



Daily The Spokesman



Nation stands by security forces in war against terrorism: Kundi

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has said the entire nation stands by the security forces in the war against terrorism. The governor paid tribute to the Balochistan government, security forces and law enforcement agencies for the successful intelligence-based operation against terrorists belonging to the Indian-backed Fitna al-Hindustan in Panjgur district, Balochistan.



Mashaal Mullick calls for special peace board on Kashmir

Hurriyat leader Yasin Malik's wife, Mashaal Mullick, has called for the establishment of a special Board of Peace for Kashmir, similar to efforts being discussed for Gaza, saying the long-running dispute must be placed at the center of global peace initiatives.

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Meeting

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif chairs a meeting on Gemstones and Minerals on Monday.



President Zardari to embark on four-day UAE visit today



the January 26-29 visit.

During the visit, President Zardari will hold high-level meetings with the UAE's leadership to review the full spectrum of bilateral ties, especially in the domains of trade and economic partnership, defence and security, and people-to-people ties.

The discussions will also focus on regional and international issues of mutual interest.

The visit of the president, subsequent to the recent visit of the UAE president to Pakistan, reflects the deep brotherly ties between the two nations and reaffirms the commitment to transforming the strong friendship between Pakistan and the UAE into a mutually rewarding partnership.

PM directs establishment of int'l-standard Gemstone Centers to boost exports

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday directed the authorities concerned to utilize the full potential of Pakistan's gemstone reserves to earn valuable foreign exchange through enhanced exports and set a deadline of August 2027 for the completion of the Islamabad Gemstone Center.

Chairing a high-level meeting at the Prime Minister House here to review

the promotion of the gemstone and minerals sector, the prime minister ordered the engagement of internationally renowned experts for the construction of proposed Gemstone Centers in Islamabad, Gilgit-Baltistan (GB), and Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

During the briefing, it was revealed that a site on Constitution Avenue in Islamabad has already been identified for the center. The facility will offer

international-standard value addition services, certification, an incubation center, and a trade center. To facilitate exporters, offices of the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) will also be established within the premises.

The prime minister stressed the need for close collaboration between the federal government and the provincial governments, as well as the administrations of GB and AJK.

The meeting was attended by

Muqam calls India's Republic Day a 'Black Day' for Kashmiris

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday described India's Republic Day as a "Black Day" for the people of Kashmir, citing the continued denial of their right to self-determination. He said New Delhi was projecting a façade of democracy while perpetuating human rights violations in the occupied territory. "Human rights abuses in occupied Kashmir continue unabated," he remarked, adding that India's conduct was a blot on the reputation of democratic nations.

The minister condemned rights violations in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir, terming them grave and ongoing.

He added that India's conduct was a blot on the reputation of democratic nations. He noted that Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control, as well as supporters worldwide, were observing India's Republic Day as a day of protest.

Muqam reiterated Pakistan's unwavering support for the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination and urged the international community to take notice of what he called ongoing Indian atrocities in the region.

Security forces kill 3 Indian-backed terrorists in Panjgur operation



News Desk

Security forces also recovered a significant cache of weapons, ammunition, and explosives from the site, the ISPR said, adding that the deceased terrorists were reportedly involved in multiple terrorist activities across the region.

Sanitisation operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist found in the area.

The ISPR reaffirmed that the relentless counter-terrorism campaign under the "Azm-e-Istehkam" vision—approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan—will continue at full pace to wipe out foreign-sponsored terrorism from the country.

Sindh CM vows shops for Gul Plaza victims in two months

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Monday announced a comprehensive relief and rehabilitation package for those affected by the Gul Plaza tragedy, pledging to provide alternative shops to traders within two months, along with financial assistance and interest-free loans.

Speaking to the media in Karachi, the chief minister said the provincial government stood with the families of those who lost their lives in the incident. He announced Rs10 million compensation for each deceased victim's family.

CM Shah said all Gul Plaza shopkeepers would

Gul Plaza sealed as 82 missing persons' search ends; death toll stands at 73



Bureau Report

KARACHI: The process of sealing the Gul Plaza building began on Monday following the deadly fire incident, as Karachi authorities moved to secure the site for further investigation.

According to the 24NewsHD TV channel, personnel of the Karachi Metropolitan Corporation (KMC) started digging pits around Gul Plaza to install iron shuttering as part of the sealing process.

Under the KMC plan, the building will be enclosed with green plastic netting.

while a technical team has reached the site to assess the structural condition of the damaged structure.

Earlier in the day, the search operation related to the Gul Plaza tragedy was largely completed, while debris removal continued for the tenth consecutive day.

After the completion of debris clearance on Monday, a structural survey of the building was conducted by the experts, following which the premises were sealed.

As of Monday, the death toll from the incident stands at 73, while 82 people have been reported missing since

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Azad Kashmir PM chairs high-level meeting to address snowfall crisis

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A high-level meeting, held here today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, reviewed the prevailing situation in the snow-affected areas and assessed the measures being undertaken by the administration and the Electricity Department in response to severe weather conditions. During the meeting, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Chaudhry Guftar Hussain and Deputy Inspector General of Police Shehryar Sikandar gave a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister on damage caused by heavy rains and snowfall, as well as the ongoing relief and rehabilitation efforts in the affected areas.

The pm was also informed about the closure of roads, landslides and difficulties faced by the citizens. The officials of the Electricity Department briefed the participants of the meeting about the steps taken in the context of severe weather conditions including the restoration of transmission lines, supply of



electricity and deployment of field staff. The meeting was informed that work is underway on an emergency basis to restore power supply in the affected areas.

Speaking on this occasion, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore directed that the administration should remain alert to deal with any emergency situation and to further intensify relief efforts in areas affected by

heavy snowfall.

He emphasized that the provision of basic necessities of life, including food, medicines, fuel, and electricity, remains the government's top priority. The Prime Minister directed the officials of the Electricity Department to ensure an uninterrupted power supply, stressing that field teams must remain ready at all times to respond to any emergency.

He further stated that all relevant departments should remain on high alert for urgent resolution of the problems faced by the citizens. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Chaudhry Guftar Hussain, Deputy Inspector General of Police Shehryar Sikandar and senior officials of the Electricity Department.

Protest against the Indian forces

ISLAMABAD: Jan26- Activists of All Parties Hurriyat Conference hold protest along the Embassy road against the Indian forces for illegal occupation of IOK.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Kashmiri leaders protest Indian Republic Day in Islamabad citing brutal occupation

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: On the occasion of India's so-called Republic Day, a protest demonstration was organized in the federal capital Islamabad by the All Parties Hurriyat Conference and the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell, led by Convener Hurriyat Conference senior leader Mahmood Ahmed Sagar. The main objective of the protest was to convince the international community that India is continuing its worst colonial and aggressive acts in occupied Kashmir under the guise of democracy.

The protesters were holding black flags and placards with slogans against the Indian military occupation, while the atmosphere of Islamabad was



resounding with the participants' loud slogans of "Indian so-called democracy, hey hey" and "Go India, go back".

Addressing the demonstra-

tion, the speakers expressed their strong appreciation for the criminal silence of the international community over the serious human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

A large number of senior Hurriyat leaders and activists participated in the protest

demonstration, including Syed Faiz Naqshbandi, Syed Yousuf Naseem, Mir Tahir Masood, Altaf Hussain Wani, Madam Shamim Shawl, Syed Ijaz Rahmani, Dawood Khan Yousufzai, Hassan Al-Banna, Director of Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Raja Khan Afsar Khan, Najeeb Al-Ghafoor Khan, Raja Rashid Raza, Sheikh Abdul Mateen, Sanaullah Dar, Chaudhry Shaheen, Nisar Mirza, Raja Khadim Hussain, Nazir Ahmed Karnali, Zahid Safi, Abdul Majeed Lone, Shafi Dar, Mian Muzaffar, Muhammad Ashraf Dar, Syed Gulshan Shah Ahmed, Adeel Mushtaq, Manzoor Ahmed Dar, Imtiaz Butt, Abdul Rashid Butt, Rais Mir, Khalid Shabbir, and a large number of people and media representatives.

Black Day Protest Mars India's Republic Day in AJK Capital

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: India's so-called Republic Day was observed as a "Black Day" across Azad Jammu and Kashmir. In this connection, a protest rally was organized in the capital Muzaffarabad under the auspices of the Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell and the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

The protest gathering was attended by former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Raja

Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan, Secretary General APHC Advocate Parvez Ahmad Shah, Government Spokesperson Azad Kashmir Shaukat Javed Mir, Mayor Muzaffarabad Syed Sikandar Gilani, Secretary Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell and Kashmir Cause Ansar Yaqoob, Commissioner Muzaffarabad Division Chaudhry Guftar Hussain, district officers, representatives of the Refugees Representative Forum, political and social leaders, lawyers, journalists, women,

and a large number of members of civil society.

Addressing the gathering, former Prime Minister Raja Muhammad Farooq Haider Khan stated that United Nations resolutions grant the people of Jammu and Kashmir the right to decide their future through a free and impartial plebiscite.

Speaking on the occasion, APHC Secretary General Advocate Parvez Ahmad Shah, on behalf of APHC Chairman Ghulam Muhammad Safi,

thanked all participants.

Government Spokesperson Shaukat Javed Mir, while addressing the gathering, paid tribute to the massive participation of people from all walks of life.

Director Kashmir Cultural Academy, Dr. Raja Muhammad Sajjad, thanked all dignitaries and participants for their presence and stated that the objective of observing India's Republic Day as a Black Day was to expose the false claims of Indian democracy.

PPP delegation meets PM Rathore to discuss promoting interfaith harmony



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: A delegation led by General Secretary of the Pakistan Peoples Party's Ulama and Mashaikh Wing, Sahibzada Fazal Rasool Tahir, called on Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore here today. During the meeting, the delegation informed the Prime Minister about the steps being taken by the Council to promote tolerance and interfaith harmony. Speaking on the occasion, Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, said that promoting tolerance, religious harmony and fostering a stable and mutually respectful society remains a key priority of his government. Terming the Pakistan Peoples Party as a party of martyrs, the pm said that the PPP is committed to safeguarding fundamental human rights and promoting civil liberties. He said that the religion of Islam teaches us humanity, tolerance and brotherhood. The government, he said, would take all possible steps to promote tolerance, peace and harmony in society in the light of these Islamic values. The delegation included members of the Islamic Ideology Council, Maulana Atiq-ur-Rehman Danish, Maulana Syed Ghulam Mujtaba Bukhari, Maulana Muhammad Asif Baloch, and others.

AIOU Coordinator highlights distance learning powerhouse in Takht Bhai media talk

Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: Coordinator of Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), Tehsil Takht Bhai, Khurshid Khan, stated that Allama Iqbal Open University is a unique educational institution in the country that is educating millions of students through its distance learning system. The university offers a wide range of academic programs from Matric to PhD, especially providing educational opportunities to those who are deprived of access to the traditional education system. He expressed these views while addressing a media talk at Takht Bhai Press Club (Registered) in connection with the admission campaign for the Spring Semester 2026 of Allama Iqbal Open University. He said that the university is playing a prominent role in promoting education across the country through modern educational facilities and an online system. Khurshid Khan further informed that under the supervision of Regional Director AIOU Mardan, Muaz Ahmed, the admission campaign for Spring Semester 2026 is currently underway, under which admissions are open in various programs from Matric to PhD. The last date for submission of admission forms has been fixed as February 10, 2026. On this occasion, Regional Director AIOU Mardan, Sajid Ahmed, said that the university is actively pursuing its mission to promote education through the distance learning system.

Kashmir activist slams Indian Republic Day as 'Veil' Over Brutality

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Raja Muhammad Zareen Khan, Central Senior Vice Chairman, Publicity Wing, has said that by celebrating India's Republic Day as a black day in Kashmir, Pakistan and every corner of the world, India would make the world believe the ugly face of democracy and how the so-called claimant and champion of democracy exploits the people of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. January 5, 1948, when India itself had promised before the United Nations and the international community to grant the Kashmiris the right to self-determination, which is the moral, political, social and fundamental right of the Kashmiris, but despite the passage of many decades, India has violated the rights of the Kashmiris. The right to celebrate Republic Day on January 26 is not because it has usurped the fundamental rights of the Kashmiris, i.e. the right to self-determination, therefore, this day has become a veil over the face of the so-called Indian imperialism under which India is hiding its cruel and imperialistic face and deceiving the world.

The true nature of India's Republic Day has been revealed by human rights organizations in their reports, showing how thousands of innocent people were abducted and disappeared forever throughout occupied Kashmir, millions were martyred, thousands of women were robbed of their rights and thousands of children were orphaned.

Kashmiris Mark Indian Republic Day as day of mourning, citing rights abuses

City Desk

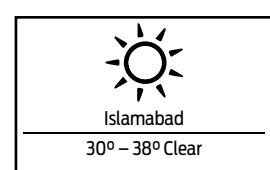
RAWALPINDI: The Kashmiri people are celebrating India's Republic Day as a black day in all over the world. India is busy committing the worst atrocities on the Kashmiri people under the guise of so-called democracy. Muslim Conference Secretary General and former AJK President and Deputy Speaker Ms. Mehran-Nissa, while declaring Republic Day as a black day, said that the world must fulfill the promise of a plebiscite to the Kashmiri people. The Kashmiri people are peacefully struggling for their basic birthright of freedom. Despite the promise, India is not giving the Kashmiris the right to self-determination, but is busy with killing, atrocities, kidnapping, arson, siege, demolition of houses, burning of barns, harassing innocent children, youth and women for demanding freedom and birthright. Mehran-Nissa said that more than one million Indian troops are busy exposing the real face of the so-called democratic country in Kashmir. She said that India has no right to celebrate Republic Day and call itself a democratic country, which is a country that gives the right to self-determination to those living in its own occupied areas. And there is no moral justification for calling a government that is busy snatching away their fundamental rights and is responsible for killing and atrocities as democratic. He said that today, the Kashmiri people have opened the floodgates of Indian democracy through vigorous protests, she added.

District Consumer Protection Council Conducts Market Inspection, Issues Notices Over Violations

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Assistant Director, District Consumer Protection Council Attock, Abdul Rehman Akhund Khail, along with his team, conducted inspections of various markets in the city. During the visit, notices were issued to several shopkeepers for failing to prominently display price lists and weighing scales, while some shopkeepers were also served summon notices to appear before the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Attock, for further action.

During the market inspection, samples of bills issued to customers by shopkeepers were also checked to ensure transparency and compliance with legal requirements under the Consumer Protection Act.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:42 am
Zohr	12:20 pm
Asr	3:55 pm
Magrib	5:33 pm
Isha	6:59 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 8888
& Rescue Services	4451122
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

Women Police

Stations	9222596
Islamabad	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

Edhi Ambulance	115
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WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

HOSPITALS

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

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

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	9204654
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316

RDA files case against owner of a private housing scheme

RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA) has lodged a First Information Report (FIR) against the owner of the Faisal Town Housing Scheme, Chaudhry Abdul Majed, and three others for alleged violations of approved regulations, an RDA spokesman said on Monday.

Acting on the directions of Director General Kinza Murtaza, the officials of RDA registered the case at Airport Police Station against Abdul Majed, Tahir Parvez, Fazal Dad and Muhammad Parvez. Police arrested Abdul Majed's brother, Chaudhry Javed, during the operation, the spokesperson informed.

He said the society management had breached the approved layout plan by failing to begin work on a sewerage treatment plant, not allotting 53 plots within the scheme and not developing a designated nullah.

"The RDA will continue strict legal action without discrimination against all illegal housing schemes and violators of approved regulations," he said, adding that the authority would ensure the protection of citizens' rights and interests.

The action has been taken under the Punjab Development of Cities Act, 1976, after the scheme's administration failed to rectify violations despite repeated notices, the spokesperson said.

Gillani urges philanthropists to partner with the government to eradicate poverty

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Senate Chairman Syed Yusuf Raza Gillani on Monday called upon philanthropists and civil society organisations to strengthen government efforts aimed at eradicating poverty, stressing that the state alone cannot overcome the challenge.

Addressing an event titled "PPAF's Community Infrastructure and Economic Empowerment Initiatives in Punjab," Gillani said meaningful progress in poverty alleviation required collective action and public-private partnership.

He urged civil society and philanthropists to actively support government initiatives for the welfare of the underprivileged segments of society.

He lauded the Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and its 63 partner organisations for their significant contributions, including the provision of interest-free



loans and investments in health and education sectors. Gilani also acknowledged the efforts of Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Syed Imran Ahmed Shah, describing his role as crucial in mitigating poverty across the country.

Earlier, PPAF Chief Executive Officer Nadir Gul highlighted the organisation's initiatives, stating that it had invested in nearly 390 education projects and about 90 health projects. He recalled PPAF's relief work after the 2005 earthquake, including the construction of 12,200 houses and provision of food to over 49,000 families, and health assistance after 2025 floods. He added that around 2,000 BISP beneficiary families were trained in livelihood skills, including fisheries.

Deputy Coordination Officer, Punjab Centre of Excellence on Countering Violent Extremism (COV-CVE), Dr Ahmad Khawar Shahzad, outlined government measures to combat poverty and promote peace.

PPP MNA Syed Sami Gilani, Deputy Secretary SED South Punjab Khilil Mazhar Siddiqi, CEO Education Dr Saifdar Wagha, and representatives of partner NGOs were also present.

Called on

ISLAMABAD: The Ambassador of Denmark to Pakistan, Ms. Maja Mortensen, called on the Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik on Monday.



Photo: PID

PSCA's 'Mera Pyara' team reunites girl missing for nine years with her family

City Desk


LAHORE: The Virtual Center for Child Safety established at the Punjab Safe Cities Authority continues to play an active and effective role in ensuring child protection, providing timely assistance and reuniting lost children with their parents. PSCA through the use of modern technology and coordinated operational strategy, has achieved significant success in tracing and recovering missing children. PSCA's "Mera Pyara" Team successfully reunited Shazia, a girl missing for last nine years, with her parents which speaks volumes of its remarkable humanitarian

achievement. Shazia went missing in 2017 from District Okara and was later shifted to the Edhi Center, Lahore.

According to a spokesperson of PSCA, "Mera Pyara" team recorded a detailed interview of the child residing at Edhi

an achievement. Shazia went missing in 2017 from District Okara and was later shifted to the Edhi Center, Lahore.

Home Lahore and shared the video on social media platforms. After watching the video, Shazia's family immediately contacted PSCA's "Mera Pyara" Team. Following complete verification and fulfillment of all legal require-

ments, the team safely reunited the child with her parents. Expressing their gratitude, the family appreciated tireless efforts of "Mera Pyara" Team and extended their heartfelt prayers and gratitude. Shazia's parents described their daughter's return as a miracle by Allah Almighty.

The spokesperson further

stated that PSCA's "Mera

Pyara" Team remains fully

committed and operational

24/7 to reunite missing chil-

dren with their families. Citi-

zens seeking information

regarding any missing child

or individual are advised to

dial 15 and press 3 for fur-

ther assistance.

Spotify Taps Neha Karim Ullah as EQUAL Pakistan Ambassador for Q1 2026


City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Spotify has announced rising dance-pop artist Neha Karim Ullah as the EQUAL Pakistan Ambassador for the first quarter of 2026, celebrating her as a fresh and compelling voice in Pakistan's evolving music scene. On January 22, Neha was featured on Spotify's Times Square billboard in New York City and has been showcased across multiple curated playlists on the platform, marking a significant milestone in her artistic journey.

"Neha Karim Ullah is a fresh voice in Pakistan's music landscape, bringing a diversity that feels both authentic and necessary," said Rutaba Yaqub, Artist & Label Partnerships Manager at Spotify for Pakistan and UAE. "Through EQUAL Pakistan, we support women at every stage of their journey, and Neha's feature reflects our commitment to amplifying emerging voices as they step onto the global stage."

Through initiatives like EQUAL Pakistan, Spotify continues to create opportunities for women artists to be heard, celebrated, and discovered worldwide. Neha Karim Ullah's recognition as the latest EQUAL Pakistan Ambassador reinforces Spotify's commitment to elevating diverse voices and spotlighting Pakistani talent globally.

To explore the sounds of Pakistan's most inspiring women artists, listeners can visit the "EQUAL Pakistan" playlist on Spotify.

DC Mela Inaugurates Two-Day Free Eye Camp


Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela inaugurated the third annual Begum & Chaudhry Faqir Muhammad Memorial two-day Free Eye Camp at Government ZCD Hospital Model Welfare Center No. 341 GB. On this occasion, former Chairman and Incharge Mian Arif Saeed, District Population Officer Mian Muhammad Naeem and Incharge Rescue 1122 Basharat Hameed were also present with him. The Deputy Commissioner inspected the facilities and stock of free check-ups, free surgeries and free medicines being provided at the camp. During the camp, eye examinations, surgical procedures and free medicines were provided to patients. Former Chairman and Incharge Mian Arif Saeed briefed the Deputy Commissioner about the arrangements and ongoing services.

Eye Surgeon Dr. Muhammad Imad Haider, Eye Specialist and Consultant at Allied Hospital Faisalabad along with Incharge Eye Unit ZCD Dr. Hina Nasir, successfully continued eye surgeries during the two-day free camp.

Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela said that such camps play a vital role in providing quality eye care facilities to the public and that efforts to strengthen public service initiatives in the health sector will be further enhanced.

RCAK Challenge Cup U-17 Cricket Tournament

Sports Desk

KARACHI: Due to some good batting by Hassan Noman 83, Ahmed Shehzad 54 and fine bowling by medium pacer Afrasayab 3/25 RCAK Greens defeated RCAK Whites by 6 wickets in the RCAK Challenge Cup Under-17 Cricket Tournament at Jinnah College Nazimabad.

Score in Brief:

RCAK Greens defeated RCAK Whites by 6 Wickets at Jinnah College Nazimabad. RCAK Whites 208 allout in 33 overs. Saad Murtaza 7p 8x4 2x6, Amanullah 40 6x4 1x6, Muhammad Haris 28, Afrasayab (mf) 3/25.

In reply RCAK Greens 213/4 in 39.1 overs. Hassan Noman 83 7x4 6x6, Ahmed Shehzad 54 5x4 2x6, Muhammad Roham 26, Aliyan Asif 22.

Asim Tanveer

MULTAN: Commissioner Multan Division Aamir Karim Khan met with the US Consul General, Stetson Sanders. During the meeting, bilateral and local issues of mutual interest were discussed in detail.

The discussion focused on ongoing development activities in Multan Division, future plans, and potential areas of cooperation. US Consul General Stetson Sanders expressed keen interest in various initiatives aimed at the improvement and development of Multan and showed willingness to cooperate in such projects.

Commissioner Aamir Karim Khan



briefed the Consul General on the priorities of the divisional administration and future development plans. He also informed him about the Rs. 72 billion development package for Multan Division under the Punjab Development Program.

The meeting also covered the development strategy of the Government of Punjab and ongoing projects under the Punjab Development Program (PDP). Commissioner Multan shared details regarding the ongoing construction work of the Multan-Vehari Road project.

Both sides agreed to further strengthen mutual relations and enhance cooperation in areas of shared interest.

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Pakistan's transport transforms with Chinese partnership

Over the past decade, Pakistan's transport sector has entered a period of quiet transformation — one powered largely by Chinese investment, engineering and long-term vision. What began as a set of infrastructure projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) has evolved into a nationwide effort to modernize mobility, boost trade efficiency, and improve daily life for millions. From motorways cutting through rugged mountains to metro systems gliding across dense urban skylines, China's influence is helping Pakistan rethink how it moves — and how it plans for the future.

The Karakoram Highway, often described as the "Friendship Highway," stands as a striking example of this cooperation. Once a perilous mountain route, it has been rebuilt with Chinese expertise into a modern transport corridor linking Pakistan's north with China's Xinjiang region. Further south, the Peshawar-Karachi Motorway has become the backbone of Pakistan's domestic logistics network, reducing travel times between provinces and opening new routes for trade and tourism. Together, these projects have not only strengthened Pakistan's physical connectivity but also highlighted how infrastructure can drive integration and growth when backed by strategic partnerships.

China's involvement has also changed the face of Pakistan's cities. In Lahore, the Orange Line Metro Train — Pakistan's first mass transit rail system — has redefined urban commuting. Developed with Chinese technology and funding, the project has offered a glimpse of what modern, efficient public transport can look like in a developing economy. Its success has prompted similar interest in other cities, including Karachi, Islamabad, and Rawalpindi, where officials are studying how Chinese cities such as Beijing and Shenzhen have built interconnected, smart, and sustainable transport systems.

For Pakistan, China's own journey offers valuable lessons. The first is integration — in China, road, rail, air, and maritime networks operate as part of a single, coordinated system designed to serve national development goals. The second is innovation — Chinese cities have embraced electric buses, automated ticketing, and AI-based traffic management, reducing congestion and pollution. The third is localisation — by investing in domestic manufacturing and technical training, China ensured that infrastructure development created jobs and long-term expertise at home.

However, perhaps the most significant takeaway from China's model is its long-term consistency. Decades of steady policy, planning, and investment have allowed China to build one of the world's most advanced transport networks. For Pakistan, achieving similar results will require sustained commitment, stable governance, and a willingness to view infrastructure not as a short-term project but as a long-term national strategy.

Pakistan's Choices as Iran Faces a New Encirclement

Pakistan steered its ship with admirable composure during the "twelve-day war," which began with Israel-U.S. strikes on Iranian military and nuclear-linked targets in mid-June 2025 and escalated into sustained exchanges that lasted nearly two weeks, ending with a ceasefire around June 24. What made those twelve days unforgettable was not only the intensity, but the symbolism: Iran's missile and drone barrages repeatedly penetrated Israeli airspace, challenging the psychological aura surrounding Israel's multi-layered defense architecture—systems such as Iron Dome and David's Sling that the world had come to view as near-absolute protection.

During that first phase, Tehran discovered that many relationships celebrated in peacetime become conditional in wartime. India—despite years of strategic engagement with Iran and the economic logic of connectivity projects designed to reach Central Asia—did not step forward in a manner Tehran expected. For Iranian observers, this was not merely silence; it felt like calculated distance, shaped by India's wider strategic alignments and its concern that any global momentum toward a Palestinian two-state framework could echo into renewed international scrutiny of Kashmir. The war thus exposed not only military fault lines, but diplomatic ones, revealing how quickly geopolitics can reorder loyalties when the costs of association rise.

The third choice is declared neutrality. Pakistan would step back, deny its soil and airspace for conflict, and consistently call for de-escalation. The advantage is imme-

diate insulation. Neutrality reduces the risk of becoming a direct target and preserves working channels with all parties. Yet neutrality in a pressure campaign can become a quiet punishment. Iran may still feel abandoned and revise its trust calculus. Washington may interpret restraint as passive resistance and still apply economic pressure. India could frame Pakistan as irrelevant or opportunistic while consolidating its own partnerships. Neutrality can be a shield, but it can also become an empty space others fill with their own narratives.

The fourth choice is calibrated dual-track strategy. Pakistan avoids loud, provocative rhetoric that triggers U.S. retaliation while quietly extending the maximum permissible support to Iran behind the curtain of diplomacy. This is survival statecraft in a world where economies can be choked without a single missile launched. The advantage is strategic breathing room: Pakistan preserves its financial and diplomatic channels while preventing Iran from feeling strategically orphaned. The risk is fragility. If exposed, secrecy can produce the worst of both worlds—U.S. anger without the protection of honesty and Iranian disappointment if the help appears too cautious or insufficient.

The fifth choice is multilateral internationalization—pushing the crisis into formal global forums such as the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and ad hoc contact groups

involving China, Russia, Turkey, and key European states. Instead of positioning itself as a bilateral actor between Tehran and Washington, Pakistan frames itself as a convener and agenda-setter, shifting the burden of mediation, legitimacy, and pressure onto a wider coalition. The advantage is dilution of risk. Decisions and outcomes no longer rest on Pakistan's shoulders alone, and the crisis is embedded in a global framework that makes unilateral escalation politically costlier. The downside is loss of speed and influence. Multilateral processes are slow, consensus-driven, and often shaped by great-power rivalries that can stall momentum at the very moments when urgency is greatest.

These five paths do not exist in isolation; they overlap, collide, and constrain one another. Pakistan cannot fully embrace one without partially touching the others. Open support for Iran strains Gulf and Western ties. Alignment with Washington risks regional backlash. Neutrality invites suspicion from all sides. Dual-track strategy demands discipline and secrecy. Multilateralization trades immediacy for legitimacy. The art of statecraft lies not in choosing a single lane, but in sequencing these options in a way that preserves room to maneuver as circumstances evolve.

The most sustainable course for Pakistan lies in a disciplined blend of the fourth and fifth choices, anchored by the language of the third. Declared neutrality

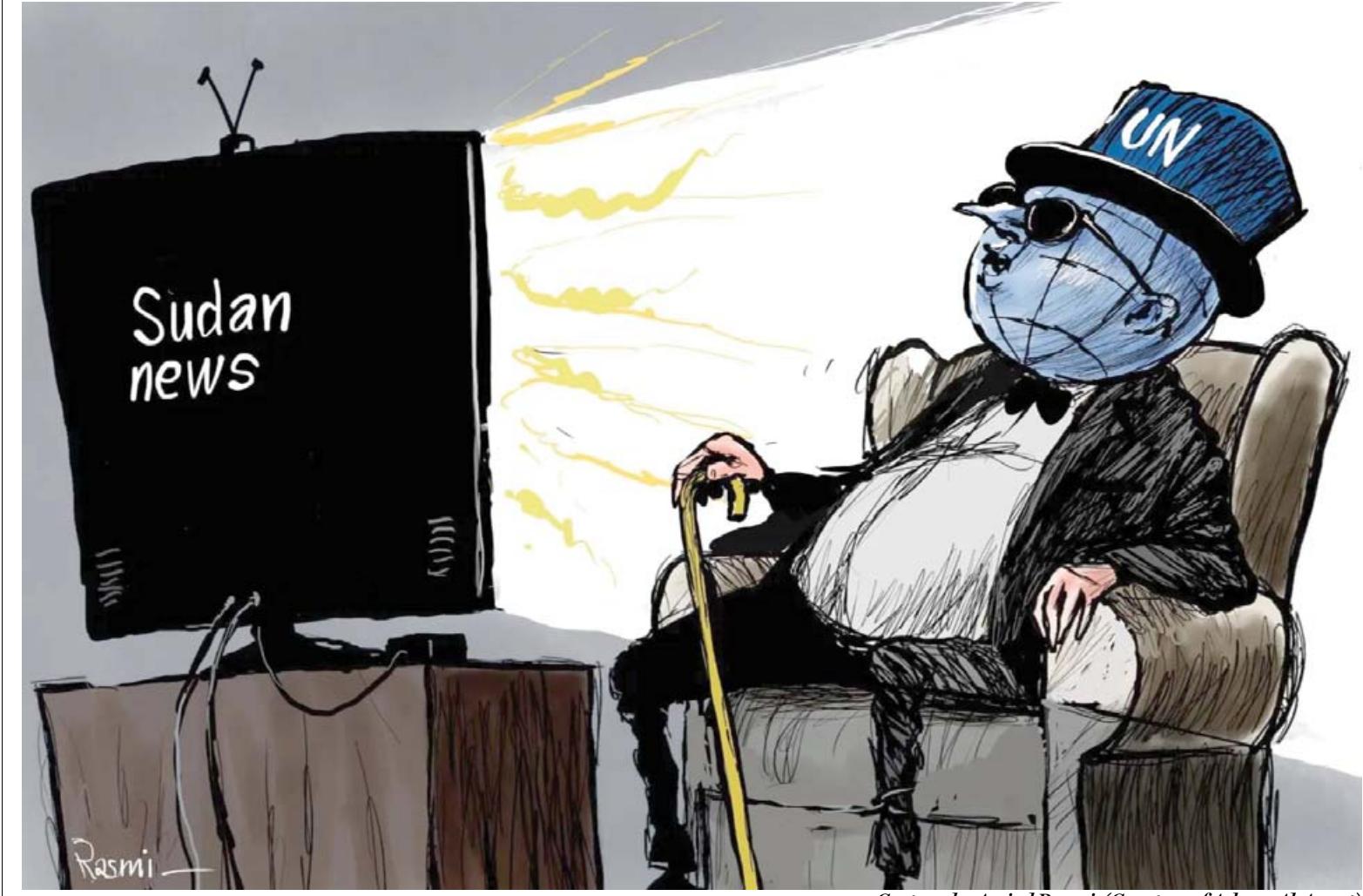
in public posture provides a shield against direct retaliation. Active, quiet stabilization with Iran preserves neighborly trust and reduces the risk of border spillover, refugee flows, and proxy escalation. Multilateral engagement internationalizes the crisis, embedding it in legal and diplomatic frameworks that slow the march toward unilateral coercion. At the same time, Pakistan must maintain cordial, pragmatic, and economically constructive relations with Washington, carefully calibrating its actions and rhetoric to avoid triggering sanctions or financial pressures that could further strain an already fragile economic landscape.

The twelve-day war proved that old myths can break and that "friends" can vanish when bombs fall. The January 23 mobilization proves something else: pressure campaigns are built to last, and nations survive them through balance, not bravado. Pakistan's victory will not be found in loud slogans or reckless entanglement. It will be measured in its ability to protect its economy, preserve its Gulf lifelines, prevent western-border chaos, stand close enough to Iran to preserve brotherhood, far enough from provocation to deny adversaries a pretext for retaliation, and engaged enough with the world to ensure that when the region's future is negotiated, Pakistan is not merely present, but heard.

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Qamar Bashir



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

Israel: The Historic Exodus of Its Citizens

There are certain turning points in history that instantly expose the claims, ideological foundations, and political narratives of powerful states. The internal crisis Israel has faced since October 7 is not merely a military or security challenge, but a profound intellectual, psychological, and existential test. The state that for decades has been presented as the safest sanctuary for Jews, an impregnable fortress, and a symbol of stability in the Middle East, now appears to have lost the confidence of its own citizens. Recent official figures reflect this bitter reality: in the past two years, more than 150,000 Israeli citizens have left the country, and in 2023 alone, 82,800 people migrated abroad for long-term residence a 44% increase compared to the previous year. These numbers are not merely statistics of migration but expressions of deep collective fear, insecurity, and political despair.



Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

This exodus is not merely a temporary reaction but also the result of deep political disappointment. Internal political divisions, institutional clashes under the banner of judicial reforms, and a lack of trust in leadership have compelled citizens to question whether this state truly guarantees their future. The younger generation, which is the asset of any society, feels trapped in an endless war, compulsory military service, and an environment of perpetual danger. This is why a large number of educated, skilled, and professional individuals are heading toward Europe, North America, and Australia, where they can find not only better economic opportunities but also psychological peace.

Migration has always been a sensitive topic in Israeli history. Zionist ideology itself

considers reverse migration a failure because the state was founded on the claim that Jews from all over the world could come here and live a secure and dignified life. However, when the exodus from the very state begins to increase, it becomes more than a numerical issue; it turns

into an ideological crisis. This recent exodus has challenged the fundamental claim that Israel is the only safe refuge for Jews. If security, stability, and hope for the future are not available, then even nationality and ideology cannot bind people.

The war has also deeply affected the Israeli economy. Businesses are closed, investment is affected, tourism is almost halted, and defense expenditures have increased enormously. These factors are directly impacting citizens' daily lives. The middle class, which

Earth is not just for humans

Haleema Saadia

Nowadays, the Punjab government is culling stray dogs to reduce their population, and many people are supporting this. The thing is that science has provided us with humane methods to reduce the stray dog population. In today's world, countries have succeeded in reducing the stray dog population by employing CNVR (Catch-Neuter-Vaccinate-Release) programmes. Some, like the Netherlands, have even achieved zero strays through spay-neuter drives. While the civilised world is employing humane methods to reduce the stray population, there is a war on stray dogs in Pakistan. There is a widespread public panic caused by rabies too. In past, most countries used to cull dogs and cats because there were few remedies to offer protection against rabies. Is it morally right to kill thousands of stray dogs today when men have vaccines and when the population can be controlled via sterilisation? More and more people are questioning the morality of the practice of culling dogs.

During current times, humans are not only being cruel to powerless non-human species but also to their own species. Most humans have become indifferent to the suffering of others, be that humans or non-humans. Dogs culling shows that our society has failed in its duty to protect the vulnerable and the marginalised non-humans. This also perpetuates the culture that isn't compassionate toward every other living being. One argument given by supporters of the dog culling policy is that we shouldn't expect the government to spend money on animal welfare when most humans are in dire need of help. Pakistan is indeed facing economic constraints, but it's also true that the government isn't spending much money on the common people, too. Most of the economic resources are being spent to sustain the security regime. Also, many well-off people in Pakistan have the wherewithal to help the innocent strays. Humans are the only species on earth which have the capacity to help themselves when they are facing any problem, but these innocent strays and many other non-humans don't have any such capacity.

One other argument propounded by supporters of

dog culling is that it's right to cull species when they begin to encroach on others' share. Everyone will agree that the only species on Earth which is encroaching on others' share of the Earth is humans. Approximately 4 lac humans are born every single day worldwide. The Human population has far exceeded the Earth's carrying capacity. Humans are destroying the habitats of millions of other nonhuman animals. It has polluted oceans, air, and has cut down the bulk of forests. Also, where is the habitat of stray dogs? The fact is that urban streets and areas are not solely for humans, just like the earth isn't. We, humans, have to share this urban space with many other species. Just like we are dependent on many other species, other species are also dependent on us for their sustainability. Currently, urban planning by the government is such that it considers the lives of non-human and some humans expendable.

Most people don't consider an animal's life to be that worthy nowadays. In past, some humans even considered it right to torture other humans and considered them inferior beings based on the blackness of their skin, but nobody considers it right today. Humans need to not discriminate against nonhumans on the basis of the number of legs, too. Some say that stray dogs should be killed because they are useless, harmful and mischievous. If we agree with this reasoning, then many bipeds should also be killed as they are also useless, mischievous and harmful creatures. Also, humans do crimes and hurt others despite having the capacity to distinguish right from wrong. Thus don't they deserve bigger punishment? Some people also think that humans alone deserve moral consideration because they are way more rational. But then some animals, such as a fully grown dog and horse, are beyond comparison more rational than some humans, like infants and the mentally unfit. Moral philosophers such as utilitarians say that it's morally wrong to hurt others because they have the capacity to suffer or feel pain, not because they are rational or not. Just as we shouldn't hurt the less rational humans, we also shouldn't hurt the sentient beings belonging to a nonhuman group. Moral community must be expanded to include all creatures. We all should try to make life better for all species on earth, and those who can afford it should help non-humans, too, as these 99 percent of the time cannot help themselves like humans. Earth is for all.

British High Commission Pakistan Recognizes Women as Central to Security, Justice, and National Resilience

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The British High Commission in Pakistan today reaffirmed its leadership in advancing inclusive and effective security by convening the national conference Women as Architects of Resilience: Empowering Women in Security and Counterterrorism, held in collaboration with the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Global Affairs Canada and with support from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) Pakistan. The conference highlighted how women across Pakistan are shaping counterterrorism policy, strengthening institutions, and delivering tangible results at the community level.

"The UK is committed to supporting women who are strengthening Pakistan's response to enhancing community safety, leading efforts to prevent violent extremism and terrorism. We are also supporting projects that improve women's access to justice, provide better

support for survivors, and empower women-led organisations working to build resilient communities," said British High Commissioner Ms. Jane Marriott while opening the conference.

Mr. Jawad Ahmad Dogar, National Coordinator NACTA, Mr. Tarik Ali Khan, High Commissioner of Canada, and Mr. Troels Vester, UNODC Representative emphasized the importance of international cooperation and government leadership in promoting gender-responsive security frameworks.

UNODC Representative Mr. Troels Vester highlighted the progress already underway, noting that women across Pakistan are increasingly serving in leadership roles within law enforcement, financial oversight, and justice institutions, contributing directly to investigations, compliance, and terrorism financing disruption.

Reaffirming the government's commitment, Mr. Jawad Ahmad Dogar, National Coordinator NACTA, stated that integrating

women's perspectives into counterterrorism policy and practice is essential to strengthening prevention, deterring radicalization, and reinforcing community resilience.

The event brought together senior policymakers, law enforcement leaders, financial regulators, international partners, and civil society to recognize the growing impact of women serving across security, justice, and prevention systems. Discussions emphasized that women are no longer peripheral to national security efforts but are central actors enhancing institutional effectiveness, accountability, and public trust.

Setting the national policy context, Ms. Humaira Mifti, Secretary, National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW), highlighted how women's participation in security and prevention strengthens resilience, safeguards rights, and reinforces long-term stability.

A key panel on Breaking Barriers in Security Leadership, featured senior women officers from policing and provincial administrations who shared operational experiences demonstrating how women's leadership has improved investigations, strengthened community engagement, and increased trust in law enforcement institutions.

The international perspectives were led by Ms. Kate Wilson, Counter Terrorism Police Liaison Officer at the British High Commission, and Ms. Kate Fitzpatrick of UNODC Vienna, who shared global best practices on inclusive counterterrorism approaches linked to measurable security outcomes. Field-level leadership and dignity-centered policing initiatives were highlighted through reflections by Ms. Aisha Butt, Superintendent of Police, Punjab Police and by Ms. Beenish Fatima, Senior Superintendent of Police, Punjab.

Another session, focused on women at the forefront of emerging technologies and financial vigilance, where experts from financial intelligence units, regulatory bodies, law enforcement, and the private sector discussed



how women are strengthening AML/CFT compliance, financial oversight, and early-warning systems to disrupt terrorist financing networks. Civil society leaders and academics emphasized how women-led community initiatives complement state-led security responses by

addressing drivers of extremism, strengthening social cohesion, and supporting at-risk populations.

The conference concluded with a shared commitment to deepen the integration of gender perspectives within provincial Centres of Excellence on Countering Violent

Extremism while advancing the establishment of a Women in Security and Counterterrorism Network to enable sustained collaboration, mentorship, and skills development across institutions and sectors.

The British Council's Women of the World Festival celebrates 10 years in Pakistan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: The British Council's WOW - Women of the World Festival in collaboration with Shan Foods, UNFPA, Jafferjee, Generation, Toni and Guy, Spa Ceylon, ECDI Pakistan and Olomopolo Media concluded on 25 January at the Beach Luxury Hotel in Karachi. The two-day festival which was free and open to the public had an attendance of over 12,500 people.

The opening keynote at the festival featured the British High Commissioner to Pakistan, Jane Marriott with Senator Sherry Rehman, CBE Founder Director at the WOW Foundation, Jude Kelly, senior journalist and writer Mahnaz Rahman in a session moderated by journalist Sidra



Iqbal. This powerful keynote set the tone for two days of dialogue, debate, and celebration.

The programme for the WOW festival also included one-of-a-kind panels, workshops, film

screenings, immersive performances, vibrant marketplaces and music performances.

talent with global ideas, and turns creativity into confidence and opportunity."

In 2026 the British Council will also be celebrating the 10th anniversary of reopening their libraries in Karachi and Lahore with a special series of activities and events. The British Council's libraries are vibrant hubs for learning, research, and cultural engagement, offering unparalleled access to books, resources, and community events.

Over the past decade, WOW in Pakistan has grown into a powerful platform for dialogue, creativity, and change. It has brought together thousands of women and girls across cities, campuses, and communities, creating space for conversations that matter, and spotlighting voices that deserve to be heard.

Exhibition of European journalist's photo book on Kashmir begins in Islamabad

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The exhibition of world-renowned Belgian photo-journalist "Cedric Gurbahay's" photo book on Jammu and Kashmir "Kashmir Wait and See" has begun in the capital Islamabad. The exhibition, held at the National Arts Council Islamabad, will continue till January 28. On the first day of the exhibition, senior politicians and other high-ranking political and social figures, members of parliament, diplomats from various countries including Europe in Pakistan,

Pakistani and Kashmiri intellectuals and students of colleges and universities attended the opening ceremony at the National Arts Council auditorium. The book's introductory ceremonies and exhibition will also be held in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir, and Mirpur, and Lahore, the capital of Punjab. In addition to the author of the book, Cedric Gurbahay, a seven-member European delegation also attended the ceremonies.

These events are being organized under the auspices of the Kashmir Council Europe

(KCEU), an organization active in Europe to highlight the Kashmir issue and the rights of Kashmiris. Chairman Kashmir Council Europe (KCEU) Ali Raza Syed, who is currently on a visit to Pakistan in connection with these events, said that this effective photo book is the result of eight years of tireless work and efforts of Mr. Cedric Gurbahay. This book is an important documentary record of the lives, struggle and perseverance of the Kashmiri people and the culture of Kashmir.

This historic book was earlier exhibited in a major international

festival, the International Festival of Photography and Journalism, in Perpignan, France last year, during which thousands of people were made aware of Jammu and Kashmir, especially the rights and culture of Kashmiris.

Apart from Islamabad, other introductory events and exhibitions of the book will be held on January 29, 30 and 31 in Muzaffarabad, the capital of Azad Kashmir, on February 1 and 2, Mirpur, Azad Kashmir, and on February 5, 6, 7 and 8, respectively. The book presents

accounts of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The book also contains visual stories of victims of pellet guns in occupied Kashmir to the residents of villages in Azad Kashmir on the Line of Control who are constantly being targeted by unprovoked firing by Indian troops. Chairman Kashmir Council EU Ali Raza Syed said that the book is an important tool to highlight the Kashmir issue at the global level, especially this book draws special attention to

the right of self-determination of the Kashmiri people.

He said that the purpose of the introductory events and exhibition of this book is to inform and influence the international public circles and policymakers by bringing the Kashmir issue and the human rights of Kashmiris to the fore. Kashmir Council Europe (KCU) has played a key role in the initiation and completion of this book project over the

past eight years. In addition, for a long time, KCU has been at the forefront of raising voices for the rights of Kashmiris across Europe. The Council has continuously been in touch with influential think tanks and civil society. Through discussions, dialogues, seminars, conferences and peaceful protests, the Kashmir Council EU has worked tirelessly and effectively to keep the Kashmir issue alive in European circles.

Scope of Analytical Chemistry in the Food Industry

Analitical chemistry plays a central and indispensable role in the modern food industry. In an era where food safety, quality, and transparency are global concerns, analytical chemistry provides the scientific foundation that ensures food products are safe for consumption and meet established standards.

From the inspection of raw materials to the analysis of finished and packaged products, every stage of food manufacturing depends on analytical techniques. In food factories, analytical chemistry is not limited to laboratory testing; rather, it functions as a comprehensive system that safeguards public health, ensures regulatory compliance, and strengthens consumer trust in food brands.

Quality Control and Quality Assurance

One of the most important applications of analytical chemistry in food factories is Quality Control (QC) and Quality Assurance (QA). These processes are essential to maintain consistency, safety, and reliability in food production. Analytical chemists routinely analyze raw materials to confirm their purity and suitability

before processing begins. During production, intermediate samples are tested to ensure that processing conditions do not negatively affect the product.

Common analytical tests include determination of moisture content, fat, protein, carbohydrates, ash value, acidity, salt concentration, and pH levels. These parameters directly influence texture, taste, shelf life, and nutritional value. By conducting these analyses, food factories can ensure batch-to-batch uniformity, reduce production losses, and prevent the release of substandard or defective products into the market.

Food safety is a global priority, and analytical chemistry serves as the first and most reliable line of defense against foodborne hazards. Food products may become contaminated during cultivation, processing, storage, or transportation. Analytical chemists are responsible for identifying and quantifying harmful substances that pose risks to human health.

In food factories, routine testing is carried out for heavy metals such as lead, mercury, arsenic, and cadmium; pesticide and insecticide residues in

fruits, vegetables, and grains; antibiotic and hormone residues in meat, milk, and poultry products; and naturally occurring toxins such as aflatoxins produced by molds. Even trace amounts of these contaminants can be dangerous, making precise analysis essential.

Advanced analytical techniques such as High-Performance Liquid Chromatography (HPLC), Gas Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS), Atomic Absorption Spectroscopy (AAS), and UV-Visible Spectroscopy are widely used for this purpose. These methods offer high sensitivity, accuracy, and reliability, enabling the detection of contaminants at extremely low concentrations and ensuring food safety for consumers.

Accurate nutritional information is both a legal requirement and an important tool for consumer awareness. Analytical chemistry enables the precise determination of calories, sugars, proteins, fats, dietary fiber, vita-

mins, and minerals present in food products. This data is used to create nutrition labels that appear on food packaging.

Through reliable chemical analysis, manufacturers can ensure truthful labeling, which helps consumers make informed dietary choices and supports public health initiatives. Proper nutritional analysis also enhances brand credibility and prevents legal issues related to false or misleading claims.

Food factories must comply with national and international regulations established by food safety authorities and standardization organizations. Analytical chemistry plays a critical role in meeting these regulatory requirements. Analytical chemists generate validated laboratory data, prepare technical documentation, and maintain testing records required for inspections, audits, certifications, and licensing. For export-oriented food industries, compliance with international food standards is essen-

tial. Analytical testing ensures that products meet the quality and safety criteria of importing countries, facilitating smooth international trade and protecting the reputation of food manufacturers.

Analytical chemistry is also a driving force behind Research and Development (R&D) in the food industry. It supports the formulation of new food products, improvement of existing recipes, and enhancement of product stability. By analyzing chemical composition, manufacturers can optimize preservatives, improve flavor and color stability, extend shelf life, and retain nutritional value. Analytical studies also help in reducing production costs while maintaining quality, developing healthier food alternatives, and adapting products to changing consumer preferences. This makes analytical chemistry an essential tool for innovation and competitiveness in the food sector.

Career Opportunities in the Food Industry. The expanding food processing and manufacturing sector offers a wide range of career opportunities for individuals specializing in analytical chemistry. Common

professional roles include Quality Control Analyst, Quality Assurance Officer, Food Safety Officer, Laboratory Analyst, Laboratory Supervisor, With increasing consumer awareness, stricter food safety regulations, and rapid industrial growth, the demand for skilled analytical chemists in food factories continues to rise. This field offers stable employment, professional growth, and opportunities to contribute directly to public health and food security.

In short, analytical chemistry is a cornerstone of the food industry. It ensures that food products are safe, nutritious, and of consistent quality while supporting regulatory compliance, innovation, and consumer confidence. Its applications extend far beyond laboratory testing, influencing every aspect of food production and distribution. As food industries continue to expand and quality standards become more stringent, the scope of analytical chemistry in food factories will continue to grow, making it a vital, dynamic, and future-oriented field.

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Javeria

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
188,587.66	189,166.82
Day's High	Day's Low
191,032.73	188,268.38
Index Value	Change
43,556,565,310	-579.16
Percentage	Time
-0.31%	26 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,148.85	+5.41
Percentage	Time
+0.053%	26 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,295.68	+196.97
Percentage	Time
+0.40%	26 Jan, 12:20 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
52,885.25	52,885.25
Percentage	Time
-1.79%	26 Jan, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.55	197.72
Bahrain Dinar	743.85	753.85
Canadian Dollar	203.77	207.31
China Yuan	38.00	41.4
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	332.42	336.51
Hong Kong Dollar	35.50	36.38
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.31
Japanese Yen	1.8080	1.9092
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.00	917.97
Malaysian Ringgit	66.55	70.3
New Zealand \$	165.68	170.56
Norwegian Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.60	738.59
Qatari Riyal	76.2	78.75
Saudi Riyal	74.90	75.35
Singapore Dollar	219.61	224.56
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	358.97	363.92
Thai Bhat	8.50	9.7
U.A.E Dirham	76.50	77.30
UK Pound Sterling	382.98	387.05
US Dollar	280.85	282.55

RCCI Expresses Disappointment Over SBP's Decision to Maintain Policy Rate



RAWALPINDI: The Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (RCCI) has expressed disappointment over the State Bank of Pakistan's decision to keep the policy rate unchanged at 10.5 percent, despite visible signs of inflationary stabilization and improving macroeconomic indicators.

In a statement, RCCI President Usman Shaukat said that recent inflation trends and positive monetary signals had created a strong case for a reduction in the policy rate. He noted that maintaining a high interest rate at this stage may further strain industrial activity and investment sentiment.

The RCCI President emphasized that an immediate reduction in the policy rate is essential to stimulate industrial growth and attract fresh investment. "Lower interest rates will significantly reduce the cost of capital, encourage expansion in the manufacturing sector, and provide much-needed support to overall economic recovery," he stated.

Highlighting the challenges faced by industries, Usman Shaukat said that proactive monetary easing would help revive industrialization, enhance competitiveness, and create employment opportunities—key elements for achieving sustainable economic development.

RCCI urged the State Bank of Pakistan to reconsider its current stance and announce a policy rate cut at the earliest opportunity to create a more conducive environment for industrial growth and economic progress.

Commerce Desk

President FPCCI praises government's decision to give rebate to rice exporters

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), has welcomed the federal government's decision to grant a rebate to rice exporters, saying it will boost the country's rice exports and benefit farmers.

In a statement, he said the decision to give a 9% rebate on Basmati rice and 3% on non-Basmati rice is commendable and will help increase Pakistan's rice exports, which are expected to earn \$1.5 billion for the country.

He said the decision will make Pakistani rice competitive in the global market, where it was facing stiff competition from Indian rice due to higher prices. The rebate will bridge the price gap between Pakistani and Indian rice, making it easier for Pakistani exporters to compete.

He praised Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan for their efforts to support the rice industry. He said the decision will not only boost rice exports but also benefit farmers and the country's economy.

Kareem Aziz Malik, Chairman Capital Office FPCCI and CEO Barkat Rice Mill, said the decision is a result of the efforts of Atif Ikram

Sheikh, who had been raising the issue of high prices of Pakistani rice in the global market. He thanked the prime minister and commerce minister for their support to the rice industry.

In a statement, Saqib Fayyaz Magoon said that the move runs contrary to the expectations of the country's trade and industry. "Inflation has gradually come down to 5.6 percent, leaving ample room for a reduction in the policy rate. The State Bank could have easily brought interest rates into single digits, but failing to do so is discouraging for the business community," he said.

Magoon explained that, according to global principles, interest rates are determined by adding a positive real rate of 2 to 4 percent to the prevailing inflation. "If inflation is at 5.6 percent, then the policy rate should ideally be between 7.6 and 9.6 percent. This is a level the State Bank could have adopted without difficulty," he noted.



Inauguration

LAHORE: Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, Coordinator to the Prime Minister for Commerce, cutting the ribbon to inaugurate the Mega Leather Show at the Lahore Expo Center, marking the opening of the major international exhibition showcasing Pakistan's leather industry and export potential.



Daraz Pakistan announces a dedicated support initiative for sellers affected by the Gul Plaza tragedy

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Daraz Pakistan, under its Daraz Cares arm, has announced a dedicated support initiative for sellers impacted by the recent fire at Gul Plaza in Karachi, aimed at helping affected businesses regain stability and continue serving customers across Pakistan.

A dedicated incubation and support track will also be introduced to provide hands-on guidance and continued assistance to impacted businesses as they stabilize over time. This support will remain in place over the next three months to help affected sellers recover and sustain their businesses through the Ramadan and Eid season. Daraz Cares is Daraz Pakistan's social impact arm, focused on mobilising the company's platform, resources, and partnerships to support communities in times of need.

Commenting on the initiative, Ehsan

Daraz Cares

Standing with

Gul Plaza,

Together We Rebuild!



Saya, Managing Director, Daraz Pakistan, said: "Gul Plaza has never been just a marketplace; it has been a place of livelihoods, relationships, and decades of hard work. Many of the sellers connected to it were among the earliest to bring their businesses onto Daraz and learn how to serve

customers far beyond Karachi. What has happened is heartbreaking. Our focus now is to stand with these entrepreneurs in a way that is practical and compassionate, and to use the reach of Daraz and our wider ecosystem to help them rebuild and move forward."

Pakistan Pavilion at Gulfood 2026 inaugurated in Dubai

DUBAI: The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) has marked its largest-ever participation at Gulfood 2026, the world's leading food and beverage trade exhibition, with the inauguration of the Pakistan Pavilion in Dubai.

The 31st edition of Gulfood brings together more than 1.5 million products showcased by 8,500 exhibitors from 195 countries, spanning over 12 food and beverage sectors. Pakistan's expanded presence at this premier global platform highlights the country's sustained efforts to enhance exports, diversify markets, and strengthen engagement with global food value chains.

This year, TDAP is facilitating the participation of an unprecedented 67 Pakistani companies, while 75 companies are participating independently across four specialized pavilions covering Rice, Pulses & Grains, World Food, Beverages, and Meat & Poultry sectors. Notably, 30 companies from the rice sector are participating in the global agri-food marketplace.

On the opening day of the exhibition, Athar Hussain Khokhar, Director General (Agro Division), TDAP, along with Hussain Muhammad, Consul General of Pakistan in Dubai, and the Trade Counsellor, visited the Pakistan Pavilion at Dubai Expo City (DEC) and Dubai World Trade Centre (DWTC).



Khushhali Microfinance Bank exhibits remarkable business solutions at SME Cluster Showcase Expo 2026

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Khushhali Microfinance Bank (KMBL) was among one of the few stalls at the SME Made in Pakistan Cluster Expo 2026 that stood out with its exhibit on small business solutions. Organized by the Small and Medium Enterprise Development Authority of Pakistan (SMEDA), the Made in Pakistan Cluster Showcase Expo 2026 brought together the

country's most appreciated platforms working in and with the SME sector. With a proven history and a vastly successful portfolio of SME clients, Khushhali Microfinance Bank garnered widespread recognition for its Khushhali Karobari Loans, a loan program with several categories catering to the bank's diverse clientele and its various business needs.

"At Khushhali Microfinance Bank, our foremost priority when

it comes to SMEs is stability and growth derived with simple tools and methods that help business owners scale their enterprises without risking their assets" said Saqib Hussain-Regional Business Head.

"Our Karobari Loans are a testament to our understanding and connection with our customers across a diverse demographic, delivering excellent results and secure growth options across various SME

industries", commented Sadaf Arshad Rana Senior Area Manager. A robust ally of the country's SME sector, Khushhali Microfinance Bank continues to provide niche products, services, and counsel to its rural, urban, and semi-urban customers, affirming its role as a leading microfinance institution dedicated towards the betterment of Pakistan's SMEs.

Pakistan to decide on T20 World Cup by Monday

PCB Chairman meets PM Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said on Monday that a final decision on Pakistan's participation in the ICC T20 World Cup 2026 would be taken either on Friday or next Monday.

Naqvi made the remarks after meeting Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad, where he briefed the premier on what he termed the "ICC matter."

According to a handout issued by

the Prime Minister's Office (PMO), Naqvi updated the prime minister on recent developments between the International Cricket Council (ICC) and the Bangladesh Cricket Board regarding the T20 World Cup.

Sources said the meeting included a detailed discussion on Pakistan's participation in the global tournament.

Naqvi also briefed the prime minister on what he described as the ICC's "dual standards" in handling issues related to the event.

The government has decided to

lodge a strong protest with the ICC over these concerns, sources added.

Naqvi said that all options were discussed and kept open during the meeting, reiterating that the final decision would be announced on Friday or Monday.

The prime minister directed that the issue be resolved "amicably," according to sources, and expressed confidence in Naqvi's handling of the matter.

Officials said the PCB would determine its next steps after further contact and consultations with the ICC.

Separately, BCCI Vice President



Rajeev Shukla was quoted as saying India had wanted Bangladesh to play in the World Cup.



Millat Tractors Junior National Tennis Championship 2026 gets underway

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Millat Tractors Junior National Tennis Championship has commenced at the Punjab Tennis Academy, Bagh-e-Jinnah, Lahore.

The opening ceremony was graced by Senior Manager Administration of Millat Tractors, Imran Ayub, who attended as the chief guest. The event drew a strong presence from the tennis fraternity, including Rashid Malik (Tangha-e-Imtiaz), Senior Executive Vice President of the Punjab Lawn Tennis Association (PLTA), tournament referee Faheem Siddiqui, seniors coach PLTA Mehbob Waheed Jan, and Syed Sajid Ali Bukhari, President of the Parents Tennis

Lovers Association, along with players, parents, and tennis enthusiasts.

Addressing the gathering, Rashid Malik extended his best wishes to the participants and urged young players to compete with zeal, discipline, and passion. He encouraged them to aim for excellence and represent Pakistan with pride at international forums. Malik also expressed his gratitude to Millat Tractors for their continued support and sponsorship for the development of tennis in Pakistan.

In the boys' U-18 first-round matches, Hamza Ali Rizwan delivered a commanding performance to defeat Hassan Alam 6-1, 6-1. Aliyan Ali registered a straight-sets victory

over Muteeb ur Rehman with a 6-4, 6-2 scoreline, while M Umar Ali outclassed Bilal Awais 6-0, 6-4. Muhammad Muaz cruised past Faizan Haider 6-0, 6-1, and Muhammad Ahmad Afzal overcame Lubaid Ahmad Khan 6-1, 6-4.

Ruhab Faisal dominated Abdullah Pirzada 6-1, 6-0. Moazzam Babar beat Romail Shahid 6-2, 6-2, and Atiq ur Rehman secured a comfortable 6-1, 6-0 win against Zayd Mansoor. In the most closely contested encounter of the round, Aalay Hussain staged an impressive comeback to defeat Rehaan Khan 3-6, 7-6, 6-1.

Meanwhile, the boys' U-14 first round witnessed several emphatic victories. Muhammad Junaid defeated

Daniyal Abdullah 4-1, 4-2, while Ohad-e-Mustafa produced a flawless display to beat Daniyal Afzal Malik 4-0, 4-0. Muhammad Muaz continued his fine form with a 4-1, 4-2 win over Ahmad Khuda Bakhsh.

Salaar Khan overcame Salman Pirzada 4-2, 4-2, and Ashter Alam Khan blanked Muhammad Turab Bhatti 4-0, 4-0. Mustafa Uzair Rana and Shahzain Faisal also recorded identical 4-0, 4-0 victories against M Husnain and M Mamnoon Bari respectively. Ryan Umer Khalil defeated M Ehsan Bari 4-1, 4-0, M Ibraheem Hussain Gill beat Moazzam Babar 4-1, 4-0, while Muhammad Faizal edged past M Daniyal 4-2, 5-3.

Uzbekistan and Pakistan on the path toward a new architecture of strategic partnership

Abduaziz Khidirov

In February 2026, a state visit by the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan will take place, aiming to become a defining stage in the development of the strategic partnership between the two countries.

The upcoming high-level talks will be held against the backdrop of unprecedented intensification of bilateral political dialogue and are aimed at the practical implementation of a key economic objective: increasing the volume of mutual trade to \$2 billion in the coming years. The central element of the agenda will be the structural transformation of economic cooperation: the parties intend to move from a model of simple trade in goods to the formation of sustainable industrial cooperation chains, the establishment of joint high-tech production facilities, and the systematic removal of tariff barriers within the framework of an expanded Preferential Trade Agreement.

Growth dynamics and strategic priorities

An analysis of current macroeconomic indicators indicates a steady, positive trend in bilateral cooperation. By the end of 2024, trade turnover between Uzbekistan and Pakistan amounted to \$404 million. The growth trend not only continued but also strengthened in 2025: from January to November, the volume of mutual trade reached \$434.4 million, 16.9 percent higher than in the same period of the previous year. Compared with the figures for January-November 2023 (\$356.0 million), the increase amounted to 22.0 percent, confirming the resilience of trade and economic ties to external volatility.

Despite steady progress, the parties acknowledge that the current figures do not reflect the true economic and resource potential of the two countries. During high-level negotiations, the leaders defined clear target benchmarks (KPIs) for the governments' economic objectives. The immediate tactical objective is to increase mutual trade

to \$1 billion in the short term. As a strategic medium-term goal, a target of \$2 billion has been approved. To achieve such multiple growth, based on the positions of the diplomatic agencies and relevant ministries, a qualitative revision of the trade balance structure is required. The simple exchange of raw materials has exhausted its growth potential – the implementation of the ambitious agenda calls for a transition to deep cooperation and the systematic removal of tariff barriers that restrict market access.

Liberalization instruments and digital integration

To implement ambitious plans to increase trade turnover significantly, the governments of Uzbekistan and Pakistan are focusing on creating a favorable legal and technical trade regime. The foundation for expanding volumes is the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA), signed in March 2022. At present, the relevant agencies of both countries are actively working to revise the terms of the agreement with a view to scaling it up. The parties intend to substantially expand the range of goods covered by the preferential customs regime, with plans to increase the list from 17 to 100. It is expected that the formalization of agreements on the expanded PTA format will take place in the near future, providing a direct incentive for exporters.

In parallel with tariff liberalization, mechanisms for the digital administration of cargo flows are being introduced. A key infrastructural solution will be the launch of an Electronic Data Interchange (EDI) system between the customs services of Uzbekistan and Pakistan. The technical teams on both sides are already working to operationalize this system, which will ensure the real-time exchange of cargo information. The digitalization of documentation aims to eliminate the need for physical verification, minimize bureaucratic delays at borders, and enhance the predictability of delivery times.

A significant element of the agenda is the systematic removal of non-tariff barriers, which often constrain trade more than duties. Preparations for this step have been carried out systematically. In April 2025, a delegation from the Central Bank of Uzbekistan, together with representatives of

the country's leading commercial banks, visited Karachi to hold negotiations with the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) and key financial institutions, including HBL, Meezan Bank, and Bank Al-Habib. The parties thoroughly addressed the issues of opening correspondent accounts and harmonizing compliance control procedures. The integration of banking systems will enable small and medium-sized businesses to minimize transaction costs and currency risks, which is a necessary condition for achieving the declared trade volumes.

Sectoral drivers: a course toward deep processing

The economic agenda of the visit goes beyond trade in raw materials, focusing on industrial cooperation and value chain creation. The textile industry serves as the flagship of this process. Uzbekistan, which is implementing a strategy to deepen cotton fiber processing, has set an ambitious goal of attracting \$2 billion in foreign investment into

Pakistani capital are already operating in Uzbekistan.

The second strategic area is pharmaceuticals. Given that the annual volume of pharmaceutical imports into Uzbekistan amounts to approximately \$3 billion, the localization of production is becoming a priority of state policy. Pakistani investors are showing strong interest in establishing production facilities in specialized zones, such as the innovative scientific and industrial pharmaceutical cluster Tashkent Pharma Park.

Successful cases are already being implemented: Novugen Pharma has launched production in the country, and during recent business forums, memorandums of cooperation were signed with Bio Labs and Caraway Pharmaceuticals. Investors are provided with tax incentives and exemptions from customs duties on the import of equipment and raw materials, and "1121 Sella" rice for subsequent export to Uzbekistan and the CIS countries. Details of chilled meat supplies in compliance with sanitary standards are also being worked out in cooperation with Fauji Meat Ltd.

19.5 percent of Uzbekistan's total fruit and vegetable exports. The

Uzbek side intends to increase the supply of fresh produce, legumes, and processed food products, leveraging the region's transit potential.

Reciprocal trade flows are being formed through the import of in-demand food items, including tropical fruits. In January 2026, in Islamabad, a delegation of the Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan held a series of negotiations with leaders of Pakistan's private sector. In particular, logistical routes and delivery volumes of Pakistani mangoes and mandarins to the Uzbek market were discussed in detail with OFood's leadership.

At the same time, negotiations are underway with Sindhu United Links Exports (Pvt.) Ltd. on the processing and packaging of potatoes and "1121 Sella" rice for subsequent export to Uzbekistan and the CIS countries. Details of chilled meat supplies in compliance with sanitary standards are also being worked out in cooperation with Fauji Meat Ltd.

Cooperation extends beyond trade operations, encompassing agricultural science and innovation. During the Uzbekistan delegation's visit to Islamabad, an agreement was reached to develop and sign a Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Agriculture of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC).

The document is intended to systematize joint work in seed production, breeding, and the introduction of advanced agricultural technologies.

Scientific and technical partnership is already being discussed at the level of specific projects. With the Pakistani company Watercon, aspects of cooperation are being explored, including the cultivation of seed potatoes using aeroponic and in-vitro methods, the introduction of frost-resistant olive varieties, and the creation of oil-processing infrastructure. A separate area will be the exchange of experience in livestock farming; the parties intend to cooperate in adapting high-yield goat breeds (with milk production of up to

10 liters per day) to the climatic conditions of Uzbekistan.

From intentions to systemic integration

The upcoming state visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Pakistan marks the completion of the stage of building political trust and the transition to a phase of rigorous economic pragmatism. An analysis of the current agenda shows that the economic diplomacy of Tashkent and Islamabad is shifting its focus from declarative statements to the creation of fundamental infrastructure, both physical and financial.

The strategic backbone of this process is the Trans-Afghan railway project. Its implementation, which has moved to the feasibility study stage, is viewed by the parties not merely as a transport route but as an instrument for the geo-economic transformation of the region. The creation of direct railway access to the ports of Karachi and Gwadar will enable Uzbekistan to overcome its landlocked status, reducing transport costs and delivery times severalfold. For Pakistan, this corridor opens

access to the markets of Central Asia and the CIS, turning the country into a key transit hub of Eurasia. The practical implementation of a package of agreements – from expanding the Preferential Trade Agreement (PTA) to launching joint industrial projects in the textile and pharmaceutical sectors – will lay the foundation for institutionalizing relations. A key political outcome of this process will be the launch of the Supreme Council of Strategic Partnership, with its first meeting scheduled for 2026. This new engagement format, formalized in high-level protocols, will enable bilateral dialogue to be placed on a footing of systematic coordination, ensuring the monitoring of agreement implementation and a prompt response to changes in the global environment.

Thus, the cooperation between Uzbekistan and Pakistan is being transformed into a sustainable model of regional partnership, where economic benefits are reinforced by developed infrastructure and the political will of the leaders of both countries.



opening of a branch of the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) in Uzbekistan. According to Alisher Duschanov, Trade and Economic Counsellor at the Embassy of Uzbekistan, the branch is scheduled to become fully operational in 2026. The

sector to modernize capacities and expand export potential.

Pakistani companies, with their significant experience in garment manufacturing and the global marketing of textile products, are viewed as strategic partners. During meetings with representatives of the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), Uzbekistan's Ambassador Alisher Tukhtayev emphasized that combining Uzbekistan's low-cost energy resources and raw materials with Pakistan's technologies would enable the production of competitive goods for third-country markets. At present, 130 joint ventures with

New era

ISLAMABAD: DPM/ Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and the Myanmar Foreign Minister Than Swe shaking hands at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on Monday.



Photo: Online

Pakistan, Myanmar vow to strengthen ties through sustained engagement

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Myanmar on Monday vowed to strengthen bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest through sustained and structured engagement in multi-sectoral areas for the mutual benefit of the two nations.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar and the Myanmar Foreign Minister Than Swe, in their opening remarks, before their

meeting at the foreign ministry here, reaffirmed their commitment to promote multi-sectoral cooperation.

The Union Minister for Foreign Affairs of Myanmar, who arrived here on Saturday for a four-day official visit, was warmly welcomed by Deputy Prime Minister Dar on his arrival at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

In his remarks, Ishaq Dar said that Pakistan attached great importance to its relations with Myanmar and

deeply valued their long-standing friendship and cooperation.

He said that there had been a gap in high-level visits as the last visit from Myanmar was in 2015, and from Pakistan since President Asif Ali Zardari visited Myanmar in 2012.

Dar said that the bilateral ties were rooted in history and mutual respect, as reflected in the early diplomatic exchanges following Pakistan's independence.

"Pakistan remains

committed to further strengthening our bilateral cooperation in areas of mutual interest through sustained, structured engagement and practical, result-oriented initiatives."

Myanmar's Foreign Minister Than Swe, appreciating the

Pakistani leadership for the warm hospitality, said that just after their independence, both countries established very valuable ties because of the two great leaders—Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah and Myanmar's founder General

Aung San—who had worked for independence from the British.

Since that time, all successive governments have followed and maintained our good, friendly relationship, he added.

Foreign Minister Than Swe said that 2026 marked the 77th anniversary of diplomatic relations and expressed the hope that both countries would find a way to strengthen ties and benefit from the multi-sectoral cooperation.

Naqvi inaugurates advanced real-time passport monitoring system 'Shukra'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the Directorate General of Immigration and Passports on Monday, where he formally inaugurated Shukra, a state-of-the-art monitoring system designed to track passport applications, printing, and departmental performance in real time.

As part of the upgrade, a 24/7 Monitoring Room and a Call Centre have been made operational at the DG Immigration and Passports. On the minister's directives, the system for issuing Emergency Travel Documents has also been fully digitized.

Officials briefed Minister Naqvi in detail on the new



Secure Hybrid Intelligence for Knowledge-Based Response Analytics (Shukra) system.

Mohsin Naqvi praised

the performance of the DG Immigration and Passports and his team for introducing a modern, technology-driven

monitoring network. He said Pakistan's passport system has now been aligned with those of the world's leading coun-

tries. "With this new system, real-time monitoring of passport applications and deliveries—both within Pakistan and abroad—will now be possible," the minister said. "Every stage, from application submission to final delivery, will be closely supervised."

Naqvi added that the government's aim is to provide citizens with fast, safe, and globally standardized services. He noted that the upgraded monitoring framework would further enhance the department's efficiency.

The Director General of FIA, DG Immigration and Passports, Chief Commissioner Islamabad, IG Islamabad Police, and other senior officials were also present.

Rain, snowfall expected in upper parts: PMD

Punjab CM approves Rs47bn Ramadan relief package

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast cloudy weather with intermittent rain, wind, and thunderstorms, along with snowfall over hilly areas, across several parts of the country on Tuesday.

According to the PMD, rain-wind/thunderstorms with snowfall over hills is expected in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, Islamabad, northeast Punjab, and northeast Balochistan.

Heavy rain accompanied by moderate to heavy snowfall is likely at isolated places in Kashmir and upper Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Cold and dry weather is expected to prevail in most other parts of the country.

LAHORE:

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday approved a Rs47 billion "Ramadan Guardian" package to provide financial relief to 4.2 million deserving families across the province.

Under the scheme, each eligible family will receive Rs10,000 in cash ahead of Ramadan to meet their basic needs.

The announcement came

during a high-level meeting chaired by the CM to review preparations for Ramadan and public welfare measures.

CM Maryam instructed

authorities to ensure transparent and timely disbursement, emphasising that no needy family should feel neglected during the holy month.

Separately, the chief minister

took strict notice of a tiger attack on a child in Punjab, and the suspects who attempted ordering the child to be shifted to Ganga Ram Hospital for a bionic arm transplant.

Following the incident, the government has banned the legal possession of pet and wild cats across Punjab, and the suspects who attempted

to hide the incident have been arrested. In another development, the CM congratulated the newly elected officials of the Lahore Press Club and assured full government support for journalists.

Officials said the Ramadan Guardian package is being hailed as a major social protection initiative aimed at easing the impact of rising inflation and providing direct relief to the most vulnerable citizens of Punjab during Ramadan 2026.



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President Zardari approves seven key bills, laws take effect immediately



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Monday approved seven major bills passed by Parliament, completing the legislative process and bringing the laws into force with immediate effect.

With the president's assent, all seven bills have formally become law. The legislation includes measures approved by both houses of Parliament, including three bills passed in a joint sitting.

According to a Presidency news release, the approved laws are the National Tariff Commission

(Amendment) Bill, 2026; the Export Development Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2026; the Transfer of Railways (Amendment) Bill, 2026; the Domestic Violence (Prevention and Protection) Bill, 2026; the Daanish Schools Authority Bill, 2026; the Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2026; and the National Commission for Human Rights (Amendment) Bill, 2026.

The legislation spans key sectors including trade and exports, taxation, railways, social protection, education and human rights, and will be implemented with immediate effect following presidential assent.

SC issues landmark ruling on delayed promotions of govt employees



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Supreme Court of Pakistan has issued a major and precedent-setting ruling on delays in the promotion of government employees, declaring that an eligible officer has the right to promotion from the date of the first Departmental Promotion Committee (DPC) meeting, and cannot be penalized for administrative negligence or delay.

Setting aside the decision of the Punjab Service Tribunal, the Supreme Court ruled that the promotion of government employee Fakhar Majeed will be effective from January 21, 2012. The tribunal had earlier

dismissed his appeal, holding that an employee was not entitled to promotion from the date a vacancy arose.

In its ruling, the apex court emphasized that timely consideration for promotion through the DPC is a fundamental right of eligible public servants. It stated that employees cannot be made to suffer due to administrative incompetence, carelessness, or institutional delays.

The seven-page written judgment was authored by Justice Ayesha Malik. The case was heard by a three-member bench comprising Justice Ayesha Malik, Justice Muhammad Hashim Kakar, and Justice Iftiqar Ibrahim.

Islamabad lawyers go on strike, hold protests against Imaan, Hadi's sentencing

News Desk

Lawyers staged a strike and protest demonstrations at the Islamabad High Court and Islamabad District and Sessions Courts on Monday against the inappropriate conduct of police officials during the arrest and court verdict against rights lawyer Imaan Mazari and her husband, Hadi Ali Chattha.

According to the details, the protest initially took place at the main gate of the Islamabad High Court Bar Association, where the association president, Wajid Gilani, senior lawyer Dr Babar Awan, and other bar office-bearers participated.

The demonstrators condemned what they described as police high-handedness and disrespectful behaviour toward members of the legal fraternity.

Similarly, lawyers belonging to the District Bar Association Islamabad also organised a rally from

the DC Office to the SSP Office and subsequently marched from the district courts to the DIG Office.

The rally was led by District Bar President Naeem Gujar and High Court Bar President Wajid Gilani, along with other bar officials. Members of the Islamabad Bar Council, including Aleem Abbasi, also joined the protest.

The lawyers staged a sit-in outside the DIG Office, where they blocked one side of the road and raised slogans against the police.

Protesters chanted slogans such as "Police brutality unacceptable" and "State oppression unacceptable," accusing law enforcement agencies of targeting lawyers.

Islamabad High Court Bar Association Secretary Manzoor Jajja said that lawyers across Islamabad observed a complete strike and refrained from appearing before courts in protest.