



Daily The Spokesman



China to scrap tariffs for most of Africa from May: Xi

Beijing's scrapping of tariffs for all but one African country will start May 1, Chinese President Xi Jinping said Saturday, according to state media. China already has a zero-tariff policy for imports from 33 African countries, but Beijing said last year it would extend the policy to all 53 of its diplomatic partners on the continent.



Mangal claims authorities turning blind eye to Balochistan incidents

The Balochistan National Party head, Sardar Akhtar Mengal, on Saturday claimed that the Election Commission accepted his resignation 17 months after it was submitted. He said the delay reflected what he described as a wider disconnect between authorities and the situation in Balochistan.

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Ramzan Package Launched

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif launches the PM Ramzan Package on Saturday.



Photo: PID

PM unveils Rs38 bn Ramazan Package for deserving families

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Saturday, formally unveiled PM's Ramazan Package 2026 worth Rs38 billion, benefiting more than 12 million families through digital payments.

Addressing the ceremony, the prime minister said that they had done away with the

old distribution system last year as the stuff provided to the deserving families under the system was of low quality and people used to wait in queues, compromising their self-respect.

The prime minister, in an address broadcast on national TV channels, said that on the basis of previous years' experience, this year, the package

would be distributed with new

commitment and improvement, adding each deserving family would now get an enhanced amount of Rs13,000.

The digital banking and cashless economy not only enhanced transparency but also saved public time and their dignity, he added.

Secretary Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) Aamer Ali Ahmad said that

it would be a historic relief package as the government would be rolling a comprehensive relief package based upon compassion and empathy in line with the spirit of the holy month.

He apprised that previous package amount of Rs5,000 per family was now enhanced to Rs 13,000 per family on the instruction of the prime minister.

A total amount of Rs38 billion had been earmarked for the relief package benefitting more than 12 million families and assisting about 36 million people, he added.

He said State Bank of Pakistan had also issued a framework for the distribution of the package, adding a helpline 9999, mobile app and portal had also been introduced for support.

JI protest in Karachi turns violent near Sindh Assembly

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Supporters of Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan staged a sit-in on Sindh Assembly Road on Saturday, demanding greater rights for Karachi and an empowered local government, as clashes erupted with police.

The protest, led by Karachi chief Munim Zafar, saw workers march from various areas toward the Sindh Assembly Building.

Heavy police contingents blocked their advance, setting up barricades. After negotiations failed, protesters began a sit-in on the main road. Police resorted to shelling, while demonstrators attempted to break through security cordon.

During the clashes, several protesters and police personnel were injured. Protesters managed to reach the



single stone."

Speaking to Aaj News, Munim Zafar said the party had announced the protest two weeks earlier and would continue the sit-in outside the assembly.

Intermittent clashes continued in the Red Zone, where police arrested more than 10 workers, according to officials.

Meanwhile, the JI chief Naeemur Rehman took to X and said that the "entire country is witnessing the fascism" of the PPP, attaching videos and photos of police action against the protesters.

The use of tear gas against peaceful citizens and attempts to stop the sit-in outside the Sindh Assembly are clear evidence of the Sindh government's failure and panic. An empowered city government is Karachi's right, and the people of Karachi will secure this right," he said.

Opposition sit-in enters second day in Islamabad over Imran's health

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Opposition lawmakers under the banners of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Tehreek Tahafuz-e-Ayeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) continued their sit-in for a second consecutive day on Saturday at Parliament House Islamabad and KP House Islamabad, demanding

immediate medical treatment for PTI founder Imran Khan.

The protest began after Friday prayers and continued overnight in Islamabad, following disclosure in the Supreme Court of Pakistan that Khan's right eye had only 15 per cent vision remaining.

Security was tightened at both locations, with heavy police

deployment and the Red Zone sealed. All internal and external gates of Parliament House were closed, restricting movement in and out of the premises.

The sit-in is being led by TTAP Chairman Mehmood Khan Achakzai, alongside PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser,

and other lawmakers.

At KP House, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi and provincial legislators are also participating in the sit-in.

Protesters are demanding that Imran Khan be transferred to Shifa International Hospital for treatment and be granted access to independent medical

care.

Senate opposition leader Allama Raja Nasir Abbas said Parliament House had effectively been turned into a detention facility.

"We have been inside Parliament since yesterday. We wanted to go outside but all the gates were closed," he said in a video posted by TTAP on X.

فرمان رسوی
Leading National Daily
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تمہرے قابلہ ان سے اپنے چاہا ہے
ان سے عروج کی خواہ ہے کیا
رخی اللہ عہدہ بھانے یا کیا کر سوال اللہ علی
الشطیپہ و سلک (جیت اور ادھ کے موچ پر)
فیلی اگرچہ کوئی نہ پہنچے مطمئن ہو جائے
بعد ملبوہ ہوئیں پس ساری کا انہوں
شلاخاں عروج کے درستے لوگوں کی طرح
کیا حرام کوں ہے (7229)
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A Leading National Daily



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Mangal claims authorities turning blind eye to Balochistan incidents

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PM Shehbaz Sharif meets Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi to review national security



City Desk

a detailed update on administrative matters related to the capital.

The prime minister instructed the interior minister to continue addressing Islamabad's security and related issues with diligence and effectiveness.

During the meeting, the interior minister briefed the prime minister on the national security situation as well as the current law-and-order and security arrangements in Islamabad. He also provided

Atta Tarar urges restraint in politicizing PTI founder's eye issue



City Desk

continuity of his undergoing treatment, said the minister in a statement posted on his personal Xs formerly Twitter account.

"A detailed report on this matter will also be submitted to the Supreme Court," the minister said while urging restraint in having "speculations, baseless news, and attempts to give this matter a political color for personal interest."

IMF discussing electricity tariffs revisions with Pakistan

Reuters

The International Monetary Fund is discussing proposed electricity tariff revisions with Pakistan authorities, the fund said in a statement to Reuters on Saturday, adding that the burden of the revisions should not fall on middle- or lower-income households.

"The ongoing discussions with the authorities will assess whether the proposed tariff revisions are consistent with these commitments and evaluate their potential impact on macroeconomic stability, including inflation," it said in its statement.

Pakistan announced a proposed tariff overhaul, which analysts said would lift inflation while easing pressure point.

sure on industry, as it seeks to meet conditions under its \$7 billion Extended Fund Facility (EFF) as another review of the programme approaches.

The EFF is a longer-term IMF loan programme designed to help countries address deep-seated economic weaknesses and medium-term balance-of-payments problems.

Electricity carries significant weight in Pakistan's consumer price index, making tariff adjustments highly sensitive at a time when inflation, though sharply lower than its near-40% peak in 2023, remains a key political and economic pressure point.

AJK PM vows commitment to media freedom and journalist welfare

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that Pakistan Peoples Party government is committed to media freedom, promotion of independent journalism, and the welfare of journalists.

He made these assertions while speaking to journalists during his visit to Central Press Club Muzaffarabad, where he was warmly received by the newly elected office-bearers.

The Prime Minister, while stressing the need for responsible journalism, said that the government not only values constructive criticism but views healthy criticism as a cornerstone for good governance.

He said that practical steps would be taken in collaboration with stakeholders to address the issues faced by journalist community. PM Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also hailed the media's significant role in achieving



sustainable development and building a prosperous state.

"The Central Press Club Muzaffarabad has always played a prominent role in strengthening democracy, democratic institutions, and

press freedom", he added. He further said that the government was taking serious measures to resolve public issues while practical steps are being taken to ensure the provision of basic necessities to the people.

On this occasion, the PM congratulated the newly elected President of the CPC Sohail Mughal, Secretary General Shehzad Lollabi, and other office-bearers and members of the executive body on their success.

Annual Flowers Show

NAWABSHA: First Lady and Member of the National Assembly Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari, along with Provincial Minister for Health Dr. Azra Fazal Pechuho, formally inaugurates the Annual Flower Show: Arts, Science and Cultural Exhibition 2026 at H.M. Khoja Garden.



Azad Kashmir PM's Directives Spur Final Preparations for Major Overseers Conference

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Under the special interest and directives of Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, the preparations and arrangements for the two-day Overseers Conference have reached their peak. The roads leading to the capital Muzaffarabad have been decorated with beautiful banners and posters, Pina Flexes, Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Khushal Khan, Principal Secretary Zafar Khan, Secretary Services Chaudhry Imitiaz have made



exemplary arrangements to host the guests. Yesterday, through a video link,

Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore consulted with Sindh Government Information Minister Sharjeel Inam Memon regarding the media coverage of the conference and a Sufi night has been organized at the end of the Sears Conference. About the conference

Expanding the scope of federal educational institutions is among the priorities of the federal government. By announcing a huge amount of money for ten billion incomplete schools and one billion refugees to improve the electricity supply, Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi has put a damper on

the so-called development package for occupied Kashmir. Shaukat Javed Mir said that the identity of the Islamic nation is the strong umbrella of the people of Kashmir and a strong fortress of respect for humanity. The overwhelming majority of the 15 million Kashmiri people that is why Pakistan's strong defense and federation consider its prosperity as the survival of the development of its future generations. Under the leadership of Field Marshal Hafiz Syed Asim Munir and Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Pakistan is becoming a leading star among developed countries.

Kashmir's Future Is Pakistan: AJK Leader Declares Eternal Bond Unbreakable

 Spokesman Report

OKARA / PAKPATTAN: Former Prime Minister and President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan, has reaffirmed that the bond between Pakistan and Kashmir is eternal and cannot be weakened by any global power. He stated that "Kashmir Banega Pakistan" is not merely a slogan, but a guarantee of a secure future for South Asia.

He expressed these views while addressing a reception hosted by the Hans community in Basti Abdul



Sattar, Gogera, Okara. Among those present were Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider, senior journalist and anchorperson Sohail Warraich, Mian Munir Hans (Patron-in-Chief), and Malik Rizwan Ahmed Hans (Central President, Hans Council).

Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan said that military democracy and military diplomacy have enhanced Pakistan's global importance. He remarked that the recent "Battle of Truth - Bunyan-um-Marsoos" demonstrated Pakistan's defensive capabilities and dealt a decisive response

to decades of hostile propaganda. He stated that the courage and resolve of the Pakistan Armed Forces will be remembered for years to come.

He reiterated that the Pakistan-Kashmir relationship is everlasting and rooted in shared faith, sacrifices, and aspirations.

Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan also congratulated Chaudhry Abdul Sattar Hans on his election as Chairman and extended his best wishes.

Later, he visited the shrine of Baba Farid in Pakpattan, where he laid a floral wreath and offered prayers.

Ambassador Masood Khan Urges Focus on Education for Pakistan's Global Ascent

 Abdul Majeed Tahir

MIRPUR: Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations, said that education, youth empowerment, and unwavering commitment to the Kashmir cause remain the foundational pillars for Pakistan's national strength, prosperity, and ideological cohesion.



Addressing a distinguished gathering at Mohi-ud-Din Islamic Medical college, Mirpur, AJK, Ambassador Khan congratulated graduating students and their parents, acknowledging their dedication and sacrifices in pursuing education. He emphasized that the primary distinction between developed and developing nations lies in educational advancement, noting that Pakistan possesses immense intellectual talent that can transform the country into a leading global nation through sustained investment in education and skill development.

Ambassador Khan expressed profound appreciation for the spiritual and philanthropic contributions of Pir Sultan-ul-Arifeen Siddiqui and his family, acknowledging their historic role in promoting spiritual enlightenment, social welfare, and educational development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir. He recalled his interactions with the leadership in London, highlighting their efforts in organizing international conferences and raising global awareness about the Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

Educational Family Planning Fair held in Zeeshan Colony Kamalia

 Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: An educational Family Planning Fair was organized in Zeeshan Colony Tehsil Kamalia under the auspices of the Health and Population Welfare Department. The chief guest on the occasion was Additional Director Health and Population Department Lahore Adnan Aslam. The event was held under the supervision of District Officer Health and Population Welfare Department Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem, while Tehsil Officer Health and Population Gojra Izhar Ahmad hosted the program. Divisional Coordinator of Punjab Family Planning Program Faisalabad Anwar Ahmad attended as Chief Guest of Honor.

A large number of families, women, children and students participated in the fair. The main objective of the event was to create awareness among the public about family planning, maternal and child health and the importance of maintaining a balanced population. Various educational and recreational activities were arranged, including painting competitions and mehndi competitions for female students along with other engaging activities. Cash prizes and gold medals were awarded to the winners of these competitions.

Addressing the participants, Additional Director Adnan Aslam highlighted the importance of maternal and child health, stating that a healthy mother is the foundation of a healthy society. He emphasized that timely medical check-ups, proper birth spacing and family planning can protect mothers and children from various health complications.

District Officer Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem spoke in detail about the significance of family planning. Divisional Coordinator Anwar Ahmad stated that raising a smaller number of children allows parents to provide better care and upbringing, which ultimately strengthens both families and society.

AJK Ombudsman Cracks Down on Lawmakers Over Unreturned Luxury Vehicles

 Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Kashmir government has started implementation in light of the demands of the People's Joint Action Committee. Taking a major step against the alleged misuse of government resources in the capital Muzaffarabad, the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Ombudsman Secretariat has started strict action against the non-return of five official luxury vehicles. The Ombudsman has sent a formal letter to the Inspector General of Police, Azad Jammu and Kashmir, ordering that the vehicles be taken back from the concerned members of the assembly within a day and deposited in the Central Transport Pool of the Services and General Administration Department and a compliance report be submitted.

According to sources, the Ombudsman took suo motu notice under Section 9(1) of the Ombudsman Azad Jammu and Kashmir Act, 1992 and initiated the action. According to the notice, the members of the Legislative Assembly whose vehicles have been ordered to be taken back include Asim Sharif, Kausar Taqdis Gilani, Javed Butt and Muhammad Akbar Chaudhry. It has been reported that several notices had already been issued by the Services and General Administration Department, but the vehicles have not yet been deposited in the Central Transport Pool.

Expressing his anger, the Ombudsman clarified that immediate recovery of the illegally detained government vehicles will be ensured and if necessary, the possession will be taken back by the police. He said that government resources are a public trust and their personal or unauthorized use will not be tolerated under any circumstances. On the other hand, sources say that not only these few vehicles, but there are reports of many influential government officers illegally possessing government vehicles inside and outside Azad Kashmir. Moreover, there has also been a case of allegedly usurping the vehicles of some departments after acquiring them on lease.

RDA conducts operation on double road/stadium road, demolishes encroachments

RAWALPINDI: On the directions of the Commissioner Rawalpindi and Director General (DG) Rawalpindi Development Authority (RDA), Engineer Aamer Khattak, the RDA Enforcement Squad conducted an operation on Double Road / Stadium Road Rawalpindi jointly with support of Municipal Corporation Rawalpindi (MCR) and PERA Force.

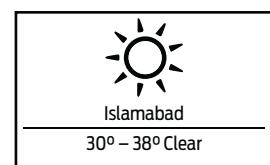
During the operation, encroachments, illegal and unauthorized sheds, and boards on the above-mentioned area were demolished.

The action was taken under the Punjab Development of Cities Act 1976 and the RDA Building and Zoning Regulations 2021. The property owners had violated the law by constructing buildings without obtaining the required approvals and No Objection Certificates (NOCs). Heavy machinery was deployed to facilitate the removal of the illegal structures.

RDA spokesperson stated that DG RDA has directed RDA to take strict actions against all encroachments and illegal residential-cum-commercial activities without any fear or favor. It was also directed to conduct a comprehensive survey regarding fees for approval of illegal buildings, commercialization, complementary maps, and plans of structures, and to regularize all illegal residential-cum-commercial buildings within RDA's controlled areas.

The DG RDA emphasized that RDA is fully committed to ensuring proper urban development and effective regulation of the city. He urged the public to take moral responsibility, cooperate with the Authority, and voluntarily remove encroachments to avoid future losses.

The operation was conducted under the supervision of Additional DG RDA Muhammad Anwar Baran. The Director Land / Incharge Enforcement Ghazanfar Ali Anwar, Building Surveyor Aamir Mahmood Malik, Asim Nawaz Khokhar, along with the RDA enforcement staff.


SERVICES
Namaz Timings

| | |
|---------|----------|
| Fajr | 5:30 am |
| Zohr | 12:22 pm |
| Asr | 4:12 pm |
| Maghrib | 5:51 pm |
| Isha | 7:15 pm |

EMERGENCY

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Rescue (Police) | 15 |
| Bomb Disposal | 15 |
| Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad | 1122 & 16 |
| Emergency Ambulance | 1122 & 88888888 |
| & 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 |
| Cant Hospital | 9270907-11 |
| DHQ | 5556311-4 |
| RGH | 9290301-7 |
| Holy Family | 9290322-7 |
| PIMS | 9261170-79 |
| Polyclinic | 9218300-09 |
| Shifa International | 4603666 |

DEPARTMENTS

| | |
|------------|------------|
| CDA | 921234-43 |
| CDA | 9208301-04 |
| Met Office | 9250360-6 |
| RDA | 5555864 |
| TMA | 5770886 |

Sindh CM
vows full
rehabilitation
of Gul Plaza
victims at
Karachi
Chamber

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday visited verification counters at the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) to review the process and meet traders affected by the Gul Plaza incident.

He assured them that his government would temporarily accommodate traders at Park Plaza, New Jamia Market, and Royal Market on Korangi Road, and provide full compensation for their losses, a communiqué said.

On the chief minister's instructions, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) has set up counters to verify claims of losses and ownership or tenancy filed by traders affected by the Gul Plaza incident.

The chief minister was accompanied by provincial ministers Nasir Hussain Shah and Jamil Ikram Dharejo, Karachi Mayor Murtaza Wahab, Karachi Commissioner Hassan Naqvi, and other senior officials.

At the chamber, the chief minister met KCCI leaders, including Zubair Motiwala and Javed Bilwani. A large number of Gul Plaza-affected shopkeepers were present as the verification of losses continued at specially established counters. Traders were verifying claims related to shop ownership or tenancy and inventory losses. The chief minister visited the counters to personally observe the verification process.

PDA and United Nations University sign MoU for GovAI

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Digital Authority (PDA) and the United Nations University (UNU) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Indus AI Week 2026 to accelerate Project GovAI, a Digital Micro-Learning & Upskilling Program for Civil/ Public Servants. Coordinated by UNU-EGOV, the collaboration will draw on experts across the UNU system, including UNU-IAS (Tokyo, Japan), UNU-MERIT (Maastricht, the Netherlands) and the UNU Institute in Macao, among others.

Shaza Fatima Khawaja, Federal Minister for Information Technology & Telecommunication (MoITT), Pakistan, said: "AI is a national priority for Pakistan, and we will use it to make government services faster, simpler and fairer for everyone. With this MoU between the Pakistan Digital Authority and the United Nations University, GovAI will build practical skills across the public sector so we can cut bureaucracy, make it easier to do business, and widen access to services for all citizens."

This is how we accelerate inclu-

sive growth and deliver a future-ready Digital Nation Pakistan under the vision of the Honourable Prime Minister of Pakistan."

Mohammad J Sear, Vice Chairperson, PDA, said: "Digital transformation is moving faster than ever. GovAI will help ensure our civil service has the practical AI skills and governance capability needed to deliver the Digital Master Plan and improve services for people and businesses across Pakistan."

Tshilidzi Marwala, Rector of the United Nations University, said: "AI is reshaping development pathways. Building public sector capacity to use AI responsibly is essential to advancing the Sustainable Development Goals, the Global Digital Compact and strengthening global cooperation for sustainable development."

Delfina Soares, Director of UNU-EGOV, added: "Sustainable and inclusive transformation depends on governance and capacity, not technology alone. GovAI will focus on the skills, institutional practices and trust foundations that turn AI into measurable public value and socio-economic progress."



Literature Festival

ISLAMABAD: Girls are taking interest in books on stall during Pakistan Mother Languages Literature Festival at Pakistan National Council of Arts in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Comprehensive Documentation of Rights Violations Launched at Kashmir House

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National Book Foundation (NBF) and Kashmir Institute of International Relations (KIIR) jointly organized the launching ceremony of "Universal Declaration of Human Rights & Kashmir" authored by Mr. Muhammad Yousaf Malik at Kashmir House, Islamabad.

The ceremony was graced by Ms. Nabila Ayub Khan, Minister for Kashmir Cause, Art & Languages, who attended as the Chief Guest. The event was further dignified by the presence of esteemed Guests of Honour



including Dr. Kamran Jhangir, Managing Director of National Book Foundation; Mr. Masood Khan, Former

Hussain Wani, Chairman of KIIR; and Mr. Ghulam Muhammad Saeed, Convenor of All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC).

During the proceedings, all keynote speakers addressed the audience on the Kashmir cause, emphasizing the urgency of international attention to the region. Author Muhammad Yousaf Malik presented a detailed briefing complemented by pictorial evidence and statistical data, specifically highlighting violations of various articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights by Indian forces in the disputed

President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir; Ms. Farzana Yaqoob, Advisor to the Prime Minister of AJK; Mr. Altaf

Traders Announce Peaceful Protest on February 17

Spokesman Report

RAWALPINDI: Traders in Rawalpindi have announced a peaceful protest on February 17 against rising inflation, heavy taxes, fines, and the sealing of shops.

During a joint press conference at Rawalpindi Press Club, Liaquat Bagh, Shahid Ghafur Pracha, President of the Central Traders Association Rawalpindi and Punjab, stated that although the majority of traders supported Pakistan Muslim League (N), the current surge in inflation, electricity and gas rates, and unrealistic price control policies have severely impacted business activities. He urged Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz to develop a practical strategy in consultation with traders, aligned with ground realities. He highlighted that despite trader representation in



the District Price Control Committee, the issued rate lists do not reflect actual market rates. President of Rawalpindi Restaurants, Caterers, Sweets, and Bakers Association, Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, said that traders wish to provide affordable goods to the public during Ramadan, but current expenses

and official rates hinder this objective. He also appealed to former Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and the current Prime Minister to play an effective role in resolving traders' issues. The press conference was attended by key trader representatives, including Sardar Saqib, President

Safe City "Mera Pyara" Team Successfully Resolves 14-Year-Old Missing Case


News Desk

LAHORE: Virtual Center for Child Safety established at Punjab Safe Cities Authority has achieved another significant milestone by reuniting Abdul Samad, who had been missing for the last 14 years, with his family. PSCA's "Mera Pyara" team successfully traced Abdul Samad, who had gone missing in 2012 at the age of four after arriving in Pakistan from Saudi Arabia and getting separated from his parents. Through the use of modern technology and social media, 'Mera Pyara' team managed to reunite him with his family.

According to the spokesperson of PSCA, Abdul Samad was found abandoned after being separated from his parents and was handed over to the Child Protection Bureau by a concerned citizen. The Safe City "Mera Pyara" team conducted a detailed interview with him at the Child Protection Bureau and shared his childhood photograph and video on various social media platforms. The social media post eventually reached Abdul Samad's father, who immediately contacted PSCA's authorities. After thorough verification of evidence and documentation, Abdul Samad was formally reunited with his family.

CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin Reviews Development Progress At Cb Nsit City

News Desk

LAHORE: The Chief Executive Officer of Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), Imran Amin, visited CBD NSIT City, Pakistan's first and largest IT city, to review the pace and quality of ongoing construction work at the landmark project.

During the detailed site inspection, the CEO CBD Punjab assessed progress on various development components and evaluated the standards being maintained across the project. A key focus of the visit was the inspection of finishing materials for the Public Realm. He thoroughly examined samples of tiles, granite, planters, streetlights, and pathway lighting to ensure that only premium-quality materials are utilized in line with international standards.

The visit was attended by Executive Director Technical Riaz Hussain, Director Architecture & Planning Sameer Aftab Sial, Director Construction Asif Babar, Director Project Management Asif Iqbal, Director Engineering Omar Hayat, Project Manager NSIT City Yasir Saifullah, along with other senior officials of CBD Punjab, NESPAK, and project contractors.

While reviewing the development works, CEO CBD Punjab Imran Amin emphasized the importance of delivering world-class infrastructure in accordance with the vision of the Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz. He directed the teams to ensure the use of top-quality materials, strict adherence to timelines and acceleration of construction activities without compromising on standards.

Attack Police crackdown against drug Dealers

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Attock Police Crackdown: 7 Drug Dealers Arrested, Ice, Hashish and Liquor Recovered.

According to details, Attock Police arrested seven accused involved in drug dealing during different operations and recovered a large quantity of narcotics and liquor.

During checking, Assistant Sub-Inspector Syed Yasir Abbas of Police Station Saddar Hasan Abdal arrested Saddam Khan son of Zohrab Khan, a resident of Swabi, and recovered 1100 grams of ice (crystal meth) from his possession.

Assistant Sub-Inspector Imtiaz Hussain Shah arrested Hamza Khan son of Rais Khan, also a resident of Swabi, and recovered 1700 grams of hashish.

Similarly, Sub-Inspector Sajjad Ahmed of City Hasan Abdal Police arrested Saeedullah son of Muhammad Naseeb, a resident of Swabi, with 1300 grams of hashish, while Assistant Sub-Inspector Faisal Khan arrested Suleman Khan son of Khalil-ur-Rehman, also from Swabi, and recovered 1300 grams of hashish.

In another operation, Assistant Sub-Inspector Masood Hussain of Police Station Bhattar arrested Kareemullah son of Fatah-ur-Rehman, a resident of Bajaur, and recovered 1700 grams of hashish.

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Pakistan calls for resolution of Kashmir dispute

The high-level Pakistan parliamentary delegation led by Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, Chairman of the Senate, met Annalena Baerbock, President of the UN General Assembly, on the sidelines of the Annual IPU Parliamentary Hearing 2024 at the UN headquarters.

The Chairman reiterated Pakistan's firm and principled support for the United Nations as the central pillar of multilateral cooperation, said a news release.

Recalling Pakistan's longstanding policy for a friendly neighbourhood and peaceful settlement of disputes, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilai termed the resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute in line with the relevant UN Security Council resolutions as essential for durable peace and stability in South Asia.

He said India has taken further destabilising action in unilaterally holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, arguing that this unlawful action constituted a blatant violation of the Treaty's provisions and established principles of customary international law.

He said that such actions threaten the lives and livelihoods of over 240 million Pakistanis and set dangerous precedents, particularly at a time when climate stress and water scarcity demand cooperation and strict respect for international agreements.

Drawing the attention of the President of the UN General Assembly to the terrorist threats faced by Pakistan, the Chairman said that the TTP, BLA, Al-Qaeda, ISIL-K and other terrorist organisations are using the Afghan soil to target Pakistan with impunity.

The Chairman underscored that the people of Pakistan strongly support the United Nations' mission of promoting international peace and security, sustainable development, and the protection of human rights.

He said that at a time of multiple and overlapping global crises, the multilateral system is facing serious challenges, including persistent violations of the UN Charter and the continued non-implementation of long-standing UN Security Council resolutions.

Highlighting a broader erosion of adherence to international law and established legal instruments, the Chairman Senate warned that such trends undermine the international order.

Highlighting the adverse impacts of climate change, he said that countries like Pakistan remain among the most severely affected and underscored the urgency of collective action, climate justice, and strengthened international cooperation.

He emphasised that the United Nations provides an indispensable platform for addressing these interconnected challenges.

Speaking on the occasion, Annalena Baerbock, President of the UN General Assembly, conveyed her condolences to the government and people of Pakistan on the loss of lives in the recent terrorist incidents in Pakistan. She said that it is in the interest of all countries to fight terrorism together. It was the PGA's first engagement with the visiting high-level parliamentary delegations.

Open & Distance Learning Education in Pakistan

Dr. T. M. Malik

Education remains one of Pakistan's most pressing development challenges. With millions of children and young adults out of school, limited physical infrastructure, and stark regional disparities, the traditional campus-based education system alone is insufficient to meet national needs. In this context, Open and Distance Learning (ODL) has emerged as a powerful alternative, offering opportunities to expand access to education while addressing socio-economic and geographic barriers. However, as Pakistan increasingly relies on ODL, ensuring quality, credibility, and relevance has become equally critical.

Open and Distance Learning refers to educational systems that allow learners to study remotely, often through a combination of printed materials, online platforms, broadcast media, and limited face-to-face interaction. In Pakistan, ODL is not a new concept. Institutions such as Allama Iqbal Open University (AIOU), established in 1974, and later the Virtual University of Pakistan, have played pioneering roles in democratizing education. These institutions have enabled millions of students – particularly women, working professionals, rural residents, and those from marginalized communities – to pursue education that would otherwise remain out of reach.

One of the greatest strengths of ODL lies in its ability to expand access. Pakistan's vast geography, coupled with inadequate educational infrastructure in rural and remote areas, has long hindered equitable access to education. For students in far-flung regions of Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan, interior Sindh, and southern Punjab, attending a conven-

tional university is often impractical due to distance, cost, and social constraints. ODL bridges this gap by bringing education to learners' homes, allowing them to study without relocating or incurring high living expenses.

ODL has also been particularly transformative for women. Cultural norms, household responsibilities, and safety concerns continue to limit female participation in higher education in many parts of the country. Flexible learning schedules and home-based study options have enabled countless women to continue their education, enhance their skills, and improve their economic prospects. In this sense, ODL contributes not only to educational access but also to gender empowerment and social inclusion.

From an economic perspective, Open and Distance Learning is a cost-effective model for both the state and learners. Establishing and maintaining brick-and-mortar institutions requires substantial investment, whereas ODL allows the state to educate large numbers of students with comparatively fewer resources. For learners, reduced tuition fees, elimination of relocation costs, and the ability to earn while learning make education more affordable. At a time when Pakistan faces fiscal constraints and rising unemployment, ODL offers a pragmatic pathway to human capital development.

Despite these advantages, the rapid expansion of ODL has raised serious concerns about quality assurance. One of the most common criticisms is the perceived gap between ODL qualifications and those obtained through traditional institutions. Issues such as outdated curricula, limited student-teacher interaction, weak assessment mechanisms, and insufficient academic support can undermine learning outcomes if not addressed effectively. Moreover, the digital divide –

unequal access to reliable internet, devices, and digital literacy – poses a significant challenge, particularly for students from low-income and rural backgrounds.

Ensuring quality in ODL requires a robust regulatory and institutional framework. The Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan has taken important steps in this direction by developing guidelines for distance education, accreditation standards, and online program delivery. However, regulation must be consistently enforced, and institutions must be held accountable for maintaining academic rigor. Quality assurance should focus not only on infrastructure and technology but also on curriculum relevance, faculty training, assessment integrity, and student support services.

Technology plays a central role in improving the quality of ODL. Learning management systems, virtual classrooms, recorded lectures, and interactive discussion forums can enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. However, technology should be seen as a means rather than an end. Effective ODL requires trained faculty who understand online pedagogy, instructional design tailored to distance learners, and mechanisms for timely feedback and academic mentoring. Investment in faculty development is therefore essential.

Another critical dimension is relevance to the labor market. For ODL to contribute meaningfully to national development, its programs must align with contemporary economic needs. Courses in information technology, teacher education, business administration, health sciences, and vocational and technical skills can enhance employability and productivity. Collaboration between ODL institutions, industry, and public sector organizations can help ensure that graduates possess market-relevant skills rather than merely academic

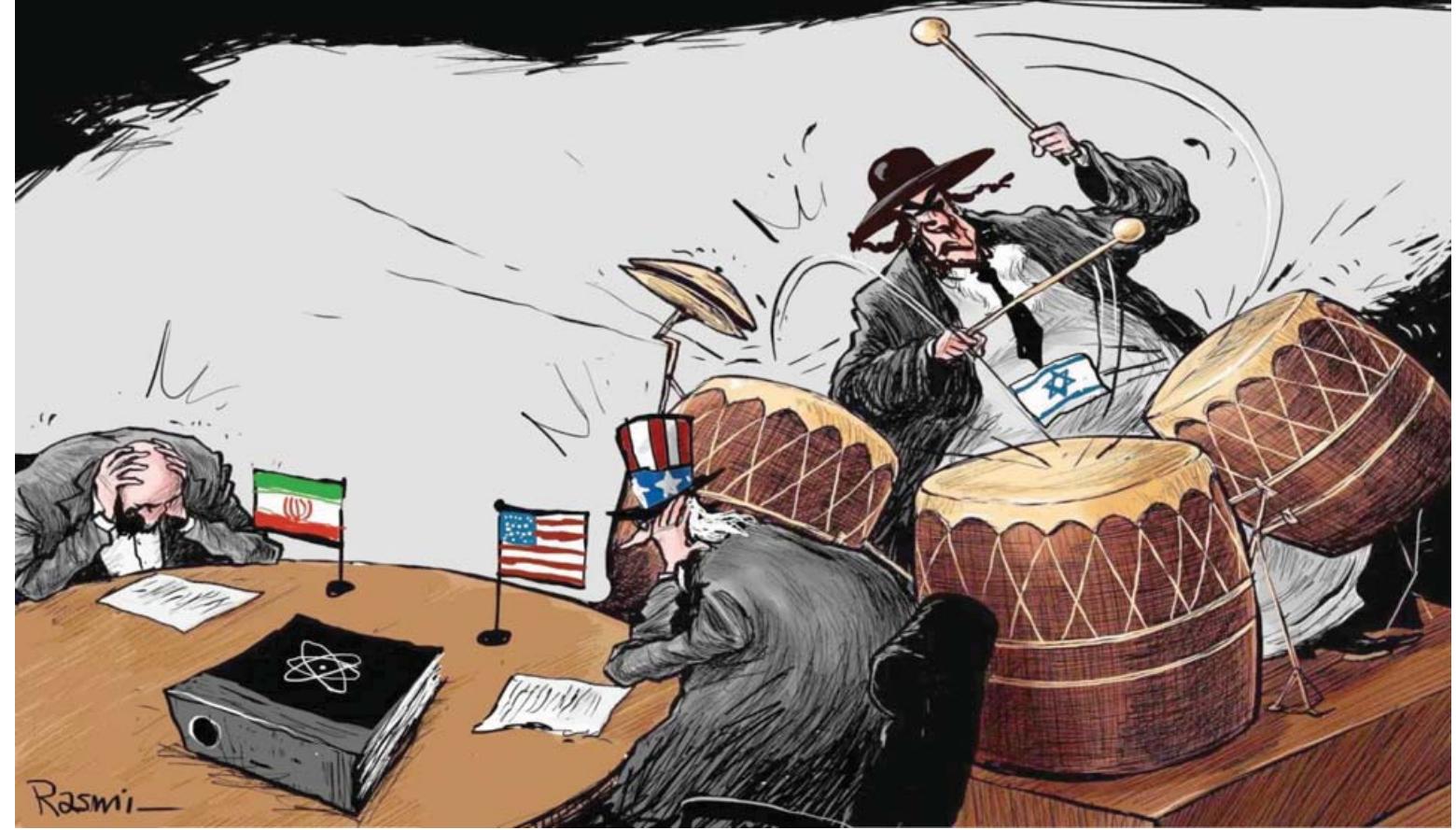
credentials.

Public perception also plays a vital role in the success of ODL. While acceptance of distance education has improved – particularly after the COVID-19 pandemic normalized online learning – lingering skepticism remains. Building public trust requires transparency, consistent quality, and visible success stories of ODL graduates contributing effectively in professional fields. Government recognition, employer acceptance, and clear equivalence frameworks can further strengthen confidence in ODL qualifications.

Looking ahead, Open and Distance Learning has the potential to become a cornerstone of Pakistan's education system rather than a peripheral alternative. Blended learning models that combine online instruction with limited face-to-face engagement can offer the best of both worlds, ensuring flexibility without compromising academic depth. Expanding broadband access, subsidizing digital devices for disadvantaged students, and promoting digital literacy are essential policy measures to support this transition.

In conclusion, Open and Distance Learning represents a powerful tool for expanding educational access in Pakistan, promoting inclusion, and addressing long-standing inequalities. However, access without quality risks creating credentials without competence. The challenge, therefore, lies in balancing expansion with excellence. With strong regulation, thoughtful use of technology, market-relevant curricula, and sustained public investment, ODL can help Pakistan move closer to its goal of an educated, skilled, and empowered population – one that is prepared to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world.

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

Students Suspended for Protest: The Mewar University Case

A professional degree is more than a certificate. It is a promise of legitimacy, stability and a secure future. When that promise collapses due to institutional failure, the consequences are immediate and deeply personal. Today, dozens of Kashmiri students find themselves in such a crisis, not because they failed academically, but because the institution they trusted failed to meet basic regulatory obligations. Their future now hangs between assurance and uncertainty.

The suspension of 33 Kashmiri students at Mewar University, Chittorgarh, Rajasthan India is therefore not a routine disciplinary issue. It reflects a serious institutional lapse.

These students did not protest for privilege. They protested for legitimacy. They demanded recognition for a professional degree into which they have invested years of effort, financial resources and hope. The core issue is clear and undeniable: the university's B. Sc. Nursing programme lacks mandatory approval from the Rajasthan Nursing Council and the Indian Nursing Council. Without these statutory recognitions, the validity of the degree remains uncertain. Professional registration becomes doubtful. Employment prospects shrink. The academic future of more than 50 students now stands at risk.

When institutions fail to meet regulatory standards, accountability must rest with administrators. It cannot be transferred to students who seek transparency and protection of their future. Suspending them sends a chilling message: silence is safer than speaking up. Such action undermines academic trust and erodes institutional credibility.

Kashmiri students pursuing education outside Jammu and Kashmir already face layered challenges. Many leave home due to limited profes-

sional opportunities within the region. They shoulder heavy financial burdens. They navigate cultural distance and social isolation. For them, higher education is not casual exploration. It is a calculated risk tied to family expectations and long-term security.

When that lifeline is threatened by administrative negligence, the psychological toll is severe. Anxiety deepens. Families back home worry. Financial sacrifices begin to feel futile. Students are forced to question whether their trust in educational institutions was misplaced. This uncertainty does not remain confined to classrooms. It follows them into their futures.

The episode also raises a broader concern. Are regulatory frameworks being treated as optional formalities rather than binding obligations?

Professional courses in nursing and allied health cannot operate in ambiguity. Compliance is not decorative paperwork. It is the backbone of professional credibility and public safety. Launching a nursing programme without securing statutory approvals reflects flawed planning at best and reckless disregard at worst. Students are not buffers for administrative delay. They are stakeholders whose lives depend on institutional integrity. When compliance failures occur, students must be protected, not punished.

The university's explanation, that inspection reports are submitted and approvals are in progress, does not resolve the central problem. Approvals must precede admissions. They cannot justify exposing students to academic and professional risk. Notably, the students' demands remain reasonable. They seek either immediate statutory approval or transfer to a recognised institution without academic loss. These are practical solutions rooted in fairness. They prioritise continuity

over confrontation.

At this stage, political intervention is essential. The welfare of students studying outside their home region cannot be left to prolonged administrative delay. Silence from authorities in the face of such uncertainty is not neutrality, it is neglect. More broadly, this crisis demands national reflection. Educational mobility across Indian states is increasing. Student protection cannot rely on informal assurances. It must be anchored in enforceable regulation and transparent oversight.

Suspending students for peaceful protest risks criminalising legitimate academic grievance.

Universities must remain spaces of dialogue and accountability. The responsibility to secure statutory approvals lies entirely with the university. Students cannot be expected to audit compliance before enrolment. When institutional assurances fail, remediation, not retaliation, must follow.

This crisis remains reversible. Approvals can be expedited. Documentation can be released. Academic continuity can be protected. What cannot be justified is prolonged uncertainty combined with punitive silence.

For Kashmiri students, this is not just about one university. It reflects a broader pattern of vulnerability. Protecting their academic future strengthens trust in institutions. Neglecting it deepens alienation. Education must empower, not endanger. The suspended students are not agitators. They are aspiring healthcare professionals. In a country facing a shortage of trained nurses, jeopardising their futures is indefensible. Their demand is simple, recognise their course or secure their transition. Protect their investment. Safeguard their dignity. Young lives must never become collateral damage of regulatory failure.

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Analysis

Mehr un Nisa Rehman

Sufferings of Women and Children in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir

Women and children in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK) remain among the worst affected victims of India's prolonged military occupation. For decades, Indian armed forces have subjected Kashmiri civilians – particularly women and children – to systematic violence, fear, and collective punishment, leaving deep physical, psychological, and social scars.

Children in IOJK grow up surrounded by militarization, violence, and fear.

Usually children witness killings, night raids, and violent crackdowns by Indian Army and paramilitary forces. The excessive use of pellet guns has blinded, maimed, and traumatised hundreds of children, permanently damaging their futures.

Most alarming practices is the occupation and misuse of schools by Indian armed forces. Educational institutions have been subjected to conversion into military camps, interrogation centers, or temporary barracks, depriving children of safe learning environments.

The frequent internet shutdowns by Indian Government have further damaged children's academic development, mental well-being, and access to information. In an era where education, healthcare, and communication rely on digital access, these blackouts amount to collective punishment, prohibited under international humanitarian law, including the Fourth Geneva Convention. These actions violate Article 28 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC), which guarantees

every child the right to education.

Indian forces routinely use collective punishment, conducting cordon-and-search operations, demolishing homes, and terrorizing neighborhoods. Schools are closed for months, healthcare access is restricted, and families are denied justice. These acts constitute serious violations of international humanitarian law, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, and the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW).

Despite relentless oppression, Kashmiri women and children continue to display remarkable resilience. However, resilience cannot replace justice. The international community must recognize that the suffering of women and children in IOJK is not collateral damage, but a direct consequence of a brutal occupation.

The suffering of women and children in IOJK is not incidental – it is the direct consequence of an unlawful occupation of India and its systemic repression with impunity.

International law demands protection, accountability, and justice. Safeguarding the rights and dignity of all. The end of Indian occupation of Jammu and Kashmir and the implementation of UN resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir in letter and spirit can result in lasting peace in the region.

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Analysis

Syed Faiz Naqshbandi

President Zardari reaffirms commitment to economic recovery, unity

City Desk

RAHIM YAR KHAN: President Asif Ali Zardari reiterated his resolve to steer the country toward economic recovery, strengthen national unity, and uphold the ideological legacy of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP).

Speaking to the local leadership and former ticket holders of the party from South Punjab, he said that being there felt like being in his home province Sindh, noting that the culture across both regions reflected unity and shared traditions and heritage.

He expressed pride in having spent around 14 years in prison, stating that he endured those years with courage, thanks to the unwavering support and indomitable will of the party workers.

In an apparent reference to a political rival now in opposition, he remarked that true leadership was tested in difficult times, contrasting his long imprisonment with others who, despite spending a shorter period behind bars and having enjoyed all facilities, could not withstand the pressure.

The President acknowledged that the country was facing economic hardships and inflation but attributed the situation to the mismanagement of the previous four-year government. He said the current Prime Minister was making sincere efforts to stabilize the



economy and ensure smooth governance despite numerous challenges.

Highlighting national security concerns, Zardari pointed to tensions along international borders and said that hostile forces remained active. He criticised Indian Prime Minister

Narendra Modi, stating that their recent defeat last year did bring sense

on the other side of the border. He praised Pakistan's armed forces for their continued sacrifices in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, emphasising that they have always

defended the country with courage and faith.

He stressed the importance of providing modern facilities to farmers to accelerate agricultural growth, ensure food security and national progress.

President Zardari also appreciated the services of senior political figures from South Punjab, including Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood and the Gillani family, stating that their contributions have strengthened the region's political landscape.

Rearranging the party's ideological foundations, he said the vision initiated by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto was carried forward by Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and continued under the leadership of Bilawal Bhutto Zardari.

"Our workers are not driven by greed or personal interests; they are motivated by principles and ideology," he added.

Makhdoom Ahmed Mahmood further remarked that it reflects President Zardari's broad vision and political maturity that he chose to leave the President House to visit a small town to personally meet party workers and local leadership.

He maintained that it was not an easy task for a sitting President to step out of the Presidency and come among the grassroots workers, but this gesture showed his connection with the people.

He expressed confidence that President Zardari's visit to South Punjab would have a highly positive impact and would further boost the morale and enthusiasm of the party workers across the region.

Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider, MNAs, MPAs, and other local leaders were also present in the meeting.

PM Mustafa represents President Abbas at 39th African Union Summit in Addis Ababa

WAFA

RAMALLAH: Prime Minister Mohammad Mustafa, representing President Mahmoud Abbas, participated on Saturday in the 39th Summit of the African Union in the Ethiopian capital, Addis Ababa, amidst broad participation from African heads of state and government.

Delivering a speech on behalf of President Abbas, Mustafa conveyed the President's greetings and sincere wishes for the success of the Summit, expressing hope that would achieve its objectives in advancing prosperity, stability, and sustainable development to the African continent and its struggling peoples.

In his address, Mustafa said on behalf of President Abbas, "This summit comes at a pivotal moment in the history of the Palestinian people, who continue to suffer from a historical injustice that reached unprecedented levels in the war on Gaza."

He also affirmed, "Millions watched this war live, and the number of victims exceeded 70,000 Palestinian citizens. This was accompanied by Israel's use of starvation as a weapon of war, in addition to its destruction of 85% of the infrastructure in the Gaza Strip, in clear violation of international law."

Mustafa said that the State of Pales-



tine had agreed to the U.S proposal regarding the Gaza war and Security Council Resolution 2803, which begins with a ceasefire in the Gaza Strip and ends with the Palestinian people's right to self-determination and the independence of their state after a two-year transitional period."

He further pointed out that the decision was driven by the belief that the war must end and humanitarian relief and reconstruction efforts must proceed.

Despite the ceasefire agreement in Gaza, he said that Israel continues to violate the agreement. Over 500

Palestinians have been killed since its declaration, threatening the agreement's sustainability and completely undermining the implementation of its second phase."

Mustafa acknowledged the mediation efforts led by the United States, Egypt, Qatar, and Turkey.

He added that "the situation in the West Bank mirrors the same approach Palestinians face in Gaza. Israel continues to confiscate Palestinian lands, expand illegal settlements, and protect colonist attacks and terrorism. In the past month alone, terrorist colonist gangs committed 1,872 attacks

against Palestinians in the West Bank."

The Prime Minister also explained that Israel continues to undermine the Palestinian government by withholding tax and customs revenues collected on its behalf, as stipulated in the Economic Protocol of the Oslo Accords signed by both parties. The withheld funds have now exceeded \$4.5 billion. Consequently, resulting in the loss of approximately 70 percent of the Palestinian government's income."

"What government in the world can continue to function while losing about two-thirds of its financial resources?" he questioned.

The Prime Minister congratulated the President of Burundi, Évariste Ndayishimiye, on assuming the African Union presidency for 2026, and thanked João Lourenço for his leadership during the previous term. He also highlighted the depth of historic ties between Palestine and Africa, emphasizing shared values rooted in anti-colonial struggle, the right to self-determination, and opposition to all forms of dependency.

"We look forward to a future built on development leading to sustainable development, the exchange of expertise and benefits, and the achievement of prosperity, economic integration, and the strengthening of bonds of friendship and mutual benefit among our peoples."

HU confers degrees upon 1,900 students at 28th convocation

Spokesman Report

KARACHI: Marked by a spirit of academic achievement and celebration, the 28th convocation of Hamdard University saw more than 1,900 scholars and students awarded PhD, MPhil, Master's, and Bachelor's degrees on Saturday.

Addressing the graduating class as chief guest, celebrated scientist and former federal minister Prof Dr Atta-ur-Rehman urged students to dedicate their lives to the pursuit of excellence, innovation, and research. He emphasised that in today's world, knowledge — rather than natural resources — has become the defining factor behind economic growth and national progress.

"Truth is truly stranger than fiction today, as intellectual capital — not mineral wealth — is the primary engine of growth," he remarked, adding that countries investing in emerging fields of science and technology are moving ahead rapidly, while those failing to innovate risk falling further behind.

Dr Atta-ur-Rehman cited breakthroughs in fields such as genomics, materials engineering, medicine, and stem cell technology that have produced wonders considered unimaginable only a few years ago. He pointed out that newly developed products with anti-



ageing properties have now made it biologically possible for humans to attain a lifespan of 100–120 years. "Scientists have discovered that thoughts are not abstract entities but are comprised of molecules and atoms," he noted while discussing the rapid progress in neurology. He referenced the pioneering work of Elon Musk's Neuralink, noting that the US Food and Drug Administration has already sanctioned the use of brain-chip interfaces.

In a profound reflection on the origins of life, the scientist — who has the distinction of having research centres named after him in Malaysia, China, and Pakistan — explained that the elements created during supernova explosions eventu-

ally converge to form planets and human life alike. "The atoms we are made of were created long ago in the stars.

In a literal sense, we are made of stardust; as I said, truth is often stranger than fiction."

The ceremony marked a significant academic milestone, with 11 scholars awarded PhDs and a further 110 receiving MPhil degrees.

In total, 1,912 students were conferred degrees in various disciplines. For their exceptional performance across Hamdard's seven faculties, 35 young men and women were awarded gold medals. Furthermore, five students were named winners of the Hakim Mohammed Said Gold Awards, while three received medals from the Institution of

Engineers, Pakistan.

Individual faculty achievements were also recognised: the Researcher of the Year Award was conferred upon Prof Dr Syed Mubeen, and the Best Teacher Award was

presented to Dr M. Faris. The Lifetime Achievement Award was granted to Prof Dr Kamran Zaheer in recognition of his enduring contributions to academia.

In his speech, Vice Chancellor Prof Dr Imran Amin stated that with Saturday's graduation, Hamdard University's alumni network has reached 37,500 — a testament to the institution's growth. He shared that the university disbursed scholarships worth Rs219 million over the last year and announced that

several foreign delegations are expected to visit in the coming months.

He also detailed the progress of various faculties and the creation of five new student clubs designed to act as incubators for leadership and civic responsibility.

Chancellor Ms Sadia Rashid (HII) urged the graduates to remain mindful of their responsibilities as citizens.

"My message to you is simple, yet profound: help people as you move ahead in life," she remarked.

She encouraged the graduates to let compassion guide their actions, treating others with dignity and fairness, and to ensure their education becomes a lasting source of benefit for society.

Israeli authorities force Palestinian to self-demolish his house near Jerusalem



WAFA

JERUSALEM: A Palestinian resident of Jerusalem was forced to demolish his own home in the Jabal al-Mukaber neighborhood, southeast of occupied Jerusalem, on Friday, following an order from the Israeli municipality on the pretext of building without a permit.

The Jerusalem Governorate said that he 80-square-meter home belonged to Samir Aliyan Arar and housed seven people, had been standing since 2018. Israeli municipal authorities had previously issued building violation fines against him totaling approximately 100,000 shekels.

According to Arar, he had submitted building permit plans in 2014 at the request of the Israeli municipality and hired lawyers and engineers to follow up in the case. However, municipal crews issued him two fines that same year, amounting to approximately 80,000 shekels and 17,500 shekels respectively.

He emphasized that he was still paying off those fines and will continue doing so until the end of 2027.

He added that municipal crews raided his home on January 26, 2026, and gave him 21 days to comply with the demolition order. He said he was forced to self-demolish his house to avoid incurring the higher demolition costs if the Israeli municipality carried it out.

Philippe Lazzarini warns escalation in West Bank undermines two-state solution



WAFA

RAMALLAH: The Commissioner-General of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees (UNRWA), Philippe Lazzarini, stated that Israel continues its political pressure to eliminate the agency.

This statement was made in a press conference on Friday evening on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, which began in Munich, Germany.

Lazzarini explained that the situation in Gaza "remains tragic," with people deprived of almost everything and struggling to survive as a result of the Israeli war of extermination.

He added that children in Gaza have not attended school for more than two years, emphasizing the importance of UNRWA continuing to provide health, primary, and secondary education services.

He noted that the agency is under immense pressure and that Israel continues to violate international law.

He continued, "Israel continues its political pressure to eliminate UNRWA, and we witnessed the demolition of our headquarters in occupied East Jerusalem."

Lazzarini pointed out that the Israelis, who are seizing Palestinian land, are escalating their violence and land confiscation in the West Bank.

He stressed the need to draw attention to the events in the West Bank before it is too late, and before they undermine the future of the two-state solution.

| Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Current | Prev. Close |
| 183,049.80 | 182,153.55 |
| Day's High | Day's Low |
| 183,801.70 | 182,054.64 |
| Index Value | Change |
| 24,924,229,716 | +896.25 |
| Percentage | Time |
| +0.49% | 11 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm |

| Europe: FTSE 100 Index | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 10,472.11 | +118.27 |
| Percentage | Time |
| +1.14% | 11 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT |

| USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 50,186.90 | -1.24 |
| Percentage | Time |
| -0.0025% | 11 Feb, 12:20 pm GMT-5 |

| Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Index Value | Change |
| 57,650.54 | +1,286.60 |
| Percentage | Time |
| +2.28% | 10 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9 |

| Open Market Forex Rates | | |
|-------------------------|---------|---------|
| Currency | Buying | Selling |
| Australian Dollar | 197.60 | 199.25 |
| Bahrain Dinar | 743.00 | 752.51 |
| Canadian Dollar | 206.02 | 209.57 |
| China Yuan | 38 | 40 |
| Danish Krone | 43.32 | 43.72 |
| Euro | 333.96 | 337.24 |
| Hong Kong Dollar | 35.34 | 36.21 |
| Indian Rupee | 2.80 | 3.30 |
| Japanese Yen | 1,818.2 | 1,920.0 |
| Kuwaiti Dinar | 906.85 | 916.30 |
| Malaysian Ringgit | 66.50 | 67.50 |
| New Zealand \$ | 168.35 | 170.75 |
| Norwegians Krone | 27.61 | 27.91 |
| Omani Riyal | 727.70 | 737.21 |
| Qatari Riyal | 76.17 | 79.17 |
| Saudi Riyal | 74.8 | 75.25 |
| Singapore Dollar | 220.40 | 225.36 |
| Swedish Korona | 30.1 | 30.4 |
| Swiss Franc | 363.10 | 367.44 |
| Thai Bhat | 8.5 | 8.7 |
| U.A.E Dirham | 76.45 | 77.30 |
| UK Pound Sterling | 383.20 | 386.99 |
| US Dollar | 280.55 | 282.2 |

Business Leader Hails FPCCI's Role in Tax Reduction and Upcoming Reforms

Commerce Desk

HYDERABAD: He Patron-in-Chief of the United Business Group (UBG), S. M. Tanveer, stated that the Federation of Pakistan Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FPCCI) has played an effective and practical role in addressing the key challenges faced by the business community. He highlighted that the reduction of the CESS infrastructure tax from 1.85% to 0.85%, now duly legislated, is a major achievement that will soon provide tangible relief to traders and industrialists.

He expressed these views while addressing traders and industrialists of Hyderabad at the invitation of Hyderabad Chamber of Small Traders & Small Industry President Muhammad Saleem Memon.

Mr. Tanveer further announced that FPCCI is in the process of appointing a Chief Executive Officer, under whom a professional research team will operate. This team will identify institutional gaps within government departments and prepare reform-oriented reports, enabling FPCCI to engage the government with data-driven policy recommendations.

Earlier, President HCSTS Muhammad Saleem Memon appreciated FPCCI's initiatives, including the establishment of the Business and Human Rights Desk, the organization of tourism and international dialogue forums, and efforts to expand trade opportunities. He acknowledged FPCCI's proactive stance on reviewing and terminating expensive IPP contracts, paving the way for significant national savings.

The event was also attended by FPCCI Vice President (Sindh Region) Bilal Khan, Patron-in-Chief Seth Ameen Khatri, Patron Haji Muhammad Yaqoob, Masood Pervez, former presidents, members of the executive committee, and conveners.

Pakistani freelancers earn over \$500 million in 1HFY26

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD/KARACHI: Pakistani freelancers generated over \$500 million in foreign exchange earnings during the first half of the current financial year 2025-26, reflecting the growing strength of the country's digital economy and the expanding global demand for Pakistan's skilled workforce.

According to data released by the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), the export receipts earned by freelancers of computer and information services increased to \$557 million during the period of July to December 2025 as compared to \$352 million foreign exchange earned by freelancers' community during a similar period of the



last financial year, showing a staggering 58 percent year-on-year growth.

The milestone underscores Pakistan's emergence as a competitive global hub for freelancing services, particularly in software development, digital

marketing, graphic design, content creation, and e-commerce. Also, the increasing initiatives of the government and the private sector toward facilitations and training programs are developing a favorable ecosystem for free-

lancing and the Gig economy across the country.

Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication (MoITT), Shaza Fatima Khawaja, said the government is taking multiple initiatives to facilitate freelancers and further enhance their contribution to the economy.

"The Ministry of IT and Telecommunication is actively working to create an enabling environment for freelancers through improved digital infrastructure, affordable broadband, simplified digital payment mechanisms, and targeted capacity-building programs. Our goal is to ensure that Pakistani freelancers can seamlessly access global markets and maximize their earning potential," she said.

Art

RAWALPINDI: February 14 - A young worker busy painting wooden tables at his workplace in the city.



Photo: APP

Trader Leaders Meet Yaser Sultan Under Zafar Bakhtawari's Leadership, Offer Condolences on the Passing of Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry

ISLAMABAD: A delegation of trader leaders, led by Secretary General of the United Business Group (UBG) Zafar Bakhtawari, met with Chaudhry Yaser Sultan, Minister for Physical Planning and Housing of the Government of Azad Kashmir, at Kashmire House and expressed their heartfelt condolences and sorrow over the demise of his father, President of Azad Kashmir Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry.

The delegation included Yusuf Rajput, President of Blue Area; former Vice President Nasir Chaudhry; Ishaq Sial, Executive Member of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and former Vice President Nisar Mirza.

The delegation offered Fateha for the eternal peace of the departed soul and expressed sympathy with the bereaved family. On the occasion, Zafar Bakhtawari said that Barrister Sultan Mahmood Chaudhry was a strong and dignified name in the politics of Azad Kashmir who always raised his voice for the rights of the Kashmiri people. He said that the services and struggle of the late leader would be remembered in golden words in history, and that his political insight and role in



promoting democratic traditions were unforgettable.

The delegation prayed that Allah Almighty may grant the departed soul

the highest place in Jannat-ul-Firdous and bestow patience and fortitude upon the bereaved family to bear this great loss. Ameen

Secretary WWF, President ICCI pledge joint efforts for workers' welfare

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Secretary Workers Welfare Fund (WWF) Zulfiqar Ahmad led a high-level delegation to the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) and held a productive meeting with ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood.

Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Irfan Chaudhry.

The meeting featured detailed

discussions on enhancing mutual cooperation and strengthening initiatives aimed at the welfare and Human Resource Development, and commended the government's initiatives for the welfare of the labor community. He praised the performance of the Workers Welfare Fund and assured that the

On their part Senior Vice President Tahir Ayub and Vice President Irfan Chaudhry reaffirmed the Chamber's commitment to continuing joint efforts for the welfare of workers and the promotion of industrial growth, recognizing the vital role of the labor force in strengthening the country's economic development.

WWF delegation included

Director Media Chaudhry Zamir Ashraf, Director Receipt and Governing Body Masood Raza and Director Audit Hafiz Junaid Saial. Those prominent among the

attendees included former President Mohamad Ejaz Abbasi, executive member Zulqurnain Abbasi, ICCI members Israr Mishwani, Azaz Mohammad and others.

Economy/Commerce

Sunday, February 15, 2026

CM Punjab writes to PM seeking urgent steps to boost potato exports



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif has written a letter to Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, urging immediate measures to increase potato exports and provide relief to farmers facing market pressures.

In her letter, the chief minister stressed the need to accelerate exports through the National Logistics Corporation and requested the removal of bottlenecks hindering the export process. She also appealed

for a special 25 per cent reduction in freight charges to make Pakistani potatoes more competitive in international markets.

Ms Sharif further called for facilitation in export documentation and sought federal support to expand market access, particularly in the European Union, Africa and the United States.

The chief minister said that the proposed measures would help stabilise prices, increase farmers' profits and strengthen Pakistan's agricultural exports.

Tiggo 9 Super Hybrid Takes Center Stage at Chery Defence



Commerce Desk

LAHORE: While the Tiggo 9 PHEV has officially arrived in Pakistan, the heart of the flagship experience remains at Chery Motors Defence. Serving as the premier venue for the Saturday, February 14th reveal, the dealership has been transformed into the nation's primary hub for high-end, sustainable automotive luxury. The exclusive reveal event, organized by Elysium, attracted a host of socialites, influencers, and entrepreneurs, all eager to witness the debut of this groundbreaking SUV.

Govt should focus on expanding the reach of Pakistani products. Rehan Naseem Bharara

Abdul Majid

This includes institutions such as the promotion of e-commerce, trade policy, and Trade Development Authority, which aims to provide economic development and employment. Ministry of Commerce: This is the federal government agency responsible for trade, exports, imports, and implementation of trade policies. Exports: Textiles, leather, sports goods, and agricultural products (such as rice, fruits) are important export items. While imports include oil, machinery, and chemicals.



Director Media Chaudhry Zamir Ashraf, Director Receipt and Governing Body Masood Raza and Director Audit Hafiz Junaid Saial. Those prominent among the

PCB chairman Naqvi reaches Colombo on ICC chief's invitation

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: At the invitation of the International Cricket Council (ICC) President, Asian Cricket Council President and Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Raza Naqvi has reached Colombo, the capital of Sri Lanka on Saturday, reported 24NewsHD TV channel.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is accompanied by Chief Operating Officer Sameer Ahmed Syed and PSL CEO Salman Naseer.

PCB Chairman Mohsin Naqvi is also expected to meet the Pakistan cricket team. The PCB chairman will watch the Pakistan-India match in Sri Lankan capital Colombo tomorrow.

Earlier, ICC President Jay Shah invited Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi to come to Colombo for witnessing the high-voltage Pakistan-India T20 World Cup clash to be



played tomorrow (Sunday).

The sources said Mohsin would travel to the Sri Lankan capital for the Pakistan-India blockbuster match. He will also meet Pakistan cricket team before

the match, the sources added.

The ICC has also invited BCCI officials for the match.

There is also a possibility of meeting between Mohsin Naqvi and Jay Shah

and Indian board officials, the sources said and added that an invitation for witnessing Pakistan-India encounter was also sent to Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) chief Aminul Islam.

Banton powers England to victory over Scotland at T20 World Cup



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Tom Banton's unbeaten 63 led England to a five-wicket T20 World Cup victory over Scotland in Kolkata on Saturday that kept Harry Brook's side on course for the Super Eights.

Victory in their final Group C match against Italy on Monday at the same Eden Gardens stadium will see England safely into the next round.

After bowling Scotland out for 152, England racked up 155-5 in 18.2 overs, with Jacob Bethell scoring 32, Sam Curran 28 and Will Jacks (16 off 10 balls) hitting a six and a four to finish the job.

England wobbled at the start of their chase as the new white ball swung under

the floodlights with the sun going down.

Phil Salt fell third ball to Brandon McMullen for just two and when Jos Buttler picked out McMullen off Brad Currie they were 13-2.

Scotland bowled tightly until Bethell broke the shackles by hitting McMullen for a six and two fours in the fifth over.

Spinner Mark Watt also came in for some punishment, conceding 22 off his first over as Banton took him for three huge sixes.

A 66-run partnership ended when the left-handed Bethell on 32 helped a leg-side delivery from Oliver Davidson into the grateful hands of Brad Wheal at short fine leg.

Captain Brook did not last long, scooping Michael Leask over his shoulder to Wheal to make it 86-4 but

England were always in control and got home with 10 balls to spare.

Earlier, England's bowlers found their mojo and vindicated Brook's decision to field on winning the toss.

After being smacked to all parts of Mumbai's Wankhede stadium in conceding 196 to the West Indies on Wednesday, England's attack exerted much more control at Eden Gardens.

Captain Richie Berrington top-scored for Scotland with 49 off 32 balls with five fours and two sixes.

He and Tom Bruce put on 71 for the fourth wicket, but it was their only notable partnership.

Spinner Liam Dawson ended it in the 13th over when Bruce was caught for 24, Curran providing the safe hands at deep square leg.

When Adil Rashid trapped Berrington lbw in the next over, Scotland collapsed, losing their last seven wickets for 39 runs from 113-3.

Jofra Archer had been expensive in the two previous outings but made the early breakthroughs before finishing with a brilliant 2-24 off his four overs.

In his second over, he hurried George Munsey into top-edging to Banton and two balls later had McMullen caught by Salt in the deep.

Michael Jones (33) holed out to Bethell off Curran and Scotland were 42-3 at the end of the six-over power play and never threatened a competitive total.

Rashid was the best of the England bowlers with 3-36 from his four overs, while Dawson took 2-34.

From Olympic glory to hockey development: Remembering Munir Ahmed Dar

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Munir Ahmed Dar is remembered as one of Pakistan's most iconic hockey players, whose skill and leadership elevated the national game to global prominence, 24NewsHD TV reported on Saturday.

Born on March 28, 1935, in Amritsar into a Kashmiri Muslim family, Dar moved to Pakistan after independence, where he began his hockey journey, representing his school and later Government College, Lahore.

Dar joined the Pakistan national hockey team in 1954.

At the 1956 Melbourne Olympics, he helped secure Pakistan's first-ever Olympic medal — a silver — marking the beginning of the country's rise in international hockey.

In the 1958 Asian Games, playing as full-back, he scored five goals in a single match against South Korea, setting a world record, and contributed eight goals overall as Pakistan claimed



the gold medal.

He was part of the historic 1960 Rome Olympics squad that ended India's 32-year Olympic hockey dominance, winning gold.

He continued his success in the 1962 Asian Games, scoring four goals to help Pakistan defeat India again in the final.

In the 1964 Tokyo Olympics, Dar added a third Olympic medal — silver — to his collection.

Dar remained a consistent full-back for Pakistan until 1967 and captained the national team from 1965 to 1967.

Under his leadership, Pakistan won silver at the 1966 Asian Games.

Over his career, he played 92 matches and scored 41 goals — an exceptional tally for a full-back.

After retiring from active play, Dar continued contributing to hockey as a coach for Pakistan's senior and junior teams during the 1970s and 1980s.

Together with his brother Tanveer Dar, he established a hockey academy in Pakistan.

His family also left a mark on sports; his son Tariq Dar was part of Pakistan's gold-medal-winning team at the 1984 Los Angeles Olympics.

Beyond hockey, Dar was active in other sports, including equestrian events, karate, and rugby.

He served as founding president of the Pakistan Karate Federation and was a member of the Pakistan Rugby Union executive committee.

Professionally, he was a police officer and chaired the Police Sports Board from 1985 to 1995, under whose



leadership police athletes achieved national, Asian, and international success.

Dar passed away on June 1, 2011, due to lung cancer and was laid to rest at Defence Cemetery, Lahore.

Abu Zar Faiz sets new benchmark in speed climbing in Pakistan

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Alpine Club of Pakistan held a highly competitive Speed Climbing Time Evaluation on Saturday at Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad, bringing together the country's top climbers in a showcase of speed, skill and athleticism.



In a remarkable display, Mir Abu Zar Faiz recorded an all-time fastest national speed climbing time of 5.73 seconds, setting a new benchmark for Pakistan and reaffirming his status as the nation's leading speed climber.

The competition was closely contested among other top athletes. Huzair Imran finished second with a time of 6.50 seconds, followed by Zaheer Ahmad in third place at 6.63 seconds. Mir Hassan Faiz claimed fourth position with 7.03 seconds, while Yasin Ali did not start.

The evaluation was conducted under the supervision of key officials, including Convener Pakistan Sport Climbing - Najeeb Ullah Khattak, Head Coach Pakistan Sport Climbing Team - Faiz Ali and Jury President - Mushahid Shah, who praised the athletes for their dedication, discipline and competitive spirit.

Officials highlighted performances like Mir Abu Zar Faiz's record-breaking climb as a testament to the rising standard of sport climbing in Pakistan. The evaluation also provides a platform for identifying emerging talent who could represent the country in upcoming international competitions.

Pakistan 'always ready' for India despite late greenlight: Agha



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan skipper Salman Agha said Saturday his team had been "always ready" to face India on Sunday at the T20 World Cup, despite only being given the greenlight a few days ago.

The biggest and most lucrative clash in world cricket has sold out the 35,000-capacity R. Premadasa Stadium in Colombo with hundreds of millions more expected to watch on television.

The game was only confirmed as going ahead late on Monday night after the Islamabad government made a U-turn on its order to boycott the blockbuster Group A game.

"This is a very big game and the magnitude is huge," Agha said ahead of the team's practice at the stadium on Saturday.

"We were always ready for the game, whatever be the decision."

Pakistan had a scrappy last over three-wicket win in their first match against the Netherlands before beating the United States by 32 runs. India have also won both their matches so far.

"We are in good momentum and I hope that being in Colombo since the start will help us in terms of conditions," said Agha.

But he warned: "We have to play good cricket to win the match."

The hugely-anticipated match could be hit by bad weather, with rain forecast for Sunday evening.

Agha believed spin would dominate, calling Tariq Usman his trump card against India's powerful batting line-up.

"Tariq has been bowling well and I am sure the mystery element will make him our trump card," Agha said, brushing aside doubts over the legality of Tariq's unique sling-arm action and the exaggerated pause in his delivery stride.

"He has been cleared twice so there are no worries."

Agha hoped the players would shake hands, unlike during their three Asia Cup matches in Dubai last year.

"The game should be played in the true spirit of the game," said Agha.

"It has been the norm in cricket for years but whatever way they want, we will only know tomorrow."

The winner will be guaranteed of their berth in the next Super Eights round.

India have a doubt over explosive opener Abhishek Sharma, who has been suffering with a stomach bug.

"I hope he plays tomorrow. I hope he's recovering well," said Agha. "We want to play against the best, good luck to him."

Agha said the role of spinners will be important in the match against India.

Talking about Usman Tariq, Agha said he is our trump card and he has been cleared twice. "I don't know why there is talk about his bowling action every now and then," Agha added.

He said Babar Azam is performing and he hoped Babar will score runs tomorrow too.

"We can't say anything about rain, even if the match is curtailed, our plan is ready," Agha said.

From Olympic glory to hockey development: Remembering Munir Ahmed Dar

Sports Desk

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leadership police athletes achieved national, Asian, and international success.

Dar passed away on June 1, 2011, due to lung cancer and was laid to rest at Defence Cemetery, Lahore.

His legacy continues to be celebrated; he was inducted into the Pakistan Olympic Association's Hockey Hall of Fame and posthumously awarded the Tamgha-e-Imtiaz by the Government of Pakistan in 2015.

Munir Ahmed Dar's contributions on and off the field solidified his status as a pioneering figure in Pakistani sports, ensuring his name remains synonymous with excellence and dedication in national hockey history.

Ground breaking ceremony

BAHAWALNAGAR: The Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan, along with the Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court, witnessing the ground-breaking ceremony of ladies' bar room Fort Abbas perform by District and session judge Bahawalnagar at Fort Abbas on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Industrialization a must to achieve economic growth, says Aurangzeb

By Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: Federal Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb said on Saturday that digitalization of the economy will bring transparency, and after stabilization, industrialization is necessary to achieve economic growth.

Addressing the 'Pakistan Economic Growth Conference' here at Regional office

of the Federation of Pakistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FPCCI), he added that relief is going to be given to the construction sector.

The finance minister said, the country's economy is moving in the right direction and the private sector would have to lead, assuring that government would utilize all resources to provide all possible facilities to the busi-

ness community.

The government is following an export-led policy and relief for the construction sector would soon be announced, he said and added that he would soon do something for the textile sector, besides considering reduction in tax rates in the property sector.

The federal minister said that work is being done in

the construction sector, the tax net is being widened, and 'we see the real estate sector separately and the construction sector separately. Other sectors are linked to the construction sector, wherever you have problems, we will solve the problems.'

FPCCI President Atif Ikram Sheikh, Senior Vice President Saqib Fayyaz Mago, former caretaker federal minister

Dr. Gohar Ijaz, UBG Patron-in-Chief SM Tanveer and Regional Chairman and Vice President Zaki Ijaz presented suggestions to the Finance Minister regarding the improvement of the economy.

In the conference, the chairmen of trade associations of all export sectors presented the problems of their respective sectors and their solutions.

JI, JUI-F warn against Pakistan's participation in Board of Peace

By News Desk

ISLAMABAD: JUI Chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman and Maulana Fazlur Rehman during a meeting in Islamabad on Friday. Screenshot/AAJ News

Senior leaders of Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) and Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (F) on Friday voiced strong reservations over Pakistan's reported participation in a proposed "Board of Peace" initiative by US president Donald Trump, warning that the move could bypass the United Nations and harm Palestinian interests.

The remarks came after a meeting between JI chief Hafiz Naeem Rehman and JUI-F head Maulana Fazlur Rehman at the latter's residence in Islamabad, where the two leaders discussed national issues and the situation in Gaza Strip.

Speaking to the media after the meeting, Maulana Rehman said a meeting of the so-called Board of Peace was scheduled for February 19, alleging that its purpose was to sidestep the



United Nations.

"Pakistan's participation in this forum is not appropriate under any circumstances," he said, adding that global powers were "making a mockery of the

Palestinian cause" and that Pakistan's rulers were complicit in the process.

He announced that a nationwide public mobilisation campaign would be launched

after Eidul Fitr, warning that if the government remained "committed to American subservience," opposition forces were prepared to take to the streets.

Hafiz Naeem said Pakistan had accepted membership of the board and had also agreed to attend its meeting, raising serious concerns among religious and political circles.

Punjab govt unveils free Iftar, Rs10,000 assistance under Rs40bn Ramazan Package

By Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab government has allocated Rs40 billion which will be given as financial assistance to 4 million poor families under the Ramadan Nigahban Package, reported 24NewsHD TV Channel.

Moreover, in order to provide this financial help to deserving families, Punjab government has started the delivery of ATM cards.

Taking to her social media account on X, Punjab Chief Minister said that no long queues, no hassle, financial assistance will be delivered with a sense of ease.

CM Maryam said that no family should feel alone during Ramazan. She said that this time ration card financial assistance has been increased from Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,000 per month during Ramazan.

CM Maryam Nawaz said free Iftar will be organized for millions of people every day through Nigahban Dastarkhwan in every tehsil of Punjab.

Punjab CM said during Ramazan Kareem, provision of essential commodities at discounted rates will



be ensured in convenience markets. The entire payment system of the Ramazan Nigahban package will be completely digital and transparent.

Helpline 08000-2345 has

been established for information regarding Ramazan Nigahban package.

She said that 160 special centers also established in each tehsil

for activation of Ramazan Nigahban package. Branchless agents and outlets also appointed across the province for ATM card and withdrawal of money.

CJP launches inclusive reforms at Punjab's last judicial post

By News Desk

ISLAMABAD: Chief Justice of Pakistan (CJP), in his capacity as Chairman of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), visited the Judicial Complex in Fort Abbas, District Bahawalnagar, reaffirming the judiciary's commitment to ensuring equal access to justice in remote and underserved regions of the country.

Fort Abbas, described as the last judicial post of Punjab due to its geographical remoteness and limited resources, was the focus of a comprehensive review of court operations, infrastructure, and litigant facilitation services. The Chief Justice of the Lahore High Court accompanied the CJP during the visit, reflecting

coordinated institutional efforts to strengthen justice delivery at the grassroots level.

The visit forms part of an ongoing outreach initiative aimed at engaging district judiciary, bar members, and litigants in far-flung areas.

Similar visits have previously been undertaken to Gwadar, Sadiqabad, Ghotki, Booni, and Nagarparkar across different provinces to bridge systemic gaps in justice service delivery.

During the visit, the CJP inspected court functioning and emphasized that constitutional guarantees must not depend on geography. He stressed that even remote judicial stations must reflect institutional dignity, operational efficiency, and responsiveness to the public.

Saudi Arabia offered to invest in M-10 Motorway: Aleem Khan



By Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Saudi Arabia has shown interest in investing in Pakistan's M-10 Motorway project, as Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan held a high-level meeting with Saudi Minister for Transport and Logistics Saleh Bin Nasser Al-Jasser on the sidelines of the OIC Conference in Istanbul.

The meeting focused on enhancing bilateral cooperation in Transport, Maritime Affairs and regional connectivity, said a press release issued on Saturday.

During the meeting, Abdul Aleem Khan formally invited the Saudi Government to invest in the M-10 Motorway, featuring a new alignment from Karachi Port to Hyderabad. He emphasized that Pakistan is keen on fostering Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) with Saudi Arabia to modernize its transport sector.

Pakistan and Kingdom of Saudi Arabia share deep-rooted brotherly and religious ties, supported by strong economic and trade trends," he stated. He added that Pakistan aims to expand its land links and trade corridors to become a regional hub. He also highlighted the potential for massive investment in Pakistan's maritime sector.

Saudi Minister Saleh Bin Nasser Al-Jasser expressed keen interest in modernizing Pakistan's Communications Sector. He noted that Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is particularly interested in increasing flight operations to Pakistan and emphasized that digitalization and road surveillance are critical requirements of the modern era. Both ministers discussed the ongoing progress in the Saudi Communication Sector and explored ways to promote cooperation among OIC member states to strengthen regional trade and connectivity.

Commerce Minister announces laptops for all final-batch 2nd Year students of BRC Othal

By Commerce Desk

gance.



ISLAMABAD: Students and faculty members of Balochistan Residential College (BRC) Othal visited the office of Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan at the Pakistan Secretariat, Islamabad, where they held an interactive meeting with the Minister as part of their All Pakistan study tour.

During the meeting, Jam Kamal Khan announced that laptops would be provided to all 2nd year students of the final batch, enabling them to strengthen their digital skills and prepare for future academic and professional challenges, said a release issued here on Saturday.

He emphasized that access to technology is essential for youth to compete in the modern world driven by innovation and artificial intelli-

The Minister recalled that BRC Othal was established as a gift to the people of Lasbela by his late father, former Chief Minister of Balochistan Jam Mir Muhammad Yousa, reflecting the Jam family's long-standing commitment to education and knowledge. He described the institution as a symbol of empowerment for the youth of Balochistan.

Addressing the students, Jam Kamal Khan spoke about the rapidly evolving global technological landscape, particularly the rise of artificial intelligence. He noted that technologies available today through mobile phones can perform tasks that once required multiple offices and professionals, and that within months, these capabilities will grow exponentially.