their screams pierced the skies, yet no mercy was shown. And all this was carried out not by a terrorist group, but by those entrusted to protect the law.

According to sources, this cruelty was not the result of personal grievance or upholding justice but was carried out at the behest of an influential individual, Shehzad Ahmed. SHO Mohi-ud-Din

Khan, accompanied by a heavy contingent, unleashed mountains of violence on poor citizens. The question arises: Can an SHO act with such brutality alone? Or should it be accepted that the silent consent of higher officers was also part of this crime?

After the incident came to light, the DPO Dera Ghazi Khan suspended SHO Mohi-ud-Din Khan, along with police officials Samar Gormani and Maqsood Qaisrani. Undoubtedly, this was a timely step, but is suspension enough? Is it not merely a symbolic measure to ease temporary public pressure? The real perpetrators often quietly return after suspension, while the victims carry their wounds for life.

Ritrarh Police Station, considered a small and relatively peaceful station in terms of crime rates, keeps making headlines. Why is posting here seemingly impossible without "special favor"? Mohi-ud-Din Khan was assigned here for a second time. Why are the duration of postings, past records, and complaints of officers not reviewed before assigning

them? The DPO conducted a surprise visit, yet somehow this atrocity escaped notice. The video that went viral on social media today is enough to shame humanity. The screams of these young men are not just captured on camera; they echo in the hearts of their parents, in the prayers of their sisters, and in the conscience of the society.

This is not the first incident. Previously, there was the Kot Adu tragedy, then the Sohail case whether the accused was a wanted criminal or not, no law allows such public torture. Human rights are not privileges; they are fundamental rights of every citizen.

When these videos reach print, electronic, and social media, and human rights organizations, voices will rise. The matter will also reach political forums, because this is not just a police station

issue—it is a question of the state's character.

The Chief Minister of Punjab, Hon. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, wants to see an exemplary, clean, and modern Punjab. Police are being provided with BYD electric vehicles and Green Policing units, but if the mindset remains old, brutal, and duplicitous, even modern vehicles cannot deliver justice.

We make a strong appeal to the Chief Minister of Punjab to ensure immediate, impartial, and transparent investigation of the Ritrarh incident. Not only the subordinate officers but all those who directly or indirectly facilitated this brutality must be brought to justice. Simultaneously, a comprehensive audit of the posting durations and performance of all SHOs in the Dera Ghazi Khan region must be conducted.

The DPO's statement that "those who take the law into their own hands

deserve no leniency" is correct. Now it is time to turn this statement into action. If this case is buried today, tomorrow another young person will fall victim in another forest at the behest of another influential person. The supremacy of law is established not through slogans but through exemplary punishments.

Otherwise, Ritrarh wins, and justice loses—again.

The office of Additional IG Police South Punjab exists, but the question remains: does this office and its officers not have the responsibility to immediately order criminal proceedings against the police officers who are now suspects or convicts? Remaining silent in the face of such crimes damages public trust in the rule of law.

Announcing suspensions after a viral video is not an achievement. Suspension is not punishment; it is merely a temporary administrative cover. The real test is whether criminal cases under the Pakistan Penal Code will be registered against these officers. Will they be charged with torture, illegal deten-

tion, misuse of authority, and filing false cases? Or, as usual, will everything be "managed" in a few days?

Here, the role of the Additional IG Punjab Police (South Punjab) is decisive. Further statements, notices, and suspensions cannot restore public confidence. We make a firm and clear demand:

The Additional IG South Punjab must immediately issue written orders to register criminal cases against all police officers involved in this torture. This case is not merely departmental; it is a serious criminal offense. If the police continue to cover up their crimes today, tomorrow every police station could turn into a torture chamber. Today it is these two young men; tomorrow it could be someone else. If the law moves at the signal of the powerful, courts will become meaningless for the weak.

"The Additional IG must act immediately on the news report, without waiting for any formal complaint or application, and ensure swift justice."

APO-NPO project highlights productivity gains in printing and packaging sector



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Productivity Organization (NPO) Pakistan, in collaboration with the Asian Productivity Organization (APO), organized a Dissemination Conference to share practical results of the project "Productivity Enhancement through Resource Efficiency in the Printing and Packaging Industry" at local Hotel, Lahore.

The event opened with remarks by Mr. Muhammad Alamgir Chaudhry, CEO, NPO Pakistan, who emphasized that the initiative is performance-driven and aimed at delivering measurable results within industrial operations rather than remaining a theoretical exercise.

Mr. Son Thanh Phan, Program Officer, APO Secretariat, highlighted APO's continued support and appreciated the commitment of participating companies in adopting data-based productivity practices.

The Chief Guest, Mr. Tanveer Ahmed, Senior Vice President, Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry, underscored the importance of productivity and resource efficiency for industry sustainability, particularly in the context of rising energy and input costs.

The conference featured presentations from six demonstration companies—Ensure Printing & Packaging, Makhdoom Printing Press Pvt. Limited, Pakistan International Printers (Pvt.) Ltd., Dilawar Hussain & Sons Printers, United Art Printers, and Vivid Packaging (Pvt.) Ltd.—showcasing tangible improvements achieved through Lean, Kaizen, 5S, and quality-focused practices.

Votes of appreciation were delivered by Mr. Saad Haleem Khan, CEO, Pakistan International Printers and Ex-Chairman PAPGAI, who acknowledged the contributions of APO, NPO, technical experts, and participating companies for their commitment and cooperation throughout the project. This was followed by remarks from the Guest of Honour, Brig. (R) Sajid Khokhar, Chairman TEVTA who emphasized the importance of linking productivity improvement initiatives with workforce skills development, technical training, and sustained capacity building to ensure long-term impact across the industry and Vice President PAPGAI, highlighting the need for sustained industry collaboration and integration of productivity improvement initiatives with skill development programs for measurable long-term impact.

The conference concluded with a commitment to scale up productivity-led, resource-efficient practices across Pakistan's industrial sector.

Traders' community expresses solidarity with the Kashmiri people

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market Rawalpindi rejected India's forced occupation of Kashmir and called upon the United Nations and other international justice-oriented institutions to ensure the immediate release of Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik and all imprisoned Kashmiri detainees, while also demanding complete freedom and the right to self-determination for the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir.

These demands were raised during a protest rally organized to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people. The rally was attended by Patron-in-Chief Raja Asad Hamid, Chairman Mushtaq Mughal, President Malik Sohail Awan, Group Leader Naqeeb Shah, Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry (President, Rawalpindi Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets and Bakers Association), Mumtaz Ahmed (Executive Member and Association Chairman), Usman Shaukat (President, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry), Senior Vice President Raja Aslam, General Secretary Raja Zafar Yousaf, Vice Presidents Arshad Mughal (A Block), Waqas Abbasi (B Block), Sheikh Raheel (C Block), Raja Rashid (E Block), Zubair Abbasi (D Block), Joint Secretary Tahir Ismail, Finance Secretary Iftikhar, Press Secretary Mati-ur-Rehman, Mehfooz Khan, Ghulam Abbas, Sheikh Tayyab, Waqar Bhatti, Kiyani, Tariq, and other trader leaders. Speakers stated that the ongoing oppression of the Kashmiri people and the unjust detention of Yasin Malik and other Kashmiri prisoners are grave human rights violations, terming the silence of the international community deeply regrettable. The leaders urged the United Nations and global human rights organizations to take immediate notice and play an effective role in securing freedom and self-determination for the Kashmiri people. They reaffirmed that solidarity with Kashmir will continue at every forum, as Kashmir's freedom remains the heartfelt aspiration of every Pakistani.



Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index		
Current	Prev. Close	
189,166.82	187,688.16	
Day's High	Day's Low	
189,566.64	186,637.57	
Index Value	Change	
42,828,319,619	+1478.66	
Percentage	Time	
+0.79%	23 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm	
Europe: FTSE 100 Index		
Index Value	Change	
10,143.44	-6.61	
Percentage	Time	
-0.065%	23 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT	
USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average		
Index Value	Change	
49,165.35	-218.66	
Percentage	Time	
-0.44%	23 Jan, 11:50 am GMT-5	
Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average		
Index Value	Change	
53,846.87	+157.98	
Percentage	Time	
+0.29%	23 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9	
Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	190.69	195.80
Bahrain Dinar	743.95	753.95
Canadian Dollar	202.31	205.80
China Yuan	38.05	42.55
Danish Krone	43.27	43.67
Euro	329.39	333.39
Hong Kong Dollar	35.55	36.45
Indian Rupee	2.82	3.33
Japanese Yen	1.7560	1.8542
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.05	918
Malaysian Ringgit	66.50	70.25
New Zealand \$	164.24	169.17
Norwegians Krone	27.56	27.86
Omani Riyal	728.7	738.7
Qatari Riyal	76	78.5
Saudi Riyal	74.95	75.4
Singapore Dollar	217.86	222.76
Swedish Korona	30.16	30.46
Swiss Franc	352.90	357.85
Thai Bhat	8.52	9.72
U.A.E Dirham	76.58	77.38
UK Pound Sterling	378.39	382.76
US Dollar	280.8	282.5

Three-Day SME Clusters Showcase Expo Begins Today
Haroon Akhtar Khan



Tahir Amin Malik

Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan is going to inaugurate the first-ever three-Day "Made in Pakistan-SME Cluster Showcase Expo on Saturday (today) morning at Lahore Expo Center. The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA), under supervision of the Ministry of Industries and Production (MoIP), has taken the lead to organize this Expo.

As per the detail plan set for the three-day activities on the sideline of the Expo, the first day would begin with inaugural ceremony at 10:00 am that will be attended by the Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Mr. Haroon Akhtar Khan as Chief Guest. CEO SMEDA Nadia Jahanir Seth and the representatives of SMEDA BOD and sponsors; HBL, Bank Al-Habib, Pak-Suzuki and Bank of Punjab would also address the inaugural ceremony.

The inaugural ceremony would be followed by a Symposium on "SME Development in Pakistan-Challenges and Policy Solutions" with Secretary MOIP Mr. Saif Anjum in chair, which will be addressed by President FPCCI, President LCCI and representatives of the SME development agencies of Malaysia and Azerbaijan.

The second day sideline symposium would cover Digital Finance and Fintech for MSMEs by Mobilink Micro-finance Bank, Marketing and Branding for MSMEs by Mr. Awas Bin Mehtab, a renowned Marketing Expert followed by a panel discussion on Public Sector & SMEs, in participation with representatives from BOI, TDAP, PSW, PBS, Planning Commission, Provincial Industries departments and the Higher Education Institutions.

Pakistan's First Banking Industry-wide Cyber Drill concludes in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: As a joint initiative of the Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) and the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Pakistan's banking sector concluded its first-ever Industry-wide Cyber Drill, a week-long exercise held from 12 to 19 January 2026 in Karachi and Lahore, with a closing ceremony in Karachi.

Governor SBP, Mr Jameel Ahmad, who graced the occasion as Chief Guest, and Chairman PBA, Mr Zafar Masud, who served as Host on behalf of the industry, attended the closing ceremony. Their participation, together with senior leadership from the banking industry, SBP, and partner organisations, underscored the collective commitment to strengthening the financial sector.

Speaking on the occasion, Governor SBP, Mr Jameel Ahmad, remarked, "Cyber resilience cannot be achieved in isolation. It requires collective preparedness, transparent information sharing, and trust between regulators and regulated entities. In today's environment, cyber resilience is measured not by whether cyber-attacks occur, but by how effectively we respond to them. As Pakistan's banking sector continues its digital transformation, maintaining public trust is paramount."



The Chairman PBA Mr Zafar Masud, stated "Cyber resilience is no longer a choice; it is a strategic imperative for the financial sector. The PBA-SBP industry-wide cyber drill represents

a significant step toward strengthening collective preparedness, improving coordination, and building institutional muscle memory to respond effectively to evolving cyber threats.

PBA remains committed to driving initiatives that enhance the security and resilience of Pakistan's banking sector and reinforce public trust in the financial system."

Meeting

LAHORE: Mashood Khan, Director, SMEDA Meet with the Secretary, Ministry of Industries, Saif Anjum, regarding the Daily Progress Report of the Expo, as per the instructions of the Prime Minister and Haroon Akhtar, SAPM.



Export-Led Growth: Prime Minister's Vision and Industrialists' Proposals

Commerce Desk

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif (Davos, Switzerland) emphasized Pakistan's economic future lies in "export-led growth." He stated, "Our exports face numerous challenges, but the path forward is clear: Pakistan must achieve growth through exports." His observation is accurate, as Pakistan repeatedly struggles with balance of payments crises due to weak exports and excessive reliance on external debt and remittances.

In this context, leading industrialist and Chairman of SM Group of Industries, Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum, proposed practical measures to boost exports:

Improving Production and Quality: Manufacturing products according to global standards to compete internationally.

Market Research and Export Opportunities: Identifying global demand and exploring new export sectors.



Incentives for Export Industries: Tax breaks, easier import of raw materials, and energy subsidies to encourage exporters.

Innovation and R&D: Investing in new technologies and unique products, and strengthening industry-university collaboration.

Logistics and Infrastructure Enhancement: Modernizing ports, roads, railways, and storage systems for faster and cost-effective exports.

Financial Stability and Currency Support: Ensuring a stable rupee and easy currency exchange to shield exporters from uncertainty.

Marketing and Promotion of Exports: Actively representing Pakistani products in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum believes that if these measures are implemented promptly and effectively, Pakistan can significantly increase its exports, addressing the balance of payments crisis and putting the national economy on a path of sustainable growth.

Support for SMEs: Providing affordable credit, training, and modern production facilities to small and medium enterprises.

Logistics and Infrastructure Enhancement: Modernizing ports, roads, railways, and storage systems for faster and cost-effective exports.

Financial Stability and Currency Support: Ensuring a stable rupee and easy currency exchange to shield exporters from uncertainty.

Marketing and Promotion of Exports: Actively representing Pakistani products in international trade fairs and exhibitions.

Chaudhry Zulfiqar Ali Anjum believes that if these measures are implemented promptly and effectively, Pakistan can significantly increase its exports, addressing the balance of payments crisis and putting the national economy on a path of sustainable growth.

Government Fails to Provide Relief to Business Community, Amaan Paracha

Commerce Desk



KARACHI: Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), Amaan Paracha, has said that despite all promises, the government has failed to provide relief to the business community. Due to flawed policies, the country's economy is on the brink of destruction, exports are continuously declining, and there is an urgent need to announce effective measures in the upcoming Federal Budget 2026-27 to clearly improve policies in order to put the country on the right track.

He emphasized that before formulating policies in the budget, consultation with all stakeholders must be ensured so that there remains no room for any anomalies in policy-making.

The FPCCI Vice President said that government officials are not willing to accept the legitimate concerns of traders, due to which businesspeople are forced to approach the courts or the Federal Tax Ombudsman (FTO). These processes consume considerable time and lead to growing frustration and disappointment within the business community.

Dollar to Hit Rs250 soon as defense exports soar, Says Malik Bostan

Commerce Desk



KARACHI: Chairman of Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP) Malik Muhammad Bostan stated that over the past six months, the overall value of the US dollar has decreased in the country. During this period, the dollar has fallen by 9 rupees against the Pakistani rupee, dropping from 340 rupees to 281 rupees. He said that very soon the dollar will return to its real value of 250 rupees in Pakistan, and that temporary minor fluctuations do not carry any real significance.

Malik Muhammad Bostan said that in the coming days, Pakistan's defense exports are increasing, and there is strong

global demand for Pakistan's JF-17 Thunder fighter aircraft. Approximately 15 countries are lined up to purchase these aircraft, and Pakistan has already conveyed that it will supply JF-17 Thunder jets to all of them. He described this as a great blessing from Allah for Pakistan, stating that since Pakistan's armed forces destroyed India's Rafale aircraft, international demand for the JF-17 Thunder has risen significantly.

inDrive CEO highlights mobility and fair-tech as catalysts for Pakistan's digital transformation

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: At the Digital Pakistan session at Davos, Arsen Tomsky, Founder and CEO of inDrive, discussed Pakistan's digital economy, its growth potential, and the steps needed to support the country's transition toward an inclusive digital economy through fair choice.

The session brought together a distinguished panel of speakers, including Maria Basso, Head of

AI Applications & Impact at the World Economic Forum; Khalifa AlShamsi, CEO, e& life; Zarrar Sehgal, Chairman, Pathfinder Group; and Muhammad Salman Ali, CEO, VRG.

Tomsky positioned Pakistan as a priority market within inDrive's global mission to challenge injustice. "I believe that three assets make Pakistan especially powerful: a young population, an entrepreneurial culture and its remarkable

able resilience," he said. "We see ourselves as a long-term partner in Pakistan's digital economy, enabling livelihoods, supporting communities, and building technology that makes everyday services more accessible and fair."

During the discussion, Tomsky also highlighted findings from a recent Oxford Economics study covering seven emerging and frontier markets, including Pakistan. He noted that in price-sensi-



tive markets with diverse income levels, fare negotiation serves as a trips due to flexible pricing, which allows fares to remain affordable," he said.

PEC First-Ever Interdepartmental Table Tennis Tournament 2026 Concludes as Part of Golden Jubilee Celebrations

 Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Engineering Council (PEC) organized its first-ever Interdepartmental Table Tennis Tournament 2026 as part of its Golden Jubilee celebrations, marking 50 years of excellence.

Held under the patronage of Chairman PEC, Engr. Waseem Nazir, the matches took place from 20th to 22nd January 2025, with the closing ceremony held at PEC Headquarters on 23rd January. Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, while Registrar PEC Engr. Khadim Hussain Bhatti, heads of departments, senior officials, and employees attended the ceremony.

Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir and Registrar Engr. Khadim Hussain Bhatti distributed shields and cheques among the winners and runners-up, and certificates among the participants of the tournament. In the Men's event, Engr. Fahad Mustafa, Assistant Director (IT Department), won the tournament, while Engr. Mughira Jamal, Site Engineer (Project Management Unit), secured the runner-up posi-

tion. In the Women's event, Engr. Samar Naseem, Assistant Registrar (Global Linkages), emerged as the winner, while Engr. Rida Nasir, Assistant Registrar (Global Linkages), remained the runner-up.

The Chairman also distributed certificates and prizes among match referees Engr. Ali Raza Asif and Engr. Omer, as well as organizing team members Engr. Haris Rasheed, Engr. Sadaf Bangash, and Engr. Hassan Kamil, who demonstrated strong leadership roles in the successful conduct of the tournament.

Chairman PEC Engr. Waseem Nazir stated that the sports tournament, organized as part of PEC's Golden Jubilee celebrations, was held for the first time in the history of the Council and would be extended to all regional offices of PEC across the country. He further shared that this initiative would also be expanded to Engineering Higher Educational Institutions and young engineers nationwide. He added that PEC will introduce a structured sports framework to ensure regular sporting activities for engineers, aimed at nurturing talent and promoting a healthy and



balanced lifestyle. According to PEC, the Chairman expressed his vision

to develop engineers' sports teams capable of representing PEC at

national-level competitions, including the National Games, with the long-

term goal of participation at international forums such as the Olympics.

FIFA president Infantino announces visit to Pakistan to promote football

 Sports Desk

DAVOS: FIFA president Gianni Infantino has announced plans to visit Pakistan soon to promote the game of football.

In an interview in Davos, Infantino said he had promised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to visit Pakistan and is now set to make the trip.

He praised the new leadership of the Pakistan Football Federation, calling Pakistan a "great football country" and expressing his hope that Pakistan becomes one of Asia's top teams.

Infantino added that FIFA is actively working to support Pakistan in reaching this goal.



Relations between FIFA and Pakistan have strengthened over time. Last month, Pakistani lawmaker Syeda Amna Batool was appointed to FIFA's

institutional reforms committee.

FIFA senior vice president Sheikh Salman bin Ibrahim Al Khalifa visited Pakistan in November 2025. During his three-day trip, he met football officials and government representatives to discuss the development of football infrastructure in the country.

Football has long been popular among Pakistani youth, and recent years have seen growing interest at international levels.

Local tournaments, school competitions, and community clubs in major cities have further fueled enthusiasm. Still, football continues to operate in the shadow of cricket, which has remained Pakistan's most popular and lucrative sport for decades.

APSUP urges Prime Minister for Immediate Appointment of Regular HEC Chairperson

 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Association of Private Sector Universities of Pakistan (APSUP) has formally requested Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif to ensure the timely appointment of a regular Chairperson of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), as the key position has remained vacant since July 29, 2025.

In a letter addressed to the Prime Minister, Prof. Dr. Ch. Abdul Rehman, Chairman APSUP, expressed serious concern over the prolonged absence of a permanent head at HEC, warning that the continued vacancy is adversely affecting strategic decision-making, long-term planning, and effective coordination across Pakistan's higher education sector.

The letter notes that the Higher Education Commission plays a critical role in policy formulation, quality assurance, research promotion, international collaboration, and governance of higher education institutions across the country.



APSUP emphasized that the absence of a regular Chairperson has begun to negatively impact institutional stability and stakeholder confidence.

According to the letter, the nine-member Search Committee constituted by the Prime Minister has already completed the selection process in a transparent and

merit-based manner. A panel of three shortlisted candidates has reportedly been forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office for final consideration and approval.

APSUP further highlighted that under the provisions of the HEC Ordinance, the appointment of a regular Chairperson is required to be finalized within a period

of three months. However, the statutory timeframe has lapsed, resulting in what the association described as an avoidable administrative vacuum at a critical national institution.

On behalf of private sector universities, APSUP urged the Prime Minister to kindly intervene and expedite the approval and appointment process at the earliest. The association stressed that the timely appointment would help restore institutional stability, ensure compliance with the law, and reinforce confidence among all stakeholders in the higher education sector.

The letter concluded by underscoring that the matter is of national importance, as it directly affects the future of higher education, research, and human capital development in Pakistan.

A copy of the letter was also sent to the Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, who is serving as the Convener of the Search Committee for the appointment of the HEC Chairperson.

When Life Becomes Jargon: The Dilemma of Today's Woman

I have noted these patterns in women living in hostels, in cities far from their families, often from backward or conservative areas, who are determined to prove themselves. They are ambitious, restless, and in their late twenties, seeking independence, experience, and opportunity. Yet, in the process, many navigate pressures that leave them confused, sometimes opportunistic, and often exhausted.

These women no longer think in quiet, honest sentences. They think in jargon, words repeated until they feel like truth: independence, freedom, self-made, enjoy life first, strong woman, later, not now. Many speak of love, yet treat it strategically. They love fully, yet pretend detachment to appear calculated, to survive in a society that judges attachment as weakness and ambition as risk.

In South Asian society, pressure never sleeps. Families ask about marriage with worry and anxiety. Communities whisper that a woman alone for too long loses respect. At the same time, modern slogans shout louder. Do not settle. Choose yourself. Do not depend on anyone. Men are optional. Women caught between these pressures often perform strength, feigning detachment, balancing personal desires with societal judgment. Survival becomes identity, and pretending becomes habit.

Many of these women pursue careers, travel, validation, and achievements with intense focus. They want to reach something, sometimes at any cost. They stop asking if their pursuits preserve their peace or faith and instead measure themselves by outcomes. In chasing success, many over-ruin their own lives while calling it growth.

A growing number dream of moving abroad. According to research on South Asian female migrants, women moving alone for education or work often face isolation, exploitation, and mental health challenges, yet equate these struggles with empowerment. Loneliness is renamed independence. Stress is renamed strength. Success is praised. Failure is ignored. Outcomes are celebrated more than well-being.

Islam never asked a woman to carry life alone. It never glorified isolation. Responsibility was distributed by design. Men were made caretakers not to control women but to carry weight so women would not have to harden themselves to survive. The Prophet

Muhammad, peace be upon him, did not teach women to become strong against men. He taught men to become strong for women. Strength was meant to create safety, not fear.

A man who is truly strong does not merely push a woman to achieve something. He does not leave her exposed with slogans and expectations. He provides practical support, guidance, and protection. He absorbs pressure

without taking away her voice. He questions reckless ambition while offering safer pathways. He prevents exploitation rather than applauding risk. He carries responsibility so she can grow without burning herself. With such a man, independence becomes natural.

It becomes a garden, not a battlefield. Without him, women are often forced to manufacture independence, which is heavy, exhausting, and defensive.

Marriage was never meant to end joy. It was meant to contain it, not to cage ambition but to protect it from chaos.

When postponed without wisdom, freedom becomes exposure, and love becomes confusion. Many women in their late twenties believe they are protecting themselves. In reality, they are training themselves to live unprotected.

These women do not need more pathways. They need clarity. A heart cannot survive forever in borrowed language. Life becomes jargon when success is achieved but the self is lost.

These patterns are not unique to one person. Many women in hostels, moving to cities for work or education, striving to prove themselves, experience these same challenges. They navigate ambition, love, independence, societal pressures, and personal desires, often learning the hard way that true freedom and growth come with clarity, support, and protection.

Independence is strongest when it grows alongside responsibility, guidance, and authenticity.

The writer is the Founder of RAD Corporation a company serving Information Technology, Education and Digital Marketing sector. He can be reached via email imran@radcorporation.com

Analysis



Imran Aziz

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Minister of Interior, Federal Affairs and Reconciliation of the Federal Government of Somalia Ali Yusuf Ali (HOSH) called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Parliament's joint session passes three bills amid Opposition's ruckus

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The joint session of the Parliament which met in Islamabad on Friday under the chair of National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq passed three bills, bulldozing every bit of amendments the Opposition lawmakers introduced.

The three bills included: National Commission for Human Rights Amendment Bill, 2025, Daanish Schools Authority Bill, 2025 and the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2025. These bills were passed with a majority vote.

During the session, amendments proposed by Senator Kamran Murtaza and MNA Aliya Kamran were rejected by the House. However, the joint sitting approved amendments moved by MNA Shazia Marri before passing the bill.

Opposition members raised concerns over certain provisions of the proposed law and called for a more detailed debate, but the government maintained that the changes were necessary to ensure legal clarity and effective functioning of the commission.

The Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection)



Bill, moved by MNA Dr Sharmila Faruqui, was passed after the House rejected amendments proposed by MNA Aliya Kamran and Senator Kamran Murtaza, while approving amendments

moved by Dr Faruqui.

According to the statement of objects and reasons, domestic violence remains a pervasive problem in Pakistan, with alarming statistics highlighting its widespread nature.

Data cited from the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics shows that one in three women in the country experiences some form of domestic abuse during her lifetime.

Meanwhile, the joint sitting also passed the Daanish Schools Authority Bill, 2025, which was moved by Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazl Chaudhry.

The House rejected amendments moved by MNA Aliya Kamran and Senator Kamran Murtaza, while accepting certain amendments proposed by Dr Chaudhry before approving the bill.

Punjab govt decides to launch 'Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar Programme'

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab government has decided to launch "Apna Khet, Apna Rozgar Programme" to make farmers who plowed on other people's lands as labourers and tenants the owners of their own fields.

The decision was taken in the 32nd Punjab cabinet meeting, chaired by Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif.

Under programme government agricultural land will be given to farmers for cultivation across the province.



Maryam Nawaz Sharif directed to take immediate steps to give government land to 50,000 people for cultivation.

The cabinet approved hundreds of posts for youth in CCD, Excise, Tourism Police, Home Department and others in Punjab.

Cabinet also decided to ply green electric buses at tehsil level after districts.

In tehsils Instructions to order 1,000 green buses to start electro-bus service.

The meeting also decided to implement cashless payment system in electro-bus from March 25. Passengers will have to pay more in electric buses in case of cash payment.

Cabinet also approved implementation of T-cash card and bank card system from March 25.

The Chief Minister ordered to take steps to ease laws for the

business community.

She also directed to hold horse and cattle shows in all districts to promote Punjab's culture and livestock.

Maryam Nawaz ordered to hold events on the lines of horse and cattle shows in every district.

Maryam Nawaz said every person is being given his right in Punjab and every facility is reaching from city to tehsil and from tehsil to village.

Maryam Nawaz Sharif instructed to introduce new tourist destinations besides Murree.

issue remained "absolutely clear and unchanged", adding that the country continued to support the establishment of an independent Palestinian state based on the pre-1967 borders.

Referring to criticism from the opposition benches, Ahsan Iqbal asked whether countries such as Saudi Arabia, Turkiye, Qatar, the UAE, Egypt, Jordan and others — all part of the broader diplomatic effort — had joined it to support aggression.

"These countries have come together to play a role for peace and for the rights of the Palestinian people," he said.

Ahsan Iqbal defends Pakistan's role in Gaza peace efforts



News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal on Friday strongly defended Pakistan's participation in an international peace initiative related to Gaza, telling the National Assembly that Islamabad had joined the forum without any change in its principled stance on Palestine and Israel, which he described as an aggressor state.

Responding to JUI-F chief Maulana Fazl ur Rehman and other members, Ahsan Iqbal said Pakistan's position on the Palestinian

Wazir Ali

CHITRAL: At least nine people were killed when an avalanche struck the remote area of Seregal, Damil Arandu in Chitral, officials said on Friday.

According to Deputy Commissioner Chitral Riaz Hashim, the avalanche buried 10 members of the same family under snow and debris, resulting in multiple casualties.

Rescue teams recovered the bodies

of nine victims from the rubble, while one child was pulled out alive and shifted for medical care. The deceased were later transported to the Chitral Wardaap Drosh area, the deputy commissioner added.

Meanwhile, rescue operations are continuing in Tirah Valley of Khyber district, where internally displaced persons (IDPs) stranded due to recent heavy snowfall are being evacuated to safer locations.

PM grieved over loss of lives in Chitral avalanche

LONDON, JAN 23 (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Friday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious lives due to an avalanche in Chitral.

He directed the concerned federal rescue and relief agencies to intensify relief operations in cooperation with the provincial government.

He directed the administration to

take steps to immediately transport the victims to safe places.

He also directed the Chairman National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to monitor the situation after snowfall in the mountainous areas of the country and maintain contact with the concerned agencies, so that any untoward situation can be dealt with.

Gul Plaza fire: CM announces Rs10m loans, cash aid, rebuild pledge

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah on Friday announced a wide-ranging relief, rehabilitation and accountability plan for victims of the Gul Plaza tragedy, telling the Sindh Assembly that affected families and traders would not be left alone and that all those responsible would be punished.

Addressing the provincial assembly, the chief minister said heirs of those killed would be given Rs10 million each, while every affected shopkeeper would receive immediate subsistence assistance of Rs500,000.

He also announced interest-free loans of up to Rs10 million for traders and compensation for damaged goods.

CM Shah said the Gul Plaza building would be demolished and

rebuilt in its original form, stressing that the number of shops would remain exactly the same.

"Not a single shop will be reduced or added," he said. He informed the house that more than 300 buildings across the city had already been inspected following the tragedy.

An FIR would be registered in the Gul Plaza incident, and strict action would be taken against all those found responsible, regardless of their position.

Outlining rehabilitation measures, the chief minister said two buildings had been identified to temporarily relocate shopkeepers, one housing 500 shops and another 350.

Traders will be provided with shops free of charge within the next two months and will not be charged rent for one year.

Physical remand rejected, Imaan Mazari, Hadi Chattha sent to jail

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Renowned rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha have been sent to jail on judicial remand after court rejected seven-day physical remand request of the police in connection with controversial tweets case.



Earlier, police arrested renowned rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband Hadi Ali Chattha on Friday morning, as they were on their way to district courts from Islamabad High Court (IHC) in connection with controversial tweets case.

Imaan Mazari's mother, Shireen Mazari also confirmed the arrest of her daughter and son-in-law by the Islamabad police.

Azma Bokhari files defamation case against Punjab opp leader Moeen Riaz

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari on Friday filed a defamation case in the Defamation Tribunal Lahore against Opposition Leader in the Punjab Assembly Moeenuddin Riaz Qureshi, under the Punjab Defamation Act 2024.

According to details, the minister is claiming Rs84 million in damages. The petition submitted to the court includes video recordings, screen captures, and transcripts as evidence. It details general, punitive, and special damages sought from the defendant.

The case follows statements made by Moeenuddin Riaz Qureshi on a private

TV programme, alleging that 150-200 "paid individuals" were being brought into the assembly on her behalf.

Azma Bokhari has termed these allegations baseless and fabricated, noting that the remarks were broadcast on television and widely shared on social media, reaching millions of viewers.

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