



# Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ  
ہم بخاری رحمہ اللہ نے کہا کہ تم سے بدیہ نے  
بیان کیا کہ ہم سے ہمارے بیان کیا کہ ہم سے  
قادر نے بیان کیا کہ ان سے اس نے مانگ نے  
بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے  
فرمایا اللہ تعالیٰ اپنے بندے کی قوم سے تم میں  
سے اس شخص سے بھی زیادہ خوش ہو تا ہے  
جس کا اونٹ پاوی کے بعد اپنا کھلے تل گیا  
ہو جانا کہ وہ ایک میل میدان میں گم ہو جاتا۔  
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## Myanmar foreign minister arrives in Islamabad on four-day visit

The foreign minister of Myanmar, Than Swe, arrived in Islamabad on a four-day official visit aimed at strengthening bilateral relations between Pakistan and Myanmar. The visiting minister was received at Islamabad International Airport by the Director General of the East Asia Pacific Division, along with officials from the Myanmar Embassy.



## Existence of Pakistan lies in local govt system, says Khawaja Asif

Addressing a panel session titled "Devolution for Revolution" at ThinkFest, a political and literary festival on Saturday, he wondered why politicians were opposed to the system. "Those who feel threatened by it should consider it as a nursery where they receive training to ensure better governance." The entire world, he added, knew New York Mayor Zohran Mamdani.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Sha'abanul Moazzam 6, Monday, January 26, 2026



www.dailyspokesman.net



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Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 281

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## Heavy snowfall

NATHIAGALI: Vehicles are stranded on Murree Road due to heavy snowfall, in the city.



Photo: Online by Sultan Dogar

## Federal govt to set up economic zone in Karachi's Malir District

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government will establish a new economic zone in Karachi's Malir district, government spokesperson Raja Ansari said on Sunday.

Two modern Danish schools will be established in Tando Muhammad Khan and Gadap Malir, and children from the backward areas will be provided with modern, world-class education.

Raja Ansari further said that the Malir Economic Zone will provide industrial development and employment opportunities in Sindh.

Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif wanted Sindh to be



economically self-sufficient, he added.

Education and industrial projects will prove to be important milestones in the development of Sindh.

The federal government wanted to initiate development projects in all areas of Sindh without discrimination, and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is taking practical steps to empower the youth of Sindh, he added.

# Global Kashmiri community to mark India's Republic Day as Black Day

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Kashmiris worldwide, including those on both sides of the Line of Control, will observe India's Republic Day tomorrow as Black Day in protest against New Delhi's ongoing refusal to grant the Kashmiri people their UN-mandated right to self-determination.

According to Kashmir Media Service, the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) called for the observance of Black Day, which will be marked by a complete shutdown in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, along with anti-India demonstrations and rallies in Azad Kashmir, Pakistan and major world capitals.

The aim is to send a strong message to the international community that Kashmiris view India as a violator of their funda-



mental rights and believe it has no legitimacy to celebrate the day in the territory.

Each year, January 26 brings heightened difficulties for Kashmiris, as Indian forces inten-

sify security measures across the region.

This year is no exception. Roads

leading to venues in the Kashmir Valley and Jammu region, where official Republic Day events are scheduled, have been sealed with barbed wire, while drones are being deployed to restrict public movement. Indian paramilitary and police personnel, supported by sniffer dogs, are conducting surprise vehicle checks and frisking residents at entry and exit points in Srinagar and other cities and towns of the occupied territory.

Meanwhile, through statements, messages, and posters displayed in Srinagar and other areas of the Kashmir Valley, people have urged a complete boycott of all Indian official celebrations.

Posters calling for the boycott have been visible in various parts of the territory over the past week, reinforcing the appeal ahead of India's Republic Day.

## Security forces kill 3 Indian-backed terrorists in Panjgur operation



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: On 25 January 2026, security forces conducted an intelligence based operation in Panjgur District of Balochistan, on reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Hindustan.

During the conduct of operation, own forces effectively engaged the terrorists' location, and after an intense fire exchange, three Indian sponsored terrorists were sent to hell (including Local Area Terrorist Commander Farooq alias Soro, Terrorist Adeel & Terrorist Waseem).

Weapons, ammunition and

explosives were also recovered from the terrorists, who remained actively involved in numerous terrorist activities in the area.

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

## Tarar dismisses Tirah evacuation rumours as baseless, contrary to facts

City Desk

KOT MOMIN: Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Sunday categorically denied rumours linking the evacuation of Tirah valley residents to security forces, describing the reports as baseless, fabricated and contrary to facts.

Speaking to media after offering condolences to senior

journalist Aun Sherazi in Kot Momin, the minister said the government had taken serious notice of the matter and issued a clarification. He stressed that no forced evacuations were being carried out, and described the claims as misleading.

Referring to a notification issued by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, Tarar said Rs 4 billion had been allocated for

the rehabilitation of people voluntarily leaving Tirah Valley due to harsh weather conditions.

Deputy Commissioner Khyber also clarified that the provincial government had earmarked funds to meet relief needs in anticipation of a possible, temporary and voluntary movement of population from certain areas of the valley. He dismissed as unfounded the impression that security forces

are compelling evacuations.

He said the relocation plan reflected the wishes of local residents, as conveyed through a representative jirga, and emphasized that intelligence-based operations were conducted strictly on credible information without causing inconvenience to citizens.

Responding to a question, Minister Tarar urged the Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa government to focus on strengthening law and order by establishing a Safe City project, raising a dedicated Counter Crime and Detection (CCD) force, and setting up a forensic laboratory.

He further called for investment in health, education and the social sector to ensure meaningful development and relief for the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## MQM-P to start Save Karachi drive: Haider Rizvi

Bureau Report

KARACHI: MQM Pakistan leader Haider Abbas Rizvi has said that over 200 people have been killed in Gull Plaza fire incident and now only their remains were being recovered by the rescuers, adding that MQM had started Save Karachi drive long

before the case.

Talking in Hyderabad zonal office, Haider Rizvi said that Sindh government has destroyed Karachi. Now Karachi does not look the capital of the province. He claimed that it seemed all resources of Sindh were being shifted to Dubai. He said that the people of

Karachi were deprived of basic amenities even in 21st century. Haider Rizvi said that fire brigade system in Hyderabad was at the verge of collapse as only five fire stations and five vehicles were operation in the city. He said that there was no scientific system of fire extinguishing in Hyderabad.



Addressing the PPP, Rizvi said Gambat project is hard work of Dr. Bhatti and SIUT project

was introduced by Adeeb Rizvi. Haider Abbas said NICVD is a federal government's project.

## PM pays tribute to security forces for operation against terrorists

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif Sunday paid tribute to security forces for their operation against Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists in Panjgur area of Balochistan.

He commended security forces for killing three terrorists associated with Fitna al-Hindustan in this operation.

He said, "Security forces are achieving great successes against terrorism under the vision of Azme Istehkam."

"The entire nation stands with Pakistan's forces in this war against terrorism," he said adding, "We are determined to completely eradicate all forms of terrorism from the country."

## Pak army airlifts patient to hospital as ground routes blocked amid heavy snow in AfK

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Pakistan Army carried out a successful helicopter rescue and relief operation in the Leepa Valley of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) after heavy snowfall cut off ground access. A patient facing serious medical complications was safely airlifted to the Rawalpindi Military Hospital via a helicopter emergency service.

The operation, officials said, involved meticulous preparation of the helipad, clearing of access routes, and timely aerial transfer.

Army officials emphasized that the rescue mission underscored their commitment to prioritizing human lives under all conditions. The local population praised the operation, expressing confidence in the army's professional capability.

# AJK President declares Jan 26 Black Day against India's illegal Kashmir occupation

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: President Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, has said that Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and the world over, are observing January 26 as a Black Day as a mark of protest against India's illegal occupation of their homeland.

In his special statement, the president said that since August 5, 2019, Indian actions have resulted in an intensified siege of the occupied terri-

tory, accompanied by severe restrictions on civil liberties. Despite this, the AJK President stated that the people of Kashmir have shown remarkable courage and resilience, remaining steadfast in the face of repression and refusing to bow to pressure.

He stated that the purpose of observing January 26 as a Black Day was to send a clear message to the international community that Kashmiris will never accept India's hegemony or its illegal occupation of their motherland.



Describing Kashmir as a UN-recognized disputed territory, he emphasized that it is time for the Indian government to acknowledge this reality and pave the way for a peaceful solution of the dispute in line with the UNSC resolutions that guarantee Kashmiris their fundamental right to self-determination.

He added that, given the evolving regional and global situation, the Kashmir issue requires a proactive role from the international community to help ensure lasting peace in South Asia.

## Free medical camp

CHINIOT: Federal Minister for Board of investment, Qaiser Ahmad Shaikh, Talking to the Media persons during his visit to the Flood relief Medical camp on Sunday.



Photo: PID

## Former AJK PM: Kashmir Rejects India's 'Illegal Occupation' on January 26

**Spokesman Report**



RAWALPINDI/ MUZAFFARABAD: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, stated that on January 26, while India observes its Republic Day, the entire Kashmiri and Pakistani nation conveys a clear message

to the international community that Kashmiris completely reject India's illegal and forcible occupation of their motherland.

He said that observing India's Republic Day as Black Day is meant to draw the attention of the world towards the fact that India has consistently denied the Kashmiri people their inalienable and internationally recognized right to self-determination. The continued presence of Indian forces in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK) is illegal, unconstitutional, and a blatant violation of international law.

Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan emphasized that under no law or legal framework can India justify the deployment of its troops in Occupied Kashmir. He expressed these views in his message issued on the occasion of observing India's Republic Day as Black Day.

He reiterated that the Kashmiri people will continue their peaceful and just struggle until their right to self-determination, as guaranteed by the United Nations resolutions, is realized.

## Rafique Nayyar Vows Unwavering Freedom Struggle Ahead of India's Republic Day

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: Minister for Information, Auqaf and Religious Affairs, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafique Nayyar has reiterated Kashmiris' pledge to continue the ongoing liberation struggle till they achieve the long cherished goal of freedom from India. In his message issued on the eve of January 26, he said that Kashmiri people observe India's Republic Day as a Black Day as a mark of their resentment and anguish against the India's imperialistic occupation of the region. He said that the Kashmiri people have made immense sacrifices in their struggle to achieve the right to self-determination, a right guaranteed to them by the international community through numerous United Nations resolutions. Describing India's claim of being the world's



largest democracy as the biggest fraud, Mr. Rafique Nayyar said that India, under the RSS-driven Modi regime, has descended into a fascist state where minorities are facing a grave and existential threat. Rafique Nayyar said that every effort aimed at resolving the Kashmir issue through meaningful and result-oriented dialogue is commendable; however, any solution that disregards the aspirations of the Kashmiri people or sidesteps the UN resolutions will not be acceptable to them.

## Governor expresses grief over demise of CS's sister



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Sunday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the demise of the sister of Chief Secretary Shahab Ali Shah.

In his condolence message, the Governor prayed for the eternal peace of the departed soul and for Allah Almighty to grant her a place in Jannat-ul-Firdous.

He also extended heartfelt sympathies to the bereaved family and prayed for them to be blessed with patience and strength to bear the loss.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi said that he shares the grief of the bereaved family in this difficult time and offered his sincere condolences.

## AJK PM Demands International Action on Kashmir Ahead of India's Republic Day

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has urged the international community to fulfill its moral and legal responsibilities regarding the Kashmir issue and play its due role in ensuring a just resolution of the long-standing dispute. In a special statement issued on the eve of India's Republic Day, the Prime Minister said that January 26 is observed as a Black Day by the Kashmiri people as a mark of protest against the India's illegal occupation of their motherland. Referring to the continued bloodshed, oppression, and grave human rights violations in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir, he said that the prevailing situation in the region exposes the hollowness of India's claims of normalcy. He said that the draconian laws and severe restrictions imposed in occupied Kashmir were in blatant violation of international law and democratic values. Highlighting the situation following August 5, 2019, the Prime Minister said that India's unilateral actions led to an intensified military siege and the imposition of unjustified restrictions on civil liberties in the territory. However, he maintained that India's policy of oppression and suppression has failed to weaken the Kashmiris' resolve or shake their faith in freedom. Reiterating the Kashmiris' pledge to carry the ongoing liberation struggle to its logical conclusion, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that the people of Kashmir are demanding their fundamental right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions and will continue their struggle until this goal is achieved.



## Kashmir Solidarity Day set for February 5 with major events planned

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

MUZAFFARABAD: On the joint call of the Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference, the people of Kashmir, along with the citizens of all four provinces of Pakistan and Kashmiris living across the world, will observe Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5 with great devotion, ideological enthusiasm, national unity, and renewed resolve.

A special session of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Legislative Assembly will be convened on this occasion. At the invitation of the Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir, Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, either the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, or the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, will address the special session.

These views were expressed by the Central Deputy Secretary Information of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Kashmir and Spokesperson of the Prime Minister, Shaukat Javed Mir, while briefing the media about the preparations and arrangements for February 5. He said that rallies, public gatherings, and protest demonstrations will be organized to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day.

He further said that the recent victories achieved by Pakistan under the dynamic leadership of Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Hafiz Syed Asim Munir during the battle for truth and justice have opened new avenues for a dignified, fair, and lasting solution to the Kashmir issue. He termed the statement by former US President Donald Trump, declaring Kashmir an international issue rather than merely a bilateral one, as a moral, diplomatic victory for the Kashmiri struggle and a setback to the Indian narrative.



## Kashmir Leader Denounces India's Republic Day as Mockery of Democracy

**Spokesman Report**



SRINAGAR: The General Secretary of All Parties Hurriyat Conference, Advocate Parvez Ahmed, in a detailed statement issued on the occasion of India's so-called Republic Day, said that India is by no means a democratic state but rather a colonial, oppressive, and racist entity that has forcibly deprived millions of Kashmiris of their basic human, political, and constitutional rights.

He stated that democracy is not merely about having a constitution, holding elections, or celebrating ceremonial events, but is fundamentally based on human dignity, equality, religious and political freedom, and the protection of minorities. Unfortunately, India has completely failed to meet these essential democratic principles.

Advocate Parvez Ahmed said that a state where minorities are treated as second-class citizens, and where hatred, violence, and discrimination on religious grounds enjoy state patronage, cannot claim to be a democratic country.

Concluding his statement, Advocate Parvez Ahmed reaffirmed that despite Indian oppression, deception, and state violence, the Kashmiri people will never abandon their legitimate struggle, and the day is not far when the Kashmiri nation will decide its future with freedom, justice, and dignity.

## Khoi Ratti Press Club oath ceremony held

**Bureau Report**

KHOI RATTA: The newly elected office bearers of Khoi Ratta Press Club Registered took oath in an impressive ceremony held at Grand Market, Khoi Ratta. The oath was administered by the Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Auqaf, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar, Advocate.

The ceremony was held in two sessions. The first session was presided over by Chaudhry Sajid Ali, while Amir Khalil Khokhar performed the duties of Stage Secretary. The event commenced with recitation of the Holy Quran by Arman Khokhar, followed by Naat-e-Rasool (PBUH) presented by Wasef Ali Wasif.

The second session was presided over by the newly elected President of the Press Club, Ghulam Mahmood Jaral, while Raisa Ghori performed the duties of Stage Secretary. Addressing the ceremony were Sajid Ali, Chaudhry Shoukat Ali Khokhar, Azhar Malik, Waheed Akram Bhatti,



and Ghulam Mahmood Jaral.

The chief guest, Minister Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nayyar, congratulated the newly elected office bearers and assured them that the issue of the Press Club building would be resolved at the earliest. He also announced that he would take up the matter of a journalists' colony with the Deputy Commissioner Kotli. He said he was

fully aware of the problems faced by Khoi Ratta and would make every possible effort to resolve issues related to water supply, electricity, and sewerage.

He stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party has always worked for the resolution of public issues and that the Press Foundation would be made more active. He termed Khoi Ratta

Press Club as his local press club and said addressing its problems was his top priority. He appreciated the Press Club for fulfilling its responsibilities in difficult circumstances and said that the unity and harmony of journalists was a source of pride. He added that journalists are the face of society and the true voice of the people.

Islamabad  
30° – 38° Clear

## SERVICES

## Namaz Timings

Fajr .....	5:42 am
Zohr .....	12:20 pm
Asr .....	3:54 pm
Maghrib .....	5:32 pm
Isha .....	6:58 pm

## EMERGENCY

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

## 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
Cannt Hospital .....	9270907-11
DHQ .....	5556311-4
RGH .....	9290301-7
Holy Family .....	9290322-7
PIMS .....	9261170-79
Polyclinic .....	9218300-09
Shifa International .....	4603666

## DEPARTMENTS

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

## COMPLAINTS

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

## WASA Chairman Lays Foundation for Rs14M Malal Dispensary Near Fatehjang

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Chairman WASA Punjab and Member of the Provincial Assembly Nawabzada Chaudhry Sher Ali Khan on Saturday laid the foundation stone of the Malal Dispensary in village Mallal near Fatehjang. The project will be completed at an estimated cost of Rs14million.

Addressing the ceremony, Nawabzada Chaudhry Sher Ali Khan said the dispensary is aimed at strengthening primary healthcare services in rural areas and ensuring easy access to medical treatment for local residents. He added that the facility would help reduce pressure on major hospitals by providing timely and quality healthcare at the community level.

Let me know if you want this shortened further, turned into a headline + lead, or adapted for social media or a press release.

# Chairman Senate lauds Italy's role in Multan heritage revival

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Chairman Senate Syed Yusaf Raza Gilani hosted a dinner in honour of Italian Ambassador to Pakistan Marilina Armellin, at Gilani House, on Saturday. Prior to the dinner, a meeting was held between the Chairman Senate and the Italian delegation, during which bilateral relations, economic cooperation, social ties and the preservation of historical heritage were discussed in detail.

The Italian delegation included Ambassador Marilina Armellin, Mr Domenico Polloni and First Secretary Mr Augusto Palmieri.

Syed Yusaf Raza Gilani appreciated Italy's support for the restoration of Multan's historical status and said Italian assistance played a key role in the rehabilitation of several historic gates of the city, which reflect its ancient civilisation and cultural identity.

He added that the historical links between Multan and Rome further strengthen Pakistan-Italy relations.

Ambassador Marilina Armellin stated that Italy intends to recruit workforce from Pakistan and plans to issue around 10,000 visas in the next phase. She also announced that an Italian visa centre will soon be established in Multan to facilitate workers through NOC issuance and other related services, benefiting people of South Punjab.

Later, a dinner was hosted by the Chairman Senate, which was attended by MNA Syed Abdul Qadir Gillani, MPA Syed Ali Haider Gillani, President Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry Bakhtawar Tanvir, former MPA Ahmed Mujtaba Gillani, industrialist Chaudhry Zulfiqar Anjum, Syed Abu-ul-Hassan Gillani, Sajjada Nashin of Darbar Hazrat Musa Pak Shaheed, Khawaja Anis and other notable figures.



Participants stressed the need to further strengthen bilateral ties, promote cultural heritage protection, expand workforce exchange between Pakistan and Italy, enhance economic cooperation and

## Islamabad Marathon 2026

ISLAMABAD: People gathered at F-9 Park for participating "Islamabad Marathon 2026" at F-9 Park to D-Chowk, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Green Crescent Trust launches Rs 900m Ramazan drive

Bureau Report

HYDERABAD/KARACHI: Laughter echoed, rides whirled, and young faces lit up with joy as 777 orphaned students from Sindh's most underserved communities enjoyed a memorable day at Hyderabad's historic Rani Bagh, during a special recreational programme organised by the Green Crescent Trust (GCT). The day-long fun gala brought together students from 65 GCT schools across 18 districts of interior Sindh. Similar recreational galas will also be held at Benazir Park (Lab-e-Mehran) in Sukkur in the coming days, ensuring that all orphaned students enrolled in GCT schools share in the celebrations. The event was part of GCT's province-wide series of fun galas, designed to bring happiness, care and a sense of normal childhood to 2,150 orphaned students



enrolled in the Trust's 173 charitable schools across Sindh. Throughout the day, children thrilled to joyrides, shared smiles over a special lunch and soaked in an atmosphere created purely for their happiness and wellbeing.

In his message on the

occasion, GCT Chief Executive Officer Zahid Saeed paid heartfelt tribute to the Trust's donors, patrons and well-wishers, whose sustained generosity, he said, makes year-round care, education and recreation for orphaned children possible. He offered

special appreciation to ICNA Canada (Islamic Circle of North America), acknowledging its philanthropists for conceptualising and fully supporting a comprehensive, year-round assistance programme for orphan students.

## 25 Family Welfare Centers established in Toba Tek Singh: Ch Naeem

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Director Population Welfare Department, Chaudhry Naeem talking to our correspondent in his office said that the Health and Population Department has established 25 Family Welfare Centers across District Toba Tek Singh to provide quality healthcare and family planning services to the public.

He stated that special "Clinic on Wheels" facilities have also been launched to serve people living in remote and rural areas, particularly in Kamalia and Gojra. These mobile clinics are helping to ensure that essential maternal and child health services along with family planning guidance, reach underserved communities at their doorstep. Chaudhry Naeem further informed that daily corner meetings and awareness sessions are being conducted in both urban and rural areas to educate families about the importance of family planning. He emphasized that these awareness activities aim to improve the health of mothers and children, reduce population pressure and promote a balanced family system. He added that the department is committed to strengthening community outreach programs and encouraging responsible parenthood. According to him, public cooperation is essential to achieve sustainable development and improve the overall quality of life in the district. 25 FWCs, 70 Marryum Nawaz Health Clinics 04 Marryum Nawaz Health Hospitals are providing family planning services free of cost. In the end, Chaudhry Naeem appealed to citizens to actively participate in awareness programs and take advantage of the free counseling and healthcare services being provided by the Population Welfare Department.



## Crackdown on Child Labour Continues Across District, says AD Shahbaz

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: Assistant Director Labour Welfare Department, Muhammad Shahbaz, in an exclusive talk our correspondent, stated that no compromise will be made on the elimination of child labour across the district. He emphasized that engaging children in labour is not only illegal but also a serious social crime and strict legal action will be taken against violators. Muhammad Shahbaz said that the Labour Welfare Department is conducting regular inspections in markets, workshops, hotels, brick kilns and industrial units to prevent underage children from being employed. He added that fines, registration of cases and other legal measures are being taken against owners who violate the law. He further stated that, in accordance with the directives of the Punjab Government, the Labour Department is also running awareness campaigns in collaboration with other relevant institutions to encourage children to pursue education and to ensure a better future for them. Parents and employers are being sensitized that child labour is detrimental to children's development and future prospects. The Assistant Director appealed to the public to immediately report any incidents of child labour to the Labour Department or concerned authorities so that timely action can be taken. He assured that the identity of complainants will be kept completely confidential.

In conclusion, Muhammad Shahbaz said that the eradication of child labour requires collective efforts from the government, institutions and the public to provide children with a safe, educated and brighter future.

## Development works outside Data Darbar shrine be completed by March 31: Dr. Ehsan Bhutta

News Desk

LAHORE: Secretary and Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta has directed all relevant departments to ensure the timely completion of development works outside the Data Darbar Shrine area by March 31, 2026. He issued these instructions during his visit to the shrine, where he conducted a detailed review of the ongoing development projects.

Dr. Ehsan Bhutta stated that the initiative is being carried out under the vision of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and the guidance of Chief Minister Punjab, Maryam Nawaz Sharif, while the Chief Secretary Punjab Zahid Akhtar Zaman is fully supporting and personally overseeing all development work to ensure timely and high-quality execution.

He also made an on-site review visit in which Chief Engineer TEPA Iqar Hussain, Director Projects Auqaf Rafiq Noor Wattoo, NESPAK DGM Adil Raza, Administrator Data Darbar Muhammad Ali Khan, XEN Auqaf Muhammad Qaiser, and other concerned officials were present.

During the visit, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta highlighted that TEPA is responsible for the comprehensive development of the shrine's external infrastructure, including the Piazza, sitting areas, a modern parking facility opposite the road, pedestrian pathways paved with tuff tiles, the pedestrian underpass, and the main entrance of the shrine.



## 'Super CM, Super Team': Roads cleared, life restored in Murree after heavy snowfall

Bureau Report

LAHORE, JAN 25: Under the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the provincial administration achieved a major milestone by restoring normal life in Murree following continuous 30 hours of heavy snowfall.

A dedicated Snow Clearance Cell, established on the chief minister's directives, remained active round the clock and successfully cleared 185 kilometres of 48 major and minor roads, despite snow layers reaching up to two feet in several areas. As a result, traffic movement has largely been restored and tourist activity has resumed.

State-of-the-art machinery, including mechanical snow sweepers and heavy-duty bulldozers, was deployed to remove thick snow from roads, while continuous salt spreading



was carried out to prevent skidding and accidents.

On the chief minister's instructions, Provincial Minister Malik

Sohaib Ahmed, along with the Deputy Commissioner Murree, DPO, and field teams, remained on duty day and night to supervise operations.

Key routes and tourist areas—including Governor House Road, Abu Dhabi Road, Pindi Point, Kashmir Point, Rawalpindi-Murree-Kashmir Road (via Ghora Gali, Sunny Bank, Kuldana, Jhika Gali, Lower Topa to Lower Dewal), Lower Topa to Patriata, Kohala Bridge to Jhika Gali, Mall Road, Bank Road, Jinnah Road, and several inner-city and suburban roads—have been fully cleared and reopened to traffic.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif praised the performance of the teams, stating that the swift and coordinated response reflects the government's commitment to public safety, uninterrupted mobility, and tourism revival in Murree.

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Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

## Trump’s imperialist desires & international law

The rise of the United States as a global superpower has often been accompanied by controversial decisions that challenge international norms and laws. A glaring example of this is the Trump Administration’s aggressive and unilateral actions against Venezuela. These actions are not merely political missteps; they represent a substantial blow to international law and the principles upon which global diplomacy rests. At the heart of this controversy lies the Trump Administration’s justification for its actions. The President defended the kidnapping of Venezuela’s President, Nicolás Maduro and his wife, claiming they had “stolen” oil that rightfully belonged to the United States. This assertion is not only factually incorrect but also indicative of a troubling mindset, one that views the resources of sovereign nations as extensions of American property. By this rationale, the notion of national sovereignty is under siege, allowing powerful nations to impose their will on weaker states.

Venezuela’s oil reserves, among the largest in the world, belong to its people, not to foreign powers. The argument that the US has a right to administer Venezuela until it “finds capable leadership” echoes historically nefarious actions reminiscent of colonialism. This call for intervention is not merely a misguided attempt to democratize a nation; it is a clear indication of neo-colonialism, where a nation’s resources are seized under the guise of governance. Such actions set a dangerous precedent, raising significant questions about the role of the United States on the global stage and the ethical implications of its foreign policy. We can imagine if Russia kidnapped the Ukrainian President or China invaded Taiwan—would the United States credibly oppose such actions when its own stance on Venezuela undermines its moral authority? This glaring hypocrisy weakens international law, destabilizes global order and underscores the enduring importance of balance of power. Despite increasing interdependence among nations, strong military and technological capabilities remain essential for states to safeguard sovereignty and territorial integrity. In this context, Pakistan’s military capabilities stand out as a remarkable element in current geopolitical dynamics. Pakistan’s defence forces are not merely a functional military unit; they represent a testament to strategic adaptability and resilience in an increasingly challenging global climate. The Pakistani military has proven capable of addressing varied threats, demonstrating effectiveness in conventional warfare while also embracing modern defensive technologies and strategies.

# Trump’s Naval Push Toward Iran

President Donald Trump’s casual but chilling reference to an “armada” of U. S. warships heading toward the Middle East has once again pulled the world into a familiar but deeply unsettling theater of power, pressure, and peril. Speaking aboard Air Force One, he framed the movement of naval force as a precaution—“just in case”—while pointing to what he called a “good sign” that Iran had paused the hanging of protesters. Yet behind this language of conditional restraint lies a strategic pattern that many across the developing world, and especially in the Middle East, recognize all too well: the choreography of threat, softening, and sudden strike.

There is a deeply rooted memory, especially in countries that have lived through the consequences of great-power intervention, of how negotiations and reassuring rhetoric can unfold alongside active military preparation. In Pakistan’s case, assurances were once delivered at the highest levels even as U.S. forces were already in motion—American cruise missiles crossed Pakistani airspace and struck targets inside Afghanistan, despite parallel diplomatic engagements and the presence of senior U.S. generals in Islamabad offering guarantees that Pakistan’s territorial integrity would not be violated. A similar pattern, in this view, emerged during periods when Iran was engaged in nuclear negotiations and discussions over its regional role, only to face sudden, precision strikes against sensitive military and nuclear-related sites under the cover of diplomatic dialogue. For many in the region, these episodes have fused into a collective perception that threats, softening gestures, and sudden force are not separate phases, but part of a single strategic sequence—one designed to lower vigilance before the moment of decisive action.

This is why Trump’s “armada” comment

resonates far beyond Washington or Tehran. It revives fears of a scenario in which the visible calming of tensions becomes the prelude to a more devastating escalation. The strategic geography makes those fears sharper. The Middle East is not just a battlefield of ideologies and alliances; it is the heart of the global energy system. The Strait of Hormuz, a narrow maritime artery through which a significant share of the world’s oil supply passes, lies within the range of any serious confrontation between the United States, Iran, and their respective allies.

From a military perspective, the asymmetry of power is stark. The United States and Israel possess unmatched capabilities in intelligence, cyber operations, satellite surveillance, and precision strike. Carrier-based aircraft, submarines, and long-range missiles offer the ability to hit multiple targets across Iranian territory within hours. Analysts often point to the vulnerability of fixed installations—nuclear enrichment sites, command centers, and air defense systems—to such a coordinated assault. The possibility of decapitating strikes against senior leadership, a tactic seen in other conflicts, adds another layer of volatility to the equation.

Iran, for its part, is not without options. Its strategy has long relied on a combination of conventional forces, missile capabilities, and a network of regional allies and proxies across Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, and Yemen. Any large-scale attack on Iranian soil would almost certainly trigger responses against U.S. bases in the region and against Israel, potentially pulling multiple states into a widening conflict. Even limited engagements could spiral rapidly, driven by miscalculation, domestic political pressures, or the simple

momentum of retaliation. Yet the most complex challenge Iran faces today is not purely military. The protests that have shaken the country since late December represent a profound internal strain. Managing unrest at home while confronting external pressure stretches any state’s capacity. Energy, attention, and resources must be divided between maintaining domestic order and preparing for potential confrontation abroad. This dual-front reality complicates decision-making in Tehran and increases the risk of unintended escalation. The specter of broader involvement looms as well. China and Russia, both significant players in global energy markets and strategic rivals of the United States, have their own stakes in the stability of the Gulf. Disruptions to Iranian oil exports or regional shipping would affect their economies and their geopolitical calculations. While direct military intervention by these powers may be unlikely, their diplomatic, economic, and possibly covert responses could further complicate an already crowded chessboard.

Beyond strategy and statecraft lies the human cost. The last decades of conflict in the Middle East have produced waves of refugees, shattered cities, and generations marked by trauma. A new, large-scale war involving the United States, Israel, and Iran would not be confined to military targets. It would reverberate through civilian populations, sending millions fleeing across borders and deepening humanitarian crises in countries already struggling with displacement and poverty. This is why Trump’s offhand phrase—“just in case”—carries such weight. It suggests a readiness to cross a threshold

that, once crossed, cannot easily be uncrossed. The movement of an armada is not a symbolic act; it is a material commitment of lives, resources, and global attention. It signals to allies and adversaries alike that the option of force is not theoretical but operational. Yet there remains another path, one that history shows is harder to sustain but far less costly in the long run. Diplomacy, backed by genuine multilateral engagement rather than unilateral pressure, offers a way to address both Iran’s internal crisis and the region’s broader security dilemmas without lighting the fuse of a wider war. Such an approach requires patience, restraint, and a willingness to accept outcomes that may fall short of maximalist goals. The world now watches as warships move across the Indian Ocean and protesters continue to fill Iran’s streets. Between these two forces—one internal, one external—lies a fragile moment in which choices made in Washington and Tehran will shape not only their own futures but the stability of the global system. An armada can project power, but it cannot rebuild trust, heal societies, or secure lasting peace.

In the end, the true test of leadership will not be measured by the number of ships deployed or the range of missiles at the ready, but by whether this moment of tension becomes another chapter in a long history of devastation or a turning point toward a more durable, if imperfect, equilibrium. The stakes are not just regional. They are global, and they will be felt in the lives of millions who have no voice in the decisions now being made over the waters of the Gulf. 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



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmi. (Courtesy of Ashfaq Al-Awdat)

## More Money or Better Military? Pakistan and India’s Defense Budget Dilemma

India’s expanding reliance on military power and force-oriented rhetoric has contributed to growing instability in South Asia. Military strength is increasingly treated as a primary instrument of national policy, shaping political discourse, media narratives, and public attitudes. As the use or threat of force becomes normalized and even preferred for managing disputes, risks rise in a region already marked by historical tensions, weak crisis-management mechanisms, and a tendency toward rapid escalation. This shift has produced a more fragile and reactive security environment with a higher likelihood of miscalculation. Against this backdrop, Pakistan’s armed forces continue to operate under significant financial and material constraints, placing greater emphasis on discipline, training, institutional cohesion, and professional competence rather than sheer financial investment. With limited resources, Pakistan focuses on strategic efficiency, operational readiness, and the development of human capital to maintain credible defense capabilities. Comparative assessments based on observable outcomes and professional evaluations often suggest that Pakistan’s military, despite operating with far fewer financial resources, has cultivated a reputation for professionalism, adaptability, and resilience. By contrast, India’s substantially higher levels of expenditure have not always translated into proportional gains in effectiveness, cohesion, or strategic clarity. This discrepancy raises fundamental questions about the efficiency and utility of India’s defense spending and whether financial volume alone can substitute for sound doctrine, effective leadership,

and institutional coherence, or whether it instead exacerbates regional tensions without delivering commensurate security benefits. India’s seemingly unrestrained rise in defense spending, combined with its growing emphasis on power projection, is increasingly compelling Pakistan to reassess and recalibrate its own defense priorities, not out of ambition or expansionist intent, but as a perceived strategic necessity. In a region marked by unresolved disputes, historical grievances, and fragile trust, Pakistan views the maintenance of minimum credible deterrence as essential for safeguarding sovereignty and preventing aggression. This posture is not intended to enable escalation or domination, but to discourage unilateral military adventurism and preserve a measure of strategic stability. However, when one state persistently expands its military capabilities far beyond what can reasonably be characterized as defensive requirements, it generates unavoidable pressure on the other to respond. This dynamic entrenches a cycle of action and reaction that gradually evolves into a regional arms race, consuming scarce resources, deepening mistrust, and amplifying risks for all parties involved. The continuation of this trajectory poses serious and far-reaching risks for South Asia as a whole, a region already burdened by political volatility, economic inequality, and entrenched security dilemmas. Sustained arms buildup diverts attention and resources away from diplomacy, conflict resolution, and regional cooperation, replacing dialogue with suspicion, strategic anxiety, and zero-sum thinking. As military posturing intensifies, even minor incidents or misunderstandings carry the potential

to escalate into major confrontations, raising the specter of miscalculations with devastating consequences for civilian populations on all sides. This arms race dynamic not only strains bilateral relations between India and Pakistan but also undermines broader regional stability by normalizing militarization as the primary instrument of statecraft. At the same time, growing criticism within India itself highlights the significant social and economic costs associated with ballooning defense expenditures. Large-scale military spending absorbs public resources that could otherwise be directed toward poverty reduction, healthcare, education, infrastructure development, and social welfare. Substantial segments of the Indian population continue to face persistent challenges such as unemployment, malnutrition, inadequate access to medical services, and shortages of clean water and affordable housing. The prioritization of military expansion over human development raises profound ethical and policy questions about national priorities and long-term resilience. It suggests that the pursuit of regional dominance may come at the expense of domestic stability and human security, potentially weakening the very foundations upon which sustainable national strength ultimately rests. Within this broader context, there is an increasing expectation that the international community should pay closer and more sustained attention to India’s militaristic trajectory and its implications for both regional and global security. Unchecked militarization risks entrenching a perpetual state of confrontation in South Asia, undermining prospects for lasting peace, economic development, and regional cooperation while diverting attention from the urgent human needs that ultimately define genuine and enduring security.



Analysis  
Abdul Basit Alvi

## Kashmiris Mark India’s Republic Day as Black Day

26 January, India’s Republic Day, the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir and Kashmiris living across the globe, are observing this day as a Black Day. The observance is intended to draw urgent international attention to the continuing Indian atrocities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir; a United Nations-recognized disputed territory that has remained on the agenda of the UN Security Council for more than seven decades. The people of Jammu and Kashmir reiterate their demand for the implementation of United Nations Security Council resolutions that guarantee their inalienable right to self-determination through a free, fair, and impartial plebiscite under UN supervision. Despite its legal and moral obligations as a UN Member State, India has persistently refused to implement these resolutions and instead claims the disputed territory as an integral part of India, while intensifying repression and military control. This refusal has resulted in systematic, widespread, and grave human rights violations in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir. Indian armed forces and paramilitary units continue to commit atrocities with impunity, posing a serious threat to peace and stability in South Asia. Numerous reports by United Nations human rights mechanisms, including the UN Human Rights Council, as well as international human rights organizations and independent civil society institutions, have documented massive arbitrary arrests, prolonged detentions, enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture, sexual violence, and the excessive use of force against civilians in Indian occupied Jammu and Kashmir.



Analysis  
Syed Faiz Naqshbandi

Thousands of innocent Kashmiris, including women and children, have permanently lost their eyesight due to the indiscriminate use of pellet-firing shotguns by Indian forces. Restrictions on freedom of expression, freedom of religion, peaceful assembly, and political activity have turned the occupied territory into one of the most heavily militarized zones in the world. The unilateral measures imposed on 5 August 2019, followed by policies of demographic engineering through changes to domicile, land ownership, and settlement laws has made life there miserable. These actions aim to alter the demographic structure of the occupied territory and constitute serious violations of UN resolutions and international law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention, threatening to permanently undermine the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people. The heavy Indian military deployment is serious threat to regional peace and security. In this context, the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir urge the United Nations to play a decisive and effective role in ensuring the implementation of its Security Council resolutions. They also demand unhindered access for UN human rights mechanisms and independent international observers to investigate ongoing atrocities and prevent further loss of innocent lives. A just, peaceful, and durable resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute, in accordance with the aspirations of its people and relevant UN resolutions, remains indispensable for regional and global peace and security. The author is senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and legal expert of international law. He can be reached at faiz.naqshbandi@gmail.com

# Message from the President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan on the National Day of Australia (26 January 2026)

On the occasion of the National Day of the Commonwealth of Australia, I extend my warm felicitations to Her Excellency Ms Sam Mostyn, Governor-General of Australia, and to the people of Australia.

Pakistan values its friendly and constructive relations with Australia, grounded in mutual respect, shared democratic values, and a long-standing record of cooperation across diverse fields. Our partnership continues to evolve through regular political dialogue, growing trade and invest-

ment links, educational collaboration, parliamentary exchanges, and strong people-to-people ties. I am confident that enhanced leadership-level engagement and sustained institutional cooperation will further deepen mutual understanding and expand collaboration in priority areas

including trade, investment, agriculture, education, climate resilience, innovation, and regional and global issues of shared interest. Pakistan looks forward to working closely with Australia to advance our common objectives for peace, stability, and shared prosperity.



# Indian Republic Day in Kashmir: A Day of Mourning, Not Celebration

Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai

India is celebrating its 77th Republic Day to honor a constitution that came into force on January 26, 1950. Yet for the people of Jammu and Kashmir, this celebration has little meaning. The world's largest self-proclaimed democracy has never extended the same democratic rights to Kashmir that it celebrates elsewhere. Just two years before India adopted its Constitution, the United Nations Security Council passed resolutions on Kashmir establishing a ceasefire and, crucially, calling for a UN-supervised plebiscite. The people of Jammu and Kashmir were promised the right to decide their own future in an atmosphere free from coercion, intimidation and external compulsion. More than seven decades later, that promise remains unfulfilled. Indian leaders often stress that citizens must preserve the unity and integrity of the nation and resist divisive forces in the interest of harmony

and brotherhood. In Kashmir, however, such rhetoric is accompanied by overwhelming militarization—armed patrols, drones overhead, sealed neighborhoods, and severe restrictions on movement. This reality bears little resemblance to democratic celebration or constitutional values. The contradiction is stark. Republic Day symbolizes democratic governance, yet Kashmir remains governed through force rather than consent. One is reminded of Bob Dylan's *Blowing in the Wind*: "How many roads must a man walk down before you call him a man?" How many roads must Kashmiris walk before they are allowed to exercise their most basic democratic right—the right to choose their own destiny? India's unilateral refusal to permit a plebiscite, followed by its assertion that Jammu and Kashmir and its people are

an integral and inseparable part of the state, has defined the conflict between India and Pakistan for decades. The cost has been enormous: hundreds of thousands of lives lost, generations traumatized, and a region kept perpetually on edge. For what purpose? India unquestionably has the right to celebrate Republic Day within its internationally recognized boundaries. But under UN Security Council resolutions and established international consensus, Jammu and Kashmir remains a disputed territory. India therefore lacks the legal and moral authority to celebrate Republic Day in Kashmir as though its status were settled. This insistence has only deepened suffering, sustained violations along the Ceasefire Line, and perpetuated the risk of wider conflict in South Asia. The historical record is clear. On October 27, 1947, Indian forces entered

Jammu and Kashmir against the wishes of its people. The Maharaja, Hari Singh, soon fled the Valley, raising serious questions about his legitimacy to decide the fate of an entire population. For Kashmiris, January 26 is not a day of celebration; it is a day of mourning—a reminder of when their right to self-determination was effectively denied. India claims to be the world's largest democracy, yet impartial international voices have long challenged this claim in the context of Kashmir. Bertrand Russell once observed that "the high idealism of the Indian government in international matters breaks down completely when confronted with the question of Kashmir." More recently, following India's actions of August 5, 2019, *Huffington Post* wrote that Indian democracy is "dying in silence in Kashmir." Basic freedoms—speech, expression, movement, assembly, and political choice—remain severely restricted. Any genuine democratic choice must occur in an atmosphere free from coercion and intimidation. Instead, Kashmir



remains one of the most heavily militarized regions in the world, with nearly 900,000 troops shaping daily life. Even Mahatma Gandhi recognized that Kashmir's true rulers were its people, not its Maharajas. He stated that if Kashmiris chose Pakistan, "no power on earth can stop them," but that they must be left free to decide for themselves. Peace and stability in South Asia cannot be achieved without a just resolution of Kashmir. That resolution requires meaningful dialogue involving all parties: India, Pakistan, and the authentic representatives of the people of Jammu and Kashmir. If India genuinely wishes to honor

the democratic ideals enshrined in its Constitution, it must release all political prisoners, including Mohammad Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, Masarat Aalam, Aasia Andrabi, Fehmeeda Sofi, Nahida Nasreen, and human rights defenders such as Khurram Parvez. Draconian laws like the Public Safety Act (PSA) and the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) must be repealed. Above all, the people of Kashmir must be granted their fundamental freedoms—and the right to choose their own destiny. Until then, Republic Day in Kashmir will remain not a celebration of democracy, but a painful reminder of its absence.

# Black Day: When India's Republic Becomes a Prison in IOJK.

On January 26, while India celebrates its Constitution, Kashmir mourns. For us, the Republic Day is not a festival of democracy but a black day—a annual reminder of constitutional terrorism that transformed our homeland into an open-air prison. The tricolor flies over Srinagar as a flag of occupation, not liberation. This is not hyperbole; it is the lived reality of eight million people trapped between India's democratic façade and its settler-colonial project. The betrayal began not in 1919, but in 1948. The United Nations promised us a plebiscite to determine our future. India's own Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, pledged before the world that Kashmir's fate would be decided by its people. That promise now lies buried under layers of constitutional subterfuge and military boots. What started as a temporary accession became a permanent occupation, and a disputed territory is now being forcibly assimilated into a Hindu majoritarian state. August 5, 2019, marked the final

assault. In one swift stroke, India abrogated Article 370, dissolved our statehood, and bifurcated us into union territories—reducing an entire people to administrative subjects. This was not constitutional amendment; it was constitutional terrorism. The move was enforced under a total communications blackout, the longest internet shutdown in any democracy, with over 5,000 Kashmiris—including minors—swept into preventive detention under the draconian Public Safety Act and UAPA. Leaders were jailed, and the State Human Rights Commission was dissolved, eliminating even the pretense of domestic redress. Since then, India has deployed a sophisticated toolkit of disenfranchisement. The domicile law, introduced in 2020, is demographic engineering disguised as policy. It grants residency rights to non-Kashmiris after just 15 years, opening the floodgates for settlers to purchase land and alter our Muslim-majority character. This is classic settler colonialism: change the facts on the ground, then hold a referendum on the new reality. Gerrymandering of assembly

segments further dilutes our political voice, carving up constituencies to favor non-local populations and marginalize indigenous communities. Reservation policies are weaponized to exclude Kashmiris from government jobs while privileging outsiders, turning employment into a tool of occupation. The surveillance state penetrates every mosque and home. Religious leaders are monitored. Waqf properties audited, and Friday sermons policed. The Kashmir Press Club was forcibly shut, its members threatened. Journalists face interrogation, spyware, and arrest under anti-terror laws for reporting facts. Government employees, teachers, and even doctors face punitive termination's for social media posts deemed "anti-national." This is not governance; it is carceral control. The military occupation remains the bedrock of this system. AFSPA

grants soldiers immunity for killings, and the PSA allows detention without trial for two years. Bodies of those killed in staged encounters are not returned to families and thus denying the right to burial; compensation is denied as "seditious" demand. Human rights defenders documenting these crimes are incarcerated, offices sealed and bank accounts frozen. Justice is not delayed—it is systematically denied. India claims this is "normalcy." It points to local elections where people vote for municipal councils that cannot hire a sweeper without New Delhi's permission. This is the ultimate democratic deception: preserve the form—ballots, assemblies, courts—while gutting the substance. The Lieutenant Governor, an unelected bureaucrat, holds absolute power over police, finances, and administration. Chief Ministers are reduced to glorified mayors. Citizens can elect, but cannot govern. This

is electoral authoritarianism—the Kashmir template now being exported to the mainland through UAPA cases against activists like Anand Teltumbde and Pegasus surveillance of critics. The international community watches in complicit silence. The UN resolutions remain unimplemented, and India's strategic importance shields it from accountability. Yet Kashmiris have not surrendered the right to self-determination. We demand what was promised: a free and fair plebiscite under UN supervision. India's denial of this right is not sovereignty; it is imperial hubris. The Hindutva agenda is explicit. By disempowering Kashmir's Muslim majority, India tests the machinery of majoritarianism for wider application. The policies perfected here—demographic flooding, constitutional erasure, surveillance capitalism—are already visible in Assam, Karnataka, and against minorities nationwide. Kashmir is not an exception; it is the laboratory. We do not mourn the Indian Constitution out of spite. We mourn because its promises of equality, feder-

alism, and justice were never exceptable to us. While Indians celebrate their republic, we commemorate it as black day. The black flags we raise on January 26 are not against India's people, but against a state that has made constitutional terrorism its governing philosophy. Until the international community enforces the UN-mandated plebiscite, and until India restores our right to determine our destiny, Kashmir will remain what it is: a territory under occupation, a democracy without rights, and a republic in name only. The question for the world is no longer about territorial dispute, but whether international law means anything at all. For Kashmiris, the answer is already written in the black banners that flutter across our valleys every Republic Day—a requiem for a promise betrayed, and a warning to democracies everywhere: if it can happen here, it can happen anywhere. The writer is research associate at Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) and can be reached at shahiazhasrafkhawaja@gmail.com

# Disownment Notices: A Written Testimony to the Murder of Relationships

This column is not a momentary reaction to a single incident; it is a serious voice of protest against a dangerous social practice that is steadily hollowing out our family system, moral values, and religious foundations from within. The disownment notice under discussion—published by a father against his own three adult daughters (two married, one unmarried) in a local Saraiki newspaper, appears less a legal document and more a written confession of moral bankruptcy. Readers may have seen the text already; the real questions lie not in the wording, but in the intent, justification, and consequences behind it. The most basic truth is that a disownment notice carries neither Islamic legitimacy nor legal validity. Such advertisements may find space in newspapers, but in the eyes of the courts, Shariah, and common sense alike, they amount to nothing more than paper threats. Inheritance is not annulled by advertisements, nor stripped away by anger. Shariah has determined these rights, and the law safeguards them. Such announcements therefore represent not justice, but the public display of vengeance. The matter is even more serious given that the daughters targeted are married and highly educated. Disagreements exist in every family, but

dragging domestic disputes onto the pages of a newspaper is not reform, it is humiliation. If a crime has truly been committed, the proper forum is a court of law, not a newspaper column. An advertisement does not prove an allegation; it merely assassinates character—especially when the victims are one's own children. This episode also presents a clear moment of reflection for newspapers and editors. Journalism's ethical responsibility is not limited to publishing news or paid notices; it also entails protecting society from further harm. Publishing content—under the guise of an "advertisement" that damages a woman's dignity, a family's honour, and social equilibrium is not journalistic facilitation, but an ethical failure. Islam has built the family system upon justice, balance, and a clear distribution of rights. In matters of parents, children, and inheritance, the Qur'an and Sunnah leave no room for personal whims, anger, or revenge. Seen in this light, the practice of issuing a "disownment notice" is not merely a social aberration; it is openly un-Islamic and unlawful. The Qur'an states unequivocally: *For men there is a share in what parents and close relatives leave, and for women there is a share in what parents and close relatives leave, whether it is*

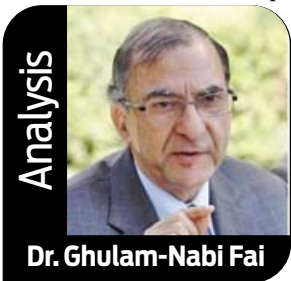
*little or much—a fixed share.*" (Surah An-Nisa, 4:7) This verse is conclusive proof that a child's right to inheritance is ordained by Allah Almighty. No father or mother has the authority to abolish, reduce, or increase it. A disownment notice can never extinguish inheritance rights. At most, parents may announce social or emotional estrangement, but declaring deprivation of property is void in both Shariah and law. Pakistan's Constitution, too, binds legislation to Islamic injunctions. Article 227 clearly states that no law shall be enacted that is repugnant to the Qur'an and Sunnah. Against this backdrop, a disownment notice is not just a few printed lines—it is a deep wound inflicted upon family bonds, social values, and human psychology. While it may appear limited to an individual case, its impact reverberates across society. Such acts turn private family disputes into public spectacles, fostering mistrust, fear, and intolerance, and reinforcing the dangerous notion that the powerful can expel the weak from relationships at will. In this way, a disownment notice punishes not just an individual, but collective social

ethics. The deepest wound, however, is suffered by the person targeted. Their social identity is damaged, mental stress and psychological insecurity take root, and society begins to view them with suspicion—as if guilt has already been established. What begins as a property dispute becomes a violation of human dignity. Parents who barter away their daughters' rights to appease sons, disguising injustice as honour or expediency, are in fact betraying justice itself. A daughter is not parental property; she is a trust from Allah. No custom, pressure, or tradition can justify betrayal of that trust. Here, the words spoken by the disowned daughters demand to be recorded: "Father, we are still your daughters today. A disownment notice cannot make us immoral, but it does leave one question behind: are daughters cherished only as long as they remain silent? Our brothers will not descend into the grave with you, nor will your daughters—there, only you and your decisions will remain." To readers and parents alike, the appeal is simple: before publishing a

disownment notice against your children, remember that tomorrow the same advertisement may stand as testimony against your own conscience. Severing relationships may be easy; turning away from rights ordained by Allah is not. Islam teaches justice, compassion, and patience even amid disagreement. A disownment notice, by contrast, is the path of revenge, ego, and anger. Civilised societies do not break relationships through newspapers and advertisements; they mend them through dialogue, reform, and justice. A disownment notice is not a decision—it is a tragic failure of relationships, tolerance, and wisdom. This must be stated unequivocally: respect for a father's authority has its place, but authority can never become a licence for oppression. To be a father is to provide protection, not humiliation; to guide, not to publicise; to symbolise justice, not to headline advertisements. A disownment notice neither strips daughters of their rights nor proves the father righteous—it merely turns a family's wound into a public spectacle. Silence in the face of such conduct is itself a crime; promoting it is an even greater one. The direct addressee of this column is the man who published this notice. You are a Hafiz-e-Qur'an, bear the outward signs of the Sunnah of the Prophet ﷺ,

hold multiple postgraduate degrees, and serve as a teacher in a government school. Society may accord you respect, yet your action has plunged your own three daughters into fear, shock, and suffering. This is the moment not for obstinacy, but for return; not for ego, but for repentance and reform. That three daughters must publicly cry out that they fear for their lives from their own father and brother is not a mere allegation, it is a chilling social tragedy. A daughter J, a BS Chemistry graduate, has been forced to seek refuge in her sister's home due to explicit threats from her father and brother. Earlier, she formally approached New Multan Police Station, stating she could no longer endure sustained oppression and coercion. These facts make it clear that the issue has transcended a family dispute and has become a matter of human life and safety. In this context, there is a strong appeal to the CPO Multan to take immediate and serious notice of the matter. Our history bears grim witness to countless incidents committed in the name of "honour," where daughters have lost their lives. It is the state's responsibility not to remain a silent spectator, but to intervene in time to protect the lives, dignity, and constitutional rights of these daughters. For when relationships turn into weapons, the law remains the only shield.

Analysis



Dr. Ghulam-Nabi Fai

Analysis



Shahzia Ashraf

Analysis



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
49,098.71	−285.30
Percentage	Time
−0.58%	23 Jan, 4:43 pm 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	

# SME Expo 2026 draws holiday crowd, CEO SMEDA Nadia Jehangir Seth took round of stalls

 **Tahir Amin Malik**

LAHORE: A large number of people visited the second day of Made in Pakistan-SME Cluster Showcase Expo 2026 organized by SMEDA, Ministry of Industries and Production at Lahore Expo Center.

The visitors showed keen interest in pavilions showcasing SME products from all over the country.

More than 150 exhibitor stalls offering a wide range of products related to apparel, cutlery, furniture, honey, handicraft etc showcased their products.

CEO SMEDA Nadia Jahangir Seth took round of stalls in Hall 2 and 3 and interacted with the exhibitors. She commended the spirit and resilience of the entrepreneurs, and assured them of helping them overcome the barriers they face.

She especially lauded Haider Suleman, who set up a stall of cutlery goods. She said SMEDA is proud of



Haider who at a tender age has shown entrepreneurial spirit and become part of this national platform.

She also visited stalls of women entrepreneurs and assured them of SMEDA's all-out support in ensuring their products visibility and business improvement.

In a media briefing, she said it's for the first time diverse SME clusters from all over Pakistan have come together on a single national platform.

She said foreign dignitaries graced the event on the second day and SMEDA was thankful to them.

Representatives of the Expo sponsors-HBL, Bank Al Habib, Bank of Punjab and Pak Suzuki Motors briefed the visitors on the products and SME support they are offering.

A symposium on Digital Finance and Fintech for SMEs and panel discussions were also held.

The event will conclude on Monday with an array of activities.

## Winter fruit

LAHORE: Vendors are displaying Kinnow attraction for customers at their workplace, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## FPCCI warns high costs threaten industry, seeks 100bps rate cut

 **Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Chairman of the Businessmen Panel Progressive (BMPP) and Senior Vice President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI), has urged the government to reduce the policy rate to single digits in light of declining inflation, stating that high financing and energy costs are severely damaging industrial activity and exports.

In a statement, Saqib Fayyaz Magoon said that inflation had already come down significantly and had entered the single-digit range, a development that was widely anticipated.



He said that the government should take advantage of the improving inflation outlook to provide immediate relief to the business community by reducing the cost of finance. He noted that the cost of doing business in the country had reached an unsustainable level, putting immense pressure on industry and trade.

## FPCCI Convener Hails Policy Shift for Global Halal Meat Competitiveness

 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food, Shahid Imran Sunday said the new policy will significantly boost Pakistan's halal meat exports to global markets.

Talking here today to a delegation of exporters he said Pakistan possesses immense potential in the halal meat sector due to its large livestock base, skilled manpower and natural compliance with halal standards, but the absence of coherent policies and modern infrastructure had limited export growth in the past. He said the new policy addresses critical gaps by streamlining certification processes, improving traceability, encouraging value addition and ensuring compliance with international sanitary and phytosanitary standards.

## Hyderabad Industry Leaders Mourn Karachi Fire, Urge Immediate Fire Safety Overhaul

 **Commerce Desk**

HYDERABAD: The Chairman of Hyderabad SITE Association of Trade & Industry (HSATT), Mr. Zubair Ghangra, along with Patron-in-Chief Mazhar-ul-Haq, Senior Vice Chairman Amir Shahab, Vice Chairman Esar Kumar, and other office bearers, have expressed deep sorrow and grief over the tragic fire incident at Gul Plaza in Karachi. They extended heartfelt condolences and sympathy to the families affected by the loss of precious lives and the significant damage to business properties.

Chairman Zubair Ghangra stated that this tragic incident serves as a serious warning to all, emphasizing that without immediate and stringent safety measures, such disasters could occur in any industrial area.

## Multipolar South Asia will curb India's unilateral influence, says SAARC expert

 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said that the emergence of a multipolar South Asia would significantly limit New Delhi's ability to unilaterally shape the norms and agenda of regional forums.

In a statement here today, octogenarian popular trade leader of South Asia, said the evolving regional and global landscape is steadily moving away from single-power dominance towards a more balanced distribution of influence among South Asian states. He said region is witnessing profound geopolitical shifts and Pakistan will by the grace of Allah will reclaim it's political space in South Asia. He said China, Bangladesh and Pakistan, strategic partners will now play significant role in new bloc.

Iftikhar Ali Malik stressed that Pakistan and other South Asian economies



especially China, Bangladesh and Pakistan, equally important strategic economic and political poles stand to benefit from this transformation by pursuing pragmatic economic diplomacy and private-sector-led regional integration rather than remaining

peripheral or subordinate actors. He concluded that a balanced South Asia, anchored in economic interdependence and mutual respect, is essential for sustainable growth, peace and stability across the region.

## Solar Revolution Sweeps Pakistan Driven by Tariffs and Technology

 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Coordinator to the Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said that a combination of economic, policy and technological factors is rapidly changing the energy landscape in favour of renewables, leading to a solar revolution across Pakistan.

Speaking here today to a delegation of solar entrepreneurs, he said persistently high electricity tariffs, frequent grid outages and rising fuel import bills have pushed households, businesses and industries to seek reliable and cost-effective alternatives, with solar emerging as the most viable option.



The sharp decline in global solar panel prices, improved efficiency of photovoltaic technology and availability of net metering have significantly shortened payback periods, making rooftop solar financially attractive for consumers.

He added that supportive government measures, tax rationalisation on renewable equipment and growing awareness about climate change have further accelerated adoption.

## Shift from low tech to innovation let growth industrial base is need of hour

 **Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council, Mian Kashif Ashfaq, Sunday urged an urgent shift from a low-tech, cost-driven industrial base to an innovation-led, value-added services to ensure sustainable and inclusive growth.

Chairing here today council board of directors meeting he emphasized that Pakistan can

no longer rely on outdated production models and must embrace technology, design innovation, research and skilled human capital to remain competitive in regional and global markets. He asserted that improved access to finance is critical for small and medium enterprises (SMEs), which form the backbone of the economy but continue to face structural barriers in credit availability. He called for

targeted financial instruments, simplified lending procedures and risk-sharing mechanisms to help SMEs modernize operations, adopt new technologies and expand exports.

Highlighting the demographic dividend, he underlined the importance of empowering youth and women through affordable financing, skills development and entrepreneurship support. Innovation-driven services can unlock

new employment opportunities, promote gender inclusion and encourage youth-led startups across design, digital marketing, logistics and smart manufacturing. He said public-private collaboration is essential to create an enabling ecosystem where innovation can flourish. Policy consistency, regulatory reforms and investment in education and technology infrastructure, he said, would accelerate the transition



toward a knowledge-based economy. Such a shift, Mian Kashif Ashfaq concluded, is vital for boosting produc-

tivity, enhancing exports and achieving broad-based, inclusive economic growth in Pakistan.

# Workshop for first-ever HBL PSL Player Auction held at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore

Imran Satti

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board conducted a detailed workshop regarding the upcoming HBL PSL Player Auction at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on Sunday noon. It was presided by Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi and CEO PSL Salman Naseer and was attended by HBL PSL officials, all eight franchise representatives, members of Pakistan's T20 World Cup squad, PCB officials and other capped players.

Among the players, the top two leading run-scorers in HBL PSL history Babar Azam and Fakhar Zaman and the top two leading wicket-takers Hasan Ali and Shaheen Shah Afridi were also present.

The HBL PSL management shared a detailed presentation on the mechanics of the retention and the auction process and consulted with all the participants. It was agreed that the HBL PSL Player Auction will take place on Wednesday, 11 February.

Among discussions on various aspects of the Auction, apart from the franchise representatives, the players fully engaged in the process.

The base prices of the players were also revealed and it was decided that the Auction price and minimum incremental bids for the players were to be in Pakistan Rupees.

The base price of the top bracket was set in PKR 4.2 crore, PKR 2.2 crore, PKR 1.1 crore and PKR 60 lacs.

The minimum incremental bid for each base price was also decided and



are as follows:

PKR 250,000 for bid amounts under PKR 1.1 crore

PKR 500,000 for bid amounts under PKR 2.2 crore

PKR 1,000,000 for bid amounts under PKR 4.2 crore

PKR 1,500,000 for bid amounts above PKR 4.2 crore

The franchises are free to bid higher than the above mentioned minimum incremental bid for each base price.

The squad composition would be a minimum of 16 players and maximum of 20 players per franchise. The number of foreign players would be five to seven depending on the squad size. It would be mandatory for the franchises to play minimum of three and maximum of four foreign players in the playing XI.

The teams are also required to have minimum of two uncapped Under 23 players in the squad and one in the playing XI.

Players either retained or picked in the HBL PSL 11 Players Auction will be engaged for two-year contracts with their respective franchise teams. After the HBL PSL 11, the franchise teams will be able to retain a maximum of seven players for the 12th edition of the tournament.

Following the HBL PSL 12, there shall be a grand auction whereby each franchise is allowed a maximum of five retentions. Any released player will return to the player auction pool.

Franchises will also be entitled to directly sign one foreign player for the HBL PSL 11, who has not played in the HBL PSL X. The franchise team purse of PKR 45 crore will be extend-



able to PKR 50.5 crore to include the directly signed foreign players. The PCB will also contribute towards the procurement of elite foreign players.

Mohsin Naqvi, Chairman PCB "I'm delighted that a consultative and productive session was held between the franchises, players and management today resulting in informed and strategic decisions which will pave the way for bright future for the HBL PSL.

"The Player Auction model is a landmark step for the HBL PSL, offering players better financial opportunities through an increased salary purse and a transparent acquisition process, while making the league more competitive and attractive."

Salman Naseer, CEO HBL PSL "The HBL PSL's highly-anticipated New Era is finally here. The player auction system modernises

player recruitment by promoting fairness, transparency, and market-driven value, strengthening the HBL PSL's appeal for both players, franchises and most importantly meets the expectations of our loyal fans.

"Today's workshop saw all views being taken into consideration and this rich feedback will be reflected in our execution of a successful player auction scheduled next month. More excitement is on the way."

## Pakistan Cricket Board Announce Cricket Squad for ICC Men's T-20 World Cup 2026

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, where they are placed in Group A and scheduled to face Netherlands in their opening game on 7 February in Colombo.

The names were unveiled during a press conference addressed by the PCB Director High Performance and member men's national selection committee Aqib Javed, Pakistan's T20I captain Salman Ali Agha and white-ball head coach Michael James Hesson at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on Sunday morning.

Among the players, skipper Salman Ali Agha, Faheem Ashraf, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay, Mohammad Salman



Mirza, Sahibzada Farhan and Usman Tariq have received their maiden mega-

event call-ups to the Pakistan squad.

Meanwhile, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad

Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan and Usman Khan have played in at least one or more editions of the tournament since 2021.

In the 20-team tournament, each team is set to play four group games before the Super Eight and Knockout Stage, all between 7 February and 8 March.

Pakistan are also set to face Australia in a three-match T20I series at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on 29, 31 January and 1 February with the preparation camp starting today.

15-Member Squad For T20 World Cup

Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan (wk) and Usman Tariq.

## ICC includes Scotland in T20 World Cup: Pakistan Announces Support For Bangladesh

Asim Tanveer

ISLAMABAD: The ICC said that despite all its efforts, the BCB is sticking to its position.

The International Cricket Council (ICC) has announced the inclusion of Scotland in place of Bangladesh after the Bangladesh Cricket Board refused to play T20 World Cup matches in India. On the other hand, the chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board says that the government will take a decision regarding the participation of the Pakistan team.

Scotland will replace Bangladesh in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 after the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) refused to participate in the tournament as per the match schedule published by the ICC, an ICC statement said on Saturday.

The ICC says the decision was taken after it found no verifiable evidence of any security threat to the Bangladesh national team in India.

The statement said that Scotland is the highest ranked team not to have qualified for the tournament.

The ICC says that Bangladesh was given 24 hours after the meeting on Wednesday, but

despite the deadline passing, no response has been received from Bangladesh.

Shortly before the ICC announcement, Pakistan Cricket Board Chairman Mohsin Naqvi had said that Pakistan stands with Bangladesh on this issue and the government will decide whether to send the Pakistan team to India to participate in the ICC T20 World Cup.

Speaking to the media at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Saturday, in response to a question about participating in the ICC T20 World Cup, he said, "We will do whatever the government of Pakistan orders us to do. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is not in Pakistan at the moment, we will be able to tell you about [our] final decision when he returns".

We are more subordinate to the government of Pakistan than the ICC, so we have to do what the government says."

Mohsin Naqvi says that he thinks Bangladesh has been wronged. "I had also said the same thing in the ICC board meeting that you cannot adopt double standards by telling one country to make a decision whenever it wants and making a completely different decision

for another country.

PCB chairman says Bangladesh should be allowed to play in the World Cup at all costs. "They are a major stakeholder and they should not be treated unfairly.

They say that if a hybrid system can be adopted for Pakistan and India matches, then why not for Bangladesh.

He was referring to the Asia Cup held in Pakistan last year, when all of India's matches were shifted to the United Arab Emirates after India refused to play matches in Pakistan.

Mohsin Naqvi said that a country cannot dictate to anyone. "If there is an attempt at dictation, then Pakistan has its own position and it will stick to it.

In response to a question, he said that if a decision is made to boycott, we have many alternative plans.

It should be recalled that on Thursday, the Bangladesh Cricket Board announced that it would not change its decision to refuse to play T20 World Cup matches in India.

Addressing a news conference in Dhaka, Bangladesh Cricket Board President Aminul Islam Bulbul informed the Bangladesh Cricket Board of the deci-



sion after meeting with Sports Advisor Asif Nazrul.

Earlier on Wednesday, the International Cricket Council (ICC) gave Bangladesh 24 hours to decide whether to play the World Cup in India in its board meeting, but before that, the Bangladesh Cricket Board announced its decision.

The ICC had apologized for relocating Bangladesh's scheduled matches in India in the T20 World Cup. Adviser on Sports Asif Nazrul told reporters on Thursday that the government's decision is clear: the Bangladesh team will not play in India.

He said that we have not received justice from the ICC, and hoped that the ICC would consider our security concerns and accept our request to play in Sri Lanka.

Asif Nazrul further said that the consequences of bowing down to someone and endangering the safety of our players should be seriously considered. He also said that he personally spoke to the cricketers about this issue.

On this occasion, Bangladesh Cricket Board President Aminul Islam Bulbul said that we will contact the ICC again and reiterate our position that we want to play in Sri Lanka, not India.

In a statement on Wednesday,

the ICC said, "The ICC has been engaged in constructive discussions with the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) for the past several weeks, with the aim of securing Bangladesh's participation in the tournament."

The ICC had said that it had shared with the BCB an independent security assessment and formal security assurances from Indian authorities, which "concluded that there was no credible or verified threat to the safety and security of the Bangladesh team in India."

The ICC further stated that despite all its efforts, the BCB is sticking to its position and is "linking its participation in the tournament to a single and isolated incident involving its player in a domestic league.

Although relations between Bangladesh and India have been strained since the fall of Sheikh Hasina's government, the death of a Hindu man during violent protests in Bangladesh last month further worsened the already tense relations between the two countries.

Now the two neighboring countries are frequently accusing each other of damaging relations, summoning each other's diplomatic staff to register protests, and issuing public statements.

## RCAK Challenge Cup U-17 Cricket Tournament Begins

Sports Desk

KARACHI: On the opening day of the RCAK Challenge Cup Under-17 Cricket Tournament RCAK Blues Under-17 defeated by 8 Wickets at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad.

Scores in Brief:

RCAK Blues Under-17 defeated RCAK Whites Under-17 by 8 Wickets. RCAK Whites 149 all-out in 30.5 overs. Abdullah Ahmed Butt 28 Amanullah 26, Mustufa Ahmed 23. Muhammad Ali (ob) 3/46, Muhammad Munir 2/15, Arsalan Riaz 2/24 Amee Hamza Khan 2/33.

In reply RCAK Blues Under-17 153/2 in 31.3 overs. Efaz uddin 69 9x4 2x6, Muhammad Asif 33, Umer Alam 28. Abdul Moiz 2/35.

All the Matches of the tournament will be played at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad as per the Schedule:

January 25 RCAK Whites vs RCAK Greens, January 26 RCAK Blues vs RCAK Greens, January 28 RCAK Reds vs RCAK Yellow, January 29 RCAK Yellow vs RCAK "P", January 30 RCAK Yellow vs RCAK "P", January 31 RCAK RCAK Whites vs RCAK Reds, February 1 RCAK Whites vs RCAK Yellow, February 3 RCAK Blues vs RCAK Reds, February 4 RCAK Greens vs RCAK Reds, February 5 RCAK "P" vs RCAK Whites, February 7 RCAK "P" vs RCAK Blues, RCAK Greens vs RCAK Blues, February 8 RCAK Greens vs RCAK Yellow, February 9 RCAK Greens vs RCAK "P", February 10 RCAK Blues vs RCAK Yellow.

## RCAK Under-15 Challenge League Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: RCAK Under-15 Reds and Greens match ended in a tie after Fighting knock of Hassan Ahmed Siddiqui 113 with 13 fours and 4 sixes and breezy 66 with 10 fours and 2 sixes by young All-rounder Rayyan Khan in the RCAK Under-15 Challenge League Cricket Tournament at Oval Ground NBP Cricket Stadium. Earlier S. M. Mehdi also Scored a brilliant century 142 with 10 fours and 8 sixes.

Scores in Brief:

RCAK Reds Under-15 and Green Under-15 match tied. RCAK Under-15 Reds 284 /4 in 40 overs. S. M. Mehdi 142 10x4 8x6, Ch. M. Rafay 56 7x4, Muhammad Qaseem 51 4x4. Shayan 2/64, Rayyan Khan 2/73.

RCAK Under-15 Greens 284/6 in 40 overs. Hassan Ahmed Siddiqui 113 13x4 4x6, Rayyan Khan 66 10x4 2x6, Areeb Noor 28. S. M. Hussain Imam 2/35.

## Haris Rauf axed as Pakistan name 15-member T20I World Cup squad

LAHORE: Speedster Haris Rauf was the conspicuous absence as Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) on Sunday announced a 15-member squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 in India and Sri Lanka between February 7 and March 8, 2026.

Pakistan are placed in Group A and scheduled to face Netherlands in their opening game on 7 February in Colombo.

The names were unveiled during a press conference addressed by the PCB Director High Performance and member men's national selection committee Aqib Javed, Pakistan's T20I captain Salman Ali Agha and white-ball head coach Michael James Hesson at the Gaddafi Stadium here on Sunday.

Among the players, skipper Salman Ali Agha, Faheem Ashraf, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Sahibzada Farhan and Usman Tariq have received their maiden mega-event call-ups to the Pakistan squad.

Meanwhile, Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Fakhar Zaman, Mohammad Nawaz, Naseem Shah, Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan and Usman Khan have played in at least one or more editions of the tournament since 2021.

In the 20-team tournament, each team is set to play four group games before the Super Eight and Knockout Stage, all between 7 February and 8 March.

Pakistan are also set to face Australia in a three-match T20I series at Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on 29, 31 January and 1 February with the preparation camp starting today.

15-member squad for T20 World Cup:

Salman Ali Agha (captain), Abrar Ahmed, Babar Azam, Faheem Ashraf, Fakhar Zaman, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay (wk), Mohammad Nawaz, Mohammad Salman Mirza, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan (wk), Saim Ayub, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shadab Khan, Usman Khan (wk) and Usman Tariq



Protest against Indian Army

MUZAFFRABAD: Activists of Pasban-e-Hurriyat, shouting slogans during protest against Indian Army, in the city.



Photo: Online

Pakistan bets big on clean energy transition to combat climate crisis and pollution: President

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The International Day of Clean Energy reminds us of the central role that clean, affordable and sustainable energy plays in inclusive development, energy security and the global response to climate change. President Asif Ali Zardari Said in a message issue on the occasion of International Day of Clean Energy

He said Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change. For this reason, the Government of Pakistan has placed the transition to clean energy at the heart of its climate and devel-

opment agenda. Under its commitments to the UNFCCC, as reflected in the Nationally Determined Contributions 2025, Pakistan has set the target of 30 per cent electric vehicles by 2030.

Air pollution has become a harsh and recurring reality for our people. Each year, dense smog and fog lead to serious traffic accidents, flight cancellations, disruption of train services and closure of motorways. Schools are forced to shut, businesses lose valuable opportunities and hospitals receive patients struggling to breathe the clean air. While air purifiers have become common in affluent households, millions of citizens



remain exposed to hazardous conditions, highlighting the deep social and economic cost of polluted air.

Through its Nationally

Determined Contribution and the National Climate Change Policy, Pakistan has committed to pursuing low carbon development pathways while protecting economic growth and social well-being.

Pakistan's energy mix already includes 35 per cent clean and renewable energy. To advance SDG 7 and SDG 13, we are giving priority to energy efficiency, conservation and sustainable resource management. This transition is being supported through policy reforms, modernisation of energy infrastructure, deployment of renewable technologies and stronger institutional coordination.

The shift to clean energy

is not only an environmental necessity but also an opportunity for economic growth, job creation and technological progress. By encouraging innovation, mobilising investment and strengthening institutional capacity, Pakistan aims to build an energy system that is reliable, affordable, resilient and sustainable for all citizens.

Let us reaffirm our resolve not only to build a climate resilient, low carbon and energy secure Pakistan, but also, as a responsible member of the global community, to support the development and adoption of technologies that sustain and improve our planet, and to move away from those that threaten its very existence.

Federal technical team inspects fire-hit building of Gul Plaza

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Rescue and search operations continued for the ninth consecutive day on Sunday at Karachi's Gul Plaza shopping centre, where a devastating incident occurred earlier this month.

A technical investigation team from the federal government, including experts from NED University, visited the site on Sunday.

According to sources, the team met with district administration officials and inspected various sections of the affected building to examine the damage caused by the devastating fire.



The team marked several locations inside the building to indicate areas where search operations had been completed in order to avoid further risk. Hazard markings, including "H" signs, were placed to signal danger or the possibility of structural collapse.

Meanwhile, the sources said that human remains were recovered from Gul Plaza late Saturday night.

A Citizens-Police Liaison Committee (CPLC) team is overseeing the identification process to ensure swift confirmation of victims' identities.

Officials stated that due to the fragile condition of the building, all operations are being carried out with extreme caution, with the safety of civilians and rescue personnel remaining the top priority.

Several sections of the building have already been thoroughly searched, but efforts to locate additional human remains are ongoing.

Punjab hikes stamp paper fees with effect from January 2026

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab government has announced a substantial increase in stamp paper and e-stamp paper fees, effective from January 2026, a move that has triggered concern among citizens already burdened by rising inflation and living costs.

According to an official notification, the minimum fee for e-stamp papers has been raised from Rs100 to Rs300.

Stamp papers used for affidavits and routine documentation will now cost three times more than the

previous rate.

The fee for divorce-related stamp papers has seen a sharp jump, rising from Rs100 to Rs1,000.

The cost of stamp papers required for domicile certificates—commonly used for school admissions, scholarships, and employment applications—has also been increased from Rs100 to Rs500.

Similarly, stamp papers needed to obtain new electricity, gas, and water connections will now cost Rs1,000, compared to the earlier Rs100.

Property-related documentation

has been significantly affected by the revised rates.

The e-stamp paper fee for property sale agreements has been increased from Rs 1,200 to Rs 3,000.

For agreements valued up to Rs500,000, the fee has also been raised from Rs1,200 to Rs3,000.

For non-property agreements, the e-stamp paper fee has been enhanced from Rs 100 to Rs 500.

Agreements valued between Rs500,000 and Rs1 million will now require stamp papers costing Rs6,000, reflecting an additional

Rs3,000 increase.

For high-value agreements exceeding Rs 15 million, the government has imposed an extra Rs 20,000 in stamp paper charges.

In addition, the e-stamp paper fee for powers of attorney has been revised upward from Rs 1,500 to Rs 1,800.

Separately, the government has made it mandatory for applicants to use a SIM card registered in their own name when applying for e-stamp papers, a step aimed at improving transparency and preventing misuse.

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

DPM/FM Dar, Bangladeshi FM review bilateral ties



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, DPM/FM Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar and Bangladesh's Foreign Adviser H. E. Md. Touhid Hossain, Sunday, reviewed Pakistan-Bangladesh bilateral relations, including trade and economic cooperation.

During a telephonic conversa-

tion, they reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration across multiple sectors, the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

The two sides also exchanged views on current regional and international developments and underscored the importance of sustained engagement to advance shared interests and promote regional peace and prosperity.

DPM/FM Dar, Qatari Minister discuss global, regional developments



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Sunday, spoke on the phone with Dr. Mohammed bin Abdulaziz Al-Khu-

laifi Qatar Minister of State.

"They discussed bilateral cooperation, key issues of mutual interest, and ongoing global and regional developments," the Foreign Office Spokesperson said in a press release.

AJK PM Faisal Rathore seeks blessings from scholar Ahmed Rafique Akhtar



Spokesman Report

GUJAR KHAN: The Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore on Sunday paid a courtesy call on renowned spiritual scholar and literary figure Professor Ahmed Rafique Akhtar. Prime Minister spent some time with

the revered scholar and sought his blessings. On the occasion, Professor Ahmed Rafique Akhtar prayed for the success, well being of the Prime Minister. The PM was accompanied by Senior PPP leaders including Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz, Raja Kamran and Chaudhry Fakhar-uz-Zaman.

Govt must compensate traders' losses, Sheikh Abdul Waheed

Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Trader leader Sheikh Abdul Waheed said that the Gul Plaza fire incident has raised serious concerns among traders nationwide, highlighting the absence of an effective system to protect traders' lives and property in emergencies. He stated that the government is failing to meet its constitutional responsibilities in this regard.

He urged the government to provide appropriate compensation or relief to registered tax-paying traders based on their capital, wealth, and business volume. He also pointed out the lack of any comprehensive policy in Punjab and other provinces to safeguard traders' businesses. Sheikh Abdul Waheed welcomed the



move to make firefighting systems mandatory in commercial centers but stressed that traders' financial and human losses must also be addressed. He called on federal and provincial governments to urgently resolve traders' issues through practical measures.