



# Daily The Spokesman



**Kashmir Solidarity Day symbolises unwavering commitment to Kashmiri people's right to self-determination: NA Speaker**

In his message on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, he emphasized that a just and lasting resolution of the Kashmir dispute in accordance with the United Nations Security Council resolutions is indispensable.



**CM inaugurates Rajapur's first modern green e-bus service**

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Wednesday inaugurated Rajapur's first state-of-the-art green electric bus, introducing a modern public transport facility in the district. On her arrival, the chief minister received a traditional welcome with regional drums and a Balochi shawl presentation, said a handout issued here.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Shaabanul Moazzam 16, Thursday, February 5, 2026 [www.dailyspokesman.net](http://www.dailyspokesman.net) [@daily\\_spokesman](https://www.facebook.com/daily_spokesman) [f](https://www.facebook.com/dailyspokesman) Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 291 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

## Pakistan, Kazakhstan set \$1 bn trade target, agree on regional transport corridor

 **Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Wednesday agreed to significantly enhance trade, investment, and regional connectivity, committing to raise the bilateral trade volume to \$1 billion within the next year and to promote a multi-country transport corridor linking Central and South Asia.



"We have agreed to the Belarus- Russia- Kazakhstan-

stan- Uzbekistan- Afghanistan- Pakistan transport corridor to enhance our regional connectivity," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said during a joint press stakeout along with President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

The prime minister said both countries would encourage their respective

business communities to come forward and invest in joint ventures, noting that despite strong political relations and shared goodwill, the existing investment portfolio remained negligible.

"Unfortunately, our trade volume is just a meager \$250 million in last year. And this does not reflect not only the strength of our friendship. *Continued on Page 7*

**DPM Dar calls on Kazakh president; reaffirms commitment to expand ties**

 **City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Wednesday called on the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev who is visiting Pakistan on a two-day official visit.

Welcoming him to Pakistan, DPM Dar extended warm greetings from President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, the government, and people of Pakistan.

He underscored Pakistan's appreciation for the growing momentum of high-level political exchanges.

He reaffirmed the shared commitment to expand bilateral cooperation across political, economic, people-to-people domains, and to work together for durable peace, stability, and development in the region.

**Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev to visit Pakistan on Feb 5-6**

 **Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev will pay an official visit to Pakistan from February 5 to 6 at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrahi announced on Monday.

Briefing the media, the spokesperson said the Uzbek president will lead a high-level delegation, including senior cabinet members and prominent business leaders, underscoring the importance both countries attach to strengthening bilateral ties.

During his stay, President Mirziyoyev will call on the President of Pakistan and hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Uzbek leader is also scheduled to address the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum, aimed at enhancing commercial and investment cooperation between the two sides.

According to the Foreign Office, the talks will comprehensively review all aspects of bilateral relations. Both sides will explore new opportunities to further expand cooperation in key areas such as trade, energy, defense, education, people-to-people contacts, and regional coordination.



The spokesperson noted that this will be President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's second visit to Pakistan, reflecting the steady upward trajectory of Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations.

He said the visit highlights the growing closeness and brotherly ties between the two countries.

Tahir Hussain Andrahi added that relations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan are rooted in a shared history, common faith, and a mutual vision of peace and prosperity in Central and South Asia, and the upcoming visit is expected to further strengthen these bonds.

## Breakthrough in govt-opp contacts as PM to meet Achakzai

 **News Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A significant breakthrough has been reported in ongoing negotiations between the government and the opposition, as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is expected to

meet Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai during the upcoming session of the National Assembly.

According to the TV channel, the development was facilitated through the efforts of the prime minister's adviser on political affairs, Rana Sanaullah.

The sources said the prime minister is likely to visit the opposition leader's chamber in the National Assembly along with his delegation.

They said initial contacts were made on Monday at the Parliament House to arrange

a meeting between the prime minister and the opposition leader.

However, the process was delayed due to the visit of the President of Kazakhstan to Pakistan and the Prime Minister's official engagements.

Sources said the meeting could not take place earlier, as President Asif Ali Zardari was in Karachi on Monday. They added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wanted to take the president into confidence before meeting Mahmood Khan Achakzai.

Sources said the meeting

could not take place earlier, as President Asif Ali Zardari was in Karachi on Monday. They added that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif wanted to take the president into confidence before meeting Mahmood Khan Achakzai.

He underscored Pakistan's appreciation for the growing momentum of high-level political exchanges.

He reaffirmed the shared commitment to expand bilateral cooperation across political, economic, people-to-people domains, and to work together for durable peace, stability, and development in the region.

During his stay, President Mirziyoyev will call on the President of Pakistan and hold delegation-level talks with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The Uzbek leader is also scheduled to address the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum, aimed at enhancing commercial and investment cooperation between the two sides.

According to the Foreign Office, the talks will comprehensively review all aspects



اہل پاکستان کی جانب سے کشمیریوں کے ساتھ اظہار یکجہتی

یوم یکجہتی کشمیر کے موقع پر کشمیریوں سے اظہار یکجہتی کیلئے  
تحریک آزادی کشمیر کے نیس کیمپ آمد پر  
وزیر اعظم پاکستان محمد شہباز شریف کے شکر گزار میں

پاکستان کشمیری عوام کی امید، آواز اور مضبوط سہارا ہے، اور ان شام اللہ پوری  
ریاست جموں و کشمیر کی آزادی اور اسکے الحاق پاکستان تک جدوجہد جاری رہیں

ہم مقبوسہ جموں و کشمیر کے عظیم حریت پرندوں کی لازوال جدوجہد، قربانیوں اور شہادت  
قدی کو سلام پیش کرتے ہیں جو بھارتی قابض فورسز کے قلم و جبر کے سامنے سینہ پر ہیں

عالیٰ برادری، اقوام متحدہ اور انسانی حقوق کی تنظیمیں مقبوسہ کشمیر میں بھارتی  
جاریت اور انسانی حقوق کی پامالیوں کا نوٹ لیں اور بھارت کو مجبور کریں  
کہ وہ کشمیری عوام کو ان کا بنیادی حق حق خود را دیتے دے

وزارت اطلاعات آزاد حکومت ریاست جموں و کشمیر

فرمان رسوں ﷺ  
عبداللہ بن عمر رضی اللہ عنہم نے خود کی  
رسول ﷺ کی اعلیٰ طلاقی میں مسلمان  
مسلمان کی بھائی ہے اس پر کام کرے اور  
اس کی قاتل کے پر کام کرے اور جو فیض  
اپنے کی بھائی میں صورت پوری کرنے میں  
کہہ گا اللہ تعالیٰ اس کی ضرورت اور حادث  
پوری کرے گا۔  
(جیسا کہ: حدیث نمبر (695) میں مذکور ہے)

Barkat Rice Mills  
(Pvt) Limited

# Rathore Reaffirms unwavering support for Kashmiri Right to Self-Determination on Solidarity Day Eve

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that Kashmir Solidarity Day has become a symbol of an everlasting bond between the people of Pakistan and Kashmir, shaped by a shared history, faith, and deep-rooted social and cultural ties. In his special message issued on the eve of solidarity day, prime minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said, "The historic day, being observed consistently since past several decades, stands as a vivid testament to the unwavering resolve of the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, who stand shoulder to shoulder with their oppressed Kashmiri brethren in their just struggle for right to self-determination".



In an indirect reference to the 19th July resolution, he noted that the Kashmiri people had ideologically aligned their future with Pakistan even before its creation. "This is a historic reality that Kashmiris proudly cherish and deeply acknowledge from generation to generation", the PM said, adding that the people of Pakistan have always stood by the Kashmiri people in every difficult moment.

The contentious move, he said, was unequivocally rejected by the Kashmiri people. Lauding the matchless sacrifices rendered by the Kashmiri people during their ongoing struggle for right to self-determination, he said that Kashmiris have shown remarkable courage and resilience in the face of Indian state terrorism, which serves as a true testament to their bravery.

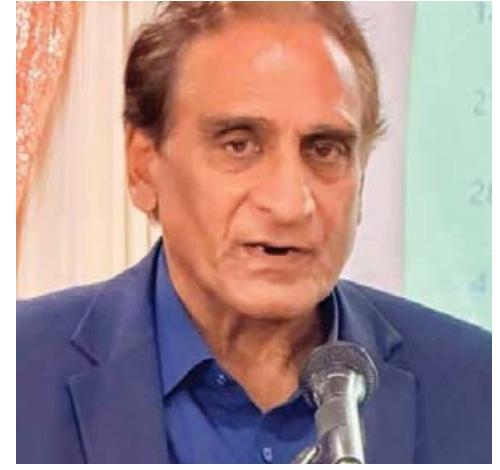
## Kashmir Solidarity Day

ISLAMABAD: A view of the banners displayed at the different roads of Capital City, regarding the Kashmir Solidarity Day, which is being observed annually on 5th February across the country.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Kashmir Sticking Point: A Test of Global Commitment to Peace, says AJK Acting President

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The acting president Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhary Latif Akbar, while reminding the international community of its legal and moral obligations towards Kashmir issue, has said that resolving the lingering dispute in line

with Kashmiri aspirations and UN resolutions serves as a litmus test of the global community's commitment to peace, stability, and security. In his special message issued on the eve of Kashmir Solidarity Day, he voiced his serious concern over the India's imperialistic presence in the region, calling it a grave threat to the existence of the Kashmiri people. Referring to the devastating consequences of the India's illegal occupation of Jammu and Kashmir, he said, "Today every household and every aspect of life in occupied Kashmir bears the

imprint of the belligerent military occupation, enforced through coercion and the use of brute force by the Indian state.

While condemning India for the serious human rights violations committed by its armed forces in occupied Kashmir, Chaudhary Latif Akbar urged the international community to shun its indifference towards the issue and play its due role to end these abuses, ensure the enforcement of the UNSC resolutions that uphold right of self-determination to the people of Kashmir.

## Kashmir Issue: A Struggle for Human Rights and Self-Determination: Chaudhry Rafiq

 City Desk

MUZAFFARABAD: Information Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir Chaudhry Rafiq Nayyar has said that our united Kashmir provides an opportunity to renew this promise that the fair struggle of the Kashmiri people is not only for our policy but also for our policy. is the constant part.

The Kashmir issue is not just a territorial conflict but a test of human rights, self-determination and international justice. In today's digital and globalized era, the importance of information, media and narrative-making has assumed extraordinary status.

Unfortunately, in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, the Indian state continues to target truthful voices with systematic media restrictions, media blackouts and targeting to suppress voices of truth.

This practice is not only a violation of universal journalistic values but also a major question mark on the claims of democracy.

Today, the people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir living around the world stand with their Kashmiri



brothers and sisters and this struggle will continue until the Kashmiris become part of the United Nations. Birthright, the right to self-determination should not be achieved.

## Crime control, law and order top priorities: IGP Kareem

LAHORE: Inspector General of Police Punjab Rao Abdul Kareem on Wednesday chaired the first meeting of Punjab Police at the Central Police Office after assuming charge, and outlined his priorities with a focus on crime control, law and order and improved public service delivery.

The meeting was attended by additional inspectors general, managing director Safe Cities, DIGs, AIGs and other senior police officers, while Additional IG South Punjab, all RPOs, CPOs and DPOs joined via video link. Senior police leadership congratulated Rao Abdul Kareem on assuming the office of IG Punjab. Addressing the meeting, the IGP said that discipline, rules and procedures must be strictly followed while performing official duties. He stressed that achieving the targets set by Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif regarding improvement in police station culture and traffic management was a top priority. He said the Chief Minister's Safe Punjab Vision would be achieved through teamwork, merit and an integrated policing system. The IGP made it clear that the performance of district officers would be reviewed regularly, particularly with regard to follow-up of heinous crime cases. He directed senior officers to ensure accessibility for the common man and to personally oversee public grievance redressal.

## Unequal Terms: India Opens Markets as US Tariffs See Minor Cut, Says Masood Khan

 Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations, has stated that India's recent trade agreement with the United States reflects strategic compulsion rather than strategic choice, asserting that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had little room

for maneuver following India's diplomatic and strategic setbacks after the May 2025 India-Pakistan conflict.

Ambassador Khan observed that the agreement emerged after India found itself increasingly isolated in the aftermath of the conflict, with bilateral tensions and international scrutiny narrowing New Delhi's diplomatic space. He noted that both India and Pakistan had reached a strategic stalemate, while President Donald Trump openly criticized India and its leadership, placing additional pressure on Prime Minister Modi to repair strained ties with Washington.

## Sardar Attique Declares Kashmir Independence Movement Victorious, Stresses Unbreakable Pakistan Link

 Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference leader and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the movement for independence of occupied Kashmir has been successful. He said that the relationship between Kashmir and Pakistan is unbreakable and no power in the world can break this relationship. Mujahid e Awwal strengthened this relationship by giving slogans of Pakistan will become Kashmir. He said that the people of free Kashmir are with their brothers of occupied Kashmir in every time of difficulty. If the world wants peace in the region, then it has to solve the long-standing problem of Kashmir. There is no other way to peace in the region. He added that Pakistan and Kashmir are necessary for each other. There can never be success in Kashmir; the problem of Kashmir is a globally recognized problem of self-determination despite the presence of 10 lakh soldiers. And the entire Pakistani nation is grateful that God will soon separate India from Kashmir. Yes, the Indian government's move on August 5, 2019 to stop serious human rights violations in Indian-occupied Kashmir has been equally welcomed by the people of Kashmir.



## AJK Cabinet Greenlights Rs 9.6 Billion Development Projects Across Health, Education, and Infrastructure

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The third meeting of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Cabinet Development Committee (CDC) for the financial year 2025-26 was held here today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore. The CDC approved 15 development projects worth Rs. 9.60 billion for the Public Health, Higher Education, and Communication & Works (C&W) departments. During the meeting, four projects of the Public Health Department, one project of the Higher Education Department, and ten projects of the Communication & Works Department were presented and approved. The meeting also took important decisions regarding the provision of basic facilities to the public, improvement of the healthcare system, enhancement of educational infrastructure, and strengthening of the road network. In the health sector, the MNCH project was approved. Furthermore, the establishment of operation theaters and nursery units in Tehsil Headquarters Hospitals of Muzaffarabad, Poonch, and Mirpur divisions was approved, which will significantly improve healthcare facilities across all three divisions. In the higher education sector, the meeting approved the construction of infrastructure for the University of Haveli.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day: PPP AJK President Urges Global Unity for Kashmiri Rights

 Spokesman Report



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan People's Party (PPP) President Azad Kashmir Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin has said that February 5 Kashmir Solidarity Day has become a date when Pakistani people across the world should come together to express their views. We are among those who said that when the Quaid-e-Azam Prime Minister of Pakistan called Zulfikar Ali Bhutto Shaheed, the world's historians went on strike in free Kashmir and occupied Kashmir. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto Shaheed announced that the day would be celebrated at the official level. Kashmiris have been sacrificing for the last seven decades to achieve their rights and self-determination. Kashmiris are making a new history of bravery with their blood. The international community should play its role in stopping the oppression of Kashmiris in the occupied valley. Ensure implementation of UN resolutions on the right of self-determination of Kashmiris. I salute the struggle of Kashmiris, unwavering determination and high morale. The struggle of Kashmiris will be colored and their bloodshed will not take place. Was, is and will remain with oppressed sisters.

## 2,000 kites confiscated during crackdown, 12 kite sellers arrested

RAWALPINDI: Rawalpindi Police have intensified a crackdown on kite sellers, arresting 12 suspects and seizing more than 2,000 kites along with 35 spools of kite string, police said on Wednesday.

According to police, Naseerabad Police detained a kite seller and recovered 1,600 kites and 10 spools of string.

Similarly, Wah Cantt Police arrested three kite sellers with 280 kites and 11 spools, while Waris Khan Police has taken six suspects into custody and seized 165 kites and 12 spools.

Additionally, Sadiqabad Police arrested a kite seller and recovered 15 kites and two spools of string, whereas Saddar Bairoon Police detained another suspect with 15 kites and a spool of string.

Separate cases have been registered against all the suspects and further investigation is in progress.

Police said kite flying had been declared a non-bailable offence due to the risks it poses to public safety.

## Messages on Kashmir Solidarity Day, 5th February 2026

### Pakistan Pledges Continued Support Until Kashmiri Plebiscite is Held

The people of Pakistan across the globe observe Kashmir Solidarity Day to reaffirm our unwavering moral, diplomatic and political support for our Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just cause to achieve the right to self-determination as enshrined in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions. It was Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto who began the observance of this day 36 years ago, following the historic uprising of the Kashmiri people in 1989, a struggle that continues to this day.

For nearly eight decades, the valiant Kashmiri people have stood tall against the illegal Indian occupation and have rendered countless sacrifices. On this day, we pay solemn tribute to their indomitable spirit and resilience.

The situation in Indian Illegally



**Mr. Asif Ali Zardari**  
President of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) remains a matter of grave concern for global conscience. Since the illegal and unilateral actions of 5 August 2019, India has intensified its efforts to consolidate its occupation through administrative and legislative manipulation. By muzzling the

media, incarcerating the Kashmiri leadership and attempting to dilute the Muslim majority through demographic changes, India seeks to disempower the Kashmiri people in their own land.

Indian occupation forces also continue to commit countless human rights violations in IOJK. The findings of recent international reports highlight the alarming rise in arbitrary detentions and collective punishment. The use of punitive house demolitions and the ongoing suppression of digital freedoms, including the blocking of thousands of social media accounts, are clear attempts to hide the reality in IOJK.

On this day, I reiterate that we will continue to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with the Kashmiri people until they realize their right to decide their own future through a free and impartial plebiscite.

### PM Reaffirms Unwavering Support on Kashmir Solidarity Day

Every year, 5th February is observed as Kashmir Solidarity Day, an occasion where the people and the Government of Pakistan reaffirm their principled and unwavering support for their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle for the realization of their right to self-determination.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains one of the oldest unresolved disputes on the agenda of the United Nations. Over the years, several United Nations Security Council resolutions have established, beyond doubt, the disputed status of the territory of Jammu and Kashmir, while prescribing that its final disposition must be made in accordance with the will of the Kashmiri people, expressed through a fair and impartial plebiscite. However, for



**Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif**  
Prime Minister of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan

nearly eight decades, the Kashmiri people have been denied this fundamental right, due to India's intransigence.

Even after decades of bloodshed, brutality and barbarity, the Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) remains a hostile environment, marred by heavy militarization,

total repression and egregious human rights violations. Arbitrary political detentions, suppression of genuine political activity and severe restrictions on media, have become India's routine instruments to silence dissent in IOJK.

On 5 August 2019, India took a host of illegal and unilateral administrative and legal measures, in an attempt to consolidate its forcible occupation of IOJK. These measures not only contravene the UN Charter, but completely defy the relevant UN Security Council resolutions and the Fourth Geneva Convention. Such hollow attempts by India to carry out demographic re-engineering, or to alter the legal and administrative status of Kashmir, cannot absolve it from its international commitments and obligations, nor could they diminish the inalienable rights of the Kashmiri people.

### Kashmir Solidarity Day: Upholding Right to Self-Determination Amid Ongoing Oppression

On this Kashmir Solidarity Day, we reaffirm Pakistan's steadfast support for the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their just struggle for freedom, dignity and human rights. The Kashmiri people have endured decades of oppression and injustice, yet their resilience and resolve remain unbroken.

The people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) continue to face systemic repression, denial of fundamental rights and widespread human rights violations. Pakistan remains committed to raising their voices on every international forum, highlighting their plight and advocating for a peaceful and just resolution.

The right to self-determination is not negotiable; it is a fundamental principle recognized by the United Nations and the international community. No oppression can extinguish the legitimate aspirations of a people seeking



**Senator Azam Nazeer Tarar**  
Federal Minister for Law & Justice and Human Rights

freedom. We call upon the global community to take a principled stand, uphold justice and work to end the suffering of innocent Kashmiris.

Today, as we pay tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people, we reaffirm that Pakistan stands with them today, tomorrow and always until their voices are heard, their rights are restored and justice prevails.

### Kashmir Dispute: A Stalemate Persists Decades After UN Intervention

On the fifth of February every year, the people of Pakistan come together to stand firmly in solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters. We renew our unwavering support for their legitimate struggle to achieve the right to self-determination, as enshrined in the relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The Jammu and Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest disputes in the world and has been on the agenda of the United Nations Security Council since 1948. The dispute remains unresolved due to India's stubbornness to implement the United Nations Security Council resolutions and give the Kashmiri people their promised right to self-determination.

Life in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) remains extremely difficult and the Kashmiri people have suffered immense hardships because of the draconian Indian regime. True representatives of the Kashmiri people remain behind bars and thousands of Kashmiri political

activists are detained arbitrarily. Freedom of expression also remains restricted as the local media has been forced to tow the official line. In particular, India attempted to consolidate its illegal occupation on 5 August 2019 through illegal and unilateral actions, which aimed to alter the region's demographic landscape and disempower the Kashmiri people.

Given the significance of this day, it must be observed with even greater organization and national resolve in the future to counter India's sustained propaganda at the global level and to further strengthen the enduring relationship between the people of Pakistan and Kashmir.

This year's February 5 holds particular importance in the evolving regional context. Following the Bunyan-un-Marsoos and Ma'raka-e-Haq, the strategic balance in South Asia has shifted, exposing the fragility of India's long-projected narrative of military and diplomatic superiority. Pakistan's defensive capability and deterrence have gained international recognition, while the morale of the Kashmiri people has been significantly strengthened.

In this regard, Prime Minister Mian

### Solidarity Day Marks Renewal of Pakistan's Commitment to Kashmir Cause

Every year February 5 is observed as Kashmir Solidarity Day. This day is not only a commemoration but also a renewal of our commitment that the freedom struggle of our oppressed Muslim brothers and sisters in occupied Jammu and Kashmir has the full and unconditional support of Pakistan. This dispute, ongoing since 1947, where India has ignored United Nations resolutions and maintained its occupation of Kashmir, has resulted in the loss of hundreds of thousands of Kashmiri lives and severe violations of human rights. We strongly condemn the barbaric acts by Indian occupying forces, including the use of pellet guns, illegal detentions, enforced disappearances, torture, sexual assaults, and prolonged curfews. These actions are not only violations of international laws but also grave crimes against humanity.

Pakistan has consistently raised its voice for Kashmir at the diplomatic level, and Government of Pakistan has strongly presented the Kashmir case on international forums such as the OIC, the UN Human Rights Council, and other platforms in recent years.

Kashmir is not a solution; it would only deepen the crisis.

On behalf of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference—the oldest and largest political party representing the will of the Kashmiri people—I pay tribute to the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir, salute the thousands of men and women languishing in prisons, and honor all those who have sacrificed their lives, property, and dignity for the cause of freedom.

We remain resolute in our conviction that the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir is inevitable. The sacrifices of countless martyrs cannot be in vain. Sooner or later, the entire occupied territory will be liberated, and through accession to Pakistan, the Kashmiri people will permanently secure Pakistan's strategic, defensive, and economic strength—safeguarding what has always been described as the nation's jugular vein.

The writer is President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir

### February 5 – Kashmir Solidarity Day

Kashmir Solidarity Day is rooted in the historic struggle of the Kashmiri people for their right to self-determination and in Pakistan's longstanding, principled solidarity with them. This solidarity is not symbolic; it is deeply embedded in shared history, culture, geography, and collective aspirations.

The first organized, state-level call in Pakistan to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people was made on 28 February 1975, when then Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto appealed for a nationwide strike and protests against the agreement between Sheikh Abdullah and Indira Gandhi, which was widely perceived as an attempt to undermine Kashmir's special status. The response was unprecedented: Pakistan came to a standstill, and protests erupted across Indian-occupied Kashmir as well, reflecting the depth of shared sentiment.

Kashmir Solidarity Day also carries the weight of tragic and unforgettable events, particularly those of early January 1990, when the Kashmiri

freedom movement reached a historic peak. Peaceful mass demonstrations in Srinagar, involving millions, were met with indiscriminate firing under the orders of Governor Jagmohan, resulting in the martyrdom of approximately 350 civilians. A prolonged curfew followed, leaving bodies unattended in streets and alleys for days. These events plunged the entire valley into mourning and marked a dark chapter in the region's history, including the forced displacement of Kashmiri Pandits, which irreparably damaged the region's centuries-old culture of interfaith harmony.

In response to these atrocities, protests and demonstrations spread across occupied Kashmir, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Pakistan, and around the world. Amid this backdrop, Jamaat-e-Islami leader Qazi Hussain Ahmed announced February 5 as a day of solidarity with the Kashmiri people. This call was unanimously supported by political, religious, and social forces, as well as by the government of Pakistan, and has since become an enduring national observance.

Over time, Kashmir Solidarity Day gained further institutional recognition. Around the year 2000, it began to be observed at the official level across Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, with state ceremonies, addresses to the Azad Kashmir Legislative Assembly, and visits by Pakistan's civil and military leadership to the Line of Control to honor the sacrifices of soldiers and civilians alike. Across the country, literary, cultural, and national events are held to reaffirm unwavering support for the Kashmiri cause.

It is important to recall that even before the creation of Pakistan, the people of Jammu and Kashmir passed a resolution in Srinagar in favor of accession to Pakistan—23 days prior to Pakistan's independence—laying an unshakeable foundation for this bond.

This unity is not driven by short-term political considerations; it is historical,



**Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan**

Analyst

cultural, economic, civilizational, and strategic in nature.

Given the significance of this day, it must be observed with even greater organization and national resolve in the future to counter India's sustained propaganda at the global level and to further strengthen the enduring relationship between the people of Pakistan and Kashmir.

This year's February 5 holds particular importance in the evolving regional context. Following the Bunyan-un-Marsoos and Ma'raka-e-Haq, the strategic balance in South Asia has shifted, exposing the fragility of India's long-projected narrative of military and diplomatic superiority. Pakistan's defensive capability and deterrence have gained international recognition, while the morale of the Kashmiri people has been significantly strengthened.

In this regard, Prime Minister Mian

Shehbaz Sharif, Field Marshal General Syed Asim Munir, the Chiefs of the Air Force and Navy, and the people of Pakistan deserve profound appreciation for their unity, resolve, and leadership. Their actions compelled India to retreat and opened new avenues for Pakistan's assertive and responsible role in regional and global affairs.

Our firm belief is that India will refrain from repeating adventurism akin to past miscalculations; should it do otherwise, it will face decisive consequences.

Any future dialogue must be based strictly on the status of Jammu and Kashmir prior to August 5, 2019. There can be no compromise on the illegal demographic changes imposed by India, including the settlement of millions of non-Kashmiris in the occupied territory.

The Kashmir dispute must be resolved through peaceful, dignified, and political means, in accordance with United Nations Security Council resolutions, with the people of Jammu and Kashmir recognized as the principal party to the dispute. Partition of

Kashmir is not a solution; it would only deepen the crisis.

On behalf of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference—the oldest and largest political party representing the will of the Kashmiri people—I pay tribute to the martyrs of Jammu and Kashmir, salute the thousands of men and women languishing in prisons, and honor all those who have sacrificed their lives, property, and dignity for the cause of freedom.

We remain resolute in our conviction that the freedom of occupied Jammu and Kashmir is inevitable. The sacrifices of countless martyrs cannot be in vain. Sooner or later, the entire occupied territory will be liberated, and through accession to Pakistan, the Kashmiri people will permanently secure Pakistan's strategic, defensive, and economic strength—safeguarding what has always been described as the nation's jugular vein.

The writer is President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir

### Kashmir Solidarity Day – An Eternal Saga of Sacrifices

Across the globe, numerous nations exist as independent entities, not only safeguarding their sovereignty but also playing active roles in the international community. In South Asia, the region of Jammu and Kashmir occupies a unique and distinguished place—renowned for its breathtaking natural beauty, diverse seasons, lush valleys, snow-capped mountains, dense forests, fertile plains, waterfalls, streams, lakes, and flowing rivers. This land possesses a distinct identity shaped by nature itself.

Yet, as enchanting as this region is, its people have endured decades of grief, oppression, forced labor, and one of the harshest forms of subjugation. It would not be an exaggeration to say that the very beauty and rich resources of this land have become the cause of the suffering of its inhabitants. Once a cradle of peace, tolerance, and spirituality—home to saints, scholars, and

traditions of harmony—Jammu and Kashmir today stands as a stark symbol of repression and brutality. When a people raise their voices for their birthright, dominant powers seldom tolerate such demands for justice and equality.

The State of Jammu and Kashmir, spanning approximately 84,471 square miles and home to nearly 25 million people, has for over eight decades been subjected to forced division, violence, killings, enforced disappearances, arbitrary searches, and prolonged sieges. This tragedy persists primarily because the Kashmiri people have been denied the fulfillment of international commitments made to them. Despite United Nations Security Council resolutions, their fundamental right to self-determination remains unrealized. Whenever Kashmiris have demanded this right, they have been met not with dialogue, but with bullets.

On 19 July 1947, the largest representative political leadership of the



**Mehr-un-Nisa**

Analyst

Kashmiri people adopted a historic resolution near Zaina Kadal, giving collective voice to the aspirations of the people of the state. This resolution was not merely a party decision but a unified expression of the Kashmiri will. The All

Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference holds the distinction of pioneering the struggle for political rights within the princely state, securing voting rights, and launching movements to protect public interests, employment rights, and equality for the people.

Following the partition of the subcontinent, the Dogra regime, against the will of the Muslim majority, enforced an illegal, immoral, and coercive accession to India, attempting to subjugate the Kashmiri people. In response, the Muslims of Kashmir rose in rebellion

against Dogra autocracy, liberating a significant portion of the state and forcing the Dogra forces to retreat. A ceasefire was agreed upon under the assurance—enshrined in UN resolutions—that the people of Kashmir would be granted the right to a free and impartial plebiscite.

However, India continues to defy international law and its own commitments by denying Kashmiris their right to self-determination.

As a result, leaders of the freedom movement, innocent civilians, youth, women, children, and the elderly have all been subjected to relentless atrocities. Since 1988, following repeated betrayals of promises, the Kashmiri people initiated an armed struggle for freedom. Over the past 37 years, approximately 110,000

Kashmiris have been martyred, thousands injured or imprisoned, and nearly 50,000 forced to abandon their homes. Additionally, Indian shelling and firing across the ceasefire line have claimed thousands of civilian lives.

After 5 August 2019, India further intensified its illegal actions by revoking the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and attempting to alter the region's demographic composition. By issuing domicile certificates to nearly four million non-residents, India seeks to weaken the freedom movement and manipulate any future plebiscite outcome. These measures represent a blatant violation of international law and human rights norms.

In these critical times, Pakistan has consistently acted as a steadfast advocate and guardian of the Kashmiri cause, raising the issue at every international forum and ensuring that the voice of the Kashmiri people is heard worldwide. On 5 February 1990, the people of Pakistan

formally declared solidarity with the Kashmiri struggle, sacrifices, and just cause. This historic initiative brought the Jammu and Kashmir dispute into sharper global focus, prompting freedom-loving nations and international human rights organizations to condemn the atrocities and support the Kashmiri demand for self-determination.

Today, once again, the people of Pakistan are commemorating Kashmir Solidarity Day by organizing rallies, seminars, and demonstrations to pay tribute to the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people and to reaffirm their unwavering support. The day is not far when the blood-soaked struggle of the Kashmiri people will reach its rightful conclusion—when the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir will be liberated and join Pakistan in accordance with the aspirations and sacrifices of its people.

The writer is Former Deputy Speakers Legislative Assembly of Azad Jammu and Kashmir

Group Chairman/Chief Editor: Almass Ayoub Sabir  
 Vice Chairman: Asim Nazir Ahmad  
 Editor: Naveed Ahmad Khan  
 Head Editorial Advisory Board: Amjad Mehmood  
 Bureau Chief Karachi: Khurram Jaffrani (jaffrani@adplus.pk)  
 Bureau Chief Lahore: Syed Afraz Ali Nazish (afrazalishah@gmail.com)  
 Head Office: AIMS Building, Street No. 4, H-8/1, Islamabad. spokesmanislamabad@gmail.com  
 Phone: +92 51 2227123, WhatsApp +92 346 5008408  
 Karachi Office: A111, Block C, Gulsha-e-Jamal, PRECHS, Karachi Phone: 021-33399390 Email: spokesmankarachi@gmail.com  
 Lahore Office: 7-E, Samanberg, Johar Town. spokesmanlahore@gmail.com  
 Daily The Spokesman available only on annual subscription

## Kashmir Solidarity Day

**H**undreds of thousands Kashmiri and Pakistani people would join hands on February 05, to awaken the world's conscience to the Indian subjugation of Kashmiri people and commitments made for their right to self-determination under the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

As the day serves as a powerful reminder of the ongoing struggle of Kashmiri people in Illegally Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), it also affirms political, moral and diplomatic support by people of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir to their brethren struggling against Indian thralldom.

Kashmir Solidarity Day is not just an occasion for reflection, but a call to action as it highlights the aspirations of Kashmiri people who have endured violence, oppression and denial of their basic rights for decades.

The conflict in Kashmir dates back to the partition of British India in 1947. But, despite multiple United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions, calling for a plebiscite to determine the will of Kashmiri people, India consistently blocked this process. For 78 years, the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) have faced brutal suppression in their quest for self-determination.

Since 1989, the situation in IOJK has worsened, with the Indian military's actions leading to horrific human rights violations. More than 96,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives, 23,000 women have been widowed and over 100,000 homes and schools have been destroyed. The region remains the most heavily militarized zone in the world, with the deployment of approximately 700,000 Indian troops.

The situation took a darker turn in August 2019, when India revoked Kashmir's special status under Article 370. The subsequent communications blackout, arrests of political leaders, activists, and journalists and deportation and mistreatment of detainees, had compounded the suffering of Kashmiris.

India's introduction of new domicile laws, enabling non-Kashmiri Hindus to settle in the region, has raised serious concerns about demographic manipulation. By September 2020, approximately 600,000 domicile certificates were issued to non-residents, fueling fears of ethnic cleansing akin to Israel's policies in Palestine. These actions threaten to undermine Kashmir's Muslim-majority identity and could influence any future plebiscite.

"Kashmir Solidarity Day is not only about territorial disputes but a struggle for fundamental human rights and dignity," remarked Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs and Gilgit-Baltistan Engineer Amir Muqam. "On this solemn day, we stand with the people of Kashmir, reaffirming our commitment to their cause."

## Solidarity Day: Kashmir, Pakistan – One Soul, Two Bodies

**K**ashmir Solidarity Day is not merely a ceremonial observance in Pakistan's national calendar; it is a reaffirmation of a living commitment that dates back to the very birth of the state. Observed on February 5, 2026, this day reminds the nation and the world that Kashmir is not a forgotten dispute, nor a negotiable footnote of history, but a central pillar of Pakistan's ideological identity, national security, and moral responsibility. Despite shifting global priorities and regional power politics, Pakistan's resolve on Kashmir remains firm, clear, and unwavering.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah's declaration that "Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan" was not rhetorical passion but strategic foresight. Rooted in the principles of the June 3, 1947 Partition Plan, the Muslim-majority character of the state, geographical contiguity, shared water resources, and deep cultural bonds, Kashmir's natural affiliation with Pakistan was self-evident. For the founder of Pakistan, Kashmir was not simply a territorial question; it was intrinsically linked to Pakistan's survival, security, and ideological coherence. That vision continues to guide Pakistan's state policy to this day.

The establishment of the Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir on October 24, 1947 was a practical manifestation of Kashmiri resistance and political agency. Pakistan's recognition and support of this government, along with sustained development, institution-building, and constitutional arrangements, demonstrate that Kashmiris are treated not as outsiders but as an integral part of Pakistan's national fabric. Similarly, the political representation and legal recognition extended to Jammu and Kashmir refugees settled in Pakistan reaffirm that Kashmir is a lived national response.



**Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi**

sibility, not a distant cause.

India's unilateral revocation of the special status of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, 2019 marked a grave violation of UN resolutions, bilateral agreements, and international law. Since then, the region has witnessed an alarming deterioration in human rights—extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, prolonged military lockdowns, media blackouts, and systematic demographic engineering.

These measures reflect an attempt to silence a nation through repression. Yet history bears witness that no amount of force can extinguish a people's aspiration for freedom, and the Kashmiri resolve remains unbroken.

Pakistan has persistently raised the Kashmir issue on every major international platform, including the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation, and global human rights forums, presenting documented evidence of abuses and violations. This diplomatic struggle transcends governments and political cycles; it is embedded in Pakistan's permanent national policy. Despite internal political differences, the nation, its institutions, and successive leaderships have remained united on Kashmir—an expression of rare and vital national consensus.

Following Operation Yajur al-Marsoo in May 2025, Pakistan demonstrated not only its defensive strength and professional military competence but also strategic restraint and diplomatic maturity. The international community acknowledged Pakistan's responsible conduct and its commitment to regional stability. This episode reinforced Pakistan's credibility as a peace-seeking yet resolute state and exposed the Kashmir dispute as the core source of instability in South Asia, not Pakistan's defensive posture.

In the evolving global environment, Pakistan must now move beyond symbolic gestures and adopt a comprehensive, modern strategy for advancing the Kashmir cause—integrating diplomacy, defense, legal advocacy, media engagement, and digital narrative-building. Moral clarity alone is not sufficient; it must be supported by strategic coherence and sustained international engagement.

Under the leadership of the military high command, particularly Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Pakistan's defense preparedness remains robust, disciplined, and deterrence-oriented. This strength reinforces diplomatic leverage, as global actors engage seriously only with states capable of securing their sovereignty. Military confidence, when coupled with restraint, lends Pakistan's Kashmir narrative both moral authority and practical weight.

Equally crucial is the harmony between political and military leadership. The coordinated efforts of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, PML-N leader Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif, and Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar complement the military's defensive posture. This unity sends a clear signal internationally: Pakistan's position on Kashmir is unambiguous, united, and unwavering.

Ultimately, the relationship between Pakistan and Kashmir transcends borders and politics. It is ideological, civilizational, and rooted in shared faith and history—aptly described as one soul, two bodies. Kashmir Solidarity Day thus becomes more than a date; it is a renewal of national resolve. February 5, 2026 reminds us that justice may be delayed but cannot be denied. Until the Kashmiri people freely determine their future, Pakistan will continue to stand with them—politically, diplomatically, and defensively. This is not policy alone; it is Pakistan's covenant, identity, and enduring national duty.

case in international forums and bolsters efforts to secure global attention and accountability.

Punjab's proactive stance complements Pakistan's national foreign policy, which has been unwavering since 1947. Pakistan has continuously raised Kashmir at the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other multilateral platforms, demanding the implementation of resolutions affirming the Kashmiri right to self-determination. By combining provincial advocacy with federal diplomacy, Pakistan has ensured that the Kashmir issue remains central to regional security discourse, emphasizing that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without justice, compliance with international law and respect for human rights.

Kashmir Solidarity Day, observed annually on Feb 5, underscores the continued urgency of Pakistan's position. It serves as a reminder to the global community that commitments made to the Kashmiri people remain unfulfilled and that decades of inaction have only deepened grievances and instability. In a world increasingly governed by the principles of human rights and rules-based order, selective application of international norms undermines credibility. Pakistan's diplomatic messaging, now amplified by Punjab's initiatives, calls for consistency, accountability and peaceful resolution.

The prolonged denial of freedom to Kashmiris has consequences not only for the region but for the credibility of

international institutions. Pakistan has consistently emphasized peaceful resolution through dialogue, negotiation and adherence to United Nations resolutions. This approach has endured since the country's founding, demonstrating that Pakistan's policy is principled, lawful and aligned with global norms. By reinforcing this stance through provincial advocacy, Pakistan strengthens both its domestic legitimacy and its international diplomatic influence.

Punjab's evolving role illustrates how sub-national governments can meaningfully support national foreign policy objectives without overstepping constitutional boundaries. Through awareness programs, humanitarian assistance and engagement with civil society, the province ensure that Kashmir remains a pressing concern in public discourse and international diplomacy alike. Its initiatives act as a bridge between grassroots solidarity and strategic advocacy, reinforcing Pakistan's credibility in bilateral and multilateral negotiations.

Kashmir Solidarity Day-2026, therefore, is not a mere ceremonial observance. It embodies Pakistan's unbroken commitment since 1947, underscores the legal and moral imperatives underpinning the Kashmir issue, and demonstrates the active contribution of provincial leadership in amplifying the nation's foreign policy objectives. Until the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir are granted the opportunity to freely determine their future in accordance with international law, the core issue of Kashmir will remain unresolved and the promise of sustainable peace in South Asia incomplete.

*(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratullah@gmail.com)*

## Kashmir and Punjab's Evolving Role

**W**hile the core issue of Kashmir has shaped Pakistan's foreign policy since 1947, recent years

have witnessed provincial governments taking a more proactive role in sustaining national and international attention on the issue. Among them, Punjab, which is Pakistan's most populous and important province, has emerged as a particularly important player under the leadership of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. By integrating advocacy, humanitarian initiatives and public diplomacy, the Punjab government has strengthened Pakistan's longstanding commitment to the Kashmiri people and projected a principled message on the global stage.

Punjab's approach has gone far beyond ceremonial expressions of solidarity. The Punjab government has actively supported awareness campaigns and institutional initiatives designed to embed Kashmir discourse within educational, cultural and civic spaces. Educational institutions have hosted seminars that highlight Kashmir's legal status, the relevance of United Nations Security Council resolutions and the humanitarian dimensions of the conflict. By promoting informed dialogue, the Punjab government ensures that public understanding is grounded in international law, human rights norms and democratic principles rather than transient slogans.

A central pillar of Punjab's strategy has been youth engagement and civil society participation. Recognizing that tomorrow's leaders and opinion-makers shape foreign policy narratives, the provincial government has encouraged forums and media initiatives that present

Kashmir issue as a legitimate international concern. Cultural diplomacy and media outreach have been leveraged to align Pakistan's domestic advocacy with global human rights discourse, thereby supporting the federal government's diplomatic and strategic objectives. In doing so, Punjab acts as a force multiplier, reinforcing Pakistan's foreign policy posture and complementing its ongoing international advocacy.

Equally significant is the province's commitment to humanitarian solidarity. Punjab has provided educational facilitation, welfare assistance and institutional support to Kashmiri students and families affected by decades of conflict. By translating diplomatic principles into tangible assistance, Punjab reinforced the human dimension of Pakistan's Kashmir policy. This approach underscores that Pakistan's support extends beyond rhetoric and formal diplomacy to include measures that address human suffering and empower affected communities.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has consistently framed Kashmir as a moral responsibility anchored in democratic values, lawful advocacy and peaceful engagement. Her government's initiatives, emphasizing youth participation and media diplomacy, reinforce Pakistan's foreign policy narrative that Kashmir is not only a regional dispute but a question of international legal and humanitarian concern. By highlighting suffering, political disenfranchisement and state-sponsored restrictions on civil liberties, Punjab strengthens Pakistan's

case in international forums and bolsters efforts to secure global attention and accountability.

Punjab's proactive stance complements Pakistan's national foreign policy, which has been unwavering since 1947. Pakistan has continuously raised Kashmir at the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and other multilateral platforms, demanding the implementation of resolutions affirming the Kashmiri right to

self-determination. By combining provincial advocacy with federal diplomacy, Pakistan has ensured that the Kashmir issue remains central to regional security discourse, emphasizing that sustainable peace cannot be achieved without justice, compliance with international law and respect for human rights.

Kashmir Solidarity Day, observed annually on Feb 5, underscores the continued urgency of Pakistan's position. It serves as a reminder to the global community that commitments made to the Kashmiri people remain unfulfilled and that decades of inaction have only deepened grievances and instability. In a world increasingly governed by the principles of human rights and rules-based order, selective application of international norms undermines credibility. Pakistan's diplomatic messaging, now amplified by Punjab's initiatives, calls for consistency, accountability and peaceful resolution.

The prolonged denial of freedom to



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

## Kashmir.... A Story of Struggle Against Systematic Repression

**Syed Nadeem Ahmed Shah**

Kashmir has been central to Pakistan's national identity. It is about more than borders, it is about justice, human dignity and defending the rights of people, who have been denied both for decades. This is what makes Pakistan's stance uncompromising and principled. Our Kashmiri brothers are not alone.

Year after year, Pakistan raises Kashmir's plight at the United Nations, OIC forums, human rights bodies and global platforms, often when others hesitate or stay silent. Kashmir is, therefore, inseparable from Pakistan's moral, cultural and ideological fabric. Every slogan shouted, every banner raised and every story shared is a reaffirmation of the jugular vein commitment. The pillars of Pakistan's position are both clear and unshakable. First, historical and ideological roots: Kashmir was envisioned as central to the creation of Pakistan. Second, moral responsibility: the Kashmiri people are enduring occupation, human rights violations and injustice; silence would be complicity. Third, strategic and practical response: Pakistan's actions, whether defensive operations or advocacy in international forums, demonstrate real commitment. All three pillars justify Pakistan's unwavering stance. In today's context, with increasing international attention on human rights, Kashmir Solidarity Day sends a clear signal. Pakistan's support is unconditional, continuous and uncompromising. It is a commitment that goes beyond words. It is a jugular vein connection, a living principle that guides policy, military posture and diplomacy.

Kashmir Solidarity Day is a moment to reaffirm that the struggle of the Kashmiri people is not forgotten and that their quest for freedom, dignity and human rights continues to command attention at both regional and global levels. Beyond symbolic gestures, this day reminds the international community of Pakistan's unwavering commitment to supporting Kashmiris in their just struggle against foreign occupation. It is a day to celebrate solidarity and to strengthen global advocacy for the rights of those living under prolonged repression in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJ&K).

Pakistan's commitment to Kashmir is rooted in history, ideology and moral responsibility. From the very beginning,

# President felicitates Sri Lanka leadership, people on Independence Day

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, on behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, and personally, extended his warm felicitations to Anura Kumara Dissanayake, President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, the Government and the friendly people of Sri Lanka on the occasion of the country's 78th Independence Day.

"This important day reflects the unity and national pride of the Sri

Lankan people, as well as the strength and continuity of their national journey, shaped by a rich cultural heritage and resilience. Pakistan and Sri Lanka have a time-tested friendship as we have stood together through thick and thin.

Pakistan's armed forces played an important role assigned by the people of Sri Lanka to crush terrorism on their homeland," President Secretariat Media Wing, in a press release, quoted the president as saying.

The president also appreciated the

role played by Sri Lanka in South Asian cooperation as Sri Lanka hosted the 6th (1991), the 10th (1998) and the 15th (2008) SAARC summits in Colombo. It is sad that India has stalled the SAARC summits for almost 12 years by violating its spirit just because the next summit was supposed to be hosted by Pakistan.

"On this day, I hope that Sri Lanka and Pakistan will continue to cooperate for South Asian security and the revival of SAARC. Pakistan and Sri Lanka enjoy longstanding and brotherly



relations, founded on mutual trust, goodwill, and shared values. Over the years, our two countries have stood together in times of challenge as well as

in moments of achievement," he added.

The president said that he was confident that the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and

Sri Lanka would continue to grow stronger as they worked together to further deepen our bilateral relations in the years ahead.



## Bureau Report

of Japan in Karachi, HATTORI Masaru, hosted the "Emperor's Birthday Reception" (National

KARACHI: The Consul General

Day Celebration) on Tuesday to celebrate the 66th birthday of His Majesty, the Emperor Naruhito, in Karachi.

The event was attended by distinguished guests, including

## Grand reception marks Japan Emperor Naruhito's 66th birthday

chief guest Sindh Chief Minister Murad Ali Shah and other notable figures from various sectors, according to a press release.

In his welcome remarks, Consul General HATTORI expressed his utmost pleasure at hosting his third national day reception in Karachi.

He reflected on the long-standing and cordial relations between Japan and Pakistan, highlighting recent efforts to enhance bilateral cooperation.

He reaffirmed Japan's commitment to strengthening ties with Pakistan and collaborating with the federal and

provincial governments to promote mutual development and prosperity.

Consul General HATTORI also emphasised Japan's significant contributions to Pakistan's socio-economic development, particularly in the fields of disaster prevention, healthcare and education.

Speaking on the occasion, Murad Ali Shah presented his wholehearted congratulations to the Japanese government and people on their national day.

He appreciated Japan's continued support and contribution to Pakistan's development and acknowledged Japan's

role in promoting sustainable growth and mutual cooperation.

He emphasised the importance of further enhancing collaboration between Sindh and Japan across various sectors.

The celebration also showcased exquisite Ikebana and Bonsai displays, immersing the guests in the elegance of Japan's timeless aesthetic traditions.

The evening concluded with a ceremonial cake-cutting and a dinner featuring Japanese and Pakistani cuisine, symbolising the enduring friendship between the two countries.

## Handover Ceremony of Exhibition and Conservation Equipment for Taxila Museum

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan, through the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), has successfully completed the provision of exhibition and conservation equipment to the Taxila Museum under the Grant Assistance project titled "Improvement of Equipment for Exhibition and Conservation of the Taxila Museum." The assistance, amounting to 48.8 million Japanese Yen, reflects Japan's

continued commitment to the preservation of cultural heritage in Pakistan.

On this occasion, H. E. Ambassador Akamatsu Shuichi underscored the historical and spiritual importance of Taxila as the centre of Gandhara civilization and highlighted its close cultural connection with Japan. He expressed hope that this initiative will open doors for further collaboration, including archaeological projects, and emphasised that Japan would like to continue

efforts in line with the vision of Dr. Satoshi Naiki, a professor at Aichi Prefectural University and an expert on Gandhara civilization, to revive archaeological missions in Pakistan to discover, preserve, and promote Gandhara heritage.

On behalf of Mr. Zahoor, Director General of Archaeology, Government of Punjab, Mr. Maqsood Ahmed Malik Chief Conservationist Punjab Archaeology, conveyed sincere appreciation to the Government of Japan and JICA for their generous assistance.

tance. He stated that the newly provided equipment will enhance the museum's capacity for modern exhibition, scientific conservation, and long-term preservation of valuable artefacts, while also supporting academic research and public education.

Mr. Miyata, Chief of JICA Pakistan Office, emphasized that museums play a vital role in preserving cultural heritage and promoting mutual understanding among nations. He expressed confidence that the project will



contribute to improved conservation standards, cultural tourism, and sustainable heritage management.

The handover ceremony reaffirmed the strong and enduring partnership between Japan and Pakistan and their shared

commitment to promoting cultural cooperation, heritage conservation, and people-to-people exchange.

## Pakistan, Kazakhstan sign accords to boost cooperation in multiple sectors

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Wednesday signed accords of cooperation in multiple sectors, including trade, investment, energy, education, sports, railways, artificial intelligence, health, and others.

The pacts were signed during the ongoing first two-day state visit of President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev to Pakistan, at the invitation of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Held at the Prime Minister's House, the ceremony was witnessed by both the leaders as the ministers and officials from both sides exchanged the documents.

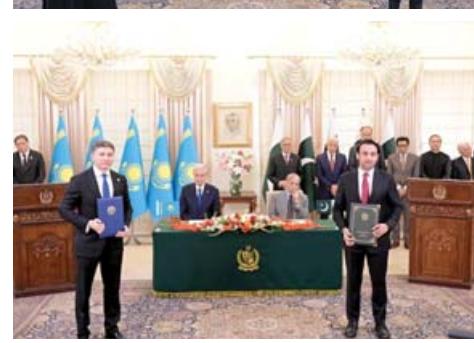
Pakistan and Kazakhstan signed a landmark Joint Declaration on the Establishment of a Strategic Partnership between the two countries.

The two sides signed a Transit Trade Agreement and an MoU between the Ministry of Industry and Construction of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of Petroleum of Pakistan on cooperation in the field of petroleum, mining, and geosciences.

An Agreement on Mutual Administrative Assistance in Customs Matters between the governments of Pakistan and Kazakhstan was concluded, besides signing a Treaty of Extradition.

Both sides signed a draft agreement on cooperation in plant protection and plant quarantine and an MoU on joint deployment in United Nations (UN) Peacekeeping missions.

The two countries also signed a Draft MoU between the Railways Ministry of Pakistan and the Transport Ministry of



Kazakhstan; MoU between the Ministry of Information Technology and Telecommunication of Pakistan and the Ministry of Digital Development of Kazakhstan; MoU in the field of climate change and environmental protection; and MoU between the ministries of health of both countries on mutual cooperation in the field of healthcare.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan also signed an MoU between the Ministry of Maritime Affairs of Pakistan and the Ministry of Transport of Kazakhstan, besides an action plan and roadmap on cooperation in the field of cultural and human-

itarian collaboration between the ministries of culture.

An MoU on news exchange between Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) and the Republican State Enterprise with the right of Economic Management TV and Radio Complex of the President of Kazakhstan was signed.

Both sides also inked MoUs between Al-Farabi Kazakh National University and the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training of Pakistan; between the State Bank of Pakistan and the Agency for Regulation and Development of the Financial Market of Kazakhstan.

stan on banking cooperation; between the Ministry of State for Artificial Intelligence and Digital Development of Kazakhstan and Pakistan Virtual Assets Regulatory Authority; and between KITZ Express Kazakhstan and NLC Pakistan.

The two countries signed an Agreement between the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan and the Ministry of National Food Security and Research of Pakistan on cooperation in the field of veterinary medicine.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan also signed MoUs for cooperation in the fields of information exchange and professional development; establishment of Ahmad Yasawi Research Center at the International Islamic University Islamabad; establishment of Al Farabi Center at Quaid-i-Azam University, Pakistan; and establishment of Pakistan-Kazakhstan Sports Center Dostyq.

An MoU was signed between the Foreign Policy Research Institute of Kazakhstan and the Institute of Strategic Studies, Islamabad; between Pakistan Post and Kazpost, and between the National Academy of Performing Arts, Pakistan, and the Ministry of Culture of Kazakhstan.

An MoU was also signed between Astana IT University of Kazakhstan and the Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences & Technology, Pakistan, as well as an agreement for cooperation in combating crimes between the two countries.

A Program for the Implementation of the Agreement between the Kazakh Institute of Standardization and Metrology and Pakistan Standards and Quality Control Authority was signed, along with a cooperation agreement between Shokan Ualikhanov Kokshetau University of Kazakhstan and the National University of Modern Languages of Pakistan. The two countries signed an MoU between the Pakistan Agricultural Research Council (PARC) and the Kazakh Scientific Research Institute of Agriculture and Crop Production for the exchange of genetic resources of agricultural crops, and for cooperation in the field of broadcasting between JSC "Khabar Agency" (Kazakhstan) and Pakistan TV.

Both sides also inked MoUs between the Autonomous Cluster Fund Astana Hub and the Ignite National Technology Fund of Pakistan; between Satbayev Kazakh National Research Technical University and the National University of Science and Technology of Pakistan; and for the establishment of a sister city relationship between Faisalabad and Shymkent.

Astana Medical University of Kazakhstan signed an MoU of cooperation with King Edward Medical University of Pakistan University of Health Sciences Lahore.

An MoU was also signed between Astana IT University of Kazakhstan and the Ghulam Ishaq Khan Institute of Engineering Sciences & Technology, Pakistan, as well as an agreement for cooperation in combating crimes between the two countries.

Current	Prev. Close
187,832.08	186,900.73
<b>Day's High</b>	<b>Day's Low</b>
188,312.20	187,018.69
<b>Index Value</b>	<b>Change</b>
31,836,375,062	+931.35
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time</b>
+0.5%	4 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

Index Value	Change
10,402.34	+87.75
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time</b>

Index Value	Change
49,251.07	+10.08
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time</b>
+0.020%	4 Feb, 12:53 pm GMT-5

Index Value	Change
54,293.36	-427.30
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>Time</b>

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195.66	199
Bahrain Dinar	743.90	753.43
Canadian Dollar	204.37	207.90
China Yuan	38.00	40
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	331.75	335.01
Hong Kong Dollar	35.38	36.25
Indian Rupee	2.82	3.33
Japanese Yen	1.7815	1.8810
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.00	917.46
Malaysian Ringgit	66.50	69.85
New Zealand \$	167.94	171.25
Norwegian Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.60	738.13
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.92	75.30
Singapore Dollar	219.24	224.18
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	359.57	364.62
Thai Bhat	8.50	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.20
UK Pound Sterling	384.67	388.18
US Dollar	280.55	282.25

**Restoring Hope, Rebuilding Lives: PSO Honours the Spirit of "Bioniks Heroes"**

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: The PSO CSR Trust recently hosted an inspiring event, "Celebrating Bioniks Heroes," at PSO House to recognize individuals whose lives have been transformed through bionic technology. By restoring mobility and dignity, the initiative has empowered these individuals to reclaim their independence and participate fully in society. The ceremony brought together leadership from the PSO CSR Trust and Bioniks, alongside their respective project teams, key stakeholders, and the beneficiaries themselves.

The program opened with an overview of recent advancements in bionic innovations, showcasing how modern technology enables individuals with limb loss to enhance their quality of life. These presentations highlighted the vital role of the PSO support in making these life-changing solutions accessible to those in need.

A key highlight of the event was the sharing of personal success stories by beneficiaries. Through real-time demonstrations and first-hand accounts, these "Bioniks Heroes" provided powerful insight into their journeys of overcoming physical challenges and rebuilding self-belief. The event also featured various stalls managed by beneficiaries who have successfully transitioned into independent careers, showcasing the tangible results of their empowerment.

Among those featured were Warisha, who has successfully balanced her professional life with her passion for baking, and Dua Rajpoot, who supports her family through her skilled stitching work. They were joined by Gufran, a talented youth creating intricate crochet items, and Mr. Zakir Hussain, who is currently completing his PhD at Federal Urdu University, Karachi. These individuals, along with many others, are now fully supporting themselves and their families.

## CM Maryam inaugurates Green Electric in Rajanpur District

**Asim Tanveer**

RAJANPUR: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurates Rajanpur's first state-of-the-art green electric bus, marking the launch of a modern public transport facility in the district.

On her arrival in Rajanpur, the chief minister receives a warm and traditional welcome. Regional drums are played and a Balochi shawl is presented to her as a gesture of local hospitality. She travels on the electric bus from DHQ Kitab Chowk to PCB Chowk Chain Mari.

At Kitab Chowk, young girls Bushra Wajid and Tooba Javed shower flower petals on the chief minister and recite verses in her honour, saying: "Thank you — your arrival brings life to the gathering, otherwise this assembly of emotions remains incomplete," and "Some people need no praise; flowers are never perfumed." The chief minister responds with affection and appreciation for the children.

Provincial Minister for Mines Sher Ali Gorchani thanks the chief minister on behalf of the people of Rajanpur and says she cares for the district just as she does for Lahore. He expresses gratitude for initiatives including Suthra Punjab, improved law and order, and recruitment in the Border Military Police.

Provincial Minister for Transport Bilal Akbar Khan briefs the ceremony about the electric bus



project, stating that 15 buses are operating on three routes in Rajanpur, including Rajanpur-Fazilpur, Rajanpur-Kot Mithan and the city

circular road.

The chief minister's arrival at the inauguration venue is met with visible enthusiasm and

applause from the participants, reflecting public excitement over the launch of the modern green transport service.

### Anti Encroachment Operation

ISLAMABAD: Workers of Capital Development Authority (CDA) seized goods of shopkeepers during anti-encroachment operation at Karachi Company area in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

### MCB Bank Reports Resilient Performance with Strong Capital and Dividend Payout

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: MCB Bank Limited is pleased to announce another year of resilient financial performance for the year ended December 31, 2025, reflecting the Bank's strategic agility, balance sheet strength, and disciplined execution amid a dynamic macroeconomic and operating environment.

The Board of Directors of MCB Bank, under the Chairmanship of Mian Mohammad Mansha, reviewed and approved the Bank's financial statements for the year ended December 31, 2025. The Board declared a final cash

dividend of Rs. 9.0 per share (90%), bringing the total cash dividend for the year to 360%, including 270% already paid, reporting one of the highest dividend payout ratios in the industry.

For the year ended December 31, 2025, the Bank recorded a profit before tax (PBT) of Rs. 115.5 billion and a profit after tax (PAT) of Rs. 54.2 billion, translating into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs. 45.73. On a consolidated basis, PBT stood at Rs. 125.1 billion. These results underscore MCB's prudent balance sheet management, sustained focus on core banking services and continued adherence to robust risk governance.

### SESSI Commissioner vows to improve healthcare facilities at Valika Hospital

**Commerce Desk**

KARACHI: Commissioner of Sindh Employees' Social Security Institution (SESSI), Hadi Buks Kalhoro, assured the executive members of the S. I. T. E. Association of Industry that key matters concerning hospital governance, digitization, reimbursement cases, and institutional collaboration are being addressed on priority.

The meeting was held against the backdrop of a recent child health incident at Kulsumbai Valika Social Security S. I. T. E. Hospital. The Association emphasized that the incident must be treated as criminal negligence and resolved with utmost urgency to prevent recurrence.

Prominent office-bearers present included Chief Coordinator Saleem Parekh, Presi-

dent Ahmed Azeez Alvi, Vice President Muhammad Riaz Dhedhi, Immediate Past President Muhammad Kamran Arbi, Former SVP Abdul Kadir Bilwani, Chairman of Labour

Committee Muhammad Tahir Goreja, and Executive Committee members Aman Naseem and Junaid-ul-Rehman. It was also agreed that the

Association would be directly involved in the resolution of pending reimbursement cases of member industries, with decisions expedited on its recommendations.

sheds light on the significant work performed by Shan Shares and SHINE Humanity through their satellite clinic in the region.

"Local farming communities, particularly women and children, face barriers to timely, quality healthcare.

The Shan Shares Shifah Gah, powered by SHINE Humanity, reinforces Shan Foods' commitment to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good Health and Wellbeing, and

This basic health unit brings essential services closer to home, reducing travel, lowering costs, and enabling earlier care. Our aim is to improve long-term health outcomes and strengthen community resilience," said Sammer Sultan, Co-Chairperson, Shan Foods.

### Standard Chartered connects Pakistan's SME Sector with Global Growth through Foreign Exchange Solutions

**Commerce Desk**

LAHORE: Standard Chartered Bank hosted a focused client engagement event in Lahore, bringing together leading SME businesses to explore strategic approaches to managing cross-border growth.

The discussion focused on how tailored foreign exchange (FX) solu-

tions can support businesses in navigating international markets with greater confidence and efficiency. SMEs form the backbone of the country's economy, including over 70% of non-agri employment, and are a key contributor to national exports.

Standard Chartered is uniquely

positioned to support this growth. With a presence in over 53 markets, the Bank offers deep market insight, end-to-end FX execution capabilities, and competitive pricing, enabling clients to optimise their global operations and reduce transaction friction. Through specialised support, the Bank offers global trade and international opportunities for SMEs who want to expand across borders.



Commenting on the event, Saadaya Riaz, Head of Wealth and Retail Banking, said, "SMEs are a vital engine of Pakistan's economy, driving growth and employment. At Standard Chartered, we are committed to supporting their ambitions by building long-term partnerships and by delivering tailored solutions, insights, and global expertise that will enable them to scale their businesses with confidence."

# Pakistan Army Team Spirit 2026 brings together forces from 19 countries including US

## Spokesman Report

PABBI: The opening ceremony of the 9th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition 2026 was held on Tuesday at the National Counter Terrorism Centre in Pabbi, marking the start of a major multinational military engagement aimed at strengthening cooperation among friendly armed forces.

The inaugural event formally launched a 60-hour-long patrolling exercise designed to test participating teams under demanding operational conditions. A senior officer attended the ceremony, underscoring the importance placed on professional military collaboration and joint preparedness.

A total of 24 international teams from 19 friendly countries are participating in this year's competition, alongside a number of military observers. The participating nations include Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Turkiye, the United States of America, and Uzbekistan. Indonesia, Myanmar, and Thailand are taking part in the event as observers.

In addition to the international contingents, 16 domestic teams from the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Navy are competing in the exercise. Observers from the Pakistan Air Force are also present, reflecting a joint services approach to professional military engagement and learning.



Pakistan Army Team Spirit is an

annual, mission-specific and task-oriented military exercise hosted by Pakistan.

The competition places a strong emphasis on physical endurance, mental resilience, and professional soldiering skills, requiring participants to operate under intense pressure while executing complex sub-tac-

tical missions.

The patrolling exercise is conducted in a near real-time operational environment, compelling teams to demonstrate rapid decision-making, adaptability, and precision. Scenarios are structured to replicate realistic battlefield challenges, allowing participating forces to test their capabilities across a range of

demanding conditions.

PATS is designed to foster perseverance through team spirit while refining core soldierly attributes. The exercise also serves as a platform for enhancing interoperability among participating militaries through the mutual exchange of innovative ideas, tactics, and best practices.

## IRS-MoIB Host Reception for Kazakhstan Media Delegation

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, in collaboration with the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting (MoIB), jointly hosted a reception in honour of a Kazakhstan Media Delegation at the Pak-China Friendship Centre, Islamabad.

The reception featured addresses by Mr. Attaullah Tarar, Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting; H. E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan; Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS; Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed; and Mr. Sardar Yasir Ilyas Khan, Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Tourism. The event provided a valuable platform for exchanging perspectives on deepening bilateral relations and enhancing cooperation between the media communities of Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

Prominent voices from academia and the media fraternity, including Dr. Adam Saud, Professor Bahria University Islamabad; Dr. Tariq Waheed, Head of Department, SZABIST; senior anchors and journalists Mr. Shaukat Paracha and Mr. Farooq Hassan; as well as Mr. Yargali, a journalist from Kazakhstan, highlighted the growing importance of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations at a time of renewed bilateral momentum.

The reception was also attended by a number of distinguished guests, including Ms. Farah Naz Akbar (Parliamentary Secretary Federal Education & Professional Training), Ms. Shamaila



Rana(MNA), Mr. Ashfaq Ahmad Khalid, Secretary Information; and Ms. Raisa Adil, Executive Director General, External Publicity Wing, MoIB, among others.

The event drew a diverse audience comprising media professionals, academics, diplomats, and senior government officials, reflecting broad-based interest in Pakistan's expanding engagement with Central Asia.

In his address, Mr. Attaullah Tarar emphasized the strategic importance of Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations and called for broader, sustained, and meaningful cooperation across key sectors, including energy, culture, tourism, trade, education, science and technology, media, and people-to-people exchanges. He further noted that the recent visit of

the President of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, Mr. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, underscored the growing importance both countries attach to high-level bilateral engagement and strategic dialogue.

Mr. Tarar stated that the governments of Pakistan and Kazakhstan are entering into several agreements and memoranda of understanding aimed at materializing broader cooperation and translating shared intent into tangible outcomes.

He expressed confidence that these initiatives would significantly deepen collaboration across multiple sectors and elevate Pakistan-Kazakhstan relations to new heights, reflecting a shared vision for long-term partnership and regional connectivity.

In his remarks, Senator Mushahid Hussain Sayed described Pakistan-

Kazakhstan relations as a vital pillar of Pakistan's broader engagement with Central Asia, rooted in shared history, mutual respect, and converging strategic interests. He underscored Kazakhstan's pivotal role in regional stability, connectivity, and economic cooperation, and highlighted Pakistan's geostrategic position as a natural gateway linking Central Asia with South Asia and beyond. Senator Sayed also commended the exemplary role played by H. E. Mr. Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Pakistan, in strengthening bilateral ties through proactive diplomacy and sustained engagement, which he noted had significantly contributed to deepening mutual trust and cooperation.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President IRS, stated that Pakistan's deepening outreach to Central Asia particularly Kazakhstan, reflects a broader regional vision aimed at connecting South Asia with Central Asia, the Caucasus, and beyond through trade corridors and enhanced transport connectivity. He reaffirmed that Pakistan attaches great significance to its brotherly relations with Kazakhstan and seeks to expand them into a broad-based economic partnership. Ambassador Saleem further emphasized the growing scope for moving beyond parallel bilateral engagements toward issue-based bilateral and multilateral cooperation, involving Pakistan, Kazakhstan, and other Central Asian partners, particularly in the areas of connectivity, energy security, and trade facilitation.

## ISMMart Group Scam: NAB records another pivotal success in preserving Public Trust

### Continued from Page 8

The management of Ismmart group lured the public with promises of unrealistic profits under the guise of fake businesses including e-commerce, restaurants, and real estate, and fraudulently collected billions of rupees. Approximately 3,400

victims approached the Bureau, with an estimated Rs. 3.5 billion defrauded in total. The principal accused has been in NAB custody since July 2024, and investigations are progressing swiftly in accordance with legal requirements.

The NAB investigation team

has also achieved a major breakthrough by tracing funds that were transferred to the United Arab Emirates (UAE) through hundi, hawala, and cryptocurrency channels. Cooperation with UAE authorities is ongoing to ensure full repatriation of the remaining funds from abroad.

On this occasion, Chairman

NAB Lt. Gen (R). Nazir Ahmed appreciated the performance of the NAB Islamabad/Rawalpindi investigation team and stated, "Public trust in NAB is our true strength." He further announced that a nationwide public awareness campaign will soon be launched to enable citizens to avoid such scams in

future.

DG NAB Islamabad/Rawalpindi Waqar Ahmed Chohan termed this achievement the "second gift of 2026," stating that providing relief to victims of Bankers City in January and ISMMart in February demonstrates NAB's dedication to upholding justice. In a citi-

zen-oriented reform, NAB has also announced that future payments to victims will be made through online bank transfers to save them from repeated visits to offices.

This NAB achievement is

clear evidence that the Bureau is not only actively combating corruption but is also firmly committed to repatriating the life savings of affected victims.

During the ceremony, the Chairman NAB distributed shields among members of the NAB Islamabad/Rawalpindi investigation team and also announced Umrah packages for the team in recognition of their outstanding performance.

## Pakistan, Kazakhstan set \$1 bn trade target, agree on regional transport corridor

### Continued From Page 1

but also the potential of the two countries," he said adding that there was great potential on both sides, and with the joint efforts, both sides could make significant progress.

Earlier, the two leaders witnessed the exchange of 37 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) and agree-

ments across a wide range of sectors. These included finance, trade, industry, transport, energy, health, culture, security, education, media, science, technology, climate change, agriculture, and other areas of mutual interest.

He noted that economic cooperation between the countries would now move towards practical and result-oriented outcomes. He also emphasized

the importance of timely implementation of the signed agreements.

He said the MoUs should be converted into actionable projects at the earliest to deliver tangible benefits to both countries.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev described Pakistan as a reliable and important partner of Kazakhstan in South Asia and

beyond. He said the elevation of bilateral relations to a strategic partnership opened new opportunities for cooperation across the full spectrum of bilateral and multilateral engagement.

"By elevating our relations to a new level, we open up immense opportunities to engage across a full spectrum of bilateral and multilateral agenda," President Tokayev said.

He noted that bilateral trade had already shown positive momentum, doubling in the previous year, and said both sides had agreed on concrete measures to further expand trade with an ambitious but achievable target of \$1 billion in the near future.

President Tokayev highlighted cooperation in transport and logistics as a priority

area, particularly projects aimed at expanding trade flows and improving connectivity. He said discussions also covered Pakistan's growing role in regional transit and logistics, including the use of the ports of Karachi and Gwadar as potential gateways for Central Asian trade.

The Kazakh president said both sides also agreed to explore the resumption of direct air

connections to promote business, tourism, and people-to-people contact.

President Tokayev also invited Pakistani companies to establish production facilities in Kazakhstan, particularly in agricultural processing, pharmaceuticals, and construction materials, and assured favorable conditions for Pakistani investors.

## CAP Schedules Executive Council Elections for February 15 in Lahore

### Special Correspondent

MULTAN: The Chess Association of Punjab (CAP) has formally announced the schedule for elections of its Executive Council for the 2026–2030 term. According to an official notification, the elections will take place on Sunday, February 15, 2026, at 1:00 pm at Grand Anmol, Main Boulevard, New Garden Town, Lahore.

The election process will be conducted strictly in accordance with the CAP Constitution, the rules and regulations of the Sports Board Punjab, and the National Sports Policy. The Sports Board Punjab has appointed Mr Mustafa Shah as the Election Commissioner and Observer to oversee the proceedings.

The Election Commission also includes Advocate Malik Shahid Iqbal, Assistant Attorney General for Pakistan, and Dr Saifur Baloch, who holds a PhD in Sports Sciences.

The elections are being held under Article 26 of the Chess Association of Punjab Constitution, in line with the Executive Council's resolution dated January 12, 2026, and directives issued by the Sports Board Punjab.

CAP Secretary General Raja Gauhar Iqbal stated that all necessary arrangements have been completed to ensure a free, fair, and transparent electoral process. CAP Announces Executive Council Elections for 2026–2030 on February 15 in Lahore.

## Hockey, football and martial arts matches held at TT Singh to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day

### Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: On the instructions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif and under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela, the Sports Department organized exhibition matches of hockey, martial arts, and football to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day. The events were aimed at expressing solidarity with the people of Kashmir and fostering national spirit among the youth through the promotion of sports.

District Sports Officer (DSO) Toba Tek Singh Chaudhary Muhammad Jamil said that these sporting activities were an effective means of conveying the message of Kashmir Solidarity, while also playing a vital role in engaging young people in positive and healthy pursuits. He added that an exhibition football match will be played on February 5 at Shaheen Football Stadium on Jhang Road Toba Tek Singh, in which local teams will participate.

## Peshawar Zalmi confirm Babar Azam's retention price

Peshawar Zalmi on Wednesday revealed the retention prices of their four retained players, including star batter Babar Azam, ahead of the historic Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 players' auction, scheduled for February 11.

The franchise confirmed the figures through PSL's official social media accounts, with skipper Babar Azam retained in the Platinum category for PKR 70 million.

Sufyan Moqim, kept in the Diamond category, will earn PKR 44.8 million, while Abdul Samad, selected in the Gold category, is set to receive PKR 28 million. Saad Baig, retained under the Emerging category, will earn PKR 19.6 million.

The yellow storm is coming

Peshawar Zalmi have confirmed their retentions for HBL PSL 2026, ahead of the upcoming Player's Auction#HBLPSL | #NewEra pic.twitter.com/wnF8PepPto

— PakistanSuperLeague (@thePSL20) February 4, 2026

With these retentions, Peshawar Zalmi have so far spent PKR 162.4 million from their overall franchise budget ahead of the auction.

Each PSL 11 franchise has been allotted a total purse of PKR 450 million, with an additional PKR 55 million reserved for direct signings under the league's new auction-based model.

This year, PSL has introduced a major shift in player recruitment, replacing the traditional draft system with a full-fledged auction format for the first time in the league's history.

Five of the six old franchises had announced their retained players by Tuesday, while Multan Sultans confirmed they will enter the auction with zero retentions, giving them the maximum purse to spend during the bidding process.

PSL 11 retentions

Lahore Qalandars: Shaheen Shah Afridi (Platinum), Abdullah Shafique (Diamond), Sikandar Raza (Gold), Mohammad Naeem (Silver)

Quetta Gladiators: Abrar Ahmed (Platinum), Usman Tariq (Diamond), Hasan Nawaz (Gold), Shamyl Hussain (Emerging)

Islamabad United: Shadab Khan (Platinum), Salman Irshad (Gold), Andries Gous (Silver)

Peshawar Zalmi: Babar Azam (Platinum), Sufyan Moqim (Diamond), Abdul Samad (Gold), Ali Raza (Emerging)

Karachi Kings: Hasan Ali (Platinum), Mohammad Abbas Afridi (Diamond), Khushdil Shah (Gold), Saad Baig (Emerging)

## Nishan-e-Pakistan

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari confers the Nishan-e-Pakistan on President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, H.E. Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, during a Special Investiture Ceremony, in the presence of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



Photo: PID

## President reaffirms Pakistan's keenness to work closely with Kazakhstan

## City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari, Wednesday, while affirming Pakistan's readiness to work closely with Kazakhstan to advance shared goals of peace, connectivity and sustainable development, said both countries shared a firm commitment to broadening cooperation across political, economic and regional domains.

He said this while talking to the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, who met

him at Aiwan-e-Sadr, President Secretariat Media Wing said in a press release.

The two presidents first held a tête-a-tête meeting, during which they exchanged views on key bilateral, regional and international issues, which was followed by an extended meeting with their respective delegations.

Talking to his Kazakh counterpart, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan and Kazakhstan shared a relationship rooted in mutual trust, shared values and a common vision for regional

prosperity.

He noted that the visit of President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev, the first by a Kazakh head of state in over two decades, provided a timely opportunity to reinvigorate bilateral ties and translate political goodwill into concrete outcomes through expanded cooperation and stronger institutional linkages.

President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev said that Kazakhstan attached great importance to its relations with Pakistan and regarded the partnership as

a key pillar of regional cooperation.

He expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral ties and reaffirmed Kazakhstan's commitment to working closely with Pakistan to strengthen connectivity, expand economic cooperation and promote peace and stability in the region.

The extended meeting was attended on the Kazakhstan side by Berik Assylow, Prosecutor General of the Republic of Kazakhstan; Nurlan Zhakupov, Chief Executive Officer of Samruk-Kazyna

JSC; Serik Zhumangarin, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of National Economy; Ernar Lazar, Adviser to the President for International Affairs; Yerzhan Kistafin, Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to Pakistan; Dauren Kosanov, Minister of Defence; Sayasat Nurbek, Minister of Science and Higher Education; Arman Shakkaliev, Minister of Trade and Integration; Nurlan Sauranbayev, Minister of Transport and Magzum Mirzagayev, Adviser to the President.

## Secretary General of Zayed Award for Human Fraternity Calls on First Lady of Pakistan, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari

## Spokesman Report

ABU DHABI: Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam, Secretary General of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, called on the First Lady of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, during her engagements in Abu Dhabi.

During the meeting, the two sides exchanged views on the promotion of human fraternity, compassion, coexistence, and dialogue as shared global values. Judge Mohamed Abdelsalam briefed the First Lady on the vision, mandate, and independent character of the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity, highlighting its global outreach



and role in recognizing initiatives that advance peace, tolerance, and human dignity across societies.

The First Lady appreciated the UAE's visionary leadership in institutionalizing human fraternity as a cornerstone of global humanitarian discourse and lauded the Zayed Award for Human Fraternity as a credible and impactful platform for advancing inclusive and values-based engagement worldwide.

The meeting reaffirmed the shared resolve of Pakistan and the United Arab Emirates to continue supporting initiatives that promote mutual respect, peaceful coexistence, and solidarity among nations and peoples.

## ISMMart Group Scam: NAB records another pivotal success in preserving Public Trust

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Second Major Milestone of 2026: After refunding affectees of Banker City in January, the compensation for the victims of ISMMart begins in February.

The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has achieved another significant success toward restoring public confidence in the State by taking decisive action against one of Pakistan's largest financial frauds — the ISMMart Group Scam. The credit goes to the professional expertise and indefatigable efforts of NAB Islamabad/Rawalpindi for recovering Rs. 1 billion so far, out of which Rs. 600 million has been distributed among



3,400 victims in the first phase.

During a ceremony held at NAB Headquarters, cheques were distributed among the victims. The event

was presided over by Chairman NAB Lt. Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed. Deputy Chairman Sohail Nasir, Prosecutor General Ihtesham Qadir Shah, DG NAB

Continued on Page 7

Published by: Almass Ayoub Sabir from Zero Point Printers Rawalpindi

## No terrorist or facilitator will be spared: Field Marshal Asim Munir



## Bureau Report

QUETTA: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir visited Quetta on Wednesday and received a comprehensive operational briefing on the prevailing security environment and internal security operations.

The briefing covered recent terrorist attacks orchestrated by Indian-backed internationally-designated terrorists of Fitna al Hindustan and the prompt aggressive response of security forces which failed their ulterior motive of compromising peace, stability, and development in Balochistan.

Measures being undertaken to further strengthen the writ of the state and ensure protection of the populace and critical infrastructure were also discussed.

The COAS & CDF remarked that

no terrorist and its facilitator will be spared and all will be dealt strictly as per law and that no one can rationalise violence and terrorism on any pretext. He appreciated the professionalism, valour, and sacrifices of officers and troops of all law enforcement agencies in thwarting nefarious anti-Pakistan designs and maintaining law and order.

Later Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir along with CM Balochistan visited Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Quetta, where he met the injured personnel of Army, FC Balochistan and Police. He lauded their high morale and commanded their bravery and steadfastness in protecting the motherland from foreign-sponsored terrorists.

Earlier on his arrival he was received by Commander Quetta Corps.

## IT Excellence Center Event Highlights Need for Tech Adoption in Azad Kashmir



## Bureau Report

Azad Kashmir PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore expressed these views while addressing a function held on behalf of IT Excellence Center and Software Technology Park under the IT Department. Secretary IT and Information Muhammad Rashid Hanif, Secretary Schools Qazi Inait, Senior Journalist Sohail Faiz, Spokesperson of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Shaukat Javed Mir, Director of Liberation Cell, Director General Satmarjad, Secretary Asif Rathore, CEO Safire Production Khurram Ghori, senior journalists, students and a large number of people attended the function.

## China condemns Balochistan terror attacks, reiterates support for Pakistan



ISLAMABAD: Speaking at a regular press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian expressed deep condolences for the victims and extended sympathies to the injured and bereaved families.

"We mourn for the lives lost, and our hearts go out to the injured and those who lost their loved ones," he said.

"China firmly opposes any form of terrorism and will, as always, firmly support Pakistan in combating terrorism, maintaining solidarity

and social stability, and protecting the safety of the people," he added.

Lin made the remarks while responding to a question about the large-scale coordinated attacks across Balochistan last week.

Earlier, the Chinese embassy in Pakistan also condemned the "recent multiple terrorist activities in Balochistan", saying it "deeply mourn(s) for the lives lost, and extend(s) sincere sympathies to the bereaved families and the injured".

According to the military's media wing, security forces killed 92 terrorists on Saturday while repulsing coordinated attacks in Quetta and several other cities and towns across Balochistan. Fifteen security personnel and 18 civilians were martyred during the violence.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said terrorists belonging to Indian-sponsored Fitna al-Hindustan carried out attacks in areas including Mastung, Nushki, Dalbandin, Kharan, Panjgur, Tump, Gwadar and Pasni.