



Daily The Spokesman

Japan's 'Iron Lady' Takaichi forges stunning election win

Japan's first female leader Sanae Takaichi's coalition swept to a landslide election win on Sunday, paving the way for her tax cuts that have spooked financial markets and military spending aimed at countering China. Takaichi's strong mandate could accelerate her plans to bolster Japan's defences, further angering Beijing, which has cast her as attempting to revive its militaristic past



Khawaja Asif arrives in Riyadh for defence exhibition

Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has arrived in Riyadh on the official invitation of Saudi Arabia to attend the World Defence Show, beginning on Sunday. He was received by senior Saudi officials and Ambassador of Pakistan to Saudi Arabia Ahmed Farooq. Pakistani defence companies have also showcased a range of products, including the Fatah-2 missile, drone technology, and other defence gear, which have garnered significant attention from int'l participants.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Sha'abanul Moazzam 20, Monday, February 9, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net



@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 295

Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

Security high alert

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif view of debris of the demolished Chambers of Lawyers at F-8 Football ground after the Supreme Court ultimatum, which was till 01-05-2021, as the Workers of Anti encroachments.



Photo: Online

President thanks global community for solidarity, calls for collective resolve against terrorism

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has thanked the leaders and nations of the world for standing with Pakistan in this moment of grief. He said Pakistan is humbled by the strong and sincere outpouring of support and solidarity from world leaders, governments and international organisations.

He noted that the messages of sympathy and solidarity have

brought comfort to the people of Pakistan and strength to the families who mourn. He said these messages reaffirm that the fight against terrorism and the violent ideology that drives it, is a shared global responsibility and a common struggle for all.

The President said Pakistan has long maintained that terrorism cannot be confronted by a single country in isolation. He observed that Pakistan's experience has

shown that when terrorist groups are allowed space, facilitation or impunity beyond national borders, the consequences are borne by innocent civilians all over the world.

In this context, he underlined that certain neighbouring countries have, regrettably, become partners in crime by allowing terrorist elements to operate against Pakistan from their soil while some not only finance them directly but also provide them technical and mili-

tary means. He said this is a reality that has shaped the regional developments in recent years.

President Zardari said Pakistan remains deeply grateful for the compassion and support extended to the country in this difficult hour. He said the solidarity shown by the international community strengthens Pakistan's resolve to continue working with partners for peace, stability and a decisive end to terrorism in all its forms.

Oman condemns mosque bombing in Islamabad

Agencies

MUSCAT: The Sultanate of Oman condemned the bombing that targeted a mosque in Pakistan's capital Islamabad. It offered sincere condolences and sympathy to the Government and people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan and to the families of the victims. It also wished a speedy recovery to the injured.

The Ministry reaffirmed Oman's firm stance in rejecting all forms of violence, extremism and terrorism, and stresses the paramount importance of upholding the values of tolerance and coexistence.

agenda will include discussions on the situation in Gaza, measures to promote peace and stability, and the formulation of a future roadmap to address ongoing challenges.

Pakistan's participation is being viewed as part of its broader diplomatic efforts to contribute to regional peace and help resolve the humanitarian crisis in Gaza.

Officials said Islamabad remains committed to supporting international initiatives aimed at ensuring lasting peace and stability in the region.

Pakistan, Iran Reaffirm Commitment to Economic Cooperation



Spokesman Report

KSA: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with the Minister of Economic Affairs and Finance of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Dr. Seyed Ali Madanizadeh, on the sidelines of the AlUla Conference 2026 for Emerging Market Economies.

The meeting focused on strengthening bilateral trade and economic cooperation between Pakistan and Iran.

Both Ministers reaffirmed their shared commitment, in line with the vision and directives of the top leadership of the two countries, to enhance the volume of bilateral

trade. They underscored the importance of sustained engagement, facilitation of trade, and removal of bottlenecks to achieve this objective.

During the discussion, the Iranian side highlighted several sector-specific opportunities for investment and market collaboration, aimed at deepening economic ties and generating mutually beneficial outcomes. Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb welcomed these proposals.

The Iranian Minister also extended an invitation to Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb to visit Iran, which the Finance Minister reciprocated by inviting him to visit Islamabad.

JUI will not join 'fake mandate' government, says Maulana Fazlur Rehman

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Jamaat-e-Islami Ulama-e-Islam (JUI) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman on Sunday announced that his party will not become part of the current government, which he described as possessing a "fake mandate," and will continue to function as an opposition force.

Addressing a public gathering, Maulana

Fazlur Rehman criticized the Election Commission, claiming it has become a puppet body executing pre-determined results instead of genuinely preparing election outcomes.

He said the results of the general elections held two years ago were rejected, yet the country is being governed based on that artificial mandate.

The JUI leader emphasized that his

party works to uphold the constitution and the rule of law, not for personal power. He criticized the present government, saying it was created through alliances rather than public mandate, and called for real majorities to emerge from citizens' votes.

Maulana Fazlur Rehman also welcomed newly joined party workers, asserting their inclusion would strengthen the "Caravan

of Freedom" and promote political awareness and democratic consciousness across Pakistan.

He reaffirmed that JUI's focus remains on public welfare, constitutional supremacy, and ensuring transparency and protection of the judiciary, noting that attaining power is not the party's goal, but safeguarding citizens' rights and the democratic system is.

Public has rejected PTI's wheel-jam strike, says Ata Tarar

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that people of Pakistan have rejected Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's wheel-jam strike call. In a statement on Sunday, Attaullah Tarar said, "This is the first time I've seen that the wheel-jam call has itself jammed."

He further said that people also paid

no attention towards politics of hatred and difference.

It is necessary to mention here that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) observed a province-wide wheel-jam and shutter-down strike across Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa, including the capital Peshawar, to protest alleged rigging in the February 8, 2024, general elections.

The strike produced a mixture of large-scale mobilisation in some urban

centres and limited disruption in others, with business activity continuing in many areas.

In the provincial capital, PTI workers staged protests and enforced stoppages on several major roads and highways.

Public transport services were suspended in parts of the city, although the government-run Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) service remained operational. Taxi services were also reported to be func-

tional in various areas.

Despite the strike call, commercial activity continued in several parts of Peshawar. Shops remained open in some markets, while food outlets and essential commodity stores operated in selected localities.

The Food Street at Fawara Chowk in Peshawar Cantonment was reported to be fully active, and most shops along University Road also remained open.

Kashmir Issue: 'A Past Story, Not Recent,' Declares Federal Minister Noon



Bureau Report

MIRPUR: Federal Minister and National Kashmir Committee Chairman Rana Qasim Noon addressing an emergency press conference in Mirpur Azad Kashmir reiterated his commitment that the Kashmir issue is a past story and not a recent one. Pakistan's foreign policy, national security and struggle of the Kashmiri people are a living and dynamic axis.

Chairman National Kashmir Committee Rana Qasim Noon

addressed an emergency press conference at Kashmir Press Club Mirpur.

President Press Club Syed Abid Hussain Shah, Press Club officials and others were also present. However, under the current circumstances, the civilian and military leadership of Pakistan is on the same page with full coordination on this national issue.

He said that Kashmir is and will remain part of Pakistan in all respects, and the Kashmiri people

should not forget the words of the late Syed Ali Gilani, "We are Pakistanis, Pakistan is with us".

He said that Pakistan wants the attention of the UN and the international community to once again ignore the Kashmir issue, as it is a recognized international conflict.

They emphasized that despite the existence of the right to self-determination movement in the United Nations, the Kashmiri people are not being given this fundamental right, while this right is being exercised in

many other parts of the world.

They paid tribute to the services of late Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry for the cause of Kashmir and said that the government of Pakistan has a clear commitment to the Kashmir issue.

Rana Qasim Noon expressed confidence that Kashmir will soon become part of Pakistan in accordance with UN resolutions, as the relationship between Pakistan and the Kashmiri people has a history, sacrifices and continuity. Strength cannot be weak.

29 years of distinguished service

MUZAFFARABAD: Secretary Information and IT Muhammad Rashid Hanif, Secretary Industries and Crafts Sardar Adnan Khurshid, and Director Public Relations Muhammad Bashir Mirza Director presenting a souvenir to Public Relations Raja Amjad Hussain Minhas on his retirement after 29 years of distinguished service.



Photo: Spokesman

Dog attack hospitalizes five, including four children; authorities silent

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Five Injured in Rabid Dog Attack in Hazro as Authorities Remain in Deep Slumber, No Action Taken Against Stray Dogs. At least five people, including four children, were injured in a suspected rabid dog attack in village Hameed of Hazro town, exposing the alarming failure of local authorities to curb the growing menace of stray dogs despite repeated complaints from residents.

The injured have been identified as

53-year-old Khalid Khan, 17-year-old Ameer Muavia, 10-year-old Inayat Ullah, 8-year-old Muhammad Ayan, and 4-year-old Ahmed, who sustained bite injuries when the dog went on a rampage in the locality, triggering panic among villagers.

According to official sources, the victims were initially rushed to THQ Hospital Hazro, where they were administered anti-rabies vaccination as immediate treatment. Due to the seriousness of the cases, they were later referred to Holy Family

Hospital, Rawalpindi, for further medical care. However, families of the victims complained that while anti-rabies vaccines were provided, the critical secondary treatment — rabies immunoglobulin (RIG) — was not available at the Rawalpindi hospital. Consequently, the affected families were forced to purchase the life-saving injections from private medical facilities, adding financial strain to an already traumatic situation. Voicing their frustration, residents said that six children injured by a rabid dog in village

Hameed were referred to Rawalpindi hospitals, yet the required immunoglobulin was unavailable. They questioned how long the Chhachh area would continue to remain neglected, saying the absence of timely medical support and preventive measures had put lives at risk. The incident has once again highlighted the negligence of the Municipal Committee (MC) Hazro and the district administration, which residents accuse of being in deep slumber while stray dogs roam freely in populated areas.

Entire nation is standing with the Pakistan Army like a glass wall: Sheikh Tariq Rasheed

Quratulain Asim

MULTAN: Pakistan Defense Rally organized by Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) to pay tribute to the two-year performance of the government and the high performance of the Pakistan Army is being led by Division President Sheikh Tariq Rasheed, former MPA Haji Javed Akhtar Ansari, City President of Women's Division Madam Sarwat Khan, General Secretary Fehmida Chauhan and others. On this occasion, former MNA Sheikh Tariq Rasheed and former Special Assistant to the Chief Minister of Punjab Haji Javed Akhtar Ansari were present.

Former Nazim Aftab Awan said that the soldiers of the Pakistan Army are fighting terrorism. The entire nation is standing with the Pakistan Army



like a glass wall. He said that terrorism in Balochistan Islamabad is a deep conspiracy against Islam and Pakistan. Anti-national elements want to incite sectarianism.

He added that he has vowed to uproot terrorism. Indian Prime Minister Modi is our cunning and deceitful enemy. He is resorting to cunning tactics to avenge May 10. Instead of coming forward, he is used to attacking from behind.

He added that Field Marshal Hafiz Asim We pay tribute to Munir, saying that under his leadership, the Pakistan Army is united. Trump has become a fan of such a high-level leader. Those who called for a wheel-jam strike have realized their status.

Business life is going on as usual. At the end of the rally, slogans will be raised in favor of the Pakistan Army.

Bashir Mirza assumed the charge of new slot

Bureau Report



MUZAFFARABAD: The Government of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has appointed Mirza Muhammad Bashir Jaral as head of Public Relations Department. The appointment of Mirza Bashir Jaral came into effect as a result of the retirement of former Director of Public Relations Raja Amjad Manhas.

The journalistic society and other public sections have termed his new appointment benefited greatly in largest interest and expressed hope that the new Director of Public Relations will continue to demonstrate his abilities to solve the problems of the Department and journalists as in the past increase and take measures related to the welfare of journalists. Journalists in Azad Kashmir congratulated him on his appointment.

SNGPL Continuing Vigorous Operations Against Gas: Jawad Khan Khakwani

Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Gas Task Force Action 03 meters disconnected, 55 cases checked.

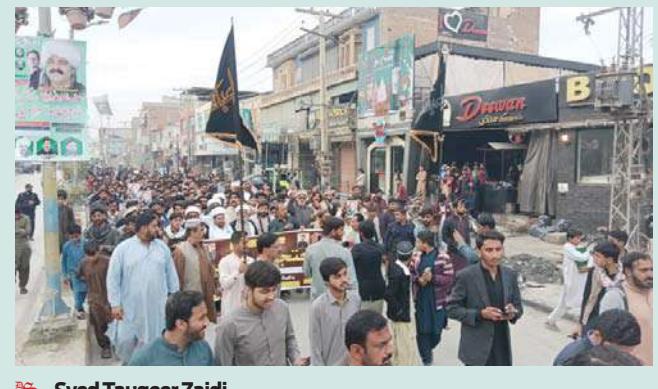
Special instructions have been issued to protect the lives and property of gas consumers.

The UFG Control Task Force of Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited, on the instructions of the Mr Jawad Khan Khakwani General Manager Sui Gas Northern Gas Pipeline Limited South Punjab is continuing vigorous operations against gas theft, illegal use and technical violations. During the recent operations, 55 places were checked in different areas of Multan, as a result of which 03 gas meters were disconnected.

According to the details, two meters that were removed by the consumer were recovered, one meter was found to be in violation of the rules due to commercial use, on which the relevant meters were disconnected.

The aim of these operations of the UFG Control Task Force is not only to eliminate gas theft but also to improve gas pressure, uninterrupted supply to consumers, and timely redressal of public complaints.

Protest rally against Islamabad suicide attack, demand justice for victims



Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Several Shia religious organizations staged a protest rally in Dera Ismail Khan on Sunday against the recent suicide attack on worshippers in Islamabad, demanding the immediate arrest and strict punishment of the terrorists and their facilitators.

The rally was organized jointly by Majlis Wahdat-e-Muslimeen (MWM), Shia Ulema Council, Imamia Students Organization, and other Shia Organizations. It was led by central leader of the Shia Ulema Council, Allama Muhammad Ramzan Tauqeer.

Addressing the gathering, speakers strongly condemned the tragic incident in Islamabad's Tralai area, stating that the government and security agencies had failed to ensure the safety and protection of citizens. They demanded the immediate arrest of those involved in the attack and called for exemplary punishment for both the perpetrators and their facilitators.

The leaders also urged the government to establish a judicial commission to conduct a transparent investigation so that the facts behind the incident could be brought before the nation.

Allama Muhammad Ramzan Tauqeer, MWM leader Tanveer Mehdi Advocate, and President of Anjuman Thalla Mutawallian Syed Athar Shah, in their speeches, termed the attack a clear sign of government incompetence. They said terrorists were operating freely even in the federal capital while the authorities appeared unable to fulfill their responsibilities.

Azad Kashmir's oldest party, Muslim Conference, gears up for elections



Bureau Report

KOTLI: The first political party of Azad Kashmir, the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, is once again dynamic on the political scene. The party faces its third major political engagement during the past month under the process of increasing popularity and organizational rehabilitation.

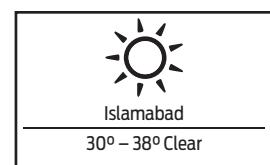
Young political leader and former candidate for Assembly Malik Rizwan Advocate from Kotli City constituency joined Muslim Conference with his colleagues. They expressed full confidence in the party leadership, especially the leadership of former Prime Minister Azad Kashmir and President Muslim Conference Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan.

Speaking at the function held on the occasion of Malik Rizwan, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan along with his colleagues welcomed the revival of the Muslim Conference.

On this occasion, Muslim Conference Central Leader Major Sardar Nasrullah Khan, Chairman Youth Wing Sardar Usman Ali Khan, Former Advisor Malik Karamat, Raja Saghir Khan Advocate, Former

Members of Kashmire Council Syed Ghulam Reza Naqvi Advocate, Syed Azhar Ali Shah President District Raulakot, Raja Yasin Qaiser Advocate, Raja Sajid Khan, Sardar Mumtaz Khan, Pahlavan Zulfiqar Janki Janjaf Khan, Sarqam Ajmal Khan, Qadri and others were also present.

Speaking on the occasion, Sadr Muslim Conference and former Azad Kashmir PM Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that Muslim Conference believes in people's strength and is ready for the upcoming elections. He said that the Muslim Conference would be dynamic with the participation and dynamic of the youth leadership. And the residents of Kashmir and the refugees should take full advantage of this situation to solve the problems of Pakistan. Muslim Conference will field its candidate from every constituency in the upcoming elections. We stand with the Jamaat-Muslim Conference.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:35 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:07 pm
Maghrib	5:45 pm
Isha	7:10 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

CMH	561111
MH	561116
MH	561116
Cantt Hospital	9270907-11
DHQ	555631-4
RGH	9290301-7
Holy Family	9290322-7
PIMS	926170-79
Polyclinic	9218300-09
Shifa International	4603666

DEPARTMENTS

CDA	921334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5707886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3

Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation

Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawalpindi	5773343

COMPLAINTS

Water Tanker Service	9204654
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9226316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

MPA
PTI Ejaz
Bukhari
(Adv)
expressed
grife over
the
martyrdom

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) member Punjab assembly from Attock Syed Ejaz Hussain Bukhari advocate expressed grief over the "martyrdom of innocent worshippers", characterizing the incident as a direct assault on humanity and a serious failure of the administration to protect its citizens.

Talking to newsmen at his residence in Attock on Sunday, he said that this cowardly and inhumane act was not only an attack on innocent civilians but also a direct assault on the country's peace, unity, and religious harmony. Targeting an Imam-bargah and a mosque, he stated, was a clear act of terrorism and one of the most brutal examples of cruelty.

He strongly condemned the repeated attacks on places of worship by the extremist group Fitna-al-Khawarij, calling them the worst form of terrorism.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Inaugurates water Plant

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Governor Punjab inaugurates water filtration plant in Fateh Jang village Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan on Monday said that the Governor House was a dignified institution dedicated to public service, where the welfare of poor and deserving people was given priority over personal interests.

Addressing a gathering at the inauguration of a water filtration plant in his native village, Dhurnal, the governor said that public trust in charitable initiatives had been restored due to transparency and accountability.

"When philanthropists are confident that their donations are reaching genuine beneficiaries in a transparent manner, they contribute generously. This is why donations worth millions of rupees



are now being received at the Governor House," he said.

He emphasised that providing basic facilities to

the public, particularly clean drinking water, was among his top priorities. The establishment of the filtration plant, he added, would ensure the supply of safe and quality drinking water to local residents and help prevent water-borne diseases.

Sardar Saleem Haider Khan clarified that donations received at the Governor House were not used for personal purposes but were spent transparently on welfare projects and for the benefit of deserving individuals.

He said that philanthropists now trusted that resources were being utilised solely for public welfare. The governor said the doors of the Governor House were open to people from all walks of life, and the welfare initiatives launched from there were aimed at supporting underprivileged segments of society.

Door closed

ISLAMABAD: A view of door closed of Nadra chowk road due to security reasons in the Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Dolphin Communication CEO Asma Butt Reaffirms Commitment to Serving Humanity

City Desk


former AJK President Masood Khan, Chairman Defence Committee National Assembly

Mian Fatah Khan, Minister for Azad Kashmir Nabeela Ayub, Member National Assembly Dr. Shaista Khan Jadun, CCO Human Rights and Focus Organization Raja Naseer, DSP Rawalpindi Shahida, Pakistan Muslim League-N leader Brigadier (R) Muhammad Khan, Sub-Inspector Maryam, social activist Raja Mustafa Azad, Social Welfare Officer Mukhtar Awan, and others, who appreciated Asma Butt's humanitarian services. Thanking the International Human Rights Movement, Asma Butt said hard work and sincerity always bear fruit and expressed hope for the continuation of such meaningful initiatives. The ceremony aimed to honor individuals and organizations for outstanding contributions to human rights and social welfare.

EXERCISE SEA GUARD 2026

Ebraiz

Pakistan Navy is conducting a national-level Exercise SEA GUARD 2026, in collaboration with key national stakeholders, from 2 to 9 February 2026 across the country's vital maritime zones, including Karachi, Ormara, Gwadar and adjoining coastal areas and at sea. The exercise is another significant milestone in Pakistan Navy's continuous efforts to enhance maritime security, inter-agency coordination and preparedness against both traditional and non-traditional threats in the maritime

domain.

Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 has been designed to evaluate and strengthen the cohesive capability of concerned organizations to safeguard Pakistan's maritime interests through a collaborative approach, bringing civil and military stakeholders together. All practical scenarios during the exercise are being centrally coordinated from the Joint Maritime Information and Coordination Centre (JMICC) of Pakistan Navy, located at Manora, Karachi.

Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 is being conducted as a national-level maritime exercise, inte-

grating a wide range of stakeholders responsible for maritime law enforcement, port security, disaster response, environmental protection and intelligence sharing. Alongside Pakistan Navy, the exercise is witnessing active participation from Pakistan Maritime Security Agency (PMSA), Pakistan Coast Guards, port authorities, law enforcement agencies, intelligence organizations and civil sector entities.

The exercise aims to evaluate and refine inter-agency coordination mechanisms, particularly the timely sharing of maritime information and synchronized responses to emerging

situations at sea. Scenarios have been crafted to mirror real-world challenges faced in Pakistan's maritime environment, ensuring that lessons learned remain directly applicable to operational realities. The central theme of Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 is maritime security, with emphasis being placed on countering threats such as illegal activities at sea, piracy, smuggling and potential terrorist threats against maritime infrastructure. Given Pakistan's reliance on secure Sea Lines of Communication (SLOCs) for trade and energy supplies, the exercise highlights the importance of constant vigi-

lance and proactive maritime domain awareness.

Recognizing the humanitar-

ian dimension of mar-

itime operations, Exercise SEA

GUARD 2026 has included

extensive Search and Re-

scue (SAR) scenarios.

These involve simulated distress situations at sea, requiring rapid coordination among naval units, maritime law enforcement agencies and civil authorities.

Such drills reinforce Pakistan's commitment to fulfilling its international obligations for the safety of life at sea. The ability to respond effectively to maritime accidents, fishing vessel emergencies or passenger craft in distress remains a vital component of national maritime domain awareness.

the importance of integrated systems and robust communication channels.

The selection of exercise area highlights its strategic and economic importance to Pakistan. Karachi remains the country's primary commercial port, while Gwadar represents a key node in regional connectivity and economic development. By conducting Exercise SEA GUARD 2026 across these critical maritime zones, Pakistan Navy and partner agencies are reinforcing their commitment to ensuring security and the uninterrupted functioning of national ports and coastal infrastructure.

Terrorists have no religion; says Syed Riaz Hussain Shah


City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Patron-in-Chief of Idara Taleemat-e-Islamia Pakistan, Allama Syed Riaz Hussain Shah, said terrorists have no religion, adding that sacrificing one's life in prayer reflects Hussainiyat, while killing innocents represents Yazidiyat. He stated that anti-Islam forces and Fitna al-Khawarij deserve no sympathy.

Condemning the terrorist attack on innocent worshippers at an Imam bargah mosque in Islamabad, he said the entire nation is deeply grieved and termed the act cowardly and inhuman. He urged the state to ensure the protection of places of worship and pledged full support to the armed forces to eliminate terrorists and their facilitators, stressing that the eradication of Fitna al-Khawarij is vital for Pakistan's peace and stability. He expressed condolences to the affected families, prayed for the martyrs' elevated ranks and the speedy recovery of the injured, and called for all those involved to be brought to justice.

Nawaabshah Official defies orders, withholds crucial railway land auction details

Bureau Report

NAWABSHAH: The orders of DS Railways Sukkur were ignored. Inspector of Works Nawaabshah did not provide the auction plan and map, citizens demanded action against the Inspector of Works Railways Nawaabshah. According to the details, Pakistan Railways Sukkur had announced the auction schedule for leasing railway land across the division for various purposes and a schedule of February 10 has been set for the auction of railway land in Nawaabshah district. Divisional Superintendent Pakistan Railways Sukkur Jamshed Alam had visited the Dour railway station four days ago, where Welfare Committee Dour leaders Muhammad Yunus Khanzada and Rizwan Bhatti drew his attention to the railways. The concerns of the citizens regarding the land auction were drawn to the attention of the DS Railways Sukkur Jamshed Alam, on which he ordered the Inspector of Works Railways Nawaabshah Agha Shabbir Pathan to give a copy of the plan and map regarding the auction of railway land to the leaders of the Welfare Committee, and also to display it at railway stations and important places across the district, so that the public can be aware of it. The citizens have demanded from the Federal Minister for Railways, Chief Executive Officer Railways Lahore and DS Railways Sukkur that action be taken against the Inspector of Works Railways Nawaabshah and an awareness campaign be launched to keep the public informed regarding the auction of railway land, and a new date for the auction be set, so that the majority of the public can participate in this auction.

Balochistan Police arrest 1,698 suspects in province-wide operations

QUETTA: The Balochistan Police registered 352 cases and arrested 1,698 suspects during special operations against criminal elements, drug dealers, fugitives, and individuals involved in serious crimes across the province.

According to police spokesperson, acting on the instructions of IG Police Balochistan Muhammad Tahir Khan, the force carried out targeted actions against drug peddlers, vehicle theft, mobile phone snatching, banditry, and other crimes. They seized 6 stolen vehicles, 67 motorcycles, 24 mobile phones, 35 tolas of gold, millions of rupees, 135 pistols, 19 revolvers, 20 Kalashnikovs, 1329 rounds, 114 magazines, thousands of litres of petrol and diesel, and rescued 6 hostages.

During the campaign, the police registered 148 cases and arrested 147 accused and seized 135 pistols, 19 revolvers, 20 Kalashnikovs, 1329 rounds, and 114 magazines from their possession.

While 204 cases were registered against drug peddlers and 213 accused were detained and 2799.75 kg of hashish, 2442.536 kg of ice shisha, 573 bottles of alcohol, 129 beers, 84 grams of heroin, 10 kg of cannabis, and 1687.061 kg of opium. In addition, 6 stolen vehicles, 67 motorcycles were recovered, 155 declared, 342 absconding suspects, while 841 suspects were detained for various crimes and 6 hostages were rescued.

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

Maritime heritage conservation key to education

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said maritime heritage is a national asset vital to cultural identity, education and sustainable economic growth, emphasizing the need to expand the blue economy while addressing climate risks.

Junaid Anwar Chaudhry reiterated this commitment in a meeting with Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi where they reviewed existing initiatives and discussed a framework for sustained inter-ministerial collaboration to promote the maritime heritage.

"Talks focused on aligning policy, research and conservation efforts to ensure maritime heritage is documented, protected from degradation and integrated into broader national development strategies," Junaid Chaudhry added.

He noted Pakistan's coastline over 1,000 kilometres along the Arabian Sea has, for centuries, linked South Asia with the wider Indian Ocean world. Historic ports, navigational routes, shipwrecks, lighthouses and fishing settlements testify to a long maritime tradition that remains under-documented and increasingly vulnerable.

"Our maritime heritage is not only a record of our past but a strategic asset for the future," Junaid Chaudhry said, noting that preservation could support education, tourism and the blue economy while strengthening national identity. "Development and preservation are not mutually exclusive. With careful planning and cooperation, we can protect our heritage while unlocking the economic potential of our seas."

Junaid Chaudhry said our ports and sea routes had been central to regional trade and cultural exchange, leaving behind both tangible assets such as historic ports and underwater archaeological sites and intangible heritage in the form of traditional fishing practices and coastal community knowledge. Protecting these assets, he added, required a "whole-of-government approach".

Coastal erosion, climate change, unregulated development and illegal salvaging pose growing threats to heritage sites, particularly underwater cultural assets, he said. "No single organization can address these challenges alone. Inter-ministerial coordination is essential to ensure that conservation goes hand in hand with sustainable economic activity."

National Heritage and Culture Minister Aurangzeb Khichi echoed the call for joint action, stressing the role of cultural institutions, museums and research bodies in documenting and interpreting maritime history. He said his ministry would work closely with maritime authorities to map heritage sites along the coast, support archaeological surveys and promote public awareness through exhibitions, curricula and community engagement.

"Maritime heritage is an integral part of Pakistan's cultural mosaic," Minister Khichi said. "From ancient trade links to living traditions of coastal communities, this heritage must be preserved for future generations. Conservation efforts must be grounded in research, respect local communities and meet international standards."

Development, Kashmir, and the Question of Consent: A Settler Colonial Agenda after 2019

It is widely believed in policy circles that if economic incentives are provided to the people in conflict regions, then it becomes very unlikely for them to turn back to violence. This is, however, a very complex political process, because short-term economic interventions to curb the deep-rooted political unrest may simply "paper over the cracks". In the absence of certain political and context-specific analysis, these incentives can reinforce conflicts. This article will analyse how administrative re-structuring after 2019, under the guise of development, is actually a "settler colonial project" to control and remove Kashmir's autonomy.

To seriously examine this colonial logic, one must begin with August 2019, when India deployed an additional 35,000 troops in the region, suspended civil mobility and revoked Articles 370 and 35 A of its constitution. This resulted in the seizure of Jammu and Kashmir's statehood and special autonomous status; the region was demarcated into two union territories, Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh, essentially putting the region under the direct control of New Delhi. Since 1953, Article 370 had been reduced to an "empty husk" through a series of legislations, but this act formally ended its very symbolic existence. Article 35A, however, vested Kashmir's legislative assembly with sole authority to define "permanent residents". Providing practical limitations to any change in

land ownership and residency. Immediately after this constitutional change, an indefinite curfew was implemented, followed by a complete communication blackout. Members of civil society, academics, and political leaders across the region were held under preventive detention laws such as the Public Safety Act. Some were still held captive even after courts ordered their release. Kashmir faced severe internet outages even when it was essential during Covid-19; in February 2021, the restoration took place in phases making the region to last for 18 months without internet and phone communication.

International media also showed concern over the situation. Al Jazeera described it as the "darkest day in the history of Jammu and Kashmir", Bloomberg looked at it as "A Shocking Decision", CNN termed it as a "Big historical blunder", and TRT was also concerned about the illegal removal of the J&K's special status, while the Los Angeles Times highlighted this as the loss of Kashmir's autonomy. These concerns were not limited to the regional politics; they were focused on civil liberties and the long-term risks involved in using force to govern a disputed region. Amnesty International and the United

Nations also showed concern that these extended restrictions could worsen the human rights situation. They have documented use of force, arbitrary detentions, and provision of legal immunity to the military personnel in Indian administered Kashmir.

India stages this act as a necessary measure. The government said that the change in special status was necessary to curb corruption, violence, and underdevelopment, and a tight central control would remove such problems and help bring peace and stability in the region.

However, this argument is opposite to the evidences. The Indian government later announced a new domicile law, which allows citizens from outside the Kashmir to acquire domicile status and lay claim to the land and government jobs in the

region. These developments signal the arrival of settler colonialism to marginalize the majority Muslim population in Indian administered Kashmir.

Colonial powers justified such domination as a civilizing mission, arguing that progress needs authority. Development plays a similar role in Jammu and Kashmir today. Political rights are compared with the economic incentives, believing that building roads and infrastructure can replace respect and

representation. Similarly, policy research found that in a conflict zone, if economic incentives are decoupled from meaningful political engagement than they are unlikely to address the root cause of the disputes. The same development approach can be seen in Northern Ireland before the Good Friday agreement and in Palestine today.

However, the legal basis of the dispute did not change. In 1948 United Nations Security Council established a UN commission for India and Pakistan, adopting Resolution 47, which calls for a plebiscite in which the Kashmiri people could determine their own future. These resolutions have not been withdrawn, nor have any other settlements replaced them.

Post 2019 governance model portrays that this development is less of a political process and more of an administrative exercise. For instance, Tourism campaigns, infrastructure development are portrayed as the indicators of success. Yet, the political mobilization remain constraint, public life is shaped through the detention laws. Development in any way without consent is not a solution at all. Peace built on surveillance is temporary. Sustainable stability of Kashmir is dependent on accountability, political engagement, and the respect of the people whose future is at stake.

The writer is Research Intern at Center for International Strategic Studies, AJK.

Analysis

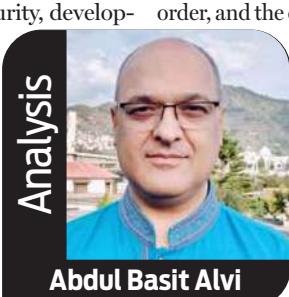
Muhammad Faiz ur Rehman



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

BLA, Herof 2 and the Limits of Political Negotiation in National Integration

The intricate and deeply entrenched phenomenon of the Balochistan Liberation Army, as it has manifested and evolved within the geopolitical and socio-historical tapestry of Pakistan, represents not merely a transient security concern but a profound, multifaceted, and persistently escalating challenge that strikes at the very heart of the state's internal cohesion, its monopoly on the legitimate use of force, and its capacity to govern its territorial expanse in a manner that ensures security, development, and the equitable application of constitutional rights for all its citizenry. This organization, through a deliberate and calculated trajectory of actions and ideological proclamations spanning numerous years, has firmly established itself as one of the most severe and intractable internal security dilemmas confronting the Pakistani state, a dilemma uniquely concentrated within the vast, resource-endowed, strategically pivotal, and historically nuanced province of Balochistan, a region whose narrative is interwoven with threads of perceived neglect, complex ethnic identity, and a long-standing, often turbulent, relationship with the federal center. Its activities, which have grown in sophistication, coordination, and sheer destructive potential over time, have irrefutably demonstrated an organizational capacity and a strategic willingness to inflict large-scale, indiscriminate violence, to deliberately destabilize the ordinary rhythms of civilian life, and to mount a direct, sustained, and overt challenge to the authority and writ of the state through relentless militant campaigns



Abdul Basit Alvi

that explicitly and categorically reject any form of recognizable, conventional political engagement or discourse conducted within the established frameworks of the constitutional order. Operating proscribed as a terrorist organization under Pakistani law and recognized as such by several international jurisdictions, the BLA has repeatedly and systematically targeted a broad spectrum of entities and individuals, encompassing innocent civilians going about their daily lives, members of the security forces tasked with maintaining order, and the critical infrastructure that forms

the backbone of economic activity and state functionality, including but not limited to pipelines transporting natural gas, electricity grids, transport and communication networks, and various development projects initiated with the aim of fostering economic growth and regional integration. Its operational toolkit has consistently featured, as central and signature elements, the deployment of suicide bombings—a tactic designed to maximize psychological terror and demonstrate fatalistic commitment—and complex, coordinated armed assaults on hardened targets, methodologies that collectively place it firmly outside the realm of legitimate political dissent or peaceful protest and squarely within the category of violent, ideologically-driven extremism that modern nation-states, in accordance with both their domestic legal obligations and their fundamental responsibility to protect their populations, are compelled to confront through robust, integrated security and law-enforcement mechanisms, albeit ideally within a broader framework addressing

underlying socio-economic grievances.

The events that transpired in the final days of January 2026 crystallized and amplified this longstanding pattern of violence into a moment of particularly stark and horrifying escalation, serving as a grim benchmark in the chronicle of the conflict. On the date of 31 January, the BLA orchestrated and executed a meticulously planned series of coordinated attacks dispersed across multiple districts within Balochistan, a campaign that synergistically combined direct armed assaults with the devastating impact of suicide bombings, with these dual-pronged offensives aimed principally at security installations, local police stations, a high-security prison facility, and, tellingly, adjacent civilian areas, thereby blurring any notional line between military and non-combatant targets and intentionally amplifying the climate of fear. The sheer scale, the precise synchronization across considerable geographical distances, and the ambitious scope of these simultaneous strikes underscored in the most unambiguous terms both the group's strategic intent to generate maximum possible disruption, chaos, and symbolic defiance of state authority, and its continued, indeed deepened, reliance on terror tactics as its primary currency of influence, rather than on selective or symbolic acts of resistance that might retain some arguable political character. In the immediate and chaotic aftermath of these assaults, Pakistani security forces launched extensive and sustained counter-operations, engaging in intense firefights and clearance missions that extended well into the following day, 1 February, as they sought to neutralize active threats, secure affected population centers, and restore a semblance of order. Official accounts released in the subsequent days provided

QR-Coded Skyline: Punjab's Bold Shift from Prohibition to Regulation

Saba Gul Aasifzai

The cultural charm of kite flying cannot obscure its mounting toll in lives lost and injuries sustained, a hazard made worse by legislative stagnation in several provinces and a high-stakes shift toward regulation in Punjab. Under the wide expanse of a Pakistani spring sky, the horizon becomes a playground of color. From every rooftop, the rhythmic cheers of children and the deep-rooted echoes of Basant tradition unite, turning a simple afternoon into a vivid celebration of the nation's spirit. Yet, beneath this idyllic image lies a sobering reality. For many families, the season's joy has been irrevocably marred by tragedy. This is not merely an unfortunate by-product of festivity; it is a systemic public safety hazard that requires modern, harmonized legal solutions.

The human cost remains chillingly specific. Reports of slashed throats and fatal falls continue to surface, claiming the lives of children and commuters alike. While administrations in cities like Islamabad have termed kite flying a deadly sport, such warnings remain largely symbolic without a cohesive legal framework. Administrative appeals are easily rendered toothless in practice when they lack the weight of enforceable, province-wide legislation.

According to a 2025 forensic study published in PubMed, titled "Deadly Threats in the Sky," these life-threatening incidents are remarkably concentrated in South Asia. The report highlights that the epidemiological burden is uniquely high in India and Pakistan due to the transition from cotton to synthetic and metallic strings. This trend proves that while

many critics are not yet ready to appreciate the Punjab model, with some even preferring to distance themselves from the culture entirely due to its associated risks, the festival itself is not the problem. Whether Punjab's ambitious QR-coded regulations will succeed remains to be seen this season; however, established international models offer a clear proof of concept. Cities like Dubai, Toronto, and Sydney demonstrate that Basant can be held without casualties. At locations like Bondi Beach, Jumeirah Beach, and Woodbine Beach Park, the event is managed through clear regulations, such as using designated open spaces and strictly banning dangerous, glass-coated strings. By focusing on the event as a public gathering, these cities allow thousands to fly kites safely and avoid the injuries seen in unregulated settings.

Kite flying, in its essence, is a harmless expression of heritage. The culprit is not the tradition, but hazardous materials and the absence of a regulated environment. Punjab's 2025 framework is a necessary starting point, but its success hinges on implementation. It demands rigorous market inspections to ensure banned strings do not re-enter circulation.

The colors of our sky should remain a cause for delight, not mourning. As Punjab prepares to test its new regulatory waters this February, the rest of the country must not succumb to seasonal amnesia. A harmonized national response is required to ensure that a child's hobby does not become a commuter's death sentence. The time to fix these gaps is not during the height of the festival, but in the months between, when lasting, life-saving change can actually be codified.

The writer is a legal and policy professional with experience in humanitarian protection

US diplomat Natalie Baker dons yellow at Basant festivities

Bureau Report

LAHORE: US Charge d'Affaires Natalie Baker took part in the festivities and arrived at the venue at the historic Delhi Gate, wearing a yellow outfit in keeping with the spirit of Basant.

She was received by Punjab Information Minister Azma Bokhari, while Senior Provincial Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb and Provincial Minister Sohaib Bharath were also present.

Members of the US diplomatic mission, including Deputy Assistant Secretary John Mark, Consul General Stetson Sanders, Sadaq Saad and other officers, attended the celebrations.

The visiting delegation was treated to traditional Lahori cuisine.

Speaking on the occasion, Natalie Baker thanked the Punjab government for the arrangements made for the Basant celebrations.

Prominent figures from Pakistan's entertainment industry also arrived in Lahore from Karachi and abroad to celebrate the occasion.

Actors Yasin Hussain, Mikaal Zulfiqar, Adeel, Mohib Mirza, Juggun Kazim, Ali Zargoon, Faryal Khan,



Gohar Rasheed, and Aamna joined the festivities in Lahore.

Several artists praised the revival of the Basant festival and expressed

admiration for Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz.

Actors Adeel and Aamna described themselves as fans of the Punjab chief

minister, with Adeel crediting Maryam Nawaz for the return of Basant and claiming the festival generated an estimated Rs350 million in revenue.



Mikaal Zulfiqar said Lahore had "woken up once again in its beautiful colours," while Yasin Hussain thanked Information Minister Azma Bokhari for organising the event, calling Lahore "truly the city of lively-hearted people."

Marriyum Aurangzeb introduced the delegation to traditional kite flying and briefed them on the decorations and arrangements made for Basant.

The US delegation praised Lahore's food, culture, heritage, and hospitality.

Marriyum Aurangzeb said cultural activities were an effective means of

bringing nations closer together and that Pakistan conveyed messages of friendship and peace through its culture.

She added that festivals like Basant highlight Pakistan's positive and peaceful identity.

She said informal interactions during such events help build mutual trust and strengthen bilateral relations, adding that Pakistan remains connected to the world through its culture, hospitality, and message of peace.

AJK PM Honors Afzal Guru on 13th Death Anniversary, Calls Him Hero of Kashmiri Resistance

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has paid eulogizing tributes to Shaheed Muhammed Afzal Guru on his 13th martyrdom anniversary.

In his special message, Prime Minister described Shaheed Guru as a hero of the Kashmiri nation and a symbol of resistance against India. "His martyrdom has given a new direction to the Freedom movement besides strengthening the Kashmiri people's resolve," he noted.

Criticising India's biased judicial system, he stated that India exposed



its so-called democracy and claims of justice by executing an innocent

Kashmiri youth under a fabricated case and biased judicial proceedings. Reiterating the Kashmiris' resolve to uphold the martyrs' mission, prime minister Rathore said that the Kashmiri nation would never forget the sacrifices of its martyrs. He said the struggle for the right to self-determination would continue until its logical conclusion.

The AJK premier urged the international community to take notice of Indian brutalities in occupied Jammu and Kashmir, and to play an effective role in ensuring the Kashmiri people achieve their birth right guaranteed to them under multiple UN resolutions.

Basant Bahar: Record Entry of 900,000 Vehicles into Lahore Recorded in 03 Days

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif chaired a special video link meeting, in which Senior Minister Marriyum Aurangzeb presented a 02-day report on Basant Festival. Home Secretary Ahmed Jawad Qazi, Commissioner Lahore, and officials from Health, PHA, Police, and Security also gave detailed briefings. She expressed satisfaction over arrangements and security measures to ensure safe celebration of Basant. She said that today is the last day of Basant festival; and kite flying will be stopped at night. She added that the ban on kite flying will remain in place after conclusion of the 03-day Basant Festival. She appreciated the cooperation of citizens of Lahore during Basant Festival, and appealed to them to continue following the prescribed SOPs/rules and regulations for kite flying even on the last day of Basant festival today.

Chief Minister Punjab noted that nearly 1.4 million passengers traveled on Orange Line, Metro Bus, Feeder Buses, Electrobuses, and other government buses over two days, setting a new record. Authorities concerned briefed her that 600,000 passengers travelled for free on Orange Line Metro Train in two days, including 299,000 on Friday and 305,000 on Saturday; 278,000 passengers travelled on Metro Bus, including 143,000 on Friday and 135,000 on Saturday; 357,000 passengers travelled on Speedo Feeder Buses, including 174,000 on Friday, and 182,000 on Saturday; 30,000 passengers travelled on Electrobus Feeder Routes, including 15,000 on Friday and Saturday each; 60,000 passengers travelled on buses under Regional Transport Authority, including 30,000 on Friday and Saturday each; while 52,000 passengers travelled on Green Electric Buses, including 25,000 on Friday and 27,000 on Saturday.

Pakistani Exhibitors Shine at Sichuan's New Year Shopping Festival

News Desk

BEIJING: The 29th China (Sichuan) New Year Shopping Festival, one of the nation's premier annual trade and cultural events, is currently in full swing in Chengdu from January 30 to February 11, with a parallel session taking place in Chongqing.

This year's festival features an expansive 50,000-square-meter main exhibition area in Chengdu, attracting over a thousand enterprises from 36 countries and regions, as well as nearly 30 Chinese provinces, showcasing more than 100,000 varieties of high-quality New Year goods.

Among the diverse international participants, Pakistan is represented by eight companies operating across 12 exhibition booths. They are showcasing a wide range of authentic Pakistani products including furs and leather goods, handicrafts and textiles to offer Chinese consumers a taste of Pakistani craftsmanship and cultural heritage, CEN reported.

Tanvir A. Bhatti, Consul General of Pakistan in Chengdu, attended the tour ceremony of the imported goods pavilion on February 4. During his visit, he highlighted the significance of Pakistan's participation.

Revival of Basant Reflects CM Vision to Reconnect Youth with Culture: Ramesh Aroora

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Minister for Minorities Affairs Ramesh Aroora stated that the vision of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif is to reconnect the younger generation with Punjab's rich culture and traditions, adding that the revival of Basant reflects the government's commitment to cultural awareness, positivity, and harmony.

He said that cultural festivals and the restoration of heritage sites are being promoted in a planned and dignified manner so that the youth, who were deprived of celebrating such traditions for many years, can rediscover their cultural identity.

He was addressing a 20-member Sikh delegation from the UK and USA during their visit to Poonch



House and the Bhagat Singh Gallery. The delegation was warmly welcomed by Secretary Tourism Socrat Aman Rana, Managing Director TDCP

Asim Raza, and Consultant Archaeology Maqsood Ahmed.

On the occasion, Consultant Archaeology Maqsood Ahmed briefed the delegation about the historical significance of Poonch House and the establishment of the Bhagat Singh Gallery. Both the visiting delegation and Minister Ramesh Aroora praised the efforts of former Secretary Tourism Dr. Ehsan Bhutta for his key role in the revival of the Poonch House and Bhagat Singh Gallery.

The visiting Sikh delegation also appreciated the initiatives taken by the Tourism and Industries Departments and thanked the Punjab Government for promoting cultural harmony, heritage preservation, and religious tourism.

A Sustainable Maritime Hegemony: Structural, Political, and Technological Barriers

A major part of trade and transport of the World's energy passes through the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). This region has become one of the most important maritime regions of the Twenty-First century. There is a very less opportunity to become hegemon in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR), despite the type of deployments of naval equipment and conflicting strategic narratives, because the structural, political, and technological realities are producing such barriers that can minimize the hegemonic ambitions, no matter how strong the aspiring actor is.

"Strategic environment of the Indian Ocean Region is shaped by some structural, political, and technological barriers that make impossible to get the status of a sustainable maritime hegemon for any single state."

Resistance against being hegemon is obvious through geography. The delicate choke-

points like, the Strait of Hormuz, the Bab-al-Mandab, and the Strait of Malacca, block the vast and fragmented Indian Ocean intermittently. It is impossible to do everything for any single power except to get some degree of overreach. The permanent hegemony is costly and unstable for any power, because efforts to strengthen power in the maritime zone become cause of competition for others. Therefore, the centralized maritime authority is limited naturally due to the physical features of the region.

Growing agency of the middle as well as the coastal states is another important barrier. Nations like, Pakistan, Iran, Indonesia, the Gulf States, and the East African countries are no longer even the observers in regional relations but also, they aggressively oppose the prominent alignments by imposing their hegemonic techniques and broadening their alliances.

Their strategic independence is a barrier for the development of hierarchical maritime system

and makes the goals of the major powers more complicated. Local resistance can also weaken the hegemonic power, even if it is mild.

Center of these barriers is the changing multi-polar nature of the region. The IOR is the home of the major as well as the middle-powers at a time, in contrast to the maritime dominance of previous eras. United States of America, China, India, European Union, and the Middle Eastern Countries use its seas. The competition of power has changed its strategic environment entirely.

Attempts to achieve dominance in the multi-polar systems are being succeeded rarely. Multi-polar systems lead the countries towards counterbalancing and informal alliances. In result of this, the influence in the Indian Ocean Region is being increased

rather than imposed. Limits are also imposed by some normative and legal frame of works, that can be another type of barriers. The UNCLOS promotes concepts of collective

limits are also imposed by some normative and legal frame of works, that can be another type of barriers. The UNCLOS promotes concepts of collective

further created imbalance. There are many examples of advanced maritime capabilities like, the precision-guided missiles, unmanned systems, cyber tools, and A2/AD technology, which

are not safe for the powerful navies. To deny is becoming easier than to control because, small powers can impose heavy costs on major powers. The financial and strategic costs to maintain hegemony have been increased dramatically because; the technological barrier is comparatively less for resistance.

Another level of barrier has been appeared due to a reason of economic interdependence. A large part of the global trade depends on the Indian Ocean, and excessive militarization is a threat to the flow of trade, stability of the markets, and energy insurance. Supply chains

become unstable. Insurance premiums increase. Economic stakeholders put pressure on business, which prioritize stability over conflict. A clear hegemonic attitude in such an environment becomes a cause of economic backlash, which harms to the strategic interests.

Finally, it is impossible to ignore the solution. Long term political stability, economic non-assertiveness, and public support are necessary for sustainable maritime hegemony, but to be remained as a permanent hegemon is difficult. Moreover, authority must be considered as a legitimate in these modern geopolitics. Stories matter. When regional actors consider the power as exclusive or self-serving, then resistance increases and trust is undermined. When it is considered collectively, then these actions point out us towards a clear-cut conclusion; the conditions like, denial, dispersion, and decentralization, which are not incompatible naturally with the naval

Analysis

Awais Akmal

Analysis

DR. Marriyam Siddique

marine governance, equal sovereignty, and freedom of navigation. These standards impress the expectations and legitimacy, although these are not executed strictly. Self-proclaimed hegemons are delicate politically but costly diplomatically because, the unilateral claims of regional hegemony are against the international law. So, in absence of regional consent, hegemony can be seen as coercive.

Technological proliferation has

supremacy, will determine the future of the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Long-term influence in this region is dependent on cooperation, modernization, and collective security, rather than unilateral control, even if the hostilities will be inevitably. Disclaimer: Views expressed are original and personal by writers in this section are their own and do not necessarily reflect Daily The Spokesman' point of view

Awais Akmal is a Research Intern at Maritime Centre of Excellence, Pakistan Navy War College Lahore, holding MPhil in Political Science from Pakistan. He can be reached at akmal.pmccl@gmail.com or/ and awaisakmal80@gmail.com

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

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

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,947.67	+1,038.95
Percentage	Time

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
54,253.68	+435.64
Percentage	Time

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-Uzbekistan Stress Need to Boost Leather Trade



RAWALPINDI: Chairman of the Royal Leather Group of Industries, Malik Azam, met with the Chairman of the Leather Industry Association of Uzbekistan, Azcharmanov, to discuss matters of mutual interest. During the meeting, both sides agreed on the urgent need to promote trade between the two countries, particularly in the leather sector.

They noted that the leather industry offers immense investment opportunities and can be developed further by providing an investor-friendly environment. Malik Azam said that thousands of people depend on the leather industry for their livelihood and that expanding this sector could significantly help reduce unemployment. He also stressed the importance of exchanging investment delegations between Pakistan and Uzbekistan to benefit from each other's experiences.

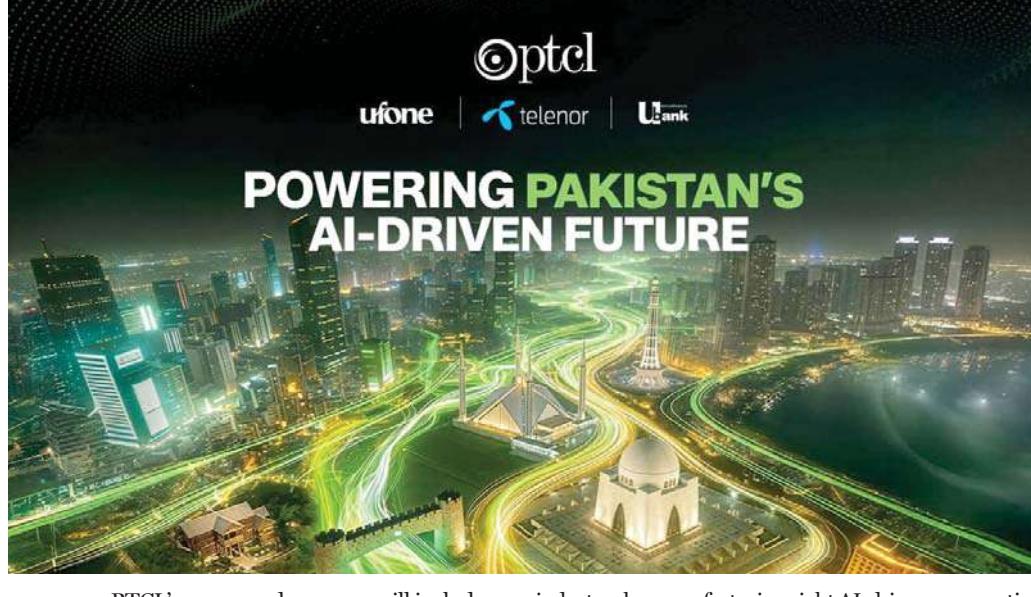
Commerce Desk

PTCL to Showcase Industry First AI-Driven Use Cases at Indus AI Week 2026

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL) will participate in Indus AI Week 2026, Pakistan's national platform for artificial intelligence, contributing industry perspective and practical AI applications to support the country's evolving AI agenda.

At the event, PTCL will demonstrate its evolution from a telecom services provider to an AI-enabled tech company, supported by e&g's global innovation capabilities, enabling responsible, scalable, and locally relevant AI adoption across Pakistan's digital ecosystem. PTCL is in the process of actively building Pakistan's latest AI infrastructure and investing in high-performance GPU capabilities to strengthen AI stacks and support advanced computing, data processing, and next-generation AI workloads.



PTCL's on-ground presence will include an industry showcase featuring eight AI-driven use

cases, comprising four powered by e&g, three PTCL Business Solutions, and one accessibility-focused AI use case by ConnectHear, highlighting real-world application of AI across operational, enterprise, and inclusive digital environments.

As part of the AI Summit, Hatem Bamatraf, President and CEO, PTCL & Ufone, will deliver a keynote address focused on translating AI ambition into national impact and the role of industry in supporting Pakistan's long-term digital and economic progress. He will be joined by Mouteih Chaghil, Chief Cloud Officer, e&g Enterprise, who will participate in a panel discussion.

PTCL's participation reflects its continued commitment to supporting the Government of Pakistan and the broader AI ecosystem by strengthening digital foundations, enabling adoption at scale, and contributing to long-term national priorities.

The silence

ISLAMABAD: A view of deserted a metro bus station at Jinnah Avenue due to metro bus service closed in twin cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

World going through swiftly a massive energy and technology shift

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Chief Executive Officer Pakistan Furniture Council Mian Kashif Ashfaq Sunday said the world is going through swiftly a massive energy and technology shift.

Speaking here today to a board of directors meeting, he said from electric cars to renewable grids, the modern economy now depends on minerals. He said Pakistan, vast and largely untapped reserves, can play a real part in reshaping the global balance as Pakistan's reserves exceeded \$6 trillion in value.

He said growing interests from US policymakers and investors shows good indication. He said what Pakistan and the US need now is a framework built on sustainable, inclusion and shared prosperity that ensures value is created within Pakistan.

He said beyond corporate responsibility, the government has an equally important

role in making sure this opportunity turns into a long term progress.

For the US, Pakistan represents a credible partner in securing critical minerals. For Pakistan, it's a chance to unlock economic potential while protecting sover-

ignty and community rights. Both countries now have the opportunity to move past old habits and co-write a new story — one rooted in mutual respect, shared prosperity, and forward-looking growth, he concluded.



Beyond Minerals: Successful Economies Built on Investing in People, urges Malik

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: SAARC Chamber of Commerce and Industry former President Iftikhar Ali Malik Sunday said investing in human capital, policy continuity, restoring credibility, rebuilding state-private sector trust and modernising public administration are prerequisites for sustained, inclusive and resilient economic growth.

In a statement here today he said successful economies of Japan, South Korea, China, India and Bangladesh have been built on strong partnerships between the state and private enterprise while in

Bangladesh, civil society has also played a constructive role. He said countries that prospered in recent decades are not those with abundant minerals or vast territory, but those that invested early and consistently in people: education, skills and the capacity to innovate.

He said a properly skilled workforce plays a decisive role in attracting domestic

and foreign investment and companies only commit capital if they're confident it will be productively employed.

Iftikhar Ali Malik said lack of continuity has had heavy costs. Local and foreign investors are unsure of our long-term direction. Frequent changes in government, political instability and polarisation have forced administrations into survival mode. Rationalising mandates, eliminating overlaps, merging or closing redundant agencies and modernising rules are essential steps towards a functional state apparatus suited to today's challenges, he concluded.



Uzbekistan President's Visit Poised to Unlock Deeper Pakistan-Uzbek Economic Ties

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Convener Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI) Regional Committee on Food Shahid Imran Sunday said that the visit of the President of Uzbekistan to Pakistan will significantly deepen bilateral cooperation across multiple domains of the economy.

In a statement here today he said that both countries enjoy strong historical, cultural and religious ties, which provide a solid foundation for expanding trade, investment and industrial collaboration. He said food and agriculture sectors hold immense potential for joint

ventures, technology transfer and value-added processing to cater to regional and global markets. He added that enhanced connectivity, including road, rail and air links, will facilitate smoother trade flows and reduce logistic costs. He said business-to-business engagements, MoUs and institutional linkages during the visit will open new avenues for exporters, particularly in halal food, grains, fruits and processed items. Sustained political will and private sector involvement can transform Pakistan-Uzbekistan economic relations into a long-term strategic partnership beneficial for both countries, he concluded.

Federal Tax Ombudsman Official urges wetland protection as climate imperative

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Coordinator to Federal Tax Ombudsman Saif Ur Rehman Sunday said protecting wetlands in Pakistan is a practical defence against climate breakdown, economic insecurity and ecological collapse.

Speaking here today at a seminar on "World Wetlands Day" he said government should strengthen enforcement against encroachment, ensure environmental impact assessments are credible and transparent, and integrate wetland conservation into provincial land-use planning. Equally vital is restoring environmental flows to the Indus

Delta so that mangroves can survive in the long term. He said country like Pakistan repeatedly battered by catastrophic floods, investing in wetland restoration should be central to disaster management planning. Instead, wetlands are often treated as wasteland — convenient sites for dumping, construction or speculative development, he added.

He said beyond the coast, Pakistan's wetlands are under mounting stress. Urban encroachment, industrial effluent, solid waste dumping and ill-planned infrastructure projects have degraded lakes such as Manchar and Haleji.

Chairman Pakistan Cricket Board Mohsin Naqvi meets Bangladesh Cricket Board President Aminul Islam in Lahore



Sports Desk

Cricket Board President Aminul Islam.

On arrival at Gaddafi Stadium, PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi welcomed Bangladesh Cricket Board President

Aminul Islam discussed the recent ongoing crisis in the meeting.

Bangladesh Cricket Board President Aminul Islam thanked Pakistan

for its support. PSL Chief Executive Officer Salman Naseer and Advisor to Chairman PCB Amir Mir were also present on the occasion.

First-Ever District Marathon Concludes Successfully Under DC's Supervision

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: The first-ever marathon in the history of Toba Tek Singh district concluded successfully on Sunday amid enthusiastic public participation, exemplary arrangements and a festive atmosphere.

Thousands of athletes along with a large number of citizens, took part in the historic event, turning it into a strong symbol of public engagement and the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. Athletes from across Pakistan, including Azad Jammu and Kashmir, participated in the marathon, highlighting its national significance.

The marathon was held under the direct supervision of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela, while the district administration ensured comprehensive arrangements, including security, traffic management, rescue services and medical facilities. Special emphasis was placed on the safety of athletes and the convenience of the public throughout the event.

A total of 6,206 athletes registered for the marathon. According to details, 4,281 athletes competed in the 5-kilometre race, 1,153 under-13 athletes participated in the 2.5-kilometre category, while 722 athletes took part in the 10-kilometre race. The deputy commissioner formally inaugurated all races, which were completed smoothly according to the designated routes and schedules.

Large crowds, including families, youth, senior citizens and sports enthusiasts, gathered at various points along



the routes to cheer the participants. The vibrant public response added to the festive spirit of the event and reinforced the message of adopting a healthy and active lifestyle.

The concluding ceremony was held at the sub-campus of the University of Agriculture, where medals, trophies, cash prizes and other awards were distributed among outstanding performers.

Senior officials, including ADCR Waqar Akbar Cheema, ADCG Zeeshan Labb

Masih, Assistant Commissioners Munawar Hussain Kamla Sial and Sadaf Irshad, Chief Officer District Council Kashif Mahmood, Chief Officer Education, District Information Officer Shahbaz Ansari, District Sports Officer (DSO) Chaudhary Muhammad Jamil and heads of various departments were also present.

Addressing the ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela congratulated all administrative departments,

security agencies and concerned officials on the successful, peaceful and well-organized conduct of the marathon.

He said the event aimed to promote sports among youth and raise awareness about a healthy, active and positive lifestyle. He added that the overwhelming public response reflected the community's growing interest in sports and health-related activities and similar large-scale events would continue to be organised in the district.

Eshal Shaukat: Pakistan's Young Climate and Humanitarian Leader Making Global Impact

Muhammad Aziz Ur Rehman

At just 15 years old, Eshal Shaukat from Faisalabad, Pakistan, has emerged as a prominent international advocate for environmental sustainability, public health, social equity, and youth empowerment. Representing a new generation of young leaders, Eshal's work aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), addressing some of the world's most pressing challenges.

Eshal currently holds multiple key roles, including Chief Youth Pan-Asian Ambassador for World Against Single-Use Plastic (WASUP), Chief Youth Ambassador for Midland International Aid Trust (UK), and Chairperson of Midland Aid Trust Pakistan.

Mentored by Professor A. R. Gatrell OBE DL, widely regarded as a father of humanitarian work, she has developed the knowledge, confidence, and skills to contribute meaningfully to international campaigns, conferences, and public discussions on sustainability and planetary health. Professor Gatrell has guided Eshal at every step of her journey, including her co-authorship of three international research papers published in Eronicon.



Her environmental activism combines advocacy with tangible action. She has planted over 300 trees, established the WASUP Recycling Unit recycling 25 tons of plastic bags monthly, and developed Silky Pearl Hand Sanitizer and Nature Pura Water Purification Solution using Zeolite and Moringa seeds to promote sustainable hygiene and clean water access. She also translated Dr. A. R. Gatrell's The Story of Three Plastic Bottles into Chinese, extending its educational impact internationally, and is an active member of the Planetary Health Alliance in the United States, highlighting the links between environmental degradation, air pollution, and human health.

Eshal's humanitarian initiatives focus on providing essential resources and education. She has installed over 60 hand pumps, made possible with the financial support of Midland International Aid Trust UK, and personally identified schools where students previously had no access to clean water, ensuring they can continue their studies without missing classes to fetch water. She plans to install 400 more hand pumps to further improve access. She organizes free medical camps as Midland International aid trust ambassador offering cataract

surgeries, cleft lip and club foot operations, 500 free hearing aids through Islamabad Hearing Center, essential medicines, and tests. Her Pehchaan Project supports marginalized women and children, while food parcel distributions and skills-training programs empower orphans and widows.

Through the GSK Women Empowerment Center, Eshal, with the support of her parents and Midland International Aid Trust, provides orphaned and needy girls with free education, fashion designing courses, IT classes, cooking classes, swimming lessons, library access, and stitching training. The center offers comprehensive support, equipping girls with the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed for education, self-reliance, and personal growth.

In addition, Eshal chairs the Pehchaan Project in Pakistan, provides free education for underprivileged children, organizes summer learning camps, and runs the EmpowerGrain Project, benefiting over 100 farmers by improving crop yields and livelihoods.

She holds numerous professional positions and memberships, including membership in the United Nations Association of Pakistan (2025-2026), participation in the KECTIL Programme (2025-2026), campus ambassador for Girls Rising for Pakistan (2025-2026), Youth Global Network Ambassador for Pakistan (2025-2026), and membership in Youth Council Pakistan, Youth General Assembly Pakistan, and the International Youth Council (USA). She is also a Pan-Asian Ambassador for WASUP, Ambassador for Midland International Aid Trust (UK & Pakistan), and for the Pakistan Cleft Lip & Palate Association. Eshal has won the Digital Art Category Trophy at the Beaconhouse International Student Convention, Thailand (2024).

Her awards and recognitions include the Rising Scholar Award (Lumière 2025), International Women Excellence Award, Dubai (2025), International Iconic Excellence Award, Maldives (2025), multiple Gold, Silver, and Bronze Medals in national and international competitions, first-place finishes in Art Beat National Competitions, first place in the All Pakistan Mask Pollution Competition (Beaconhouse Abbottabad 2021), distinction in the Immerse Education Essay Competition (2025), Oxford Summer Programme Scholarship (2026), and the International Education Award from the Global Education Network Pakistan (2025). She also received a trophy from the Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmed Khan, for her support to Palestinian students.

Eshal has represented Pakistan internationally at events including the Belt & Road Conference in China (2025), climate change lectures at Chinese institutes (2025), and as a guest speaker at the University of Thailand (2024), invited by Nature, Health & NODE. She has been nominated Co-Chair of the GMUN General Assembly in Kazakhstan, served as an official delegate at Harvard Model

United Nations (HMUN) Africa 2026, and attended the CAYA Summit in Pakistan (2025) representing the country among participants from 11 nations. She has completed "Becoming a Climate Champion" and "International Climate Negotiation" programs certified by UNITAR in 2025.

Eshal is also a published researcher, co-authoring three international research papers with Professor Gatrell, and contributing blogs to West Midlands Sustainable Schools (UK) and UN Coventry Branch (UK). She has served as a jury member for the Little Art Film Festival (2020) and the International Film Festival in Baku (2024), and was a finalist in Beaconhouse RISE - Young Canvas (Digital Art, 2024).

Through her initiatives like the EmpowerGrain Project, Pehchaan Project, and GSK Women Empowerment Center, Eshal continues to support farmers, marginalized women, and orphaned or needy girls. Her work in climate advocacy, education, and humanitarian service demonstrates that age is no barrier to leadership. Eshal Shaukat remains a role model for youth in Pakistan and globally, exemplifying how young leaders can drive meaningful change across communities and borders.

PCB spokesperson rejects propaganda by Indian media

Sports Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has rejected the unfounded news items by a section of Indian media on approaching the International Cricket Council (ICC) regarding the upcoming Pakistan-India fixture on February 15 at R. Premadasa Stadium, Colombo.

In a statement by PCB spokesperson Amir Mir issued on the social media platform X on Saturday night, the PCB maintained that it had not approached the ICC regarding the fixture against the arch-rivals India and any claims by Indian media was far-fetched from reality.

The rumours are ripe among the cricketing circles after Pakistan decided to boycott ICCT20 World Cup game against India scheduled on February 15 at RPS, Colombo in protest of the ICC playing second fiddle to the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the dragging of politics into cricket by the ICC chair Jay Shah.

PCB decision was governed by the directions from the Pakistan government which barred the Pakistan team from playing against Indian team at the T20 World Cup. The decision may be motivated by different events in the recent past. Recently, the Indian team refused to shake hands with the Pakistan team out of political reasons during a gentleman's game during the Asia Cup 2025 and, latter, the Indian team declined to receive the winner's trophy from ACC President Mohsin Naqvi - who is also Chairman PCB.

Pakistan also rejected ICC decision to oust Bangladesh from playing the T20 World Cup after the BCB refused to travel to India to participate in the World Cup due to security reasons and asked the ICC to move its matches from India to Sri Lanka. The BCB were declined the favor while the same was granted to India by the ICC in 2025 when the BCCI refused to travel to Pakistan on security reasons to play Champions Trophy 2025. All Indian matches were moved to UAE to oblige India.

In the X post PCB spokesperson Amir Mir wrote, "I categorically reject the claim by Indian sports journalist Vikrant Gupta that PCB approached the ICC. As usual, sections of Indian media are busy circulating fiction. A little patience and time will clearly show who actually went knocking and who didn't."

Multan Sultans auction set for tomorrow in Lahore

Sports Desk

The auction of Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Multan Sultans' bidding will take place tomorrow (February 9) in Lahore ahead of the league's 11th edition, 24NewsHD TV reported on Sunday.



According to PSL officials, five (5) bidders will take part in the auction process.

The auction will determine the new ownership rights of Multan Sultans following the expiration of the previous agreement.

Former Multan Sultans owner Ali Tareen is among the bidders competing to regain ownership of the franchise, re-entering the race just a year after stepping away from the team.

Alongside Ali Tareen, Wally Tech, and M-Next Inc are also participating in the auction process.

Both companies had previously taken part in the bidding for the Hyderabad and Sialkot franchises last month but were unsuccessful.

In addition, CD Venture and Particle Ignite have entered the PSL auction process for the first time.

It is worth recalling that the Hyderabad and Sialkot franchises were sold for Rs175 crore and Rs185 crore, respectively, reflecting the growing commercial value of the PSL.

The base price of the Multan Sultan is Rs 1.8 billion.

The Multan Sultans auction is scheduled two days before the player draft, which will take place on February 11, 2026, also in Lahore.

The franchise has retained no players, meaning the new owner will have the opportunity to build an entirely new squad for the upcoming season.

The PCB officially announced the sale process for Multan Sultans on January 14, 2025, inviting interested individuals and companies to submit bids.

The deadline for technical proposals was initially set for January 30, but was later revised.

Last month, during a historic auction at Jinnah Convention Center, FKS Group and OZ Developers secured the Hyderabad and Sialkot franchises for Rs1.75 billion and Rs1.85 billion, respectively.

With the addition of these two teams, the number of teams for PSL 11 has now increased to eight.

Called on

Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf called on Chief of Royal Malaysian Navy Admiral Tan Sri (Dr.) Zulhelmy bin Ithnain during his official visit to Malaysia on Sunday.



Finance Minister, Saudi Economy Minister discuss investments and tech talent collaboration at AlUla Conference

Commerce Desk

KSA: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, held a meeting with H. E. Faisal bin Fadil Alibrahim, Minister of Economy and Planning of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, on the sidelines of the AlUla Conference 2026 for Emerging Market Economies, held in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

During the meeting, the two sides discussed follow-ups on matters relating to Saudi investments in Pakistan as well as bilateral economic cooperation.

The Saudi Minister strongly highlighted the high-quality artificial intelligence and technology talent being produced by Pakistan, noting that it ranks among the top one or



two globally.

He stated that Saudi Arabia is keen to leverage Pakistani tech talent to lead and support the technological transformation underway in the Kingdom. In this context, he also

referred to Mr. Eric Schmidt, US businessman and former CEO of Google, who has similarly acknowledged the strength and potential of Pakistani technology professionals. Senator Muhammad

Aurangzeb shared that Pakistan is planning to create a structured pipeline of quality human resources for key international markets, including Saudi Arabia, to generate economic impact for both

sides.

The Saudi Minister also mentioned progress on the GCC Free Trade Agreement and emphasized prioritizing increased trade and exchanges with Pakistan.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb assured that dedicated teams from the Pakistani side are actively leading the process for finalizing Saudi Arabia's investment commitments in Pakistan.

The Finance Minister also appreciated the Government of Saudi Arabia for organizing an excellent and strategically significant conference for Emerging Market Economies and thanked H. E. Faisal bin Fadil Alibrahim for Saudi Arabia's continued commitment to Pakistan's economy.

Bravo Lahore: CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Appreciates Lahanites on Celebrating Safe Basant

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif praised in her media message people of Lahore for ensuring implementation of safety SOPs while celebrating Basant.

She said with satisfaction and thanks that people of Lahore have not breached their trust. She noted that she is very happy because Lahore is very happy today, and acknowledged that Alhamdulillah, people of Lahore have played an important role in



celebrating a joyous yet safe Basant.

Chief Minister Punjab also noted that delicious foods were served, kites were flown, tangled and fought over, besides the playful chase of kites, which is a true happiness.

She said that no reports have been received of using prohibited strings and kites other than the prescribed size and specifications.

She added that a safe Basant was celebrated on rooftops in accordance with the SOPs. She highlighted that transformers across Lahore also remained safe

due to non-use of metallic strings.

She was happy that on rooftops, by the grace of Allah Almighty, the preemptive measures taken proved effective, and the concept of 'Safe Basant' will be adopted in other cities following Lahore.

She underscored that in every area, including Liberty and inner city, 200 clinics-on-wheels and 21 field hospitals were deployed. She appealed to the citizens that they should not let go off the mantle of caution, as today is the last day of Basant festival.

Tralai Attack Raises Questions Over Islamabad's Security Regime and Accountability

Zain Khan Malghani

ISLAMABAD: This report is based on observations and concerns highlighted in a recent vlog by senior journalist Naveed Ahmed Khan, Editor of Daily Spokesman, in which he examined the effectiveness of Islamabad's security system following the deadly incident in Tralai.

Over the past several years, authorities have enforced stringent vehicle and personal identification requirements in the capital. Entry into Islamabad has been restricted without an M-Tag, while citizens have been required to complete vehicle registration, carry

national identity cards, and possess valid driving licences. Residents of Islamabad have also been instructed to comply with these conditions to move freely within the city.

Despite long queues and administrative inconvenience, the public largely complied. Citizens installed M-Tags and E-Tags and replaced private number plates with officially issued ones after objections were raised by authorities. While these measures imposed financial and logistical burdens, the public adapted to government directives.

Islamabad has since evolved into a heavily fortified city. Multiple check-

points line major arteries, residential streets, and service roads. Under the Safe City project, surveillance cameras have been installed across the capital. According to officials, these arrangements are intended to enhance security and protect citizens.

Each morning, commuters and parents transporting children to school face prolonged delays at security checkpoints. Travellers entering Islamabad from Rawalpindi encounter repeated checks along IJP Road and the Islamabad Expressway. Despite these daily hardships, most citizens continue to cooperate with law enforcement agencies.

However, the Tralai incident has raised pressing questions about the effectiveness of these measures. The attack occurred during Friday prayers, resulting in several deaths and numerous injuries. Victims reportedly faced difficulties in being transported to hospitals due to security and traffic restrictions.

Observers argue that the tragedy exposes systemic shortcomings in security coordination and emergency response. The presence of multiple overlapping checkpoints operated by different police stations has also drawn criticism, with concerns that fragmented authority weakens overall

effectiveness rather than strengthening

acceptance of responsibility, and corrective action at institutional levels.

Public discourse has further focused on the issue of responsibility. Historically, major security lapses in Pakistan have rarely resulted in resignations or formal admissions of failure. Critics note that tragedies often pass without institutional accountability, while official narratives frequently attribute such incidents to foreign elements or external conspiracies.

Analysts warn that a persistent failure to acknowledge mistakes risks long-term damage to public trust and national stability. They argue that meaningful reform requires transpar-

Chief of the Naval Staff undertakes official visit to Malaysia

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Reflecting Pakistan Navy's commitment to cooperative maritime security and naval diplomacy, Chief of the Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf undertook an official visit to Malaysia and called on the leadership of the Royal Malaysian Navy.

The visit commenced at Royal Malaysian Navy Headquarters, where Admiral Naveed Ashraf was received by the Chief of the Royal Malaysian Navy, Admiral Tan Sri (Dr.) Zulhelmy bin Ithnain, and was accorded a Guard of Honour.

Admiral Naveed Ashraf underscored Pakistan Navy's active role in sustaining regional stability through continuous Regional Maritime Security Patrols (RMSP) and its consistent participation in the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), reinforcing Pakistan's standing as a responsible mar-

itime stakeholder. The Chief of the Naval Staff also visited Malaysia's National Hydrographic Centre (NHC), where he was briefed on its technical capabilities and contributions to maritime safety. Emphasizing hydrography as a foundation of effective naval operations, Admiral Naveed Ashraf called for deeper institutional linkages between Malaysia's NHC and Pakistan's National Hydrographic Office (NHO), particularly in specialized training, data exchange, and professional collaboration.

Rooted in a legacy of shared values and enduring friendship, Pakistan-Malaysia naval relations continue to evolve in step with contemporary maritime realities. The visit of the Chief of the Naval Staff marks another step toward a more integrated, cooperative and future-oriented partnership between the two navies.

IGP Islamabad Rizvi reviews security duties, orders strict checking and vigilance



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Inspector General of Police (IGP) Islamabad Syed Ali Nasir Rizvi reviewed ongoing security duties at various points across the federal capital and issued clear instructions to police officers to ensure strict checking, effective surveillance and professional conduct.

An official told APP on Sunday that during the visit, the IGP Islamabad inspected duty points and interacted with officers and personnel deployed on security assignments.

The IGP Rizvi directed police officers to remain fully alert, maintain a high level of vigilance and strengthen monitoring at all entry and exit points as well as sensitive locations.

IGP Islamabad Rizvi reviews security duties, orders strict checking and vigilance

He stressed the importance of professional behaviour while dealing with citizens during checking and patrolling duties, directing officers to ensure courtesy, discipline and responsibility at all times.

Rizvi further instructed officers to enhance coordination among field formations and ensure prompt response to any suspicious activity or untoward situation.

IGP Islamabad Rizvi reviews security duties, orders strict checking and vigilance

He reiterated that the protection of citizens' lives and property is the top priority of Islamabad Police, adding that no negligence in security duties would be tolerated.

The IGP Rizvi Islamabad emphasized that Islamabad Police will continue to utilize all available resources to maintain peace, security and public confidence in the federal capital.

Minor motorcyclist killed in road accident

FAISALABAD: A minor motorcyclist was hit to death in a road traffic accident in the area of Jaranwala Sadar police station.

Rescue 1122 spokesman said here on Sunday that a speeding tractor-trolley hit a motorcycle near Chak No.60-GB. As a result, 12-year-old motorcyclist

Muhammad Usman, a resident of Chak No.102-GB received serious injuries and died on the spot before getting any medical assistance.

Rescue 1122 shifted the corpse to mortuary of Tehsil Headquarters (THQ) Hospital Jaranwala while the area police started investigation, he added.