



# PM's Advisor leads tribute to former AJK Leader with grave visit and condolences

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: A high level delegation led by Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Rana Sanaullah, Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam and Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry visited the grave of Azad Jammu and Kashmir former President Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on his death, laid flowers and offered Fetea.

On this occasion, a well-dressed police contingent saluted and presented a guard of honor. Later, they came to the residence of the former President of the State, Sultan House, Chechian, and expressed their condolences to his sons, Minister of the Government Chaudhry Yasir Sultan, Chaudhry Saud Sultan and Minister of Energy Chaudhry Arshad Hussain.

No amount of tribute can be paid to his brilliant and dignified services. On this occasion, former ministers of the Azad Kashmir government Chaudhry Muhammad Saeed, Chaudhry Rukhsar Ahmed, Mayor Municipal Corporation Chaudhry Usman Ali Khalid, officers of the divisional and district administration and a large number of dignitaries of the area were present.



Advisor to the Prime Minister of Pakistan Rana Sanaullah said that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry played an active and active role in the Kashmir freedom movement. Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs

Dr. Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said that the personality of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry has played a historic and epoch-making role in the politics of Azad Kashmir. His entire life is a symbol of the Kashmir freedom

movement. His struggle and efforts for the Kashmir cause will always be remembered. He expressed his heartfelt condolences to the family of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on the demise of his father.

## Basent Festival

LAHORE: Girls students are decorating kites and other things during preparation of "Basent Festival" at University of Home Economics, in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

## Evening review meeting of day one of Polio NIDs campaign held

Shaukat Ali Malik

KOTLI: An evening review meeting of the first day of the Polio National Immunization Days (NIDs) campaign was held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office, Kotli. The meeting was chaired by Ms. Iffat, Additional Deputy Commissioner General (ADCG) Kotli.

The meeting was attended by Dr.

Fida Butt, Dr. Talal (District Polio Officer, WHO), Kamran Gors (Assistant Director Surveillance), Mr. Asghar, and supervisors from various Union Councils.

Dr. Fida Butt, Dr. Talal, and Kamran Gors stressed the importance of continuous monitoring, accurate data reporting, and timely information sharing. Field teams were directed to

focus on tracking missed children, giving special attention to hard-to-reach areas, and ensuring the highest standards of quality.

At the conclusion of the meeting, all participants reaffirmed their commitment to continue the Polio



NIDs campaign with high standards and to ensure that all eligible children in district Kotli are protected against polio.

## Bollywood, Narrative Warfare, and the Quiet Admission of Involvement

Iram Saleemi

In today's globalized media landscape, Pakistani audiences are no longer confined to local or regional cinema. Platforms like Netflix, Amazon Prime, and other digital networks have made international content—particularly Indian films—easily accessible. Watching Indian cinema, therefore, is no longer unusual or ideologically charged. However, what deserves serious attention is what these films are now choosing to say.

Recently, after watching the Indian film *Dhurandhar*, one cannot ignore several critical elements that go beyond entertainment. At a surface

level, the film borrows heavily from Pakistani cultural material. At least two songs appear to be directly inspired by Pakistani music—one notably lifted from Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan's iconic qawwali, while another closely resembles an established Pakistani composition. This cultural appropriation is not new, but it is telling.

More importantly, *Dhurandhar* carries a far more consequential narrative: it implicitly acknowledges Indian involvement in destabilizing Pakistan, particularly in Balochistan. For decades, Indian state and media narratives have categorically denied interference in Pakistan's internal affairs. Yet this film, intentionally or otherwise, does something unprece-

dented—it normalizes the idea of infiltration and involvement in another state's internal conflicts.

The storyline openly depicts Indian engagement through Baloch elements, portraying how such actors were used as tools to weaken Pakistan from within. Characters and plotlines suggest coordination, manipulation, and exploitation of the Baloch issue, while simultaneously attempting to malign Pakistan's intelligence and law enforcement agencies. What stands out most is not the accusation itself, but the acceptance of involvement. This is a subtle but powerful shift—from denial to justification.

This cinematic admission reinforces what Pakistan has consistently raised at international forums: that

external forces have played an active role in fueling unrest in Balochistan. When Indian cinema itself begins to echo this reality, it inadvertently strengthens Pakistan's long-standing position.

At the same time, Indian popular cinema continues to function as a tool of emotional distraction. After military and diplomatic setbacks, Bollywood often steps in to manufacture heroism for domestic consumption. War losses are repackaged into cinematic victories, old patriotic songs are remixed, and aging stars are recycled to construct new "heroes." Even Indian audiences on social media platforms increasingly mock these narratives, recognizing them as exaggerated and disconnected from reality.

The pattern is clear: when tangible

success is absent on the battlefield

or in diplomacy, spectacle replaces

substance. Films are used to evoke

emotion, prolong outrage, and ultimately make the public forget uncomfortable truths—whether military defeats, downed aircraft, or failed

strategic objectives.

However, this raises an important question for Pakistan: should we continue to remain silent in the narrative space?

Pakistan does not need to fabricate myths or invent false heroics. Our

history already contains documented

events—military achievements, diplomatic successes, sporting victories,

and real intelligence wins. These reali-

ties deserve representation through

cinema and media, not as propaganda, but as storytelling grounded in fact.

India aggressively markets its

version of events across the world

through films. That narrative—often

hostile to Pakistan—circulates freely

and shapes perceptions. Pakistan, on

the other hand, hesitates to use its

own creative industries to counter

this discourse.

The solution is not imitation, but assertion. If cinema has become a battleground of narratives, Pakistan must participate—confidently, truthfully, and strategically. Cultural silence only allows others to define our story.

In an era where films influence public opinion as much as news head-

lines, narrative sovereignty matters. And it is time Pakistan claimed it.

Mirwaiz Umar Farooq's heartfelt condolences on the demise of Barrister Sultan Mehmood

Bureau Report

Srinagar: Kashmir Hurriyat leader Mirwaiz Umar Farooq has rich tribute to late Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. He says "I am deeply saddened by the demise of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry. He said that I had the opportunity to meet him several times. He was a fellow countryman of Jammu and Kashmir across the Line of Control. Barrister Sahib had a deep sense of the pain of divided families, the suffering caused by the LoC and the suffering of the people as a result of this division. He was a strong advocate of dialogue and compassionate engagement to resolve the conflict and deal with its human aspect.

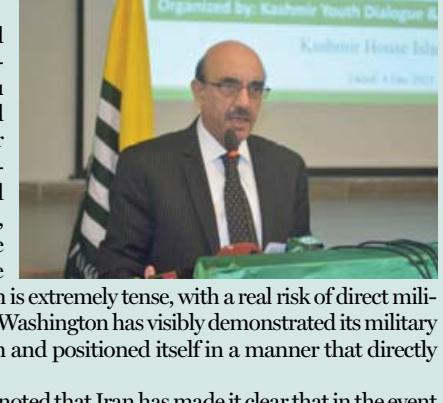


May Allah Almighty grant him a high place in Paradise, raise his ranks and grant patience to his family and friends. Ameen.

Ambassador Masood Khan Warns of Imminent U.S.-Iran Military Confrontation

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations, cautioned that the situation between the



United States and Iran is extremely tense, with a real risk of direct military confrontation, as Washington has visibly demonstrated its military presence in the region and positioned itself in a manner that directly targets Iran.

Ambassador Khan noted that Iran has made it clear that in the event of an attack, it would respond forcefully and comprehensively, striking U.S. military installations across the region, including air bases in Qatar, naval facilities in Bahrain, and positions in Iraq and Jordan. He described the situation as fast-developing and highly volatile, with escalation risks that extend far beyond the immediate protagonists.

At the same time, Ambassador Khan pointed to a modest but significant ray of hope that has emerged over the past 48 hours. He said that diplomatic channels between the United States and Iran appear to have been activated, with intermediaries working intensively to explore the possibility of a negotiated outcome, particularly on the nuclear issue. Referring to recent statements by senior Iranian figure Ali Larijani, a close aide to the Supreme Leader, and parallel signals from President Donald Trump, Ambassador Khan observed that diplomacy seems to be back in motion, and there is reason to hope that it may succeed.

HERA Initiated Cleanliness Drive In Collaboration with Private Chartered Universities Forum

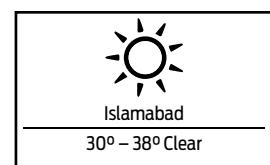


News Desk

PESHAWAR: CECOS University of IT & Emerging Sciences successfully concluded a large-scale Cleanliness Drive today, organized in collaboration with the Higher Education Regulatory Authority (HERA). The initiative brought together leading private sector universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa to promote environmental responsibility, civic awareness, and collective action for a cleaner and healthier society.

The drive was led by CECOS University, with active participation from Ghadariah University, Abasyn University, Qurtuba University, and Sarhad University. The initiative witnessed enthusiastic involvement from university administrations, faculty members, and students, making the campaign impactful and highly successful.

The event was graced by distinguished delegates from HERA, including Mr. Sajid Inam, Chairman HERA, and Mufti Yaqoob, Director HERA, who appreciated the collaborative efforts of the participating universities and emphasized the importance of sustained cleanliness initiatives across higher education institutions.


**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:38 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:02 pm
Maghrib	5:41 pm
Isha	7:06 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police**
**Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	5556311-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	9261170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	921234-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	555864
TMA	5770886

Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

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

**Sheikh Abdul Wahid condemns Balochistan terror attacks**

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Business leader Sheikh Abdul Wahid strongly condemned the recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan, calling them a serious threat to peace and economic stability. He urged the government to tighten security and adopt effective strategies to eliminate terrorist elements.

Expressing solidarity with the families of martyred soldiers and civilians, he paid tribute to the Pakistan Armed Forces for their sacrifices. He also called on India and Afghanistan to refrain from interference and contribute to regional peace. Sheikh Abdul Wahid stressed that the nation stands united with its armed forces and warned that any future terrorism would be treated as aggression, urging the international community to play an active role in ensuring regional stability.

TOBA TEK SINGH: A dignified collective wedding ceremony was held in Toba Tek Singh under Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's Dhee Rani Programme, where 52 couples were married with honour and state support. The event also included three couples from minority communities, reflecting the programme's inclusive and welfare-oriented character.

The ceremony was organised at a private marquee under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela. Provincial Minister for Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Punjab Sohail Shaukat Butt, attended as the

# Deputy Commander-in-Chief, Libyan Arab Armed Forces Calls on Chief of the Naval Staff At Naval Headquarters

**Spokesman Report**

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces, Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Hafta, called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

Upon arrival at Naval Headquarters, Deputy Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. During meeting both the leaders deliberated on matters of mutual interest, evolving regional maritime security landscape, and ways to further bolster cooperation in defence and training.

Lieutenant General Saddam Khalifa Hafta commended Pakistan Navy as a pivotal force for regional peace and maritime security. Both leaders reaffirmed their resolve to further diversify and strengthen



the scope of existing bilateral defence relationship.

## Mustard crop

ISLAMABAD: Youngsters are wading in the mustard crop in the Golra area of the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## First College Librarians' Symposium Held in Karachi

**Rabia Ali Fareedi**


KARACHI: The First College Librarians' Symposium was held at Adamjee Government Science College, Karachi, under the auspices of the Society for Promotion of Reading and Improvement of Libraries (SPRIL) in collaboration with Library Information Innovators. The symposium aimed to identify key challenges faced by college librarians and to propose practical solutions.

The chief guest was Dr. Riffat Parveen Siddiqui, Chairperson, Department of Library and Information Science, University of Karachi, while Dr. Rais Ahmed Samdani was the guest of honor.

The opening session was presided over by Dr. Samdani and began with the recitation of the Holy

Quran followed by the national anthem.

Several librarians and profes-

## Sindhi Textbook Songs to Be Digitized Through AI: Dr. Sher Mehrani

**Abdul Ghafoor Sarohi**

HYDERABAD: Artificial Intelligence Can Drive Development Across Sectors: Ghulam Farooq Technology expert Ghulam Farooq held a meeting with Dr. Sher Mehrani, Chairman of the Sindhi Language Authority, to discuss collaboration on various technology-driven projects aimed at promoting the Sindhi language and supporting public sector development.

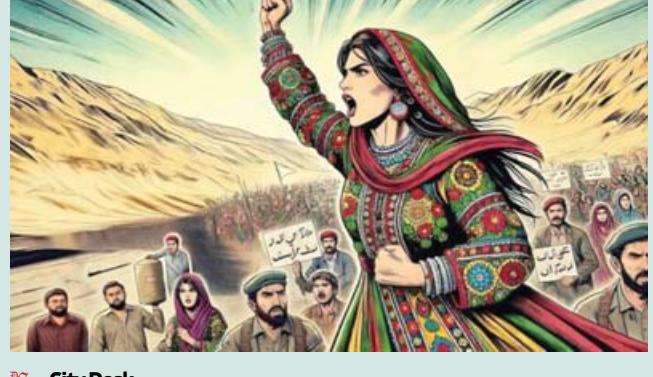
During the meeting, Ghulam Farooq highlighted the transformative potential of artificial intelligence in key sectors including education, healthcare, policing, agriculture, and other fields. He emphasized that effective implementation of AI-based solutions would require institutional and government support.

He informed the participants that work is already underway to link the poetry and classical works of Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai and other Sindhi Sufi poets with AI models. The initiative includes digital translation, interpretation, voice models, and the development of educational content to make Sindhi literature more accessible for younger generations and global audiences.

Chairman Dr. Sher Mehrani proposed that AI-based models be developed for poems and textbook songs included in Sindhi curriculum from Grade 1 to Grade 10. These digital tools would help students understand meanings, learn correct pronunciation, access detailed explanations, and benefit from audio support. The primary objective of the project is to connect students with the Sindhi language and literature from an early age through modern, engaging, and interactive methods.

The meeting was also attended by Amir Fayaz Buriro, Director of the Abdul Majid Bhurgi Institute of Language Engineering, and former Secretary of Culture, Akbar Laghari.

## NCSW Highlights Role of Balochistan Women in Peace Building Amid Exploitation Crisis


**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: National Commission on the Status of Women (NCSW) expresses grave concern over the growing exploitation of women by militant and extremist organisations in conflict-affected regions of Pakistan, particularly Balochistan. The use of women by banned groups for coercion, propaganda, and acts of violence constitutes a serious violation of their human rights, dignity, and fundamental right to life and security.

Women can never be tools of conflict. Any attempt to normalise or glorify their exploitation undermines the core principles of gender justice, human rights, and sustainable peace.

At the same time, NCSW commends the courage, resilience, and moral strength of the mothers and women of Balochistan who continue to uphold family cohesion, reject violence, and stand for peace despite decades of conflict, marginalisation, and loss. These women represent the true strength and unity of Pakistan.

Since the independence movement, inspired by the leadership of Mohtarma Fatima Jinnah, women in Pakistan have played a vital role in nation-building and social stability. Today, women in Balochistan and conflict-affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa continue this legacy by contributing to community resilience and peace-building efforts.

It is imperative to recognise that women in conflict zones are overwhelmingly victims not perpetrators of violence. Militant groups exploit structural inequalities, poverty, lack of education, weak protection systems, and prolonged exclusion to manipulate and coerce women.

NCSW calls upon Federal and Provincial Governments to adopt urgent, coordinated measures, including:

responsible use of artificial intelligence in library services.

Service Awards were presented by SPRIL to senior librarians promoted to Grade 20, including Farheen Mahmood, Syed Munawar Ali, and Professor Rustam Ali Brohi, while Professor Aamir Subhani (Grade 19) was also honored. Shields were also presented to distinguished guests and contributors.

In their concluding remarks, speakers appreciated the initiative and described the symposium as a historic and positive step for college librarians. At the closing session, Ms. Farheen Mahmood presented a resolution highlighting the issues faced by college librarians, which will be forwarded to the relevant authorities.

## 52 couples married in mass wedding ceremony under CM Dhee Rani programme Zafar Chishti

chief guest.

Leaders of Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz, senior officials of the Social Welfare and Bait-ul-Maal Department, including Director General Tariq Qureshi, Deputy Director Rana Kashif Nisar, additional deputy commissioners, assistant commissioners and heads of various departments were also present.

Under the Dhee Rani Programme, wedding dresses were provided to both brides and grooms, while brides were also given artificial jewellery.

Arrangements were made for the respectable participation of 20 guests per couple. The Punjab government

provided Rs200,000 as salami to each bride, which was transferred directly through ATM cards. Addressing the ceremony, Provincial Minister Sohail Shaukat Butt said Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif had thought about the future of Punjab's daughters with the care of a mother.

He said the Dhee Rani Programme had provided real relief to deserving parents. He added that 3,000 collective marriages had already been completed successfully in the first phase, while the target of 5,000 marriages for the year 2025-26 would be achieved ahead of schedule.

He further announced that the



target set for June 2026 would be completed by February 16.

The minister said the Dhee Rani

Programme was a blessing for daughters of labourers and deserving families, ensuring that the marriage of a

well-off family.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Big Dreams Demand Hard Efforts

**Abdullah Basheer**

**B**ig dreams in any given age of human development have been the invisibly moving power that drives societies. From scientific discoveries to social upheavals, since building a nation to the birth of a person, ambition has always come before success. But dreams have never sufficed. When history repeats a lesson to us, it is invariably a simple, yet not very pleasant truth, that big dreams require hard work. The great things cannot be, without discipline, perseverance and long struggle, mere empty dreams.

Dreaming has been simplified in the era of social media. Success stories, living lavish lifestyles and overnight sensations fill the platforms, giving the idea that success is immediate and effortless. This edited story is a falsification of reality. What is hardly noticeable is the years of struggle, sacrifice, failure and learning that lead to success. Big dreams do not get achieved through motivation but rather they are achieved through constant and in many cases painful effort.

At a national scale, countries are also influenced by their dreams. The idea of independence, democracy, or development has been the inspiration of movements all over the world. Nation-building is however, not a smooth ride. The nations which have gained stability economically and had strong institutions did so after having invested in education, governance and long-term planning. It takes challenging reforms, patience and social discipline to develop. National progress has no shortcuts, as

personal success does not have it.

In the third world, the disparity between ambitions and initiatives is usually high. Young people have a dream of goals of global achievement but are often highly reluctant or incapable of investing in such a large amount of work. It is not just a case of personal laziness but such systemic issues as poor access to education and unemployment, and political instability. However, despite such restrictions, hard work is still a determinant. The only difference between those who overcome circumstances and those who do not is that the first one has ambition and perseverance.

Hard work does not only pertain to physical work but it also refers to intellectual discipline and emotional strength. In the fast-changing world, flexibility and lifelong learning is becoming more important in success. The new skills, use of technology, and openness to change are the new requirements of big dreams today. Effort is not a one-time investment, thus, is a lifelong commitment. Even ambitious people lose their way in time as those who cease to struggle are left behind.

Hard work is an irreplaceable companion of failure. But even failure itself is misunderstood. Instead of a weakness, it is a very important phase of development. There is always a time of hesitation and discouragement before every significant accomplishment. Those who succeed in big dreams never fail, but they do not give up. Hard work instills endurance, the ability to stand up after falling, and this is probably the best skill in any profession.

It should also be noted that hard work does not ensure success overnight. This fact may be demotivating in a world where things always go fast. But hard

## A World on the Brink: How U.S.-Iran Tensions and Middle East Turmoil Are Redrawing the Global Order

**B**y integrating new geopolitical stress points — especially between the United States and Iran — with shifting global alliances and economic upheaval, the world stands dangerously close to a systemic realignment. What was once contained in diplomatic backchannels and regional flashpoints has now surfaced as an open struggle that threatens to reshape global strategic balances.

This is not a localized crisis. It is the latest inflection point in a broader reordering of international order — economic, military, and ideological — with consequences far beyond the Middle East.

**The Latest Flashpoint: Escalation Between Iran and the United States**

Tensions between Washington and Tehran have grown sharply in recent weeks, reaching levels not seen in years. In January 2026, the U.S. imposed a fresh slate of sanctions targeting senior Iranian officials and entities accused of aiding repression and illicit finance, including digital asset exchanges used by Iran's elite. These measures have been accompanied by an unmistakable military buildup: U.S. warships, including the aircraft carrier USS Abraham Lincoln, are operating in the region alongside multi-day aerial exercises and fighter deployments.

Concurrently, Washington's approval of nearly \$16 billion in arms sales to key regional allies — Israel and Saudi Arabia — has underscored strategic commitments but also elevated anxieties that the balance of power could be further destabilized.

These arms deals, intended by policymakers in Washington to strengthen defenses against potential threats, also mark a clear signaling of support for certain state actors — even as diplomatic tensions grow with others. This complicates an already fraught regional landscape.

### Iran's Internal Crisis: A Regime Under Strain

At home, Iran is enduring its deepest economic crisis in decades, driven by sanctions, currency collapse, inflation, and structural economic weaknesses. This decline has fueled widespread protests and nationwide unrest, which in turn has dramatically heightened tensions with the U.S. and the broader international community.

In this sense, Iran's external posturing cannot be separated from internal crises. The interplay between domestic survival and regional influence now shapes Tehran's strategic calculus as much as any external threat.

### Diplomatic Crossroads: Mediation and Constraints

Amid war talk, there are persistent diplomatic efforts to avert full-scale conflict. Iran's foreign minister has engaged in talks with Turkey, and regional actors including Turkey and other Muslim majority states have attempted to mediate, arguing that conflict would devastate the region.

However, any meaningful negotiation appears conditional and delicate. Iran has signaled openness to dialogue

but only on its own terms, rejecting demands that it curb core defense capabilities. Washington, for its part, appears open to talks but continues pressure through military deployments and sanctions. These dual tracks — pressure warily paired with negotiation readiness — create brittle diplomacy, easily shattered by a misunderstanding or provocation.

### A Middle East in Deep Trouble

The broader Middle East is experiencing compounded instability:

- Ongoing struggles between Israel and Iranian-aligned groups continue to fester despite ceasefire arrangements from past conflicts.

- U.S. and regional allies have vastly increased military presence and exercises, fueling local fear and mistrust.

- Smaller states — from Gulf monarchies to Iraq and Lebanon — are caught in the widening crosswinds of great-power tension.

This environment heightens the risk of miscalculation. Borders are porous, proxy networks span borders, and the financial and political pressures on governments are rising. A single misjudgment — whether in the Strait of Hormuz or in cross-border military posturing — could trigger a broader conflict that draws in multiple actors.

### Global Consequences Beyond the Region

The implications of this crisis reach well beyond the Middle East:

- Disruptions in the Strait of Hormuz — through which a significant percentage of global oil supply transits — risk triggering a spike in global energy prices, with profound economic effects worldwide.

- European economies, already battered by energy shocks and strategic recalibrations, could face further instability.

- Wider fault lines involving Russia, China, and the U.S. complicate diplomatic options and could redraw global alignments.

This is not just a regional conflict. It is a geopolitical stress test for the international system, revealing weaknesses in alliances, institutions, and crisis management mechanisms alike.

### Conclusion: Nearer to War or Diplomatic Breakthrough?

The world today faces a stark reality: the risk of confrontation between major powers is not theoretical — it is immediate and tangible. Neither side wants an all-out war, but both are preparing for the possibility that diplomacy may fail.

This dual trajectory — simultaneous negotiation and military readiness — is the hallmark of a system under strain.

History shows that the most dangerous moments are those in which diplomacy and conflict coexist in equal measure. The coming weeks and months will reveal whether the current crisis will be remembered as a turning point toward reconciliation or as the moment when a series of missteps cascaded into something far more destructive.

The stakes are global, and the margin for error is shrinking.



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

## Deterrence, Doctrine, and Limited Conflict: The India-Pakistan Rivalry in the Nuclear Era

**Ahsan Ur Rehman**

**T**he relationship between India and Pakistan has been one of a long-standing confrontation that dates back to the years of independence in the year 1947. This competition has led to several armed conflicts, in particular, in 1948, 1965 and 1971, and to frequent crises, low level conflicts, and proxy wars. In May of 1998, South Asia became overtly nuclearized and this has completely changed the character of war between the two countries. The nature of hostilities has since that watershed moment shifted away to the full-scale conventional warfare to limited commitments under the nuclear deterrence umbrella. This article aims at discussing why India is seeking limited war solutions against Pakistan and the implications of the strategic stability in South Asia.

Before nuclearization, both India and Pakistan had conventional wars with the intention of realising decisive military and political results. The coming of the nuclear arms put hard limits on escalation. The full scale war between two states with nuclear weapons may lead to the idea of the Mutual Assured Doom (MAD), where both of the parties would lose everything and nothing will be acceptable. As a result, political and military leaders of both parties have attempted to score goals that would be limited to the nuclear level.

Cold Start was seen by Pakistan as a great danger to its strategic stability and a policy of Full-Spectrum Deterrence (FSD) was adopted. This also involved tactical nuclear weapon (TNW) development, e.g. Nasr (Hafiz IX) missile, to counter conventional incursions at tactical and operational level. Although FSD was supposed to reestablish deterrence, it actually reduced the nuclear threshold thus exposing the chances of miscalculation and unintentional escalation.

Later crises also demonstrated the mechanisms of limited war with nuclear deterrence. Following the attacks in Mumbai in 2008, India did not engage in direct mili-

tary vengeance although it held Pakistan based militants responsible. On a parallel note, India carried out so-called surgical attacks across the LoC after the Uri attack in September 2016 with careful calibration to ensure that it would be limited.

The Pulwama crisis of 2019 was a major escalation. On 26 February 2019, India used airstrikes on Balakot, which were described as non-military, preemptive strikes on militant targets. Pakistan retaliated by operation Swift Retort and shot down an Indian plane and took its pilot hostage. Restraint was then taken by both sides highlighting the stabilising though precarious status of nuclear deterrence.

The recent events, such as the April 2025 attack in Pahalgam and the following one-sided military contacts show that India still wants to have space to engage in limited war without an open confrontation. The Pakistani reactions have also been in the same scenario, in attempts to send a message of determination without occasioning nuclear escalation. Even though India has a policy of No-First-Use (NNU), Pakistan is uncertain, citing the vagueness of its doctrines and the changing capabilities.

The Indian search for limited war options with Pakistan indicates that India wants to take the form of punishment to perceived provocations without going into the nuclear paradigm. Nevertheless, this course of action puts a major implication on the strategic stability in South Asia. The fact that Pakistan is heavily relying on full spectrum deterrence which involves tactical nuclear weapons enhances the notion that any small scale conflict would escalate to a full-scale war. As nuclear weapons still serve to create a balance of power and prevent the complete war, constant crises and rivalry in the theory of the doctrine, as well as the close position of the countries, make the region highly unstable. Any mathematical error within this set up may be disastrous and strategic restraint as well as crisis management is something that the region needs in order to have peace.

The writer is a scholar at National Defence University, Islamabad. The author served an active role in Defence Acquisition Management, DAM at Institute for Strategic Studies Research and Analysis, ISSRA.

**Abdullah Basheer**

work, however, accumulates. As little savings eventually become great wealth with consistency, day by day discipline is slowly turning potential to excellence. Effort thus takes a necessary side-kick with patience. Big dreams have a slow development, and sometimes even they are not visible to start.

Finally, big dreams are not unrealistic, they are unrealistic expectations. Only when it is not tied to any effort, dreams can be dangerous. When coupled with discipline, sacrifice and consistency, they are strong change machines. The most transformative people and countries of the world were not successful because they dreamed more than others, but because they worked more and more to achieve this dream.

Dreaming big is important in a global environment which is uncertain, economically fluctuating, politically polarizing and technologically disruptive. Better still, it is more important to dream responsibly. It involves admitting that ambition has a price and that nothing can be achieved in a significant manner without dedication. Big dreams pose tough questions to us: Do we care to work? Are we prepared to fail? And shall we not continue where results are long?

The responses to these questions will make dreams either far-off fantasies or actualities. Dreams can be the motivating factor in the end but we are characterized by hard work. People who know this reality are not just dreaming about the brighter future they create it, bit by bit, with the help of constant commitments.

*The writer is Student of BS- International Relations in University: National Defence University, Islamabad*

# Message from the President of Pakistan, Asif Ali Zardari, on the Independence Day of Sri Lanka (4 February 2026)

**O**n behalf of the Government and the people of Pakistan, and personally, I extend my warm felicitations to His Excellency Mr. 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.

I also want to appreciate 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.

I am confident that the bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and Sri Lanka will continue to grow stronger as we work together to further deepen our bilateral relations in the years ahead.

## Two Pakistani NGOs Receive Over \$85K in Japanese Grants for Vital Community Projects

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Japan, under its Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Program, has decided to provide grant assistance of USD 85,429 (equivalent PKR 23.9 million) to two local NGOs for development projects in District Chakwal, Punjab, and District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The grant contracts were signed between His Excellency, Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi, Ambassador of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and representatives of the two NGOs at the Embassy of Japan in Islamabad on February 3, 2026. The two NGOs that will implement the projects are Bin Qutab Foundation and Saibaan Development



Organization. Bin Qutab Foundation will receive USD 55,230 (equivalent PKR 15.5 million) for the construction of a Maternal

and Child Healthcare Center at Begum Noor Memorial Hospital in the rural side of District Chakwal. The new center, installed with essential

medical equipment, will provide 24-hour safe delivery services, emergency obstetric care, and neonatal services under one roof and providing subsidized service

to needy. The project is expected to benefit more than 10,000 patients annually and will also promote family planning awareness, contributing significantly

to improved maternal and child health.

Saibaan Development Organization will receive USD 30,199 (equivalent to PKR 8.4 million) for the improvement of a link road in Village Makrriha, District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project includes pavement of the road and construction of protection walls, which will enhance mobility and safety for local residents. The project is expected to benefit more than 2,400 direct beneficiaries, as well as thousands of indirect beneficiaries in nearby areas, by improving access to healthcare, education, and markets.

At the signing ceremony, His Excellency, Mr. AKAMATSU Shuichi emphasized that Japan has worked closely with Paki-

stan for decades to address basic human needs, including health, education, and infrastructure development. Ambassador Akamatsu highlighted that the GGP Program focuses on face-to-face assistance through partnerships with local NGOs to respond directly to community needs.

Ambassador Akamatsu further noted that basic services and infrastructure form the foundation of sustainable development and human security, reflecting Japan's own development experience. As an enduring friend of Pakistan, the Government of Japan will continue to support for capable local NGOs through grant assistance, with the aim of improving the daily lives and wellbeing of people at the grassroots level throughout the country.

## Exporters should play their role in strengthening the national economy: Malik Bostan

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP), Malik Muhammad Bostan, welcomed the new incentive package announced by Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Shehbaz Sharif for the export industry. He said that with the reduction in the refinance rate from 7 percent to 4.5 percent, industrialists and exporters will be able to obtain more financing, electricity will become cheaper, and

exporters have also been given relief in duties. Now it is the responsibility of exporters to take advantage of the Prime Minister's incentive package to further strengthen the national economy and to bring all dollars earned through exports back into Pakistan.

Malik Muhammad Bostan said that the government has generously accepted all the demands of exporters; therefore, exporters should now focus on exporting value-added products so that better returns can be achieved. If cotton is value-added,

converted into finished products, and then sold, its value can increase by 50 percent.

He said that Pakistan needs industrial development, and the government should install plants within the country for goods that are currently imported so that imports are reduced, local demand is met, and exports can also be increased.

Malik Muhammad Bostan said that two years ago the interbank dollar rate was Rs 308, while now it is Rs 280. Previously, when an individual



sent USD 100,000 from abroad, an additional USD 324 was received,

whereas now, due to the lower dollar rate, the family of a person sending USD 100,000 from abroad receives an additional USD 357. In this way, there is a benefit of USD 33 more over two years. This is why remittances are increasing, and with the decline in the dollar rate, remittances will further rise. As the rupee strengthens against the dollar, exports will also increase.

He said that 80 percent of imported goods are re-exported. When goods were imported at Rs 308 per dollar, more Pakistani rupees had to be

paid, whereas now fewer rupees are required, which has strengthened the Pakistani currency.

Malik Muhammad Bostan further said that the recent incentive package announced by Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for the export industry will help revive the country's manufacturing sector and enhance competitiveness at the global level. The decisions taken by the government will determine Pakistan's future economic direction and will benefit the country's export industry.

## Pakistan, Uzbekistan agree to fast-track trade, investment, connectivity cooperation

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Commerce, held a detailed meeting in Islamabad with Laziz Kudratov, Minister of Investment, Industry and Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan, to review progress in bilateral economic cooperation and agree on practical steps to accelerate trade, investment, connectivity and sectoral partnerships.

Welcoming the Uzbek delegation, the Federal Minister noted that Pakistan-Uzbekistan engagement has intensified significantly over the past two years through frequent high-level contacts and institutional follow-up, and stressed that the priority now is to "materialize" opportunities by closing gaps in logistics, business linkages and implementation, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

He also pointed to the importance of keeping trade and investment coordination streamlined, while reaffirming Pakistan's full support for Uzbekistan across trade development initiatives.

The Uzbek Minister, in turn, welcomed the forward movement on trade arrangements and emphasized that sustained implementation—supported by business-to-business engagement—would be essential for turning frameworks into increased shipments, contracts and joint ventures.

Investment and industrial cooperation featured prominently, with Uzbekistan noting that 228 Pakistani companies are currently operating in Uzbekistan and that 80 new companies were registered there in the last year alone. Both sides discussed

expanding partnerships in priority sectors including food security, mining, textiles, leather and pharmaceuticals, alongside value-added manufacturing and specialized industrial cooperation.

The Uzbek Minister said Uzbek companies are keen to explore investment and projects in Pakistan as well, including in food security and meat production, rice cultivation opportunities, and mining.

The two sides also reviewed the positive momentum in people-to-people and business connectivity, welcoming the resumption and scaling up of direct air links.

Uzbekistan reported that flights have been restarted and expanded to multiple weekly frequencies from Islamabad and Lahore, with additional services planned from Karachi, aiming to reach six flights per week between the two countries—an increase expected to strengthen commercial travel, tourism and

trade engagement.

On regional connectivity and logistics, both sides discussed challenges stemming from disruption of traditional routes, particularly due to border and transit constraints in the neighborhood. In this context, the meeting explored alternative corridors and the role of National Logistics Corporation in routing cargo through the northern corridor and via Kashgar as a logistics and warehousing hub.

The Uzbek side shared that Pakistani logistics operators have begun shifting cargo through the northern route regularly, though with higher costs and longer delivery times.

Both Ministers agreed that improving predictability and reducing friction on alternative corridors is now critical for trade continuity.

A key outcome of the discussion was the proposal to pursue a multi-country "green corridor" arrangement involving Pakistan, China and Central Asian part-

ners to facilitate smoother movement of goods, supported by clear legal and operational mechanisms. The Uzbek side urged coordinated engagement with Chinese authorities to address bottlenecks, and welcomed the idea of leveraging warehousing capacity in Kashgar, including logistics facilities offered for use to support onward movement of cargo. Both sides agreed that diversified routes are essential to strengthen resilience in regional trade.

The meeting devoted significant attention to mining and minerals cooperation, where the Federal Minister underscored Pakistan's need for modern exploration capacity, technical surveying, drilling services and technology-driven mining development.

Uzbekistan briefed Pakistan on its deep expertise—built over decades—in exploration, laboratories and both open-pit and shaft mining, and shared that a specialized overseas geology and mining services company has been established to provide services outside Uzbekistan.

The Uzbek delegation indicated readiness to work with Pakistani partners on exploration services, knowledge transfer, and joint projects, while also engaging with Pakistan's geological institutions.

The conversation further expanded to agriculture and value-added exports, including collaboration on livestock and red-meat value chains, rice varieties and cultivation models, and processed foods such as dehydrated fruits, juices and concen-

trates.

The Ministers discussed the importance of compliance, standards, and investment-backed models to enable Pakistan to scale exportable surpluses and tap larger markets in the region.

Concluding the meeting, both Ministers reaffirmed their commitment to deepening Pakistan-Uzbekistan economic ties through accelerated implementation, sustained institutional coordination, and expanded B2B engagement.

They agreed to maintain close follow-up across trade facilitation, connectivity, mining cooperation and food security initiatives, with the shared objective of translating strong political goodwill into measurable trade and investment outcomes.



**Bull & Bears**  
 PSX 100-Share  
 Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
186,900.73	185,057.83
Day's High	Day's Low
187,518.78	185,545.92
Index Value	Change
37,168,423,725	+1842.90
Percentage	Time
+1%	3 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,310.05	-31.51
Percentage	Time
+0.30%	3 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
49,369.64	-38.02
Percentage	Time
-0.077%	3 Feb, 11:31 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
54,720.66	+2,065.48
Percentage	Time
+3.92%	3 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	194.98	198.73
Bahrain Dinar	743.50	753.02
Canadian Dollar	203.84	207.38
China Yuan	38.00	40
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	330.69	335.03
Hong Kong Dollar	35.55	36.43
Indian Rupee	2.82	3.33
Japanese Yen	1.7896	1.8899
Kuwaiti Dinar	907.50	916.96
Malaysian Ringgit	66.60	69.35
New Zealand \$	167.62	171
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.20	737.72
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.35
Singapore Dollar	219.12	224.05
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	358.11	363.15
Thai Bhat	8.45	8.75
U.A.E Dirham	76.50	77.30
UK Pound Sterling	383.31	387.76
US Dollar	280.60	282.30

**TCS and Nippon Express Group Announce Strategic Partnership**


**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: TCS Group, one of Pakistan's most established and trusted logistics conglomerates, has formalized a strategic partnership with Nippon Express (South Asia & Oceania) Pte. Ltd., a subsidiary of Nippon Express Holdings, Inc. (Nippon Express Group) of Japan, under which Nippon Express Group has acquired a minority stake in TCS Logistics (Private) Limited.

Commenting on this partnership, Saira Awan, President, TCS Group, said, "This partnership with Nippon Express is a landmark moment for TCS and Pakistan's logistics sector. It reflects international confidence in Pakistan's market fundamentals and enhances our ability to deliver world-class supply chain solutions that connect Pakistani businesses to the global economy."

Over 4 decades, the TCS Group has built a strong reputation for reliability, nationwide reach, and service excellence. TCS Logistics, a core logistics arm of the TCS Group, operates an extensive domestic logistics infrastructure spanning land transportation, warehousing, distribution, and cross-border logistics connectivity.

Through close collaboration, TCS Logistics aims to contribute to the modernization of Pakistan's logistics ecosystem and provide technology-enabled logistics services and value-added supply chain solutions for customers operating in and through Pakistan. Meanwhile Nippon Express, in a statement said that through this transaction, the company will leverage TCS Logistics' domestic network and customer base to strengthen logistics operations in Pakistan and will also work to enhance trade lanes to Central Asia originating from Pakistan, focusing on developing new logistics services and identifying emerging needs.

# Ahsan urges fact-based national narrative, district export hubs, brand-led growth

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Tuesday stressed the need to promote a fact-based national narrative and urged the business community to develop global brands, transform districts into export centres and serve as ambassadors of "Brand Pakistan."

He was addressing the inaugural ceremony of Pakistan's first indigenous Index of Transparency and Accountability (iTAP), launched by the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) in collaboration with Ipsos here at the FPCCI Capital House.

The ceremony was attended by representatives of the public and private sectors, civil society, academia and media, while FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh and Chairman Policy Advisory Board FPCCI Mian Zahid



Hussain also spoke on the occasion. The iTAP initiative was conceived in

May 2025 as a strategic effort by FPCCI to develop an indigenous, recurring benchmark

to measure transparency, accountability and public trust in government and institutions.

The field survey was conducted during December 2025 and January 2026 to ensure contemporary and nationally representative insights.

Congratulating FPCCI for bringing transparency and accountability to the forefront of national discourse with rigour and commitment, Ahsan Iqbal said these principles formed the foundation of good governance and were essential for citizen satisfaction, investor confidence, a business-enabling environment and sustainable national development.

He appreciated FPCCI's initiative and urged the business community to move beyond products and focus on building brands and value chains. "Nations sell brands before they sell products. Trust in quality begins with trust in the country," he said.

## Traditional clay pots

ISLAMABAD: An elder shopkeeper is selling traditional clay pots at Golra area to earn daily wages for the livelihood of his family.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Renowned Industrialist Khawaja Muhammad Jalaluddin Romi passes away

**Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Renowned industrialist, Chairman Masood Rumi Group, former President Multan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former President Dera Ghazi Khan Chamber of Commerce and Industry, former Chairman All Pakistan Bed Sheet and Upholstery Manufacturers Association, and former Caretaker Provincial Minister Khawaja Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi has passed away due to natural causes.

Inna Lillahi wa Inna Ilahi Raja'Un.

With his demise, the business and industrial community of Multan and South Punjab has lost a dignified, wise, and dynamic leader. Khawaja Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi rendered invaluable services for the promotion of industry and trade, resolution of issues faced by the business community, and effective representation of traders' interests.

He served in key roles at chambers of commerce, trade bodies, and govern-



ment forums during different tenures and was widely respected for his integrity, prudence, and foresight.

He was the founding Chairman of the Khawaja Jalaluddin Rumi Foundation, former Chairman of the Nishtar Board of Management, former President of the Multan Industrial Estate Board of Management, Chairman of the Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology Board of Management, and also served

as Member/Director of the Multan Electric Power Company (MEPCO) Board of Directors.

Late Khawaja Muhammad Jalaluddin Rumi was not only a successful industrialist but also actively involved in social and welfare activities. Under his leadership, the Masood Rumi Group played a significant role in industrial growth, job creation, and business development. His passing has been deeply mourned by trader organizations, political and social figures, and business circles across the region.

His funeral prayer will be offered today, Wednesday, February 4, at 2:00 pm at the shrine of Hazrat Ghaus Bahauddin Zakariya Multani (RA). A large number of political, commercial, industrial, and social personalities, trader leaders, and citizens are expected to attend. Participation in the funeral prayer has been requested.

The bereaved include family members, Mahmood Group, and Masood Rumi Group.

in Expo Centre Lahore, brought together top tech KOLs, OPPO executives, partners, and media. Attendees enjoyed hands-on experiences in the dedicated Reno15 Experience Zone and engaged in in-depth briefings about the series' innovative features.

The OPPO Reno15 Series introduces the Aurora Design, which takes inspiration from the dreamlike beauty of the aurora, delivering a unique visual experience that feels alive in the hand.

## Yango Pakistan paints Lahore in colour with free rickshaw rides and deliveries

**Commerce Desk**

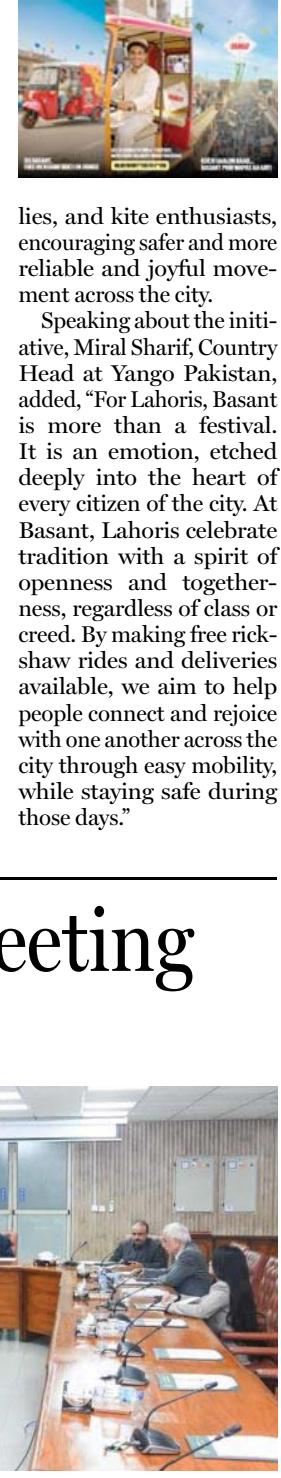
LAHORE: After many years, Lahore is set to celebrate one of its most beloved festivals, Basant. Joining the festivities, Yango Pakistan is celebrating Basant by offering Lahoreis free rickshaw rides and deliveries during 6-8 February 2026\*. The initiative aims to spread the festive spirit across the city while making travel and deliveries safer and more convenient during the Basant celebrations.

This also goes inline with the Government of Punjab's efforts to ensure safety and wellbeing of citizens.

For three high-energy days of Basant, Yango-branded rickshaws will take over streets and public parks across Lahore. Bringing the festival to life, these rickshaws will offer free rides and deliveries via the Yango Super App, making the Basant more inclusive for friends, fami-

lies, and kite enthusiasts, encouraging safer and more reliable and joyful movement across the city.

Speaking about the initiative, Miral Sharif, Country Head at Yango Pakistan, added, "For Lahoris, Basant is more than a festival. It is an emotion, etched deeply into the heart of every citizen of the city. At Basant, Lahoris celebrate tradition with a spirit of openness and togetherness, regardless of class or creed. By making free rickshaw rides and deliveries available, we aim to help people connect and rejoice with one another across the city through easy mobility, while staying safe during those days."



## Federal Minister BOI Chairs Stakeholders' Meeting on Industrial Closures in Faisalabad

**Commerce Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Mr. Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, chaired a detailed consultative meeting with key stakeholders, including

representatives of major Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), to deliberate upon issues highlighted in recent news reports regarding the closure of industries in Faisalabad, on which the Prime Minister has taken notice.

Senior officials of the Board of Investment, including Additional Secretary Dr. Erfat Iqbal, Additional Secretary Mr. Zulfiqar Ali, and Director

General Mr. Mahmood Tufail, were also present. All participants were given adequate time to share their views and challenges faced by the industrial sector.

Mr. Farooq Yousaf, President FCCL, APTMA Chairman Mr. Kamran Arshad, Mr. Zia-ul-Arfeen from KCCI raised the long-pending refund issues, echoed concerns regarding high energy and tax rates, and emphasized the need for long-term planning. He referred to Bangladesh's SME-focused policies and appreciated the Prime Minister's initiative. He noted that despite Paki-

stan's potential to export USD 15 billion, especially in view of opportunities such as the SCO Summit, current exports remain around USD 3 billion.

He also recommended a single-point sales tax system.

The Federal Minister and Additional Secretary Dr. Erfat Iqbal requested all chambers

and associations to submit their issues and proposals in writing to enable structured follow-up with the Prime Minister's Office.



# Pakistan, Kazakhstan sign MoUs to boost sports cooperation

## Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan and Kazakhstan on Tuesday signed multiple Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) aimed at strengthening bilateral cooperation in sports, leadership, and youth empowerment initiatives, underscoring a significant step toward deepening people-to-people ties between the two countries.

The agreements include three MoUs covering boxing, kabaddi, and chess, along with a comprehensive roadmap for the promotion and development of sports cooperation.

The initiatives are expected to facilitate talent exchange, capacity building, and joint training programmes, particularly for young athletes.

The MoUs were signed by World's Top Pugilist Amir Khan, Secretary Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC)

Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani, Director General Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) Yasir Pirzada, Muhammad Sarwar Rana, Honorary Secretary, Pakistan Kabaddi Federation, Pakistan Boxing Federation (PBF) President Nasir Tung, Hanif Qureshi, President, Chess Federation of Pakistan with the Kazakhstan delegation. PSB Deputy Director Shahid Islam and other officials were also present on the occasion.

Speaking at the MoU signing ceremony, Mohyuddin Ahmad Wani expressed satisfaction over hosting the Kazakh delegation and welcomed the growing partnership.

He said the agreements would open new avenues for Pakistani youth to engage in a wide range of healthy and competitive activities.

"We are extremely happy to host the Kazakhstan delegation and wish them a pleasant stay in Pakistan. These MoUs



will bring forward many young talents. Our youth need sports like MMA, chess, boxing, and other healthy activities to excel. This initiative brings all sports under one roof," he remarked.

Wani emphasized that the collab-

oration goes beyond sports alone, describing it as an ecosystem of shared growth and friendship. "This is not only about sports, it is about building an ecosystem. These MoUs are a project of friendship between the two countries,

and the youth will benefit immensely by learning new skills," he added.

Kazakhstan's Minister of Science and Higher Education Sayasat Nurbek, while addressing the ceremony, said his country had arrived with a large delegation, reflecting the importance it places on cooperation with Pakistan.

He highlighted Kazakhstan's strong boxing heritage and described the presence of world-renowned boxer Amir Khan as a privilege.

"Being a boxing nation and having one of the world's top pugilist Amir Khan, here is an honour. He is a true hero not only in Pakistan but also in Kazakhstan," he said.

The Kazakh minister noted that Pakistan's young generation holds immense potential if provided with proper guidance and opportunities.

He also disclosed that the President of Kazakhstan is expected to visit

Pakistan, during which discussions on broader infrastructure cooperation would take place.

He stressed the need for a regional approach in a rapidly changing world, noting that Pakistan and Kazakhstan share deep historical, cultural, religious, and social bonds.

On the occasion, the Dostyq Sports Centre was inaugurated at the Amir Khan Boxing Complex. "Dostyq means friendship, and it represents the foundation of our shared culture, faith, and heritage," he said.

Amir Khan welcomed the initiative, calling it a visionary step toward taking boxing in Pakistan to the next level. He thanked the Pakistan Army and the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) for their continued support, stating that the collaboration would provide the much-needed push for sports development in the country.

## HBL PSL International Media Rights Sold - Another Record Shattered: PCB Official

### Asim Tanveer

LAHORE: The HBL Pakistan Super League (PSL) today announced the successful sale of its International Media Rights for the upcoming season, marking another significant milestone in the league's continued global expansion.

The one-year agreement for Global Media Rights for HBL PSL 11, minus India Region, will be awarded to Walee Technologies who was the highest successful bidder who exceeded the PCB's reserve price.

On a comparable equivalent basis for the same regions, this represents a 149% increase in value compared to the previous cycle, highlighting the growing brand value and reach of HBL PSL worldwide. This substantial uplift underscores the league's rising stature as one of the world's leading T20 tournaments.

PSL CEO, Mr. Salman Naseer, said "We are extremely pleased with the outcome of the International Media Rights sale, which has delivered a remarkable 149% increase over the last cycle for the same regions. This growth



is a strong validation of the HBL PSL brand, its competitive quality, and its increasing appeal to cricket fans around the world".

"The HBL PSL continues to attract strong global interest, and this agreement reinforces our confidence in the

league's long-term commercial trajectory and its ability to deliver value across diverse international markets.

We are grateful to Walee Technologies for stepping up the ante in the New Era and breaking past records. The continued rise in international media rights value

also reflects the collective efforts of all stakeholders, including franchises, players, and partners, who have played a vital role in positioning the HBL PSL as a globally recognized cricketing property."

Walee Technologies CEO, Muhammad Ahsan Tahir, said "This is a victory for every Pakistani who believes in 'Made in Pakistan' technology," said Ahsan Tahir, CEO of Walee Technologies. "This is just the start of our HBL PSL journey. We have a lot of plans and we'd like everyone to eagerly await everything Walee is about to do."

Since its inception in 2016, the HBL PSL has consistently demonstrated sustained commercial growth across media rights, sponsorships, and digital platforms, further cementing its status as Pakistan's biggest sporting brand and a prominent fixture in the global T20 ecosystem.

The PCB and HBL PSL management remain committed to enhancing the international broadcast product and expanding the league's reach, ensuring that fans worldwide continue to engage with the HBL PSL at an unprecedented scale.

## Knights Chess Academy Presents, 2nd Rapid Open Chess Tournament



### Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 2nd Rapid Open Chess Tournament organized by Knights Chess Academy was successfully held on 1st February 2026 at Shahbaz Sharif Sports Complex, Rawalpindi.

More than 30 players from different cities participated in the tournament, with ages ranging from 9 years to 70+. The participation of national-level players made the event more competitive and exciting, providing valuable learning opportunities for young players.

A delicious Chicken Biryani was served for lunch. The tournament concluded with cash prizes awarded to the top three players.

The cash prizes were distributed by CEO of Knights Chess Academy, Mr. Yasir Hussain, along with National Master Mr. Liaquat Ali.

## Kashmir struggle unyielding despite escalating Indian crackdown, says Sardar Atiq

### City Desk

RAWALPINDI: President Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan has expressed deep concern over the increasing terrorism of Indian forces in the occupied valley and said that after August 5, 2019, India is busy changing the Muslim majority status in occupied Jammu and Kashmir by increasing its atrocities day by day. The daily round-ups of youth and confiscation of properties under the black laws of the Indian army are reflecting this. Indian atrocities cannot force Kashmiris to give up their just struggle for their internationally recognized right



to self-determination. Former Prime Minister and President Muslim Conference Sardar Atiq Ahmed Khan expressed these views while speaking at a dinner hosted by Secretary General and former Deputy Speaker Mehran Nisa in honor of the

party leaders. Hurriyat leader Syed Yousuf Naseem Advocate, renowned lawyer Sardar Abdul Raziq Khan Advocate, Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Abid Afzal Butt, Sardar Abid Razaq, Asim Zahid Abbasi and Dr. Abid Abbasi were also present on the

occassion. He said that after the abrogation of special status by the Hindutva government, serious human rights violations in occupied Jammu and Kashmir have increased to an alarming level, which is a cause for concern. Sardar Atiq Ahmed

Khan said that the large-scale movement of Indian forces in occupied Jammu and Kashmir reflects war madness and power addiction, which is dangerous for regional peace. For a lasting solution to the Kashmir issue, a peace forum on the Trump Peace Forum model should be formed, which is the urgent need of the hour. Despite the genocide of millions of Kashmiris by Indian forces, the Kashmiri people's passion for freedom could not cool down. He stressed on resolving the Kashmir dispute in accordance with UN resolutions and said that the genocide of Kashmiris by Indian forces should be stopped. Indian atrocities cannot force Kashmiris to give up their just struggle.

## NAB Sets Historic Benchmark: Recovery of Rs. 6.213 trillion Amidst Sweeping Digital

### Continued from Page 8

Central to this achievement was the reclamations of 2.98 million acres of encroached state and forest land, valued at approximately Rs. 5.98 trillion. Leading the regional efforts, NAB Sukkur reclaimed 1.63 million acres (valued at Rs. 3.73 trillion), followed by NAB Balochistan for 1.02 million acres, valued Rs. 1.374 trillion and NAB Multan reclaimed 0.33 million acres of Rs. 653.97 billion, 51 canal worth of Rs. 29.41 billion precious state land recovered in Federal Capital Territory, thereby effectively restoring critical national assets to the state.

Concurrently, the adoption of a citizen-centric approach, guided by a policy ensuring fair treatment, delivered significant relief to 115,587 affectees of fraudulent housing and investment schemes through disbursement of Rs. 180 billion. In this context, a major contour of accessible and transparent service delivery emerged through digital compensation

mechanisms. For the first time in NAB's history, Rs. 2.8 billion was transferred directly into the bank accounts of 12,892 affectees under an agreement with the National Bank of Pakistan (NBP), thereby sparing citizens the hardship of traveling to regional offices.

Further strengthening public trust, another major milestone was achieved through the opening of Profit-Bearing Accounts (NIDA) to preserve the time value of recovered funds, ensuring

that claimants receive maximum financial benefit during disbursement. As a result, the year 2025 witnessed momentous relief in high-profile cases including Al-Bari Group (Rs. 5.4 billion disbursed to 1,126 affectees), Eden Housing (Rs. 4,362 billion returned to 11,889 affectees). Plots worth of Rs. 72.23 billion delivered to 6750 affectees of State Life Cooperative Housing Society, B4U Global (Rs. 3,157 billion disbursed to 17,500

affectees), and AAA Associates (Rs. 8,869 billion disbursed to 1,211 affectees). While NAB recovered and disbursed Rs. 10.066 billion to Provincial governments and financial institutions during the year.

In parallel with public relief initiatives, the Bureau undertook massive institutional revitalization to provide specialized facilitation. To ensure fairness and inclusivity, NAB operationalized specialized Facilitation Cells for Parliamentarians and Government Officials

Business Community Overseas Pakistanis Particular emphasis was placed on effective complaint handling for affected citizens. During the year, the Operations Division successfully managed an influx of 23,411 complaints, utilizing a time-bound verification mechanism to filter out frivolous reports and only 367 complaints emerged cognizable. The year showed 24 per cent reduction on fresh complaints compared to complaints received

in previous years, reflecting a downward trend in incidence of corruption and the impact of institutional reforms undertaken by NAB. The current year witnessed a significant decline of 52 per cent in complaints against public office holders and businessmen. The NAB completed 191 inquiries and 65 investigations while 152 inquiries and 56 investigations were closed and referred to other departments/agencies during the year. The year saw 12.4 per cent decline in under process inquiries and investigations.

An encouraging trend has been witnessed regarding the number of whistleblowers driven complaints which rose by 41 per cent from the previous year.

Moreover, investigations are now supported by AI-assisted tools, blockchain analysis, and digital forensics, coordinated through the newly inaugurated Pakistan Anti-Corruption Academy (PACA). To date, the Academy has conducted 42 training courses and events, aimed at enhancing both technical and soft skills of investigators and prosecutors. Special focus was placed on training related to e-pads, intelligence functions, investigation of white-collar crimes, anti-money laundering, and countering terror financing. Consequently, NAB's work improved a lot and Prosecution's success rate remained 72 per cent in disposal of cases in courts in 2025. The Prosecution Division has contributed in the recoveries of billions of rupees in land matters, cheating public at large and other corporate scams and approx 302 references were under process before the Accountability Courts in 2025. Due to the promulgation of amendments in NAO-1999, 246 references were transferred at various stages of proceedings to other departments/agencies.

At the same time, digital transformation and the transition towards a "paperless future" formed a cornerstone of NAB's institutional revival. The Bureau is aggressively modernizing its infrastructure to enhance data-

driven decision-making. NAB has transitioned to a paperless environment through the E-Office system and is currently developing a robust Human Resource Management System (HRMS) to digitize all personnel functions.

In alignment with federal austerity policies, NAB also implemented rigorous cost-saving measures. Firstly, the abolition of 238 posts resulted in annual savings of Rs. 356 million. Secondly, operational cuts—through a 30% reduction in fuel consumption and increased reliance on virtual meetings—saved millions in travel and boarding costs. Thirdly, a dedicated Inquiry Cell disposed of 13 departmental inquiries, reinforcing NAB's commitment to internal self-accountability.

Additionally, the Bureau's robust intelligence apparatus played a crucial role in identifying individuals impersonating senior NAB officers for illegal and monetary gains.

Beyond internal reforms, NAB actively engaged with civil society

organizations, professional bodies and the private sector to reinforce the collective responsibility against corruption through seminars, walks, meetings and prevention committees. On the international front, as Pakistan's Central Authority under the UNCAC, NAB signed three new MoUs with anti-corruption agencies in Malaysia (MACC), Saudi Arabia (Nazaha), and Nigeria (EFCC). Furthermore, NAB's focus on complex financial crimes led to the attachment of Rs. 127 billion in assets in 39 high profile cases of Anti-Money Laundering.

In conclusion, the results of 2025 reflect NAB's transformation into a modern, transparent, and highly efficient accountability framework. By combining record recoveries with digital innovation, institutional reform, and tangible public relief, NAB continues to serve as the vanguard in safeguarding Pakistan's public resources and restoring public trust.

## Called on

ISLAMABAD: Commander of Azerbaijan Naval Forces Rear Admiral Shahin Mammadov called on Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters on Tuesday.



Photo: Online

## Finance Minister Chairs Meeting of CCoSOEs

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry (virtually), along with Secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory bodies.

The Committee reviewed and approved the Procurement Policy of the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of Pakistan 2025, aimed at streamlining



EXIM Bank's procurement compliance with Chartered operations and is aligned with the State-Owned Enterprises Act, 2023, while ensuring

compliance with Chartered Supply (CIPS) global standards and PPRA regulations.

Additionally, the Committee reviewed and approved agenda items submitted by the Ministry of

Commerce. These included the filling of one vacant position of Independent Director and appointment of Chairman of the Board of National Insurance Company Limited (NICL); filling of one vacant position of Independent Director on the Board of State Life Insurance Corporation (SLIC); and appointment of an Independent Director on the Board of the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) against one of two vacant positions.

The committee also asked the Ministry to submit a separate proposal in coordination with the Law Division regarding the funding of the proposed entity and management of assets already under the PTDC.

## Dignitaries Pay Tribute at Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's Mausoleum

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Prime Minister of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir State Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Acting President and Speaker of the Assembly Chaudhry Latif Akbar, President of the Pakistan Peoples Party Women's Wing and In-charge of Political Affairs of the People's Party Azad Kashmir Ms. Faryal Talpur, former Prime Minister of Pakistan Raja Pervez Ashraf, President of the People's Party Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin visited the mausoleum of the President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry on his death, offered flowers on his grave and offered Fateha. On this occasion, a police contingent presented a salute and a guard of honor. Later, they went to the Chechian



Sultan House, the residence of the President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, offered Fateha and expressed their condolences to the bereaved government ministers Chaudhry Yasin Sultan, Chaudhry Arshad Hussain, Chaudhry Saud Sultan. On this occasion, Sindh Home Minister Zia-ul-Hassan Lanjai, former Sindh Home Minister Sohail Anwar Sial, former Federal Minister and MNA Ijaz Jakhrani, former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Sardar Tanveer Ilyas Khan, government ministers Chaudhry Qasim Majeed, Chaudhry Muhammad Akhlaq, Chaudhry Muhammad Rashid, Ms. Nabila Ayub, Ms. Taqdis Gilani, Javed Iqbal Badhanvi, former advi-

tor Chaudhry Muhammad Riaz, advisor to the government Sardar Ahmed Sagheer, former provincial minister Nadeem Asghar Cairo, DG Prime Minister's Secretariat Aamir Zeeshan Jaral, Chairman Ulema Mashaikh Council Sahibzada Zulfiqar Ali, former DG Liberation Cell Nadeem Qasmi, in addition to dozens of leaders of the Pakistan People's

Party, also offered Fateha and expressed condolences.

PPP Azad Kashmir Political Affairs In-charge Ms. Faryal Talpur said that the President of the State of Azad Jammu and Kashmir pays tribute to Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry's political and international services in highlighting the Kashmir freedom movement.

## NAB Sets Historic Benchmark: Recovery of Rs. 6.213 trillion Amidst Sweeping Digital

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: The National Accountability Bureau (NAB) has released its annual performance report for 2025, marking a year characterized by unprecedented financial success, institutional revitalization, and accelerated technological advancement.

Deputy Chairman NAB Sohail Nasir, Prosecutor General Intesham Qadir Shah, Director General Amjad Majed Aulakh briefed the media persons on achievements of NAB.



Under the leadership of the

incumbent Chairman Lt Gen. (R) Nazir Ahmed, NAB achieved a

record-breaking recovery of Rs. 6.213 trillion, the highest annual figure since the Bureau's inception in 1999.

Building upon this milestone, NAB's total recoveries—both direct and indirect—have now reached a cumulative Rs. 11,524 trillion (equivalent to 41 billion USD) in last three years, with 2025 alone accounting for more than half of this amount. Notably, this performance is thirteen times higher than the total recoveries recorded over the preceding 23 years.

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## Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces Called on Chief of the Naval Staff at Naval Headquarters

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces (ANF), Rear Admiral Shahin Mammadov called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters, Islamabad.

Upon arrival, Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces was received by Chief of the Naval Staff. A smartly turned out contingent of Pakistan Navy presented Guard of Honour. Thereafter, the dignitary laid floral wreath at the Shuhada's Monument and was introduced to the Principal Staff Officers at Naval Headquarters.

Later, Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces called on Chief of the

Naval Staff. During the meeting, both leaders discussed matters of mutual interest, regional maritime security situation, and avenues for enhanced cooperation in training and Defence.

Both leaders pledged to further strengthen and diversify the scope of existing bilateral defence relationship. Later, a briefing was also given to the visiting dignitary on Pakistan Navy's ongoing projects.

Pakistan and Azerbaijan share longstanding brotherly relations marked by close naval cooperation. The visit of Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces will further enhance bilateral collaboration between the two countries in general and navies in particular.

## Canadian High Commissioner called on Federal Minister Communications



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan called on by the Canadian High Commissioner to Pakistan, Mr. Tarik Ali Khan in Islamabad today. The meeting focused on matters of mutual interest and strengthening bilateral relations between the two countries.

During the call on, the High Commissioner of Canada Mr. Tarik Ali Khan expressed keen interest in boosting bilateral trade and highlighted that Canadian companies are looking to invest in Pakistan's evolving market, particularly in livestock, agriculture and other key sectors. Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan presented proposal of visit of Business Community from the countries of Pakistan and Canada on

which Canadian High Commissioner told that next month in Toronto Small Business Convention in which Pakistan is also being invited.

Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan emphasized that Pakistan is actively involving the private sector to increase production across various industries. He provided updates on major infrastructure projects, including the Karachi-Hyderabad-Sukkur Motorway, noting that connecting the new Motorway to the Karachi Port offers excellent investment opportunities. He also highlighted that the Sialkot-Islamabad Motorway will reduce travel distance by 100km while the Kharian-Rawalpindi Motorway is opened for investment and it has been planned as a 6 lane Motorway instead of 4 lane

## CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Launches DGPR's 1st DSNG & OB Van

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif formally inaugurated DGPR's first DSNG and OB Van. She inspected the DSNG and OB Van, and interacted with their staff. She was briefed on the project by the Provincial Minister for Information & Culture, Azma Zahid Bokhari, who said that the DSNG and OB Van will be used for high-quality live news coverage and outdoor broadcasting of events across Punjab. She added that it is for the

first time that an advanced artificial intelligence audio-video transmission system has been installed in the DSNG and OB Van. She highlighted that with the state-of-the-art DSNG and OB Van, seamless satellite uplink and broadcasting will be possible. She underscored that DSNG and OB Van will also be used for mobile live streaming and field-based production posts, a ground station for the DSNG and OB Van has been made functional at DGPR. She noted that AI-powered drones can also be utilized in the DSNG and OB Van project.

## 22 shops sealed in Murree crackdown on illegal petrol agencies, gas refilling

MURREE: The Civil Defence Murree on Tuesday sealed 22 shops during a crackdown on illegal petrol agencies and unauthorised gas refilling operations across the hill station, officials said.

The action was carried out on the instructions of Deputy Commissioner Murree Agha Zaheer Abbas Shirazi, as part of efforts to curb hazardous activities posing risks to public safety.

The officials said the Civil Defence teams inspected various localities and took action against outlets involved in

the illegal sale of petrol and unlawful refilling of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG). They said such practices constituted a clear violation of the law and posed a serious threat to life and property, particularly in a sensitive and densely populated tourist city like Murree.

The Civil Defence officials said illegal petrol agencies and gas refilling points could trigger major accidents at any time. They said a zero-tolerance policy was adopted and strict action taken against violators.