



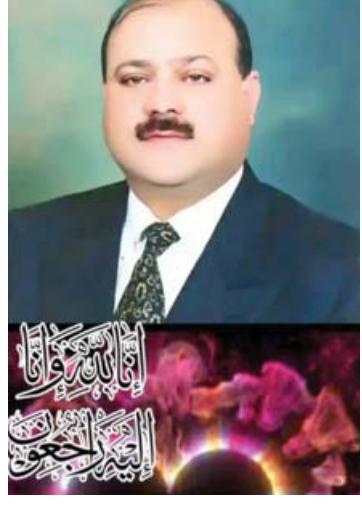
# AJK Prime Minister mourns death of state President, announces three days of official mourning

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the passing of President of the State, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. Upon receiving the news of the President's demise, the Prime Minister rushed to Shifa International Hospital and offered his condolences to the President's son and Minister of the Government, Yasir Sultan.

The Prime Minister arranged for the mortal remains of the President to be sent to Mirpur with full state protocol.

He also announced three days of official mourning in Azad Jammu



and Kashmir on the demise of the President, during which the state flag will remain at half-mast. The Services and General Administration Department has issued an official notification in this regard.

In his condolence message, the Prime Minister said that the death of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry is an irreparable loss for Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Kashmiri people.

He described the late President as a visionary politician, a constitutional and legal expert, and a committed and effective advocate of the Kashmiri cause, who dedicated his entire life to safeguarding state interests and the rights of the Kashmiri people.

The Prime Minister said that

Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry rendered invaluable services in highlighting the Kashmir issue at the international level, and his struggle will always be remembered. Expressing heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the bereaved family, he said that the Government of Azad Kashmir stands shoulder to shoulder with the grieving family in this hour of sorrow.

He prayed that Allah Almighty grant the departed soul a place in His eternal mercy, forgive him, and bestow patience and strength upon the bereaved family to bear this great loss.

Meanwhile, the Pakistan Peoples Party Azad Kashmir has also announced a period of mourning.

## Tent pegging competition

ISLAMABAD: Players are trying to compete each other during Tent pegging competition during the Two-Day Pakistan Tourism Festival, at F-9 Park in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Rawalpindi honors retiring AJK Information Director Raja Amjad Hussain Minhas

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: A dignified ceremony was organized by the Rawalpindi Liaison Office in honor of the retirement of Raja Amjad Hussain Minhas, Director of the Information Department, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

The ceremony was attended by President AKNS Sardar Zahid Tabassum, Director Liberation Cell Raja Khan Afzal Khan, Chief Editor Jammu & Kashmir Aamir Mehboob, President KJF Sardar Irfan, Chief Editor Freedom Post Shahzad Rathore, Chief Editor Country News Sardar Hamid, Chief Editor Jannat Nazir Ejaz Khan, Chief Editor Naseer Syed Dilawar Bukhari, Chief



Editor Naseer Kiani, Group Editor Jannat & Kashmir Raja Kafeel, former President Kashmir Journalists Forum

Khawar Nawaz Raja, General Secretary Rawalpindi-Islamabad Union of Journalists Raja Bashir Usmani, Secretary

General KJF Maqsood Sofi, Editor Kashmir Express Ms. Shameem Ashraf, Editor Sada-e-Chinar Ejaz Abbasi, Editor Kashmir Link Sardar Javed Iqbal, former Secretary General KJF Sardar Aqeel Anjum, Assistant Director Shaukat Ali Malik, Web Editor Syed Ali Hasnain Naqvi, In-charge Social Media Liberation Cell Sardar Najeeb-ul-Ghafoor, Assistant Director Information Khawaja Imran-ul-Haq, Information Officer Muhammad Sohail Khan, Assistant Director Information Raja Abdul Basit Khan, Chief Photographer Sajid Chaudhry, Head Clerk Khawaja Rauf Ahmed, Junior Clerk Syed Suleman Shah, Zohaib Kiani, Naseer Ahmed, Khawaja Kamran, Abrar Ahmed, and others.

## Information Minister lays foundation stone for Khoiratta Bar President's Office

Bureau Report

KHOIRATTA: The Minister for Information, Religious Affairs and Auqaf, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Muhammad Rafiq Nair, laid the foundation stone of the office of the President Tehsil Bar Khoiratta at the Khoiratta Kachheri.

A simple yet dignified ceremony was held on the occasion, which was attended by President Tehsil Bar Khoiratta Zahoor-ul-Haq Advocate, all office-bearers of the Tehsil Bar, a large number of senior and junior lawyers, and other distinguished personalities.

While addressing the ceremony, the Information Minister said that the lawyers' community is playing a key role in ensuring the supremacy of law, provision of justice, and strengthening



of democratic values in society.

President Tehsil Bar Khoiratta Zahoor-ul-Haq Advocate, in his address, thanked the Information Minister and said that the laying of the foundation stone of the Bar President's office is a historic step for the

lawyers' community of Khoiratta.

Other speakers also addressed the ceremony, appreciated the steps taken by the Azad Kashmir government to resolve the issues of the lawyers' community and provide basic facilities, and expressed hope that the

project would be completed within the stipulated time.

At the end, the Information Minister unveiled the foundation stone plaque and expressed his best wishes for the early completion of the project.

## Muslim Conference Suspends Activities to Honor Deceased AJK President Sultan Mahmood

Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan has expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of President of Azad Kashmir, Government of Jammu and Kashmir State Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry and paid rich tribute to his services for the Kashmir freedom movement. The President of the Muslim Conference said that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's services for the construction and development of Azad Kashmir and the Kashmir issue are unforgettable. The President of the Muslim Conference said that in recognition of the services of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference suspends its political activities for three days and the government of Azad Kashmir is advised to keep the flag of Azad Kashmir at half mast for three days so that the world is given a message about how valuable services Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry had for the Kashmir freedom movement. May Allah Almighty forgive the deceased completely. May the bereaved and their loved ones be granted patience.

## Death Anniversary of Ch Mukhtar Ahmad Nusrat

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: On the death anniversary of Chaudhry Mukhtar Ahmad Nusrat, father of Former Chairman Market Committee Kamalia Chaudhry Faisal Qazafi, Imran Ahmad Chaudhry, Former Chairman Rizwan Ahmad Chaudhry, Patron-in-Chief Kamalia Tajer Ittehad Chaudhry Kamran Ahmad Nusrat and Furqan Ahmad Chaudhry, a Quran Khawani was organized at Chaudhry House kamalia. Special prayers

were offered for the eternal peace and elevated ranks of the departed soul. On this occasion, President Kamalia Tajer Ittehad Chaudhry Tariq Hassan Rehmani, General Secretary Rai Asad Ali Khan, Deputy Secretary Ahsan Shafiq, Information Secretary Aasim Rehmat, Additional Secretary Malik Ajmal, Chaudhry Nasir (Owner Star Mobile), President Power Looms Association Khan Abbas, Aftab Hussain Sathu, Rana Kamran, Daniyal Bhatti along with other notable figures of the area were also present and expressed their condolences and solidarity with the bereaved family.

## Marathon to be held in Toba Tek Singh on 8th February: DSO Chaudhry Jamil

Zafar Chishti



TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, "Khelta Punjab," final preparations are being made for the marathon to be held in Toba Tek Singh. District Sports Officer (DSO) Chaudhary Muhammad Jamil talking to our correspondent, said that on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela, a detailed review of administrative arrangements has been conducted, including the marathon route, security measures, medical facilities, traffic plan and other related matters.

He added that the Deputy Commissioner has instructed all concerned departments to complete necessary arrangements in a timely manner to ensure that the marathon is conducted in a safe, organized and transparent manner.

District Sports Officer Chaudhary Muhammad Jamil further stated that the Toba Tek Singh Marathon will be held on 8th February under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela. The event is being organized jointly by the District Council and the Sports Department. The marathon will provide equal opportunities for children, youth, adults and senior citizens to participate in healthy activities. A special 2.5-kilometer race has been arranged for children aged 13 years and below, while 5-kilometer and 10-kilometer races have been scheduled for youth and adults.

The 5-kilometer and 10-kilometer races have been divided into four age categories, under 18 years, 19 to 30 years, 31 to 40 years and above 40 years. Participants from all walks of life will be eligible to take part in the marathon.

Outstanding performers will be awarded prizes, medals and trophies. However, each participant will be allowed to compete in only one category. Departmental athletes will not be allowed to participate, and the referee's decision during the competitions will be considered final.

Online registration for the Toba Tek Singh Marathon has already started and will remain open until February 6.

## KP Governor condoles death of AJK President Sultan Chaudhry

PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Saturday expressed deep grief and sorrow over the demise of President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

In his condolence message, the Governor said that the passing of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry is an irreparable loss for Azad Kashmir and Pakistan. He described the late leader as a seasoned politician, senior jurist, and a strong voice for the Kashmiri cause whose services will always be remembered.

Faisal Karim Kundi said that the late Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry devoted his entire political life to public service, the promotion of democratic values, and the struggle for the rights of the Kashmiri people.

The Governor prayed that Allah Almighty grant the departed soul a high place in Jannah and give strength and patience to the bereaved family to bear this great loss. He also extended heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the grieving family.

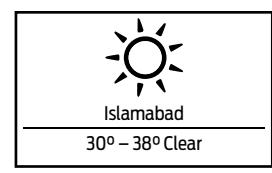
## Entry into CSS 2026 exam prohibited on expired identity documents

LAHORE: The Federal Public Service Commission (FPSC) has issued additional instructions for the registered candidates for the CSS 2026 written exams starting from February 4.

According to the FPSC local chapter said, the candidates have been instructed to renew their national identity cards or passports before their expiry date, as entry into the examination hall will not be allowed on expired identity documents.

The commission has further said that all candidates should be present at their designated seats at least 50 minutes before the commencement of the examination. Carrying any additional material into the examination hall will not be allowed.

The FPSC has urged candidates to ensure full implementation of the previously issued instructions as well as the new additional instructions.

**SERVICES****Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:00 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:00 pm
Maghrib	5:38 pm

**Emergency**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 945112
& Rescue Services	945112
Motorway Police	9266044
Motorway Police	9270601-20

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270971-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Policlinic	9218300-99
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	921234-43
CDA	920801-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawalpindi Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80

**11 newly confirmed LHC judges take oath**

LAHORE: Eleven newly-confirmed judges of the Lahore High Court (LHC) took the oath of their offices on Saturday.

LHC Chief Justice Aalia Neelum administered the oath to the newly-confirmed judges in a simple but impressive ceremony held at the LHC main lawn.

The event was attended by LHC judges, Federal Minister for Law Azam Naeem, provincial law officers, members of the Pakistan Bar Council and Punjab Bar Council, office-bearers of the Lahore High Court Bar Association and Lahore Bar Association, judicial officers, lawyers, LHC officers and family members of the newly-confirmed judges.

The judges who took oath as confirmed judges include Justice Hassan Nawaz Makhdum, Justice Malik Waqar Haider Awan, Justice Sardar Akbar Ali, Justice Syed Ahsan Raza Kazmi, Justice Malik Javid Iqbal Wains, Justice Muhammad Jawad Zafar, Justice Khalid Ishaq, Justice Malik Muhammad Awas Khalid, Justice Chaudhry Sultan Mahmood, Justice Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, and Justice Abher Gul Khan.

Chief Justice Aalia Neelum congratulated the judges on their confirmation and wished them success in the discharge of their judicial responsibilities.

**CM Maryam's Directions**

# Administration takes emergency measures for cleanliness, sewerage and beautification in Sargodha

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: As directed by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif, emergency measures have been taken by the authorities concerned to ensure cleanliness, sewerage, and beautification in Sargodha. Advisor to the Chief Minister Shaheen Mirza arrived in Sargodha to attend an emergency meeting in this regard, chaired by Commissioner Sargodha, in which a 03-day strict deadline was set for resolving the cleanliness and sewerage issues of the area. They directed WASA to immediately remove standing water throughout the city, besides deploying additional machinery in the field under "Suthra Punjab." They were also directed to ensure complete cleaning and washing of roads, markets, and streets, besides immediately completing Zebra Crossings and traffic safety measures in front of schools. They also directed them to ensure permanent solutions to ponds and standing water



in the suburban rural areas, along with immediate improvement of parks, green belts, and medians. A decision was also taken in the meeting to restore street lights and take indiscriminate action against the encroachments, besides issuing a warning of strict action against the delinquent or non-complying officers.

They set a target of making Sargodha a model city in terms of cleanliness and beautification by Eid, and directed the authorities concerned to present after 03 Days a progress report in this regard to the Chief Minister Punjab.

The meeting was attended by Commissioner Sargodha Division



Hafiz Shaukat Ali, Deputy Commissioner Sargodha Hussain Ahmad Raza Choudhry, Additional Commissioner, Director Development, Managing Director WASA, CEO Solid Waste Management Company, and relevant officers of Municipal Corporation, District Council, Parks and Horticulture Authority, Highways, and Local Government.

## Pakistan Tourism Festival

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister Sardar Yasir Ilyas and Sardar Rashid Ilyas presenting souvenirs to the Turkish Ambassador on the occasion of the Pakistan Tourism Festival.



Photo: Sultan Bashir

## Shaan Shahid Returns Punjabi action Film "BULLAH"

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Shake Films has officially unveiled the motion poster of the big-ticket Pakistani Punjabi action film BULLAH, igniting excitement amongst fans and industry insiders alike.

The film stars powerhouse performer Shaan Shahid alongside Mona Liza, Naeema Butt, Adnan Butt, Ali Josh, Maham Mirza, and Asif Khan, and marks the highly anticipated reunion of iconic duo Shaan Shahid and Saleem Sheikh on the big screen after nearly 30 years—a moment long awaited by cinema lovers. The movie is being distributed by HKC Entertainment.

The motion poster offers a striking first glimpse into



the epic thriller BULLAH's intense tone and visual scale, setting the stage for the official teaser launch event attended

by the cast and crew, along with the press and media fraternity on 30th January 2026 at CineStar, Xinhua Mall, Lahore. The film is scheduled for a grand nationwide release on Eid-ul-Fitr 2026.

## Sui Gas Multan Region on high Alert After Lahore incident

**Asim Tanveer**

MULTAN: Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited (SNGPL) Multan Region General Manager Ahmed Jawad Khan Khakwani has called an emergency meeting of all section in-charges in view of the recent unfortunate incident in Lahore. The meeting directed to ensure implementation of safety measures (SOPs) during field work. The General Manager made it clear that no negligence will be tolerated in the matter of public safety. He directed that the presence of field staff on site will be mandatory during the repair and excavation of the Sui Gas Pipeline and no compromise will be made on safety regulations until the work is completed. He further emphasized that pits should not be left open in an unsafe manner after excavation. All field staff and labor were directed to strictly follow safety measures so that any untoward incident can be avoided.

## PSCA's "Mera Pyara" Team Achieves Another Distinctive Success

**City Desk**

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority's "Mera Pyara" Reunification Team of the has achieved another significant success by reuniting a girl, Samra, who was found abandoned at Iqbal Park, Lahore, 9 years ago, with her family. According to the spokesperson of Punjab Safe City, the girl Samra was found abandoned in 2017. She was speech-impaired; however, she was able to write her name. The Safe City "Mera Pyara" team made continuous and untiring efforts over a long period to trace her family, which included multiple interviews, use of sign language, and assistance from various available resources.

The spokesperson further stated that, in order to help identify her home and family, the girl was taken to several areas including Iqbal Town Park, Karim Block, and Chowk Yateem Khana. However, despite extensive efforts, she was unable to recognize her home or family members. Later, after watching a video shared on social media, the girl's brother contacted the Safe City "Mera Pyara" team. During the verification process, it was revealed that the girl's parents had passed away during the period of her disappearance. After completing all legal and biometric verification procedures, the Safe City Reunification Team formally handed over the girl to her brother.

## PTC Hiring Appointment Orders Distributed Among Female Candidates in Dera and Paharpur Subdivisions

**Syed Tauqeer Zaidi**

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A dignified ceremony was held at Government Girls Primary School, Karamat Abad Shorkot Circle, for the distribution of appointment orders among successful candidates selected under the Primary Teacher Certificate (PTC) hiring program for the female subdivisions of Dera and Paharpur.

Mrs. Ali Amin Khan Gandapur attended the event as the chief guest and personally distributed appointment letters to candidates who qualified on merit.

During the ceremony, 41 candidates from Subdivision Female Dera and 28 candidates from Subdivision Female Paharpur received their appointment orders.

District Education Officer (Female) Dera, Syeda Anjum, SDEO Female Dera Sonia Nawaz, SDEO Female Paharpur Samina Shehnaz, along with Assistant Sub-Divisional Education Officers, were also present on the occasion.

The appointment process was completed through the dedicated efforts of DEO Syeda Anjum, SDEO Sonia Nawaz, and SDEO Samina Shehnaz, whose services were widely appreciated. The participants paid tribute to their hard work and commitment to ensuring a transparent recruitment process.

Addressing the gathering, Mrs. Gandapur said that the purpose of the PTC hiring initiative is to strengthen the education system by inducting competent and qualified teachers into schools. She emphasized that merit-based recruitment is a hallmark of transparency and helps build trust among the youth.

## 'Little Minds, Big Discoveries' Open Day Showcases Student Talent at The City School Attock Campus

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: The City School Attock Campus held its much-anticipated Open Day titled "Little Minds, Big Discoveries," providing a vibrant platform for students to demonstrate creativity, confidence, and practical learning through a wide range of academic and co-curricular projects.

The campus was transformed into an interactive learning environment where students presented hands-on projects across science, technology, engineering, and humanities. Through engaging

models and live explanations, students explored real-life concepts including the human digestive and respiratory systems, emphasising the importance of health, nutrition, and everyday science. A variety of themed learning zones, including Fruitland Landia, Magic Garden, Space Exploration, Marine Life, Safari Jungle, Winterland, Desert Life, and the Progression of the Wheel, captured the attention of visitors. Students confidently explained concepts while dressed in creative costumes, reflecting both subject knowledge and presentation skills. The Robo Learning

Hub and Explorer Club showcased robotics, scientific inventions, and innovative ideas, while literary characters were brought to life through storytelling and theatrical performances.

Speaking on the occasion, Headmistress Ms Sahar Qasim stated that the Open Day aimed to provide students with opportunities to apply classroom learning to practical problem-solving, fostering critical thinking, creativity, collaboration, and communication skills. She added that the event also served to actively involve parents in the educational process and strengthen the home-school partnership.

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 Bureau Chief Karachi: Khurram Jaffrani (jaffrani@adplus.pk)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: Syed Afraz Ali Nazish (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad. spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
 Phone: +92 51 2227123, WhatsApp +92 346 5008408  
 Karachi Office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS, Karachi Phone: 021-33399390 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com  
 Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town. spokesmanlahore@gmail.com  
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## Pakistani Pine Nuts Shine at Nanjing Spring Festival Food Fair

**A**s China's Lunar Year of the Horse approaches, the 25th Nanjing (National) Spring Festival Food and Commodity Fair has commenced its 18-day run, opening its doors on January 27 to throngs of visitors. The annual fair, a landmark event in the lead-up to China's most important festival, has drawn over 600 domestic and international companies presenting a dazzling assortment of goods.

The offerings range from traditional Chinese specialties – including pastries, candies, nuts, seafood and fresh produce – to global delicacies such as Indonesian coffee, Middle Eastern dates and a special highlight: pine nuts from Pakistan. Amid the vibrant festive ambiance accentuated by Spring Festival couplets, horse-themed decorations and intricate cultural crafts, stalls featuring Pakistani pine nuts consistently attracted keen interest. Exhibitors from Pakistan highlighted the unique qualities of their products while reflecting on their continued positive engagement with the fair.

"Participating in this exhibition has become a rewarding tradition for us over several years," shared one pine nut trader. "The bustling crowds and genuine Spring Festival spirit create an ideal platform. As nut-based snacks are essential for Chinese New Year celebrations, we are particularly encouraged by the growing appreciation for pine nuts from western Pakistan. Customers frequently commend their rich aroma, large kernels, and ease of shelling."

These sought-after pine nuts are harvested primarily from Chilgoza pine forests in western and northern Pakistan and are celebrated for their distinctive flavor, high nutritional value and labor-intensive production process. Often called "Chilgoza" nuts, they are carefully hand-picked from high-altitude pine cones, then sun-dried and processed with meticulous attention. More than just a local delicacy, the nuts represent a major agricultural export for Pakistan and embody the country's rich natural bounty, CEN reported.

The fair also resonated with international visitors, including Saba Malik, a Pakistani PhD student based in Nanjing. Visiting the exhibition, she expressed her pride at seeing her country's produce warmly received. "The diversity at the fair is remarkable, and it is truly heartening to witness Pakistani pine nuts enjoying such popularity," she noted. Malik further pointed to wider opportunities for trade collaboration, adding, "Many products displayed here, such as ribbonfish and honey, are also abundant in Pakistan. I see promising potential for mutual market growth and deeper bilateral cooperation from the fair."

Running until Feb 13, the Nanjing Spring Festival Fair continues to serve as a dynamic bridge connecting cherished Chinese holiday traditions with high-quality products from across the globe. In this festive marketplace, Pakistani pine nuts have firmly established themselves as a seasonal favorite, symbolizing both shared culinary enjoyment and the strengthening economic and cultural ties between China and Pakistan.

*The writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at sirasif786@gmail.com*

# The Debt Trap of Wealthy Economies and the Rising Threat of Global Economic Instability

**T**he global economy is currently standing at a highly precarious juncture, where states long regarded as prosperous are increasingly buckling under the weight of the very financial burdens they themselves have created. It is a sobering reality that countries such as the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Italy, and Japan once seen for decades as symbols of fiscal discipline, industrial strength, and sound policymaking are now buried beneath mountains of public debt. This debt not only threatens their own domestic economic security but has also become a serious warning signal for the entire global economic architecture. International observers, including The New York Times, largely agree that this record-level debt is no longer merely a matter of statistics; it now challenges the very foundations of global growth, investment trends, and financial stability.

Over the past two decades, developed economies have relied excessively on borrowing, a dependence rooted in global financial crises, pandemic-related expenditures, war costs, and expansive social welfare commitments. In the United States, government debt relative to national output has reached levels once confined to economic theory textbooks. In the United Kingdom, the persistent relationship between budget deficits and rising debt has raised funda-

mental questions about fiscal sovereignty. Meanwhile, in countries such as France and Italy, the combination of high debt and weak economic growth is generating deeper concerns about the future. Japan, already counted among the world's most indebted nations, now faces even greater difficulty escaping this burden due to an aging population and limited economic expansion.

What makes this debt crisis particularly dangerous is that the global financial environment is no longer favorable. In the past, low interest rates allowed governments to temporarily manage budget deficits through cheap borrowing. Today, however, inflationary pressures have compelled central banks to raise interest rates significantly. As a result, interest payments on debt have themselves become a massive and separate government expenditure. In several countries, spending on interest alone now exceeds combined budgets for defense, education, or healthcare an alarming indicator of fiscal stress.

This situation is proving severely damaging to development and social welfare initiatives. When a substantial portion of state resources is consumed by debt servicing, investments in infra-

structure, research, human development, and social protection are either curtailed or indefinitely postponed. The direct consequences are felt by ordinary citizens, as access to healthcare, education, and employment opportunities steadily shrinks. Economic inequality deepens, and the trust gap between the state and its people continues to widen.

Another grave dimension of rising interest rates and debt is the inflationary pressure that spreads globally. When major economies adopt monetary tightening, capital flows in international markets are disrupted. Investment begins to exit developing countries, their currencies come under pressure, and inflation becomes a worldwide challenge. The heaviest cost is borne by societies that are already economically vulnerable. Thus, the financial crises of wealthy nations evolve into fresh trials for poorer and developing regions of the world.

It would not be incorrect to say that the current debt crisis is the outcome of a long history of flawed policy priorities. Many developed states ignored long-term fiscal discipline in pursuit of political popularity, expanded welfare promises without sustainable revenue streams, and incurred heavy military and strategic expenditures

whose economic returns were far from clear. Today, those decisions have resurfaced as a collective debt burden, one that cannot be resolved through short-term or superficial measures alone.

At the global level, resolving this crisis cannot be limited to spending cuts or tax increases. What is required is a comprehensive fiscal and economic strategy centered on sustainable growth, equitable taxation, reductions in unnecessary military spending, and greater investment in productive sectors. At the same time, international financial institutions must reassess their own policies to ensure that the burden of debt is managed in a fair and balanced manner.

Ultimately, it cannot be ignored that if the world's largest economies fail to address their debt crises with seriousness and resolve, the consequences will not remain confined within national borders. Global trade, investment, and the pace of development will all suffer, potentially giving rise to a form of financial instability deeper and more prolonged than previous crises. In this context, wealthy nations face a critical moment of reflection: to move beyond short-term political interests and chart an economic course that guarantees stability and growth not only for their own citizens, but for the world as a whole.

*The writer is senior analyst and he can be reached at muhammadtayyab773@gmail.com*



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

## Trump Peace Board: Russia and China's roadmap

**I**n global politics, the struggle for power, interests, and ideologies has always been ongoing, but in the twenty-first century this struggle has taken on new forms. The foreign policy of former U.S. President Donald Trump and the various "peace plans" he presented often referred to by some analysts as the "Trump Peace Board" attracted significant attention worldwide. The core idea behind this concept was that the United States would use its power, economic influence, and diplomatic pressure to resolve global conflicts in line with its own interests. However, how major global powers such as Russia and China view this strategy is a highly important question for students and analysts of international relations.

The central slogan of Donald Trump's foreign policy was "America First." Under this approach, he reviewed many international agreements, withdrew from some of them, and attempted to place greater financial and defense responsibilities on allied countries. During his tenure, the U.S. adopted a relatively tough and independent stance toward forums such as NATO, the Paris Climate Agreement, the Iran nuclear deal, and the World Trade Organization. In this context, various plans proposed by Trump to resolve conflicts also emerged, including the Middle East peace plan and negotiations with North Korea.

The term "Peace Board" symbolically represents Trump's broader mindset of viewing global conflicts in a manner similar to business deals. In his view, peace is an agreement in which both parties gain something, but the primary benefit should serve America's strategic and economic interests. In this thinking, the balance of power, sanctions, trade pressure, and diplomatic incentives play a central role.

Russia, which sees itself as a major global power and an alternative pole to the United

States, has had a mixed response to Trump's policies. On one hand, reports of relatively better personal relations between Trump and Russian President Vladimir Putin emerged. On the other hand, both countries stood in opposition on issues such as NATO's expansion, the Ukraine conflict, and economic sanctions.

From Russia's point of view, the "Peace Board" is essentially a new form of maintaining American dominance. Russian analysts believe that the United States seeks peace agreements that prioritize its own strategic interests while placing other powers in a secondary position. American alignment with Israel in the Middle East and NATO's presence in Europe have remained major concerns for Russia.

However, Russia also saw an opportunity in Trump's approach. Since Trump showed less confidence in global institutions, Russia attempted to advance its interests through bilateral negotiations. Examples include talks on arms control agreements and limited cooperation with the United States on the Syrian issue.

China, as a rapidly rising global power, mostly views Trump's policies through the lens of strategic competition. During Trump's presidency, a trade war began between the United States and China, which significantly strained relations between the two countries. From China's perspective, the "Peace Board" is an attempt to preserve American superiority in the global system and to limit China's growing economic and political influence.

Chinese leadership emphasizes that global problems should be solved through multilateral cooperation rather than the pressure of a single power. This is why China promotes platforms such as the United Nations, the Shanghai Cooperation Organization, and the Belt and Road Initiative, aiming to establish a balanced and shared global system.

Trump's Middle East peace plan, especially regarding the Palestinian-Israeli issue, received cautious responses from both Russia and China. Their stance was that any sustainable peace requires the consent of all parties involved and respect for United Nations resolutions. Russia and China stressed that unilateral decisions could increase instability in the region.

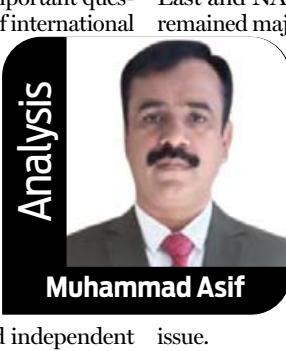
Both Russia and China appear to agree that Trump's policies sparked a new debate about the balance of global power. The United States' distancing from global institutions created opportunities for Russia and China to expand their influence. Their growing presence in regions such as Syria, Africa, and parts of Asia is often seen as part of this broader strategy.

Trump's trade policies had a deep impact on the global economy. The trade war with China affected not only both countries but also markets around the world. Russia used this situation to its advantage by strengthening economic cooperation with China, particularly in the energy sector.

Both Russia and China view diplomacy as a long-term game. In their opinion, Trump's style was more focused on immediate results, with less attention to long-term stability. Therefore, they tend to see the "Peace Board" as a temporary strategy that can change with a shift in leadership.

For Russia and China, Trump's "Peace Board" is a concept that presents both opportunities and concerns. Russia sees it, on one hand, as a symbol of American pressure, and on the other, as a means to pursue its interests through bilateral negotiations. China evaluates it in the context of global power competition and stresses the importance of multilateral cooperation.

Ultimately, the future of global peace can only be bright if major powers consider not only their own interests but also their global responsibilities. Dialogue, cooperation, and mutual respect among Russia, China, and the United States can form the foundation of a balanced and sustainable international system.



**Muhammad Asif**

## 5 February Kashmir Solidarity Day - a Strong Message of Support

**Syed Faiz Naqshbandi**

**O**n 5 February, Kashmir Solidarity Day, the people and Government of Pakistan convey to entire world especially to India a clear, loud and power message of political, diplomatic, moral, and humanitarian support to the people of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and their just and legitimate struggle for the inalienable right to self-determination, in line with the United Nations Resolutions.

For more than seven decades, the people of IOJK have resisted Indian occupation and repression with extraordinary courage and resilience. India has responded to their peaceful demand for self-determination with systematic repressive policies, state violence, and brutal suppression.

Thousands of Kashmiris have been killed with impunity, thousands upon thousands forcibly disappeared, tortured and arbitrary detained by Indian occupation forces.

Kashmiris are detained in far-off Indian prisons, denied legal safeguards, and subjected to inhuman and degrading treatment solely for demanding what the United Nations itself promised them. No freedom of religion and free expression is allowed. Mirwaiz Umar Farooq the supreme spiritual and leader of the people of IOJK is not allowed to offer Friday prayers. The excessive use of force against civilians, suppression of peaceful protests, communication blackouts, and collective punishment expose India's attempt to crush the Kashmiri struggle through fear and coercion. The people of IOJK remind the world that the Kashmir dispute is not an internal matter of India.



**Syed Faiz Naqshbandi**

It is a long-standing international dispute, recognized by numerous UN Security Council resolutions, which India continues to defy—a serious violation of UN Charter and international law.

The people of Indian Occupied Kashmir love Pakistan. History is testimony to the fact that Kashmiris have been celebrating Pakistan Independence Day on 14 August with passion, love and resolve. Even under huge deployment of Indian troops, Pakistani flags are hoisted on rooftops and high buildings, symbolizing hope and resistance. Conversely, 15 August—Indian Independence Day is observed as a Black Day, a clear rejection of Indian occupation of their homeland and a powerful message to the world that Kashmiris do not accept India's rule and wants implementation of UN resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir in letter and spirit.

History records powerful acts of defiance—when Kashmiris aligned their standard time with Pakistan Standard Time, Indian forces resorted to checking wristwatches. Such acts prove that occupation may control territory, but it can never conquer hearts.

Pakistan stands shoulder to shoulder with the Kashmiri people, strengthening brotherhood and firmly supporting their right to self-determination, while India continues its policies of repression, disappearance, and violence. But no force can defeat the will of the Kashmiri people.

Pakistan remains a symbol of brotherhood, freedom, dignity, and the ultimate destiny for the people of Jammu and Kashmir is Pakistan.

*The author is senior leader of All Parties Hurriyet Conference (APHC) and legal expert of international law. He can be reached at faiz.naqshbandi@gmail.com*

# Islamabad unveils largest family festival boosting tourism potential

By Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's largest-ever Tourism, Sports and Family Festival kickoff at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad.

Speaking on the occasion Sardar Yasir Ilyas said the mega festival would open a fresh chapter for tourism and serve as a model to be replicated in other provinces. The event, he added, is being organised as a fully family-friendly festival with programmes and attractions aimed at children, young people and tourists from diverse backgrounds.

The coordinator said the government was introducing new ideas into the tourism industry and launching youth-focused training courses to build skilled human resources. "Pakistan is a peaceful and hospitable country, and our nation is globally known for its unmatched tradition of hospitality," he said.

The festival included food stalls, games, handicrafts and jewellery exhibitions, and will showcase the cultures of Pakistan's four provinces as well as Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Sardar Yasir Ilyas said the initiative aligns with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's plan to develop tourism into a full-fledged industry, noting Pakistan's large untapped tourism potential.

Adventure sports a major draw. The coordinator highlighted paragliding off the Margalla Hills, hot-air ballooning, power gliding, tent pegging, cycling events and a marathon carrying a Rs100,000 prize among the attractions. Leading paragliders from around the country will launch from the Margalla Hills and land at the



Cricket Ground near the Sports Complex; organisers have set aside an area for photography and spectators.

More than 300 vintage cars and classic motorcycles were displayed, and rallies, rock-climbing and zip-lining activities organised for youth and children.

Aftab ur Rehman Rana, Managing Director of the Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (PTDC), said PTDC has introduced a national tourism calendar that will host over 50 events nationwide. He described Islamabad as an emerging gateway city with strong potential across adventure, sports, medical, recreational and cultural tourism, sectors that

could boost economic growth.

The festival was feature stalls run by PTDC and other departments, women's chambers, hotels, tour operators, hospitality institutes and cultural troupes from different provinces and countries. "This event is aimed at creating public awareness about tourism, culture and heritage, as tourism already contributes around 5.6 percent to Pakistan's GDP," Rana noted.

All festival activities take place at the Pakistan Sports Complex, except tent pegging, which was staged at F-9 Park, the coordinator said. Sardar Yasir Ilyas emphasised the government's commitment to promoting tourism and said the event is

intended to send a message that Pakistan is a peaceful nation. He added that the government aims to raise the sector's contribution to the economy to \$40 billion within the next five to eight years.



Online Photo by Sultan Bashir

## TMUC Gets Glorified with Launch of Gloria Jean's Café at Islamabad

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Millennium Universal College TMUC officially inaugurated Gloria Jean's Café at its Islamabad H-11/4 Campus, further strengthening its commitment to delivering a vibrant, student-centred campus environment that blends academic excellence with lifestyle enrichment says a press release.

The inauguration ceremony was led by Dr. Faisal Mushtaq TI, Founder and CEO of TMUC Higher Education Group, in the distinguished presence of Ambassador Masood Khan, President MiTE and CLAS; Mr Khalid Mehmood, CEO of Rank Brothers Pvt. Ltd.; and Ms Muneeze Muzaffar, Head of Institution TMUC Islamabad, leading influencers and

alongside faculty members and a large number of enthusiastic students.

The launch ceremony was marked by a lively and celebratory atmosphere, transforming the campus into a hub of excitement and engagement. The event featured upbeat music, freshly brewed speciality coffees, interactive games, a live DJ, delicious food offerings, and student-led activities that brought the TMUC community together in a spirited celebration. The vibrant energy reflected TMUC's culture of creativity, inclusivity, and community building.

Addressing the audience, Dr. Faisal Mushtaq TI highlighted TMUC's vision of developing purpose-built campuses that nurture not only academic growth but also personal development.



opment, collaboration, and student well-being. He emphasised that modern learning environments must offer spaces where students can interact, exchange ideas, and recharge, making Gloria Jean's Café a valuable addition to the TMUC ecosystem.

Ambassador Masood Khan commended TMUC's continued efforts in investing in student-focused infrastructure and initiatives that enhance campus engagement and foster innovation.

He noted that such spaces play a crucial role in encouraging dialogue, creativity, and leadership development among young learners.

Mr. Khalid Mehmood, CEO of Rank Brothers Pvt. Ltd., expressed his appreciation for the partnership and shared his enthusiasm for bringing a

globally recognised café brand into an academic environment, offering students and faculty a premium café experience within their campus.

Ms. Muneeze Muzaffar, Head of Institution at TMUC Islamabad, welcomed the initiative as a meaningful enhancement to student life, stating that the café will serve as a social hub for collaboration, informal learning, and relaxation, further strengthening the sense of community on campus.

The opening of Gloria Jean's Café aligns with TMUC's broader mission to provide world-class facilities, holistic learning experiences, and dynamic campus environments that prepare students for success in an increasingly globalised world. The café is expected to become a popular gathering

## Experts warn proposed 2025 regulations could trigger mass grid defection

By Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Stakeholders and policy experts on Wednesday amid witnessing Pakistan's record-breaking rooftop solar movement facing a critical turning point warned that the

proposed Prosumer Regulations 2025 risk dismantling a decade of citizen-led energy progress.

During the national consultative dialogue convened by the Pakistan Renewable Energy Coalition (PREC) and the Alliance for Climate Justice and

Clean Energy (ACJCE) on "Redefining the Prosumer-Grid Relationship: Analysis of Draft Prosumer Regulations 2025", the participants cautioned that a shift from net metering to net billing could destabilize the power sector by pushing

consumers toward total grid defection.

Dr. Nafisa Shah, Member National Assembly stated, "Consumers are bearing the brunt of policy failures while simply trying to secure their basic right to electricity. The

next phase of this revolution will be a battery rush, and we must safeguard those who rely on solar."

Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwary Taimur underlined that this regulation contradicts ARE 2019, NDC 3.0, and the rights

of solar consumers. "It risks disincentivizing renewable energy adoption in a climate-affected nation," she added.

Intiaz Baloch Director General Licensing, NEPRA Intiaz Baloch from NEPRA, Zeehan Ashfaq, CEO of

Renewables First, Dr. Khalid Waleed, Energy Economy Expert, SDPI, Rabia Babar Manager Data and Analytics, Renewables First and Shah Jahan Mirza, Ex-Managing Director, PPIB also speak on the occasion.

## A Strategic Mask: India's Net Security Provider Claim in the Indian Ocean

As the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) has emerged as one of the most strategically contested regions of the twenty-first century, its traditional identity as a conduit for global trade and energy has undergone a profound transformation. Today, geopolitical rivalries, competing security narratives, and power projection ambitions are increasingly shaping the region's maritime order. Among these narratives, India's claim to be the Net Security Provider (NSP) in the Indian Ocean warrants closer scrutiny.

At face value, the NSP concept appears benign. It invokes ideas of regional stability, humanitarian assistance, counter-piracy efforts, and cooperative maritime security. However, beneath this reassuring language lies a deeper strategic logic. The

NSP narrative functions less as a neutral contribution to collective security and more as a strategic mask – a conceptual cover that legitimizes power projection while portraying it as responsible leadership.

In international politics, states rarely pursue dominance openly. Instead, they rely on comforting narratives such as stability, accountability, and collective security to advance state-centric strategic goals. The notion of a strategic mask helps explain this phenomenon. It allows a state to expand influence while appearing benevolent, a tactic particularly effective in the maritime domain where the provision of public goods – such as disaster relief and sea lane security – can easily be framed as cooperative security.

India's NSP claim rests on the assertion that it contributes more to regional maritime secu-

rity than it consumes. New Delhi presents itself as a first responder during humanitarian emergencies, a defender against non-traditional maritime threats, and a stabilizing force in the Indian Ocean. These roles are rhetorically aligned with cooperative security principles and regional responsibility. Yet, when viewed geopolitically, the NSP framework simultaneously legitimizes India's growing naval footprint across the region.

Over the past two decades, India has significantly expanded its operational reach in the IOR. This expansion includes forward naval deployments, rapid modernization of maritime capabilities, enhanced surveillance networks, and a web of logistics and access agreements. While often justified under the banner of maritime cooperation, these developments unmistakably enhance India's power

projection capacity.

The drivers behind this strategy are rooted in broader strategic calculations. Intensifying competition with China, concerns over external influence in the Indian Ocean, and deepening strategic alignment with the United States and its allies have collectively shaped New Delhi's ambition to influence the regional order. The NSP narrative offers normative justification for this ambition, placing India at the center of the maritime hierarchy while framing its actions as protection rather than assertion.

Such an approach has far-reaching implications for the regional order. Smaller coastal and island states may find themselves drawn into asymmetric security arrangements where strategic dependence replaces genuine cooperation. Instead of fostering stability, the Indian

Ocean risks becoming increasingly militarized, shaped by pressures for dominance, alignment, and strategic exclusion rather than inclusive maritime governance.

For Pakistan, these developments carry particular significance. The maritime routes of the Arabian Sea and surrounding waters are central to Pakistan's economic security, trade connectivity, and strategic deterrence. India's expanding naval presence near Pakistan's maritime approaches – justified through the NSP narrative – raises concerns about freedom of navigation, deterrence stability, and the broader security environment of the North Indian Ocean.

Moreover, India's self-proclaimed role raises important normative and legal questions. Under international law and existing maritime security

norms, regional security is inherently a cooperative endeavor. No single state possesses the legal or moral authority to unilaterally guarantee security for an entire region. When such responsibilities are self-assigned, the risk of selective enforcement, exclusion, and escalation increases.

A sustainable maritime order in the Indian Ocean requires more than unilateral leadership claims. Concepts such as inclusive governance, shared responsibility, transparency, and respect for sovereign equality remain essential for long-term stability.

A multipolar and cooperative security framework – rather than a hierarchy dominated by a single actor – offers a more credible vision for regional peace. A closer analysis reveals that India's NSP claim functions primarily as a strategic cover, masking power accumulation under the language

of stability and cooperation. Recognizing this dynamic is essential for understanding the evolving geopolitics of the Indian Ocean and for preventing security narratives from becoming instruments of hegemony.

*Disclaimer: Views expressed are personal.*

**Authors:**

Awais Akmal is a Research Intern at Maritime Centre of Excellence, Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, holding MPhil in Political Science from Pakistan. He can be reached at [akmal.pnwl@gmail.com](mailto:akmal.pnwl@gmail.com) or [awaisakmal80@gmail.com](mailto:awaisakmal80@gmail.com)

DR. Marriyam Siddique is a Senior Research Fellow at Maritime Centre of Excellence, Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, holding PhD in International Relations from China. She can be reached at [drmarriyam16@gmail.com](mailto:drmarriyam16@gmail.com)

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
184,174.48	182,338.12
Day's High	Day's Low
186,619.51	182,347.47
Index Value	Change
37,469,160,042	+1836.36
Percentage	Time
+1.01%	30 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,223.54	+51.78
Percentage	Time
+0.51%	30 Jan, 4:35 pm GMT

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

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

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

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

Commerce Desk

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

Positioned as a next-generation industrial hub, United Business Park is set to become the largest privately developed SEZ in Lahore, aimed at accelerating industrial expansion, boosting exports, and attracting both local and foreign investment at a time when Pakistan is actively seeking sustainable economic growth.

The project offers investors direct access to SEZ incentives under the SEZA Act, 2012, making it a highly competitive destination for manufacturing, export-oriented units, and value-added industries. These incentives include a one-time customs duty exemption on the import of plant, machinery, and equipment, along with a 10-year income tax holiday, alongside other fiscal and regulatory facilitation measures.

**Gold price plunges further by Rs25,500 to Rs511,862 per tola**

ISLAMABAD: The price of per tola 24-karat gold on Saturday witnessed a sharp decline of Rs25,500 and was traded at Rs511,862 in the local market, the All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24-karat gold also plunged by Rs21,862 to Rs438,839, while the rate of 10 grams of 22-karat gold decreased by Rs20,041 to Rs402,283.

In the international market, gold prices fell by \$255 to \$4,895.

Meanwhile, per tola silver shed Rs2,063 to reach Rs9,006, while the price of 10 grams of silver declined by Rs1,761 to Rs7,721. International silver prices decreased by \$10.63 to \$85.31.

**Commerce Desk**

**6** Daily The Spokesman

# FPCCI hails PM's historic economic package as a turning point for Pakistan's export-led growth

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Atif Ikram Sheikh, President of the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), stated today that the business community wholeheartedly welcomes the Prime Minister's historic economic package. He described the announcement as a pivotal turning point in the "Maarka-e-Maishat" (Economic Battle), placing Pakistan firmly on the path toward export-led growth.

**Wheeling Mechanism:** Mr. Sheikh noted that an active wheeling mechanism, a long-standing FPCCI demand, will provide industries access to cheaper energy, helping exporters meet global market requirements.

**Monetary Policy:** He urged a further reduction in the policy rate, suggesting a gradual decrease to 7% to stimulate investment and alleviate poverty.

**The Blue Passport Initiative:** The announcement of the Blue Passport facility for exporters was lauded as a significant step in boosting the prestige and morale of the business community.

Despite the positive outlook, Atif Ikram



Sheikh warned that the immediate recovery of Rs. 300 billion in Super Tax could "break the back" of the industry. He cautioned that this move would trigger a severe liquidity crisis

and disrupt the business ecosystem, urging the government to find a more reasonable and balanced solution.

To solve economic issues permanently, the FPCCI proposed appointing a District Economic Commissioner in every district, modeled after the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and DPO. This official would be responsible for:

- Industrial research and SME development at the local level.
- Human resource development and women's economic inclusion.
- Providing employment opportunities at the doorstep of citizens.

Addressing the press conference, FPCCI Vice President Tariq Jadoon, Chairman Coordination Malik Sohail Hussain, Former President FPCCI Ghazanfar Bilour, Chairman Founder Group (ICCI) Tahir Sadiq, President Rawalpindi Chamber Usman Shaukat, Former Vice President FPCCI Mian Akram Farid, and Advisor to President FPCCI Sheikh Muzammil Saleem collectively welcomed the government's economic package and the reduction in electricity prices.

## Old is gold

ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are taking interest in classic and vintage cars during the Two-Day Pakistan Tourism Festival, at Sports Complex in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Claims of Growth, Ground Realities: Two Press Conferences, One Big Question

Commerce Desk

MULTAN: In a V log by Mr. Naveed Ahmed Khan, Editor, Daily Spokesman said about Two press conferences held days apart at the same venue have exposed a striking contradiction in Pakistan's economic narrative—raising a fundamental question about where the truth really lies.

He said FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, alongside Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal, addressed the media with an optimistic assessment of the economy. The message was emphatic: Pakistan is on the path to recovery, industrial activity is reviving, investment is flowing in, and inflation has not only eased but is nearing an end. The overall impression was one of near-arrival—so buoyant that one might fear the public would soon take to the streets to witness "rivers of milk and honey" already flowing.

This narrative, however, sits uneasily with another press conference held just a day earlier at the same place. Addressing the media then was SM Tanveer, Patron-in-Chief of the United Business Group (UBG)—the very group that currently commands a majority within the FPCCI and whose backing played a key role in Atif

Ikram Sheikh's election as president.

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These questions found no clear answers in the latest press conference, nor have they been convincingly addressed by any responsible forum so far.

This is not the first time such concerns have surfaced. Previously, prominent industrialist Gohar Ejaz was seen at a press conference pleading before Ishaq Dar, stating that Faisalabad—once the beating heart of Pakistan's textile sector—had turned into a graveyard.

With these statements firmly on record, one must ask: how should the claims of

growth, investment and prosperity be understood?

This is not an argument for or against any individual. Nor is it an attempt to declare SM Tanveer right and Atif Ikram Sheikh wrong, or vice versa. The core issue is that, contrary to verbal assurances, there is little on the ground that can credibly be described as development.

This disconnect is not merely a personal perception; it reflects the sentiment of every informed citizen who observes and understands the realities around them.

If Atif Ikram Sheikh represents a group whose own patron-in-chief is openly declaring the collapse of the textile industry, it would have been prudent to consult internally before addressing the nation—or at the very least, to present these conflicting views with solid evidence rather than ignoring them altogether.

In the end, all one can do is hope that the optimistic claims being made do come true—proven not by rhetoric, but by results. Because nations do not run on speeches; they run on outcomes.

May God have mercy on this country and grant us the wisdom to distinguish between reality and illusion.

## CBD Punjab Advances Smart Urban Growth With NSIT Pulse Phase-I



City Desk

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA) also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab) has announced the launch of NSIT Pulse Phase-I, a premium retail and commercial development located at a prime site within CBD NSIT City, Punjab's flagship innovation-led urban district.

Commenting on the launch, CEO CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, said, "NSIT Pulse-I reflects our commitment to creating commercially sound and future-ready developments within CBD NSIT City. The project has been designed in accordance with international standards, ensuring transparency, sustainability, and long-term value for investors while contributing to the city's evolving urban landscape."

He further emphasized that CBD Punjab continues to adopt digitally enabled planning and allocation mechanisms to promote efficiency, investor confidence, and timely project delivery.

## PTA hails the announcement of PM

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The Chairman, Pakistan Tanners Association, Mr. Hamid A. Zahur hailed the announcement of PM for reduction of electricity charges which was dire need of export oriented Industries including Leather sector of Pakistan with other incentives announced by him particularly the interest rate from 7.5% to 4.5% in Export Refinance Scheme rate which would really be a great source of motivation for investors while contributing to the city's evolving urban landscape.

This is not merely a personal perception; it reflects the sentiment of every informed citizen who observes and understands the realities around them.

If Atif Ikram Sheikh represents a group whose own patron-in-chief is openly declaring the collapse of the textile industry, it would have been prudent to consult internally before addressing the nation—or at the very least, to present these conflicting views with solid evidence rather than ignoring them altogether.

PTA requests to Honourable PM for favourable consideration to reinstate the Export Facilitation Scheme at its original position which was eligible before 30.06.2024 as well

as continued reduction in import duties on chemicals is needed in the upcoming budget for the year 2026-27.

The Cumulative Corporate Tax Rate of around 50% is too high and this needs to be rationalized along with taxation on the salaried class individuals in order to boost investment and exports from Pakistan and help to retain our Human Capital to drive economic growth.

PTA extends special thanks to the Honourable Prime Minister for the announcement and looking forward for further level playing fields to this vital industry so that our member exporters would play more pivotal role in strengthening the country's economy with the promotion of exports of this vital sector to achieve common goals.

## Clean energy surge that can power industrial revival, economic sovereignty

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: At a time when Pakistan's economy is straining under the weight of crippling energy costs, capacity payments, and an unsustainable reliance on imported fuels, a powerful counter-narrative is rapidly gaining momentum: solar energy is no longer an alternative—it is an inevitability. This unmistakable message resonated forcefully at the Pakistan Solar Association's (PSA) annual dinner in Karachi, a landmark event that underlined the sector's growing confidence, unity, and stra-

tegic clarity.

Welcoming the participants, PSA Chairman Waqas Moosa delivered a data-driven yet hard-hitting address that captured both the scale of the opportunity and the urgency of action. He noted that despite Pakistan already achieving a record 40 gigawatts of solar installations, the domestic market still has the capacity to expand by an additional eight to 10 gigawatts, driven largely by rapid population growth and rising energy demand.

Echoing these sentiments, FPCCI Senior Vice-President Saquib Fayyaz

Magoo delivered a candid assessment of Pakistan's energy dilemma. Former PSA chairmen Rana Abbas and Amir Chaudhry urged members to remain united and proactive, recalling the sector's exemplary mobilization during the foreign exchange crisis when imports were restricted. Muhammad Zakir Ali, CEO of Inverex Solar Energy, called upon the PSA to take its conventions beyond Karachi and Lahore to Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Afaaq Ali Khan Vice Chairman PSA, Faaz Diwan Director Diwan Internationals, Mohammad Jibran and others Representatives also spoke on this

## Pakistan vs Australia 2nd T 20 Cricket Match

# Pakistan defeated Australia by 90 runs and won the T20 Series After 8 Years

By Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: Pakistan defeated Australia in the second T20 match by 90 runs and won the T20 series after 8 years. Thus, they expressed their ambitions for the mega event by defeating a team like Australia in two consecutive matches before the T20 World Cup at home ground.

In the second T20 International match played at Gaddafi Stadium Lahore, Pakistan won the toss and once again decided to bat first. Playing first, they scored 198 runs for the loss of 5 wickets. The highlight of the innings was Salman Ali Agha's 76 runs off 40 balls and Usman Khan's 53 runs off 36 balls. Shadab Khan scored 28 runs and Babar Azam could score five runs.

In response, the Australian batting line was helpless in front of a kind of Pakistani spin battery and the entire team was bowled out for 108 runs in 15.4 overs. Thus, Pakistan won by 90 runs.



The 10 wickets that fell were all taken by the spinners. Abrar Ahmed took three wickets for 14

runs. Shahadab Khan took three wickets for 26 runs. Usman Tariq took two wickets for 16 runs.

Saim Ayub and Muhammad Nawaz also took one wicket each. For Australia, captain Mitchell



Marsh scored 18 runs. Travis Head could only score four runs. Cameron Green scored 35 and

Matthew Short scored 27. Pakistan has won the three-match series by 2-0. The last

match of the series will be played tomorrow at the Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore.

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

Brilliant Century 121 by Haris Ali Khan and dashing by Ahsan Ali 91

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

Ground. Ahsan Ali also score dashing 91.

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

Scores in Brief:

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

(sl) 3/51, Wahaj Riaz (ob) 3/60.

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



## CM Punjab congratulates Pakistan on T20 series win against Australia

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif congratulated the Pakistan cricket team on its victory in the T20 series against Australia, praising the players for their outstanding performance.

In a statement, the chief minister said the Pakistani team displayed excellent skills and determination, winning the hearts of the nation with their brilliant play. She said Team Pakistan made history by registering its highest-ever score against Australia in T20 cricket.

Maryam Nawaz expressed hope that the national team would continue its winning momentum in future matches and bring further pride to the country.

## Zainab of Royal Palm got emerging victory in Fatima Jinnah Golf Championship



Victory for Minna Zainab in Fatima Jinnah golf championship, the fight for sporting success continued in the Fatima Jinnah golf championship at royal Palm golf course dominate in the ongoing play was Minna Zainab of royal palm. She was successful in emerging victorious in the handicap category 25 to 36. It was experience at play and this lady showed her capability.

Others who did extremely well were Sobia Waseem and Huma Bilal. The one to succeed in net section was Qurat ul Ain Tai. She is emerging as a fighter and is likely to challenge national talent in future. Afifa Yawar.

## Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament

Saudi Titans 4th win; Unbeaten 100 by Huzaifa Munir

Karachi: Due to Deadly Bowling by Medium Pacer Owais Rahim 4/31 and Brilliant Unbeaten Century 100 by Huzaifa Munir Saudi Titans won 4th Match after

defeated Fay International by 8 wickets in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament here on Friday at RLCA UP Ground.

### Summarized Scores:

Saudi Titans beat Fay International by 8 wickets at RLCA UP Ground. Fay International 150 all-out in 34 overs. M.

Sufyan Aleem 31, S. M. Huzaifa Saud 31, Wasif 24 not out. In reply Saudi Titans 156/2 in 20.1 overs. Huzaifa Munir 100 5x4 10x6 Hassan Danish 22 both not out.

## Pak Qatar General Takaful IPO Public Portion Oversubscribed by 9.6x

By Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pak Qatar General Takaful Limited's IPO witnessed extraordinary investor demand, with applications received for 71.7 million shares through 13,013 applications, amounting to PKR 1,003 billion. This resulted in an oversubscription of approximately 9.6x. The public offering was held on 28-29 January 2026.

Unprecedented retail demand led to a historic development: the public portion was increased from 25% to 30%, marking the first time in Pakistan's capital market history that such an increase has been made to accommodate individual investors.

For the first time in Pakistan's IPO history, overwhelming participation from

retail investors prompted institutional investors to step back — ensuring wider public ownership and a stronger retail footprint.

As per the allotment criteria, applications up to 1500 shares will be fully accepted while the applications of 2000 shares are subject to balloting. Furthermore, all the applications above 2,000 shares will be fully refunded.

Earlier, the book-building portion of the IPO was met with extraordinary demand, being oversubscribed by 21x and priced at a 40% premium over the floor price.

Congratulations to the Pak Qatar General Takaful Limited team and Arif Habib Limited, Consultant to the Issue, on the successful completion of the public offering and the record-breaking participation from investors.

## AIOU Introduces Academic Platform for Strengthening Family System in Light of Qur'an

By City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Under the auspices of the Department of Qur'an and Tafsir at Allama Iqbal Open University, an academic and intellectual forum titled "Qur'anic Family: Construction and Formation for Khilafah and Empowerment" has been established. The forum was formally inaugurated by the Dean of the Faculty of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi.

The primary objective of establishing this forum is to strengthen the family system in the light of the teachings of the Holy Qur'an, promote Islamic family values and particularly to intellectually and practically prepare the younger generation and students to play a positive, moral and responsible role in society.

The chief guest speaker at the inaugural ceremony was



the distinguished Saudi scholar and researcher Dr. Hidayatullah Al-Shash who delivered a detailed lecture on the principles of marital life in the light of the Seerah of the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ, the mutual rights and responsibilities of spouses, the Qur'anic concept of "spouses are garments for one another," the rights of parents and righteous family upbringing. She emphasized

that a family structured according to the guidance of the Qur'an and Sunnah alone can serve as the foundation of a strong Islamic society.

In his presidential address, Prof. Dr. Mohyuddin Hashmi stated that the foundation of an Islamic society rests upon a strong family system, and that the Holy Qur'an has declared the family to be the central institution

for training, moral development and social stability. He described the establishment of the forum as an important need of the time, adding that through this platform, the younger generation will be provided with practical guidance to live their lives in accordance with Qur'anic principles, enabling them to fulfill their responsibilities of Khilafah on earth more effectively.

On this occasion, the Chairman of the Department

of Qur'an and Tafsir, Dr. Sanaullah while outlining the aims and objectives of the forum, stated that it will highlight Qur'anic family values through research, teaching and training activities. He further informed that under the forum, lectures, seminars, workshops and dialogue sessions will be organized with the aim of contributing to the formation of a righteous, balanced and strong society by understanding

the requirements of Khilafah on earth and the establishment of religion (Tamkeen-e-Deen).

At the conclusion of the ceremony, a resolve was expressed that this forum would play an effective role at the academic and intellectual level in promoting the Qur'anic family system and would serve as a permanent source of intellectual guidance for the university's male and female students.

## AJK President Barrister Sultan Mehmood Chaudhry dies at 71

Continued from Page 1

He was elected President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir in 2021.

Barrister Chaudhry was widely regarded as one of the most prominent international voices for the Kashmiri right to self-determination.

He raised the Kashmir issue at global forums, including the United Nations and the US State Department, and addressed parliaments in several countries.

He also led large-scale demonstrations in support of Kashmir at London's Trafalgar Square, outside the UN headquarters in New York, in front of the European Union institutions in Brussels, in Dublin, and at Berlin Wall landmarks.

He held extensive diplomatic

engagements in Islamabad, briefing European and Islamic countries' ambassadors on the situation in Indian-administered Kashmir and alleged human rights violations.

Barrister Chaudhry was also the only AJK political leader to visit Indian-administered Kashmir, where he addressed a public gathering at Srinagar's Lal Chowk and met senior Kashmiri leaders, including Syed Ali Gilani, Syed Shabbir Shah and Yasin Malik.

The visit is considered of historic significance.

He is remembered as a mass leader with political support across all constituencies of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and as a tireless campaigner for the Kashmir cause on the international stage.

## Launching ceremony

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif launching Punjab Agriculture, Food and Drug Authority Laboratories on Saturday.



Photo: Online

## PM Shehbaz Sharif lauds CM Maryam Nawaz on inauguration of PAFDA

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday congratulated the Punjab government on the inauguration of the Punjab Agriculture, Food and Drug Authority (PAFDA), terming it a landmark institution for ensuring food security and hygienic standards across the country.

Addressing the inaugural

ceremony, the prime minister praised Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif for transforming a long-neglected and incomplete building into a modern, IT-led and AI-enabled laboratory.

He said the project, which had remained idle for years, now stands as a symbol of progress and good governance. "Full marks to Maryam Nawaz Sharif for converting an idling building into a great institu-

tion," he remarked.

He also commended the efforts of scientists, experts, and professionals who worked tirelessly to complete what he described as a unique project in Pakistan.

According to the prime minister, the PAFDA will play a vital role in ensuring food safety, quality control, and public health, calling it a need of the hour.

He paid rich tribute to

late Dr Ashraf Tahir, who left a successful career in the United States to serve Pakistan, and acknowledged the role of former provincial officer Naseem Sadiq and other officials in setting up the forensic lab.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif congratulated the Punjab cabinet, chief secretary, police leadership, and all officials involved in the project. He expressed hope that the PAFDA

would help eliminate adulteration and set new standards for food and drug regulation in Pakistan, calling it a great national service.

Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif presented a souvenir to the prime minister.

The chief minister also spoke on the occasion. The federal ministers, provincial ministers, businessmen and diplomats attended the ceremony.

## 78 killed in Karachi traffic accidents in January

### Bureau Report

KARACHI: At least 78 people have lost their lives, and 814 others have been injured in traffic accidents in Karachi during the first month of the year, rescue officials said.

According to rescue sources, the dead include 58 men, nine women, 11 children and one girl.

Among the injured were



644 men, 118 women, 38 children and 14

overall 78 fatalities reported this year.

The report said heavy vehicles involved in fatal accidents included 10 trailers, five water tankers, four buses, one dumper and one Mazda vehicle.

## PTI ends SC sit-in after assurance on Imran Khan's medical report

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leaders on Friday ended a sit-in outside the Supreme Court after meeting Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi and receiving assurances that former prime minister Imran Khan's medical report would be shared with his family.

PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja said the assurance followed his meeting with the chief justice, which lasted over 30 minutes. He said the party had raised concerns over restrictions on meetings between the jailed PTI founder, his family members and party leaders. The protest began earlier in the day after the government disclosed that Imran Khan had been taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) in Islamabad for a medical procedure. PTI leaders demanded clarity and access, citing a lack of consultation with the family.

Senior PTI figures, including Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, Senate Opposition Leader Allama Raja Nasir Abbas, Latif Khosa and other lawmakers, gathered outside the apex court to press their demands.

## DG ISPR visits Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi, meets Taqqi Usmani



### Bureau Report

KARACHI: DG ISPR Lieutenant General Ahmed Sharif Chaudhry visited Jamia Darul Uloom Karachi on Saturday, religious scholar Mufti Taqqi Usmani and other religious scholars welcomed him on his arrival.

During the meeting, the scholars expressed their full solidarity with the Pakistan Army in the fight against national security and terrorism.

Mufti Taqqi Usmani appreciated the efforts of the Pakistan Army to eradicate terrorism and assured all possible cooperation. Mufti Taqqi Usmani prayed for the integrity of Pakistan and success for the Pakistani armed forces on every front.

## Quetta train services suspended amid security concerns



### Bureau Report

QUETTA: The indefinite suspension of mobile data and train operations has caused disruptions for residents and travellers, as security measures remain in effect across Quetta.

In addition, all train operations from Quetta, both within

the province and to other parts of the country, have been temporarily halted.

According to railway officials, the suspension affects trains including the Jaffer Express, Bolan Mail, Chaman Passenger, and services on the Zahidan section.

The railway official said that passengers travelling on these trains

## War against terror to continue until last terrorist is eliminated, says Naqvi



### City Desk

Interior Minister paid tribute to officials and citizens martyred in terrorist attacks. He said the martyrs sacrificed their lives and thwarted the evil intentions of the terrorists. Interior Minister said that ongoing war against terrorism will continue until the last terrorist is eliminated.

Interior Minister Naqvi was briefed on the terrorist attacks of Fitna-ul-Hindustan and the security situation. Balochistan Chief Minister Sarfaraz Bugti and Corps Commander Balochistan also participated in the briefing.

Interior Minister appreciated the timely and effective action of the security forces against Fitna-ul-Hindustan.

Earlier, Interior Minister and CM Bugti attended the funeral prayers of the martyrs at Police Lines in Quetta.

Interior Minister Naqvi and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir

Sarfaraz Bugti also met with the victim families and offered condolences.

## Hanif Abbasi highlights major railway reforms, revenue growth at Havelian station



### News Desk

HAVELIAN: Federal Minister for Railways Hanif Abbasi on Saturday highlighted wide-ranging reforms and development initiatives in Pakistan Railways, stating that improved services, infrastructure upgrades and digitalisation had significantly boosted public confidence and revenue.

Talking to the media at Havelian Railway Station after inauguration of refurbished track of Hazara express train.

The minister said that his visit had turned into a public gathering, reflecting public interest in railway development. He described Havelian Railway Station as a historic site and noted that he belonged to the Hazara region.

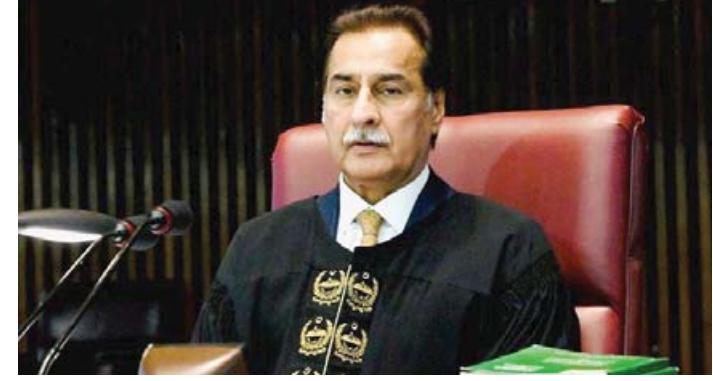
Abbasi said Pakistan Railways

had achieved several key targets, announcing that six train rakes had been allocated for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to facilitate passengers travelling from Peshawar to Karachi. He added that the Hazara Express had been upgraded with new and refurbished coaches, improving travel comfort.

Highlighting reforms, he said 60 railway stations across the country had been digitised, enhancing efficiency and transparency.

He further stated that a Rs 600 billion Karachi-Rohri railway track project was underway, while the proposed Rohri-Nokundi line would link the mineral-rich Chagai region and strengthen regional connectivity with Central Asian countries, including Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan.

## Sardar Ayaz Sadiq expresses condolences on the demise of President AJK



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has expressed profound grief and sorrow over the passing away of the President of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

In his condolence message, Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq paid rich tribute to the late Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry for his distinguished political and social services, particularly his invaluable contributions towards effectively highlighting the Kashmir cause at international forums.

He stated that the services rendered by Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry in advocating for the legitimate rights of the Kashmiri people will always be remembered.