



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول
بجھ سے عثمان بن ابی شیبہ نے بیان کیا کہ انھوں نے جو جبریل بن عبدالمعین نے ان سے منقول کیا ہے، ان سے اس وقت اور ان سے عائشہ رضی اللہ عنہا نے بیان کیا کہ محمد صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کے ہواؤں کو عینہ آنے کے بعد بھی تین دن تک برابر گھوڑوں کی روٹی کھانے کے لیے نہیں ملی، یہاں تک کہ نبی کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم کی روٹی ختم ہو گئی۔
(بخاری: حدیث نمبر 6454)
Barkat Rice Mills (Pvt) Limited



Ali Mustafa Dar appointed as adviser to CM on Artificial Intelligence and special initiatives

The Punjab provincial government has appointed Ali Mustafa Dar as Adviser to Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz on Artificial Intelligence and Special Initiatives. According to sources within the provincial government, he is eligible to enjoy the status and powers of a provincial cabinet minister.



Pakistan unveils 'SMASH' Hypersonic Anti-Ship Missile at World Defense Show

Pakistan's Global Industrial and Defence Solutions (GIDS) has unveiled a new hypersonic anti-ship ballistic missile, named 'SMASH', at the ongoing World Defense Show 2026 in the Saudi capital, Riyadh. Designed with a dual-role operational concept, the SMASH missile is capable of striking both naval and land-based targets, allowing a single missile platform to be employed across multiple mission profiles.

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AI Indus Week

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif visits different kiosks at "AI Indus Week", an Initiative of Ministry of Information Technology on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM announces \$1 bn investment, 1000 fully funded PhD scholarships in AI by 2030: PM

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday announced that the government would invest \$1 billion in the country's Artificial Intelligence (AI) sector by 2030 to build a future-ready digital economy and empower the country's youth.

The prime minister said the investment would help establish a robust AI ecosystem across

Pakistan. He announced that AI curriculum will be introduced in all federally run schools, while 1,000 fully funded PhD scholarships in AI will be offered to students from across the country by 2030. In addition, a nationwide programme to train one million non-IT professionals in AI skills will be launched to boost productivity and improve livelihoods.

"Pakistan is absolutely ready to accept the challenge and work

with our global partners, with great commitment and dedication", he said while addressing the inaugural session of Indus AI Week.

Highlighting priority sectors, the prime minister said AI interventions would focus on agriculture, mines and minerals, industry, commerce, trade, and youth empowerment.

Addressing concerns among IT professionals about rapid technological change, he assured

that government programmes would help transform IT technicians into AI experts, unlocking unprecedented gains in agricultural yield, quality and efficiency, as well as industrial growth and women's empowerment.

Minister for IT Shaza Fatima Khawaja said Indus AI Week aimed to strengthen coordination between universities, governments and international companies, underscoring Pakistan's full commitment to a

digital revolution. She said the Pakistan Digital Authority was preparing a nationwide digital master plan to guide future transformation.

Minister for Planning Ahsan Iqbal, in his remarks, said the world had entered a moment where intelligence itself had become a factor of production, with nations competing on ideas, talent, data and technology rather than commodities.

Aurangzeb underscores fiscal progress, buffer-building and reform agenda at AIUla conference

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday highlighted Pakistan's recent fiscal progress, ongoing reforms, and strategy for rebuilding buffers while sustaining growth, underscoring the importance of discipline, credibility, and institutional strengthening in navigating repeated economic and climate-related shocks.

Attending a high-level panel discussion "Fiscal Policy in a



Shock-Prone World" on the 2nd day of the AIUla Conference for

Emerging Market Economies in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,

the minister shared Pakistan's experience in managing structural constraints, strengthening revenue mobilization, reducing debt vulnerabilities, and responding to shocks while protecting priority development spending, said a news release.

Responding to the moderator's questions, the Aurangzeb said that Pakistan's fiscal strategy has been shaped by a history of boom-and-bust cycles, persistent structural deficits, high debt levels, and limited fiscal space.

He emphasized that under

these circumstances, it has been critical to carefully safeguard the fiscal progress achieved over the past two to three years.

He noted that Pakistan has delivered successive primary surpluses and reduced its fiscal deficit from around eight percent of GDP to approximately 5.4 percent, with the current trajectory pointing toward a further reduction below five percent. He highlighted that this improvement reflects coordinated progress on the revenue, expenditure, and debt fronts.

Ulema call pulpit, sermons crucial to thwart enemy's divisive conspiracy

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Ulema and Mashaikh Council emphasized patience, piety, and mutual empathy among the masses, urging the promotion of inter-sect harmony and moral upbringing through pulpits and minbars to thwart

every divisive conspiracy of the enemy.

This was expressed during a meeting of the Ulema and Mashaikh Council held on Monday under the chairmanship of Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousuf.

The council strongly condemned the suicide attack in Islamabad and expressed complete solidarity with the Armed Forces of Pakistan and the state in the fight against terrorism.

The council clarified that targeting innocent worshippers in places of worship is entirely

contrary to Islamic teachings, as well as constitutional and ethical principles.

The meeting outright rejected the misguided ideology of Fitna al-Khawarij and all narratives of terrorism, and resolved to vigorously counter internal and external conspiracies aimed at

harming Pakistan's peace.

The Ulema and Mashaikh pledged to play an effective role in disseminating messages of peace, tolerance, and mutual respect through their sermons and madrasas, and in safeguarding the younger generation from extremism.

DMP Dar says Pakistan committed to meet GSP Plus obligations



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Monday said that Pakistan had successfully completed four biennial GSP Plus reviews remained committed to fully meeting its obligations under the scheme to expand mutually beneficial trade opportunities.

The deputy prime minister was chairing a high-level inter-ministerial meeting to review measures aimed at strengthening Pakistan's economic and trade cooperation with the European Union.

He underscored the impor-

ance of deepening and expanding trade and economic engagement with the EU, noting that the EU remained a key economic partner for Pakistan, particularly under the GSP Plus framework.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazir Tarrar, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, Secretary Foreign Affairs Ambassador Anna Baloch, the federal secretaries of commerce, interior, overseas Pakistanis and human rights, Pakistan's Ambassador to the EU, along with senior officials from relevant federal and provincial departments.

Gov't committed to strengthen bar associations: Law Minister

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Law and Justice, Senator Azam Nazeer Tarrar on Monday met delegations of lawyers from various bar associations, including Islamabad, Bahawalpur, Sahiwal, and Faisalabad Bar Associations.

During the meeting, matters relating to administrative and professional facilitation for lawyers, strengthening of bar institutions, and welfare of the legal community were discussed in detail.

The Federal Law Minister stated that the welfare of lawyers remains a priority for the government and that practical steps are being taken in this regard.

Senator Azam Nazeer Tarrar emphasized that lawyers are a key pillar of the justice



system and reiterated the government's commitment to further strengthen bar associations.

He also underlined the importance of effective and continuous engagement between the legal community and the government.

The visiting delegations appreciated the Ministry of Law and Justice for its cooperation and expressed confidence that continued coordination would help address issues faced by lawyers.

Islamic, Arab FMs slam illegal Israeli decisions, acts

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Ministers of Islamic and Arab countries, Monday, condemned in the strongest terms the illegal Israeli decisions and measures aimed at imposing unlawful Israeli sovereignty, entrenching settlement activity and enforcing a new legal and administrative reality in the occupied West Bank.

They also reaffirmed that Israel has no sovereignty over the occupied Palestinian territory.

The Islamic Republic of Pakistan, the Arab Republic of Egypt, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, the United Arab Emirates, the Republic of Indonesia, the Republic of Turkey, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the State of Qatar, in their joint statement termed these illegal acts as 'accelerating attempts at its illegal annexa-

tion and the displacement of the Palestinian people.'

The ministers warned against the continued expansionist Israeli policies and illegal measures pursued by the Israeli government in the occupied West Bank, which fueled violence and conflict in the region, the joint statement shared by the Foreign Office Spokesperson with media, said.

"The Ministers expressed their absolute rejection of these illegal actions, which constitute a blatant violation of international law, undermine the two-state solution, and represent an assault on the inalienable right of the Palestinian people to realize their independent and sovereign state on the 4 June 1967 lines, with occupied Jerusalem as its capital," it reiterated. Such actions also undermined the ongoing efforts for peace and stability in the region.

AJK PM Rathore condemns Tarlai Imam Bargah tragedy



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore visited Ali Masjid Satellite Town and headed Tehreek Enforcement Fiqh Jafaria Alam Syed Hussain Maqdasi and Allama Hussain Waheed Acid Kharaqas Syed Hussain Maqdsi and Alama

Hussain Waheed expressed deep sorrow over the tragic incident in Imam Bargah Tarlai from Khorasani. Former Government Advisors Murtaza Drani and Malik Raheel were also accompanied by the Prime Minister. Such cowardly and brutal events cannot weaken our resolve. We are equal partners in the grief of the victims and pray for the full recovery

of the injured.

Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that communal harmony, religious tolerance and harming brotherhood will not be allowed in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The state is committed to peace, unity and mutual respect and the elements involved in such incidents will be brought to justice.

They said that the common role of scholars, Mushaikh Azam and all schools of thought is the guarantee of promoting peace in society, and we should all work together to convey the message of unity, against hatred. Chief Ulama Syed Hussain Maqdsi thanked the Prime Minister for his visit to Ali Masjid and wished him long life and blessings.

Carelessness

ISLAMABAD: A view of the students standing on the Suzuki pickup at busy Lehtrar Road, which may cause any serious incident, which needs the action of traffic police authority against the Suzuki driver and it is also a alarming situation for their parents.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Hurriyat leaders demand return of Afzal Guru, Maqbool Bhat remains to families

Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: The leadership of the base camp and the entire All Parties Hurriyat Conference demanded the international community to return the bodies of Muhammad Afzal Guro Shaheed and Maqbool But Shaheed to their heirs. Yes.both Indians should hang a plaque or refer to Ran's village heritage instead of hanging India on a plaque for the crime of struggle for self-determination and slogans of freedom. They are Karrkhi. The international community is taking notice of the Indian oppressor in occupied Kashmir. India has declared illegal military occupation of occupied Kashmir. The issue of peace in South Asia is conditional on Kashmir. The ongoing movement in occupied Jammu and Kashmir is a right to self-determination movement.



The people of base camp are carrying the shoulders of their brothers in the struggle for freedom. He said that we should present our case to the world with full force and expose the human rights violations committed by India and its occupying forces in occupied Kashmir. India knows that it will not maintain its oppressive rule over Kashmir through oppression and coercion for

long. The speakers expressed these views while addressing the birth anniversary of Muhammad Afzal Guru Shaheed in collaboration with the All-Jamaat Hurriyat Conference organized by Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell. Secretary Information of All Party Hurriyat Conference Mushtaq Butt, Senior Hurriyat Leader, Spokesperson Azam Azad Kashmir Shaukat

Javed Mir, Director Jammu and Kashmir Media, Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Cell Sardar Vauxhall Liberation Cell Sardar Ali Shan, Shabab-ul-Muslim's Umair Ahmad, Munir Qureshi, Ashfaq Awan, Haider Ali Osama and others also addressed the audience. Babar Bashir Awan performed the duties of stage secretary at the Barsi ceremony.

Grand writing competition organized at Riphah International College Sheikhupura Road

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In order to promote education and develop the hidden talents of students, a prestigious and grand Riphah Writing Competition 2026 was organized at Riphah International College, Sheikhupura Road Campus. Thousands of students of class 10 participated in this competition and demonstrated their academic ability and mental capabilities to the fullest. A large number of students of class 10 participated in this academic competition. The college administration, showing generosity, provided on-the-spot registration facilities for those students who were not able to register earlier, so that no student would miss out on this golden opportunity.



The ceremony was attended by directors Dr. Tanveer Aslam Dhillon, Sadaqat Hussain Lodhi, Akbar Ali Harl, Moazzam Mahmood Advocate, Atta Al-Munaim, Akram Dogar

Director Admin(White Beard), Taimoor Ahmad COordinator, Nadeem Dhillon, Shabbir Dhillon,

Vice Principal Nasir Mahmood, Osama Mahmood and other important educational and social figures and encouraged the students. Addressing the participants, Principal of Riphah International College Sheikhupura Road, Muhammad Ahfazullah said that our goal is not just to obtain degrees but to provide students with platforms where they can recognize their talents. Rifah International College will continue to provide quality education and the best opportunities for co-curricular activities to the students of Faisalabad in the future as well. Principal Muhammad Ahfazullah and the college administration expressed their heartfelt gratitude to the principals and teachers of all the schools of Faisalabad, due to whose cooperation and hard work this competition was so successful and exemplary.

Price Review Committee fixes Ramadan rates

Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: A meeting of the District Price Review Committee was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Dera Ismail Khan, Abdul Nasir Khan, to finalize prices of essential commodities ahead of the holy month of Ramadan. The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Adnan Jameel, Assistant Commissioner Dera Syed Muhammad Arslan, Assistant Commissioner Paharpur Dr. Hamid Khan, Assistant Commissioner Daraban, District Food Controller Aman Khan, and representatives of various trader associations, including Senior Vice President of Central Traders Association Chaudhry Jameel Ahmad, President of All Grocery Merchants Haji Ghulam Subhani, President of Markazi Tajir Ittehad Hamid Ali Rahmani, General Secretary Malik Ashfaq Chughtai, Rehan Azam, Muhammad Sohail, Sufi Muhammad Jaleel, Allah Mehr, Nauman Niazi, Haji Karim Nawaz, Mujtaba Saleem, Raza Kashmiri, Ansar Abbas, along with members from milk sellers, butchers, sweets and bakers associations, livestock and Halal Food Authority officials. The committee held detailed deliberations on controlling the prices of food items during Ramadan. Speaking on the occasion, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Nasir Khan said that Ramadan is a blessed month and strict implementation of officially notified prices will be ensured. He warned that shopkeepers found overcharging would face heavy fines and even imprisonment.

Altaf Ahmed Bhat Pays Tribute to Afzal Guru, Maqbool Bhat

City Desk



ISLAMABAD: Senior leader of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and Chairman of the Jammu Kashmir Salvation Movement (JKSM), Altaf Ahmed Bhat, paid rich tribute to Shaheed Afzal Guru, stating that his execution was a politically motivated act carried out after a deeply flawed trial that exposed the true nature of India's judicial system in occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In a statement issued today, Altaf Ahmed Bhat said that Afzal Guru was made a scapegoat to satisfy a manufactured narrative, while his legal rights were systematically denied. He termed Guru's hanging a judicial killing, adding that the secrecy surrounding his execution and burial inside Tihar Jail was a blatant violation of international law, religious rights, and human dignity. He reiterated the long-standing demand for the return of Afzal Guru's mortal remains to his family for a dignified burial. Highlighting the deteriorating health of several detained leaders, Altaf Ahmed Bhat said that Muhammad Yasin Malik, Shabbir Ahmed Shah, Masarat Alam Bhat, Zaffar Akbar Bhat, Naem Khan, Asiya Andrabi, and Dr. Abdul Hameed Fayyaz are being kept in harsh prison conditions despite advanced age and serious illnesses. He termed their continued detention illegal, inhumane, and a violation of international human rights norms.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa pays homage at the Shrine of Hazrat Data Ganj Bakhsh (RA)

LAHORE: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi stated that the shrine of Hazrat Syed Ali bin Usman Al-Hajveri (Data Ganj Bakhsh) (RA) is a beacon of love, peace, and spiritual guidance, whose message of tolerance and harmony continues to unite people across the country.



The Governor expressed these views during his visit to Data Darbar, where he paid homage at the shrine, laid floral wreaths, and offered Fateha. He prayed for the peace, stability, and prosperity of Pakistan, as well as for the protection of its ideological and geographical frontiers. Upon his arrival at Data Darbar, the Governor was warmly received by Director General Religious Affairs, Shahid Hassan Kalyani, who also performed the traditional dastaar bandi (turban-tying) ceremony in his honor. Manager Data Darbar, Noman Saifi, Assistant Director Tableegh-o-Tarbiyat, Syed Israr Shah, and other officials accompanied the Governor during the visit. Officials of the Auqaf Department provided a detailed briefing on the Data Darbar expansion project, highlighting ongoing development initiatives and future plans. Governor Faisal Karim Kundi highly appreciated the efforts of the Auqaf administration, particularly lauding the arrangements made for devotees, security measures, and overall management. He commended the department for ensuring improved facilities for pilgrims and maintaining the sanctity and serenity of the revered shrine.

Seminar at UAF Toba sub campus on citrus care

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: Experts at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad have cautioned orchard growers against deteriorating citrus situation in the years to come for which they have to ensure proper management practices, diseases free nurseries, add proper fertilizer and clean weeds in order to safeguard the citrus from the increasing greening and other incidences. They addressed at a seminar on Citrus titled "Care of Citrus Orchard after Fruit Harvesting to Enhance Orchard Health and Production" arranged Institute of Horticulture Sciences at UAF Toba Tek Singh Campus in collaboration with China Pakistan Horticulture Research and Demonstration Center, Huazhong Agricultural University China, and funded (CPEC-CRG-2-447) by Higher Education Commission, Islamabad. The seminar was arranged on the directives of Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Zulfiqar Ali. Principal UAF Toba Tek Singh Campus Dr Rashad Waseem Khan, Dr Jaffar Jaskani, Dr Muhammad Azam, Prof Liu Yong Zhong and Dr Summar Abbas Naqvi spoke on the occasion. While highlighting the importance of modern orchard management for citrus productivity, Dr Rashad Waseem Khan called for adopting scientific practices, including soil testing and pest control that will improve fruit quality, enhance yield and ensure long-term sustainability for growers in the region. Dr Muhammad Azam emphasized the need for balanced and regulated use of fertilizers to ensure healthy citrus growth and sustainable productivity. Dr Jaffar Jaskani, Prof Liu Yong Zhong from Huazhong Agricultural University, China,, Dr Summar Abbas Naqvi also speak on the occasion.

Islamabad
30° – 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:34 am
Zohr 12:22 pm
Asr 4:08 pm
Maghrib 5:46 pm
Isha 7:11 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

Immediate reforms are essential for economic improvement: Syed Aman Shah

News Desk

KARACHI: Syed Aman Shah, Provincial Convener of Awaam Pakistan Party (APP) Balochistan, has expressed serious concern over the country's current economic situation, stating that despite existing economic policies, the public has not received any meaningful relief. As a result, ordinary citizens are facing severe financial pressure. He warned that if timely and effective reforms are not introduced, the economic crisis could intensify further in the coming months.

He said that persistently high inflation, rising prices of food items and petroleum products, and shrinking employment opportunities have greatly increased the difficulties of the middle and lower-income classes. According to him, small traders, transporters and daily wage earners are the most affected, while stagnation in business activities has also weakened market confidence.

Chief Minister Punjab expresses gratitude over successful Basant Festival



Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif expressed gratitude over the successful organization of the Basant Festival and lauded the administration, police and 15 departments for their collective efforts. Addressing a high-level meeting, the chief minister said that after saluting the people, she also thanked Nawaz Sharif, who gave the vision of uniting people through festivals and celebrating happiness together.

She said the revival of Punjab's great culture is credited to the people of Lahore,

adding that the three-day Basant festival brought back joy not only to Lahore but across Pakistan.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that Basant-related activities were cancelled following the tragic incident in Islamabad, adding that her heart is saddened and grieved. "Enemies of the country cannot tolerate peace, calm and happiness here. We will not be afraid and will continue to confront them," she said.

The chief minister said she feels immense happiness seeing Lahoris celebrating. She added that Generation Z visited the Walled City of Lahore for the



first time, leaving behind laptops and iPads to celebrate joyfully. "Basant is a festival that connects hearts, and people were given the opportunity to celebrate freely," she said.

She said the entire government worked

as one team and commended the IG Police, Commissioner, CCPO, DIG, DC, all assistant commissioners and their teams. She also appreciated Safe City authorities for real-time rooftop monitoring.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif

said that DG PHA Raja Mansoor did exceptional work in beautifying the city and creating a festive environment for Basant. She also thanked the Transport Department and LESCO for their support.

Independence of Sri Lanka

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar along with High Commissioner of Sri Lanka Rear Admiral Fred Seneviratne (rtd) and others lighted the candle during an event on the occasion of the 78th Anniversary of the Independence of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka at local hotel in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Another Splendid Achievement of Safe City Virtual Center for Child Safety

News Desk

LAHORE: Virtual Center for Child Safety established at Punjab Safe Cities Authority has achieved another major milestone by reuniting Atif, who had been missing for 28 years, with his family. The Safe City "Mera Pyara" team successfully traced and reunited Atif, who was separated from his family in 1998 at the age of three, after a prolonged period of 28 years.

Spokesperson further stated that Atif spent 28 years at an SOS



Village. Safe City "Mera Pyara" team conducted a detailed interview with

him and shared interview along with his childhood photograph on social media. The Facebook post reached Atif's brother, Muhammad Waqas, who is currently residing in Saudi Arabia. Information provided by him helped confirm Atif's identity. After verification of all evidence, the Safe City "Mera Pyara" team facilitated reunification contact between the two brothers and formally handed Atif over to his family.

According to the spokesperson, Atif's mother, Razia Sultana, and his

brother, Muhammad Naeem, are still missing, and efforts to trace them are ongoing. The spokesperson added that "Mera Pyara" team has so far reunited more than 60,000 missing persons with their families. The Punjab Safe Cities Authority has urged citizens to share information regarding any missing person by calling 15 and pressing 3. PSCA remains fully committed to leveraging modern technology to ensure public safety so as to reunite missing individuals with their loved ones.

Mushaal Mullick Leads Hundreds in Tribute to Kashmiri Martyr Mohammad Afzal Guru

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A commemorative event was held in Islamabad on the 13th martyrdom anniversary of Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Shaheed Mohammad Afzal Guru at The Strong Base School System where hundreds of students were present to pay tribute and express solidarity with the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Hundreds of students warmly welcomed Ms Mushaal Hussein Mullick and raised slogans in support of the Kashmir struggle reaffirming their commitment to justice freedom and human dignity. A collective prayer was also offered for all the martyrs of Kashmir and Pakistan



including Shaheed Mohammad Afzal Guru and for peace unity and protec-

tion of the oppressed

The event was addressed by the Chief Guest Ms Mushaal Hussein Mullick Chairperson Peace and Culture Organisation and Former Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment and wife of jailed Kashmiri Hurriyat leader Mohammad Yasin Malik.

The participants demanded international intervention to ensure fair legal processes for Kashmiri prisoners an end to politically motivated trials in IOJK the immediate return of the mortal remains of Shaheed Mohammad Afzal Guru to his family and justice accountability and protection of fundamental human rights in Kashmir.

Unopposed Election of Trunk Bazaar Leadership Welcomed



City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Office-bearers of the Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market, Rawalpindi, congratulated the newly elected President of Trunk Bazaar, Sheeraz Butt, and his entire team on their unopposed election, expressing confidence that the new leadership will play an effective role in resolving traders' issues and improving the business environment.

The delegation was led by Malik Sohail Awan, President of Anjuman-e-Tajran Commercial Market, and included Naqi Shah (Group Leader), Hammad Qureshi (Vice Chairman), Raja Zafar Yousaf (General Secretary), Tahir Ismail (Joint Secretary), Raja Rashid Mahmood (Vice President), Owais Butt, Khurram, Adnan Yameen, Mujahid Riaz, Mehfooz Khan, and other office-bearers. They presented bouquets to Sheeraz Butt and his team and extended heartfelt congratulations on their success.

On the occasion, the leaders expressed hope that the new Trunk Bazaar leadership would contribute positively toward addressing traders' concerns and enhancing the overall business climate. Representatives of both organizations reaffirmed their commitment to working jointly for the service of the trader community, protection of traders' rights, and promotion of unity across the city. The meeting also featured detailed discussions on strengthening trader unity, jointly resolving market-related issues, and improving coordination with administrative authorities.

Pakistan faces high child eye cancer burden: Al-Shifa Trust

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital in Rawalpindi has completed genetic testing for 139 patients from 91 families with inherited eye conditions, marking one year since opening Pakistan's first genetic testing lab dedicated to eye disorders.

The lab, launched in January 2025, assists doctors in identifying genes that cause inherited vision loss. These conditions affect roughly eight million people globally. Pakistan's genetic eye disease burden is substantially higher than the global rate though no official exists, said Dr. Rutaba Gul, Geneticist, Department of Ophthalmic Genetics.

The hospital's Department of Ophthalmic Genetics employs advanced DNA testing to confirm causes of inherited eye diseases. This technology enables earlier and more precise diagnoses, she added.

Pakistan's higher risk of inherited eye diseases is partly due to cousin marriages, which are common in many regions. Research indicates that over 70 percent of inherited retinal disease cases in Pakistan occur in children born to closely related parents. Consequently, these disorders are more prevalent than in Europe, the United States, or other Asian countries.

The genetic lab diagnoses many conditions that, if left untreated, could lead to severe vision loss or blindness. Patients are referred to the genetics department by eye specialists based on symptoms and family history. Once a genetic cause is confirmed, families receive genetic counseling to understand the risks to other family members and future children, as well as available treatment options.

Additionally, Prof Dr. Tayyab Afghani, Head of the Orbit and Oculoplastics Department noted that Pakistan also faces a significant burden of eye cancer among children. Al-Shifa Trust hospitals treat around 700 children with eye cancer each year, approximately twice as many as in India.

All genetic testing at the hospital is provided free of charge, despite the high costs involved, said Major General (Retd) Rehmat Khan, president of Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital.

He added that the hospital plans to expand its genetic testing program and establish a national database to support early screening and future treatments. Nearly 80 percent of patients receive free care at Al-Shifa Trust hospitals in Rawalpindi, Chakwal, Kohat, Sukkur, Muzaffarabad, and Gilgit. A new hospital in Lahore is scheduled to open by 2027.



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Overseas Pakistanis And Foreign Guests Thanked for Making Basant Safe and Successful

Punjab Minister for Information and Culture Azma Bokhari expressed heartfelt gratitude to the people of Lahore, citizens across Pakistan, Overseas Pakistanis, foreign guests, and diplomats for the safe and successful celebration of Basant. She stated, “Thank you Lahore, thank you Pakistan, thank you Overseas Pakistanis and our foreign guests” for celebrating the festival responsibly and with enthusiasm.

She said Lahoris deserve appreciation and congratulations for celebrating a safe Basant while enjoying the vibrant colors of life with discipline and civic responsibility. Azma Bokhari added that Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz has won the hearts of the people of Lahore and across Pakistan by bringing back the joy of Basant in a safe and organized manner.

The Minister clarified that the official Basant period has now concluded and kite flying is no longer permitted. She urged parents to keep a close watch on their children, warning that strict legal action will be taken against any violations.

She noted that Basant was celebrated this year in a safe and successful manner, with participants arriving in Lahore from various countries including the United States, the United Kingdom, and the Middle East. Citizens fully complied with government SOPs and safety instructions, demonstrating responsibility and civic awareness.

Azma Bokhari also paid tribute to the dedicated efforts of the police, rescue services, district administration, and all relevant departments for ensuring public safety and smooth management throughout the celebrations. She said all institutions performed their duties with professionalism and commitment.

On the third and final day of Basant, candles of peace and joy were released into Lahore’s skies, symbolizing the city’s vibrant spirit and rich cultural heritage. She expressed hope that these lights of optimism would bring renewed celebrations next year. She emphasized that Lahoris themselves protected their festival and cultural traditions by strictly following SOPs. She further stated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz remains a true guardian of the happiness of Lahore and Punjab, providing the public with safe and memorable cultural experiences.

Concluding her remarks, Azma Bokhari said that the people of Pakistan have rejected politics of hatred, division, and agitation, and have instead supported the path of development, prosperity, and peace, while elements attempting to weaken the country have reached their logical end.

The Ugly Face of the West and Jeffrey Epstein

These days, newspapers around the world, electronic media, social media platforms, and even drawing-rooms discussions are dominated by the so-called Epstein Files. So let us also take a closer look at the reality behind the Western societies about which our younger generations often dream. Movies, music, fashion, and social media create an image of a bright, liberal, and glamorous world in our minds but what is the dark and ugly truth behind this façade?

This is also a lesson for Generation Z: the West’s lofty claims of morality and human rights often serve merely as a curtain. The underlying reality is that powerful individuals cross every limit to fulfill their desires. Here, Islamic teachings provide us with clear guidance. The Qur’an and Hadith declare the protection of the rights of youth, children, and women as a fundamental duty. Any form of sexual relations, exploitation, or abuse involving minors is strictly prohibited in Islam.

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ emphasized that protecting the dignity and safety of children is one of the greatest responsibilities. Islam also makes it clear that consent is valid only for mature and mentally sound adults. The “consent” of a minor child or girl is never acceptable. Their protection is the responsibility of parents, society, and the law.

Islam further teaches that societies are not strengthened by laws and state institutions alone, but through morality, upbringing, and education. Parents must train their children to stay away from easy money, false promises, and suspicious activities. It is essential to educate children about their rights, bodily boundaries, and their right to say “no.” According to Islamic teachings, parents and

society can protect children by maintaining open communication, guidance, and awareness of dangers.

Now let us briefly examine what the Epstein Files actually are.

The U. S. Department of Justice has released approximately 3 million pages of documents, including investigation reports, court records, letters, emails, and other written material. The total volume of files is believed to be around 6 million pages, of which only slightly more than half has been made public so far.

The recent release reportedly includes around 180,000 images, some of which may depict case-related items, Epstein’s personal records, and glimpses of his connections with famous personalities. It also includes nearly 2,000 videos, some directly related to the case, while

others consist of miscellaneous or evidentiary recordings.

Now let us see where this entire drama was staged.

Little Saint James, also known as Epstein Island, is located in the United States Virgin Islands in the Caribbean Sea. The island spans approximately 70 acres (28 hectares) roughly equivalent to about 40 football fields. It is extremely secluded and accessible only by private helicopter or personal boat, which is why Epstein used it for his secretive and illicit purposes.

The photos and videos reportedly feature personalities whom the youth of our country often consider their ideals and heroes. For public awareness, the following names have surfaced:

Bill Clinton, former U. S. President
Donald Trump, current U. S. President
Elon Musk
Bill Gates

Ehud Barak, former Israeli Prime Minister
Larry Summers, former U. S. Treasury Secretary and economist
Prince Andrew, member of the British royal family

Sarah Ferguson, Duchess of York
Michael Jackson, world-famous singer
Mick Jagger, leader of the Rolling Stones
Naomi Campbell, supermodel
Chris Tucker, actor/comedian
David Copperfield, magician/entertainer
Reid Hoffman, co-founder of LinkedIn
On this satanic island, the modus operandi reportedly involved luring girls aged 13 to 17 under the pretext of massage services, gradually drawing them into an organized network of sexual exploitation and prostitution. This network allegedly included members of royal families, global business tycoons, and other influential figures. This case stands as a horrifying and practical proof of the West’s moral deception.

Western media often regarded as a symbol of freedom of expression and transparency frequently practices double standards. While it quickly highlights violations in smaller countries, weaker groups, or non-Muslim societies, it skillfully conceals or downplays the crimes of its own powerful elites, wealthy individuals, and political circles. The Jeffrey Epstein case is a clear example of this hypocrisy: while the suffering of victimized girls was partially reported, no effort was spared in hiding the names, roles, and realities of powerful figures and the islands involved.

Islam teaches us that concealing the truth or granting concessions to the powerful is injustice. The Qur’an states:

“And stand firm for justice, even if it be against yourselves or your relatives.” (Surah An-Nisa, 4:135)

This means that deviating from justice due to someone’s power, wealth, or fame whether through media or otherwise is completely unacceptable according to Islamic teachings.

The Unquiet Graves of Tihar: Memory, Injustice and the Rebellion of the Gallows

February brings a particular heaviness to those who chronicle the human cost of the Kashmir conflict. Sandwiched between the Ninth and eleventh days of this month lie the anniversaries of two judicial killings that continue to haunt the conscience of anyone who believes that justice should be blind rather than politically convenient. In the penal archives of New Delhi’s Tihar Jail, two unmarked graves hold the remains of Maqbool Ahmed Butt and Muhammad Afzal Guru—Kashmiri men executed by the Indian state three decades apart, united in death by the denial of dignity both in life and after the noose tightened around their necks.

To write about Maqbool Butt is to write about the architecture of resistance itself. Here was a man who did not merely whisper about freedom in the safety of drawing rooms but crossed the Line of Control twice—an act of physical and political courage that demonstrated the geographical unity of a divided people. The founder of going struggle Maqbool Ahmed Butt represented a generation that believed the struggle for self-determination required more than diplomatic petitions; it demanded preparation, organization, and the willingness to bear the ultimate cost.

When the Indian judiciary convicted him in a murder case riddled with witness retractions and procedural irregularities, and the hangman pulled the lever on February 11, 1984, the state harbored a specific delusion: that this execution would serve as a terminal warning to Kashmiris not to think of freedom from Indian occupation. The gallows, they believed, would function

as a period at the end of a sentence, a full stop on the conversation about self-determination. Instead, the soil of Kashmir absorbed Butt’s blood and sprouted an entire generation of volunteers. The message intended to induce fear became a beacon of sacrifice. Hundreds of thousands of young Kashmiris, witnessing how the state treated their brightest son, crossed the threshold from sympathy to commitment, choosing the path of resistance over the safety of submission. The occupation’s attempt to decapitate the movement instead multiplied its soldiers.

Three decades later, on February 13, 2013, the state machinery returned to the same gallows to repeat its grim ritual, this time targeting one of those very volunteers who had heeded Butt’s unwitting call. Muhammad Afzal Guru was not merely an innocent man trapped in a web of conspiracy; he was the organic product of a resistance culture that Butt’s martyrdom had fertilized. His journey from a medical student to a committed freedom fighter mirrored the trajectory of thousands of Kashmiris who realized that the Indian state would not yield an inch of justice without resistance.

Yet Guru’s case represents something even more sinister than judicial overreach—it stands as a meticulously state-managed theater of scapegoating. Convicted for his alleged role in the 2001 Parliament attack—a crime he consistently maintained he did not orchestrate—Guru was the perfect offering for

a vengeful state seeking catharsis. His trial was marked by legal representation that can only be described as farcical, confessions extracted under circumstances that violated every norm of due process, and a Supreme Court judgment that admitted the evidence was circumstantial yet justified the death penalty to “satisfy the collective conscience of the society.”

This was not justice; it was human sacrifice dressed in judicial robes. The state needed a Kashmiri body to offer to the baying crowds, and Guru, already in custody and politically disposable, fit the requirement. The execution was carried out in secrecy, his family informed via post after the fact, and his body

interred within Tihar’s walls—a double punishment that denied his son, his wife, and his aging mother the fundamental human right to mourn according to their faith and tradition.

From a human rights perspective, these cases illuminate the pathology of occupation—not merely the military occupation of territory, but the occupation of legal systems by political expediency. Both men were denied the international standards of fair trial that India’s Constitution claims to uphold. Both were buried behind prison walls, a practice that serves no penological purpose but functions purely as collective punishment of bereaved families and a warning to dissenters. This refusal to return bodies constitutes a form of enforced disappearance after execution,

designed to erase the physical memory of the condemned while paradoxically ensuring their martyrdom.

The international community’s silence on these judicial murders speaks to the selective morality that governs global human rights discourse. While western capitals lecture the world on legal propriety and due process, the execution of Afzal Guru—described by legal experts as a “miscarriage of justice”—barely registered in diplomatic corridors. The Kashmiri people are thus reminded that their lives, and deaths, exist outside the perimeter of international concern, collateral damage in the strategic calculations of nuclear-armed states.

Yet the state’s calculus proved fatally flawed. By converting Butt and Guru into unquiet graves within its own prison complex, India created permanent shrines of resistance. The soil of Tihar, heavy with the remains of these men, has become sacred ground for those who continue to demand self-determination. The dates of February 09 and 13 are no longer merely calendar entries; they are days of transnational mourning and renewed commitment, when Kashmiris across the diaspora gather to assert that while bodies can be imprisoned and hanged, the volunteer tradition they inspired remains ungovernable. For every Maqbool Butt they hang, thousands rise; for every Afzal Guru they frame, the resolve deepens. The gallows, intended as instruments of deterrence, have become the very forge where the will for freedom is tempered.

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

A Practical Path to Turning a Struggling Student into a Success

In our society, education is often measured only by marks and grades. A child who scores well is considered intelligent, while one who falls behind is quickly labeled as “incapable.” In reality, no child is born incapable. Every child is like a closed bud that needs love, guidance, and the right strategy to bloom. If a student is weak in studies, it is not a sign of failure but an invitation to rethink our approach. With proper attention, a supportive environment, and positive training, every child can be transformed into a shining star.

The first step is to focus on the child’s psychological recovery. Words carry great power; calling a child “incapable” or “useless” damages their self-confidence from within. Constant comparisons, such as telling them to look at other children’s achievements, create feelings of inferiority. It is essential to remove the fear of failure from the child’s heart and reassure them that effort is their responsibility while results are in God’s hands. Celebrating small successes, listening carefully to their concerns, and becoming their friend rather than a strict authority figure builds confidence. Avoid scolding or humiliating the child in front of others and protect their self-respect, because a confident child is ready to learn.

Education nourishes not only the mind but also the soul. Teaching children to pray, such as reciting (رب زدني علما) “Rabbi zidni ilma” (“My Lord, increase me in knowledge”), develops trust in God. Respect for teachers shapes a child’s character, and giving charity fosters empathy and positive thinking. Above all, children should understand that education is not only

for securing a job but for becoming good and responsible human beings.

Parents and teachers play a central role in this entire process. Patience is the most important quality because change happens gradually. Expectations should be realistic, and each child’s unique abilities must be recognized. Continuous communication between parents and teachers supports the child’s progress. The most powerful teaching comes through example; when parents read and value learning themselves, children naturally develop a love for books.

These principles can be applied through a step-by-step plan. In the first week, focus on strengthening the relationship with the child and reducing academic pressure to remove fear. In the second week, establish a regular routine for sleep and a short, enjoyable study time. In the third week, set simple goals and encourage the child by rewarding achievements. In the fourth week, gradually introduce more challenging subjects and increase study time. Through this structured and positive approach, the child steadily gains confidence.

In the end, we must remember that every child is a precious diamond that only needs proper polishing. When we believe in them and guide them with love, patience, and wisdom, they can reach great heights. The journey may be difficult, but it is never impossible. With the right attention and strategy, every struggling student can be guided toward a bright future, because the truth is simple: no child is truly incapable, there is only a lack of attention.

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Russian Envoy maps out 900 years of diplomacy, unveils bright future for Russia-Pakistan ties

Naveed Ahmad Khan

Islamabad Policy Research Institute (IPRI) organized an event, titled “Legacy of Russian Diplomacy, Current State and Prospects of Russia-Pakistan Relations,” was attended by IPRI President Lt General Majid Ehsan and other distinguished guests.

On the occasion, Russian Ambassador Albert P. Khorev underscored the deep historical roots of Russian statecraft and outlined a robust vision for the future of Russia-Pakistan relations.

Ambassador Khorev began by tracing the origins of Russian diplomacy back to the 9th century, highlighting key milestones such as the 860 Treaty of Peace and Love with the Byzantine Empire and the formal establishment of the Ambassadorial Service in 1549. He paid tribute to historical figures who shaped Russia’s international engagement, from the strategic compromise of Alexander Nevsky during the Mongol period to the foundational work of Ivan Viskovaty.

The Ambassador detailed the contributions of several prominent foreign ministers, including:

Vasily Golitsyn (1682-



1689): Credited with securing the “Eternal Peace” with Poland-Lithuania and the first Sino-Russian border treaty.

Andrei Osterman: A key architect of the Treaty of Nystad (1721), which secured Russia’s access to the Baltic Sea.

Alexander Gorchakov (19th Century): Famous for declaring “Russia is concentrating” and for abolishing restrictive clauses of the 1856 Paris Treaty.

Andrei Gromyko (1957-1985): Noted for his pivotal role in founding the UN and managing Cold War crises. Ambassador Khorev specifically highlighted Gromyko’s role in establishing diplomatic relations between the USSR and Pakistan on May 1, 1948, and the USSR’s mediation leading to the 1966 Tashkent Declaration between Pakistan and India.

Yevgeny Primakov (1996-

1998): Associated with Russia’s turn toward a “multi-vector” foreign policy, famously exemplified by his decision to turn his plane back over the Atlantic in 1999 to protest NATO’s bombing of Yugoslavia.

Turning to contemporary ties, Ambassador Khorev stated that the friendship between Russia and Pakistan “is growing stronger every year.” He outlined several pillars of the current



bilateral relationship.

High-Level Political Dialogue: Noting two meetings between the countries’ leaders in 2025 and three between their foreign ministers, he emphasized a “dynamic and constructive” political dialogue.

International Coordination: Close cooperation at the UN and SCO, with shared commitments to a multipolar world order, combating terrorism, extremism, neo-colonialism, and Islamophobia.

Trade & Economic Projects:

Several promising initiatives are under discussion, including: Restoring the Karachi Steel Mills.

Launching railway connectivity via the North-South Transport Corridor.

Joint pharmaceutical production (including insulin).

Development and modernization of Pakistan’s hydropower sector and oil/gas fields.

Working on alternative payment mechanisms to bypass Western sanctions.

Humanitarian & Educational

Ties: Russia has tripled scholarships for Pakistani students to 152 for the 2025-26 academic year. Russian language centers are active, and both sides are exploring involvement in the “Russian Teacher Abroad” program.

Institutional Framework: The Intergovernmental Commission (IGC), Business Council, and regular diplomatic consultations provide a solid foundation for cooperation.

The Ambassador also suggested Pakistan explore engagement with BRICS and its New Development Bank, as well as with the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU).

Concluding his remarks, Ambassador Khorev reaffirmed Russia’s foreign policy priorities: upholding the UN Charter, building a multipolar world, combating neo-Nazism and neo-colonialism, and preserving historical truth. He expressed confidence in the continued growth of the Russia-Pakistan strategic partnership, stating, “We will continue working to realize the full potential of Russia-Pakistan relations.”

The seminar, which also featured an exhibition on the history of Russian diplomacy, concluded with a Q&A session.

High Commissioner Highlights Investment Potential in Pakistan’s Key Sectors for Canadian Business

Spokesman Report

OTTAWA: High Commissioner of Pakistan to Canada Muhammad Saleem, delivered keynote address at the historic Albany Club Toronto, engaging a distinguished audience of Canadian legislators, business executives and policy influencers. The event served as very pertinent platform to share the low lying fruits and immense opportunities for bilateral economic cooperation with Canada’s political and business communities.

The High Commissioner underscored significant untapped potential for expanding Pakistan-Canada trade and investment ties. He shed light on Pakistan’s competitive, promising and strategic investment sectors particularly mining and minerals; IT-enabled services;



clean energy; and infrastructure sectors. Emphasizing Pakistan’s various economic diplomacy initiatives, he highlighted Pakistan’s strategic location as a bridge to connect Central Asia, South Asia, the Gulf States and the wider world across Arabian Sea and Indian Ocean. He drew

attention to the growing prospects for engagement of Canadian enterprises across multiple sectors in Pakistan under the Canadian Government’s economic diversification drive.

The High Commissioner also shared geopolitical insights, stressing that sustainable peace

in South Asia is essential for long-term regional prosperity. He reiterated Pakistan’s principled position on the Kashmir dispute between Pakistan and India. Referring to Canada’s first ever UN peacekeeping mission across the disputed Kashmir region in 1949, he emphasized the need for peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute through implementation of the relevant UN Security Council Resolutions which call for holding free and fair plebiscite to enable the people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir decide whether they would join Pakistan or India.

Hon. Zee Hamid, MPP and Assoc. Solicitor General, Government of Ontario, as well as Hon. former MP Bryon Wilfert, Chair of the Canada-Pakistan Business Council, also addressed the event participants.

4th Meeting of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group Inaugurated at COMSTECH Secretariat

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: The 4th Meeting of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group (VMG) was formally inaugurated on Monday at the OIC-COMSTECH Secretariat, Islamabad, marking a major milestone in advancing vaccine self-reliance and strengthening health security across the Islamic world.

The inauguration session was graced by H. E. Mr. Syed Mustafa Kamal, Federal Minister of Health as chief guest, along with H. E. Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khokher, Assistant Secretary-General (Science & Technology), OIC, and H. E. Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary, Coordinator General, OIC-COMSTECH. Dr. M. Salman, Chief Executive Officer (CEO), National Institutes of Health (NIH), Pakistan, senior representatives of the OIC General Secretariat, WHO, Islamic Development Bank



(IsDB), SESRIC, SMIIC, vaccine manufacturers, regulators, development partners, and experts from OIC Member States, were also present on the occasion.

Welcoming the distinguished participants, Prof. Dr. Muhammad Iqbal Choudhary stated that hosting the fourth meeting of the VMG at a critical

global juncture reflects the strong commitment of OIC member states to advancing collective health security. He emphasized that the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent global supply disruptions clearly demonstrated that vaccine self-reliance is no longer an option but a strategic necessity, particularly for OIC countries

facing high disease burdens and rapidly growing populations.

Highlighting the evolution of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group since its establishment in 2014, Prof. Dr. Choudhary noted that the Group has laid strong foundations through cooperation agreements, joint training programmes, and the establishment of the OIC Centre of Excellence on Vaccines and Biotechnology Products in Indonesia.

Addressing the inaugural session, H. E. Mr. Syed Mustafa Kamal, Federal Minister of Health, appreciated the pivotal role of OIC-COMSTECH in promoting scientific cooperation and public health initiatives across the Islamic world. He informed participants that Pakistan is currently using 13 imported vaccines, and shared that the country aims to develop indigenous vaccine production capacity by 2030, in collaboration with OIC member

states. He proposed the establishment of a Vaccine Alliance among OIC countries to collectively address the health challenges of nearly 1.9 billion people living in the Islamic world.

In his remarks, H. E. Mr. Aftab Ahmad Khokher, Assistant Secretary-General (Science & Technology), OIC, reaffirmed the strong support of the OIC General Secretariat for the Vaccine Manufacturers Group. He emphasized that strengthening vaccine manufacturing capabilities within OIC Member States is central to the Organization’s broader science, technology, and development agenda. He highlighted the importance of regulatory convergence, standardization, and enhanced intra-OIC collaboration, and commended COMSTECH for its catalytic role in convening stakeholders and translating political commitment into tangible and sustainable outcomes.

The meeting is being attended by

leading vaccine manufacturers and research institutions from across the OIC region, including PT Bio Farma (Indonesia), the Pasteur Institute of Iran, the Razi Vaccine and Serum Research Institute, VaxSen-Pasteur Institute of Senegal, the Pharmacia Research Centre (Malaysia), and manufacturers from Pakistan and other Member States. National regulatory authorities, including the Drug Regulatory Authority of Pakistan (DRAP), along with international partners such as WHO, the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB), SESRIC, SMIIC, and GAVI, are also participating.

The 4th Meeting of the OIC Vaccine Manufacturers Group is expected to conclude with clear recommendations and an actionable roadmap aimed at enhancing vaccine availability, affordability, quality, and regional self-reliance, thereby contributing meaningfully to OIC-wide and global health security.

IRS hosts launch of Urdu translation of tragedy in Kashmir

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, hosted the launch of the Urdu translation of “Tragedy in Kashmir,” a historical work by Abdul Haq Suharwardy, highlighting the continued relevance of the Kashmir dispute and the importance of preserving its authentic historical narrative.

In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar Saleem, President, IRS, described the book as a rigorously researched account of the events surrounding the 1947 Partition and the annexation of Jammu and Kashmir. He noted that the work’s credibility is reinforced by corroboration from Indian

and British sources, making it a trusted reference for scholars, researchers, and diplomats.

Mr. Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, Chairman of the Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, said the book serves as a powerful reminder of the historical injustices faced by the people of Jammu and Kashmir. He added that its translation into Urdu would strengthen public awareness and national resolve on the Kashmir issue, particularly among younger generations.

Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organization and former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment, emphasized that

the Urdu translation is vital for highlighting the human dimension of the Kashmir dispute and for sustaining informed human rights advocacy.

Presenting an overview of the book, Senator Dr. Zarqa Suharwardy Taimur highlighted its academic depth and documentary evidence, noting that the Urdu translation makes this authoritative work accessible to a wider audience in Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Senator Barrister Syed Ali Zafar reflected on the legal and constitutional aspects of the Kashmir issue, stressing the need to ground contemporary discourse in verified historical facts.

Ambassador Ashraf Jehangir

Qazi underscored the importance of historical accuracy in shaping sound policy and diplomacy, describing the book as a serious scholarly contribution that helps separate fact from myth.

In his address, Ambassador Sardar Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, termed the Urdu translation an intellectual and national endeavour aimed at reconnecting people with the true historical context of Kashmir.

Ms. Nasim Zehra, author and senior journalist, highlighted the role of credible historical documentation in countering misinformation and historical distortion, particularly in the context



of Kashmir.

Mr. Farhan Bokhari, seasoned multimedia journalist and

columnist, discussed the relevance of the book for media narratives and public discourse,

noting that such works help reconnect society with forgotten or overlooked historical realities.

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
182,340.38	184,129.58
Day's High	Day's Low
185,650.59	180,992.79
Index Value	Change
50,622,772,909	−1789.20
Percentage	Time
−0.97%	9 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,386.23	+ 16.48
Percentage	Time
+0.16%	9 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
50,133.09	+ 16.01
Percentage	Time
+0.035%	9 Feb, 11:57 am GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average	
Index Value	Change
56,363.94	+ 2,110.26
Percentage	Time
+3.89%	9 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates		
Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195.29	197.25
Bahrain Dinar	743.00	752.51
Canadian Dollar	204.03	207.54
China Yuan	38.25	40.15
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	331.37	334.63
Hong Kong Dollar	35.34	36.21
Indian Rupee	2.82	3.33
Japanese Yen	1.7754	1.8747
Kuwaiti Dinar	906.85	916.30
Malaysian Ringgit	66.60	69.95
NewZealand \$	167.23	169.25
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	727.70	737.21
Qatari Riyal	76.02	79.01
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.30
Singapore Dollar	219.13	224.06
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	359.39	364.44
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.7
U.A.E Dirham	76.45	77.30
UK Pound Sterling	381.33	385.09
US Dollar	280.55	282.25

Pre-Arrival,
Post-Payment GD
Filing: A Game-
Changer for
Import Clearance

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The introduction of pre-arrival filing with post-payment of Import Goods Declarations (GD) could prove to be a major step towards faster and more efficient import clearance in Pakistan, said Chairman of the All Pakistan Customs Agents Association (APCAA) Arshad Khurshid.

Speaking at an awareness session held at the Customs Academy of Pakistan, Mr Khurshid described the new mechanism as a “game changer” for the country’s import clearance system. The session was attended by senior customs officials, representatives of the Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and a large number of customs agents.

Under the new facility, importers can file goods declarations before the arrival of vessels, while payment of customs duties, taxes and even provincial cess can be deferred, significantly reducing cargo dwell time and easing cash-flow pressures on businesses.

Meezan Bank Expands
Correspondent Banking Network
with PKR Vostro Account for
Freedom Bank Kazakhstan

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Meezan Bank, Pakistan’s leading Islamic bank and one of the largest banks in the country has signed an agreement with Freedom Bank Kazakhstan to establish a PKR Vostro Account, marking an important milestone in strengthening correspondent banking relations between the two institutions.

The signing ceremony was held on 4 February 2026 at Serena Hotel, Islamabad, and was attended by senior management and key officials from both banks.

Under the agreement, Meezan Bank will provide PKR Vostro account services to Freedom Bank Kazakhstan, enabling seamless settlement of trade and commercial transactions, improved liquidity



management, and enhanced operational efficiency for businesses and financial institutions operating between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.

The PKR Vostro account will improve settlement efficiency and facilitate smoother cross-border banking transactions, particu-

larly in support of trade-related payments and remittances between the two markets.

Speaking at the ceremony, Muhammad Abdullah Ahmed, Group Head, Transaction & International Banking of Meezan Bank Pakistan stated:

“The establishment of this PKR Vostro account highlights Meezan Bank’s continued efforts to expand its global correspondent banking footprint and strengthen cross-border payment infrastructure. This arrangement will facilitate smoother PKR settlements, enhance transaction efficiency, and enable our banking partners and business communities to benefit from secure, reliable and compliant banking channels. We believe this collaboration will play

a meaningful role in supporting trade and strengthening financial connectivity between Pakistan and Kazakhstan.”

Timur Agdavletov, First Deputy Chairman of the Management Board of Freedom Bank Kazakhstan added:

“We are pleased to partner with Meezan Bank in establishing PKR clearing and settlement capabilities. This represents an important step in strengthening Freedom Bank’s international banking platform and enhancing our ability to support clients engaged in trade and cross-border business with Pakistan. We look forward to developing a strong correspondent relationship that delivers greater convenience, efficiency and value for businesses in both markets.”

Welcome meeting

ISLAMABAD: Coordinator to the Prime Minister on Commerce, Rana Ihsaan Afzal Khan, holding a welcoming meeting with H.E. Cham Nimul, Minister of Commerce of Cambodia, as both sides reaffirm commitment to strengthening bilateral trade and investment cooperation ahead of the 2nd Pakistan-Cambodia Joint Trade Committee (JTC).



ABHI Microfinance Bank, 1LINK to
launch 1GO Raast P2M Services for
Merchants

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: ABHI Microfinance Bank Ltd. (Abhi MFB) has entered into a strategic partnership with 1LINK to roll out 1GO Raast Person-to-Merchant (P2M) services, enabling merchants nationwide to accept instant digital payments through Raast using QR technology.

The agreement was formalized at a signing ceremony where Mariam Pervaiz, Chief Commercial Officer – Abhi Microfinance Bank, and Najeeb Agrawalla, Chief Executive Officer – 1LINK, signed on behalf of their respective organizations. The ceremony was also attended by Kabeer Naqvi, Entrepreneur in Residence – Abhi Fintech, along with senior representatives from both institutions.

Under this collaboration, Abhi MFB will integrate 1LINK’s 1GO Raast P2M static QR solution into its merchant



ecosystem. This will allow shopkeepers, small businesses, and service providers to accept digital payments directly into their bank accounts without the need for expensive hardware or complex setup.

Customers will be able to make payments instantly using Raast-supported mobile banking apps and wallets, creating a simple and interoperable payment experience.

UNDP Pakistan
Empowers 200 Female
Students at Emerson
University in Multan
with Digital Skills



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Under the DHL Project, UNDP Pakistan has launched a specialized “Digital Skills & Online Economy” training program at Emerson University Multan, exclusively for 200 female students. Led by Digital Literacy Consultant Muhammad Yasin, PMP®, the intensive hands-on sessions cover essential

modern tools, including AI productivity, professional communication, and mobile video editing via CapCut. By focusing on global earning platforms like Fiverr, the initiative aims to bridge the digital gender gap in South Punjab, equipping young women with the practical expertise needed to secure financial independence and thrive in the global digital marketplace.

PAAPAM Announces
21st Pakistan Auto
Show 2026 to Be Held
in September

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Pakistan Association of Automotive Parts & Accessories Manufacturers (PAAPAM) has officially announced the 21st edition of the Pakistan Auto Show (PAPS) 2026, Pakistan’s premier and most comprehensive automotive exhibition, scheduled to take place on 18-19-20 September 2026 (Fri-Sat-Sun) at International Expo Center Lahore.

Organised by PAAPAM, the Pakistan Auto Show is widely recognised as the country’s largest and most influential automotive & parts exhibition, representing the complete mobility and automotive value chain. Over the years, PAPS has consist-

ently recorded the highest number of exhibitors and the largest public footfall, firmly positioning itself as the flagship platform for Pakistan’s automotive industry.

Speaking at the announcement, Salman Saleem, Convener of the PAPS 2026 Organising Committee, stated that “PAPS 2026 will serve as a key platform to drive business expansion and innovation in Pakistan’s automotive sector.” He added that the exhibition will feature extensive participation from OEMs, auto parts manufacturers and allied industries, with a strong emphasis on business collaboration, technology exchange and sustainable industry growth.

Pakistan loses nearly 1pc of GDP annually to climate impacts,
reveals OICCI’s 4th Pakistan Climate Conference

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Pakistan is losing close to one per cent of its GDP each year to climate-related damages, speakers revealed on Monday at the 4th Pakistan Climate Conference, as government leaders, development partners and business executives urged an accelerated shift from policy frameworks to bankable climate action.

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Masood Malik said Pakistan was on the frontline of a rapidly intensifying crisis. “I commend OICCI for creating a platform where climate resilience is treated not as CSR, but as an economic imper-

ative. From record 53°C heatwaves to floods that displaced four million people last year, with over 13,000 glaciers melting and climate losses costing nearly one per cent of GDP annually, this is an existential challenge,” he said.

Addressing the participants, Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb described climate change as an existential threat, stressing that while key frameworks including the National Adaptation Plan, Climate Prosperity Plan and Green Taxonomy were in place, the focus must now shift to mobilising available financing and developing investable projects. He highlighted the private sector’s role in providing not just capital, but innovation

and technical expertise. Speaking at the Conference, Regional Lead, Sustainable Finance, Asia and Pacific at United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), Chongguang Yu (Charles) said the core challenge was no longer capital availability but fragmented systems, advocating blended finance, risk-sharing mechanisms and programmatic investment pipelines to unlock scalable private-sector participation.

President OICCI Yousaf Hussain said the Government of Pakistan was making tangible progress on its climate agenda. He noted that from emphasising adaptation finance through public-private partnerships at the World Economic Forum in Davos to finalising the \$20 billion,

10-year Country Partnership Framework with the World Bank, and preparing for the launch of Pakistan’s first Green Panda Bond, the steps reflected growing momentum on sustainable finance. “Together, these steps signal a clear and credible national commitment to climate resilience.” Meanwhile, Senior Vice President OICCI Jason Avanceña said the Conference was designed to move beyond rhetoric towards practical economic outcomes. “Building on the momentum from COP30, our discussions focused on translating climate commitments into economic outcomes, from modernising Pakistan’s strained power grid and accelerating renewable energy to unlocking Blue Economy opportunities through coastal

resilience and marine sustainability, while leveraging artificial intelligence to improve climate forecasting, reduce disaster losses, and strengthen investment planning,” said Jason.

The event was attended by local and international speakers from UNDP, Asia Development Bank, International Finance Corporation, World Wildlife Fund Pakistan, State Bank of Pakistan, SECP, Pakistan Stock Exchange, Environmental Protection Agency Punjab, Sindh Solid Waste Management Board, Sindh Environmental Protection Agency, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, and leading corporates including Unilever, Nestlé, Standard Chartered Bank and Beko Global.

Gomal University launches HEC Zonal Cricket Championship



Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Gomal University, in collaboration with the Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad, formally inaugurated the Zonal Cricket Championship Session 2025-26 (Men) at the university's sports ground on Monday. The opening ceremony was attended by university officials, distinguished guests, faculty members, and players representing various universities across the region.

Senior Auditor of the Higher Education Department Peshawar, Attaullah,

graced the occasion as the chief guest and officially declared the tournament open.

Addressing the ceremony, he emphasized the importance of sports activities in promoting students' physical and mental development. He noted that such events help instill discipline, teamwork, and a spirit of healthy competition among youth.

Teams from several universities located across the region are participating in the championship, including FATA University, Kohat University of Science and Technology, Khushal

Khan Khattak University, University of Bannu, University of Lakki Marwat, and the University of Agriculture Dera Ismail Khan. A series of matches will be played during the tournament, providing players an opportunity to showcase their cricketing talent and sportsmanship.

Vice Chancellor of Gomal University, Professor Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, directed Director Sports Dr. Waseem Khan to ensure the provision of all possible facilities and arrangements for the participating teams.

The university administration

warmly welcomed the visiting teams and completed comprehensive preparations for the smooth conduct of the event.

Director Sports Dr. Waseem Khan reaffirmed the university's commitment to promoting sports and organizing competitive events in the future to encourage student participation in healthy activities.

The ceremony concluded with the chief guest extending his best wishes to all teams and appreciating the players for their dedication and enthusiasm on the field.

Pakistan set to play against India on Feb 15, confirms Govt

ISLAMABAD: The Government of Pakistan has officially confirmed that the national team will take the field against arch-rivals India on February 15 in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026.

The announcement was confirmed via the Government of Pakistan's social media account.

"In view of the outcomes achieved in multilateral discussions, as well as the request of friendly countries, the Government of Pakistan hereby directs the Pakistan National Cricket Team to take the field on February 15, 2026, for

its scheduled fixture in the ICC Men's T20 World Cup," the tweet wrote.

"Moreover, this decision has been taken with the aim of protecting the spirit of cricket, and to support the continuity of this global sport in all participating nations," it added.

The decision was taken after the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Mohsin Naqvi briefed Prime Minister Shebaz on the outcomes of talks with the ICC.

"The Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan, Mr. Shehbaz Sharif has been

formally briefed by the Chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), Mr. Mohsin Naqvi, regarding the outcomes of high-level deliberations held between the PCB, representatives of the International Cricket Council (ICC), and the Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB)."

Pakistan's government also reviewed requests from the Bangladesh Cricket Board and support from Sri Lanka, UAE, and others seeking leadership for solutions to recent challenges.

"The Government of Pakistan has

reviewed the formal requests extended to the PCB by the Bangladesh Cricket Board, as well as the supporting communications from Sri Lanka, the United Arab Emirates, and other member nations. These correspondences sought Pakistan's leadership in securing a viable solution to recent challenges," the statement concluded.

For those unaware, the development comes after the Government of Pakistan had instructed the national team not to take the field against India in solidarity with Bangladesh.

Dominant South Africa crush Canada in T20 World Cup clash

South Africa inflicted a 57-run thrashing on Canada in Ahmedabad on Monday, as the 2024 runners-up opened their latest T20 World Cup campaign with a dominant performance with bat and ball.

After Canada won the toss and elected to field, South Africa smashed 47 off the last three overs to pile up 213-4, the highest total so far in this year's T20 World Cup.

David Miller hit an unbeaten 39 off 23 balls and Tristan Stubbs was not out 34 off 19 as they put on an unbroken stand of 75 in 6.1 overs at the end.

Canada's Navneet Dhaliwal was the only top-order batter to offer any resistance, falling for 64 in the final over as Canada were restricted to 156-8 in reply.

Lungi Ngidi did the bulk of the damage for South Africa, taking 4-31 from his four overs as their pace attack had Canada reeling at 45-4 during the powerplay.

Ngidi was named player of the match and said the evening dew had helped his variation.

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channel

"It did have a bit of an impact. You could see once you bowled a touch fuller, it would sort of just slide on. The slow balls were still holding up a little

bit," he said.

"We knew that obviously our attack brings pace, but for me, I feel like the variations are always the ones that catch people out."

'ICC T20 World Cup 2026 Gets Off to a Thrilling Start'

The ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026 has once again captured the attention of cricket fans around the world. Co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, the global event began with exciting matches and tremendous enthusiasm. The opening games, especially in India's major cities and Sri Lanka's historic grounds, witnessed packed stadiums and an atmosphere charged with cricket fever. Nail-biting contests, matches decided in the final overs, and impressive performances by both top teams and emerging nations have made this tournament exceptionally engaging. This shortest format of the game has always been full of drama, excitement, and surprises, where a single over can change the course of a match and underdogs can defeat giants.

This year's T20 World Cup is the largest in history, featuring 20 teams. These teams have been divided into groups, from which the top sides will advance to the Super Eight stage, followed by the semifinals and final. Alongside major cricketing nations such as India, Pakistan, Australia, England, South Africa, New Zealand, Sri Lanka, West Indies, and Afghanistan, emerging teams like the Netherlands, Ireland, Scotland, Namibia, Nepal, the USA, Oman, Canada, the UAE, Zimbabwe, and Italy are also part of this mega event. Matches are being played at iconic venues in Indian cities such as Mumbai, Delhi, Kolkata, Bengaluru, and Chennai, as well as Sri Lanka's historic grounds in Colombo, Kandy, and Galle. This

expanded format has played a significant role in making cricket more global and providing smaller teams with valuable opportunities to prove themselves.

Some well-known teams failed to qualify for this edition, as they could not progress through the qualifying rounds. While the ICC has aimed to maintain high competitive standards, it has also focused on expanding global participation, resulting in new and talented teams replacing some established ones. This blend has made the World Cup even more exciting and unpredictable, where every match can produce a major upset.

The tournament's early matches were played at famous Indian venues, including the opening match at Mumbai's historic Wankhede Stadium, where spectators from around the world created a vibrant atmosphere. One of the most talked-about games of the opening days was between England and Nepal at Delhi's Arun Jaitley Stadium, where Nepal came close to pulling off a major upset and surprised everyone with their spirited performance. England posted a strong total, but Nepal chased bravely and kept the contest alive until the final over. Although England won by a narrow margin, Nepal's performance proved that the gap between big and small teams is steadily narrowing.

The tournament then moved to Sri Lanka, where Sri Lanka faced Ireland at Colombo's R. Premadasa Stadium. Playing in home conditions, the Sri Lankan team displayed disciplined bowling and built solid partnerships in batting. Ireland showed resistance,

but Sri Lanka's superior strategy earned them victory and delighted the home crowd.

Meanwhile, in Bengaluru at the M. Chinnaswamy Stadium, the match between Pakistan and the Netherlands was equally thrilling, with Pakistan narrowly avoiding defeat in the final moments. Pakistan's batting struggled against the Netherlands' disciplined bowling, and for a while, it seemed a major upset was on the cards. However, Pakistan's experience and composure under pressure secured them a hard-fought win. This match not only highlighted Pakistan's mental strength but also demonstrated that associate teams are no longer easy opponents.

Pakistan's overall position in the tournament appears strong yet challenging. The team comprises a mix of young talent and experienced players. Pakistan's biggest strength lies in its fast bowling, which has the ability to trouble any top order and maintain pressure in the death overs. While the batting lineup has the potential for aggressive starts, it has occasionally lacked consistency in the middle overs. However, in recent matches, particularly in Bengaluru and Chennai, the team has shown adaptability to different conditions.

In the group stage, Pakistan faces tough competition not only from major teams but also from emerging sides. The narrow win against the Nether-

lands served as a reminder that no team can be taken lightly. At the same time, such close contests help teams identify weaknesses early and improve before the knockout stages, which could prove beneficial for Pakistan.

The biggest talking point of the tournament remains the possibility of a clash between India and Pakistan, potentially at historic venues like Eden Gardens in Kolkata or Wankhede Stadium in Mumbai. Whenever these two teams face each other, the match transcends sport and becomes a global spectacle watched by millions. Their encounters in ICC tournaments are consistently among the most viewed, with emotions running high on both sides.

If India and Pakistan meet in the group stage, it will undoubtedly be the tournament's most anticipated and significant match. From a cricketing perspective, both teams boast world-class players capable of changing the game at any moment. India's strong batting lineup, disciplined bowling attack, and excellent fielding make them one of the tournament favorites. On the other hand, Pakistan's unpredictability, pace bowling, and aggressive style add to the excitement.

Predicting the outcome, the match is likely to be extremely close and fiercely contested. India may hold a slight edge due to their consistency and strong batting, particularly in the

powerplay and middle overs. However, if Pakistan's fast bowlers strike early and put pressure on India's top order, the complexion of the match could change. If Pakistan's batting avoids early collapses and builds partnerships, they possess the capability to chase or defend any target. History shows that Pakistan often elevates its performance in high-stakes encounters, making the result unpredictable.

Beyond India and Pakistan, several other teams are strong contenders for the title. Australia, England, South Africa, and New Zealand are known for their organized strategies and strong performances under pressure. Sri Lanka, playing in home conditions, could be dangerous, while Afghanistan's spin bowling attack can trouble even the strongest batting lineups on pitches in Colombo and Kandy. The West Indies, twice winners of the T20 World Cup, remain an unpredictable side but can defeat any opponent on their day.

One of the most encouraging aspects of this World Cup has been the outstanding performances of emerging teams. Nepal's brave showing against England, the Netherlands' near-upset against Pakistan, and the solid performances of teams like Scotland and Namibia highlight that cricket is no longer confined to a few countries. These teams bring passion, energy, and fresh talent to the field, making contests more thrilling, whether played in Mumbai or Colombo.

Looking ahead, Pakistan's success will depend on consistency in batting and effective utilization of bowling

resources. If the team can maintain stability in the middle overs and avoid losing wickets under pressure, it can comfortably reach the Super Eight stage and emerge as a strong contender beyond that. Pakistan's fast bowling gives them a natural advantage, especially on pitches offering bounce and swing. Strong leadership and sound match management will be key factors in this journey.

If an India-Pakistan clash takes place in the group stage, its impact will go far beyond the points table. Victory in such a high-profile encounter often provides immense confidence that carries teams deep into the tournament. For Pakistan, an early win against India could significantly boost morale, while for India, such a victory would further solidify their status as title favorites.

The T20 World Cup has begun with thrilling matches, surprising results, and cricket of the highest quality. Games played across cities in India and Sri Lanka have made the event more inclusive, competitive, and unpredictable than ever before. Despite early challenges, Pakistan has shown resilience, and its journey ahead looks even more exciting.

A potential India-Pakistan encounter could ignite a new wave of passion and enthusiasm, transforming this World Cup into not just a sporting event but a global spectacle. As the group stage progresses and the knockout rounds approach, fans can look forward to more memorable moments, gripping contests, and the true spirit of cricket.

(Writer can be reached at: aahsan210@gmail.com)

Defending Champions Gilgit-Baltistan Ready for Wheelchair Cricket T20 Showdown



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The fifth Interloop Quaid-e-Azam Trophy Tournament 2026 will begin in Faisalabad from February 11. Six teams will participate in the country's biggest domestic event organized by the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council, including Sindh, Punjab, Balochistan, KPK, Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

The Gilgit-Baltistan team will defend its honor in the event. National and international wheelchair cricketers from all over the country are participating in the event played in the T20 format. Young players have been provided with ample opportunities in the Quaid-e-Azam Trophy. The promotion of wheelchair cricket in the country and the upcoming third T20 Asia Cup, which will be hosted by Pakistan in Karachi and Hyderabad, are of great importance.

According to the Pakistan Wheelchair Cricket Council, a total of ten matches will be played, the final match will be a day-night match, which will be held on February 52 at the Bohra Wali Ground. The trophy unveiling ceremony will be held on February 10 at a local hotel in Faisalabad, which will be attended by players, dignitaries, and past and present cricketers.

Walee Technologies acquire Multan Franchise after record bid

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board has conducted successful Team Auction of the Multan Franchise with Walee Technologies acquiring it for a record PKR 245 crore here at the Expo Centre, Lahore on Monday evening.

The Auction was officially started by Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi after CEO PSL Salman Naseer shared his thoughts regarding the sale and the journey of the HBL Pakistan Super League as it enters the New Era.

A total of five technically qualified bidders comprising the victorious Walee Technologies, Aim Next, Particle Igniter, CD Ventures and DSM took part in the fiercely competitive Team Auction.

A base price of PKR 182 crore was set for the Franchise after which the parties took on each other in only round of bids. Walee Technologies led by their CEO Ahsan Tahir made the successful bid of PKR 245 crore, which is the highest figure among all the eight HBL PSL franchises.

Chairman PCB, Mohsin Naqvi "I congratulate Walee Technologies for acquiring the franchise with a record figure and I appreciate the other participating bidders as well for their keen interest in the HBL PSL.

"The fair and transparent team Auction has set new records and I'm sure the league will continue to grow at the same pace. The evident trust of various stakeholders going into the 11th season has increased the stature of the HBL PSL manifold.

"As the lineup of all eight franchise owners is completed, I want to assure our fans that the upcoming season of HBL PSL will be unprecedented in terms of reach, growth and entertainment."

CEO PSL, Salman Naseer "The HBL PSL stands proud and tall today given the kind of bids made in this Auction and we welcome Walee Technologies to the HBL PSL family. This also showcases the immense commercial and financial potential of the league after a 10-year long journey. There cannot be a better time to be entering the New Era. Over to the historic HBL PSL Players Auction now."

"The journey ahead is going to be highly exciting in the coming weeks, months and years as we will continue to amaze our fans with various developments."

Meeting with UN delegation

ISLAMABAD: The Honble Chief Justice of Pakistan in a meeting with UN delegation at the Supreme Court of Pakistan on Monday.



Photo: PID

CJP briefs UN delegation on judicial reforms, role of judiciary in improving governance

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahyah Afridi meets with Mohamed Yahya, United Nations Resident Coordinator in Pakistan, along with a delegation comprising Country Representatives of United Nations Development Programme, UN Women, United Nations Children's Fund, United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, and UNFPA.

According to a press statement released by apex court's public relation office, detailed discussions were held on reform in Pakistan's justice sector and the evolving role of judicial institutions in strengthening governance, accountability, and public confidence in the rule of law.

The Chief Justice shared his perspectives on ongoing reform interventions aimed at improving access to justice, enhancing institutional efficiency, and ensuring a justice system that is responsive, inclusive, and citizen-centric.

During the course of the discussion, the Chief Justice of Pakistan underscored the close linkage between justice sector reforms and the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals which call for access to justice for all, and the building of effective, accountable, and inclusive institutions. He emphasized that a strong and credible justice system is a

foundational pillar for sustainable development and democratic governance.

The CJP also expressed appreciation for the constructive role played by United Nations agencies in Pakistan in supporting governance reforms and institutional strengthening. He acknowledged their contributions in areas such as rule of law development, human rights protection, gender equality, child-sensitive justice, and capacity building

of justice sector institutions, noting that these efforts have meaningfully complemented national reform initiatives.

The meeting further explored potential avenues for future collaboration between the judiciary and United Nations organizations, including technical assistance, judicial education and training, data-driven and evidence-based reform initiatives, policy support, and the sharing of international best practices.



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue

Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Monday described Saudi Arabia as a "longstanding partner" and emphasized

Saudi investment pipeline active as reforms advance: Finance Minister

the importance of sustainable, mutually beneficial cooperation, particularly in key economic sectors.

Speaking to Arab News on the sidelines of the AIUla Conference for Emerging Market Economies, Aurangzeb said the relationship between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia remains resilient despite global geopolitical tensions.

He said "The Kingdom has been a longstanding partner of Pakistan for the longest time, and we are very grateful for how we have been supported through thick and thin, through rough patches and, even now that we have

achieved macroeconomic stability, I think we are now well positioned for growth."

Aurangzeb said the partnership has facilitated investment across several sectors, including minerals and mining, information technology, agriculture, and tourism. He cited an active pipeline of Saudi investments, including Waf's entry into Pakistan's downstream oil and gas sector.

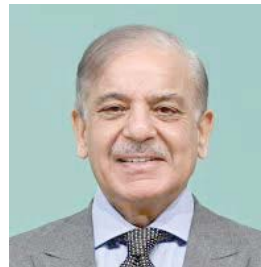
"The Kingdom has been very public about their appetite for the country, and the sectors are minerals and mining, IT, agriculture, tourism; and there are already investments which have come in. For example,

Waf's came in (in terms of downstream oil and gas stations). There's a very active pipeline," the minister said.

He said private sector activity is driving growth in these areas, while government-to-government cooperation is focused mainly on infrastructure development.

Acknowledging longstanding investor concerns related to bureaucracy and delays, Aurangzeb said Pakistan has made progress over the past two years through structural reforms and fiscal discipline, alongside efforts to improve the business environment.

PM facilitates Sanae Takaichi on her re-election as Prime Minister of Japan



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Monday congratulated Sanae Takaichi on her re-election as the Prime Minister of Japan.

"We look forward to continue working with Prime Minister Takaichi to further strengthen and diversify our excellent bilateral relations with Japan," the prime minister wrote on his official X handle.

CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif Meets World Bank President Ajay Banga

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif met a delegation of World Bank led by its president Ajay Banga. She warmly welcomed the World Bank President and his delegation. Both leaders held talks on promoting partnership between World Bank and Punjab, besides discussing cooperation in the fields of education, 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar' (Own Roof, Own Home), 'Suthra' Punjab (Clean Punjab), and climate protection. World Bank President Ajay Banga appreciated Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif's welfare projects, especially her ongoing tourism, education, health, and skill development projects in Punjab. They also reviewed in the meeting projects being run in various sectors of Punjab with World Bank's cooperation.



World Bank's delegation assured their future support and investment for climate resilience, digital governance, and inclusive development.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif said that Punjab government has introduced various initiatives for the improvement of digital payments, governance, and agriculture. She added that the purpose of digitalization is to promote efficiency, transparency, and development in the province, as initiatives like Nawaz Sharif IT City, global IT certifications, and e-procurement are improving the governance system. She underscored that Punjab's

irrigation system has been improved with the help of World Bank, and affordable housing is being provided through 'Apni Chhat Apna Ghar program.' She flashed that social welfare schemes such as Nighaban Ramadan Package and Himmat Card have been launched for the deserving individuals.

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President felicitates Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on historic electoral mandate in Japan

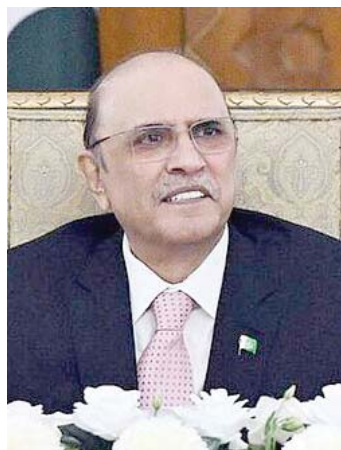
City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari has extended warm congratulations to Prime Minister Sanae Takaichi on the historic landslide victory of her Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) in Japan's lower house elections, securing a commanding majority in the House of Representatives.

The President noted that the decisive electoral outcome reflects the strong confidence of the Japanese people in Prime Minister Takaichi's leadership and her commitment to making Japan strong and prosperous.

President Zardari observed that the scale of the mandate, marking a post-1955 record for the party, underscores public endorsement of Prime Minister Takaichi's policy direction and governance agenda at a critical moment for Japan.

He conveyed his best wishes to Prime Minister Takaichi for success in fulfilling the responsibilities entrusted to her by the



Japanese electorate and expressed confidence that Japan would continue to advance stability, progress and prosperity under her leadership.

The President also reaffirmed Pakistan's desire to further strengthen friendly relations with Japan and to deepen cooperation across areas of mutual interest for the benefit of both peoples.

Pakistan Reforms Report 2026 launched, documents over 600 governance reforms

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Reforms Report 2026 was launched in Islamabad on Monday, documenting more than 600 governance reforms carried out across 135 federal ministries, divisions and affiliated institutions during 2025, according to the organisers.

Prepared by Mishal Pakistan — the country partner institute of the World Economic Forum — the report is the second annual edition of what is described as Pakistan's first systematic documentation of governance reforms. It notes a fivefold increase in reform activity compared to the previous year.

The report indicates a shift in policy focus from crisis stabilisation toward strengthening long-term state capacity. The energy sector accounted for roughly 40 per cent of the recorded reforms, followed by law and justice, and digital governance and IT, highlighting an emphasis on structural and digital transformation.

More than 200 reforms were implemented through digital platforms aimed at improving transparency and reducing administrative discretion. Fiscal and energy sector measures, including renegotiated independent power producer

contracts, are projected to generate about Rs1.4 trillion in power-sector savings.

The report also notes progress in natural resource development, including the \$6 billion Reko Diq copper-gold project and new tight gas and offshore exploration policies targeting around \$5bn in potential investment.

Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik, who attended the launch as chief guest, stressed the importance of credible documentation in strengthening public trust and improving Pakistan's standing among international partners and investors.

He said transparent, fact-based reporting helps shift public discourse from policy announcements to implementation and outcomes.

Mishal Pakistan Chief Executive Officer Amir Jahangir said the report aims to create an institutional memory of governance reforms, enabling year-to-year comparison and long-term analysis.

Co-founder Purush Chaudhary said the initiative focuses on documenting reforms that improve access, transparency and trust, particularly in digital governance, justice delivery and citizen services.

NDMA dispatches 28th humanitarian aid consignment to Palestine



ISLAMABAD: National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has dispatched an additional humanitarian aid consignment for the people of Palestine following the special directives of Prime Minister.

The 28th relief consignment, comprising 100 tons of tents, has been sent with the support of Alkhidmat Foundation. The relief goods were dispatched through a special flight from Allama Iqbal International Airport, Lahore to Al-arish Egypt for onward delivery to Gaza.

With the dispatch of this latest consignment, the total volume of humanitarian assistance sent to

Palestine through 28 consignments has reached 2,727 tons. The sending-off ceremony was attended by Punjab Housing Minister, MPA Mian Bilal Yasin as chief guests. Senior officials from NDMA, MoFA, along with representatives of government departments and Alkhidmat Foundation, were also present on the occasion.

Government of Pakistan and the people of Pakistan stand firmly with the people of Palestine in this difficult time and will continue to make every possible effort to support them and address their humanitarian needs.