



# Daily The Spokesman

## CM Maryam Nawaz orders arrests, dismissals over Bati Gate manhole tragedy

Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed strong indignation over the fatal Bati Gate manhole incident, censuring the district administration, Lahore Development Authority (LDA), WASA and other concerned departments for what she termed "criminal negligence".



## Pakistan's largest Tourism, Sports and Family Festival kick off today

Prime Minister's Coordinator on Tourism, Sardar Yasir Ilyas Friday announced that Pakistan's largest-ever Tourism, Sports and Family Festival will commence on Saturday at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, marking a major step toward reviving and mainstreaming the country's tourism sector after years of neglect.

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# A Model of Efficiency Transforming Healthcare at Shahbaz Sharif Hospital: Dr Tanzeel Ur Rehman

Asim Tanveer / Karan Asim

MULTAN: In a healthcare landscape often burdened by overcrowding and logistical delays, Shahbaz Sharif Hospital Multan has emerged as a standout success story. Since taking charge, Medical Superintendent Dr. Tanzeel ur Rehman Suhrani has spearheaded a series of strategic reforms that have nearly doubled patient inflow while drastically improving the quality of health care.

In this interview, Dr. Suhrani discusses the roadmap that led to this transformation and how a compact urban facility is now leading the way for public health in the region.

Dr. Tanzeel ur Rehman Suhrani said I was posted here in April. After my first month, I conducted a comprehensive



Gap Analysis Report and submitted it to both the Health Department and the district machinery, highlighting the specific deficiencies within the facility. My primary finding was that this hospital was an under-utilized urban health facility; it wasn't meeting its true

potential.

If you look at the statistical trends from 2024 and compare them with the first six months of 2025, the growth is evident. Previously, the hospital saw an average of 50,000 patients per month. Now, we are catering to approximately

90,000 patients every month.

In total for 2025, we treated around 700,000 outdoor patients, 200,000 emergency patients, and 21,000 indoor patients. When compared to previous years, these numbers represent a massive improvement in patient volume and trust.

We provide free medicines 24/7, including for emergency patients. Our Mother and Child campus—the Fatima Jinnah campus—provides all facilities including C-sections, SBD, ultrasounds, and vaccinations completely free of cost.

We are equipped with CT Scan facilities, Ultrasound, Digital X-Rays, and a digital department. Our labs can perform every type of test, and we have all the prescribed medical specialties available.

## Dangerous

RAWALPINDI: A view of the open main hole in the middle of the road at Gowalmandi area, as according to the claim of local residence, it is broken from several months but local administration seems blind on it, which needs the immediate action to prevent people from any incident.



Photo: Online

## Shaukat Javed Mir Credits PM Rathore for Major Educational Breakthrough

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Central Deputy Secretary Information of Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) Azad Kashmir and candidate for Assembly Constituency No. 7, Shaukat Javed Mir, has said that the Rs. 7 billion agreement for the Out-of-School Children Project, signed under the leadership of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, is a major breakthrough and a continuation of the PPP government's commitment to inclusive educational development without discrimination.

He said that, in addition to the Rs. 7 billion education package included among the priorities of the Azad Kashmir government, the establish-



ment of three Danish Schools and one Danish University by the federal government will help transform Azad Kashmir

Sharif for the provision of Rs. 40 billion for the Health Card, funding for educational projects, and Rs. 10 billion for upgrading the electricity system.

He expressed these views while talking to the media yesterday.

Shaukat Javed Mir said that the PPP government follows the people-friendly political philosophy of Quaid-e-Awam Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto and Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto. He added that social justice, equitable distribution of resources, education, health, employment, and development are the core elements of the national agenda and sacred mission of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore's govern-

ment.

He further stated that under the leadership of President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairperson Faryal Talpur, In-charge Political Affairs Chaudhry Riaz, PPP Azad Kashmir President Chaudhry Muhammad Yaseen, and Speaker Chaudhry Latif Akbar, the PPP's nominated candidates will secure a resounding victory in the general elections on the basis of their exemplary performance.

He concluded by saying that the opposition will be knocked out from zero in the electoral arena, and Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore will be declared the "Man of the Match" of the elections.

## Pakistan's Moral Duty: Joining the Board of Peace for Gaza

In the annals of our nation's history, Pakistan has stood as a principled voice for justice, dignity and the rights of oppressed peoples. As Pakistan announced its decision to join the Board of Peace for Gaza, we affirmed not only our solidarity with the Palestinian people but also our commitment to the universal values of peace & humanity.

Gaza is not merely a geographic strip of land, it is a symbol of resilience against unimaginable suffering. The cries of its children, the shattered homes and the silenced dreams demand more than sympathy, they demand action. By joining this Board, Pakistan places itself on the right side of history, advocating for ceasefire, humanitarian relief, reconstruction

and freedom rooted in justice.

The Palestinian cause resonates deeply with us, for it mirrors the plight of our Kashmiri brethren. Both peoples have endured decades of occupation, dispossession and denial of their right to self-determination.

The United Nations has long recognized these struggles, resolutions affirm the right of Palestinians to an independent state and call for a plebiscite in Jammu and Kashmir to allow its people to decide their future. These resolutions remain unfulfilled yet they stand as moral compasses guiding the conscience of the world.

It is imperative to shun the illegal occupations that perpetuate suffering.

Israeli occupation in Palestine and Indian occupation in Kashmir are twin injustices that defy international law and human conscience. They must be rejected unequivocally, for no peace can flourish under the shadow of oppression.

The Board of Peace must stand as a collective voice against these occupations affirming that the dignity of nations cannot be trampled by force, "Justice First, Peace Forever, Occupation Never".

As Muslims, our voice carries the weight of a shared faith and a shared

pain. To stand with Gaza and Kashmir is to stand with every oppressed soul who yearns for dignity and freedom. Pakistan's decision to join the Board of Peace is therefore not only a diplomatic step but a spiritual affirmation of our collective responsibility. We resolve to support every peace effort, every dialogue and every initiative that brings us closer to justice for Palestine, for Kashmir and for all oppressed peoples.

This is Pakistan's pledge to remain steadfast in the pursuit of peace, to amplify the voice of the voiceless and to remind the world that silence in the face of oppression is complicity. Our government's decision deserves not only our support but our active engagement for peace in Gaza and Kashmir is peace for us all.



Analysis

Waqar Naseem Wamiq

Annual Urs of Damri Wali Sarkar (RA) Set for February 2026 at Khari Sharif

Bureau Report

MIRPUR: The annual Urs Mubarak of the great spiritual leader of the Subcontinent, Hazrat Baba Pira Shah Ghazi, also known as Damri Wali Sarkar (RA), will be held under the auspices of the Aqaf Department at Darbar-e-Alia Khari Sharif on 02 and 03 February 2026, corresponding to 13th and 14th of Sha'ban-ul-Mu'azzam, with great devotion, reverence, and in accordance with religious traditions.

During the two-day Urs ceremonies, hundreds of thousands of devotees from Azad Kashmir, Pakistan, and abroad are expected to participate. All arrangements for the Urs are being made under the supervision of the Aqaf Department. On the directions of the Government of Azad Kashmir, the administration, police, emergency and municipal services, government departments, NGOs, volunteers, and members of civil society are actively participating to ensure smooth conduct of the event.

According to the schedule of the two-day Urs:

The Urs will commence on Monday, 02 February (13 Sha'ban-ul-Mu'azzam).

The inaugural ceremony will be held after Maghrib prayers on 02 February, during which the ritual bathing (Ghusl) of the holy shrine of Hazrat Baba Pira Shah Ghazi (RA) will be performed, followed by Chadar-poshi.

The central supplication ceremony will take place on Tuesday, 03 February at 11:00 a.m. at the Jamia Mosque, Darbar-e-Alia Khari Sharif. On this occasion, Naat reciters will present Hamd and Naat, and the mystical poetry of the renowned Kashmiri Sufi, Hazrat Mian Muhammad Baksh (RA), will be rendered. Prominent Ulama and Mashaiikh will also address the gathering.

AJK Election Body warns unregistered parties: No participation without proper documentation

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: According to a press release issued by the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, in the context of the general elections scheduled to be held in the middle of the current year, all political parties are hereby informed that, under Section 129 of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections Act, 2020, only those political parties are eligible to participate in the electoral process which are registered with the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the prescribed rules.

Earlier, in light of the judgment of the Honourable High Court of Azad Jammu and Kashmir dated 05.10.2023 titled "Waheed Ashraf vs. Election Commission", the Election Commission of Azad Jammu and Kashmir had issued notices to all political parties, directing them to submit their party registration documents after rectifying the deficiencies and shortcomings identified by the Honourable Court.

In this regard, registration of five (05) political parties has been completed, as they submitted complete documentation. However, some political parties have submitted incomplete documents, which are under process due to non-fulfilment of legal requirements.

Therefore, the heads of all political parties whose registration cases are currently under process with the Election Commission are hereby informed to submit the required documents without delay, in accordance with the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Elections Act, 2020, the Elections Rules, 2020, and the judgment of the Honourable High Court, so that the process of their registration may be completed.

Rising Pharmacists Take Oath as New PPA Islamabad, AJK & GB Cabinet Assumes Charge

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Pharmacists Association, Islamabad, Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan Chapter, on Wednesday, January 28, 2026, held its oath-taking ceremony for the newly elected cabinet following the successful conclusion of the PPA Elections 2025, in which the Rising Pharmacists Group secured a clean-sweep victory.

The ceremony was graced by Dr. Nisar Ansar Abdali, Chairman Health Commission AJK, as Chief Guest, while Dr. Obaid Ullah Malik, Chief Executive Officer of the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan, attended as Guest of Honor. Other distinguished guests included Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice Chancellor Health Services Academy, Mr. Zaheem Zia, Chief Executive Officer Islamabad Health Regulatory Authority, and Mr. Zafar Bakhtawari, Chairman D. Watson Group of Pharmacies and Stores and Secretary General United Business Group.

The elected leadership includes Mr. Khakan Babar as President, Mr. Rashid Mejjed as Senior Vice President, Vice Presidents Dr. Wajid Ahmad, Mr. Ghayour Ahmed, Dr. Mahvash Ansari, Gulzaib Khan and Dr. Waseem Ali Tikka, Mr. Azizullah Khan as General Secretary, Mr. M Nadeem Khan as Finance Secretary, and Dr. Usman Abid as Press Secretary.

The Executive Members of the newly elected cabinet include Faisal Aziz Sandeela, Ikramuddin, Dr. Abdul Rehman Raja, M. Danish Mumtaz Abdurehman Bin Javed, Faran Ali, Tanweer Bakht, Nisar Muhammad, Syed Hazrat Ali Shah, and Haris Sher, while the female executive members include Sana Kanwal, Dr. Misbah Zainab Nagvi, Rakia Safi, Tahira Bibi, and Shaista Ahmed, representing a broad and inclusive professional spectrum from across the region.

Rain and Snowfall Advisory Issued for Azad Kashmir

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The State Disaster Management Authority (SDMA) Azad Kashmir has issued a weather advisory for rain and snowfall from 1st to 3rd February.

According to the Meteorological Department, a western weather system will enter the country from the night of 30th January.

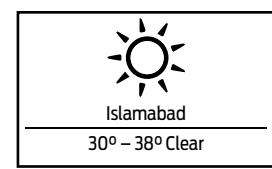
From 1st to 3rd February, light to moderate snowfall is expected in the mountainous areas of Azad Kashmir.

Farmers have been advised to ensure timely harvesting and safe storage of crops.

In case of any emergency situation, updates must be provided to SDMA twice daily.

Any loss of life or property should be immediately reported on the SDMA helpline.




**SERVICES**
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:40 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	3:59 pm
Magrib	5:37 pm
Isha	7:02 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	555631-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	926170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	921334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	927015-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potowar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	92266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249

**PA to play proactive role in addressing issues faced by working journalists:**  
Speaker Ahmad

LAHORE: Punjab Assembly (PA) Speaker Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan has reiterated his firm commitment to safeguarding press freedom and addressing the professional and welfare-related concerns of journalists, emphasizing that a free and responsible media is a cornerstone of a vibrant and functional democracy.

During an informal meeting with the office-bearers of the Pakistan English Media Association (PEMA) at a local hotel on Friday, the speaker assured participants that the Punjab Assembly would play a proactive and constructive role in addressing issues faced by working journalists.

He underscored that the government values the media as an essential pillar of democratic governance, accountability and transparency.

The speaker said that the English media, since the inception of Pakistan, has played a significant role in shaping national discourse, promoting informed debate and strengthening democratic institutions.

Acknowledging the challenges and sacrifices of journalists, he pledged that all possible measures would be taken to improve working conditions, ensure professional security and enhance institutional support mechanisms.

# Japan Funded for the Installation of Seven Water Filtration Plants

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: H. E. Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to Pakistan, inaugurated a project for the installation of water filtration plants in seven communities of District Faisalabad, Punjab on Thursday. The project was implemented by Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, a non-governmental organization which has over three decades of experience in humanitarian and development work across Pakistan.

The Government of Japan, through its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Program, provided financial assistance of 70,201 USD to this project, for the installation of seven water filtration plants in underserved communities such as Peoples Colony 2, Badar Colony, Kuri Wala, 40 Mor Jarawala, Chak No. 421 GB, Hussainabad in Faisalabad District, and Bamba Bola in Okara District. The inauguration ceremony was attended by officials from the Embassy of Japan, repre-



sentatives of Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan, and members of the beneficiary communities.

Alkhidmat Foundation Pakistan has implemented several successful projects in the past in collaboration with the Japanese Embassy to improve the living standard of people in Pakistan. This project, funded by the Government of Japan responds to

the urgent need of safe drinking water for over 400 households (or 2,870 people) in Faisalabad where a large proportion of the population is exposed to water-borne diseases due to contaminated water sources. The availability of clean drinking water will contribute to improve people's health and livelihoods.

While speaking at the ceremony,

Ambassador Akamatsu congratulated NGO for the successful completion of the project and appreciated its role in delivering essential services to underserved communities. Ambassador Akamatsu stressed that access to safe drinking water is a fundamental human right and a key priority of Japan's assistance policy toward Pakistan.

## Preparation of Tourism festival

ISLAMABAD: A view of the glimpses of the preparation at Sports Complex regarding the two days Pakistan Tourism Festival in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Political harmony is essential for national economic stability: Achakzai

**Commerce Desk**


of mutual interest, the current national political situation,

national and regional challenges, and especially the promotion of Pakistan-China trade and economic relations.

During the meetings, Muhammad Naseem Khan Achakzai described the Pakistan-China friendship as a strong foundation for Pakistan's economic development and presented his authored book to Syed Aman Shah and others. On the occasion, he stated that China is Pakistan's reliable and trusted friend, and emphasized the urgent need to further expand bilateral trade, industrial, and economic cooperation between the two countries.

## DC Gujrat Noor-ul-Ain Qureshi urges cleft patients to contact the Cleft Helpline

**Anwar Chohan**

GUJRAT: Deputy Commissioner Gujrat Noor-ul-Ain Qureshi has released a public-interest message concerning the treatment, nutrition, and care of patients with cleft lip and cleft palate, urging the public to contact the 24-hour helpline of Pakistan Cleft Hospital, Gujrat, a charitable institution providing treatment for cleft lip and palate.

In her video message, the Deputy Commissioner stated "If a child has been born in your family with a cleft lip or cleft palate, and you are worried about their feeding or treatment, or if you have any questions, a 24-hour helpline has been launched at Cleft Hospital, Gujrat. You can contact the number 05311111108 to obtain complete information. This is a completely treatable condition, and every child has the right to smiles."

## Meeting held on CM Punjab's "Dhee"

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: A meeting regarding Chief Minister Punjab's welfare initiative "Dhee Rani" was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner (Finance & Planning) Nosheen Israr. Heads of various line departments attended the meeting.

During the briefing, officials of the Social Welfare Department informed participants that under the Dhee Rani programme, collective marriages of 155 couples will be arranged in Attock district. Each couple will be allowed to invite 20 guests, while brides will also be provided with gifts as part of the programme.

ADC Nosheen Israr directed all concerned departments to ensure timely and efficient completion of arrangements. She emphasized that no negligence or lapse will be tolerated and stressed the importance of inter-departmental coordination to successfully implement the programme. The meeting also reviewed administrative arrangements, security measures, hospitality, and other related matters in detail.

## PM measures are commendable, Amaan Paracha

**News Desk**

KARACHI: FPCCI Vice President Amaan Paracha appreciated the measures taken by Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif to reduce the growing problems of exporters and importers, revive industrial activity affected by expensive electricity and gas, tax pressures, and economic uncertainty, ease the increasing burden on small and medium-sized enterprises, and prevent a rise in unemployment.



He said that although the problems are severe and exporters and importers are facing serious difficulties, the FTA between India and the European Union has further worsened the situation. In these circumstances, business-friendly policies, a simple and fair tax system, and the restoration of investor confidence are the need of the hour.

## Speakers call for adopting Prophetic diplomacy as a model for the modern world

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Speakers emphasized that the principles of Prophetic diplomacy embodied in the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ offer an effective and practical framework for promoting peace, tolerance, mutual respect and international harmony amid today's complex global challenges. These views were expressed by Dr. Muhammad Abdul Razzaq Aswad, a distinguished professor at Imam Abdulrahman Bin Faisal University, Dammam (Saudi Arabia) while addressing an international Seerah seminar held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU).

Dr. Muhammad Abdul Razzaq Aswad stated that the diplomatic strategy of the Holy Prophet ﷺ was founded on justice, ethical conduct, patience, dialogue and mutual trust values that are essential for achieving sustainable peace in the modern world.

The opening remarks were delivered by Prof. Dr. Shah Moeen-ud-Din Hashmi, Chairman of the Department of Seerah Studies while the seminar was presided over by Prof. Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi. Dr. Hafiz Saeedur-Rehman served as the focal person for the event.

In his presidential address, Professor Dr. Shah Mohyuddin Hashmi remarked that the Seerah of the Prophet ﷺ is a comprehensive source of guidance not only for Muslims but for all humanity, and that the principles of Prophetic diplomacy can serve as a beacon for modern diplomatic institutions and global leadership. The seminar was attended by a large number of faculty members, researchers, and students. A detailed question-and-answer session was held at the conclusion of the event during which participants demonstrated keen interest in the subject.

**News Desk**

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) continues to implement 24/7 real time surveillance through advanced technology, smart cameras, and drone monitoring across the province. This technology based monitoring system enables effective identification of open manholes, illegal kite flying, crime hotspots, encroachments, wrong parking, and other violations, ensuring timely and appropriate action.

During drone surveillance operations in Safe City Multan, several open manholes were identified at different locations. The relevant departments

were promptly notified, and immediate corrective measures were taken. In Okara, Multan and Gujrat, drone-based action against illegal kite flying resulted in immediate legal proceedings against elements involved in committing such violations. Furthermore, drone surveillance is actively ongoing at crime hotspots in Muzaffargarh, Dera Ghazi Khan and Sialkot, with strict monitoring of suspicious activities.

The spokesperson stated that drone operations against illegal activities are continuously being carried out across the province, and the departments concerned are strictly implementing a zero-tolerance policy against numerous violations. The spokesperson of Punjab Safe Cities Authority emphasized that sustainable measures are



being consistently implemented through advanced technology and drone-based monitoring to ensure a safe and peaceful Punjab.

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## The Tax System, the Judiciary, and the Need for Policy Continuity

The weakness of the national economy, the growing fiscal deficit, and the pressure of state needs demand an effective tax system that is both transparent and trustworthy. Unfortunately, in Pakistan, taxation is still largely viewed as a burden, whereas the reality is that without effective revenue collection, no state can maintain a stable administrative or economic structure.

In this context, the recent address by Judicial Member of the Appellate Tribunal Inland Revenue, Muhammad Mohsin Virk, at the Lahore High Court Bar Association was of exceptional importance. He not only highlighted the critical role of tax collection but also clearly outlined the responsibilities of all stakeholders involved in the system—taxpayers, lawyers, and state institutions.

Muhammad Mohsin Virk emphasised that taxpayers must submit accurate tax returns with honest intent, as misstatements or concealment of information eventually lead to serious financial and legal complications. He noted that negligence or bad faith in tax matters harms not only individuals but also undermines confidence in the entire system.

He also stressed the role of lawyers, stating that thorough preparation is essential when appearing in tax-related cases. Lawyers should present their arguments before the relevant authorities and courts in light of applicable laws as well as the judgments of the superior judiciary and the Supreme Court. Strong legal reasoning not only facilitates the delivery of justice but also helps curb unnecessary litigation and delaying tactics.

A particularly important aspect of Muhammad Mohsin Virk's address was his proposal for continuity in tax policies. He rightly pointed out that frequent amendments to tax laws create uncertainty among taxpayers and damage the investment climate. He argued that before making any changes to tax legislation, consultations should be held with relevant sectors, taxpayers, and bar associations so that laws align with ground realities and can be effectively implemented.

In reality, the greatest challenge Pakistan faces today is not the number of laws but their instability and unpredictability. When there is no continuity in tax policies, taxpayers lose trust, widening the gap between the state and its citizens.

This moment calls for viewing taxation not as a punishment but as a national responsibility. The state must provide a transparent and fair system, lawyers must fulfill their professional duties with integrity, and taxpayers must adopt lawful and accurate reporting as a guiding principle. If continuity in tax policies, stability in laws, and fairness in implementation are ensured, the tax system can become a solid foundation for economic stability.

## Influence of Social Media: Redefining Power in the Digital Age

In the contemporary world, power is no longer exercised only through governments, traditional media, or large institutions. It is increasingly shaped, negotiated, and contested in digital spaces. Social media has emerged as one of the most influential forces of the modern age, redefining how authority is built, voices are amplified, and public opinion is formed. What began as a tool for social interaction has evolved into a powerful mechanism that influences politics, culture, economics, and everyday social behavior.

One of the most significant changes brought about by social media is the shift from centralized to decentralized power. In the past, newspapers, television channels, and radio stations controlled the flow of information. Editors and producers decided which stories mattered and how they would be presented. Today, millions of individuals participate directly in the creation and circulation of content. A single post, video, or image shared by an ordinary user can reach vast audiences and shape public debate. This transformation has weakened traditional gatekeeping and given rise to a more participatory media environment.

Beyond politics, social media plays a crucial role in shaping cultural norms and social values. It influences how people perceive beauty, success, gender roles, and identity. Trends spread rapidly across borders, creating a shared global culture while also reshaping local traditions. Social causes gain visibility through digital storytelling, personal narratives, and collective campaigns. Issues that were once ignored or marginalized now find space in public discourse, forcing societies to confront uncomfortable realities and reconsider long-

standing assumptions.

However, the growing influence of social media also raises serious concerns. Power in the digital age is not evenly distributed. While platforms appear open to all, visibility is often determined by algorithms designed to prioritize engagement rather than accuracy or social value. Content that provokes strong emotions tends to spread more widely, even if it is misleading or harmful. This has created an environment where misinformation can flourish, undermining trust in institutions, media, and even scientific knowledge. The consequences of false information are particularly damaging during elections, public health emergencies, and times of social unrest.

Another challenge is the increasing polarization of societies. Social media often exposes users primarily to content that aligns with their existing beliefs. Over time, this reinforces divisions and reduces opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Instead of encouraging debate, digital spaces can become arenas of hostility, where opposing viewpoints are dismissed rather than discussed. This fragmentation weakens social cohesion and makes consensus on critical national and global issues harder to achieve.

The commercialization of influence further complicates the picture. Social media platforms are driven by profit, and influence has become a valuable commodity. Advertising, sponsored content, and brand partnerships shape what users see and whom they trust. While many content creators use their platforms responsibly, others blur the line between genuine advocacy and paid promotion. Social causes are sometimes reduced to marketing tools, raising ethical

questions about authenticity and accountability in digital communication.

Despite these challenges, it would be simplistic to view social media solely as a threat. Its role in redefining power also carries significant opportunities. It has expanded access to information, encouraged civic engagement, and provided new tools for education and awareness. Communities that were once isolated can now connect, share experiences, and build solidarity across geographical and cultural boundaries. For many, social media offers a sense of belonging and a platform to express identity and creativity.

The key issue, therefore, is not whether social media is good or bad, but how its power is managed and used. Media literacy has become an essential skill in the digital age. Users must learn to question sources, verify information, and understand how digital platforms shape what they see. Equally important is the responsibility of policymakers and technology companies to ensure transparency, protect users' rights, and reduce the spread of harmful content without suppressing free expression.

In conclusion, social media has fundamentally redefined power in the digital age. It has transformed who can speak, who is heard, and how influence is exercised. By breaking traditional monopolies over information, it has empowered individuals and reshaped social and political life. Yet, it has also introduced new forms of inequality, manipulation, and division. As societies move forward, the challenge lies in harnessing the positive potential of social media while addressing its risks. The future of power will not be decided only in parliaments or newsrooms, but also on screens, networks, and digital communities that shape the modern world.

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Dr. M. T. Malik

## Beijing as Europe's New Geopolitical Mecca

There was a time, not long ago, when the word "China" in European capitals was spoken in the language of caution, if not suspicion. Parliaments passed laws to block Chinese acquisitions of strategic assets. Regulatory walls were erected against Chinese technology, telecommunications equipment, social media platforms, and even academic cooperation. Brussels and national governments debated how to "de-risk" from Beijing, how to preserve Europe's cultural, economic, and technological sovereignty from what they framed as an expanding Chinese influence. China was cast as a systemic rival, an adversary whose footprint in Europe had to be contained at almost any cost.

Yet within a single year of Donald Trump's return to the center of global politics, that posture has undergone a remarkable reversal. What once looked like a coordinated Western front to slow China's rise has given way to a steady procession of European and North American leaders boarding planes for Beijing. The symbolism is hard to miss. The very capitals that once competed to demonstrate their distance from China are now, one after another, paying homage to the Chinese leadership, signing strategic agreements, and speaking the language of partnership rather than containment.

China, for its part, has played the role of the patient host. Chinese leaders have emphasized humility, mutual respect, and the search for common ground. The rhetoric is carefully calibrated: no lectures on internal politics, no overt demands for ideological alignment, but a steady emphasis on economic opportunity, infrastructure development, and long-term partnership. For European and Canadian leaders bruised by what they perceive as Washington's heavy-handedness, the contrast is striking.

This realignment is not confined to

Europe. Across the Caribbean and parts of the Western Hemisphere, governments are also reassessing their strategic options. Countries long accustomed to living in the shadow of U.S. power—economically, diplomatically, and sometimes militarily—are watching Europe's pivot with interest. The lesson many are drawing is that diversification is no longer a luxury; it is a necessity in a world where economic pressure and sanctions have become routine tools of statecraft.

Nowhere is this broader shift more visible than in the Middle East, particularly in the evolving standoff between the United States, Israel, and Iran. European governments have shown a marked reluctance to back any new American or Israeli military adventure in the region. When U.S. naval forces moved closer to Iranian waters, signaling readiness for confrontation, European capitals responded not with public endorsements but with calls for restraint and diplomacy.

At the same time, China and Russia have deepened their engagement with Tehran. During recent periods of heightened tension, both powers offered diplomatic cover and, according to many analysts, strategic support that helped Iran withstand external pressure. The result has been a recalibration of power. Iran now presents itself not as an isolated state under siege, but as a node in a broader Eurasian network, backed by two permanent members of the UN Security Council and enjoying at least tacit sympathy from much of the Global South.

For Europe, this matters. The continent's leaders are acutely aware that a new war in the Middle East would have direct consequences for energy prices, migration flows, and internal political stability.

Aligning unquestioningly with Washington and Tel Aviv in such a scenario risks not only domestic backlash but also the loss of diplomatic leverage with Beijing, Moscow, and a large swath of the Muslim world. By contrast, maintaining open channels with China offers Europe a potential role as a mediator, or at least as an independent actor rather than a subordinate ally.

Critics in Washington see Europe's turn toward Beijing as naive, even dangerous. They warn of hidden dependencies, of technology transfers that could erode Western security, of economic ties that might one day be weaponized. European leaders counter that the greater danger lies in strategic monoculture—placing all economic, political, and security eggs in a single basket that may no longer be as reliable as it once was.

The symbolism of these Beijing visits has been amplified by their timing. As European leaders walk the red carpets of the Great Hall of the People, Trump prepares to host—or confront—some of them in Washington. The contrast is deliberate. The message, implicit if not explicit, is that Europe will not be treated as a collection of smaller states to be disciplined through tariffs and threats. It is a bloc of 450 million people, a major economic and technological power in its own right, and it intends to act like one.

The broader narrative taking shape is almost poetic in its irony. The United States, long the architect and champion of a liberal international order built on open markets, alliances, and multilateral institutions, is now seen by many as retreating into a more unilateral, interest-driven posture. China, once portrayed as the outsider challenging that order, is positioning itself as a pillar of stability,

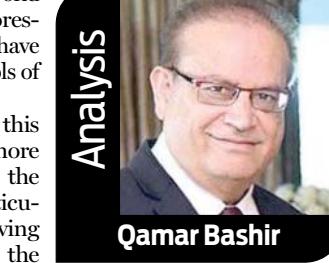
investment, and predictable partnership. Whether this role reversal will endure is an open question. Europe's ties to the United States remain deep, woven through NATO, financial systems, and decades of political and cultural exchange. But something fundamental has shifted in the psychology of European leadership. The assumption of automatic alignment has given way to strategic hedging.

In this unfolding story, the "geopolitical train" metaphor resonates. Many in Europe believe that the momentum of global growth, infrastructure development, and technological innovation is increasingly centered in Asia, with China as a primary engine. To miss that train, they fear, is to risk long-term economic stagnation and strategic irrelevance.

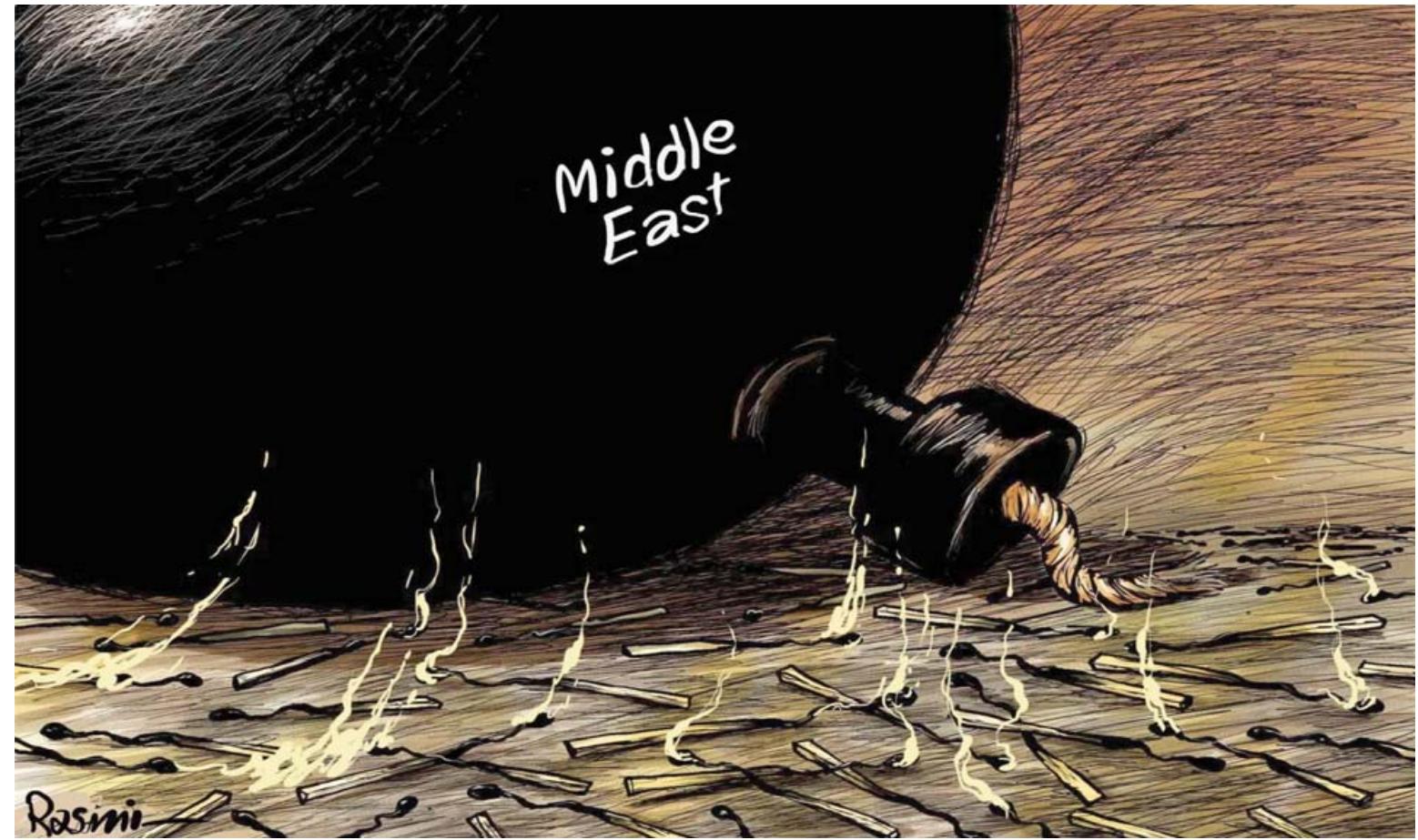
For Washington and Tel Aviv, the picture looks more uncertain. Their ability to mobilize broad international coalitions around security initiatives—particularly those involving Iran—appears diminished. Even traditional partners are choosing caution over commitment, dialogue over endorsement.

History will judge whether this moment marks a temporary detour or a lasting change of direction. What is clear is that, in the span of a single year, the diplomatic map of Europe and its transatlantic relationship has been redrawn in ways few would have predicted. The pilgrimages to Beijing are not merely about trade deals or investment packages. They are a statement of intent—a declaration that in a world of shifting power, Europe intends to keep its options open, its partnerships diverse, and its future unbound to the will of any single capital, however powerful.

The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan



Qamar Bashir



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

## Influence of Social Media: Redefining Power in the Digital Age

In the contemporary world, power is no longer exercised only through governments, traditional media, or large institutions. It is increasingly shaped, negotiated, and contested in digital spaces. Social media has emerged as one of the most influential forces of the modern age, redefining how authority is built, voices are amplified, and public opinion is formed. What began as a tool for social interaction has evolved into a powerful mechanism that influences politics, culture, economics, and everyday social behavior.

One of the most significant changes brought about by social media is the shift from centralized to decentralized power. In the past, newspapers, television channels, and radio stations controlled the flow of information. Editors and producers decided which stories mattered and how they would be presented. Today, millions of individuals participate directly in the creation and circulation of content. A single post, video, or image shared by an ordinary user can reach vast audiences and shape public debate. This transformation has weakened traditional gatekeeping and given rise to a more participatory media environment.

Beyond politics, social media plays a crucial role in shaping cultural norms and social values. It influences how people perceive beauty, success, gender roles, and identity. Trends spread rapidly across borders, creating a shared global culture while also reshaping local traditions. Social causes gain visibility through digital storytelling, personal narratives, and collective campaigns. Issues that were once ignored or marginalized now find space in public discourse, forcing societies to confront uncomfortable realities and reconsider long-

standing assumptions.

However, the growing influence of social media also raises serious concerns. Power in the digital age is not evenly distributed. While platforms appear open to all, visibility is often determined by algorithms designed to prioritize engagement rather than accuracy or social value. Content that provokes strong emotions tends to spread more widely, even if it is misleading or harmful. This has created an environment where misinformation can flourish, undermining trust in institutions, media, and even scientific knowledge. The consequences of false information are particularly damaging during elections, public health emergencies, and times of social unrest.

Another challenge is the increasing polarization of societies. Social media often exposes users primarily to content that aligns with their existing beliefs. Over time, this reinforces divisions and reduces opportunities for meaningful dialogue. Instead of encouraging debate, digital spaces can become arenas of hostility, where opposing viewpoints are dismissed rather than discussed. This fragmentation weakens social cohesion and makes consensus on critical national and global issues harder to achieve.

The commercialization of influence further complicates the picture. Social media platforms are driven by profit, and influence has become a valuable commodity. Advertising, sponsored content, and brand partnerships shape what users see and whom they trust. While many content creators use their platforms responsibly, others blur the line between genuine advocacy and paid promotion. Social causes are sometimes reduced to marketing tools, raising ethical

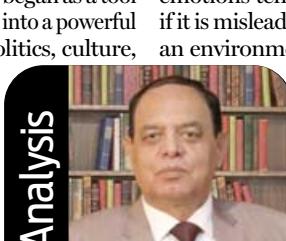
questions about authenticity and accountability in digital communication.

Despite these challenges, it would be simplistic to view social media solely as a threat. Its role in redefining power also carries significant opportunities. It has expanded access to information, encouraged civic engagement, and provided new tools for education and awareness. Communities that were once isolated can now connect, share experiences, and build solidarity across geographical and cultural boundaries. For many, social media offers a sense of belonging and a platform to express identity and creativity.

The key issue, therefore, is not whether social media is good or bad, but how its power is managed and used. Media literacy has become an essential skill in the digital age. Users must learn to question sources, verify information, and understand how digital platforms shape what they see. Equally important is the responsibility of policymakers and technology companies to ensure transparency, protect users' rights, and reduce the spread of harmful content without suppressing free expression.

In conclusion, social media has fundamentally redefined power in the digital age. It has transformed who can speak, who is heard, and how influence is exercised. By breaking traditional monopolies over information, it has empowered individuals and reshaped social and political life. Yet, it has also introduced new forms of inequality, manipulation, and division. As societies move forward, the challenge lies in harnessing the positive potential of social media while addressing its risks. The future of power will not be decided only in parliaments or newsrooms, but also on screens, networks, and digital communities that shape the modern world.

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Dr. M. T. Malik

## Basant Festival: Culture, Safety, and Moral Responsibility

The Basant festival is known in the cultural history of the subcontinent as an ancient and colorful tradition that is usually celebrated to welcome the arrival of spring. On this day, the sky filled with flying kites, yellow clothes, music, and fairs presents a joyful scene. However, in the modern era, a serious question is being raised: is celebrating Basant really necessary, and what are its social, moral, environmental, and human losses? This article sheds detailed light on whether Basant is merely a form of entertainment or whether its effects have become a serious issue for society. Supporters of Basant argue that it is a symbol of cultural heritage that provides people with happiness, harmony, and an opportunity for collective activity.

People from different social classes gather in one place to celebrate, which increases social interaction and promotes traditional arts such as music, handicrafts, and local food. In addition, tourism is boosted, benefiting the economy because people from different cities come especially to witness and celebrate this festival. However, despite all these benefits, when we examine the practical outcomes and the dangers associated with it, the other side of the picture also becomes clear.

The biggest problem during Basant is the use of metallic or chemically coated kite strings, which prove to be deadly not only for humans but also for birds and animals. Every year, dozens of people are injured while riding motorcycles or bicycles when they come into contact with such strings.

It took years to eradicate the evil that had taken place and now the world had forgotten this festival, seeing its harms. What we had been reading and hearing for the previous years was

that people would become mortal enemies of each other because of this Basant. The fight to steal children's kites became a family feud and hundreds of families lost their wages, passersby were killed, government property was damaged, explosions started happening at WAPDA transformers and grade stations, and this festival became a symbol of fear. When the situation reached its peak, the courts intervened and prevented it. Now, after some time, peace had returned, some people who were deprived of understanding and insight remembered their old addiction and now Basant is everywhere. May Allah bless them and let them go through any hardship and trouble.

The role of educational institutions, media, and religious and social leaders becomes very important here, as they can help people understand that true happiness is celebrated without harming anyone. If we celebrate our traditions within the boundaries of human life, the environment, and social values, only then do they truly become a source of pride. In the end, it is fair to say that celebrating Basant is neither completely necessary nor entirely unacceptable. The real decision depends on the collective awareness and responsible behavior of society. If we succeed in celebrating it in a safe, decent, and organized manner, it can become a source of cultural joy. But if negligence, carelessness, and irresponsibility prevail, its harms will always outweigh its happiness. Therefore, it is the moral responsibility of every individual to ensure that their entertainment does not become a source of trouble for others and to play their part in building a society where festivals are a celebration of life, not a threat to it.

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Muhammad Asif

# Nation mourns as Martyred Pakistani soldier laid to rest with full military honours

By Chaudhry Tabraiz Aurah

JHELUM: A Pakistan Army soldier from Jhelum district embraced martyrdom after succumbing to injuries sustained during an encounter with terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to details, Malik Muhammad Usama, a resident of Pindi Syedanpur village in Pind Dadan Khan Tehsil, was critically injured a few days ago during an exchange of fire with terrorists in a remote area of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He was immediately shifted

to Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Peshawar for medical treatment, where he later succumbed to his injuries on January 29, 2026, while performing his national duty.

Funeral prayers for the martyr were initially offered at CMH Peshawar, after which his mortal remains were transported to his native village. Upon arrival in Pindi Syedanpur, an atmosphere of grief and sorrow prevailed as family members, relatives, and local residents paid their final respects.

The funeral prayer of Shaheed Malik Muhammad Usama was offered on Friday, January 30, 2026,

at 11:00 am in his ancestral village. A large number of people attended the funeral, including senior military officials, representatives of the civil administration, DSP Pind Dadan Khan, SHO Police Station Jalalpur Sharif, political and social figures, and residents from across the district.

The martyr was laid to rest with full military honours at the ancestral graveyard of Pindi Syedanpur. Army contingents presented a salute, and floral wreaths were laid on behalf of the armed forces.

Shaheed Malik Muhammad Usama is survived by his mother, two minor

children, three brothers, and one sister. Speaking to the media, the martyr's brother said that despite the deep sorrow, the family feels immense pride in his sacrifice. "He laid down his life for the defence of the country, and this is a great honour for our family," he said.

Political and social leader Malik Saqib Al-Khairi, while paying tribute, stated that the sacrifices of martyrs are the backbone of national security. "The bravery and sacrifices of our martyrs will always be remembered and honoured by the nation," he said.



## US Consul General Stetson Sanders highlights enduring US-Pakistan partnership during South Punjab visit

By Kiran Asim

MULTAN: During a visit to South Punjab, U. S. Consul General in Lahore Stetson Sanders toured a U. S. government-supported health and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) site implemented through UNICEF in flood-affected Jalalpur Pirwala, underscoring American support for communities hardest hit by the 2025 monsoon floods.

At the site, Consul General Sanders observed U. S.-funded child malnutrition screening, the distribution of life-saving therapeutic food, and restored water and sanitation facilities. He also met with mothers, caregivers, and frontline health workers benefiting from American assistance.

The United States has provided \$1 million to UNICEF's emergency flood response, enabling the screening of more than 44,000 children, life-saving treatment for 2,300 severely malnourished children, micronutrient support for over 15,000 mothers, safe drinking water for nearly 11,000 people, and hygiene and disease-prevention outreach to more than 58,000 women and children across Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Consul General Sanders honored 450 students from Multan and Dera Ghazi Khan who graduated from the U. S.-funded English Access Scholar-



ship Program, a flagship U. S. initiative that builds English proficiency and employability, advancing U. S.-Pakistan interests through skills-based education. By investing in self-reliance and academic mobility, the United States strengthens

economic opportunity, stability, and pathways to global markets, including the United States. CG Sanders also met with members of the Pakistan-U. S. Alumni Network from South Punjab to highlight how U. S.-funded exchange alumni deliver measurable

returns for shared U. S.-Pakistan interests. Alumni shared how skills and best practices gained in the United States are driving economic growth, trade, energy security, innovation, and responsible development of critical minerals.

## Decision taken to revive Pakistan Library Association; elections to be held soon

By News Desk

ISLAMABAD: A significant development has taken place regarding the revival and reorganization of the Pakistan Library Association (PLA). Director General, Department of Libraries, Islamabad, Sheikh Muhammad Arshad, announced that a committee will soon be constituted to carry out the restructuring of the Association and to ensure the conduct of elections at the earliest.

He made this announcement while addressing a ceremony organized under the auspices of the Islamic Library and Information Science Alumni Association (ILISAA), Federal Chapter. The decision was warmly welcomed by



library professionals from across the country, who termed it a positive and timely step and expressed confidence that it would help unite the librarian community throughout Pakistan.

On the same occasion, the book

launching ceremony of renowned researcher Iqrar Hussain Sheikh's newly published book, "Allah Main Hazir Hoon," along with the inauguration of the Alumni Association's official website, was held at the Pakistan

Academy of Letters, Islamabad.

The ceremony was graced by Dr. Shahid Soroya, Director General, Pakistan Institute of Education, as the Chief Guest. He formally inaugurated the Association's website, while Zahoor Ahmed provided a brief overview of its key features. The event was also attended by Kazim Ali Syed, Additional Director, Allama Iqbal Open University; Raja Javed Iqbal (Retd. Director General, National Library of Pakistan); and a large number of prominent library professionals.

The event proved to be not only an academic and literary gathering but also a milestone toward professional unity and development within Pakistan's library community.

## Pharmacists Association seeks Pay Raise for Industrial Pharmacists

By Special Correspondent

MULTAN: A delegation of the Pakistan Pharmacists Association (PPA), led by Central President Alamgir Rao, met Director General Industries Punjab Zeehan Shabbir Rana to discuss salary and service-related issues of pharmacists working in the industrial sector.

The delegation included PPA Punjab Secretary General Umair Ikram Dar and Joint Secretary Punjab Bilal Yaseen. During the meeting, the PPA presented recommendations calling for an increase in salaries of pharmacists employed on the industrial side, highlighting long-standing disparities and job-related concerns.

In response, DG Zeehan Shabbir Rana gave a firm assurance that all legitimate demands of the pharmacists would be addressed. "These demands are justified, and I will personally ensure they are taken forward," he said.

Thanking the DG, PPA President Alamgir Rao said he was encouraged by the seriousness shown by the Industries Department in resolving pharmacists' issues. He reaffirmed the association's commitment to continue working tirelessly for the rights and welfare of pharmacists serving in both public and private sectors.

## Launch of 'The Eyewitness: Standing in the Shadows of Pakistan's History' in Lahore



By News Desk

LAHORE: The launch of Muhammad Saeed Mehdi's much-anticipated memoir, "The Eyewitness: Standing in the Shadows of Pakistan's History," was held at a well-attended event in Lahore. Hosted by Lightstone Publishers, the launch brought together an audience of over 600 including diplomats, senior journalists, legal experts, academics, and literary figures, marking the unveiling of a work that contributes significantly to Pakistan's political and journalistic record.

Opening the ceremony, Ameena Sayid, Managing Director of Lightstone Publishers, highlighted the historical importance of the memoir, stating, "This book is not merely a collection of memoirs; it is a mesmerizing and eyewitness account of events that shaped Pakistan."

The era of Muhammad Saeed Mehdi closely observed are in-valuable historical documentation for future generations." She further noted Lightstone Publishers' longstanding commitment to education and cultural development through its Adab Festival. She said that the school textbooks published by Lightstone are culturally grounded and nurture critical thinking, inquiry and imagination.

In his opening remarks, Muhammad Saeed Mehdi, the author, spoke candidly about his motivation for writing the book, sharing, "I wrote this book to preserve the truth. I have written exactly what I saw, nothing more, nothing less." The discussion then transitioned into a thoughtful exchange among senior panelists, focusing on the political, judicial, and journalistic dimensions of the memoir.

Aitzaz Ahsan, Senior Lawyer and Chief Guest, emphasized the importance of firsthand accounts, noting, "To understand Pakistan's history, eyewitness accounts are indispensable. The judicial aspects of the Bhutto case documented in this book are an important part of our legal history."

Dr. Amjad Saqib, Farhan Khawaja, Mujib-ur-Rehman Shami, Chief Editor of Roznama Pakistan, Sohail Warrachia also speak on the occasion. The event concluded with an active book-signing session, where attendees engaged directly with the author, reflecting on the revelations and historical insights presented in "The Eyewitness: Standing in the Shadows of Pakistan's History."

## PC Hospitality Participates to the 'World Economic Forum'

Travel, Tourism and aviation governors meeting" as Global Tourism Leaders Unite to Shape a Sustainable Future

By Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Along side Tourism, held in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, the WEF brought together global hospitality and tourism leaders to advance a new vision for sustainable, inclusive, and community-driven tourism. In alignment with the World Economic Forum's recently issued Principles for Transformative Tourism, the gathering convened major international brands—including Kempinski, Accor, Rotana, and other prominent stakeholders—to outline a forward-looking framework for the sector's evolution.

As part of this international delegation, PC Hospitality contributed its perspective on sustainable development, local economic empowerment, and the role of hospitality groups in driving responsible sector transformation

across the region.

Bastien Blanc, CEO of PC Hospitality, commented on the company's engagement in the forum. "Participating in WEF Board alongside respected global hospitality organisations reinforces our commitment to sustainable development and the strengthening of local economies. We believe the hospitality industry must embrace a more responsible, inclusive approach that supports communities, preserves cultural heritage, and protects the environment."

### PC Hospitality's Key Commitments Highlighted at the Event

Throughout the gathering, PC Hospitality emphasised its alignment with the sector's new direction, highlighting several priority areas:

• Sustainable Development: Implementing environmentally

responsible operational practices and long-term resource stewardship.

• Local Economic Development: Increasing reliance on local suppliers, producers, and workforce development initiatives to ensure broad-based economic benefit.

• Talent Empowerment: Expanding training and career-development programmes for hospitality professionals across Pakistan.

• Cultural and Community Stewardship: Encouraging tourism that supports local identities, traditions, and community prosperity.

• Global Collaboration: Engaging with international hospitality peers to help shape shared standards for responsible global tourism.

PC Hospitality's inclusion in the

World Economic Forum Travel, Tourism and Aviation gathering reflects its growing role as a regional contributor to the global discussion on the future of tourism.

One that emphasises long-term value creation, environmental responsibility, and community respect. "Our sector is entering a new era," the CEO added. "We are committed to contributing to this transformation and to advancing a model of hospitality that creates meaningful, sustainable impact."

PC Hospitality is one of the leading hospitality groups in Asia, dedicated to service excellence, responsible operational practices, and community-focused development. Through ongoing innovation and sustainable initiatives, PC Hospitality aims to set a new standard for environmentally and socially conscious hospitality in the region.



## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

### Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
184,174.48	182,338.12
Day's High	Day's Low
186,619.51	182,347.47
Index Value	Change
37,469,160,042	+1836.36
Percentage	Time
+1.01%	30 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

### Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,223.54	+51.78
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	30 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

### USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
48,576.11	-495.45
Percentage	Time
-1.01%	30 Jan, 1:01 pm GMT-5

### Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
53,322.85	-52.75
Percentage	Time
-0.099%	30 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

### Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.89	198.71
Bahrain Dinar	743.5	753.05
Canadian Dollar	206.05	209.61
China Yuan	38.15	40.25
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	333.83	338.26
Hong Kong Dollar	35.47	36.35
Indian Rupee	2.82	3.33
Japanese Yen	1.8083	1.9095
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.55	917
Malaysian Ringgit	66.5	69.25
New Zealand \$	168.13	171.08
Norwegian Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.25	737.77
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.35
Singapore Dollar	220.59	225.58
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	362.64	367.78
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.85
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.35
UK Pound Sterling	385.04	389.51
US Dollar	280.60	282.3

## Din Properties Breaks Ground on Lahore's Largest Private SEZ



### Commerce Desk

LAHORE: In a significant development for Pakistan's industrial and investment landscape, Din Properties on Wednesday held a dual ceremony to mark the groundbreaking of United Business Park, a large-scale private Special Economic Zone (SEZ) located adjacent to the Sundar Industrial Estate.

Industry stakeholders view the development as a timely intervention, particularly as demand grows for well-planned industrial zones with modern infrastructure and policy-backed incentives. Located strategically near Sundar Industrial Estate, United Business Park benefits from strong connectivity, access to supply chains, and proximity to Lahore's industrial ecosystem.

"With its scale, strategic location, and SEZ-enabled incentives, United Business Park is positioned to play a pivotal role in strengthening Pakistan's industrial base and supporting export-led growth," said SM Imran, CEO of Din Properties.

He added that the project reflects Din Properties' long-term commitment to supporting industrialization, job creation, and foreign direct investment, while enabling businesses to operate within a globally competitive and investor-friendly environment.

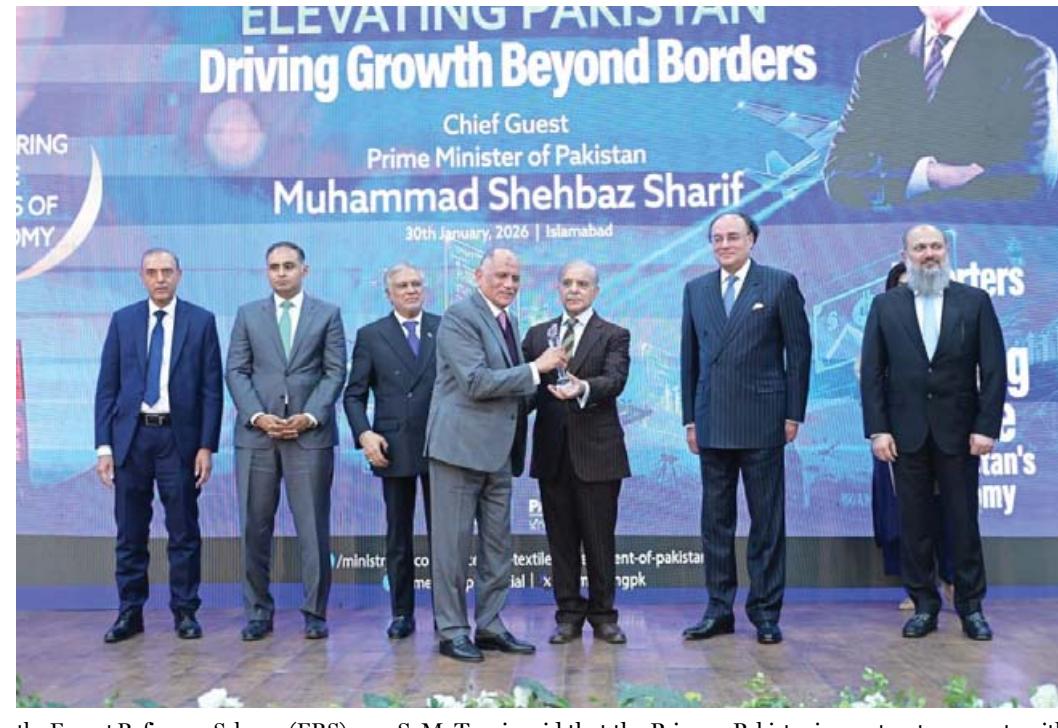
## PM's relief measures for industrialists are positive: S. M. Tanvir & Zubair Tufail

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Patron-in-Chief of the United Business Group (UBG) at FPCCI, S. M. Tanvir, and UBG President Zubair Tufail have appreciated the relief measures announced by

Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for industrialists in his recent address.

The measures announced by the Prime Minister include a reduction of PKR 4.04 per kilowatt-hour in electricity tariffs for industries, and under



the Export Refinance Scheme (ERS), the financing rate has been reduced from policy rate minus 3 percent to policy rate minus 6 percent, which will provide exporters with enhanced concessional financing support. In addition, wheeling charges have been reduced by PKR 9 per kilowatt-hour, which will lower electricity costs for consumers.

S. M. Tanvir said that the Prime Minister's relief measures will help reduce the growing problems faced by industrialists. He stated that the Free Trade Agreement (FTA) between India and the European Union will certainly affect Pakistan's exports; however, he expressed confidence that the Prime Minister will provide better opportunities to

Pakistani exporters to compete with this agreement and will take positive steps to reduce industrial production costs.

UBG President Zubair Tufail also welcomed the Prime Minister's announcement of reducing the refinance rate for exporters by 300 basis points, bringing it down to 4.5 percent.

## Press Conference

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to Prime Minister on Tourism Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan addressing press conference at Press Information Department (PID) regarding the two days Pakistan Tourism Festival at Sports Complex in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Meezan Bank Invited to Share Expertise on Risk Sharing Finance

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan's leading Islamic bank and one of the largest banks in the country, engaged with Bank Negara Malaysia (BNM), the Central Bank of Malaysia, under a focused knowledge-sharing initiative on risk-sharing finance.

On the invitation of BNM, Meezan Bank contributed as a speaker to a Programme titled "Incubation Programme on Risk-Sharing" designed for Islamic banking practitioners in Malaysia. The Programme focused on supporting the development of risk-sharing and non-debt-based financial solutions within the Malaysian Islamic banking sector by drawing on Meezan Bank's market leadership and extensive experience in Islamic banking.

Meezan Bank was represented by Mr. Shayan Ahmed Baig, Head of Shariah Compliance, who led discussions based on the Bank's experience in structuring, implementing, and governing Shariah-compliant risk-sharing products in Pakistan. The sessions focused on translating conceptual risk-sharing principles into viable banking solutions, with detailed discussion on regulatory considerations, operational execution, and Shariah governance frameworks. Meezan Bank shared experience in assessing alternative product



structures aligned with risk-sharing objectives and its local regulatory requirements.

As part of the visit, Mr. Baig met with senior officials of BNM and presented Meezan Bank's recently launched offi-

cial history book, titled "Unconventional: The Bank No One Saw Coming," to the Assistant Governor, BNM, highlighting the Bank's journey and role in the development of Islamic banking in Pakistan.

## National Grid Company finalizes arrangements to ensure uninterrupted power transmission during Basant in Lahore



### Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The National Grid Company of Pakistan (NGC) has taken comprehensive measures to ensure uninterrupted power transmission in Lahore during the Basant festival from February 06 to 08, 2026. In this regard, NGC management has issued necessary directives to ensure swift response to any untoward incident during the festivities.

In light of the directions issued by DMD (AD&M), Engr. Rasheed A. Bhutto, NGC's emergency response teams will remain fully prepared and available round the clock. The availability of technical staff, vehi-

cles and safety equipment will be ensured at all times, while transmission lines and grid stations in Lahore will be closely monitored to promptly address any technical issues.

Managing Director NGC, Engr. Altaf Hussain Malik, stated that the Punjab Govt has permitted Basant celebrations under strict rules and regulations. He emphasized that Basant is a festival of joy and recreation and appealed to the public to strictly follow SOPs during the festivities to safeguard their lives, property & national assets and to refrain from any activity that could damage the power transmission system or grid stations.

## FFC Announces Annauk Final Results for the Year 2025

### Commerce Desk

RAWALPINDI: Fauji Fertilizer Company Limited (FFC) has announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2025 in its Board of Directors meeting held on January 29, 2026.

The fertilizer market was over-supplied for most of the year, driven by adverse climate conditions, irregular crop yields, and farmer economics, leading to higher industry-wide inventory levels. However, the Company's effective measures allowed it to remain lowest inventory

carrying Company in the entire year.

The Company achieved net profitability of PKR 73.6 billion, translating into PKR 51.7 earnings per share. Higher dividend income of PKR 22 billion from subsidiaries and associates along with investment income of PKR 17.4 billion was the key contributor to financial performance.

Aggregate urea production stood at 2,903 thousand tonnes, while DAP output was recorded at 837 thousand tonnes, with average capacity utilization of 112% and 124% respectively. Combined urea

oftake reached 2,886 thousand tonnes and DAP stood at 834 thousand tonnes during the year.

The Company continued to play a key role in supporting the National Exchequer, contributing PKR 110.07 billion in taxes and levies, up from PKR 94.11 billion last year. Additionally, locally produced fertilizers enabled foreign exchange savings of approximately USD 1.2 billion through import substitution.

The Board also announced a final Cash Dividend for the year ended December 31, 2025 at PKR 8.5 per share i.e. 85%. This is in addition to Interim Dividends already paid at PKR 28.50 per share i.e. 285%.



# President, PM congratulate Green Shirts on win in first T20 over Australia

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated the national cricket team on their win over Australia in the opening T20 International of the three-match series.

The match took place on Thursday at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, where Pakistan defeated Australia by 22 runs in the opening game.

In their separately issued statements, the president and prime minister commended the players' efforts, strategy, discipline, and exemplary teamwork which made the victory possible.

President Zardari said that the victory highlighted Pakistan's positive image in sports and congratulated the Pakistan Cricket Board, especially Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, on the outstanding performance and extended best wishes for further wins in the upcoming matches.

Prime Minister Shehbaz also praised the outstanding performance of the players, particularly the bowlers, describing the win as a result of the players' hard work and dedication.



He said that the team had capability to win the entire series if they continued to work with the same commitment and diligence as defeating a strong team

like Australia after a long time was undoubtedly manifested the players' efforts.

The prime minister also commended

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi, his team, and the coaches and extended his best wishes to the entire team for the upcoming matches in the series.

## Improvement of sports infrastructure is top priority of Punjab government, says Sports Minister

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar has said that the improvement of sports infrastructure across the province is the top priority of the Punjab government. He said this while presiding over an important meeting at the National Hockey Stadium on Friday.

The important meeting was convened to review the annual development schemes of Punjab Sports Department.

The ongoing and new development sports projects of Punjab Sports Department were discussed in detail during the meeting. Senior officers of Punjab Sports Department and other relevant officials were also present in the meeting.



Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali gave a comprehensive briefing to the Provincial Minister regarding the overall sports development schemes, expenditures, and progress of the department.

It was informed during the briefing that a total of 184 development sports schemes of the Punjab Sports Department are under construction, out of which 88 are new development projects.

Addressing the meeting, Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar directed the Punjab Sports Department to further enhance its performance and ensure that all ongoing sports development schemes are completed within the stipulated time-frame.

Provincial Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar said that the pace of sports development schemes is being accelerated across the province to promote sports culture and

provide modern and quality sports facilities to the talented youth. He emphasised that sports played a significant role in engaging young people in the positive and healthy activities.

## Multan Heritage Revival: Cultural Alliance Vows Global Promotion

News Desk

MULTAN: In order to highlight the identity of Multan, the city of history, civilization and spirituality, the Kul Multan Tanzeemi Ithihad has announced to further accelerate its activities at the National and International levels. This determination was expressed by the Chairman of Multan Organizational Alliance, Muhammad Ehsan Khan Saduzai, President Aziz Ahmed Khan Advocate and Senior Vice President Shamim Akhtar Hanjra, Advocate while addressing a press conference. They said that Multan is the great historical city where the light of Islamic teachings and spiritual values was lit for the first time in the subcontinent, whose light is still illuminating the entire region today. The cultural, literary and spiritual heritage of this city is a proud asset not only for



Pakistan but also for the entire Muslim World. The Kul Multan Tanzeemi Ithihad will continue the process of revitalizing literary, cultural and social activities to protect, promote and publicize this heritage, while national unity will be further

strengthened. Mr. Rashid Hussaini also said that the Kul Multan Tanzeemi Ithihad was established 45 years ago and today it is the largest, most active and most reliable of literary and cultural organizations. The alliance has been formed. National

festivals will be celebrated with enthusiasm, dignity and national spirit from the platform of the alliance in cooperation with social organizations so that harmony, tolerance and unity can be promoted in the society. He announced that a grand and memorable event will be organized soon in a big hotel of the city in which leaders of all prominent social, literary and cultural organizations of Multan will be invited.

The aim of this event is to give a new lease of life to the history of Multan, strengthen its identity and make the process of cultural survival effective. It was also informed in the press conference that quality documentary films will be produced to preserve the history, movement and civilization of the region so that the historical heritage of Multan can be preserved and passed on to the coming generations.

## Maximum Facilities for Devotees at Data Darbar, a Top Priority of the Punjab Government: Nabeel Javaid

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Senior Member Board of Revenue Punjab Nabeel Javaid has stated that in line with the keen interest of Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar and vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, the Punjab government is fully committed to providing maximum facilities and improved services to devotees visiting Darbar Hazrat Data

Ganj Bakhsh (RA). He said that the extension and development of the Data Darbar shrine is being carried out with special emphasis on convenience, safety, and better management for the millions of devotees who visit the sacred site every year.

He was addressing a review progress meeting of the Data Darbar Extension Project held at Hajvery Hall. The meeting was attended by Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta

and other concerned officers. While briefing the meeting, Secretary/Chief Administrator Auqaf Punjab Dr. Ehsan Bhutta

stated that all relevant departments have been assigned their respective responsibilities and clear timelines have been fixed to ensure completion of the project within the stipulated period. He added that effective coordination among departments is being ensured to maintain quality standards and timely execution of the development works. Dr. Ehsan Bhutta further emphasized that all construction activities are being carried out with



due regard to the sanctity, historical significance, and spiritual environment of the shrine.

Senior Member Board of Revenue Punjab Nabeel Javaid

appreciated the Secretary Auqaf on auction of HVAC system which was auctioned at 60m instead of base price of 20m thus transparency was fully ensured.

He also thanked Chief Executive of Madina Foundation Aslam Tareen to extend full cooperation for the completion of development work.

**Saqiba Batool in winning mood in 5th Fatima Jinnah Punjab amateur Ladies golf Championship**

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The royal palm premises was in a colorful and grand affair as the ladies of Punjab assembled in great numbers to take part in the 5th Fatima Jinnah Punjab amateur golf championship at the well maintained golf course divided into two categories from handicap 15 to 24 and handicap 25 to 36 to make the game equitable and compatible the ladies decided to put in a gallant effort to make the exercise successful the most successful one turned out to be young and enterprising saqiba batool of royal pam who played exceedingly well to appear as a leader in the handicap category 15 to 24. her gross score of 90 was the result of extremely steady play and she is determined to win the championship. in this category other good scores were produced by aliba Amjad, sabima Murtaza and tehmina Ahmed. The other handicap ladies belonging to handicap category 25 to 36 made a good account of themselves and played strongly and cohesively their top lady is the lady captain Minna zinab. she was a class by herself

Other ladies who excelled were sobia Waseem and afifa anwar. let see how they proceed tomorrow. the match was sponsored by gourmet foods.

**Y. J Sports wins fifth consecutive victory in Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament**

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant Century 121 by Haris Ali Khan, Muhammad Azaan 56 helped Y. J Sports defeated One Ten Communication in the important match of Group "B" Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament at RLCA UP Ground. Ahsan Ali also score dashingly 91.



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

Scores in Brief:

Y. J. Sports beat One Ten Communication by 102 runs at RLCA UP Ground. Y. J. Sports 342/7 in 40 overs. Haris Ali Khan 121 16x4 4x6, Muhammad Azaan 56 4x6, Salah Khan 49 5x4 1x6, Yasir Mushtaq 42, Muhammad Ahad 26. Fayyaz Hussain (sla) 3/51, Wahaj Riaz (ob) 3/60.

In reply One Ten Communication 240 all-out in 29.3 overs. Ahsan Ali 91 8x4 8x6, Shaharyar Ghani 70 6x4 2x6, Hammad Alam 34, Sami Arshad 19. Muneeb Niaz 2/39.

**RCAK Challenge Cup U-17 Cricket Tournament**

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to Brilliant All-round Performance by Muhammad Khan first he scored Brilliant 104 and then he got 2 wickets for 14 runs RCAK Under-17 Reds defeated RCAK Under-17 Purple by 100 runs in the RCAK Challenge Cup Under-17 Cricket Tournament at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad.

Scores in Brief:

RCAK Under-17 Reds defeated RCAK Under-17 Purple by 100 runs at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad. RCAK Under-17 Reds 266/6 in 40 overs. Muhammad Khan 104 7x4 7x6, Hassan Muhammad 59 5x4 2x6, Muhammad Soman Kabir 51 9x4. Anas Khan (mf) 3/35, Shaikh Abdullah 2/56.

In reply RCAK Purple 166 all-out in 29.2 overs. Muhammad Naveed 34, Sami Ullah 31, Muhammad Bilal 26, Rana Hamza 23, Mahad Khatri (sla) 3/54, Muhammad Khan 2/14, Muhammad Rehan 2/25.

**Mondelez Pakistan recognized as Top Employer 2026**

News Desk

KARACHI: Mondelez Pakistan has been recognized as a Top Employer 2026, reinforcing its alignment with the internationally recognized people and workplace standards implemented across Mondelez International's Middle East, North Africa and Asia Pacific (MENAP) region as well as globally.

Commenting on the achievement, Mamoon Javed-Managing Director Mondelez Pakistan said, "This certification reflects our commitment to maintaining globally benchmarked people practices in Pakistan, fully aligned with the standards applied across our MENAP region."

It is a recognition of the consistency, discipline, and focus our teams bring to building a strong and inclusive workplace year after year."

The certification is awarded by the Top Employers Institute, a globally recognized authority that assesses organizations through a rigorous and independent process. Companies are evaluated via the HR Best Practices Survey, followed by independent validation and audit, covering areas such as leadership, learning and development, inclusion, wellbeing, and employee experience.

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Senior Member Board of Revenue Punjab Nabeel Javaid

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## Calls on

ISLAMABAD: Representative of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on Special Assignments H.E. Mr. Khalaf Khalafov calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehzad Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

## PM, Azerbaijan Representative discuss ties

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Representative of the President of Azerbaijan on Special Assignments Khalaf Khalafov, called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehzad Sharif, at the Prime Minister House on Friday and discussed matters of mutual interest. Ambassador of Azerbaijan to Pakistan Mr. Khazar Farhadov also present in the meeting

Welcoming the Azerbaijani dignitary, the Prime Minister recalled the warm fraternal bonds between Pakistan and Azerbaijan and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to further strengthen bilateral relations with Azerbaijan, in all areas of mutual interest.

He conveyed his warm greetings for President Ilham Aliyev, and

praised him for his wise and sagacious leadership that had raised Azerbaijan's global profile. He fondly recalled his numerous important meetings with President Aliyev, including at the Victory Parade in Baku last November. While noting that both sides were close to finalizing the agreement for USD two billion investment by Azerbaijan in Pakistan, the Prime Minister reiterated his invitation to President Aliyev to undertake an official visit to Pakistan, at his earliest convenience.

The Representative also handed over a letter from President Aliyev to the Prime Minister, acknowledging the Prime Minister's message of appreciation on the support provided by Azerbaijan for the establishment of Asaan Khidmat Markaz in Islamabad, inaugurated earlier this month.

## New SECP leadership calls on Finance Minister

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday held a meeting with the new leadership of the Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP), led by Chairman Kabir Ahmed Sidhu and Commissioner Ali Farid Khawaja, who called on the Finance Minister.

The Finance Minister's core team at the Finance Division, including senior officers overseeing debt management, capital market development, and regulatory coordination, was also in attendance.

Welcoming the new SECP leadership, the Finance Minister expressed confidence that their extensive domestic and international market experience would strengthen



Pakistan's regulatory framework and accelerate the development of capital markets said a press release.

The meeting focused on aligning priorities to deepen capital markets, diversify financing sources for the public and private sectors, and

improve investor confidence through efficient regulation, modern infrastructure, and coordinated policy action.

The Finance Minister highlighted the Government's move toward a more integrated reform approach through the Capital Markets Development

gaps that require regulatory reform, legislative support, and inter-agency coordination.

The SECP leadership shared initial observations on regulatory frameworks for NBFCs, SME-focused finance, and insurance, noting the need to revisit and strengthen these frameworks to support access to finance while maintaining prudential oversight.

The discussion emphasized a regulatory approach that enables business activity, reduces unnecessary procedural delays, and promotes compliance through digital tools.

The SECP leadership expressed its commitment to working with the Finance Division and market stakeholders to translate these priorities into actionable reforms with measurable outcomes.

## Rathore Meets UK MP, Stresses Kashmir Solution Vital for South Asian Peace

### Abdul Majed Tahir

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has stressed the need for resolving the Kashmir issue in accordance with United Nations resolutions. He made these remarks during a meeting with Chairman of the Kashmiri Committee, Rana Qasim Noon, and British Member of Parliament, Chaudhry Imran, who called on him here today.

Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore described India's actions in occupied Kashmir including state oppression, extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, and violations



of fundamental human rights, as a grave challenge to the global conscience. He also appreciated the principled stance of British parliamentarians on the Kashmir

issue and their support for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

He highlighted the UK's pivotal role

in finding out a just and peaceful resolution of the long running dispute. Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore underscored that a lasting solution in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people is essential for sustainable peace in South Asia.

During the meeting, Chaudhry Imran expressed solidarity with the Kashmiri people and reaffirmed his commitment to safeguarding human rights and raising the Kashmir issue on international platforms. During the meeting, the current situation in the region, and the ongoing human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir came under discussion.

### News Desk

KARACHI: Chairperson Benazir Income Support Program (BISP), Senator Rubina Khalid, visited the Benazir Bhutto Shaheed Human Resource Research and Development Board (BBSHRD) in Karachi. Upon her arrival, she was warmly received by Chairman Board Tameezuddin Khera, Secretary Munawar Ali Mithani, and officials of the institution.

Speaking on the occasion, Senator Rubina Khalid said that skill development was the vision of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, who

believed that "skill is your asset." She noted that global demand for skilled manpower is steadily increasing and emphasized the need to train women and youth in line with modern market requirements to fully benefit from these opportunities.

The meeting was attended by Director General BISP Sindh Sanaullah Rind, Outreach Consultant Naveed Khan, Assistant Director Media Shafquat Ali Qureshi and other concerned officers. At the end of the meeting, participants offered prayers for the high status of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto.

## PM Shehzad offers condolences to Minister of State Armaghan Subhani on mother's demise



SIALKOT: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehzad Sharif on Friday visited the residence of Minister of State Chaudhry Armaghan Subhani to express his condolences over the passing of the minister's mother.

During the visit, the prime minister conveyed his heartfelt sympathies to Chaudhry Armaghan Subhani and other bereaved family members, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

He offered Fateha for the departed soul and prayed for the elevation of

her ranks in the hereafter.

The prime minister also prayed for patience and strength for the bereaved family to bear the loss with fortitude. "May Allah Almighty grant the departed soul a place in Jannat-ul-Firdous," the prime minister said.

Federal Minister for Defence Khawaja Muhammad Asif and Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar accompanied the prime minister during the visit.

## Japanese Ambassador Highlights Trade Potential During FCCI Meeting

### Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Japanese Ambassador to Pakistan Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi said that efforts are being made to enhance bilateral relations between Japan and Pakistan, while it is expected that direct air flights between the two countries will also start soon.

He was talking to Vice President Engineer Asim Munir during his visit to the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry today. He said that Faisalabad has a key importance in the economy of Pakistan, which is why he has visited Faisalabad many times.

He said that at present there



are no direct flights between Pakistan and Japan, but it is expected that direct flights will start in the future.

He mentioned his meeting with Punjab Chief Minister Ms. Maryam Nawaz and said that increasing bilateral cooperation

was reviewed in it.

Earlier, Vice President Engineer Asim Munir welcomed the Japanese ambassador and said that this city with a population of ten million is contributing greatly to the country's development and national exports.

He said that he would soon visit the Japanese Embassy along with President Farooq Yousaf Sheikh and executive members, while he also invited the Japanese Ambassador to visit the Chamber again to meet the members of the Chamber.

Finally, Engineer Asim Munir presented the honorary shield of the Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry to the Japanese Ambassador, while Mr. Akamatsu Shuichi also recorded his impressions in the chamber's guest book. Executive Member Muhammad Ali was also present on the occasion.

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