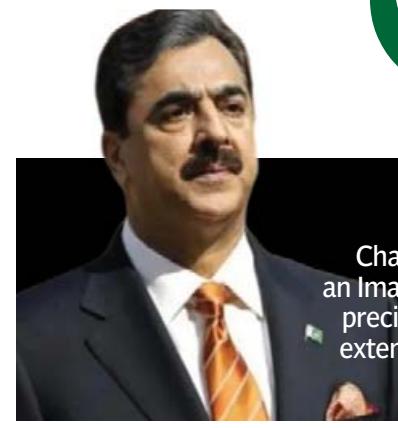




# Daily The Spokesman



## Gilani condemns blast in Tarlai Imambargah

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday strongly condemned the blast at an Imambargah in the Tarlai area of Islamabad. He expressed deep grief over the loss of precious lives and the injuries suffered by several people in the incident. The chairman extended heartfelt condolences to the families of the martyrs and expressed solidarity with the injured, praying for their early and complete recovery.



## Dr Niaz Akhtar has been appointed as Chairman HEC

Dr Niaz Akhtar has been appointed chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC) on Friday for a two-year term. The appointment was approved by the prime minister. Dr Niaz Akhtar was previously serving as vice chancellor of Quaid-e-Azam University.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Sha'abanul Moazzam 18, Saturday, February 7, 2020

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## Bloody Incident

ISLAMABAD: People shift an injured man onto a stretcher following an explosion at a mosque in Islamabad on Friday.



Photo: Courtesy AFP

## Suicide bombing at Islamabad mosque kills 31, injures 169

**Naveed Ahmad Khan**

ISLAMABAD: A suicide bombing at a mosque in Islamabad's Tarlai area during Friday prayers killed at least 31 worshippers and injured more than 169 others, officials said.

Police said the attacker was affiliated with the terrorist group Fitna al-Khwarij. A forensic team collected body

parts and other evidence from the site to aid the investigation.

A spokesperson for the district administration confirmed the death toll and said dozens of the wounded were shifted to Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for treatment. Several victims remain in critical condition.

Police sources said the attacker attempted to enter

the mosque during prayers but was stopped by worshippers and security personnel at the entrance gate. He then detonated the explosive device, causing a powerful blast inside the premises.

Eyewitnesses said gunfire was heard shortly after the first unit of prayer, followed by a loud explosion when worshippers were in prostration.

Following the blast, police, rescue teams, law enforcement agencies and bomb disposal squads rushed to the scene. The area was sealed off, nearby roads were closed, and security was tightened across the federal capital on the instructions of the Islamabad inspector general.

Initial rescue efforts were carried out by residents, who

shifted the injured to hospitals before ambulances arrived.

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi directed Minister of State Talal Chaudhry to visit PIMS, where he met the injured and instructed hospital authorities to ensure special medical facilities for the victims. Sources said relatives of senior police officials were also among those affected.

## Security forces kill 24 terrorists in KP operations

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan security forces killed 24 terrorists in two separate intelligence-based operations against Fitna al-Khwarij in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said on Friday.

ISPR said an operation was carried out in Orakzai district following reports of al-Khwarij presence, during which troops engaged a hideout and killed 14 terrorists after a heavy exchange of fire.

The second intelligence-based operation in the neighbouring Khyber district

led to the killing of 10 more terrorists.

The ISPR said the terrorists belonged to Fitna al-Khwarij, which it described as an Indian proxy group, and that sanitisation operations were underway to eliminate any remaining fighters in the area.

It added that counter-terrorism operations would continue under the 'Azm-e-Istehkam' vision to eradicate foreign-sponsored terrorism.

President Asif Ali Zardari paid tribute to the security forces, saying the war against terrorism resulting from foreign interference was contin-



uing successfully and would go on until its complete eradication.

Prime Minister Shehbaz

Sharif also praised the professionalism of the officers and personnel involved, reiterating that the fight against terrorism

would continue until it was fully eliminated.

Separately, the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government reaffirmed its resolve to eliminate terrorism and restore lasting peace in the province.

The commitment was reiterated during the first meeting of the Provincial Apex Committee, chaired by Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in Peshawar, according to a statement issued by the Chief Minister's Secretariat on Thursday, which said all available resources, including the army, police and Counter-Terrorism Department, would be utilised.

## Peshawar court grants NAB seven-day remand in Rs3.73bn land scam

**Bureau Report**

PESHAWAR: An accountability court in Peshawar on Friday handed over an accused to the National Accountability Bureau (NAB) on a seven-day physical remand in a multi-billion-rupee land scam case.

The hearing was conducted by Accountancy Judge Hamid Mughal. NAB Special Prosecutor Habibullah Baig and the investigation officer were also present in court.

The prosecutor told the court that the accused, Abdul Waheed Butt, had allegedly collected Rs3.73 billion from 1,616 people

in the name of a private land marketing company.

He said the victims, mostly from low-income backgrounds, had lodged complaints with NAB, prompting the investigation.

The prosecutor said Butt's interim bail had been cancelled earlier, after which he was taken into custody.

He requested physical remand for further interrogation, saying more investigation was required to recover the defrauded amount and identify accomplices. The court accepted the request and remanded the accused in NAB custody for seven days.

## High alert in Balochistan as train services suspended again

**Bureau Report**

QUETTA: Authorities in Balochistan have imposed a high alert across the province on Friday amid ongoing security concerns.

Train services, which had resumed after six days, have been suspended once again.

Checking has been intensified at entry and exit points in several districts, including Quetta. Security has been heightened at key installations and sensitive areas, while law enforcement agencies continue patrolling throughout the province.

Passengers are facing difficulties due

to the suspension of train services, which officials say will resume only after security clearance.

Mobile and internet services have been restored.

Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD) and other agencies have detained dozens of suspicious individuals during search and combing operations, seizing weapons in the process. National highways remain open for traffic.

Officials have stated that security measures will continue until the situation is fully under control.

فرمان رسوی اللہ علیہ

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ریسٹ اسٹریٹ میں حدیث نے ایسی  
نے مجھ خود کے پر ریسٹ اسٹریٹ  
یاں کیا میں بھی اونٹوں میں شامل تھا  
جنہیں نے پہلی ملکی قیادتی پر تھر  
پڑھ جو جو ہے کی تھی طور پر ایسی  
حرط جو جو ہے کی تھی طور پر ایسی  
اور ایسیں کم کر رہے ہیں  
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## President confers Nishan-e-Pakistan on Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev



**City Desk**

Shavkat Mirziyoyev at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday conferred Nishan-e-Pakistan, the highest civilian award, upon President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev in recognition of his contribution to strengthening Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations.

The Special Investiture Ceremony was held at Aiwan-e-Sadr and was attended by, among others, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, members of the federal cabinet, Chief of the Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, members of the diplomatic corps and parliamentarians, and was followed by a state banquet hosted in honour of the visiting President.

Earlier, a bilateral meeting was held between President Asif Ali Zardari and President of the Republic of Uzbekistan

Continued on Page 7

## President, PM mourn victims in wake of terror attack on worshippers

**City Desk**

ically condemned attacks on mosques and places of worship, often describing them as "cynical" and "brutal" acts against civilians. He sent letters of condolence to President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

Foreign diplomats also denounced the attack. British High Commissioner Jane Marriott said she was "heartbroken" by the "horrible terrorist attack" during Friday prayers and expressed solidarity with Pakistan. Iranian Ambassador Reza Amiri Moghadam likewise condemned the bombing and extended condolences to the victims' families.

Authorities said the attack had no connection with Islam and vowed to bring the perpetrators and their facilitators to justice.

Russian President Vladimir Putin has histor-

## Atta Tarar condemns blast in Islamabad

**City Desk**

despicable act, the minister said while vowing action against the perpetrators.

He said no one would be allowed to disrupt peace and harm inter-sect harmony in the country.

The state is fully committed to protecting the lives and property of the people as well as the mosques and Imambargahs, the minister stressed.

He said the state would continue to take action against evil elements.

# Rathore claims PPP restored public trust through performance, anti-corruption drive



**Bureau Report**

LACHHRAT/MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Government of Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that the Charter of Demand should be made into a Charter of Deliverance.

The PPP government in a short period of time restored people's confidence in politics with practical measures. The government ended corruption across the state.

The date that shows performance

in the next few months and the measures will take place will attest to this. Insha Allah, PPP will achieve great success in the upcoming elections from Lachhrat. Today's inclusion programs are proof that the people have full confidence in the policies and performance of the PPP.

He expressed these views while addressing a large rally held at Panjkot during his visit to Lachhrat. Syed Bazal Ali Naqvi and Muhammad Ilyas Awan also addressed the gathering.

Most Senior Minister Mian Abdul Waheed and Forest Minister Sardar Javed Ayub were also present on the occasion. Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir announced important development projects on the occasion to announce re-conditioning of Nosiri to Panjkot road, BHU Panjkot to be upgraded to RHC, Govt. Declaring approval.

The chief minister of Azad Kashmir said that the path of development and prosperity is being opened for a better future of the youth. We have come

to provide all possible relief to the people. The Prime Minister of Azad Kashmir said that he congratulated the martyrs and those who joined the Jamaat of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) except various political parties.

They said that they welcome Ilyas Awan in particular for joining the party. Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that PPP has got government for a limited period of seven months but it can handle this responsibility in extremely difficult circumstances.

## Traditional teeth cleaner

ISLAMABAD: A vendor selling peel of tree (Dandasa) at a weekly Friday bazaar, in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## TT Singh DPO Fazal Abbas, DAO Rai Sabir Express Condolences over Rai Aurangzeb's Demise

**Zafar Chishti**

MAMUKANJAN: District Police Officer (DPO) Toba Tek Singh Fazal Abbas and District Account Officer (DAO) Toba Tek Singh Rai Muhammad Sabir visited Mamukjan to express condolences over the demise of Rai Aurangzeb. They went to Dera Zaildar Rai Ali Ahmad, where they meet the bereaved family of the late Rai Aurangzeb. DPO Fazal Abbas and DAO Rai Muhammad Sabir expressed profound sorrow and grief over the passing of Rai Aurangzeb and conveyed their heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the family. They offered prayers for the forgiveness of



the departed soul and for the elevation of his ranks, stating that the late Rai Aurangzeb was a pious, noble and sociable person whose social services would always be remembered. During the condolence meeting, DPO Fazal Abbas said that he stood with the grieving family in this difficult time and prayed that Allah Almighty grant patience to the bereaved. DAO Rai Muhammad Sabir also termed the death of Rai Aurangzeb a great loss for the family and the area.

On the occasion, notable local figures, relatives and friends were also present. They offered Fateha for the departed soul and expressed their condolences to the bereaved family.

## Azad Kashmir Minister Vows Continued Fight for Underserved in Lachhrat

**Bureau Report**

LACHHRAT / MUZAFFARABAD: Azad Kashmir Public Health Minister Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi has said that he is always fighting for the rights of the people of Lachhrat. Clearly, the work for the deprived people will continue in the future. If a political activist is a mujahideen of his party, a worker should defend the government, always respond to hatred with love, we should share love, let's consider joining the PPP of Elijah Awan, owner The destiny of the region has changed. Despite intensive engagement, PM said that Azad Kashmir wants to go to five courts in any case. There is leadership in Pakistan that Field Marshal Asim Munir of Pakistan is here for as many years. Congratulations to all the Armed Forces of Pakistan on India's speech blockade in Operation How to increase Pakistan's reputation after India crisis and PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto achieved diplomatic successes. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) is welcoming other political parties in the joining programme. Yes, the people of Union Council Panj Gran, Nasida Nosiri and Panjkot received an exemplary welcome from the people. Thank you, Senior Most Minister and Minister of Forests for coming to the constituency, they said that the perception of the disadvantaged people is taking steps to solve the problem (continue to take steps) Constituency two Raja Khurshid, Member of Majlis Aamla PML-N (N) Ilyas Awan also addressed and praised the initiatives of the present government.



## Dr. Ijaz Bashir Expresses Deep Sorrow and Condolences over Islamabad Tragedy

**Anwar Chohan**

GUJRAT: Prominent philanthropist and humanitarian Dr. Ijaz Bashir has expressed profound grief and heartfelt condolences over the tragic loss of innocent lives in the terrorist attack at a Jamia Mosque in Islamabad.



Condemning the incident in the strongest terms, Dr. Ijaz Bashir said that such acts of violence are utterly unacceptable and stand in complete contradiction to the values of religion and humanity. He expressed confidence that law enforcement agencies will take swift action and ensure that those responsible are brought to justice.

He stated that the killing of innocent people reflects moral bankruptcy and a complete disregard for human life. Attacks on places of worship, he added, are not only assaults on sacred spaces but also strikes at the very foundations of Pakistan's social and moral fabric.

Dr. Ijaz Bashir appealed to the nation to remain united and uphold the spirit of tolerance and harmony, urging people to reject all attempts to spread hatred and division in the name of religion or regional identity. He emphasized that such malicious designs must never be allowed to succeed.

## Four day anti polio drive ends in TT Singh district

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: A four-day polio vaccination campaign in Toba Tek Singh has been successfully completed under the directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. During the campaign, polio drops were administered to 436,430 children, exceeding the set target of 433,838 children and achieving 100 per cent coverage.

A review meeting to assess the campaign's outcomes was held at the Deputy Commissioner's Office, chaired by Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela. The meeting examined the overall performance of the Health Department and administrative teams involved in the drive. Expressing satisfaction over the campaign's results, the deputy commissioner commended the efforts of all participating teams. He said the successful completion of the campaign reflected the practical implementation of the chief minister's vision of a "Polio-Free Punjab". The deputy commissioner also appealed to parents to extend full cooperation to polio teams during future vaccination campaigns to ensure complete eradication of the disease.

## PSCA Ensures Strict Surveillance for a Secure Festival

**City Desk**

LAHORE: After a long wait of two decades, Basant Festival has returned to Lahore. In line with the directives of the Government of Punjab and notified Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), Punjab Safe Cities Authority (PSCA) has ensured foolproof security and state-of-the-art surveillance arrangements across the city during the Basant Festival. Through the "CM Basant Festival Control Room," dedicated Safe City surveillance teams are monitoring the city round the clock. Continuous monitoring is being carried out via advance Safe City cameras installed at key locations, sensitive areas, major roads, and entry and exit points of the city.

According to the spokesperson of Punjab Safe Cities Authority, special portable cameras have been installed on rooftops across Lahore to effectively monitor use of (charkhi) and hazardous metallic kite strings. Safe City teams, in coordination with Lahore Police and the district administration, are conducting special surveillance of hotspot areas, major flyovers and high-rise buildings. Additionally, aerial surveillance of restricted areas is being carried out using Safe City drones.

The spokesperson further stated that AI-based cameras are being utilized to detect presence of safety rods on motorcycles. In case of any violation, strict action will be taken under a zero-tolerance policy. Incidents involving aerial firing, display of weapons and other illegal activities will be promptly identified and dealt with in accordance with the law.

## Comedy and Craft Clash: IMCG Bhara Kahu Hosts Sparkling Inter-Collegiate Talent Show

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: IMCG Bhara Kahu shines bright! The college hosted the Inter-Collegiate Standup Comedy and Embroidery Competition, 2026, and what a show it was! Our talented students gave tough competition, but in the true spirit of sportsmanship, our winners stepped aside to let others shine!

The event was graced by our

esteemed Chief Guest, Sir Anjum Habibi, and judged by the following judges:

For Standup Comedy: Sir Javed Ahmed Jawad, Sir Imran Khan Farooqui, and Madam Asma Nizam and for the Embroidery Competition: Madam Najma Habibi, Saeeda Shazia Fatima, and Madam Aziz Fatima.

The judges were thoroughly impressed by the talent on display

and had nothing but praise for the impeccable organization and warm hospitality. A special shoutout to our revered Principal, Madam Abida Parveen, whose vision and leadership made this event possible. Your unwavering support and encouragement have created a platform for students to showcase their talents, and we're grateful for your dedication to nurturing creativity and excellence!

Standup Comedy Winners were Syeda Anna Zaidi by IMCG Margalla, Aleesha Noor by IMCG F-6/2, Zoha Aftab by IMCG I-8/3.

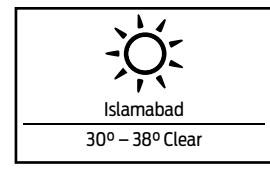
A special shoutout to our own Halima by IMCG Bhara Kahu, who won the hearts with her stellar performance, but graciously stepped aside to let Zoha Aftab take the top spot!

Embroidery Competition Winners were 1st position Irfan Asghar by IMCG F-7/2, 2nd posi-



tion Qurat ul Ain by IMCG I-8/3, Huda Fatima by IMCG skills, securing 1st position, but in a generous gesture, passed on the trophy to IMCG I-8/3! Kainat by IMCG Bhara Kahu, dazzling with her embroidery

Hats off to all participants and winners! IMCG Bhara Kahu proves that true victory lies in generosity and kindness.


**SERVICES**
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:36 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:05 pm
Maghrab	5:43 pm
Isha	7:08 pm

**EMERGENCY**

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 16
& 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	9270831-7
WASA Rawalpindi	5555489
CAA	9281092

**HOSPITALS**

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116

**CANTT HOSPITAL**

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	5555864
TMA	5770886

**Basant Festival: Rescue 1122's special emergency plan released**

LAHORE: To ensure the safety of lives and property of citizens on Basant Festival, the Punjab Emergency Service (Rescue 1122) released special emergency plan on Friday.

A statement the slogan for event is: 'Celebrate Basant with Safety'.

According to Rescue 1122 sources, the personnel will remain on high alert during Basant on Friday, Saturday and Sunday in Lahore, as more than 1200 trained rescuers, 56 ambulances, 24 fire vehicles and 300 rescue motorbikes will be deployed at important places across the city.

In addition to the 23 rescue stations in Lahore, special "key points" have been established at various sensitive and important locations. Along with the rescue stations, emergency ambulances, fire vehicles and rescue motorbikes will be deployed at 180 important key points to enable immediate response in any emergency.

In view of the narrow streets and traffic pressure, rescue motorbikes have been deployed at special key points for timely access. Special rescue teams will also be present in various areas including Walled City, Mozang, Ichhra, Shad Bagh and Data Darbar.

According to Rescue 1122, in case of any major emergency, backup rescue teams will be available immediately from nearby districts. During the Basant Festival, rescue and medical corps as well as routine rescue operations will continue as usual.

# Lahore Celebrates Three-Day Basant Festival After 25 Years

**Bureau Report**

LAHORE: A three-day Basant festival is being celebrated in Lahore after a gap of 25 years, with Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif thanking the citizens of the provincial capital for their enthusiasm and cooperation.

In her message, the chief minister urged the people to celebrate Basant responsibly, saying, "Enjoy the festival, we are with you. Leave your

worries behind and focus on the kite soaring into the blue sky." She remarked that on this occasion, "it is not just kites but happiness that is flying across Lahore."

Ms Sharif said Basant was an integral part of Punjab's cultural heritage and stressed the need to take pride in local traditions while demonstrating responsible citizenship during the festival. She appealed to citizens to prioritise public transport instead of



motorcycles, noting that 419 buses would remain available free of charge on all routes throughout the three days.

She announced that over 60,000 free rides would be provided to the public during Basant.

The Orange Line Metro Train would offer free travel to 25-seat passengers, while Metro Bus, feeder buses and

green buses would also operate free of cost. In addition, rides on 6,000 Yango rickshaws would be free during the festival.

The chief minister emphasised strict compliance with safety measures, urging citizens to use only standard-sized kites and approved strings.

She warned that the use of prohibited kite string could result in heavy fines and long-term imprisonment.

The use of metal wire, sharp string, bulletproof material and spools (charkhi) for kite flying has been declared illegal.

She further stated that kite flying would not be allowed in civil aviation areas of Lahore, while the installation of safety rods on motorcycles and motorcycle rickshaws was mandatory.

## Carrying The Injured

ISLAMABAD: People help victims outside Polyclinic hospital, following an explosion at a Shiite mosque "Imam Bargah Qasr-e-Khadijatul Kubra" at Tarlai, in the Federal Capital, killed at least 31 people and wounded more than 150.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

## Chaudhry Inam Zafar Slams Terror Attack on Islamabad Worship Sites


**City Desk**

RAWALPINDI: Political and social leader Chaudhry Inam Zafar strongly condemned the suicide blast inside an Imambargah and mosque in the federal capital, Islamabad, expressing deep sorrow and shock over the tragic incident that claimed 24 lives and left more than 150 people injured.

He said targeting a place of worship is a cowardly and brutal act of terrorism and an open crime against humanity. He added that Pakistan's brave armed forces will not rest until terrorist elements are completely eliminated, and the entire nation is proud of its military.

In his statement, Chaudhry Inam Zafar emphasized that those responsible for shedding innocent blood deserve no leniency. He urged the government and law enforcement agencies to take immediate action, arrest the culprits, and ensure exemplary punishment.

## Shia leader slams Islamabad Mosque bombing security failure

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: Allama Arif Hussain Wahidi, Central Vice President of the Shia Ulama Council Pakistan, strongly condemned the cowardly explosion at Jamia Masjid Khadja-tul-Kubra in Islamabad. He stated that carrying out such an act of terrorism inside a mosque during prayers raises many serious questions. The most important question is directed at the federal government and the administration: how could such a major security lapse occur in such sensitive circumstances?

Allama Arif Wahidi said that for some time, takfiri elements had been disrupting the law and order situation in the country. He added that repeated warnings were given that this was a major conspiracy against the state. Extremism, takfir, and terrorism are a cancer for the stability of the country, but these threats were not taken seriously, which led to such a tragic and heart-breaking incident. He said this incident is a clear question mark on the performance of the federal government and security institutions. Allama Arif Wahidi said that this is an extremely painful incident which has caused widespread anxiety among the public. He urged followers of all schools of thought to maintain unity within their ranks.

## Ancient Malakhro Wrestlers Battle it Out at Ghulam Shah Urs

**Kamran Khamiso Khawaja**

SUJAWAL: Brushing aside all the stress of routine life, a large number of local villagers and fans from different areas had gathered outside the shrine of Hazrat Ghulam Shah on the eve of his annual Urs to witness the nail-biting encounters of Sindhi Wrestling, popularly known as Malakhra. Local wrestlers were adamant to prove their mettle before a massive crowd that was surging as the day wore on.

The sport, which traces its roots back around 5,000 years, has not lost its popularity even in the era of technology where the young generation is more attached to their mobile screens, claims Abdul Ghafur Jat, a local landlord and administrator of Malakhra organized on the occasion of the annual Urs.

He further said that elderly and middle-aged men from different parts of district Sujawal and Thatta thronged to witness wrestlers overpowering each other to earn praise and recognition. "The Malakhra events are held at 85 localities across Sindh annually," he mentioned, adding that at the annual Urs of Ghulam Shah, wrestlers from across Sindh participated in the competition.

Another local resident of the village Ghulam Shah said that people voluntarily present cash prizes and presents to the winning wrestlers. He further stated that Sindhi wrestling was played in a unique way where wrestlers hold each other by their waists and the one overpowering his opponent is declared as the winner.

Jiyandal Laghari, Ayaz Shah, Moheb Sheedi, Rano Khaskeli, among others, are considered eminent players of this sport in the locality.

Umer Jat, a 70-year-old fan of Malakhra, mentioned that he was 15 years old when he first witnessed this sport in his village and since then he had rarely missed any Malakhra in his life. He also proposed that UNESCO should patronize this game so that it could get worldwide recognition.

## AKU Hosts Pakistan's First Conference on Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Science

**News Desk**

KARACHI: In a national first, the Aga Khan University hosted the Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Conference 2026 (RSC-2026) in Karachi. The conference brought together scientists, clinicians, policymakers, regulators, and industry representatives to exchange perspectives on recent advances in stem cell research, regenerative medicine, and tissue engineering, with a focus on Pakistan and comparable health care settings.

"Regenerative medicine represents a shift from managing disease to restoring function," said Syed Athar Enam, Conference Chair and Director of the Centre for Regenerative Medicine and Stem Cell Research at AKU. "This conference was conceived to place Pakistan within the global scientific conver-



sation, while remaining grounded in our local realities. Our aim is to build knowledge, capacity, and collaboration that

can translate into meaningful benefit for patients."

RSC-2026 featured scientific sessions,

panel discussions, and focused deliberations examining both opportunities and challenges in the field. Key areas included RNA-based gene transfer, stem cell-derived exosomes, regenerating damaged heart tissue, glaucoma care, liver fibrosis, and Alzheimer's disease modeling to better understand the disease. Discussions emphasized strong scientific standards, ethical responsibility, and regulatory oversight, particularly in resource-limited environments.

"Building sustainable programs in regenerative medicine requires more than isolated discoveries," said Azhar Hussain. "It requires strong systems, interdisciplinary collaboration, and alignment between science, regulation, and clinical need." Echoing this sentiment, Sheerien Rajput noted that "capacity building is central to long-term impact."

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## Weather Alert System on Islamabad to Lahore Motorway

Pakistan is preparing to deploy one of its most advanced road weather alert systems on the Islamabad to Lahore Motorway through the 'Weather on the Way' initiative. This flagship partnership between Weather Walay and ONE Network is the first of its kind in the region, offering hyperlocal weather intelligence on a major travel corridor that sees millions of passengers every year and spans multiple microclimate zones.

The system is designed to give travelers precise, real-time information so they can make safer and more informed decisions on the road.

The technology network brings together 14 automated weather stations, 5 dedicated air quality sensors, 4 visibility sensors, satellite feeds, and weather forecasts. These inputs are processed through a decision support engine that tracks evolving hazards such as fog, rain, wind, and reduced visibility, along with other rapidly changing conditions that affect travel. Information is then delivered to travelers through smartphone applications, web platforms, and SMD display screens placed at toll plazas across the route.

The initiative marks a major leap in Pakistan's road weather intelligence. For the first time, road operators, public agencies, and drivers will access the same real time meteorological data for route planning, hazard preparedness, and informed decision making. This approach mirrors international best practices where granular, ground verified observations are central to road safety and traffic management.

The broader value of installing dense weather and sensor networks extends far beyond motorway travel. These systems enhance microclimate mapping, agriculture planning, fog forecasting, logistics operations, tourism insights, energy modeling, and environmental monitoring. The data supports farmers in planning irrigation and sowing, improves the management of fog-prone segments of the motorway, strengthens air quality tracking, and captures hyperlocal signals of dengue-conducive environments, crop pests, plant diseases, and related risks. Built on locally developed software with select imported components, the system is tailored for Pakistan's terrain and can support agencies such as the Motorway Police, NDMA, and other public sector organizations in planning and executing their operations with greater efficiency and confidence.

Weather Walay's work extends nationwide, where it continues to strengthen early warning systems and climate intelligence. Its modeling suite blends European, German, US, Swiss, and indigenous weather models that are configured for Pakistan's complex terrain. The resulting datasets support a wide range of sectors including agriculture, tourism, energy, health, and transport, along with microclimate research, urban planning, environmental monitoring, and several other data-driven applications that rely on precise, localized weather intelligence.

The company's microclimate mapping includes detailed work across Pakistan, with Islamabad serving as a clear illustration. Areas like Shah Allah Ditta, Bhatti Kahu, and Banigala can differ by several hundred millimetres of annual rainfall despite being only a few kilometres apart. These contrasts drive different heating needs, energy use, and local weather patterns. Such insights underline the importance of dense ground-based sensor networks in cities and regions with diverse landscapes where no two localities behave the same.

## Rare Earths: The War America Wasn't Prepared to Fight

On February 2, 2026, President Donald Trump authorized the creation of a \$12 billion strategic fund to establish a national reserve of rare earth minerals and rare earth magnets and to rebuild the domestic supply chain from the ground up. The initiative was designed to restore American control over materials essential to defense systems, energy infrastructure, and high-technology manufacturing. It marked the first serious attempt in decades to reverse the erosion of the United States strategic autonomy—and, in doing so, quietly acknowledged how dangerously exposed the nation had become.

That exposure did not occur overnight. It was the cumulative result of decades of policy failure under successive administrations, across party lines, that systematically dismantled America's rare earth ecosystem. Mining capacity was neglected, refining and separation facilities were allowed to disappear, magnet manufacturing was abandoned, and strategic planning was replaced with short-term cost calculations.

Even more alarming, foreign—primarily Chinese—companies were permitted to operate rare earth mines on U.S. soil, export raw material abroad for processing, and then sell finished products back to American industry. By the time Washington acted, control had already been surrendered.

When China signaled restrictions on the free flow of these materials in response to trade pressure, the impact on the United States was immediate. Defense contractors warned of supply disruptions. Electric vehicle manufacturers

faced production uncertainty. Semiconductor, robotics, and aerospace industries confronted bottlenecks that threatened to halt assembly lines. The message was unmistakable: without access to Chinese-controlled supply chains, large segments of the American economy could not function.

Manufacturing leaders rushed to Washington with stark warnings. Defense suppliers and technology firms made clear that prolonged disruption would cripple production and weaken national security.

Temporary diplomatic adjustments followed, easing immediate pressure, but the strategic lesson could no longer be ignored. The United States had allowed a single external power to dominate the most critical inputs of the modern economy.

It was this realization that culminated in the February 2026 decision to create a strategic reserve and rebuild domestic capacity. Yet the very scale of the initiative underscored the depth of the problem. Constructing mines, refineries, separation plants, alloy facilities, and magnet factories is not a short-term exercise. Rebuilding expertise, securing environmental approvals, training skilled labor, and establishing industrial scale will take a decade or more. Until then, American industries remain exposed, and defense stockpiles continue to thin.

Despite political rhetoric, many firms will remain dependent on Chinese supply—on Chinese terms. The rare earth crisis also exposed a

second, even more consequential failure: the hollowing out of America's manufacturing base. Over the past four decades, production was systematically outsourced to Asia and other regions. The United States retained innovation, design, finance, and branding, while physical manufacturing migrated abroad. This model delivered profits during periods of stability, but under stress it proved dangerously fragile.

By the mid-2020s, manufacturing

employment represented only a fraction of the U.S. workforce compared to its historical peak. The tariff shock revealed a hard truth: innovation without manufacturing depth is not power; it is dependence. Ideas alone cannot build vehicles, weapons, energy systems, or infrastruc-

ture when supply chains fracture. The domestic consequences are increasingly visible. Job insecurity has risen, real wage growth has lagged, and many households rely on savings or government support to maintain stability. A nation that once projected industrial confidence now faces growing public anxiety about economic security and employment resilience.

Geopolitically, the tariff era produced an outcome few anticipated. Rather than isolating China, it accelerated China's centrality. Allies and competitors alike were penalized, prompting many to seek stability by deepening engagement with Beijing. Across Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East, countries moved pragmatically toward China—not out of

ideology, but necessity.

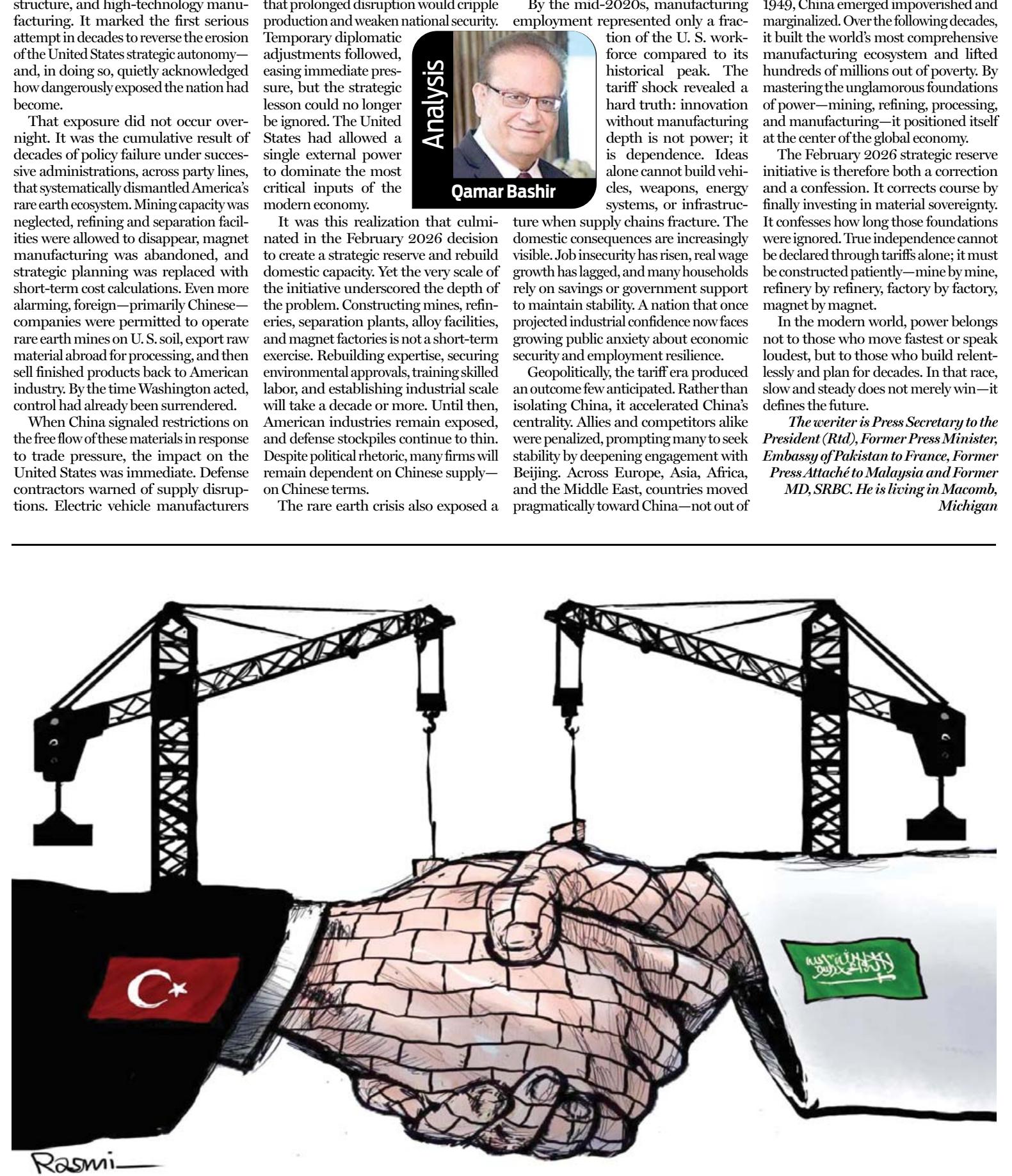
China's strength at this moment lies not in coercion, but in integration. It controls critical processing chokepoints, maintains manufacturing ecosystems, and sustains trade relationships across political systems. While the United States pushed partners away through pressure, China welcomed them through industrial cooperation and long-term planning.

The historical irony is profound. In 1949, China emerged impoverished and marginalized. Over the following decades, it built the world's most comprehensive manufacturing ecosystem and lifted hundreds of millions out of poverty. By mastering the unglamorous foundations of power—mining, refining, processing, and manufacturing—it positioned itself at the center of the global economy.

The February 2026 strategic reserve initiative is therefore both a correction and a confession. It corrects course by finally investing in material sovereignty. It confesses how long those foundations were ignored. True independence cannot be declared through tariffs alone; it must be constructed patiently—mine by mine, refinery by refinery, factory by factory, magnet by magnet.

In the modern world, power belongs not to those who move fastest or speak loudest, but to those who build relentlessly and plan for decades. In that race, slow and steady does not merely win—it defines the future.

The writer is Press Secretary to the President (Rtd), Former Press Minister, Embassy of Pakistan to France, Former Press Attaché to Malaysia and Former MD, SRBC. He is living in Macomb, Michigan



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

## Universities as Engines of Employment: From Degrees to Dignified Futures

Across the world's most stable and competitive economies, universities are not viewed merely as degree-awarding institutions.

They function as engines of innovation, industrial growth, leadership development, and dignified employment. Nations

that have successfully transitioned toward knowledge-based economies have done so by positioning universities at the center of economic strategy, linking education with industry, research with markets, and students with real-world performance.

In such systems, the success of higher education is not measured by enrollment figures alone, but by how effectively graduates integrate into productive economic roles. Universities that align curricula with industrial needs, emerging technologies, and global market trends produce graduates who do not merely seek jobs but earn opportunities through skills, innovation, and adaptability.

**Pakistan's Universities: Emerging Pillars of Industry and Leadership**

Within Pakistan, despite structural and resource constraints, several universities have demonstrated that meaningful university-industry linkage is both possible and impactful.

The University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) stands as a cornerstone of Pakistan's agriculture-based economy. UAF graduates have played a decisive role in establishing and strengthening the country's pesticide and plant protection industry, now valued at approximately PKR 120 billion annually, alongside the fertilizer sector and a poultry industry exceeding USD 8 billion. UAF-trained professionals dominate agribusiness firms, multinational agrochemical



Analysis

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Jalal Arif

For policymakers, the lesson is clear. Higher education policy, industrial policy, and innovation strategy must operate in harmony. Universities require autonomy, sustained funding, and incentives for industry collaboration. Industries must be encouraged, through tax incentives and regulatory facilitation, to invest in research, training, and long-term university partnerships.

Think tanks and policy institutions should be institutionally linked with universities to translate research into governance and economic solutions. Future-oriented disciplines, artificial intelligence, data science, cybersecurity, fintech, biotechnology, smart agriculture, climate resilience, and advanced manufacturing, must be prioritized. These fields do not merely generate employment; they build export capacity, technological sovereignty, and economic dignity.

### Conclusion

Dignified employment is not simply about job placement; it is about productivity, self-worth, and national confidence. When universities connect knowledge with industry, research with markets, and students with global networks, they empower youth to earn livelihoods with dignity rather than dependency.

The global experience of Silicon Valley and the local successes of Pakistan's leading universities offer a clear roadmap. Nations that invest in strong university-industry linkages move from unemployment anxiety to innovation-driven growth. For Pakistan, this path is not optional, it is essential. Strengthening universities as engines of employment and innovation will enable the country to unlock the true potential of its youth and build a future defined not by degrees alone, but by dignified, productive, and globally competitive lives.

The writer is Former Professor and Chairman, Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture, Faisalabad. He can be contacted at jalalarif807@yahoo.com

## Bridging the Socio-Cultural and Economic Divide in Pakistan

**P**akistan, a nation of immense cultural, linguistic, and regional diversity, stands at a pivotal juncture in its social evolution. Despite its immense human potential, strategic location, and rich cultural heritage, the country continues to grapple with deep socio-cultural and economic divides. These disparities, rooted in unequal development, social exclusion, and economic imbalance, have widened over time and now pose serious challenges to social cohesion, political stability, and sustainable growth.

Bridging these divides is not merely a policy challenge but a national imperative.

Pakistan's socio-cultural diversity is one of its defining characteristics. Multiple ethnic groups, languages, traditions, and belief systems coexist across provinces and regions.

While this diversity has historically enriched the national identity, it has also exposed fault lines when combined with economic inequality and uneven development. Communities with limited access to education, healthcare, employment, and political representation often feel marginalized, leading to mistrust and alienation. Addressing these concerns requires a comprehensive and inclusive approach that links social harmony with economic justice.

The media and digital platforms play an increasingly influential role in shaping social and economic narratives. While media can promote awareness and dialogue, sensationalism and polarization often undermine constructive discourse. Social media, in particular, has amplified both voices of reform and narratives of division. Promoting media literacy, ethical journalism, and responsible digital engagement is essential to ensure that media serves as a tool for unity rather than division.

Religion and cultural values can also play a

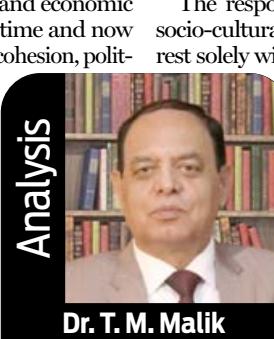
constructive role in bridging divides. Pakistan's social fabric is deeply influenced by religious teachings that emphasize justice, compassion, and social responsibility. Religious leaders and institutions can help promote tolerance, social solidarity, and economic ethics, countering extremism and sectarianism through dialogue and community engagement.

The responsibility for bridging Pakistan's socio-cultural and economic divide does not rest solely with the state. Civil society organizations, private sector institutions, educational bodies, and community leaders all have vital roles to play. Public-private partnerships, youth engagement programs, community development initiatives, and skills-based training can help bridge gaps and create opportunities for marginalized groups. Pakistan's youth, which constitutes a significant portion of the population, represents a powerful force for change if provided with education, skills, and employment opportunities.

Ultimately, bridging the socio-cultural and economic divide in Pakistan requires a long-term vision rooted in inclusion, equity, and shared prosperity. Development cannot be sustainable if large segments of society remain excluded. A cohesive nation is built not through uniformity but through fairness, mutual respect, and equal opportunity.

Pakistan's future depends on its ability to transform diversity into strength and inequality into opportunity. By prioritizing inclusive economic growth, equitable education, gender empowerment, responsible governance, and social dialogue, Pakistan can move toward a more unified, resilient, and prosperous society where every citizen feels valued and invested in the national future.

The writer is PhD in Media Sciences. He can be reached at maliktariq.media@gmail.com



Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

# UNESCO Director-General Dr Khaled El-Enany pays his first official visit to Pakistan

## Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: UNESCO Director-General Dr. Khaled El-Enany paid his first official visit to Pakistan on 1st and 2nd February, that has successfully reinforced the strategic partnership between the Government of Pakistan and UNESCO. During this visit the Director-General engaged in high-level bilateral discussions with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and Federal Ministers representing the portfolios of education and professional training, culture and heritage, as well as science and technology. A primary outcome of these consultations was the joint decision to elaborate a new Strategic Roadmap between Pakistan and UNESCO designed to identify forward-looking actions and impactful initiatives tailored to the country's specific needs.

Central to the mission was Dr. El-Enany's vision of "UNESCO For

the People," which places youth at the heart of the organization's mandate. At the Islamabad Model School, the Director-General received a comprehensive briefing on the National Education Emergency Action Plan and the national initiative to address the challenge of 25 million out-of-school children. He actively engaged with students in a digital classroom and a robotics lab, highlighting the critical role of AI and digital literacy in modern education. This focus on youth was further demonstrated during a visit to the Taxila World Heritage Site, where Dr. El-Enany observed ongoing excavations at Bhir Mound and praised the inclusion of young female archaeologists in heritage management. He emphasized that preservation becomes a shared community value when every individual feels ownership of their cultural heritage.

Throughout the mission, the Director-General championed his philosophy of "expertise beyond borders," advocating for global solidarity and twinning systems between museums and schools to ensure that local policies achieve global impact. This vision of shared knowledge and best practices will be a central theme of the upcoming high-level launch of the 2026 GEM Report in March and a global dialogue on out-of-school children scheduled to be held in Pakistan this April.

Dr. El-Enany concluded his visit by meeting with the UNESCO Islamabad Office team to discuss field-office empowerment and the necessity of an intersectoral approach to address community needs.

He also expressed during this meeting his commitment to maximizing resources for impactful ground-level activities. Envisioning Pakistan as a global model for the organization's mandate, the Director-General recalled the importance of the UNESCO80 platform for continued dialogue as the organization moves toward its next milestone.



## Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: Pakistan High Commission in Ottawa and the three Consulates General in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver observed the Kashmir Solidarity

Day today to express solidarity with the people of Indian-occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IOJK) in their just struggle for exercising the right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant United

## Pakistan Missions Mark Kashmir Solidarity Day with Strong Call for UN Action

Nations Security Council Resolutions. The event was attended by members of the Pakistani community and friends of Pakistan and the Kashmir cause.

Special Messages of the President, the Prime Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister/ Foreign Minister of Pakistan on the occasion were also read out to the audience. Moreover, documentaries on Kashmiris' struggle were screened and broadcast on

social and local electronic and ethnic media.

Informational material highlighting the plight of the Kashmiri people in IOJK was also distributed. A series of programmes were arranged including pictorial exhibition and media interaction to highlight the human rights violations in the IOJK and to express solidarity with Kashmiris facing the worst kind of oppression

under illegal Indian occupation.

Speaking on the occasion, High Commissioner Muhammad Saleem reiterated that the Kashmiris in IOJK have endured relentless repression including extrajudicial killings, arbitrary detentions, communication blackouts and forced demographic changes. He paid tribute to the resilience and courage of the Kashmiri people in IOJK in the face of prolonged

hardships.

He reiterated Pakistan's principled position that a peaceful and lasting resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute can only be achieved through implementation of relevant UN Security Council Resolutions and in line with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people in IOJK through holding free and fair plebiscite.

The High Commissioner stressed the urgent need for the

international community to play its due role in ensuring justice and accountability.

He renewed the call upon the international community to uphold international law, the respect for human rights and securing a just, durable and peaceful settlement of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute by persuading India to implement the UN Security Council Resolutions.

## 'The Kashmir Dispute in the Aftermath of the 2025 Conflict discussed at the CASS Webinar'

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, organised a webinar titled 'The Kashmir Dispute in the Aftermath of the 2025 Conflict' on 4 February 2026. The webinar examined the impact of the May 2025 hostilities on the Kashmiri population in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), assessed how India's policies have shaped their lived realities, and explored the diplomatic, legal, and political options available to Pakistan for strengthening international engagement on the Kashmir dispute in

the post-2025 conflict scenario. As an independent think tank, CASS continues to engage with national and international academia and practitioners interested in National Security in its wider context.

The session was moderated by Air Marshal (Retd.) Zahid Mahmood, Senior Director at CASS. He emphasised that the dispute is not merely territorial but a political and humanitarian issue rooted in the unfinished agenda of partition and the unfulfilled right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people, as recognised by the United Nations.

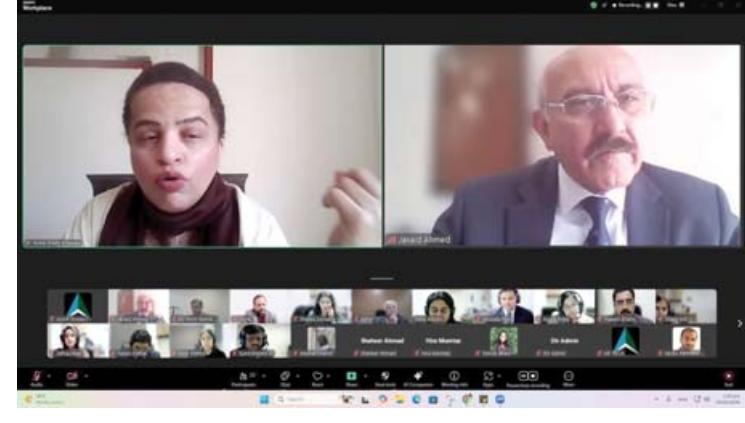
In her keynote address, Dr Asma

Shakir Khawaja, Executive Director of the Centre for International Strategic Studies (CISS) AJK, explained that Kashmir holds central importance for India due to ideological motivations, strategic considerations relating to China, control over water resources, and the imposition of a majoritarian narrative over the only Muslim-majority region under Indian control. From Pakistan's perspective, she stressed that the dispute is grounded in the principles of the Radcliffe Award, shared ethnic and religious ties, strategic imperatives, and the primacy of human rights and dignity. Critiquing the Modi government's Kashmir

policy, she observed a declining appetite for peace, a more aggressive security posture, and prestige-driven narratives projecting India as a 'vishwaguru'. She argued that attempts to normalise the situation through tourism and sporting events have failed to conceal coercive ground realities.

Looking ahead, Dr Khawaja called for moving beyond cosmetic measures to address the core issue of self-determination, humanising the Kashmir conflict, challenging ideological extremism, and linking Kashmir with contemporary global issues to enhance international engagement.

Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd.),



President of CASS, thanked the keynote speaker for her valuable contributions and reaffirmed Pakistan's principled stance in supporting a just, durable, and peaceful resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people and relevant UN resolutions.

## Vietnam Envoy Highlights Growth and Bilateral Ties at Tet Reception

### Naveed Ahmad Khan

Islamabad witnessed a vibrant cultural evening as Mr. and Mrs. Pham Anh Tuan, Ambassador of Vietnam to Pakistan, hosted a reception at the Embassy to celebrate the Vietnamese Lunar Year, also known as the Community Tet Celebration. The event, themed "Year of the Horse," brought together friends of Vietnam from across Pakistan, offering a blend of tradition, hospitality and shared joy.

Deputy Head of Mission Mr. Thang Truong, along with Embassy staff and their families, warmly received the guests. Former Pakistani ambassadors to Vietnam, ambassadors and high commissioners from ASEAN countries including Malaysia, Thailand, Brunei, Myanmar and Indonesia, as well as representatives from civil society, the business community and chambers of commerce, were among the participants.

The highlight of the evening was the Lucky Tree, a cherished Vietnamese tradition. Guests took part by plucking beautifully prepared red envelopes hanging like fruits from the tree. Containing lucky money, the envelopes symbolize good fortune for the coming year. The tradition drew keen interest from Pakistani guests, many of whom expressed a desire to adopt the custom.

Traditional Vietnamese soup and delicacies were served, delighting guests who have come to appreciate the culinary excellence at Vietnam's cultural events. The hosts appeared in colorful traditional attire, drawing admiration for its intricate designs and vibrant hues.

In his address, Ambassador Pham Anh Tuan welcomed members of the Vietnamese community living, studying, working and doing business in Pakistan, along with friends of the Embassy, to gather at what he described as "the shared home of Viet Nam on Pakistani soil" to celebrate the Lunar New Year, enjoy familiar flavors of the



homeland and remember their country and families.

He said that over the past year Viet Nam had achieved significant and comprehensive accomplishments. Macroeconomic stability was maintained, national defense and sovereignty safeguarded, social welfare ensured and living standards steadily improved. Viet Nam's international position and prestige, he noted, continued to rise.

The ambassador informed that Viet Nam remained a bright spot of growth in the region and the world, with economic growth exceeding 8 percent, the highest in more than 15 years. He said Viet Nam ranked among the world's top 15 destinations for foreign direct investment, attracting nearly USD 40 billion in FDI, with total import-export turnover surpassing USD 900 billion. GDP had exceeded USD 500 billion and GDP per capita had crossed USD 5,000, officially placing Viet Nam in the group of upper-middle-income countries.

He said these achievements reflected the collective efforts of the Party, the people and the armed forces in advancing renewal, reform and international integration, laying a solid foundation for a new stage of development.

Referring to the recent 14th National Congress of the Party, he said the country was undergoing a strong transformation across many fields, creating a firm base for an era of Viet Nam's rise, as affirmed by General Secretary Tô Lâm. In this broader context, he said, friendship and cooperation between Viet Nam and Pakistan had continued to grow in an active and substantive manner. The year 2025 witnessed notable progress in bilateral economic and trade cooperation, with two-way trade nearing USD 900 million and moving toward a target of USD 1 billion in 2026.

He recalled that during the visit of Viet Nam's Minister of Industry and Trade to Pakistan in October 2025, negotiations were officially launched on the Viet Nam-Pakistan Preferential Trade Agreement (VPPTA). Several rounds of technical exchanges had since been held, and efforts were underway to conclude and sign the agreement in 2026.

The signing of the VPPTA, he said, would create favorable conditions for businesses of both countries by reducing tariffs on strategic products, lowering costs, enhancing competitiveness and



opening new avenues of cooperation. The agreement would benefit not only state agencies but also enterprises and members of the Vietnamese community living and working in Pakistan.

Over the past year, the Embassy of Viet Nam in Pakistan had carried out various activities to promote bilateral friendship and cooperation, worked closely with Pakistani ministries and local authorities, organized conferences and seminars on trade and investment promotion, and promoted Vietnamese culture through programs featuring áo dài, cuisine and traditional values.

An important milestone was the opening of Viet Nam's first Honorary Consulate Office in Lahore, which has contributed to trade promotion, citizen protection and stronger links with the Vietnamese community in Pakistan.

Although the Vietnamese community in Pakistan is small and geographically dispersed, mainly in Karachi,



Lahore and Islamabad, the ambassador said it remained united, law-abiding and committed to preserving Vietnamese cultural identity. He appreciated the community's support and participation in Embassy activities over the past year.

For the first time, outstanding overseas Vietnamese representatives participated in the "Xuân Quê Hương" program, and he expressed hope that a Viet Nam Association in Pakistan would be established to further strengthen community bonds and mutual support.

Looking ahead to 2026, he said the Embassy would continue to implement political, economic and cultural initiatives, promote exchanges of delegations at all levels, and expand people-to-people exchanges and tourism between the two countries. He added that the Embassy would remain a shared home and a strong bridge for the community.

He observed that a new spring was

arriving in the homeland and in the hearts of Vietnamese abroad, and despite challenges, the potential for development of Viet Nam and Viet Nam-Pakistan relations was immense.

He expressed confidence that with solidarity and mutual affection, the Vietnamese community in Pakistan would continue to support one another and promote the positive image of Vietnamese people and culture among Pakistani friends.

On the occasion of the Lunar New Year of the Horse 2026, he extended best wishes to members of the Vietnamese community and their families for good health, happiness, peace, prosperity and success.

As the evening concluded, guests departed with fond memories of Vietnamese hospitality, culture and cuisine, expressing hope for continued engagement and friendship between the two nations.

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

### Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
184,129.58	187,832.08
Day's High	Day's Low
188,036.30	183,547.29
Index Value	Change
48,367,476,050	-3702.50
Percentage	Time
-1.97%	6 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

### Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,369.75	+60.53
Percentage	Time
+0.59%	6 Feb, 4:40 pm GMT

### USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,947.67	+1,038.95
Percentage	Time
+2.12%	6 Feb, 12:57 pm GMT-5

### Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
54,253.68	+435.64
Percentage	Time
+0.81%	6 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9

### Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	193.25	197
Bahrain Dinar	743.80	753.33
Canadian Dollar	203.50	207.01
China Yuan	38.00	40
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	330.54	333.75
Hong Kong Dollar	35.45	36.30
Indian Rupee	2.8	3.31
Japanese Yen	1.7773	1.8766
Kuwaiti Dinar	908.10	917.56
Malaysian Ringgit	66.60	69.95
New Zealand \$	165.93	168
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	728.55	738.18
Qatari Riyal	76.11	79.11
Saudi Riyal	74.90	75.30
Singapore Dollar	219.24	224.18
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	358.88	362.92
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.77
U.A.E Dirham	76.55	77.20
UK Pound Sterling	384.67	388.18
US Dollar	280.6	282.30

**Pakistan and Uzbekistan sign MoU to enhance joint efforts against corruption**

### News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Anti-corruption Agency of the Republic of Uzbekistan (ACAU) and the National Accountability Bureau of Islamic Republic of Pakistan signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) to strengthen mutual cooperation in the fight against corruption. The MoU signing ceremony was held on the occasion of two day visit of President of Republic of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev, under-scoring the shared commitment of both countries to United Nations Convention against Corruption (UNCAC).

The MoU was signed by Deputy Chairman NAB Mr. Sohail Nasir and Abdulaziz Kamilov, Advisor to the President on Foreign Policy, Uzbekistan.

The signed agreement provides a comprehensive framework for institutional coordination, cooperation and capacity building to prevent and combat corruption within the respective competencies of both agencies.

The contours of this mutual cooperation include information sharing with respect to trend typologies and general methods of corrupt practices of both countries. It also commits to provision of technical and methodological assistance in addition to exchange of expertise & human resource personnel in areas like forensic, accounting assets investigation, forensic engineering & money laundering Capacity building and public awareness campaigns are also a major part of the cooperation.

The heads of both anti-graft agencies expressed their confidence that the MoU will amplify institutional linkages and effectiveness of accountability mechanism in both countries.

Deputy Chairman NAB told the Media that corruption is a major obstacle to economic development and public trust. He emphasized that the transnational nature of the financial crimes & illicit assets requires strong bilateral cooperation among member states of UNCAC.

The signing of the MoU marks a significant step forward in Pakistan – Uzbekistan relations & mutual resolve of both nations to promote transparency and good governance.

# PM Shehbaz Recognizes NBP for Contributions to Economy

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif has recognized National Bank of Pakistan (NBP) for its significant contributions to the national economy.

During a ceremony held in Islamabad recently, PM Shehbaz Sharif presented the award to Rehmat Ali Hasnain, President and CEO, NBP. The event honored leading exporters and bankers for the year 2024-25.

The recognition highlights NBP's strong support for export growth and its continued role in strengthening Pakistan's financial sector. Through its services and partnerships, the bank has played an important role in promoting trade, supporting businesses, and contributing to overall economic development.

Senior government officials, top bankers, business leaders, and exporters from across the country were present on the occasion.

NBP remains firmly committed to driving sustainable and inclusive growth by supporting the business community, strengthening financial intermediation, fostering innovation, and actively contributing to Pakistan's long-term economic stability, resilience, and overall national development.



## Construction work

KARACHI: Labourers are busy in construction work of Jahangir Road, in the Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

# ICCI hosts Uzbek delegation for talks on Fruit exports, joint ventures

### Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Sardar Tahir Mehmood, has reaffirmed the Chamber's strong commitment to facilitating the business community by fostering meaningful collaborations with overseas chambers to enhance trade, investment, and sectoral growth.

He expressed these views while welcoming Deputy Director General of the Agency of Plant Protection and Quarantine under the Cabinet of Ministry of Agriculture of Uzbekistan, Ulugbek Yunusov, who visited ICCI along with a three-member delegation to explore avenues of cooperation, particularly in the fruit and vegetable sector.

Senior Vice President ICCI, Tahir Ayub, highlighted the fruit and vegetable potential of the region and informed the delegation about the various

countries to which exports are currently being carried out.

Those present on the occasion included Vice President Irfan Chaudhry, former ICCI

Presidents Zubair Ahmed Malik, Mohammad Ejaz Abbasi, Executive Member Ishaq Sial, Naveed Akhtar Satti, and ICCI members.



# Dun & Bradstreet Partners with Midas Safety to Support Data Driven Financial Decision-Making

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Dun & Bradstreet has partnered with Midas Safety through the deployment of D&B Finance Analytics. The partnership will enable Midas Safety to strengthen its financial decision-making capabilities through enhanced data-driven insights.

The signing ceremony was held recently at the Dun and Bradstreet

Pakistan Office, where representatives from both organizations came together to formalize the collaboration. The ceremony was attended by Khawaja Khurram, General Manager IT, Hasan Vohra, Group Commercial Finance Manager, and Kashan Mansoori CFO – from Midas Safety Pakistan. The collaboration reflects the growing demand among enterprises for strong analytics that give better visibility into finances and help

teams make better decisions. While talking about the collaboration, Zubair Qureshi, CBO Dun and Bradstreet Pakistan said, "We're pleased to collaborate with Midas Safety as they adopt D&B Financial Analytics platform to strengthen its partner evaluation framework. This reflects how leading Pakistani enterprises are adopting global best practices to make smarter and sustainable partnership decisions".

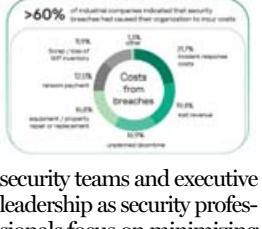


## Kaspersky's OT calculator enables confident, data-backed OT security investments

### Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Kaspersky's new online tool has been specially developed for industrial organizations to assess the potential costs associated with insufficient operational technology (OT) security. By offering detailed financial forecasts, the calculator empowers senior management to make well-informed decisions regarding security investments.

Industrial organizations increasingly depend on interconnected systems, elevating cybersecurity to a critical factor in business resilience and profitability. According to VDC Research, over 60% of industrial companies last year reported that cybersecurity breaches had led to significant costs. Despite this, a persistent disconnect remains between



security teams and executive leadership as security professionals focus on minimizing risk, while executives must balance cybersecurity concerns with broader business objectives. This misalignment often results in competing priorities and underfunded security initiatives.

To bridge this gap, Kaspersky has launched the OT Cybersecurity Savings Calculator, an innovative online tool designed specifically for industrial organizations to assess the potential costs of inadequate operational technology (OT) security initiatives.

Sharing their feedback on Day 1 of the fair, Mr. Muhammad Uzair, GM Marketing, Parus Plastic, said: "An exciting start to Ambiente & Paperworld Frankfurt 2026. The exhibition provides a valuable opportunity to showcase the creativity, quality, and innovation of Pakistani products to international buyers. We look forward to building strong business connections and exploring new markets in the coming days."

## 13 Pakistani Companies Represent Pakistan at Ambiente & Paperworld Frankfurt 2026

### Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The global consumer goods season officially began today as Ambiente & Paperworld Frankfurt 2026 opened its doors at Messe Frankfurt, running through February 10. Recognized as the world's leading international trade fair for consumer goods, the event brings together global buyers, suppliers, and industry leaders, setting key sourcing and design trends for the year ahead.

Pakistan is participating with a diverse lineup of 12 exhibitors showcasing their creativity, quality, and innovation. The Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) is supporting six companies: Anaya Salt

# VC Women University Dr. Kalsoom stresses importance of sports in youth

 **Zain Khan Malghani**

MULTAN: Vice Chancellor Women University Multan, Dr. Kalsoom Paracha, has emphasized that sports are not merely about competition but play a vital role in character building, self-confidence, and leadership development among youth. She was addressing a dignified ceremony organized by the Multan Press Club in honor of the Multan team for their outstanding performance in the National Junior Badminton Championship.

Dr. Kalsoom Paracha said that representing Multan at the national level and achieving success is clear evidence of the immense potential possessed by the youth, which can be fully realized through proper guidance and opportunities. She stressed that co-curricular activities are as essential as academics and encouraged young people to make sports an integral part of their lives.

Highlighting the initiatives of Women University Multan, she said that the university offers full fee concessions on merit to students associated

with sports, including tuition, transport, and hostel fees, along with free mess facilities. She added that the university gives equal importance to sports and education and praised the Multan Press Club for honoring badminton players, terming it a commendable step towards promoting sports culture.

Dr. Kalsoom Paracha also underscored the importance of the role of teachers and parents, stating that a strong linkage between educational institutions and sports fields is necessary to ensure students' balanced growth alongside their academic pursuits.

President Multan Press Club, Shakeel Anjum, said that the Press Club has always encouraged talent and emphasized the need to create more opportunities for athletes. He said that mere participation in the National Junior Badminton Championship was praiseworthy and expressed hope that these players would bring pride to the country in the future.

District Sports Officer Adnan Naeem said that the performance of the Multan team was highly encour-

aging and that such achievements at the junior level lay a strong foundation for future national-level athletes.

Senior Vice President Khalid Chaudhry, senior sports journalists Izhar Abbasi and Shahid Lodhi also addressed the ceremony. Among those present were Vice President Multan Press Club Sharif Jouya, Chairman Executive Committee Nadeem Haider Hans, senior journalists Agha Shahid Azeem, Shoaib Latif, Dilzeeb Akash, and others.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, chief guests Dr. Kalsoom Paracha, Shakeel Anjum, and Adnan Naeem distributed shields and certificates among badminton players Ayan Khan Lodhi, Mehr Nigar, Dua Afaq, Maryam Sarfaraz, Sonia Ijaz, Muhammad Ahmad, Abdullah Tahir, Fahad Hussaini, Ahmed Bilal, Muhammad Abdullah, Muhammad Hassan, Neen Tara, and officials Muhammad Anees Khan, Muhammad Iqbal, and Shahid Sharjeel, and extended best wishes for their bright future.

The players, under the leadership of President Shakeel Anjum, appreciated the new sports-related initia-



tives undertaken by the Multan Press Club and expressed hope for continued support in the promotion of sports.

## London Media Team outstanding victory over SJAL by 39 runs in friendly Match

 **Sports Desk**

LAHORE: London Media Cricket Team got 39-run victory over Sports Journalists Association of Lahore (SJAL) in a friendly match played at the historic Lahore City Cricket Association (LCCA) Ground, highlighting sporting camaraderie and strengthening ties between media professionals from both regions.

Batting first after winning the toss, the London Media team delivered a commanding batting performance, posting a formidable total of 200 runs for the loss of just one wicket. The innings was anchored by an outstanding knock from Ghulam Ashraf, who played a fluent innings of 80 runs, showcasing elegant stroke play and excellent timing. He was well supported by Mohsin Jaffery, who contributed a solid 62 runs, helping his team establish a dominant position in the match.

Chasing a challenging target of 201 runs, the SJAL team fought valiantly but ultimately fell short, managing to score 161 runs for the loss of four wickets within the allotted overs. Murtaza led the batting effort for SJAL with a fighting 47-run innings, while Shafiq Chauhan added a useful 30 runs. Muhammad Yaqoob also made a notable contribution with 19 runs,



but the team could not maintain the required scoring momentum against disciplined bowling from the visitors.

Among the London Media bowlers, Sajid Aziz delivered a notable performance, claiming two wickets, while Azhar Abbas chipped in with one wicket, playing a key role in restricting the opposition's chase.

The friendly fixture was played in

a spirit of sportsmanship and mutual respect, reflecting the positive engagement between media communities from Pakistan and the United Kingdom. The event also provided an opportunity for journalists and media professionals to interact beyond professional responsibilities and promote goodwill through sports.

The prize distribution ceremony was

held to acknowledge the performances of players from both sides. The awards were presented by renowned journalist and analyst Sohail Warraich, former Director General of the Federal Investigation Agency Raja Riffat Mukhtar, President Lahore East Zone Bilal Muqit, Treasurer East Zone Shehzad Ali, SJAL Information Secretary Azhar Masood and the entire SJAL family.

## President confers Nishan-e-Pakistan on Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev

 **Continued from Page 1**

He also acknowledged President Mirziyoyev's personal role in bringing Pakistan and Uzbekistan closer.

President Zardari said that Pakistan and Uzbekistan are natural partners with intertwined futures and expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of bilateral relations.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working closely with Uzbekistan to further strengthen cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and heritage.

He noted that direct air links between the two countries have brought their

peoples closer and underscored the importance of regional connectivity initiatives, including the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project, while highlighting the need to address remaining challenges through collective efforts.

The president highlighted the steady growth in bilateral trade in recent years and underscored the need to realize the true economic potential of the relationship, with the shared objective of expanding trade to USD 2 billion as agreed by the two sides.

He also stressed the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts, tourism cooperation and cultural

exchanges, drawing on the rich historical and spiritual links between the two nations. President Zardari also expressed the need to extend collaboration and facilitation between the financial institutions, including banks, to support trade and investment flows.

President Shavkat Mirziyoyev said that Uzbekistan attached great importance to strengthening friendship and the strategic partnership with Pakistan.

He noted with satisfaction the steady growth in bilateral contacts at various levels, including the expansion of trade, an increase in joint ventures, and the implementation of cooperation projects in priority sectors of the economy.

He directed his concerned minister to coordinate with the Pakistani counterpart in this regard.

The Uzbek President emphasized the need to further expand practical cooperation through closer political dialogue, stronger trade, economic and investment ties, and more active business exchanges. He also invited President Asif Ali Zardari to pay an official visit to Uzbekistan.

He also said that two additional direct flights would be added between the two countries, taking the total number of weekly flights to six, to further facilitate people-to-people contacts, tourism and business exchanges.

## PM invites Uzbek firms to exploit Pakistan's trade potential

 **Continued from Page 8**

Referring to the signing of \$2 billion trade protocol, he said that Pakistan-Uzbekistan relations would now be measured by trade flows, investment projects, industrial partnerships and people-to-people exchanges.

He said both countries would form a working group to come up with a roadmap of five years to promote trade, investment portfolio, and joint collaborations in research and development, IT, and agriculture.

Highlighting his government's achievements on the economic front, he said the country had transitioned from a period of severe physical turbulence in 2023 to an improved

economic conditions with the inflation rate down from over 30% to a single digit, banking policy rate from 22.5% to 10.5%, and IT sector exports are touching \$3.8 billion exports.

Shehzad Sharif said Pakistan and Uzbekistan stood to benefit immensely from each other's strengths in key sectors.

He also appreciated the economic achievements of President Mirziyoyev's government including doubling of GDP in just 10 years, lifting 8.5 million people out of poverty and unemployment reduced by half.

The prime minister said 30 redundant textile plants in Uzbekistan could provide a win-win opportunity for investors from both sides and

expressed the hope that PIA flights to Uzbekistan would boost people-to-people contact.

In his remarks, President Mirziyoyev said that the business forum reflected the long-standing shared intentions and deep mutual understanding.

He congratulated Prime Minister Shehzad and the people of Pakistan on the remarkable economic progress with reduced inflation, single-digit interest rates, and strong recovery which he said provided excellent opportunities for deeper cooperation.

He told the gathering that Uzbekistan had around 30 high-tech textile enterprises awaiting Pakistani management and expertise to access world markets, and also expressed his country's strong interest in collaborations in leather goods.

Regarding mining cooperation, he said Uzbek relevant ministry was ready to finalize action plans and that

zero corruption, no bottlenecks, and no obstacles.

He said Uzbekistan needed Pakistan's expertise and high-quality in the pharmaceutical sector, affordable medicines and offered 10-year tax exemptions, support, and all conducive conditions.

He told the gathering that Uzbekistan had around 30 high-tech textile enterprises awaiting Pakistani management and expertise to access world markets, and also expressed his country's strong interest in collaborations in leather goods.

Later, the two leaders also witnessed the exchange of the documents of pre-signed MoUs between the business entities from both sides.

## Malik Fires Record Opening to Lead Pakistan Amateur Golf



 **Tahir Amin Makik**

LAHORE: 15th Pakistan amateur golf championship, nick faldo trials. The Pakistan amateur golf championship plus nick faldo trials commenced at the most well laid out rumanza golf course in the city of multan. everything was perfect for the participating juniors. the weather, the splendid golf course and the shining boys and girls. all participants seem to have prepared well for the occasion and came up with scores that were exemplary. the one to shine all by himself was young Saad Habib malik. on the opening day he carded a round of gross 68, four under par playing like a champion that he is, his hitting was top class and so was his overall game. good for him that he earned birdies in succession. very impressive was shamir Majid who trails the leader by one stroke. others who played steady golf were Abdul moez Khan, gross 69, mahal Khan, 72 gross Mustafa Zubair 72, zayd omer arshed 74 and Mohammed razzaullah 74. at 75 are Abdulla amer raja and hamza Waheed. amongst the girls the topper is Sara Amin Khan and the girls following her are aleesa Rashid and ramin Amin Khan. the competitive proceedings commence tomorrow.

## Greens and Whites Triumph in RCAK Challenge Cup U-17 Cricket Tournament.

 **Sports Desk**

KARACHI: Two more matches were decided in the RCAK Challenge Cup Under-17 Cricket Tournament here at various Grounds of the City.

### Scores in Brief:

RCAK Under-17 Greens defeated RCAK Under-17 Reds by 98 runs. RCAK Under-17 Greens 231/6 in 40 overs. Ahmad Shahzad 56 3x4 2x6, Aliyan Asif 53 8x4 2x6, Muhammad Hassan 24, Mahad Furqan 18, Muhammad Zafar 2/35, Muhammad Ahad Khatri 2/35.

In reply RCAK Under-17 Reds 133 allout in 27.1 overs. Muhammad Hamza 21, Abdul Rafay 18, Saad Asif Pai (rlb) 3/16, Syed Azan Ali 2/15, Abdul Wahab 2/18, Afrasayab 2/35.

In the 2nd Match RCAK U-17 Whites beat RCAK Purples by 8 Wickets. RCAK U-17 Purples 132 all-out in 33.3 overs. Samiullah 42 8x4, Muhammad Abdulla Javed 19, Muhammad Hanzala Nadeem (rlb) 4/26, Jawad Ahmed (sla) 3/16. Muhammad Saad Ali 2/26. RCAK Under-17 Whites 136/2 in 16.1 overs. Saad Murtaza 58 9x4 1x6, Muhammad Haris 34 8x4 2x6.

## Pakistan compete in 12th Asian Indoor Athletics Championship in Tianjin

ISLAMABAD: As many as 35 Asian countries, including Pakistan, are taking part in the 12th Asian Indoor Athletics Championship 2026, which gets underway on Friday in Tianjin, China.

Vice President of the Asian Athletics Federation and Organising Delegate, Major General (Rtd) Muhammad Akram Sahi, said on Thursday that all arrangements for the championship had been finalized during a meeting held ahead of the event.

He said that a total of 323 athletes from across Asia would compete in 26 men's and women's events during the three-day championship, which will continue until February 8.

Pakistan are fielding a five-member national team in the championship. The Pakistani athletes include Shajar Abbas (60 metres), Tameen Khan (60 metres), Muhammad Naeem (60 metres hurdles), Muhammad Akhtar (3000 metres) and Sohail Amer (1500 metres).

Chaudhry Asghar Ali Gill is accompanying the team as manager-cum-coach. The Asian Indoor Athletics Championship is considered a key event on the continental calendar, providing athletes an important platform to compete at the highest level of indoor athletics in Asia.

## MoU's

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and President of Uzbekistan Shavkat Mirziyoyev witnessing the MoUs exchange between Pakistan and Uzbek businesses on Friday.



Photo: Online

## PM invites Uzbek firms to exploit Pakistan's trade potential as \$3.4 bln B2B deals signed

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday invited Uzbek business firms to explore investment opportunities in Pakistan's textile, pharmaceutical, mining, agriculture, and tourism sectors, as private sector entities from both countries signed MoUs worth \$3.4 billion for B2B cooperation.

The prime minister,

addressing the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum held here along with Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is on a two-day state visit here, said that both sides had signed a protocol on Friday to achieve an "ambitious yet easily achievable" target of increasing bilateral trade to \$2 billion in five years.

At the forum attended by the ministers and businessmen from both sides, the

two leaders assured the investors to provide a conducive business environment with no room for systemic hurdles.

Both leaders welcomed the B2B deals with the Uzbek president, calling it "very much achievable" because both sides had a very good program already drafted and established.

"I am here, of course, as Prime Minister of Pakistan, but for this forum as the

CEO of Pakistan. I am just a telephone call away. My colleagues are just a telephone call away. We will remove any bottleneck or impediment on the way.

And I would like to assure you that bureaucracy and red tapism will not create any kind of hurdle in your business proposals," Prime Minister Shehbaz committed.

Recalling his participation in a similar business forum

last year in Tashkent, he said the deliberations there had led the bilateral trade to \$450 million during the last year, which was still far below the potential.

He expressed the hope that President Mirziyoyev's visit would go a long way to strengthen bilateral relations and convert them into a level of unprecedented economic cooperation.

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## Punjab police arrest 191 over anti-kite act violations

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Police have intensified action against violations of the Anti-Kite Flying Act on Friday, registering 193 cases across Lahore and other cities within 24 hours and arresting 191 suspects, a spokesperson confirmed.

Authorities also recovered 22,755 unapproved kites and 642 spinning wheels made of metal and chemical strings from the suspects.

This year, a total of 4,486 individuals involved in the illegal kite and metal-string business have been arrested, with more than 371,000 kites and 8,648 spinning wheels confiscated.



Inspector General Punjab, Rao Abdul Karim, directed all

RPOs and DPOs to take strict action against unapproved kite manufacturers and sellers.

He emphasised that Basant celebrations are permitted only in Lahore on specific days under strict conditions.

Monitoring of festivities will continue with drones and Safe City cameras.

The IG stressed that only registered vendors are allowed to sell approved kites and strings, and warned of stringent action against aerial firing, weapons display, and provocations.

"Compliance with the code of conduct is essential to make the three-day Basant festival safe for everyone," IG Punjab added.

## Court issues non-bailable arrest warrants for ex-AJK PM Tanveer Ilyas

### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A court in Islamabad on Friday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for former Azad Jammu and Kashmir prime minister Sardar Tanveer Ilyas in a case related to the alleged misuse of a diplomatic passport.

Judicial Magistrate Murid Abbas issued the warrants after Ilyas repeatedly failed to appear before the court despite multiple summons.

The court directed law enforcement agencies to arrest the former premier and present him before the court.

The Federal Investigation Agency (FIA) has registered a case against Ilyas over the



alleged misuse of official travel documents.

The magistrate adjourned further proceedings in the passport misuse case until February 23.

Meanwhile, the same court also heard a separate case involving Sardar Tanveer Ilyas and others related to an alleged physical altercation registered at Margalla police station.

During the hearing, the court sought arguments on the accused's plea for acquittal and directed lawyers from both sides to present their submissions at the next hearing.

The hearing in the assault case was adjourned until March 5.

## Multan Corps Commander holds interactive session with students, faculty in DG Khan university



Asim Tanveer

region.

Addressing the gathering, the Corps Commander said that the Two-Nation Theory is the foundation of Pakistan's national unity, stressing that "Pakistan exists, therefore we all exist."

He highlighted the success of Operation Bonyan Marsoos, stating that it was achieved with the help of Allah and the full support of the nation. Students and faculty members expressed pride in the success of the operation and appreciated the Pakistan Army's role in the ideological and national guidance of the youth.

## PHC strikes down KP Police Act amendments as unconstitutional

### Bureau Report

PESHAWAR: The Peshawar High Court (PHC) has declared the 2024 amendments to the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police Act 2017 unconstitutional and nullified them, according to a detailed judgment issued on Monday.

Justice S. M. Atiq Shah issued a 28-page written verdict on a petition challenging the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police (Amendment) Act 2024.

The court ruled that making appointments and transfers of Grade-18 and above police officers subject to the chief minister's approval was unconstitutional.

It also declared unlawful the withdrawal of powers from the inspector general of police to appoint field commanders.

The judgment said the amendments undermined the operational autonomy of the police and turned the force into a political tool, contrary to constitutional principles.

It stressed that routine administrative matters, postings and trans-

fers should remain under the IG to ensure discipline and unified command.

The court said a politically neutral and functionally autonomous police force is a constitutional requirement essential for protecting fundamental rights, ensuring fair trials and promoting equality.

It added that the chief minister's authority should be limited to policy guidance, while bypassing the IG in operational matters weakens the command structure.

The judgment noted that responsibility for law enforcement rests with the police chief, who is accountable only under the law.

The KP Assembly had passed the amendment bill on October 21, 2024, expanding the chief minister's powers and making approval mandatory for transfers of senior officers.

Following the bill's passage, Barrister Muhammad Yousaf Khan filed a petition in the PHC, naming the provincial government as a respondent. The case was heard by a bench comprising Justice Atiq Shah and Justice Ejaz Anwar.

## Pakistan, Oman reaffirm fraternal ties, eye stronger cooperation



### City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary delegation from the Sultanate of Oman called on Deputy Speaker National Assembly Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah at Parliament House, where both sides reaffirmed the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and Oman and agreed to expand cooperation in trade, investment, manpower, and parliamentary exchanges.

During the meeting, the Deputy Speaker highlighted that Pakistan and Oman enjoy close brotherly relations rooted in shared Islamic values, mutual respect, and historical ties. He emphasized that Pakistan attaches great importance to its fraternal relations with Oman and appreciates the excellent hospitality extended by the Sultanate to the Pakistani community residing there.

Syed Ghulam Mustafa Shah stated that enhanced parliamentary cooperation would further strengthen bilateral relations between the two countries. He noted that the shared interests of Pakistan and Oman play a vital role in promoting peace and stability in the region.

Speaking on the occasion, members of the Omani parliamentary delegation expressed that Pakistan is a highly respected and close partner for Oman. They acknowledged that relations between the two countries are based on strong historical, religious, and mutual trust foundations.

The delegation also appreciated the valuable contributions of the Pakistani diaspora toward the development and progress of Oman.

Both sides agreed to further strengthen the longstanding bilateral partnership between Pakistan and Oman.