



Daily The Spokesman

ECP upholds JUI MNA Sadaf Ehsan's reserved seat

The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Wednesday rejected an application filed by Hina Bibi seeking the de-notification of Sadaf Ehsan from Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam's (JUI) reserved seat for women in the National Assembly.



Arshad Sharif Widow approaches Constitutional Court seeking judicial commission

Soumya Arshad requested the court to constitute a high-level judicial commission to investigate all aspects of the case with the assistance of international experts. She also urged the court to continue proceedings initiated under her *suo motu* notice, instead of disposing of the matter.

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Calls on

ISLAMABAD: President Global Development Gates Foundation Dr. Chris Elias along with delegation calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday.



Photo: PID

Govt taking practical steps to eradicate polio disease from Pakistan: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday emphasized that the government was taking practical steps through a comprehensive strategy and an effective team to completely eliminate Polio disease from Pakistan at the earliest.

He was talking to President Global Development Gates Foundation Dr. Chris Elias who

along with his delegation called on him at the PM House.

The prime minister expressed that the government's resolve that Pakistan will continue its efforts, with the support of trusted partners like the Gates Foundation, until the complete eradication of polio from the country.

The prime minister also directed the federal health ministry to formulate recommendations, in coordination with all relevant institutions, for

public awareness and the supply of vaccines related to polio eradication.

Gates Foundation President for Global Development Chris Elias said the Foundation highly appreciates the prime minister's personal attention to polio eradication and the effective practical measures taken in this regard.

"Pakistan is taking effective steps towards the complete eradication of polio and is

moving steadily towards success," he said.

Chris Elias emphasized that constructive consultations on polio eradication will continue with the federal and provincial governments and relevant institutions in Pakistan.

"Effective and commendable measures have been taken to eliminate the environmental presence of the polio virus in Pakistan and to ensure access for polio teams in all areas," he

added.

Director Polio Kathy Neuzil, and Deputy Director Polio Michael Galway were part of the visiting delegation.

Minister for Planning and Development Ahsan Iqbal, Minister for Health Syed Mustafa Kamal, the Prime Minister's Focal Person for Polio Eradication Ayesha Raza Farooq, and other senior government officials were also present at the meeting.

Minister urges opposition to offer solutions, not rhetoric

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday called on the opposition to adopt a solution-oriented approach, urging them to move beyond point scoring and criticism by presenting constructive alternatives. Speaking at the oath-taking ceremony of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Youth Assembly, flanked by Prime Minister's Coordinator for Information on KP Affairs Ikhtiar Wali Khan, he said one province continues to lag behind due to narrative-driven politics.



He stressed the need to replicate modern facilities such as forensic labs and crime control departments developed under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, lamenting that politics has been

reduced to "singing and poetry" rather than serious policymaking.

Tarar said politics has transformed into rhetoric on social media, where opponents brand each other as traitors or thieves.

He emphasized that competition among ruling parties should focus on infrastructure development, counterterrorism, and human development indices, noting that skill development is the true measure of progress globally.

Praising the "dynamic youth" of the province, he underscored the importance of student politics in shaping future leaders.

FIA launches corruption inquiry against brother of former ISI DG Faiz Hameed

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has launched a corruption inquiry against Najaf Hameed, brother of former senior army officer and ex-DG ISI Faiz Hameed, over allegations of assets beyond known sources of income.

According to sources, the inquiry has been initiated by the FIA's Anti-Corruption Cell. As part of the probe, details of Najaf Hameed's assets have been sought from various public and private institutions, while the State Bank of Pakistan has been approached for information regarding his bank accounts.



Sources said Najaf Hameed's name has also been placed on the Provisional National Identification List (PNIL), and FIA teams have conducted raids at multiple locations to arrest him. However, no arrest has been made so far.

The development comes after a signifi-

cant legal setback for Najaf Hameed, as a special central court in Islamabad on Monday cancelled his interim bail in a fraud and land scam case. The bail was cancelled after the court accepted an application filed by the FIA.

The Islamabad Special Court Central approved the FIA's plea for cancellation of bail, ruling in favour of the prosecution. The verdict was announced by FIA Special Judge Central Shah Rukh Arjumand, who had earlier reserved the decision.

Najaf Hameed could not be taken into custody following the verdict, as he was not present in court at the time the decision was announced.

The development comes after a signifi-

Veteran doctor dies after fire damages clinic in Karachi



Bureau Report

KARACHI: A veteran doctor died as a huge fire erupted at a clinic in a residential area of Karachi. The clinic was located in the Johar Chowrangi area of Gulistan-e-Johar locality.

Soon after receiving the report, a fire brigade vehicle rushed to the spot and launched an operation to extinguish the blaze, which they did after hours-long effort.

One man lost consciousness due to thick smoke. Later, the rescue personnel shifted him to a hospital where he succumbed to his injuries. The deceased was identified as 91-year-old Dr Muhammad Usman. The cause of the fire at the clinic could not be revealed.

A Leading National Daily

ABC Certified

فرمان رسوی

می کریں اسی پر فرمائیں فرمائیں کیا پہنچ گیا۔
یہ، جو ایسا کے والوں کی بھی جاتی۔
اللہ کے سوار کوئی نہیں جانتے۔
کیا ہے اسکے سوار کوئی نہیں جانتے کہ کیا
کیا جو کلہ کے سوار کوئی نہیں جانتے۔
کہ آئے گی اللہ کے سوار کوئی نہیں جانتے۔
کہ کس جو کوئی سے گاہر اسکے سوار کوئی
نہیں جانتے۔ قیامت بقایوں۔

(7379) بارک ریس میلز (پیٹ) لیمیٹڈ

DPM Dar reviews measures to boost Pakistan's agricultural exports, trade competitiveness



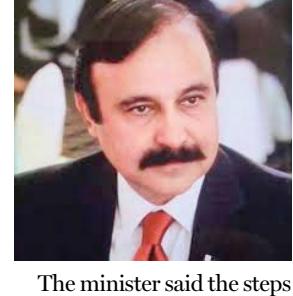
agricultural exports and trade competitiveness.

During the meeting, discussions focused on expanding market access, facilitating trade, and strengthening engagement with key international partners, a DPM's Office news release said.

The meeting was attended by SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Foreign Secretary Ambassador Anna Baloch, Pakistan Ambassadors at key missions abroad, and senior officials from relevant ministries.

Dr. Tariq terms KP CM's statement on Tirah Valley false, politically driven, misleading

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Wednesday rejected the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister's remarks on the Tirah Valley operation, calling them false, politically driven and misleading.

In a post on X, he said using a serious national issue like terrorism for political purposes was irresponsible and against the country's interests.

He added that such issues required national unity, not political scoring.

The minister said the steps being taken in Tirah Valley were not aimed at any person, political party or government.

He said the measures were necessary to restore peace, protect citizens and fully eliminate terrorism from the country.

Pakistan eyes mineral-led growth under CPEC 2.0, links mineral-rich regions to Gwadar: Ahsan

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Wednesday said Pakistan and China were entering a decisive new phase of economic partnership by placing mineral development at the centre of CPEC 2.0, aimed at transforming connectivity into productivity, exports and sustainable growth.

Addressing the launching ceremony of the China-Pakistan Mineral Cooperation Forum here, he said the two countries were repositioning their strategic partnership towards minerals-led industrialization, with Gwadar emerging as the principal gateway to connect Pakistan's mineral-rich regions with regional and global markets.

The minister said the initiative reflected a deliberate shift from infrastructure-centric cooperation to value-added, export-oriented collaboration, as both countries approach the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.

"As we approach 75 years of Pakistan-China relations, our partnership stands as a model of continuity, trust and strategic depth. This is a relationship that has never witnessed a season of autumn; it has always flourished in spring and reached newer heights every year," he remarked.

Ahsan Iqbal said the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) phase-I remained the most visible expression of this enduring partnership, noting that projects completed under the corridor had added over 8,000 megawatts of energy capacity, upgraded more than 1,000 kilometres of road infrastructure, modernised Gwadar and strengthened national connectivity.

Rathore chairs AJK Cabinet meeting; Approves key administrative and welfare decisions

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu and Kashmir cabinet meeting was held here today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. The meeting, after deliberating on important administrative, educational, welfare, and developmental matters, gave the final nod to key decisions including the launch of the Health Card in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and restoration of ministers' discretionary funds. It also reviewed progress on the implementation of the agreement reached with the Awami Action Committee. Approval was also granted for age relaxation in government employment for the brother



of martyr Sajjad Resham, as well as compensation for the heirs of Zahid Qureshi, who was martyred in Bagh. The meeting approved the allocation and transfer of state land for the estab-

lishment of Danish School Haveli, and constituted a four-member committee to resolve the matters relating to Healthcare Hospital Mirpur.

The cabinet meeting, through

a unanimous resolution condemned the denial of the right to self-determination to Kashmiri people, illegal detention of Hurriyat leader Muhammad Yasin Malik and other Kashmiri prisoners, political and human rights violations being committed by Indian forces in Indian occupied territory of Jammu and Kashmir. The cabinet also congratulated the Pakistan Air Force on the successful development of its "Taimoor" defense system and paid tribute to the Pakistan Army for the successful helicopter rescue operation in the Leyah Valley. On this occasion, the Prime Minister said that the Armed Forces of Pakistan are playing a commendable role in the defense of the country,

Good gesture

ISLAMABAD: Workers are busy in shifting the green tree after plucking off, from the green belt in the middle of Park Road to plant anywhere else during the construction of underpass as it is a very good gesture greenery like this, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Modern Public Library Demanded for Jati Taluka of Sujawal District

 Kamran Khamiso Khowaja

SUJAWAL: Besides several challenges being faced by Jati Taluka of district Sujawal, one prominent challenge in recent years is the crumbling standard of education and a low literacy ratio. With no facilities for students to study and research, the majority of youth residing in the historic Jati city and its adjoining areas are inclined toward harmful habits, drug addiction, or the excessive use of mobile phones, leaving a drastically adverse effect on their mental health.

The noted residents of the area, as

well as emerging youth, have come up with a demand to set up a library in the Taluka headquarters of Jati, equipped with modern learning facilities. The Taluka, with a dense population of 214,720, does not have any public sector library to facilitate students, readers, and researchers.

Sharing his views on the issue, Shan Qureshi, a student of Computer Science, mentioned that Jati is the largest Taluka of district Sujawal but lacks facilities for the educational uplift of its youth. He stated that Jati Taluka has produced prominent personalities such as Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana,

Rasool Bux Tamimi, Dr. Mansoor Ali Khowaja, Zakir Hussain Khatti, Dr. Wazir Ali, Aziz Jaffrani, and Fida Hussain Sheikh, among others who have served the country in different capacities. However, in current times, the youth of Jati have been left hopeless, mainly due to a lack of educational infrastructure.

Historian Haji Zahid Ishaque Soomro said that the demand for opening a well-equipped library in Jati town has been raised multiple times before the Deputy Commissioner of Sujawal, the Chairman of the District Council, and other concerned author-

ities, but to no avail.

Zubair Aziz, a librarian and researcher himself, disclosed that a plan to set up a library named after the seasoned linguist Dr. Ghulam Ali Allana was under consideration by the concerned authorities; however, due to a lack of interest on the part of local officials, the project perished. Local citizens, including Abbas Kousar, Ghulam Murtaza Khatti, Mahtab Shah, Khalid Hussain Jat, and others, continue to demand a library equipped with modern technologies for Taluka Jati.

VC AIOU Emphasizes SDGs and Digital Skills in Lifelong Learning Courses

 City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Emphasizing the need to align lifelong learning with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and rapidly evolving digital skill demands, Vice Chancellor Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that educational institutions must design future-ready, relevant and market-oriented courses.

He was addressing the inaugural session of a two-day training workshop on Course Development and Proposal Writing organized by the Center for Lifelong Learning at AIOU with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

The inaugural session was presided over by Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood while JICA's Deputy Chief

Advisor, Abid Gul, participated as the guest of honor.

Addressing the ceremony, the Vice Chancellor stressed that relevance should remain the core principle in developing courses under the Center for Lifelong Learning. He noted that it is the responsibility of educational institutions to design programs that are not only aligned with present-day requirements but also remain effective and useful in the future.

Highlighting global trends, Dr. Nasir Mahmood pointed out that the demand for a skilled workforce particularly individuals equipped with IT and digital skills is increasing rapidly worldwide.

On this occasion, JICA's Deputy Chief Advisor, Abid Gul termed the establishment of the Center for Lifelong Learning at AIOU with the support of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

During the workshop, participants are being provided with practical training in modern course design, formulation of clear learning outcomes, curriculum development aligned with market needs, and effective proposal writing techniques for courses offered under the Center for Lifelong Learning. The training aims to further enhance the professional skills and capacities of faculty members and technical staff.



Two-Day Course Development and Proposal Writing Workshop

January 28-29, 2026

Organized by
Centre for Lifelong Learning (CLL), Allama Iqbal Open University
in Collaboration with
Japanese International Cooperation Agency (JICA)

Advancing Quality Adult and Lifelong Learning

Hearing of Yasin Malik Case Held in Delhi High Court Today



 Spokesman Report

NEW DELHI: A hearing in the case of Yasin Malik was held today at the Delhi High Court, where he appeared before the court through a video link.

The hearing was conducted on the application filed by the National Investigation Agency (NIA), in which it has sought enhancement of Yasin Malik's sentence from life imprisonment to the death penalty. During the proceedings, arguments were presented by the lawyers representing both sides.

Addressing the court, Yasin Malik stated that repeated adjournments and frequent hearing dates were affecting the transparency of the case. He expressed his readiness to present his stance before the court and reaffirmed his determination to safeguard his legal rights.

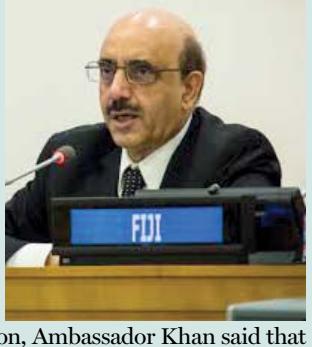
However, no verdict was announced today. The court granted additional time to the NIA to submit its response and adjourned the hearing to 22 April 2026.

It is clarified that today's hearing was limited to the presentation of arguments, and the final decision will be announced at a later stage.

US-Led Peace Board Spurs Indian Strategic Anxiety Over Kashmir, Says Masood Khan

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations as well as Ambassador to the United States, has said that India's hesitation to join the US-led Board of Peace is driven less by procedural concerns and more by deep strategic anxiety over Kashmir, accountability for human rights violations, and rapidly changing relations with Washington.



Speaking in a televised discussion, Ambassador Khan said that while it is India's sovereign right to decide whether to join the Board of Peace, New Delhi has deliberately avoided an outright rejection. He explained that speculation in diplomatic circles suggests India fears the Board's broad mandate, particularly the possibility that it could address long-standing conflicts beyond Gaza, including Jammu and Kashmir. "India's paranoia stems from the concern that Kashmir could be internationalised again under a new global mechanism," he said.

Construction of Masooma-e-Sindh Shrine Halted for Several Months

 Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi

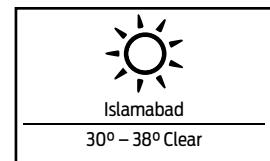
HYDERABAD: The construction work on the shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh, Syeda Khadija Maham (SA) bint Imam Musa Kazim (A.S.), which was initiated by the Government of Sindh after releasing special funds, has been completely halted for the past several months due to deliberate delaying tactics allegedly employed by certain officials of the Sindh Auqaf Department.

As a result, pilgrims visiting the sacred shrine from across the country are experiencing serious concern and anxiety. The Government of Sindh and other relevant authorities must take immediate and serious notice of the situation, not only to resume the stalled construction work but also to ensure the swift completion of the project through practical measures.

These views were expressed by renowned religious scholar Allama Ayaz Ali Qumi while speaking to media representatives after visiting the shrine of Masooma-e-Sindh and inspecting the construction project that has remained suspended for months.

Allama Qumi advised the office-bearers of the Zaireen Khidmat Committee, Agham Kot, to adopt the path of public protest against these tactics. He added that pilgrims visiting from across the country, particularly mourners from all over Sindh, would extend their full support to such a protest.

He further appealed to the Government of Sindh to take immediate and serious action in this matter to ensure transparency and timely completion of the sacred project.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:41 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	3:57 pm
Maghrib	5:35 pm

Isha	7:01 pm
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EMERGENCY

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

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CAA	9281092

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MH	561116
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Punjab Assembly approves junior driving license: Rana Abdul Manan


Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: The Provincial Motor Vehicles (Amendment) Bill 2026 was approved in the recent session of the Punjab Provincial Assembly. The meeting was chaired by MPA Rana Abdul Manan.

Under the new bill, youths aged sixteen years and above can drive motorcycles on public roads, provided they have a junior driving license which will be issued by the licensing authority. The aim of this move is to provide the youth with an opportunity to move in a legal, safe and orderly manner.

The meeting was also attended by Special Secretary, Law, DIG Waqas and other relevant department officers, who gave a detailed briefing on the bill and presented suggestions related to the practical implementation of the law.

Amendments have also been made in Section 89-B, under which the rules previously applicable to specific roads will now be applicable to all roads, and some unnecessary subsections have been abolished.

The bill was passed amid concerns that gaps in the current laws are leading to youth riding motorcycles without licenses, leading to increased accidents and safety risks. Introducing a junior driving license will reduce these risks and enable youth to drive responsibly.

CM Maryam inaugurates Parwaz Card to Empower Skilled Youth

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has inaugurated the province's first-ever and flagship youth empowerment initiative, the "Parwaz Card", aimed at providing financial support and employment opportunities to skilled youth.

Addressing graduates of technical training institutes, the chief minister said that 250,000 young people have

completed technical training, while over 114,000 have secured employment, including 97,000 within Pakistan and 33,000 abroad. She also launched three complementary initiatives — Creative Hands, Rah-e-Rozgar, and the Skill Development Portal — to strengthen the province's skills ecosystem.

Under the Parwaz Card programme, the chief minister announced interest-free financial assistance of up to



Rs300,000 for skilled youth, particularly those seeking overseas employment, to help them avoid exploitation by agents.

Speaking to graduates of institutions affiliated with the Punjab Skills Development and Entrepreneurship Department, CM Punjab said the government wanted to invest every single rupee of the provincial treasury in the youth,

adding that scholarships alone were not enough and that the state was now ensuring training, market access and by agents.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif reiterated her vision of transforming Punjab's workforce from low-paid labour to a highly skilled and globally competitive asset, stating that Pakistan must move from "brain drain to brain gain".

She said the Parwaz Card would support every skilled youth going abroad with financial assistance of up to Rs300,000.

She concluded by sharing her vision of a province where products proudly carry the label "Made in Punjab", urging skilled youth to contribute positively to the country and stay away from anti-state narratives.

Future on footpath

ISLAMABAD: A younger boy is waiting for customers to sell flowers pots and earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family, in school going age.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

South Punjab Lawyers protest LHC over unfulfilled video link promise for Supreme Court Hearings

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Syed Riaz Ul Hassan Gillani and Nasheed Gondal Lead the Protest and demonstration for provision of video link facility for hearing cases in Supreme Court in Multan.

Lawyers of South Punjab have been petitioning, protesting for more than 02 years that Supreme Court cases should be heard in Multan through video link facility.

All lawyers' organizations of Pakistan supported this demand. Protests were also given before the Supreme Court of Pakistan 02 times on 06.04.2024 and 27.09.2024 and finally on 26.12.2024, the



Chief Justice of the Supreme Court of Pakistan approved it, but it has not been implemented yet. Whenever the lawyers' representatives spoke to the Chief Justice of Paki-

stan in this regard, he took the excuse of non-cooperation from the Chief Justice of Lahore High Court.

Therefore, it has now been decided that a protest

demonstration will be held on Tuesday, 27.01.2026 at 11:30 AM in the premises of the Lahore High Court Multan Bench against this attitude of the two Chief Justices.

True Love for Hazrat Ali (RA) Enlightens the Inner Self with the Light of Haideri: Syed Riaz Hussain Shah

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, stated that those who fail to acknowledge the status and greatness of Hazrat Ali (RA) remain unaware of his true *ilm* and are deprived of respect in society, whereas those who love Hazrat Ali (RA) earn public respect naturally.

He expressed these views while addressing the weekly *Mehfil-e-Zikr* and *Dars-e-Quran* organized by Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan. The proceedings were conducted by Allama Sheikh Muhammad Qasim Deputy Director, recitation of the Holy Quran was presented by Hafiz Muhammad Shehzad, while Naat was recited by Nadeem Awan. Allama Syed



Riaz Hussain Shah said that a true devot remains free from worldly greed and strengthens his bond with Allah. He added that personalities associated with the Holy Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ) are a source of pride for Muslims, and since Hazrat Ali (RA) was beloved to the Holy Prophet (ﷺ), he is also beloved to the Ummah. He emphasized that sincere love for Hazrat Ali (RA) illuminates a person's inner self with the *Noor-e-*

PSCA Carries Out Real-Time Crime Monitoring Through Safe City Drones Across Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) continues to carry out effective drone operations across the province using advanced, technology-enabled drones for real-time crime monitoring. Over the past 24 hours, drone surveillance identified multiple violations including crime hotspots, kite flying, open manholes, encroachments, illegal parking, smog and environmental pollution. Timely actions were taken by the relevant departments in response to these violations.

According to a Safe City spokesperson, carrying out drone surveillance within the jurisdiction of Raiwind City Police Station, violations of Anti-Kite Flying Act were identified and reported. Similarly, drone monitoring in Raiwind and surrounding areas detected smoke emissions from local factories, prompting immediate action by the authorities concerned.

In response to a call received on 15, the Safe City drone team provided a prompt response to a fire incident at Faisal Bank, Shah Alam Market and carried out joint operations in coordination with rescue services. In Multan, drone surveillance identified smoke emissions from brick kilns, leading to immediate legal action by the relevant departments. Additionally, monitoring of crime hotspots in Multan resulted in the identification of suspicious activities. In Gujrat, drone monitoring at Prince Chowk detected illegal parking and the traffic police were immediately informed. Meanwhile, Safe City Sialkot identified crime hotspots and other civic issues during drone surveillance at Syedan Road, Marakiwal and Kalma Chowk.

In Murree, drone surveillance helped identify traffic routes affected by snowfall, and all critical points were promptly cleared. Similarly, drone operations in Okara and Dera Ghazi Khan resulted in the identification of crime hotspots and traffic violations. According to a Safe City spokesperson, drone surveillance plays a vital role in timely identification of suspicious activities, crime tracing and crime prevention. Safe City drones remain committed to ensuring public safety, reducing crime, and providing effective support to law enforcement agencies, and will continue to play a key role in this regard in future as well.

Short courses starting with the collaboration of TEVTA: Dr. Ehsan Bhutta


News Desk

LAHORE: Secretary / Chief Administrator Augaf Punjab, Dr. Ehsan Bhutta, has said that comprehensive and effective measures are being taken to counter extremism in the province in line with the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab. He stated that initiatives are being introduced to improve school education and to enhance the skill development of students of religious seminaries through short courses in collaboration with the Technical Education and Vocational Training Authority (TEVTA).

He expressed these views while presiding over a meeting regarding the "Center of Excellence for Countering Extremism" held yesterday at Augaf House, Lahore. During the meeting, various matters related to the human resource structure and the implementation mechanism of key policy pillars were discussed in detail.

The meeting was attended by Additional Secretary Augaf Nabila Javed, Director General Religious Affairs Shahid Hassan Kilani, and from the Punjab Home Department, CEO Ahmad Khawar Shehzad, Deputy CEO Sagheer Ahmed, and Consultant Sohail Ahmed.

Over 21,000 kites and strings seized as ICT Police arrest 54 in month-long crackdown

ISLAMABAD: Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) Police have confiscated more than 21,000 kites and kite strings and arrested 54 kite sellers and flyers during an intensified crackdown against the illegal activity across the federal capital in the ongoing month.

A police spokesperson told APP on Wednesday that various police teams carried out indiscriminate operations in different areas, resulting in the recovery of over 11,000 kites and more than 10,000 kite strings from the possession of the arrested accused. Cases have been registered against the suspects at relevant police stations, while further investigation is under way.

SSP Operations Islamabad Qazi Ali Raza said that kite flying and selling is a dangerous and unlawful practice that poses serious threats to human life, particularly to children, motorcyclists and pedestrians. He urged parents to educate their children about the hazards of kite flying and the legal consequences involved.

He added that awareness announcements regarding the dangers of kite selling and preventive measures are also being made in mosques within police station jurisdictions across the district to discourage the practice.

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Gaza ceasefire is making a difference, but situation is still deadly for children

The fragile ceasefire in the Gaza Strip is making a difference to the lives of over a million children, and improving overall access to food – but more aid still needs to enter, according to senior officials from two UN agencies.

The officials from the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Programme (WFP), speaking on Monday to journalists in New York following a week-long visit to the enclave and the occupied West Bank said the two agencies have brought more than 10,000 trucks of aid into Gaza since the 10 October truce between Israel and Hamas, representing some 80 per cent of all humanitarian cargo.

Three months later, "the food security situation has improved and famine has been reversed," said Ted Chaiban, UNICEF Deputy Executive Director, Humanitarian Action and Supply Operations.

Carl Skau, WFP Deputy Executive Director, added that most families he met "were eating at least once a day" – sometimes twice.

Commercial goods have reappeared in Gaza's markets, including vegetables, fruits, chicken and eggs. Recreational kits to help children heal from the stress and trauma of two years of war are now in their hands.

UNICEF and partners have provided more than 1.6 million people with clean drinking water and distributed blankets and winter clothes to 700,000. They have also restored essential life-saving paediatric intensive care services at embattled Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

The second round of a Gaza-wide "catch-up campaign" for routine childhood vaccinations is currently underway, while another 72 UNICEF-supported nutrition facilities have been established, bringing the total to 196.

"These gains matter," said Chaiban. "They show what is possible when the fighting pauses, political commitments are sustained and humanitarian access opens."

WFP has also scaled up massively over the past 100 days, said Skau, speaking from Rome. Teams have reached more than a million people every month with full rations for the first time since the war began.

They are "serving 400,000 hot meals every day and delivering school snacks to some 230,000 children in 250 temporary learning centres," in addition to operating hundreds of distribution points and some 20 warehouses.

Other humanitarian organizations are bringing in tents, blankets, mattresses and other essentials thanks to WFP's shared logistics services.

The agency is also helping to facilitate more regular aid convoys and is expanding common storage facilities so that more aid can be positioned closer to the population. It has also ramped up cash support to roughly 60,000 households.

Cricket Lays Bare India's Reality to Bangladesh

Relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, both born from the partition of the subcontinent and separated by the trauma of 1971, have been visibly recalibrating in recent years in ways that go beyond formal diplomacy and are increasingly driven by popular sentiment. Ordinary citizens in both countries are expressing growing warmth, rediscovering shared cultural and religious ties, and reassessing their complex history with greater nuance. This trend contrasts sharply with the deteriorating image of India within Bangladeshi society, a shift widely attributed to India's own actions rather than external influence. Although India long positioned itself as Bangladesh's indispensable ally by highlighting its role in the 1971 Liberation War, many Bangladeshis have come to view that relationship as unequal and insincere. Persistent grievances over river water sharing, border killings, trade imbalances, alleged political interference, and a patronizing posture have steadily reshaped public opinion, particularly among younger generations who are less bound to the narratives of 1971 and more focused on present-day realities in which India's dominance is often experienced as constraining rather than supportive.

Concurrently, and as the necessary counterpoint to this narrative, India's image and soft power standing in Bangladesh have suffered a significant, and perhaps historic, depreciation. What a growing number of Bangladeshis now describe, in blunt terms, as India's "dirty actions" are perceived not as unfortunate isolated incidents or policy errors, but as interconnected components of a broader, ingrained pattern of hegemonic behavior that prioritizes dominance and unilateral advantage over authentic partnership and mutual benefit. This pattern,

critics argue, manifests from perceived interference in internal electoral politics and support for particular factions, to the use of economic measures and non-tariff barriers perceived as coercive, to a general diplomatic attitude that often seems to take Bangladesh's alignment for granted. These accumulated actions have contributed decisively to a growing, populist belief within Bangladesh that India, despite its proclamations, does not view it as a true friend or equal, but rather as a subordinate state within its sphere of influence. This palpable disillusionment has been especially pronounced and vocally expressed among the younger demographics of Bangladesh, a generation that is digitally connected, historically less burdened by the debt-of-gratitude narrative of 1971, and quick to utilize social media to challenge and deconstruct official narratives that portray Indian policy as consistently benevolent or selfless. For them, the observed contrast between Pakistan's supportive role in specific international forums and India's recurring confrontational or dismissive stance—whether on cricket, water, or trade—has been both stark and morally revealing.

Cricket, therefore, in this deeply consequential sense, has become immeasurably more than just a game of bat and ball. It has effectively acted as a high-resolution mirror, reflecting and sometimes magnifying deeper political realities and submerged emotional truths that define interstate relations in South Asia. The poignant moment of the cricket board president's public tears thus symbolized, for a vast audience, a kind of national awakening within Bangladesh—a collective

moment of recognition regarding which nations stand with them in times of institutional need and which nations are perceived to stand in their way. It powerfully reinforced an increasingly held belief that genuine, enduring international relationships are built on the bedrock of consistent mutual respect and demonstrated solidarity, not on the transient capital of historical claims or the blunt instrument of regional dominance. The visibly strengthening bond between Pakistan and Bangladesh, which its advocates often describe as being rooted in a renewed "purity" of relationship untainted by contemporary coercion, stands as an evolving testament to this very principle.

As Pakistan and Bangladesh continue on this trajectory of growing closeness, a process observable at both the intergovernmental level and, more dynamically, at the level of ordinary citizens, the foundational dynamics of South Asian politics appear to be undergoing a subtle but significant recalibration. The expressions of love, respect, and fraternity between the peoples of the two countries are becoming increasingly visible and frequent, expressed not only through the shared passion for sports but also through cultural dialogues, artistic collaborations, and in the vast arena of public discourse on digital platforms. In stark contrast, India finds itself confronting a deepening crisis of perception and legitimacy in Bangladesh, a crisis that is widely analyzed as being largely of its own making. The persistent exposure of what many Bangladeshis now consider to be the real, unadorned face of Indian policy—one they perceive as often arrogant and self-serving—has

generated a potent mix of resentment and distrust, thereby weakening the fraternal ties that Delhi had for so long taken for granted as a permanent feature of the regional landscape.

Ultimately, this complex and unfolding situation underscores a simple but historically potent truth: that diplomacy which is authentically rooted in the principles of brotherhood, consistent respect, and strategic sincerity can generate a deep and lasting positive impact on the hearts and minds of a neighboring populace, creating bonds that are resilient to political fluctuations. Conversely, diplomacy that is perceived to be driven primarily by arrogance, coercive leverage, and a sense of entitled dominance will, almost inevitably, fail to retain affection and may actively breed alienation, regardless of material dependencies. In the current narrative, Pakistan's recent approach, as interpreted through the prism of events like the ICC vote, has demonstrably won hearts and shifted perceptions in Bangladesh, strengthening an emotional bond that continues to deepen with time. India's approach, judged by that same public through the lens of its daily actions and perceived slights, has alienated a generation, leading to a fundamental and potentially lasting reassessment of its role and intentions in Dhaka. In this rich and ongoing narrative, the game of cricket has played an entirely unexpected but profoundly revealing role, serving as a theater where these grand strategic themes are played out in human terms, exposing geopolitical realities that anodyne official statements often work to obscure, and reminding all observers that the relationships between nations are ultimately shaped as much by the intangible currencies of empathy, recognition, and perceived solidarity as by the cold, calculable arithmetic of power and influence.



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

The Changing Face of Public Space

Digital platforms are the new public spaces, functioning as modern versions of public houses; however, they lack many of the foundational principles that defined public houses in twentieth-century America and elsewhere in the world. Public houses embodied freedom of entry, speech, and social presence—people could sit, read, eat, drink, and converse freely. Entry was open to anyone who could afford even a minimal expense. Now such public houses can be seen in the movies only where people used to enter freely, gossip, drink and enjoy public gatherings. These spaces functioned as individual as well as collective trend builders by serving as the cultural exhibitions of one's land and people, and ultimately homogenizing culture and opinion as well. But all this happened with the opinion of the people without any intervention of the powerful authority. The authority intervened only in case of any misdoing at the public house. Another important model of public space existed in rural societies, particularly in village centers, where people gathered around a huddle-bubble, exchanged gossip, shared opinions, discussed social issues, and even resolved village disputes. In such rural public spaces, many friendships were formed by dissolving the enmities in an environment of love and fraternity. Consequently, these characteristics and style functioning of such public spaces, at the towns of villages, made them immensely popular and frequently visited public spaces.

In the twenty-first century, these spaces have been assigned a new role: opinion formation. While they ostensibly exist for the expression of individual viewpoints, in

Analysis



Dr. Zia Ahmed

pays a huge amount of money for these advertisements which are highly persuasive in nature. In return social media sells him its members. Profit is earned in both ways, but the genuineness of public opinion is compromised. Moreover, many of the channels in social media have become monetized and so the content is being uploaded by the users not as opinion but to attract views by hook or by crook which again doubts the genuineness of opinion and more a profit mongering attitude. Thus, the current public spaces are more profit earning platforms rather than the promotions of free opinion. This manipulation and manufacturing of the public is also tilted for a particular purpose or a person through the media brigades of the political

parties and the powerful social magnates. This has led to trolling and ridiculing at a very vast level and hence damaged the ethics of working as a healthy and positive institution.

Historically, public houses were introduced as part of the democratic process, enabling people to participate freely in social and political life. Social media initially inherited this democratic promise; however, participation within these digital spaces is now heavily conditioned. These conditionalities transform the process into a corporate mechanism in which individuals unknowingly labor not for their own benefit but for the profit of platform owners. The spirit of democracy also dies down when social media is manipulated by the powerful to their own advantage. There is no harm in convincing the people to vote for them, but it is a big danger democracy that people may be forced to accept a particular opinion rather than expressing their own.

The fundamental purpose of social media should be to allow the public to express opinions freely and independently, thereby making these platforms genuinely democratic spaces where public sentiment can be studied to inform people-oriented policy shifts. If social media is to function as a true space for public expression, it must promote freedom alongside ethical guidance and a shared moral framework.

Dr. Zia Ahmed is currently working as Professor of English at University of Southern Punjab, Multan, and has recently been working as principal of GGCL Multan. He was formerly a professor and chair of the English department, along with additional responsibility of the Registrar at Emerson University Multan, Pakistan. He has also been attached to NUML, Multan, and WUM for academic purposes

Trump's legacy: eroding legal norms

Arooj Zafar

I do not need international law, said Donald Trump, President of the United States of America, a superpower. This is not just a mere rhetoric but an outright renunciation of international legal norms that had underpinned the post-World War stability. These remarks are preceded by the very contentious foreign policy decision in American history, the military invasion of Venezuela, leading to the abduction of President Nicolás Maduro, and will, according to Trump, lead to the imposition of long-term US governance over its oil reserves.

The world order, after World War II, has been for decades based upon a fragile but crucial consensus. Non-intervention, state sovereignty, territorial integrity, and prohibition on the use of force are not abstract concepts but legal answers to avoid war's devastation. These principles outlived not due to adherence but due to lip service of powerful states and leaders to these principles. But even the pretense has been given up in this latest statement by Trump.

Trump's outright expressions constitute much more than provocation, as these statements set a precedent not only for the violation of international law but also that it does not need to be respected even in principle. International law has sustained in post-war international order not due to its enforcement but due to the expectations. Its virtue is in the fact that even powerful nations will justify their actions in a legal framework, though rhetorically. Norms remain influential if leaders find themselves compelled to justify their actions under them. Such explicit disregard renders them disposable.

Trump's approach presents foreign policy as an expansion of personal authority and national power, framing legality as optional. This change has impacts beyond Washington. Other states are watching as the US openly pursues foreign intervention, regime change, and the use of force, bypassing multilateral

legal institutions. Other nations are already poised to exploit this permissive environment. Russia, for instance, has already defended its territorial aggression with Western inconsistencies. Now this direct dismissal of norms regulating territorial integrity and state sovereignty reinforces Russia's stance that borders are flexible when strategic interest demands.

China too stands advantageous from this erosion. Beijing has dismissed several legal judgments as politicized and selectively enforced, especially regarding maritime disputes. The USA's explicit disregard confirms the narrative. Regional powers may be even quicker to grab the opportunity. Whether its India's stance in disputed territories or Israel's expansion of control in occupied territories, once norms against unilateral actions weaken, any violation can be framed as a security imperative. Smaller states may also act, using sovereignty at home to suppress dissent and coercion abroad, counting on the fact that no one in the system will be held legally responsible since norms are no longer upheld even in pretense by major powers.

As Trump's supporters suggest, the overlook of international law by powerful states is nothing new, it's true, but it overlooks the normalization of this time. Violations in the past were considered as exceptions, which had to be denied, justified in a legal context, or by diplomatic cover. Now they are proclaimed publicly and defended as normal policy options. The danger lies in the declaration by Trump: as he dismisses international law, saying he's only bound by his own morality. The public disregard of legal norms by the leader of the most influential state of the world sends a strong message that rules are optional and power is what matters; it is not hypothetical but plain sight precedent. Through this explicit disregard, Trump is redefining the global expectations and undermining the rule of law. Once legitimacy is openly dismissed, deference turns into permission.

The writer is a student of BS International Relations at the National Defense University, Islamabad, Pakistan.

NCCIA launches AI-enabled technology for investigations into online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Today marked the launch of 'Katalyst': an AI-enabled technology that will support the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) in their investigations into online child sexual exploitation and abuse in Pakistan. The introduction of the technology was a result of the partnership between the Ministry of Interior and Narcotics Control and the UK-Pakistan Serious Crime and Law Enforcement (UPSCALE) Programme, funded by the British High Commission. The system was launched by the Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control, Talal Chaudhry; the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott; and the Director General of the NCCIA, Syed Khurram Ali.

Every year Pakistan receives nearly

one million referrals of suspected child abuse material from technology companies via the United States National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC). The deployment of AI will enable NCCIA to review all incoming referrals of suspected online child abuse and identify and prioritise the most urgent cases for investigation.

Speaking at the event, Ayesha Raza Farooq, Chairperson of the National Commission on the Rights of Child (NCRC) highlighted the importance of taking a whole-of-government approach to online child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Syed Khurram Ali, Director General NCCIA, emphasised that protecting children from online harm is a core priority for the agency. Since its establishment in April 2025, NCCIA has handled a high volume of cybercrime reports.

The British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott, highlighted that online child abuse is a global issue that transcends borders. She noted that child protection is a core UK priority at home and overseas, and emphasised the value of the UK-Pakistan partnership in safeguarding children in both countries. While recognising the role that technology has played in cases of child abuse and exploitation, she stressed that tools like Katalyst show how AI can be used for good, reaffirming the UK's commitment to work closely with Pakistan to protect children, disrupt criminal networks, and make the digital world safer.

Minister of State for Interior and Narcotics Control, Talal Chaudhry appreciated the efforts of the NCCIA and the British High Commission in improving the country's response to online child abuse and exploitation.



National Level Expert Panel Discussion on issue of Medical Laboratory Technologist



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A National-level panel discussion of experts on the issues faced by Medical Laboratory Technologists (MLTs) in Pakistan was organized by the Medical Laboratory Technologists Association of Pakistan (MLTAP) at the Pak-China Friendship Center, Islamabad.

The Chief Guest of the event was Dr. Muhammad Fiaz Chaudhary, Chairman Advisory Committee MLT, Allied Health Professionals Council Pakistan, while the session was presided over by the Central President MLTAP, Mr. Muhammad Ali Malik.

Chairpersons of departments, principals, deans, directors, heads of departments, laboratory managers, and senior medical laboratory technologists from across Pakistan participated enthusiastically in this national panel discussion.

While addressing the gathering, Mr. Muhammad Ali Malik, Central

President MLTAP, emphasized that private practice should be allowed to all highly qualified professional medical laboratory technologists across Pakistan. He further stated that the registration process of the Allied Health Professionals Council should be made easier and more convenient to facilitate professionals, and that there must be a mandatory paid house job for MLT graduates.

Officials of MLTAP, including Dr. Raza Mohy Uddin, Dr. Mubarak Zeb, Dr. Obaidullah, Dr. Noor-ul-Ameen, Mr. Muhammad Arshad and Mr. Zaeer Ahmad Kasuri, stressed that a uniform service structure and a uniform curriculum should be implemented throughout Pakistan.

Moreover, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Arif Nadeem Saqib (Chairman MLT, National Skills University), Prof. Jamil Akhtar (Principal, College of Medical Laboratory Technology, National Institute of Health Islamabad), Dr.

Humayoon Satti (Associate Professor, NUMS), Dr. Ammar (Head of Department, Iqra University), Dr. Abdul Jabbar (Associate professor MLT, University of Haripur), Dr. Aslam Balti, Senior Technologist, Gilgit Baltistan, Mr. Azizullah Senior Technologist from Peshawar and Dr. Nazeer Ahmad (Senior Technologist, CDA Hospital) highlighted the need for an early registration process and a clearly defined house job structure for MLT students by the Allied Health Professionals Council.

Addressing the participants, the Chief Guest of the event, Dr. Muhammad Fiaz Chaudhary assured that all the issues raised by the Medical Laboratory Technologists are genuine, and he pledged to strive for their resolution in coordination with the Allied Health Professionals Council in a harmonious manner. He also appreciated MLTAP for organizing such an important national-level panel discussion.

PSCA Continues Effective Monitoring of Crime Hotspots & Other Violations Through Smart Drones Across Punjab

Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) is ensuring continuous monitoring and timely effective action across the province through advanced smart drones and artificial intelligence based technologies to address crime, traffic violations and emergency situations. During the past 24 hours, prompt field responses were carried out in cases related to smog, illegal kite flying, traffic violations and various emergency incidents. According to the PSCA spokesperson, drone surveillance in different areas of Lahore, including Lohari, led to the identification of illegal kite flying activities, upon which field forces took immediate legal action. During drone monitoring in the Lohari Gate area, emissions of smoke from a factory were detected over which relevant environmental authorities were promptly

informed.

According to the PSCA spokesperson, drone surveillance at Urdu Bazaar Chowk and Lohari areas also identified traffic congestion caused by wrong parking. Immediate action was taken, and the affected routes were cleared to restore traffic flow. Meanwhile, a fire incident was reported through emergency 15 helpline in Shah Alam Market. The PSCA drone team responded promptly and conducted a joint operation with rescue services. The spokesperson further stated that in Multan, Gujrat, Muree, Okara, Sahiwal and Sheikhpura, drone surveillance enabled identification of crime hotspots and traffic violations, leading to swift implementation by the law enforcement agencies. In Sialkot's Aguoki Model Town, drone monitoring detected the presence of garbage, on which Solid Waste Management authorities were immediately informed.

for taking swift action.

According to the PSCA spokesperson, following recent snowfall in Muree, drones were deployed to continuously monitor traffic routes and snow accumulation. As a result, all affected points were cleared expeditiously ensuring safe movement for commuters. According to the PSCA spokesperson, real-time monitoring of traffic and crime hotspots through smart drones remains ongoing, with effective coordination between district administrations and field forces to ensure rapid response. The spokesperson added that under the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab Safe Cities Authority remains fully committed to leveraging modern technology, artificial intelligence and smart drone surveillance systems to provide citizens with a safe, peaceful and improved living environment in the province.

Expert: Bangladesh's Industrial Leap Offers Pakistan Key Development Lessons

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Renowned Japanese development economist and a former visiting fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, from Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, Japan, Prof. Yamagata Tatsufumi on Monday at the special guest lecture on Bangladesh's development trajectory highlighted that the country has effectively transitioned from a typical South Asian economy to an East Asian powerhouse by adopting a high-intensity industrial development model that offers important lessons for Pakistan and other South Asian countries.

Opening the session, Dr. Abid Qaiyum Suleri, Executive Director SDPI, said that Bangladesh's development experience is particularly relevant for Pakistan due to strong similarities in natural resource endowments and economic structure. He noted that Bangladesh's strategic shift towards an East Asian development model helped expand its export share



and significantly increase women's participation in the workforce.

In his lecture, Prof. Yamagata argued that while Bangladesh is geographically a South Asian country, its development pattern increasingly resembles that of East Asia. He amid drawing on his experience as a visiting fellow at the Bangladesh Institute of Development Studies, challenged the race to the bottom argument that attributes the growth of Bangladesh's apparel exports solely to labor exploitation. Instead, he described the ready-made garments sector as a

window for diversification and a foundation for broader industrial development.

Speaking on the occasion, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, Akamatsu Shuichi, said Bangladesh's industrial development provides an interesting reference for Pakistan, especially given shared challenges such as labor abundance and the need for diversification. He stressed that South Asian countries must create opportunities to productively absorb their growing labor force and translate demographic trends into sustained economic growth.

Chalk Dust to Clicks: Economy Finds a New Voice

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

The rise of e-commerce platforms, online marketplaces, and digital payment systems has revolution-

ized the way businesses reach their customers and conduct transactions. With just a few clicks, consumers can now purchase goods and services from anywhere in the world, opening up a world of possibilities for businesses to expand their reach and tap into global markets.

The rise of the digital economy had far-reaching effects on traditional industries, challenging existing business models and paving the way for innovative approaches to commerce. One of the key areas where this transformation is most evident is in the retail sector. With the proliferation of e-commerce platforms and online marketplaces, consumers now have the ability to shop from the comfort of their homes, accessing a vast array of products with just a few clicks. This shift has not only reshaped the retail landscape but has also forced brick-and-mortar stores to adapt or risk becoming

obsolete.

One of the key benefits of this digital transformation is the level of convenience it offers to both businesses and consumers. Online transactions eliminate the need for physical storefronts, reducing overhead costs for businesses and providing customers with the flexibility to shop anytime, anywhere. The ease of use and accessibility of online platforms have democratized commerce, allowing small businesses and entrepreneurs to compete on a level playing field with established corporations.

Furthermore, the digital divide remains a persistent barrier to full participation in the digital economy. While online transactions offer unpar-

alleled convenience and accessibility, there are still segments of the population lacking the necessary skills or resources to take full advantage of digital opportunities. Bridging this gap requires investment in digital literacy programs, affordable internet access, and inclusive technology solutions to ensure that everyone can benefit from the fruits of the digital age.

Moreover, the digital economy has opened up new avenues for entrepreneurship and job creation. Start-ups and small businesses now have the opportunity to reach a global audience through online platforms, leveling the playing field and democratizing access to markets. This has led to a wave of innovation and creativity, with

entrepreneurs harnessing the power of technology to disrupt traditional industries and offer unique solutions to contemporary challenges.

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

However, with these opportunities come challenges. The digital economy has raised concerns about data privacy and security, as the proliferation of online transactions and interactions has made individuals more vulnerable to cyber threats. Additionally, the

digital divide gap between those who have access to technology and those who do not remains a pressing issue, with marginalized communities being left behind in the fast-paced digital world.

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

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

Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
188,380.38	188,202.85
Day's High	Day's Low
189,183.88	188,179.50
Index Value	Change
32,170,758,505	+177.53
Percentage	Time
+0.09%	28 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,154.43	-53.37
Percentage	Time
-0.52%	28 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,022.10	+18.69
Percentage	Time
+0.038%	28 Jan, 12:05 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
53,358.71	+25.17
Percentage	Time
+0.047%	28 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.67	197.4
Bahrain Dinar	743.60	753.59
Canadian Dollar	205.03	208.57
China Yuan	38	40.75
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	335.54	339.67
Hong Kong Dollar	35.50	36.38
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.31
Japanese Yen	1.7992	1.8998
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.60	917.56
Malaysian Ringgit	66.50	69.75
New Zealand \$	167.25	170.75
Norwegian Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.25	738.25
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.90	75.35
Singapore Dollar	219.12	224.07
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	361.00	366.07
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	76.50	77.30
UK Pound Sterling	386.26	390.96
US Dollar	280.65	282.3

Increased Online Family Connectivity Raises New Cyber Safety Concerns: Kaspersky



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky has conducted a study to reveal the common patterns of modern family life in the digital age and discover the cybersecurity challenges that lurk beneath our screen interactions. The latest research shows that mostly all people currently interact with their family members digitally: 86% of participants communicate with family via messaging apps, 58% have regular video calls, and 44% have even established joint streaming service accounts.

According to the Kaspersky's survey, regular messaging via WhatsApp, Telegram, Signal, Viber and other messenger apps were top of users' choices when communicating with their families. People in the 35-54 age group were the most likely to engage this way, with 89% of respondents choosing this option. Video calls were a much less popular option among respondents as a way of keeping in touch with relatives, with only 58% choosing this digital solution.

"As our family life moves more and more online, it opens up amazing ways to stay close and create memories – but it also brings new risks like scams and hacking. Kids and older relatives can be especially at risk, so looking out for each other online is really important. Protecting your digital privacy and using cybersecurity measures is an important way to care for your loved ones and keep your family safe," comments Marina Titova, Vice President for Consumer Business at Kaspersky.

The study was conducted by Kaspersky's market research center in November 2025. 3000 respondents from 15 countries (Argentina, Chile, China, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Malaysia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Spain, Turkey, UK, United Arab Emirates) took part in the survey.

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Govt, FPCCI Ink Landmark MoU to Drive 'Uraan Pakistan' Toward \$3 Trillion Economy

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: In a major step toward national economic transformation, the Government of Pakistan and the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) officially signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to collaborate under the "Uraan Pakistan" program.

The agreement aims to align the private sector with the government's ambitious vision of transforming Pakistan into a \$3 trillion economy by 2047.

The MoU was signed by Federal Minister for Planning, Development, and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal and President FPCCI Atif Ikram Sheikh at a ceremony held at the FPCCI President Secretariat.

The event was attended by business leaders, including: FPCCI Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain, and Former President Zubair Malik, President Islamabad Chamber Sardar Tahir and President Rawalpindi Small Chamber Sardar Saqib Naseem, Mian Akram Farid,



Dost Ali Jan, Asif Javed, Shafiq Swati, and

Under the agreement, both parties committed to promoting export-led growth

as the primary engine for economic revival. The "Uraan Pakistan" program focuses on a public-private partnership model to implement the "5Es" framework: Exports, Energy, Environment, Energy, and Equity.

"The success of Uraan Pakistan is inevitable for our survival. To revive the industry, we must ensure a conducive environment, address high interest rates, and provide competitive electricity tariffs," stated Atif Ikram Sheikh during a joint press conference.

Addressing the media, Minister Ahsan Iqbal highlighted that the cooperation of the business community was instrumental in steering the country away from the threat of default.

Sustainable Development: The Minister described "Uraan Pakistan" as a roadmap for sustainable development and industrial revival.

National Leadership: He noted that the leadership of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the support of the military leadership (Field Marshal Asim Munir) are being recognized globally for bringing economic stability.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb met today with Ms. Ina Lepel, Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to Pakistan, who called on the Minister at the Finance Division.



Photo: Online

Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu Assumes Charge as Chairman SECP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Dr. Kabir Ahmed Sidhu has formally assumed charge as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP). His appointment marks the beginning of a reform-driven agenda aligned with the Prime Minister's Economic Governance Reforms, with a focus on strengthening Pakistan's capital markets, improving the ease of doing business, and deepening financial inclusion.

Prior to his appointment, Dr. Sidhu resigned from the position of Chairman of the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP). The federal cabinet accepted his resignation on January 27.

Upon assuming office, Dr. Sidhu outlined a clear vision focused on building a fair, transparent, and inclusive financial market that canalized savings into investments, supports innovation, and sustainable economic growth. He emphasized that SECP will prioritize reducing the cost



of doing business by simplifying regulations, streamlining procedures, and accelerating digital transformation across the corporate and financial regulatory framework.

Dr. Sidhu highlighted capital market

are steam engine of economic growth. He would focus on broadening the investor base, encouraging new listings, and introducing diversified financial products with enabling legal and regulatory framework, derivatives, REITs, green bonds, and fractional investment options. These measures aim to enhance market depth, liquidity, and investor confidence while aligning Pakistan's markets with global best practices.

A major thrust of the new Chairman's strategy is the promotion and revival of the Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFC) sector. Dr. Sidhu underscored the importance of leasing companies, digital lending, mortgage finance, housing finance, and peer-to-peer platforms in expanding credit access, particularly for SMEs, first-time borrowers, and underserved segments of the economy. SECP will work towards enabling a more supportive regulatory environment to unlock the sector's growth potential.

Prime Meat Hosts High-Level Business Meeting in Karachi

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Under the auspices of Reefat Enterprises & Event Fixers, a highly significant and purposeful business meeting was held in honor of Mr. Muhammad Raza, a renowned and internationally active business leader from Sky Logistics & Contractors (Kuwait). The meeting took place at the Prime Meat Head Office, DHA Karachi.

This meeting marked the first official business engagement of Mr. Muhammad Raza during his visit to Karachi. The primary objective of the session was to explore international opportunities within Pakistan's food industry, with particular emphasis on meat exports and logistics-related sectors.

Senior leadership from Prime Meat participated in the meeting, including

Mr. Jam Zafar Ullah Dehrijo, Chairman, Prime Meat and Mr. Mahad Jilani, Head of Marketing & Sales, Prime Meat.

Wafi Energy Pakistan and Hyundai Nishat Motors sign Shell Lubricants Supply Agreement

LAHORE: Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited and Hyundai Nishat Motors have signed a strategic agreement for the supply of Shell lubricants for Hyundai vehicles in Pakistan. The contract signing ceremony held in Lahore marked the launch of Shell Helix HX8 0W-20, a lubricant developed as per Hyundai engine requirement.

The ceremony was attended by senior leadership, including Zubair Shaikh, CEO of Wafi Energy Pakistan Limited, and Hasan Mansha, CEO of Hyundai Nishat Motors. This significant milestone underscores the commitment of both organizations to deliver premium lubrication solutions.

The partnership reflects the dedication of both Wafi Energy and Hyundai Nishat Motors to deliver exceptional value and support to Hyundai vehicle owners across Pakistan. Through this collaboration, customers can confidently



rely on authentic, OEM-approved lubricants that meet the highest standards of performance and reliability.

Marsh sees series as right platform to T20I World Cup preparations

 Sports Desk

LAHORE: Australian captain Mitchel Marsh has said that the three-match series is the right platform to preparations for the ICC Men's T20I World Cup in India and Sri Lanka due to the similar conditions in Pakistan.

Addressing the pre-series press conference at the Gaddafi stadium on Wednesday afternoon, he said Australian team is in good stead and made preparations for four days in Dubai before travelling to Pakistan for the three-match series at the Gaddafi stadium on January 29, 31 and February 1.

Marsh, who led Perth Scorchers to title against Sydney Sixers in final of the BBL 15 in Australia, said that the team had gelled well in Dubai while some players will join later due to BBL duty or for being rested. "We've got some guys that weren't quite ready to be here," Marsh responded, adding "But they're back home training and preparing to



meet us in Sri Lanka, so absolutely no stress from our end."

The Australian cricket has rested five cricketers for the Pakistani series including Pat Cummins, Josh Hazlewood and Glenn Maxwell, Tim David and Nathan Ellis.

On the Pakistani fast bowler Shaheen

Shah Afridi, he said that Pakistan has great history of fast bowlers over the years, adding that Shaheen is an amazing bowler and he looked forward to a great series ahead.

On being caught off hand by cold weather in Pakistan as compared with Australia and Dubai, the Australian

captain tacitly admitted that the weather was comparatively in Lahore but promised good cricket, adding that "the Australian side was ready to go tomorrow".

Marsh added that some of the Australian team members would meet them in Sri Lanka, as the tour was "really important for our World Cup preparations".

On Babar challenge despite below par performance in the BBL, Mitchel Marsh said Babar's been a world-class player for a long period of time for Pakistan, adding that the "Australian team has great respect for him. And we know that in these conditions he's one of the best players in the world still, so we look forward to that challenge."

Marsh admitted that the Pakistani team will be a big challenge in the home conditions at the Gaddafi stadium and the similar conditions will be useful in Sri Lanka, adding that the Australian were ready for the spin-bowling challenge against Pakistan.

27th National IKO- Matsushima Kyokushin concluded with successfully

 TahirAmin

The 27th National IKO-MATSUSHIMA Kyokushin karate championship was held in Lahore. Male weight categories, included -25kg to 75kg 11 weights with the difference of 5kg. While

Female weight categories, were -25kg to 65kg 10 weights with the difference of 5kg.

The final ceremony Chief Guest were Secretary DHA Brig Rauf Shahzad along with Brig Mir Siddique Executive Director Sports DHA & Col Umair Najum Hashmi they distributed prizes to the winners Male & Female competitors.

Food was also served to all



participants/ Officials/ Guest etc
International player/ officials who participated in this event were

Mazher Ellahi Black Belt 4th
Dan Japan. Lahore
Adnan Ali Black Belt 2nd
Dan Japan. Lahore
Kamran Khan Black Belt 2nd
Dan Japan. Rawalpindi.
Ahmed Raza Khan Black Belt
3rd Dan Japan. KPK
Ali Mirza Black Belt 2nd Dan
Japan. Murree.
Imran Ali Black Belt 3rd Dan
Japan. Gilgit Baltistan.
Saima Batool Black Belt 3rd
Dan Japan. LDA Lahore.
Adeel Ashfaq Black Belt 2nd
Dan Japan. Gujranwala.
Hassan Raza Naqvi Black
Belt 4th Dan Japan. Lahore

Stokes, Moeen added to England Lions coaching staff for Pakistan series

LONDON: Ben Stokes and Moeen Ali are set to join England Lions coaching staff for the upcoming white-ball series against Pakistan Shafeens, slated to commence in Abu Dhabi next month.

According to the England Cricket Board (ECB) press release, the tour involves three T20 matches, which will be followed by five 50 over fixtures.

Jordan Cox will captain the Lions in the T20s while Dan Mousley will take charge of the 50-over team.

"Jordan Cox and Dan Mousley will

captain the England Lions' T20 and 50-over squads respectively during next month's white-ball series against Pakistan Shafeens in the United Arab Emirates," the board said.

Following the announcement, ECB Men's Performance Director, Ed Barney shared his views on the tour, emphasizing the tour as a buildup towards the 50 overs World Cup set to be held in 2027.

"It's exciting to have such a strong England Lions squad selected. This

group brings a real blend of proven performers, exciting talent who have performed over the winter and retains an eye on future best," he said.

"With limited 50-over cricket on offer, this series combined with tours over the remainder of 2026 will give players the opportunity to develop and deliver as we build towards the 2027 ICC Men's World Cup in South Africa," he added.

England Lions head coach Andrew Flintoff will oversee the coaching responsibilities that will also include

Troy Cooley's, who will be joining the team for the first time since returning to the ECB as Men's Elite National Pace Bowling Lead.

Moreover, the coaching setup will also include Neil McKenzie, Sarah Taylor, Neil Killeen, former all-rounder Moeen Ali, Amar Rashid and England's Test skipper Ben Stokes.

The opening match of the tour will commence on Friday 20 February 2026 at the Sheikh Zayed Cricket Stadium, Abu Dhabi

Trump Board of Peace: A Paid Alternative to the United Nations and Its International Impact

The government of Pakistan has opted to participate in an initiative announced by current U.S. President Donald Trump, dubbed the Board for Peace, an action that has ultimately led to a major controversy in the global press and is still in policy formulation circles. Though most citizens at first perceived that the body was formed with the sole aim of dealing with the war in Gaza, the details that are being tabled indicate that the ambitions of this body far exceed the war in Gaza. The Board for Peace, according to draft provisions and reporting in major international publications on the matter, is a stark challenge to the status quo on the international law system and multilateral government, and its implications may have far-reaching implications on international order, especially on the developing nations.

Donald Trump has tried to hide his contempt for the international legal system to a very small extent. In one of the best-known interviews with The New York Times, he categorically claimed that he is not bound by international law and that he is only limited to his own actions by his own morality and judgment. International law he did not need, he added; that only himself could check his decisions. These comments are of critical context to interpret the ideological background of the Board for Peace.

The rough draft charter goes still further. It puts the entire execu-

tive power in the hands of Donald J. Trump himself, not in the position of the president of the U.S., but in Trump as a person. His term as any chairman would be indefinite, and there would be no limit. He could only be removed by Trump himself resigning or the members of the Board reaching unanimity in extracting him. A single vote opposed to him would stop such an eventuality.

The powers of the chairman will go as far as he can appoint or expel any member state. It would take a two-thirds majority to overrule his decisions, and even then, Trump would still have his unconditional veto power. According to the charter, decisions will be taken through the majority of the member states in attendance and voting, on the approval of the chairman.

Practically, it does not have to do with the fact that any decision, even those that have the most widespread support, can be canceled by Trump himself.

The document also gives the chairman the sole power to establish, establish, or wind up subsidiary entities within the Board. It lacks any independent checks and judicial mechanisms, and does not separate powers. According to the observers, this is an affirmative denial of the rules-based international order of the UN to the

so-called pay-to-play system, where money, loyalty, and strategic utility take the place of law, norms, and collective decision-making.

This strategy can be viewed as a general political ideology that has been linked to Trump since the beginning of his campaign; namely, the abandonment of multilateralism and the adoption of transactional interaction. The view of global peace as a commodity is done in this model rather than the treatment of peace as a public good.

The rich states and those who have the means become constant insiders, whilst poorer nations have to be content with conditional and precarious membership. The principle of sovereign equality, which is a pillar of the

UN system and holds that all states are equal, is replaced by a hierarchy of powers based on wealth and influence.

Analysts point out that this is a revival of the history of the 19th-century great-power diplomacy, which had been established before the establishment of the United Nations, and recalls the colonial era practice. Instead of being an international law, the Board for Peace is an international patronage. Peace is a business transaction with cost and benefit analysis and short-term gains, which results in losers and winners instead of lasting political reso-

lutions.

Some critics argue that this transactional view is misconceived about the manner in which the process of peace operates. According to them, sustainable peace entails building trust, long-term institutional checks, and these are the attributes that cannot be substituted by personal connections or finances. Rewards are capable of short-term adherence, but they yield no structural justice. Elimination of incentives leads to the breakdown of agreements.

In addition to the legitimacy of the United Nations, the Board on Peace is considered to be a platform to build trust, long-term institutional checks, and these are the attributes that cannot be substituted by personal connections or finances. Rewards are capable of short-term adherence, but they yield no structural justice. Elimination of incentives leads to the breakdown of agreements.

A close reading of the draft charter leads many analysts to conclude that the Board for Peace was not designed to establish peace but to dismantle international law and entrench the power of those already wealthy and influential. Its ultimate effect, they warn, would be to weaken the United Nations, erode international legal norms, and undermine the sovereignty of developing countries.

Australian series vital to finalize team combination in World Cup

 Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan white-ball captain Salman Agha has said that the three-match T20I series against Australia is vital in finalizing team combination for the ICC Men's T20I World Cup in Sri Lanka.

In the pre-series press conference at the Gaddafi stadium here on Wednesday, he said there are some boxes that need to be ticked – this is the series during which the team will tick all boxes.

"We have fair idea about the team combinations but the three matches against Australia ahead of the T20 World Cup will help us in deciding team combinations and positions even better," he added. He said every team member is sure about his role in the eleven.

Agha said that an effort had been made to prepare similar pitches to the Sri Lankan condition, adding that he expected to do well in the series.

To a query, he said the team has been playing aggressive cricket for the past one year and they scored big whenever the conditions were conducive to batting.

The Pakistan captain rejected the idea that Pakistan team has not done well against the stronger team, adding that there are no "big or small" teams in T20I cricket.

"If you're playing internationally, no team can be easy, any team that comes to us, we don't look at whether they're the number one team or lower-ranked than us; we look at how we can improve our cricket and what plan we can execute."

On chances of a series win against a depleted visiting Australian side, Salman disagreed with the idea that it was a "golden opportunity" to beat Australia in the absence of five senior cricketers. He said Australian team are mentally very strong and no Australian side can be deemed weak.

On Babar's unimpressive batting stint as per the batter's standards in the Big Bash League (BBL) in Australia, the all-rounder said that he was least concerned about Babar Azam's recent performance for the Sydney Sixers, adding that the ace batter has been doing good for the Pakistan team recently.

"I wonder when the journalists will discuss performance of the other 14 cricketers in the team as well and let Babar Azam alone," Agha said in a light-hearted response to a journalist.

On fans throwing tantrums on team's low performances, he said cricket was the only top sport in the country and fans' disappointment, sometimes, was natural if the team did not do well. However, he expressed the hope that fans will turn up in large numbers to watch the games against Australia.

He said odd-spinner Usman Tariq may be a trump card for the Pakistan bowling in the Sri Lankan conditions during the World Cup, adding that he was aware of his superior statistics while batting at number 3 but he must play as per the team requirement.

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

17-member Australian squad reaches Lahore for T20I series

 Sports Desk

LAHORE: A 17-member Australian squad arrived here on Wednesday to play three T20Is ahead of the ICC Men's T20I World Cup in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8, 2026.

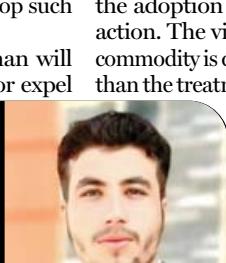
The Three T20Is will serve as a platform for both the teams to launch their respective World Cup campaigns in India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan is due to play all their matches in Sri Lanka under a hybrid arrangement by the ICC – the model was introduced last year prior to the ICC Champions Trophy 2025 in Pakistan. India had refused to travel to Pakistan.

All three matches are scheduled to be played at the Gaddafi Stadium on January 29, 31 and February 1, said a PCB press release.

Australian squad is led by Mitchel Marsh and includes Sean Abbott, Xavier Bartlett, Mahli Beardman, Cooper Connolly, Ben Dwarshuis, Jack Edwards, Cameron Green, Travis Head, Josh Inglis, Matthew Kuhne, Mitch Owen, Josh Philippe, Matthew Renshaw, Matthew Short, Marcus Stoinis, Adam Zampa,

Among the players Jack Edwards, Josh Philippe, Mahli Beardman, Matthew Kuhne, and Xavier Bartlett are visiting Pakistan for the first time. Beardman and Edwards are uncapped at the international level.

Analysis



Asad Ullah

Meeting

DUBAI: President Asif Ali Zardari, UAE Vice President and Prime Minister and the Ruler of Dubai Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum and First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari during a meeting at Zabeel Palace on Wednesday.



Photo: APP

Finance Minister vows to address textile sector challenges

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, here on Wednesday assured the textile industry of the government's continued engagement to address key challenges facing the sector.

The minister, along with Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, was talking to a delegation of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), according to press release issued by finance ministry.

During the meeting, the Ministers emphasized that the textile industry remained a cornerstone of Pakistan's economy due to its significant contribution to exports, employment and industrial activity, and reiterated the government's resolve to



support its sustainability within the broader economic reform framework.

The Ministers further reaffirmed the government's commitment to maintaining a fair and predictable policy environment for businesses,

highlighting the importance of equity, transparency and broad-based participation across the economy. It was emphasized that efforts are underway to address genuine concerns of compliant sectors, while advancing structural reforms

through consultation and institutional processes.

Aurangzeb acknowledged the concerns raised by the delegation and stated that the government was actively reviewing various issues affecting the cost of doing business for export-oriented industries.

He noted that energy affordability and reliability remain important priorities and that relevant options are being examined in consultation with concerned ministries and stakeholders to improve efficiency and competitiveness, while ensuring fiscal responsibility and system sustainability.

The APTMA delegation comprised Kamran Arshad, Chairman; Asad Shafi, Chairman North Zone; Muhammad Jamil Qassim, Senior Vice Chairman; Shahzad Ahmed Sheikh, Vice Chairman; Siddique Javed Bhatti, Vice Chairman; Aamir Fayaz Sheikh, Former Chairman; Rahim Nasir, Former Chairman; Khurram Inam, Senior Member; Raza Baqir, Secretary General; Asim Riaz, Energy Advisor; and Syed Absar Ali, Senior Economist.

Govt assures adequate wheat stocks across all provinces

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain on Wednesday chaired meeting of National Wheat Oversight Committee to review the overall wheat situation in the country.

The meeting also discussed wheat procurement plan for the crop season 2026, availability of current wheat stocks, inter-provincial coordination, and market stability.

The meeting was attended by representatives from all provinces and relevant federal departments, said a press release.

The committee reviewed the wheat supply position across the country and expressed satisfaction over the availability of sufficient stocks to meet national wheat requirements for the current food year.

It was categorically stated that there is no shortage of wheat and that adequate arrange-



ments are in place to ensure smooth availability of wheat until the upcoming harvesting season.

The committee discussed provincial procurement strategies and emphasized the importance of protecting farmers from exploitation. Provinces briefed the meeting on measures being taken to ensure that farmers receive fair economic returns, particularly through effective monitoring and implementation at the district level.

'Pakistan-China Mineral Cooperation Forum' significant step to boost bilateral ties: BOI Minister

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI) Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Wednesday said that the Pakistan-China Mineral Cooperation Forum was a significant initiative aimed at further strengthening economic and investment cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Addressing the Pak-China Mineral Cooperation Forum as chief guest, the minister said that Pakistan and China were bound by a strong and time-tested bond of "iron friendship," which continued to deepen through mutual trust, cooperation and shared devel-



opment goals.

"I have personally witnessed the extraordinary development of China, from which Pakistan can learn a great deal," he said, adding that enhanced

collaboration in minerals and other key sectors would open new avenues for sustainable growth.

The minister emphasized the need to further expand people-to-people and business-to-business contacts between the two countries, noting that more than 300 Pakistani companies had visited China in September 2025 alone.

He informed that 167 Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed during the Pak-China Business-to-Business Conference, and the Board of Investment was actively working on the implementation of all signed agreements.

Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh said that

the BOI was providing full facilitation to investors by improving Ease of Doing Business and offering incentives through Special Economic Zones (SEZs).

He added that regulatory reforms were underway to further improve the investment climate and create a more conducive environment for foreign investors in Pakistan.

The minister reaffirmed that the Board of Investment remained fully committed to promoting and facilitating foreign investment in the country, particularly from China, to achieve long-term economic development and shared prosperity.

Zardari meets Dubai ruler Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum, seeks stronger UAE investment in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

DUBAI: President Asif Ali Zardari met His Highness Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, at Zabeel Palace, where both leaders discussed expanding economic, trade and investment cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE.

During the meeting, President Zardari congratulated Sheikh Rashid Al Maktoum on completing two

decades as ruler of Dubai and praised the emirate's transformation into a global hub for tourism, finance and emerging technologies. The two sides exchanged views on how Pakistan could benefit from Dubai's development model, particularly in ports, logistics, infrastructure, information technology and digital financial services.

The meeting was attended by First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, Chairman of Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari and Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE.

Two Pakistan Navy officers Promoted to the Rank of Rear Admiral



Rear Admiral Javed Zia SI (M)

Rear Admiral Armaghan Ahmad SI (M)

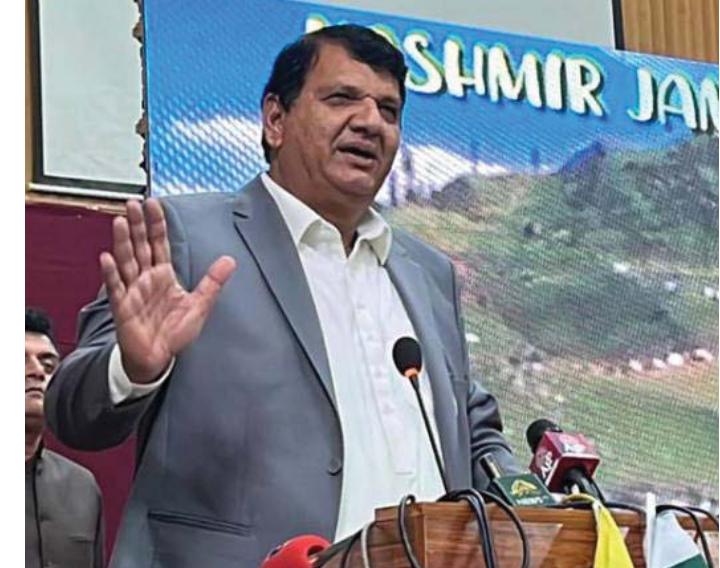
City Desk

ISLAMABAD, 28 JAN 26: Two Commodores of Pakistan Navy have been promoted to the rank of Rear Admiral.

Rear Admiral Javed Zia was commissioned in Weapon Engineering Branch of Pakistan Navy in 1994. The Flag Officer is a graduate of Pakistan Navy War College Lahore and National Defence University Islamabad. He did his Master of Science in Manufacturing System Engineering & Management from NUST. The officer has an illustrious service career with vast experience of serving on key appointments. He is currently serving as Managing Director Dockyard (Karachi).

In recognition of their meritorious services, the Flag Officers have been awarded Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military).

Amir Muqam urges EU to take notice of rights situation in IIOJK



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and Safron, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Wednesday urged the European Union to take serious notice of the human rights situation in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IIOJK), during a meeting with a delegation of the Kashmir Council European Union led by its chairman, Ali Raza Syed.

The minister said the Kashmir issue remained the cornerstone of Pakistan's foreign policy and that Islamabad was continuing diplomatic efforts at all levels to secure the right to self-determination for the Kashmiri people in line with United Nations resolutions.

He said the international community should also take note of what he

described as rights violations, alleged atrocities and attempts to alter the demographic structure of IIOJK.

Muqam said the people of IIOJK had endured suffering for nearly eight decades, praising their resilience and steadfastness, and added that their resolve to achieve freedom and the right to self-determination remained firm.

He said lasting peace and stability in South Asia depends on a just and durable settlement of IIOJK in accordance with relevant UN Security Council resolutions.

The meeting also discussed matters of mutual interest, ways to raise the issue effectively at European forums and strengthening contacts between the two sides. Secretary for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and Safron Zafar Hasan was also present.