



Daily The Spokesman



MQM renews demand for judicial commission on Gul Plaza fire

Farooq Sattar, while addressing a ceremony related to the Gul Plaza tragedy victims, said Chief Justice of Pakistan should form a commission under his leadership and the TORs should also be clear. If Karachi is saved, Pakistan will be saved. All energy should be spent to save Karachi.



Shahid Afridi asks ICC to act impartially and fairly

In a post uploaded on his X account on Monday, Shahid Afridi said "I have always believed cricket can open doors when politics closes them. It's regrettable that Pakistan won't play India at the T20 World Cup." He maintained "But, I stand behind my government's decision. This the moment for the ICC to lead and prove through decisions, not statements, that it is impartial, independent and fair to every member."

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Sha'abanul Moazzam 14, Tuesday, February 3, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net



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Daily Spokesman



Vol: 19, Issue: 289



Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Called on

RAWALPINDI: Field Marshal Khalifa Abu-al-Qasim Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces called on Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Force Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Monday.



Photo: ISPR

PM urges KP govt to fulfill its responsibilities for law & order, health, education sectors

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday assured the federal government's support for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's uplift, urged the provincial government to fulfill its responsibilities to establish law and order in the province, besides providing education and health facilities to its people.

The prime minister, in a meeting with Chief Minister of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Sohail

Afridi here, emphasized cooperation between the federal and provincial government for the development and prosperity of the KP's people, calling it essential for provincial law and order too.

The prime minister stressed the need to further intensify the provincial government's efforts to establish peace and security and strengthen its institutions to combat terrorism.

The prime minister said that as the KP government was empowered to ensure the uplift of the



education and health sectors, it should take the required measures.

Calling the KP province an important unit of the federation, he said the federal government had always been striving for the betterment of the KP's people and would continue similar within its jurisdiction.

Emphasising close relations and effective coordination between the federation and the provinces as key to national progress and public service, Prime Minister Shehbaz

also assured cooperation within the federal framework for development projects in KP, improvement of basic infrastructure, education, health, and increasing employment opportunities.

He said that the federal government was committed to taking all provinces along and acting on the vision of uniform development, saying that the goals of national unity, stability, and prosperity could only be achieved through mutual consultation and collaborative action.

PM Shehbaz Sharif meets Pakistan Pavilion Team for 61st Venice Biennale 2026

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday held a meeting with the team representing the Pakistan Pavilion at the historic 61st Venice Biennale 2026, currently underway in Venice, Italy.

The meeting was attended

by Najam Sethi, renowned Pakistani artist Faiza Butt, who is representing the Pakistan Pavilion, Pavilion Curator Beatriz Cifuentes Feliciano, and Pakistan Pavilion Commissioner Dr. Yaqoob Khan Bangash.

During the briefing, the Pavilion team informed the

Prime Minister that Pakistan's traditional art, distinctive aesthetics, and rich cultural heritage would be showcased to international visitors and tourists at the Venice Biennale. They further shared that a series of events will be organized under the Pakistan Pavilion from May to November 2026, aimed at

highlighting diverse facets of Pakistani art and culture for global audiences.

The team also apprised the Prime Minister that the Venice

Biennale, established in 1895, is the world's oldest and largest international art exhibition, widely recognized for its diversity and creative excellence.



APP's digital outreach key to counter misinformation, promote country's soft image: Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Monday emphasized the role of Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) in strategic narrative-building said the expansion of state news agency's digital outreach would prove helpful

in countering misinformation and promote country's soft image.

Chairing a meeting here during his visit to the APP's headquarter, the Information Minister stressed utilizing multiple social media platforms, particularly for dissemination of news content in regional languages, to ensure close engagement with local communities at

grassroots level.

The Information Minister directed extensive digital promotion of the content produced by APP's Balochi/Brahvi, Sindhi, Pashto, Sindhi and Saraiki services and said it would increase public trust by making narratives more relatable and inclusive.

To meet emerging media

trends, Tarar proposed induction of young social media experts to boost APP's digital capacity and to make the content more engaging and competitive.

He announced to chair a joint meeting of APP, Pakistan Television (PTV) and Digital Communication Department (DCD) in near future for devising a broad-

based framework for coordination among these departments in the domains of news content and digital media. Earlier on his arrival at APP headquarters, Information Minister Attaullah Tarar was received by Managing Director APP Muhammad Asim Khichi, senior officials and other employees.

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسوی
فیصل علی
عائشہ علی
رخی علی
بیانکہ علی
بیانکہ علی
اس وقت آج ہوئے کہ کارکار
تمم کامیابی کا اعلان ہے
بڑی توشیتی کارکروں کا اعلان ہے
اریانی مکان کا کارکردگی
(جگہ نہیں: صدیق نہیں: 6621)

Barkat Rice Mills
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Pakistan and Libya agree to strengthen defence ties

Naveed Ahmad Khan

ISLAMABAD: Field Marshal Khalifa Abu-al-Qasim Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, on Monday called on Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Force Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir at General Headquarters (GHQ), according to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Haftar, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, accompanied him.

The two sides exchanged views on matters of mutual interest, with a focus on regional security dynamics and professional military cooperation. They agreed to enhance secu-

rity collaboration between the armed forces of Pakistan and Libya.

Field Marshal Asim Munir welcomed the Libyan delegation and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening bilateral relations. He reiterated Pakistan's support for peace, stability, and institutional development in Libya. The meeting was held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere, reflecting the longstanding friendly relations between the two countries, the ISPR said.

Earlier, on arrival at Noor Khan Airbase, Field Marshal Haftar was received by Field Marshal Asim Munir. The Libyan commander later paid homage at the Yadgar-e-Shuhada and laid a wreath at the martyrs' memorial at GHQ.

Smugglers behind unrest in Balochistan: Khawaja Asif



City Desk

and criminal groups was facilitating the illegal trade.

The defence minister said the movement, which claimed to be nationalist, had effectively turned into a front for smugglers and criminals who were also financing it. He alleged that criminals operating under the name of the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) were protecting smugglers.

The defence minister told the House that over the past two days, 177 terrorists had been killed in Balochistan. He said 16 security personnel and 33 civilians were also martyred during the violence.

He added that the killed terrorists were part of the same criminal network and that their claims of human rights or nationalism had been fully exposed.

Senate passes resolution unanimously to condemn recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Senate on Monday unanimously passed a resolution condemning the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan and expressed deep condolences to the bereaved families, while wishing a speedy recovery to the injured.

The resolution was moved by Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar in the House. The House paid tribute to the courage and sacrifices of the security forces and law-enforcement agencies who continue to lay down their lives in the line of duty for the protection of citizens and the defence of the motherland.

It reaffirms the Senate's commitment to peace, development, and political inclusion in Balochistan, recognizing that sustainable security is inseparable from socio-economic progress, good governance, and respect for constitutional rights," the resolution said.

The House reiterated the resolve of the Pakistani nation that terrorism shall not be allowed to succeed, and that the unity of the State and the will of the people will prevail over all forces of violence, extremism and terrorism. The Senate urged the government to ensure a transparent, swift, and conclusive investigation into the incidents and bring the perpetrators, facilitators, and local and international sponsors of terrorism to justice in accordance with law.

The House called upon the Federal and Provincial Governments to further strengthen intelligence coordination, border security, and counter-terrorism mechanisms, with special focus on Balochistan.

Annual Urs of Damri Wali Sarkar begins with sacred darbar bathing ceremony

 Bureau Report

MIRPUR: The two-day annual Urs celebrations of the great spiritual leader of the subcontinent, Hazrat Baba Peer Shah Ghazi, also known as Damri Wali Sarkar, have begun. On the occasion of the Urs, the ceremony of bathing the Darbar Alia was held after Maghrib prayers at the Astana of the Khari Sharif Darbar of Hazrat Baba Peer Shah Ghazi, also known as Damri Wali Sarkar.

Deputy Commissioner Raja Muhammad Sadaqat Khan, SSP Khurram Iqbal, Haji Chaudhry Waqas, SP Raja Nadeem Arif, Additional Deputy Commissioner General Naeem Akhtar, Assistant Commissioner Mian Hussam Sajid, Tehsildar Chaudhry Imran Yousuf, Administrator Auqaf Sardar Muhammad Shafiq, Assistant Director Auqaf Zaheeruddin Babar, Allama Dr. Zubair Ahmed Naqshbandi, officers of the Auqaf Department, and other people bathed the Darbar Sharif with rose water and covered it with a chadar. On this occasion, Durood-e-Salaam was specially mentioned and



later, the Naat Khawans concluded the ceremony by reciting the poetry of the Roman Kashmiri Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (RA).

The two-day Urs celebrations will continue till February 3. The

concluding prayer ceremony of the Urs will begin on Tuesday, February 3 at 11 am, in which scholars will address and Naat Khawans will recite the mystical poetry of Hazrat Mian Muhammad Bakhsh (RA). Allama

Dr. Zubair Ahmed Naqshbandi prayed for the elevation of the ranks of religious leaders and the freedom of occupied Kashmir including the state of God-given Pakistan, the glory of the armed forces and the world of Islam.

Preparation of Basant

LAHORE: People buy kites from shop during the preparation for upcoming "Basant Festival" in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

AJK PM vows accelerated development for underserved Haveli region

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, met a representative delegation from Haveli led by contractor Tariq Khan. The delegation included Principal Khalid Khan, Chief Editor Jannat Nazir Ejaz Khan, Haji Khursheed, Haji Rafiq, Shabbir Khan, Alamgir Khan, Dr. Tariq Mahmood, contractor Sharif Khan, Shakeel Khan Yousafzai, Manzoor Khan, Hassan Ejaz Khan, Aamir Rafiq Khan, and others.

While speaking to the delegation,



the Prime Minister said that the development of underdeveloped areas of Azad Kashmir, including Haveli, is the government's top priority. He stated

that the government is taking concrete and practical steps to resolve public issues and ensure the provision of basic facilities.

The Prime Minister added that work on projects related to roads, health, education, and other infrastructure is progressing rapidly, and the people of Haveli will certainly benefit from the fruits of development. He assured the delegation that their issues would be resolved and that immediate instructions would be issued to the relevant departments.

The delegation apprised the Prime Minister of the problems faced by the people of Haveli and expressed confidence in the government's policies, assuring their full cooperation.

Punjab Governor hosts mass wedding ceremony for 35 brides

 Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: 02feb, Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan hosted a mass wedding ceremony for 35 underprivileged brides at the Fatah Jang Sports Stadium, reaffirming the government's commitment to social welfare and inclusion.

The governor personally presented flower bouquets to the brides and bid farewell to the newlywed couples with prayers for a happy and prosperous married life.

Addressing the gathering, Governor Saleem Haider Khan said the office of governor was a sacred trust bestowed by Allah, the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him), and the people of Attock. "My mission is public service," he said,



adding that it was by the grace of Allah that a son of Attock had been entrusted with Punjab's highest constitutional office.

He described the brides as his own daughters and pledged to work for the welfare of marginalized and unheard communities. "There are many respectable families who are unable to marry off their daughters due to limited resources. By the grace of Allah, after Him, I take responsibility for them," he remarked.

Announcing further welfare initiatives, the governor said that 10,000 laptops would be distributed among students of Attock to promote education and digital empowerment. He also announced that the series of mass wedding ceremonies would continue

across the district.

Governor Saleem Haider Khan urged deserving families facing financial hardship to register at Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) offices, assuring them that he would personally ensure dignified marriages for their daughters. He emphasized that assistance would be provided discreetly and with respect.

Sharing his personal background, the governor said he belonged to a middle- and lower-middle-class family. "No daughter will now be left waiting at home due to the inability to arrange dowry or wedding meals," he stated.

Speaking on the occasion, President of the Overseas Business Community, Sardar Zahoor Iqbal Khan (France), announced that he would sponsor the weddings of 20 couples in future mass marriage programmes.

The ceremony was also addressed by the governor's son Faizan Haider Khan, PPP Rawalpindi Division President Ashar Hayat Khan, PPP Attock President Haji Malik Riyasat of Sudhriyal, and former Parliamentary Secretary Asif Ali Malik Advocate.

AJK PM hails overseas Kashmiris as economic backbone and global advocates

 Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, while describing Overseas Kashmiris as a valuable asset, has said that they play a crucial role in strengthening the state's economy and in projecting the Kashmir issue globally. He said this while taking to Information Secretary Pakistan Peoples Party UK and Tamgha-e-Imtiaz nominee Zahid Mughal and Sabir Mughal who called on him here today. Minister for Higher Education Zafar Malik was also present on the occasion. Speaking on the occasion, the PM said that the upcoming Overseas Convention would prove to be an effective platform for including the overseas Kashmiris in the process of state development and solving their problems. He said that practical steps were being taken to further boost the overseas Kashmiris' confidence saying that their suggestions would be incorporated in policy making. On the occasion, Zahid Mughal congratulated the Prime Minister on assuming office and expressed his best wishes. He assured his full cooperation in organizing the Overseas Convention.

Kashmiri Leaders Mourn Death of Azad Kashmir Leader Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry

 Spokesman Report

BRADFORD/UK: Raja Najabat Hussain Sitara-e-Pakistan, Founder Chairman of Jammu and Kashmir Right to Self-Determination Movement International, expressed deep sorrow and grief over the death of former Prime Minister and former President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Quaid Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, saying that the State of Jammu and Kashmir has lost a global ambassador of Kashmiris, a national and international Kashmiri leader and a great hero of the Azad Kashmir Movement today. The people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir, wherever they are in the world, are currently in deep sorrow and grief and are in mourning, organization International Lobby on Kashmir including Sardar Abdul Rehman Khan Patron-in-Chief Jammu Kashmir Self-Determination Movement International (JKSDMI), Raja Najabat Hussain, Star of Pakistan and Founding Chairman (JKSDMI), Muhammad Azam, Central Secretary General (JKSDMI), Naila Sharif, Chairperson (UK), (JKSDMI), Javed Tariq, Secretary General (UK), (JKSDMI), Zeehan Arif, President Youth Wing UK (JKSDMI), Hasnain Zafar, Chairman Yorkshire Region UK (JKSDMI), Muhammad Perey Botta, Director Administration (JKSDMI), Raja Sajid Mahmood, Country Coordinator Pakistan (JKSDMI), Councilor Yasmin Dar, Chairperson International Lobby on Kashmir, Professor Taimur Shafiq, Central Secretary General International Lobby on Kashmir. We all pray that Allah Almighty forgives and grants forgiveness to the leader of Kashmir, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, grants him a high position in Paradise, and grants patience to the bereaved family.



Punjab VCs call for unified push to enhance quality, skills in higher education



 Zain Khan Malghani

MULTAN: Vice chancellors of public sector universities across Punjab on Saturday pledged closer collaboration to improve the quality of higher education, strengthen faculty competencies and equip students with market-relevant skills to meet national and global challenges.

The resolve was expressed at the first Vice Chancellors' Forum of Punjab, hosted by Bahauddin Zakaria University (BZU), Multan. The high-level meet provided a platform for academic leaders to deliberate on academic excellence, innovative teaching practices and the evolving role of universities in producing skilled, ethical and employable graduates.

Participants stressed the need to align higher education with contemporary demands through continuous faculty development, relevant curricula and student-centred learning approaches. Discussions also focused on research-oriented learning and fostering critical thinking and innovation among students.

Vice Chancellor Women University Multan Prof Dr Kalsoom Paracha, who also attended the forum, underscored that quality education is rooted in competent, committed and continuously trained faculty. She said universities must move beyond conventional teaching to nurture creativity, leadership and practical skills.

Attack police Arrest drug dealers

 Raza Naqvi

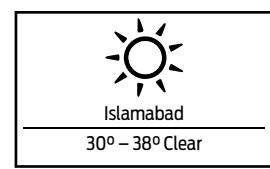
ATTOCK: Attack Police Action: 04 Accused Involved in Drug Peddling Arrested, Heroin, Hashish and Liquor Recovered

According to details, Sub-Inspector Wali Muhammad of Attock Khurd Police Station, along with his team, recovered 1100 grams of heroin from Nassar Nawaz son of Muhammad Nawaz, resident of Faisalabad, during a checking operation.

Similarly, Assistant Sub-Inspector Babar Riaz of Fatah Jang Police Station, along with his team, recovered 1320 grams of hashish from Mumraiz Iqbal son of Muhammad Rafiq, resident of Chasan Wali Dheri, Fatah Jang, during a checking operation.

In another operation, Assistant Sub-Inspector Muzammil Shah of Injra Police Station, while on patrol with his team, recovered 1200 grams of hashish from Muhammad Nasir son of Rustam Khan, resident of Tarap, Tehsil Jand, District Attock.

Meanwhile, Assistant Sub-Inspector Muhammad Faraz Khan of City Attock Police Station, during a patrol, recovered 101


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:39 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:01 pm
Magrib	5:40 pm
Isha	7:05 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 &
& Rescue Services	445122
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	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-99
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	921234-43
CDA	9208301-4
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawalpindi	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8, ...	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8, ...	92266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

First Lady Aseefa urges parents to ensure children's participation in 2026 polio drive



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Aseefa Bhutto Zardari on Monday emphasized the importance of the first nationwide polio vaccination campaign of 2026, urging parents to ensure that all children under the age of five receive the vaccine every time it is offered.

In a post on social media platform X, she said that health workers were going door to door across the country as part of the campaign, calling it a vital step towards protecting children and eliminating polio once and for all.

"The first nationwide polio vaccination drive of 2026 is underway, with health workers going door to door. This campaign is a vital step towards protecting our children and eliminating polio once and for all," she said.

Deputy Commander in Chief of Libyan Armed Forces calls on the Air Chief

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: A high-level defence delegation headed by Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Hafta, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces called on Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, at Air Headquarters, Islamabad. The meeting featured wide-ranging discussions on matters of mutual interest, the evolving regional security landscape and prospects for strengthening bilateral military cooperation.

During the meeting, Chief of the Air Staff underscored the deep-rooted religious & historical bonds between Pakistan and Libya, while highlighting Pakistan Air Force's high state of operational readiness, ongoing modernization and Multi Domain capability development. Emphasizing PAF's thrust on indigenization, technological innovation and human resource development, the Air Chief reaffirmed PAF's resolve to share its professional expertise and operational experience with friendly Air Forces while assuring the visiting delega-

tion of PAF's unwavering support in the capability development of the Libyan Air Force. The delegation was also briefed on PAF's indigenization initiatives being advanced through National Aerospace Science & Technology Park, envisioned as a hub for innovation, public-private collaboration and the development of a robust & self-reliant aerospace ecosystem in Pakistan.

Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Hafta thanked the Air Chief for the warm and gracious welcome extended to him and his delegation. He lauded the high standards of professionalism exhibited by Pakistan Air Force personnel and expressed keen interest in leveraging the operational experience of PAF air & ground crew. Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces also conveyed his desire to further expand bilateral defence cooperation through enhanced joint training initiatives, military exercises and professional exchange programmes.

The visit of the Libyan delegation to Air Headquarters signifies a positive step towards further strengthening bilateral defence cooperation while marking a



renewed chapter of collaboration, mutual trust and defence partnership between the two brotherly nations.

President of Kazakhstan Visit

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan flags displayed on opposite sides of parliament on the occasion of Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev two-day official visit to Pakistan on February 3-4, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Pakistan power loom industry faces closure over stifling solar policy

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: All Pakistan Power Looms Association Central President Abdul Khalil Qandeel Ansari, Chairman Haji Bashir Ahmed Pehlwan, General Secretary Saeed Ahmed Saeedi, Vice Chairman Haji Irsahid Ahmed Qadri, Haji Bashir Ahmed Silk Wale, Haji Mushtaq Ahmed, Muhammad Yunus Ansari, Sanaullah Ansari, Muhammad Ashraf Goga, Rafiqat Munir Ansari, Abdul Wahid Rewari Wale, Haji Abdul Rashid, Haji Nazir Ahmed Ansari, Haji Mubarak Ali, Muhammad Bashir Ahmed, Haji Sabir Ali Ansari, Babu Abdul Khalid, Chaudhry Abdul Ghafoor, Maqbool Ahmed, Abdul Latif Ansari, Haji Abdul Zaqq Ansari, while holding a press conference at the Press Club, said that Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shahbaz Sharif should take immediate notice

of the solarization policy of the Power Division and has practically banned new net metering connections in the Power Division because the already running net metering connections, especially the small industrial connections of the power looms industry, are not being included in the billing of export units and are being used to generate electricity.

There has been a clear viola-

tion of meeting policy. Small industries including power looms industry and small and medium enterprises (SME sector) have been irreparably damaged.

The Prime Minister of Pakistan should take note of the silverization policy of the Power Division. New net meters have been banned. The government has benefited crores of rupees by stopping

net metering, but the power looms industry has suffered losses.

According to the new policy, there is a ban on increasing the load of net metering. The new policy is such that we have to tie you up and kill you.

Power looms are the largest exporter of cloth. First, yarn, then electricity has been made expensive, increasing our production cost.

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Pakistan, UNESCO Agree to Expand Cooperation

Pakistan and UNESCO have reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening collaboration in heritage preservation, cultural promotion, and technical capacity building during a high-level meeting between Director-General UNESCO Dr. Khaled El-Enany and Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture.

The meeting focused on aligning Pakistan's cultural policies with international standards and exploring new avenues of cooperation to safeguard the country's rich cultural legacy.

Director-General UNESCO Dr. Khaled El-Enany lauded Pakistan's efforts for preserving its cultural heritage and acknowledged the work of the National Heritage and Culture Division in promoting and safeguarding historical assets. He emphasized that culture should remain accessible to a wider public, stating that despite diverse traditions, societies are united through shared cultural values. He described culture as a powerful social message and assured UNESCO's continued support to Pakistan in preserving its rich heritage.

Dr. El-Enany highlighted UNESCO's ongoing efforts to simplify heritage preservation processes through digital transformation and improving accessibility to heritage sites. He proposed new initiatives including the promotion of heritage tourism, organization of capacity-building workshops for technical staff, and identification of projects requiring UNESCO's technical assistance, particularly in monument restoration and documentation of traditional arts. He also stressed the importance of strengthening Lok Virsa's role as a national technical hub for future Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) engagements.

Federal Minister warmly welcomed Dr. El-Enany and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to UNESCO's mission of promoting cultural heritage and education. He acknowledged UNESCO's longstanding partnership with Pakistan since 1963, particularly its pivotal role in the preservation of Mohenjo-Daro under the "Save Moenjodaro" campaign.

The Minister highlighted Pakistan's diverse historical legacy, noting that six sites Taxila, Takht-e-Bahi, Makli (Thatta), Lahore Fort and Shalimar Gardens, Rohtas Fort, and Mohenjo-Daro are currently inscribed on UNESCO's World Heritage List. He informed that Pakistan has also placed 25 sites, including Badshahi Mosque, Hiran Minar, Harappa, and Mehrgarh, on the tentative list for future inscription, while the Department of Archaeology has proposed additional sites for consideration.

Referring to Pakistan's ancient civilization, the Minister highlighted the 9,000-year-old archaeological remains at Mehrgarh and shared plans to establish an institution for heritage and museum development in Karachi, which was endorsed by the UNESCO Director-General as a positive regional initiative. He also underscored the importance of Intangible Cultural Heritage as a tool for social cohesion and resilience, noting that the traditional folk singing art "Boreendo" has been inscribed on UNESCO's ICH list for urgent safeguarding.

Trade Tensions in the Trump Era: Why US-India Economic Frictions Are Becoming a Foreign Policy Crisis

Midhah Fatima

The revival of protectionist trade measures during the new Trump administration has put a lot of pressure on the economic ties between the US and India. The trade relationship, which has been strategic for both the countries for over 20 years, has recently been characterized by conflicts over tariffs, imposition of trade restrictions without consultation, and conditioning of policies. Such changes in the trading situation bring up the issue of the sustainability of economic collaboration and the growing conflict between the two nations.

The main issue is that the strategic partnership between the US and India has been displaced by trade disputes. This transformation demonstrates an increasing problem with foreign policy where economic frictions are a reason for the deterioration of relations between the two countries.

The challenges which have arisen due to economic frictions between both the countries are as follows:

Tariff war and trade tensions:

In 2025 Trump introduced a global tariff scheme that imposed a 10 percent tax on US imports, in addition he imposed 26% on India for unfair practices and trade deficits. The situation worsened when the Trump administration imposed an additional 25% reciprocal tariff followed by an additional 25% penalty. This impacted heavily on Indian exports with a drop of an estimate of \$48-50 billion.

Russia, energy policy and sanctions pressure:

India has sharply increased imports of discounted Russian oil since the Ukraine war, citing energy security and inflation control. The Trump administration has tied an additional 25 percent penalty tariff on Indian exports to these purchases, framing them as indirectly funding the Russians War. India calls thus unfair, unjustified and unreasonable pointing out that Western countries continue trade with Russia in key commodities. As a result, energy policy has become a core economic policy friction rather than a foreign policy disagreement.

Investments, supply chains:

Trump-era tariffs have weakened the push to shift global manufacturing from China to India, as higher U.S. duties reduce the appeal of "China+1" strategies based in India. This contradiction sends mixed signals to investors, with strategic rhetoric about deeper ties undermined by restrictive trade policy.

Strategic Trust Deficit:

The weaponisation of trade erodes diplomatic goodwill and casts doubt on the reliability of the US as an economic partner.

Policy Spillover:

Trade disputes are increasingly affecting other areas, such as technological collaboration, immigration policies and skilled labor mobility.

India's policy towards the challenges has been a combination of strategic resistance and selective accommodation. Measures such as the repeal of digital taxes laws, targeted market access concessions, and bilateral negotiations reflect efforts to mitigate economic fallout. Simultaneously, India has maintained firm positions on issues related to strategic autonomy, energy security, and domestic regulatory authority.

The analysis indicates that trade tensions are driven by divergent foreign policy choices rather than economic incompatibility. Trump era trade actions reflect domestic political imperatives rather than a long term mutual economic and strategic cooperation.

• Politicization of trade undermines long term economic cooperation.

• Institutionalized economic engagement cannot be replaced by temporary measures.

• Prolonged tensions risk encouraging India to diversify economic partnerships, thereby reducing US strategic influence in the Indo-Pacific.

The recommendations to stabilize bilateral ties are as follows:

• Revive negotiations for a comprehensive bilateral trade agreement.

• Decouple strategic and security cooperation from trade coercion.

• Establish dispute-resolution mechanisms to prevent unilateral tariff actions.

• Promote predictable and transparent trade rules aligned with global norms.

Trade tensions in the new Trump era have elevated US-India economic friction into a significant policy crisis with strategic consequences. Unless managed through dialogue, institutional mechanisms, and mutual restraint, these frictions risk undermining one of the most consequential partnerships of the 21st century. A shift from transactionalism to strategic economic cooperation is essential for sustaining long term stability and mutual benefit.

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Grammar Rules Should Evolve, Not Be Treated as Law

Ahmad Faraz

To plenty of folks, grammar brings back memories of strict corrections, lines drawn through mistakes, a clear line between correct and incorrect that seems unchangeable. In schools or online debates, it commonly appears as an inflexible set of laws demanding full obedience without exception. Rules like avoiding split infinitives stand firm, ending phrases with prepositions tends to draw criticism, while singular they remain controversial among certain groups. Still, speech does not function like rigid legislation stamped into rock. Living through constant change, this system grows as speakers shape it day by day. When seen as fixed commandments, grammar rules ignore the true nature of English—its flexibility—and weaken its power to express today's realities.

Starting off, knowing the origins of grammar helps clarify their purpose. Though some believe these guidelines follow natural logic, most were actually introduced long ago by scholars who wanted English to mirror Latin more closely. Because Latin relies heavily on word endings to show meaning, its framework differs greatly from how English operates. A well-known restriction—the one about not placing words between "to" and a verb—survives mainly due to Latin's rigid form, where such breaks never occur. Yet clarity often benefits when an infinitive gets split in English. Despite this, the guideline remains more due to long-standing habit and scholarly weight than any real gain in expression.

This distinction matters most when studying language: rules versus real-world patterns. One version sets fixed

ideas about speech, pushing forms chosen long ago without clear reason. Instead of enforcing norms, another method watches what happens naturally among users. Over years, actual practice shapes what becomes accepted—this view holds stronger weight today. Once a way of speaking sticks around because people understand it, it earns its place in the language. So grammar isn't about control—it shows up later, shaped by how people actually talk.

A noticeable shift in grammar shows up in the use of singular they. For many years, people have said things like "Someone left their umbrella," using even when talking about just one person. Although this pattern has deep roots, educators and manuals previously claimed it was wrong, pushing clumsy versions such as "he or she" instead. Nowadays, most leading reference sources accept singular they, seeing it as useful and respectful of diverse identities. Such acceptance grew not from top-down rules, yet from everyday communication demands. Speakers adopted what fit real-life situations more naturally.

Certain people object when grammar shifts over time, claiming such changes bring disorder or even a so-called downfall of speech. Rules loosening worries them—messy expression might follow, along with falling expectations. Still, facts rarely back up this worry. Constant transformation marks English across more than ten centuries, but breakdown never actually happened. Beowulf's era spoke an Old English nearly foreign to anyone now. Yet even Shakespeare sounds distant compared to how people write or speak today. Without shifts in grammar over time, current novels, research papers, and worldwide conversations in English could not exist. Change made the language flexible.

ible enough to carry new ideas across centuries. Staying fixed would have frozen it long ago.

Actually, sticking too closely to old grammar guidelines might blur meaning instead of sharpening it. Take the idea that sentences must never finish with a preposition. Though reworking them is doable, such versions tend to feel stiff or oddly prim. Famously, Winston Churchill poked fun at this habit using the line, "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put." That quip points to something real: everyday speech usually gets ideas across better than strained precision. Clarity matters more than rigid form when words are meant to connect. What counts is being understood—not ticking rule boxes.

One concern worth considering involves how enforcing grammar like a strict code affects people socially. Because rigid enforcement commonly ties speech patterns to assumptions about intellect or background. Dialects outside mainstream norms—like African American Vernacular English or rural forms of English—often get dismissed as wrong. Even though these varieties follow internal logic and structure just as closely as standard versions do. Treating official rules as absolute tends to uphold hierarchy more than clarity. Seeing grammar as adaptable opens space for fairer attitudes toward different ways of communicating.

This idea does not imply a lack of structure or total freedom in language use. Mutual comprehension depends on agreed-upon patterns, particularly within official documents, classrooms, and workplaces. Still, such patterns function better as flexible suggestions than fixed doctrines immune to change. Explaining the reasons behind favoring particular structures in given situations offers greater value compared to dismissing others

outright. Awareness of context shapes choices, giving users control instead of limiting expression.

Nowadays, technology pushes language to shift faster than before. Through texting and platforms connecting people worldwide, fresh words appear alongside altered punctuation and quicker ways to form sentences. Although certain individuals criticize such shifts, others recognize them as inventive solutions shaped by modern interaction. Dropping uppercase letters, treating emojis like speech cues, or mixing talk-like patterns into writing show how expression adjusts when contexts transform. Stiff rules unable to adapt may drift far from how people actually speak and write.

Grammar, at its core, works best when seen as something useful rather than something strict. What it aims to do is make communication clearer, smoother, and suitable for who's listening. If certain rules get in the way of those goals, questioning them makes sense. Speakers shape language more than old books ever could. As life changes, letting grammar shift too helps English stay open, current, and responsive.

Looking back, strict rule-following ignores how language actually moves through time. Change shapes English—not randomly, but alongside shifts in society, culture, communication. Accepting this flow doesn't harm clarity; rather, it supports adaptability. As people shift speech patterns, so should structure—it keeps pace with real usage. Grammar that bends without breaking mirrors life itself: layered, shifting, alive.

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Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraq Al-Awsat)

Kashmir Solidarity Day

Kashmir Solidarity Day is not merely a date on the calendar or a ceremonial observance; it is a living symbol of national consciousness, sustained struggle, and a collective moral commitment. It is the day when informed and conscientious people across Pakistan and around the world reiterate a fundamental truth: the Kashmir issue is not simply a geographical dispute, but a prolonged struggle of a living nation for the right to self-determination, human dignity, and basic freedoms. This day reminds us that silence is the most powerful weapon of oppression, while the voice of truth remains its most effective resistance.

History bears witness to the fact that Kashmir has long possessed a distinct civilizational, cultural, and spiritual identity. The manner in which the Kashmiri dispute reached the halls of the United Nations after the partition of the subcontinent itself proves that this conflict was international in nature from the very beginning. The resolutions of the United Nations Security Council still exist, affirming the Kashmiri people's right to decide their future through a free and fair plebiscite. Yet, tragically, the imbalance of power, global interests, and persistent diplomatic apathy have reduced these resolutions to mere words on paper.

The role of the international community in this context deserves serious scrutiny. The modern world presents itself as a champion of human rights, democracy, and the rule of law, yet in the case of Kashmir, these very principles often appear compromised by double standards. Economic interests, arms markets, and geostrategic alliances are frequently prioritized over human lives. Kashmir Solidarity Day thus serves as a silent yet powerful indictment of this global hypocrisy, reminding the world that justice loses its meaning when it becomes selective.

The media and the digital sphere have added a

new dimension to this struggle. Today, Kashmiri youth are not confined to stones and slogans alone; they are using social media, documented evidence, and international platforms to make their voices heard. Despite internet shutdowns, information blockades, and systematic censorship, the inherent nature of truth is such that it ultimately finds its way through. Kashmir Solidarity Day symbolizes the continuity and resilience of that truth.

This day also compels us to reflect upon our own responsibilities. Mere slogans, banners, or one-day observances are not sufficient to fulfill the true spirit of solidarity. Genuine solidarity demands sustained awareness, continuous engagement, and practical diplomatic and intellectual efforts. Educational institutions, intellectual circles, the media, and civil society must play an active role in keeping this issue alive, so that Kashmir does not fade into a passing headline but remains a permanent question for the global conscience.

Kashmir Solidarity Day further teaches us that the struggle for freedom is not confined to physical borders alone; it is also fought on the fronts of thought, the pen, and moral conduct. It instills the courage to stand with the oppressed, to speak the truth, and to raise a voice against injustice. History testifies that when nations remain steadfast in their ethical stance, even the fortresses of power eventually begin to tremble.

Ultimately, Kashmir Solidarity Day is a day of hope that the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people will not be in vain; hope that the darker the night of oppression, the closer the dawn of justice; and hope rooted in the conviction that the collective voice of humanity will one day open those closed doors behind which an entire nation awaits its freedom.

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

Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhani

Maritime Security Exercise Sea Guard-2026 commences in Karachi

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Opening brief of Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 was held under the auspices of Pakistan Navy at Karachi. Commander Coast, Vice Admiral Faisal Amin graced the occasion as Chief Guest. The third of its series, Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 is scheduled from 2-9 Feb 26.

The exercise is a national level effort by Pakistan Navy to bring together representatives of diverse maritime sector ranging from shipping, fishing, law enforcement and private sector entities to collectively counter multi-faceted challenges in maritime arena.

Exercise SEA GUARD 26 aims to synergize the efforts of all stakeholders to ensure safety and security within the maritime zones of Pakistan and beyond. The activity includes conduct of various scenario based exercises along with table top discussions for rehearsing and improving mechanism of maritime protection along Pakistan's



coastline. During the opening brief, participants were also apprised about working methodology and efficacy of Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC).

Vice Admiral Faisal Amin applauded the efforts of all stakeholders for participating in this national level exercise and acknowledged the proactive role of media in promoting maritime aware-

ness at national level. Pakistan Navy officials, leadership of government sector organizations and representatives from private and fishing sector participated in the event.

Pakistan High Commission London observes Kashmir Solidarity Day



Chaudhry Tabraiz Arafah

LONDON: The Kashmir Solidarity Day was observed at the Pakistan High Commission in London to express solidarity with the people of Illegally Occupied Indian Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) and to commemorate the sacrifices in their struggle for self-determination.

The event was attended by members of the UK Parliament, human rights activists, political activists and prominent Kashmiri leaders in the UK, as well as members of the Pakistani diaspora in the UK.

Special guest speakers included Engineer Amir Muqam, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs

and Gilgit Baltistan, and Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, Chairman of the Kashmir Committee, who participated in the event virtually from Pakistan.

The prominent guest speakers included MP Yasmin Qureshi, MP Afzal Khan, MP Adnan Hussain, Lord Qurban Hussain, former MP Khalid Mahmood, Chairperson JKSDMI Raja Nazabat Hussain, Information Secretary Tehreek-e-Kashmir (UK) Adv. Rehana Ali, Chairman Kashmir Council Europe Ali Raza Syed, Cllr Muhammad Sadiq, former Mayor of Sutton (UK), Cllr Amjad Abbasi, and Shamim Shawl Executive Member of the All Parties Hurriyat Conference.

Engineer Amir Muqam, Federal

Minister for Kashmir Affairs & Gilgit-Baltistan, said, "Kashmir is not an internal matter of India; it is an internationally recognized dispute. Pakistan will continue to raise the voice for the Kashmiri people at every global forum until justice is delivered."

Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, Chairman Kashmir Committee, said "The people of Kashmir have paid an immense price for their demand for freedom. Their voices must not be ignored, and their suffering must not be forgotten."

Addressing the seminar, Dr Mohammad Faisal, Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, stated that Pakistan has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution of

the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions and the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

Special prayers were offered for Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, President AJK for his long life contributions to the cause of Kashmir.

Earlier, the High Commissioner, along with prominent Kashmiri leaders based in UK, a large number of Pakistani Diaspora and media, visited the photo exhibition arranged by Pakistan High Commission London. The photo exhibition portrayed pictorial representation of the atrocities being inflicted upon the innocent people of Jammu & Kashmir.

Dr Mohammad Faisal, Pakistan's High Commissioner to the UK, stated that Pakistan has consistently advocated for a peaceful resolution of

Kanysh Satbayev Scientific and Educational Center launched at NUST

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Kanysh Satbayev Scientific and Educational Center was formally inaugurated on Monday at the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), marking a significant milestone in strengthening academic and scientific cooperation between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

The center was inaugurated by Kazakhstan's Minister for Science and Higher Education, Mr. Sayasat Nurbek, during his official visit to Pakistan. Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Khalid Hussain Magsi,

Rector NUST Dr. Muhammad Zahid Latif, senior officials, academicians, and representatives from both countries were also present on the occasion.

Speaking at the ceremony, Federal Minister for Science and Technology Mr. Khalid Hussain Magsi said the establishment of the Kanysh Satbayev Scientific and Educational Center reflects Pakistan's commitment to strengthening international academic cooperation.

He noted that such initiatives would promote joint research, innovation, and knowledge exchange, while creating new opportunities for students and faculty of both countries.

Established in collaboration with Kazakhstan's Satbayev University, the center aims to serve as a hub for scientific research, academic exchange, and cultural understanding.

The establishment of the Kanysh Satbayev Scientific and Educational Center is expected to open new avenues for joint degree programs, faculty and student exchanges, scientific conferences, and support for startups and innovative projects, further strengthening academic and cultural ties between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

UAJK Holds Condolence Ceremony for Late President Barrister Sultan Mahmood

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The University of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (UAJK) held a solemn condolence and prayer ceremony at the University Administration Block to pay rich tribute to the late President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Chancellor of UAJK, Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, and to pray for the eternal peace of his departed soul.

The ceremony was attended by Registrar UAJK Prof. Dr. Saadat Hanif Dar, Director Finance Prof. Dr. Muhammad Basharat, Director Planning Prof. Dr. Ansar Yasin, Controller of Examinations Dr. Basharat Ahmed, President of the UAJK Administrative Staff Association Israr Saeed Qadri, along with senior univer-

sity officers and a large number of members of the administrative staff.

Special prayers were offered for the forgiveness and elevation of ranks of the late President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. Prayers were also offered for the departed relatives of UAJK Administrative Staff Association General Secretary Raja Siraj and the late father of Muhammad Nadeem Iqbal, Senior Clerk.

Speaking on the occasion, the university's principal officers described the demise of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry as a profound national loss, stating that his lifelong services for the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and his unwavering commitment to the Kashmir

cause would remain a guiding legacy for future generations. They emphasized that the late President played a pivotal role in projecting the Kashmir dispute at international forums and in highlighting human rights violations against the oppressed people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Registrar UAJK Prof. Dr. Saadat Hanif Dar remarked that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry would be remembered for his statesmanship, political wisdom, and relentless advocacy for the Kashmir cause at the global level. He said that the university deeply mourns the loss of a visionary leader who remained closely associated with academic institutions and consistently supported

the role of education in nation-building.

Addressing the gathering after the ceremony, President of the UAJK Administrative Staff Association Israr Saeed Qadri

expressed heartfelt grief over the passing of the late President and said that with his demise, the Kashmiri nation has lost a seasoned, farsighted, and principled political leader. He added

that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry devoted his political career to the struggle for the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people and remained an influential voice for the oppressed

Kashmiris across the world. The condolence and prayer ceremony concluded with collective supplications and expressions of solidarity with the bereaved family.

Global Scientific Cooperation urged to combat climate change, food and energy challenges

News Desk



ISLAMABAD: National and international educationists and scientists have emphasized that interdisciplinary research and global scientific cooperation are indispensable to address worldwide challenges such as climate change, food security, energy and health. Speakers at the inaugural session of the first international conference titled "Frontiers in Science" held at Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU) stressed the need to adopt a comprehensive and collective policy to align modern scientific research with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

The speakers noted that the impacts of climate change have now become clearly evident. The winter season has shortened while summers have become longer and significant changes have occurred in rainfall patterns, adversely affecting the country's overall climate direction. They stated that these challenges cannot be resolved through individual efforts alone, rather the world must think and act as a single unit by adopting a collective strategy.

On this occasion, the speakers also highlighted the importance of seeking guidance from the Holy Qur'an, stating that its principles are universal and timeless and contain solutions to the problems of the modern era.

The chief guest of the inaugural ceremony was Prof. Dr. Akmal, Chairman of the Pakistan Science Foundation. Other key-note speakers included Vice Chancellor of the University of Narowal Prof. Dr. Tariq Mahmood, former Vice Chancellor of the University of Sargodha Prof. Dr. Muhammad Akram, Vice Chancellor of AIOU Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood, and Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Prof. Dr. Sher Muhammad.

In his address, Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Nasir Mahmood said that the university's students possess immense potential and there is a need to translate their creative ideas and research projects into practical applications, convert them into business models and connect them with the market. This, he said would create employment opportunities for students and contribute to the country's economic development.

He further stated that in the present era, the role of universities is no longer limited to teaching alone; rather, they must act as an effective bridge between research, innovation and policymaking. The goals of sustainable development, environmental protection and social welfare can only be achieved when scientific research is linked with ground realities and societal needs.

Dean, Faculty of Sciences, Professor Dr. Sher Muhammad said that the conference is an important step toward promoting modern scientific trends, opening new horizons of research and strengthening global collaboration. Interdisciplinary cooperation, he added, not only improves the quality of research but also ensures that its practical benefits are directly transferred to society.

According to Conference Secretary Dr. Saima Qadeer, the two-day international conference includes keynote addresses by prominent national and international scientists, thematic sessions, presentations of research papers and policy dialogues. These activities aim to strengthen the link between science and society, highlight modern scientific advancements, empower young researchers and innovators and promote global academic and research partnerships.



Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
185,057.83	184,174.48
Day's High	Day's Low
185,611.72	182,792.39
Index Value	Change
28,593,790,770	+883.35
Percentage	Time
+0.48%	2 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,341.56	+118.02
Percentage	Time

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,372.97	+480.50
Percentage	Time
+0.98%	2 Feb, 12:04 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
52,655.18	-667.67
Percentage	Time

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	192.56	196.73
Bahrain Dinar	743.95	753.48
Canadian Dollar	203.88	207.42
China Yuan	38.00	40
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	331.97	336.38
Hong Kong Dollar	35.50	36.38
Indian Rupee	2.80	3.31
Japanese Yen	1.7954	1.8958
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.00	917.46
Malaysian Ringgit	66.5	69.25
New Zealand \$	166.66	170.57
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.65	738.18
Qatari Riyal	76.12	79.12
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.35
Singapore Dollar	218.61	223.55
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	360.36	365.37
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.85
U.A.E Dirham	76.50	77.30
UK Pound Sterling	382.98	387.45
US Dollar	280.65	282.25

TCL Expands Free AC Installation Service to 40 Cities Across Pakistan

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: TCL, Pakistan's leading consumer electronics brand, has announced the expansion of its Free AC Installation Service to 40 cities nationwide, reinforcing its commitment to delivering convenience, comfort, and hassle-free ownership to customers nationwide.

As part of this initiative, TCL is offering free installation on all its air conditioner models, ensuring consumers enjoy complete peace of mind from purchase to setup, with no hidden costs. The service now covers major cities including Karachi, Lahore, Islamabad, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Sialkot, Multan, Gujranwala, and Peshawar, along with many others across Pakistan.

The free installation offer applies to TCL's most popular air conditioner models, including the FreshIN Series, T5 Smart Series, T3 Pro Series, and Elite Series. Whether you're looking for healthier indoor air, energy-efficient smart cooling, powerful performance, or a premium design, TCL has a model to suit your lifestyle. FreshIN Technology introduces fresh, purified outdoor air into your space, ensuring a healthier and more comfortable cooling experience, while T3 Technology delivers reliable cooling performance and is specially designed to perform efficiently even in harsh and high-heat climates.

Commerce Desk

PAKISTAN: Payoneer Global Inc. ("Payoneer" or the Company) (NASDAQ: PAYO), the global financial technology company powering business growth across borders, today announced the expansion of its global payment platform with new local collection capabilities in Indonesia and enhanced local collection services in Mexico.

The expanded capabilities enable customers to transact and receive funds from local buyers and e-com-

Pakistan, Uzbekistan reaffirms commitment to deepening strategic economic Partnership at 10th IGC session

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The 10th Session of the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Intergovernmental Commission (IGC) on Trade, Economic, and Scientific-Technical Cooperation was held under the co-chairmanship, Haroon Akhtar Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister for Industries and Production, and Laziz Kudratov, Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan in Islamabad.

The engagement enabled a comprehensive review of bilateral relations and established a forward-looking roadmap to strengthen joint efforts in major economic and social sectors, said a release issued here on Monday.

Pakistan, Uzbekistan reaffirms commitment to deepening strategic economic Partnership at 10th IGC session

Both sides expressed satisfaction over the steady progress achieved since the previous IGC session in 2025 and reaffirmed their resolve to expand bilateral trade, investment, and economic engagement.



The Parties underscored the importance of the Preferential Trade Agreement, welcomed progress under Phase II concessions, and agreed to expedite institutional mechanisms

to achieve the agreed target of \$2 billion in bilateral trade.

Emphasis was placed on trade facilitation, improved logistics, customs digitalization, transit trade cooperation, development of regional trade corridors, and enhanced business-to-business engagement, supported by improved visa facilitation for business communities.

Both sides further agreed to establish the inaugural Joint Working Group on labor relations, tasked with addressing labor mobility, skills development, workplace safety, and practical considerations linked to employment visas.

The Government of Pakistan expressed satisfaction with the outcomes of the 10th IGC session, noting that the agreed decisions reflect a shared commitment to strengthening bilateral cooperation across all priority sectors.

Both sides agreed to hold the 11th Session of the Intergovernmental Commission in Tashkent, on dates to be mutually agreed through diplomatic channels.

Meeting

ABU DHABI: Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and HRD, Chaudhry Salik Hussain, meeting with H.E. Rabab Abdullah Al-Osaimi, Director-General of Kuwait's Public Authority for Manpower, on the sidelines of the Abu Dhabi Dialogue 2026 on Monday.



Photo: PID

PQAMC's Monthly Income Plan Maintains Strong Returns with PKR 1.200 Dividend

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pak-Qatar Asset Management Company Limited (PQAMC), a leading dedicated Islamic asset management company in Pakistan, has announced a monthly dividend of PKR 1.200 per unit for its Pak-Qatar Monthly Income Plan (PQMIP) for January 2026.

Mr. Farhan Shaukat, Chief Executive Officer of PQAMC, approved the dividend distribution under authority delegated by the Board of Directors.

Investors can view PQMIP's performance on the Mutual Funds Association of Pakistan (MFAP) website.

"We are pleased to announce this distribution to PQMIP unit-holders," said

ABHI Microfinance Bank, DigiKhata partner to unlock financing for SMEs

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: ABHI Microfinance Bank has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with DigiKhata, a leading digital ledger platform used by small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to enable structured financing solutions for businesses operating on DigiKhata's platform.

The partnership is designed to connect digitally active SMEs with formal financial services, allowing eligible merchants and businesses on DigiKhata to access financing through ABHI Microfinance Bank.

Commenting on the approval, Amer Aziz, Chief Executive Officer of HBL Zarai, said: "Approval as an Agricultural Services Provider under the 'Zarkhez-e', Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme reflects confidence in HBL Zarai's integrated and execution-driven model. Our role is to ensure that agricultural finance translates into real productivity, transparency, and improved farmer incomes through services delivered on ground."

Small businesses today are generating valuable financial data through digital tools, but access to formal credit has often remained out of reach.

Mariam Pervaiz, CCO, ABHI Microfinance Bank, said the collaboration reflects the Bank's focus on empowering small businesses through technology-driven finance.

Adnan Aslam, CEO, DigiKhata, highlighted the importance of linking digital record-keeping with access to capital.

"Small businesses today are generating valuable financial data through digital tools, but access to formal credit has often remained out of reach."

HBL Zarai Approved as Agricultural Services Provider under 'Zarkhez-e', Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), through the Pakistan Banks Association (PBA), has conveyed its no objection to onboarding HBL Zarai Services Limited (HBL Zarai) as an approved Agricultural Services Provider (ASP) under the 'Zarkhez-e', Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme. The approval enables participating banks to facilitate structured in-kind agricultural financing, strengthening transparency and improving farmer economics through productive service delivery.

Commenting on the significance of structured in-kind financing, Saleem Ullah, Deputy Governor State Bank of Pakistan, said: "The 'Zarkhez-e', Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme is designed to ensure that agricultural financing is deployed productively and transparently along with



tural credit."

Zafar Masud, Chairman Pakistan Banks Association, added: "The onboarding of integrated Agricultural Services Providers under the scheme enables banks to collaborate with credible execution partners. This model promotes responsible financing while supporting farmers with access to essential agricultural services through structured delivery mechanisms."

Commenting on the approval, Amer Aziz, Chief Executive Officer of HBL Zarai, said: "Approval as an Agricultural Services Provider under the 'Zarkhez-e', Asaan Digital Zarai Qarza Scheme reflects confidence in HBL Zarai's integrated and execution-driven model. Our role is to ensure that agricultural finance translates into real productivity, transparency, and improved farmer incomes through services delivered on ground."

Agri-advisory services to enhance farmers' productivity. In-kind financing, supported by approved service providers strengthens oversight, improves outcomes for farmers, and enhances the effectiveness of agricultural

and execution-driven model. Our role is to ensure that agricultural finance translates into real productivity, transparency, and improved farmer incomes through services delivered on ground."

Small businesses today are generating valuable financial data through digital tools, but access to formal credit has often remained out of reach.

Mariam Pervaiz, CCO, ABHI Microfinance Bank, said the collaboration reflects the Bank's focus on empowering small businesses through technology-driven finance.

Adnan Aslam, CEO, DigiKhata, highlighted the importance of linking digital record-keeping with access to capital.

"Small businesses today are generating valuable financial data through digital tools, but access to formal credit has often remained out of reach."

Payoneer Expands Capabilities in Mexico and Indonesia

Commerce Desk

PAKISTAN: Payoneer Global Inc. ("Payoneer" or the Company) (NASDAQ: PAYO), the global financial technology company powering business growth across borders, today announced the expansion of its global payment platform with new local collection capabilities in Indonesia and enhanced local collection services in Mexico.

The expanded capabilities enable customers to transact and receive funds from local buyers and e-com-

merce platforms more quickly and cost-effectively, supporting businesses as global trade flows continue to shift toward high-potential emerging markets.

Payoneer empowers small and medium-sized businesses ("SMBs") in more than 190 countries and territories, including Pakistan, to do business globally, whether selling on the world's largest e-commerce marketplaces or directly to other businesses.

A core pillar of Payoneer's offering is enabling SMBs to operate locally in the markets they serve.

As part of this strategy, and in collaboration with local providers, Payoneer has launched local collection capabilities in Indonesia and Mexico. These additions build on Payoneer's existing local collection infrastructure across North America, Europe, Latin America, and Asia Pacific, helping customers access new demand and expand across fast-growing and strategic trade corridors.

Indonesia is the largest e-commerce market in Southeast Asia, accounting for more than half of total online business volume within



the Association of Southeast Asian Nations bloc. With this launch, Payoneer enables SMBs to collect

funds directly from local marketplaces and businesses in Indonesia, offering greater control over foreign exchange management and access to a rapidly expanding market.

In Mexico, Payoneer's enhanced Mexican peso (MXN) collection services reduce friction for global sellers entering the market while supporting evolving international demand. Customers can now collect funds across multiple channels, including local collections from major e-commerce marketplaces.

Nagesh Devata, Senior Vice President, APAC at Payoneer, said, "Global trade continues to evolve as businesses adapt to changing macroeconomic conditions and trade dynamics. By expanding our local collection capabilities in key markets like Mexico and Indonesia, we are strengthening Payoneer's global infrastructure to help businesses scale with confidence. These developments also open new growth avenues for Pakistani entrepreneurs and exporters looking to access high-demand markets and diversify their international customer base."

Pakistan Shaheens Cricket Squad Announced For White-Ball Series Against England Lions

By Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has announced the 16-member Pakistan Shaheens squad for the upcoming T20 and 50-over series against England Lions in Abu Dhabi. The three-match T20 series will begin on Friday, 20 February, while the five-match 50-over series will be played from 27 February to 9 March.

All the matches are set to take place at the Stadium Oval in Abu Dhabi. The Pakistan Shaheens squad will take part in a seven-day training camp from 11-17 February in Karachi before departing for United Arab Emirates.

Left-hand batter Shamyl Hussain is set to lead the Shaheens in both the T20 and 50-over series, while in the batting

department he will be joined by Abdul Samad, Hasan Nawaz, player of the tournament in ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars Maaz Sadaqat and left-hand batter Saad Khan.

Pakistan U19 batter Sameer Minhas has also received the call-up for both the series along with his brother Arafat Minhas as the duo make strong strides following their appearances in the ICC U19 World Cup and ACC Men's Asia Cup Rising Stars, respectively.

Rohail Nazir and Saad Baig will take up the wicket-keeping duties, while Arafat, leg-spinner Saad Masood and left-arm wrist spinner Sufyan Moqim form the spin contingent for the Shaheens.

Among the fast bowlers Pakistan U19 pacer Ali Raza will be joined by Ahmed



Player support personnel:

Sarfraz Ahmed (mentor & team manager), Ijaz Ahmed Jnr (head coach), Mansoor Amjad (fielding coach), Aizaz Cheema (bowling coach), Mohammad Tahir (physiotherapist) and Usman Hashmi (performance analyst).

Pakistan Shaheens v England Lions series schedule: (All matches at Stadium Oval, Abu Dhabi)

1st T20 – 20 February
2nd T20 – 22 February
3rd T20 – 24 February
1st 50-over – 27 February
2nd 50-over – 1 March
3rd 50-over – 4 March
4th 50-over – 6 March
5th 50-over – 9 March

Pakistan Shaheens squad:

Shamyl Hussain (captain), Abdul Samad, Arafat Minhas, Ahmed Daniyal, Akif Javed, Ali Raza, Hasan Nawaz, Maaz Sadaqat, Mohammad Salman, Rohail Nazir (wk), Saad Baig (wk), Saad Khan, Saad Masood, Sameer Minhas, Shahid Aziz, and Sufyan Moqim.

Rs 4 lakh cash prize awarded to female taekwondo player

By Sports Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Minister for Sports and Youth Affairs Malik Faisal Ayub Khokhar, on the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, presented a cheque of Rs 3 lakh to 14-year-old international taekwondo star Ayesha Ayaz.

The provincial minister presented the cheque to Ayesha Ayaz during a meeting held at the National Hockey Stadium on Monday. He also awarded a cash prize of Rs one lakh from his own pocket to encourage the young athlete from Swat.

Vice-Chairman Sports Board Punjab Malik Sulaiman, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab M Ali and other officials concerned were also present on this occasion.

Praising the initiatives of Punjab CM, Faisal Khokhar said that CM Punjab



firmly believes in the promotion of sports and the patronage of young talented athletes. "It is due to her vision and commitment that Pakistani female athletes are winning laurels in international sports competitions," he said.

Punjab Minister for Sports said that Ayesha is not only the daughter of Swat but the pride of the entire nation. He said that at the age of just 14, Ayesha

has won 11 international medals and more than 150 medals overall which is an exceptional feat that makes her Pakistan's youngest and most successful international taekwondo player.

He said that Ayesha has the potential to raise Pakistan's flag at the Olympic Games and reaffirmed that patronizing such talented athletes is the top priority of Punjab government.

Faisal Khokhar also paid rich tribute to Ayesha's father Ayaz Khan, who is also her coach. He acknowledged Ayaz's tireless efforts and professional training as the foundation of Ayesha's remarkable success.

Ayesha Ayaz, on the occasion, expressed her gratitude to Punjab CM Maryam Nawaz and provincial minister for sports for their encouragement. She said that she will try her best to win more international titles for the country in future as well.



deputy commissioner was briefed on the overall arrangements of the campaign, including team deployment, field monitoring mechanisms and the set targets. Speaking on the occasion, the deputy commissioner said that the anti-polio campaign in Toba Tek Singh district will continue from February 02 to February 05, 2026. During the campaign, a target has been set to administer polio drops to 433,838 children under the age of five. He added that to ensure the success of the campaign, 355 area in-charges, 1,916 mobile teams, 106 fixed teams and 49 transit teams have been consti-

tuted. These teams will conduct door-to-door visits across the district, while special teams have also been deployed at bus stands, railway stations and other key public places. The deputy commissioner appealed to parents to fully cooperate with polio teams and ensure that all children under the age of five receive polio drops. He stressed that all relevant

departments would work in close coordination for the eradication of polio and that no negligence would be tolerated during the campaign. He concluded by stating that safeguarding the future of children is a collective responsibility and expressed confidence that the anti-polio campaign in Toba Tek Singh would achieve its objectives successfully.

DC Umar Abbas Mela inaugurates anti-polio drive

By Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Deputy Commissioner Toba Tek Singh Umar Abbas Mela formally inaugurated the anti-polio campaign at City Hospital Toba Tek Singh by administering polio drops to children. On the occasion, he reaffirmed the district administration's commitment to the complete eradication of polio. The inaugural ceremony was attended by Chief Executive Officer Health Dr Kashif Nadeem, District Health Officer Dr Faizan Arshad along with other officers and staff of the health department. The

deputy commissioner was briefed on the overall arrangements of the campaign, including team deployment, field monitoring mechanisms and the set targets. Speaking on the occasion, the deputy commissioner said that the anti-polio campaign in Toba Tek Singh district will continue from February 02 to February 05, 2026. During the campaign, a target has been set to administer polio drops to 433,838 children under the age of five. He added that to ensure the success of the campaign, 355 area in-charges, 1,916 mobile teams, 106 fixed teams and 49 transit teams have been consti-

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Mr. Qamar Raza appreciated Mazhar Thathal's vision and initiatives aimed at promoting Pakistan's trade and business interests globally. He acknowledged GTEC's efforts to create inclusive platforms that connect overseas Pakistanis with local enterprises and investment opportunities.

Mazhar Thathal reaffirmed GTEC's commitment to working closely with the Pakistan Overseas Foundation to facilitate trade, encourage diaspora engagement, and contribute to sustainable economic growth through expanded international market access.

Mazhar Thathal Meets Syed Qamar Raza Chairman BOG Pakistan Overseas Foundation

By Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mazhar Thathal, Chairman of Global Trade Expo Centre (GTEC), held a cordial meeting with Mr. Syed Qamar Raza, Chairman Board of Governors (BOG), Pakistan Overseas Foundation, to discuss mechanisms for facilitating overseas trade and strengthening engagement with the Pakistani diaspora.

The meeting focused on promoting cooperation between overseas Pakistanis and domestic businesses, with particular emphasis on supporting exporters, SMEs, and manufacturers in accessing international markets. Both sides discussed opportunities for overseas Pakistani busi-



ness development and the role of global trade platforms in enhancing Pakistan's international trade presence.

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RCAK Yellow Triumph in RCAK Challenge Cup U-17 Cricket Tournament



By Sports Desk

KARACHI: One more match were decided in the RCAK Challenge Cup Under-17 Cricket Tournament here at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad.

The highlights of the days play was some good batting by Muhammad Yaqoob Sonja 81, Ashar ullah Khan 75, Sagheer Ahmed 61 and Uzair Khan 56.

Scores in Brief:

RCAK Under-17 Yellow defeated RCAK Under-17 Whites by 4 Wickets at Jinnah College Ground Nazimabad. RCAK Under-17 Whites 241/7 in 40 overs. Muhammad Yaqoob Sonja 81 11x4, Uzair Khan 56 7x4 2x6, Abdul Moiz 28, Saad Murtaza 19, Darain Faraz (rb) 3/49, Abdul Aziz (sla) 2/48. RCAK Yellow 246/6 in 38.2 overs. Ashar ullah Khan 75 9x4 2x6, Sagheer Ahmed 61 8x4 2x6, Sahabzada Talah Afridi 43 8x4, Jawad Ahmed (sla) 3/31, Abdullah Ahmed Butt (mf) 2/48.

DIB Celebrates Indoor Racing Event of International Inter School Rowing Regatta

By News Desk

KARACHI: DIB Pakistan marked a key highlight of the 18th International Inter School Annual Rowing Regatta with the Indoor Rowing Competition, culminating in a medal distribution ceremony.

The indoor racing event brought together young rowers competing across various age groups in a test of endurance, strength, and technique, offering an inclusive and high-energy platform that complements the on-water races. Winners were awarded medals by Muhammad Ali Gufaraz, CEO DIB, acknowledging both competitive excellence and the commitment demonstrated by participants throughout the event.

Speaking at the ceremony, Muhammad Ali Gufaraz emphasized the importance of providing structured, positive platforms that encourage youth participation in sport and reinforce healthy habits from an early age. "Events like the indoor rowing competition reflect the power of sport to bring young people together in an environment that rewards effort, discipline, and perseverance," said Muhammad Ali Gufaraz.

The indoor racing segment has become an integral part of the Regatta, enabling broader participation while showcasing rowing as an accessible and performance-driven sport. It also reinforces the Karachi Boat Club's longstanding commitment to developing rowing talent through world-class facilities, coaching, and safety standards. The Regatta brings together more than 600 student athletes from over 25 schools, universities, and clubs from Pakistan and abroad, fostering cross-cultural exchange and international sporting camaraderie while it continues to strengthen Pakistan's presence on the regional and global rowing calendar.

ICC issues warning to Pakistan over boycotting India clash

DUBAI: The International Cricket Council (ICC) on Sunday addressed Pakistan's decision to boycott their T20 World Cup 2026 clash against India, warning that "selective participation" could have serious implications for the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB).

Pakistan were originally scheduled to face arch-rivals India on February 15 in Colombo during the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, which will be held in India and Sri Lanka from February 7 to March 8.

However, the Government of Pakistan announced on Sunday that the national team will take part in the tournament but will not play India.

Within hours of the government's announcement, the ICC released a strongly worded statement, clarifying that it has not yet received official communication from the PCB regarding the matter.

"The ICC notes the statement that the government of Pakistan has made regarding the decision to instruct its national team to selectively participate in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026," the ICC said in a statement.

"While the ICC awaits official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), this position of selective participation is difficult to reconcile with the fundamental premise of a global sporting event where all qualified teams are expected to compete on equal terms per the event schedule."

The ICC further stressed that its tournaments are built on sporting integrity and fairness, warning that refusing to play a particular opponent undermines the very foundation of international competition.

"ICC tournaments are built on sporting integrity, competitiveness, consistency and fairness, and selective participation undermines the spirit and sanctity of the competitions," it added.

Although the ICC acknowledged the role governments play in national policy decisions, it maintained that the move is not in the sport's best interests and could hurt cricket fans, including millions in Pakistan.

"While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan," the statement continued.

In a clear warning aimed at the PCB, the ICC urged Pakistan's cricket authorities to reflect on the long-term consequences of such a stance. "The ICC hopes that the PCB will consider the significant and long-term implications for cricket in its own country as this is likely to impact the global cricket ecosystem, which it is itself a member and beneficiary of," it said.

The governing body also called on the PCB to find a solution that safeguards the tournament and the interests of all stakeholders.

"The ICC's priority remains the successful delivery of the ICC Men's T20 World Cup, which should also be the responsibility of all its members, including the PCB," the ICC further stated.

"It expects the PCB to explore a mutually acceptable resolution, which protects the interests of all stakeholders."

Pakistan have been placed in Group A alongside India, Namibia, the Netherlands and the USA, and are set to play all their matches in Sri Lanka under the tournament's hosting model. The Green Shirts will open their campaign against the Netherlands on February 7, followed by matches against the USA on February 10 and Namibia on February 18.

Meeting with the Wafi Energy Pakistan delegation

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb holding a meeting at the Finance Division with the Wafi Energy Pakistan Ltd delegation led by Mr. Javaid Akhtar, Chief Finance Officer, Asyad Group (Board Member), Wafi Energy Pakistan Ltd, and others.



Aurangzeb reaffirms stability, stronger FX as Wafi Energy signals \$100m investment

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday reaffirmed the government's commitment to sustaining macroeconomic stability, strengthening foreign exchange buffers, and enhancing investor confidence.

He reiterated this during a meeting with a delegation of Wafi Energy Pakistan Ltd, which signaled a potential investment of up to USD 100

million in Pakistan over the next two to three years, a news release said.

The delegation, led by Javaid Akhtar Chief Finance Officer Asyad Group (Board Member), included Zubair Shaikh, Chief Executive Officer and Zarrar Mahmud Chief Finance Officer of Wafi Energy Pakistan Ltd.

The interaction provided an opportunity to review the company's current operations, future investment outlook, and matters relevant to the oil marketing and energy sector.

During the meeting, the Finance Minister emphasized that sustained macroeconomic stability remained the cornerstone of the government's economic strategy and was essential for maintaining investor confidence.

He noted that improvements in foreign exchange availability were a direct outcome of broader macroeconomic discipline and reforms, and that strengthening external buffers will enable smoother facilitation of legitimate business trans-

actions, including dividend repatriation and cross-border payments.

The Finance Minister observed that improving macroeconomic indicators were already translating into greater confidence among both domestic and foreign investors, and underscored that such developments represent fundamental elements of a healthy investment climate.

He highlighted that local investor participation played an important role in further encouraging foreign invest-

ment inflows.

The discussion also covered the role of public-private partnership models and structured finance as effective mechanisms for delivering large-scale infrastructure projects.

Aurangzeb noted that successful experiences at the provincial level demonstrate the potential of such models and emphasized the need to further encourage structured finance solutions and stronger engagement with the banking sector to support infrastructure development.

Pakistan will leave no stone unturned for Kashmiris, Amir Muqam invites nationwide solidarity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam on Monday invited all stakeholders and citizens to show solidarity with the Kashmiri people, reaffirming that Pakistan will continue to raise the Kashmir issue at every forum until the Kashmiris are granted their rightful rights.

Ahead of February 5, the Minister, in a special video message on PTV, underscored that the abrogation of Article 370, which forcibly revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status has deepened



the suffering of the Kashmiri people and made it imperative for the nation to stand united

in defending their rights. Amir Muqam urged everyone to actively participate in initiatives and demonstrations expressing solidarity with Kashmiris.

He called on the nation to stand together, reinforcing that Pakistan will continue to raise the Kashmir issue at every international forum and pursue all possible avenues until the Kashmiri people are granted their legitimate rights.

Reaffirming Pakistan's unwavering commitment to the Kashmiri cause, the minister stated that the country will go to every extent to support Kashmiris and will not relent until justice and self-determination are achieved.

CM Maryam inaugurates Punjab Transport Company HQ, EV command centre

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Monday inaugurated the Punjab Transport Company headquarters and the Electric Vehicle (EV) Command and Control Centre, reiterating the government's commitment to clean, safe, and modern public transport.

Following the inauguration, the chief minister inspected the EV Command and Control Centre, a state-of-the-art electric bus washing plant, and a modern charging station. Officials briefed her that the automatic washing plant reuses recycled water, while a 160-kilowatt charging station can fully charge an electric bus in 105 minutes.

CM Maryam directed



authorities to introduce new routes for green electric buses, shift the charging system to solar energy, and

sought a timeline for the procurement of 1,500 new buses.

The chief minister instructed officials to increase the number of buses on routes where passengers face long waiting times and ordered the claiming of carbon credits under the Green Bus Project.

She said electric buses were helping reduce air pollution and smog, adding that the green bus project had broken ridership records across Punjab. She announced that metro bus services would be launched soon in Faisalabad and Gujranwala.

CM Maryam said electric buses were providing comfortable and safe travel to the public and stressed that clean, secure, and modern public transport remained the government's top priority.

Pakistan pushing homegrown reforms for stability, PM tells WB chief



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday said Pakistan is vigorously pursuing a comprehensive, homegrown economic reform agenda aimed at achieving sustainable economic stability.

He made the remarks during a meeting with World Bank Group President Ajay Banga, who called on him in Islamabad during his first official visit to Pakistan.

The prime minister acknowledged the World Bank Group's long-standing support for Pakistan, particularly in resilient infrastructure, agribusiness, digital development,

energy, human capital, fiscal reforms and the promotion of productive private investment for job creation and growth.

He said the government remains committed to structural reforms designed to unlock job-rich growth and strengthen investor confidence.

Ajay Banga commended Pakistan's ongoing reform efforts and reaffirmed the World Bank Group's commitment to deepening cooperation through a 'One World Bank Group' approach.

He said greater mobilisation of private capital, alongside close coordination with development partners, would be critical to meeting the government's reform ambitions.

Kazakh president due in Islamabad on Feb 3 for maiden state visit



ISLAMABAD: President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev will undertake his first state visit to Pakistan on February 03-04, 2026, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

He will be accompanied by a high-level delegation, comprising senior cabinet ministers and other high-ranking officials, according to a Foreign Office statement.

During the visit, President Tokayev is expected to meet with the President Asif Ali Zardari, hold talks with the prime minister, and address the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Business Forum.

"The visit will provide the two sides an important and timely opportunity to undertake a comprehensive review of bilateral relations, discuss new avenues for broadening cooperation, particularly in trade, logistics, regional connectivity, people-to-people contacts, and explore collaboration at regional and international forums," according to the statement.

The forthcoming visit reflects the strengthening bonds between Pakistan and Kazakhstan, their mutual commitment to transforming historic and cultural affinities into robust cooperation, and their common desire for peace and progress in the region, it added.

High-Stakes Lobbying Underway for Vacant AJK Presidency



Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: Political activity has intensified in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) following the death of President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry, as lobbying for the vacant office has gained pace in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad.

According to political sources, various political and social figures have stepped up behind-the-scenes contacts and informal outreach to position themselves for the presidency.

Meetings and consultations, both announced and private, are underway as stakeholders work to reach an agreement on a suitable candidate for the AJK presidency.

Sources said that several prominent names are being considered for the constitutional post, including former Foreign Office spokesperson Tasneem Aslam, former AJK president Sardar Masood Khan, former Legislative Assembly speaker Chaudhry Latif

Albar, former prime ministers Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan, Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Sardar Muhammad Yaqoob Khan, and former prime minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan. Political insiders said consultations among senior leaders and unannounced meetings are continuing, with efforts focused on reaching an agreement over a mutually acceptable nominee for the presidency.

Given the office's constitutional and symbolic importance, major political parties are keen to appoint an influential and experienced figure to the position. Before a final decision is taken, political parties are intensifying internal consultations with their leadership while also seeking support from coalition partners. According to sources, the election process for the president of Azad Jammu and Kashmir will be completed strictly in accordance with constitutional requirements, with significant developments expected in the coming days.