



A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ ہم سے عمارتیں تقطیع نہ کیا، انہوں نے کہا ہم سے ابوہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا اور ان سے ابوہریرہ رضی اللہ عنہ نے بیان کیا کہ رسول اللہ صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا: "میں نے جو زبان پر لکھی ہیں لیکن ترازو پر (آخرت میں) بھاری ہیں اور اللہ رحمن کے یہاں پسندیدہ ہیں وہ یہ ہیں: «سبحان اللہ و بحمده، سبحان اللہ العظیم»۔» (بخاری ص 682)

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# Daily The Spokesman



## Trump warns Iran of 'bad things' if no deal made, sets deadline of 10-15 days

President Donald Trump warned Iran on Thursday it must make a deal over its nuclear program or "really bad things" will happen, and set a deadline of 10 to 15 days, drawing a threat from Tehran to retaliate against U. S. bases in the region if attacked.



## Iran says draft nuclear plan to be ready in 'next two, three days'

Iran's Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi has said that Tehran would be ready to submit its plan for a nuclear agreement to the United States in the coming days, after President Donald Trump threatened military action.

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## Inaugural meeting

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the inaugural meeting of Board of Peace on Friday.



Photo: PID

## Pakistan won't hesitate to act if Kabul fails to ensure peace: Khawaja Asif

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif has warned that Pakistan will not hesitate to launch fresh actions if Kabul fails to guarantee peace, alleging that more than 70 per cent of terrorist incidents in the country involve Afghan nationals.

In a statement on Friday, the senior leader of the Pakistan Muslim League (N) said New Delhi and Kabul were "on the same page" in actions against Pakistan.

He claimed Kabul was not serious about eliminating terrorism and asserted that attacks in Pakistan were the result of India's proxy war.

Asif said Pakistan reserved the right to take all necessary measures against terrorism.

"If Kabul does not provide guarantees of peace, we will not hesitate to take new actions," he said, adding that foreign elements were involved in multiple attacks, including the Islamabad blast.

Addressing domestic poli-



tics, the minister rejected reports of any deal or relief being extended to the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI).

He said that while individuals might have approached authorities regarding facilities, PTI's public statements were aimed at creating false hope.

## PM invites DFC to enhance financing for Pakistan's energy, mining, IT projects

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday highlighting Pakistan's fast-improving macroeconomic fundamentals, government's commitment to deepening structural reforms, and attractive investment climate, invited the United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) to enhance its financing for projects in the energy, mines and minerals, agriculture and IT sectors.

The prime minister, in a meeting with CEO of International Development Finance Corporation Benjamin Black here on the sidelines of the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace, appreciated the expanding economic partnership between Pakistan and the United States.

Benjamin Black was accompanied by DFC's Head of Investments Conon Coleman

and the senior leadership of the agency.

The prime minister recognized DFC's crucial role in catalyzing joint ventures between private enterprises of the two countries, essential to job creation and productivity enhancement.

He appreciated DFC's portfolio of over \$1 billion and pointed to the synergies between the economic priorities of both countries, which presented mutually-rewarding opportunities for enhanced B2B engagement.

The prime minister also invited DFC to participate in the upcoming Minerals Conference scheduled to be held in Islamabad in April this year.

Benjamin Black briefed the prime minister on the agency's strategic initiatives, priorities and project pipeline in Pakistan, and evinced interest in enhancing DFC's footprint in Pakistan.

# Pakistan, US agree to enhance bilateral trade, economic ties, counterterrorism cooperation

Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on the sidelines of the inaugural meeting of Board of Peace Washington, where both sides agreed to enhance bilateral trade and economic activities as well as mutual cooperation in counterterrorism.

During the meeting, the two

sides underscored the importance of Pakistan-U. S. strategic relations and expressed satisfaction over the momentum and positive trajectory of the partnership, under the leadership of President Trump.

The prime minister was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, a press release issued by the PM House Media Wing said on Friday.

The prime minister congratulated President Donald Trump and Secretary Rubio on the successful inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace and reaffirmed that Pakistan was ready to work with the Board of Peace for the implementation of Gaza Peace Plan.

He emphasized the importance of continued high-level engagement between Pakistan and the U. S. to advance common goals in a rapidly

evolving global environment.

Meanwhile, in a press statement issued by the US State Department, Secretary Rubio thanked Pakistan for its ongoing support of President Trump's Peace Plan for Gaza and for participating in the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace as a founding member.

He also offered his condolences for the horrific January 31 attacks in Balochistan and the devastating February 6

bombing in Islamabad, reaffirming the importance of our continued partnership in the fight against terrorism.

The secretary welcomed Pakistan's participation in the recent Critical Minerals Ministerial in Washington.

The officials discussed critical minerals and energy sector development, as well as commercial investment opportunities for American companies.

## Macroeconomic growth through export-led strategy, key to poverty alleviation: Ahsan Iqbal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal on Friday emphasized that macroeconomic growth driven by an export-led economy and performance-based industrial units at provincial and district levels, was the need of the hour to alleviate poverty in the country.



Addressing the "Launch of Poverty and Inequality Estimates 2024-25" ceremony held at the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Auditorium, the minister underscored the importance of developing competitive human resource capital across all federating units.

He stressed for the promotion of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and cottage

industries at district and provincial levels to unlock local potential and eradicate poverty at the grassroots level, while advancing progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

"Export-led growth, along with quality education and competitive human resource development, can play a major role in reducing poverty at both national and provincial levels," he said.

## Seven Ramazan bazaars providing essentials at controlled prices: Dr Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday said that seven Ramazan Sasta Bazaars set up by the government, are supplying essential items to the public at officially fixed prices. Speaking to reporters after

visiting the Ramazan Bazaar in G-6, he said the special markets have been set up in G-6, Barakahu, H-9, Tarnol, Pak-Town, Taramri and G-10 to provide relief to citizens during the holy month.

The Deputy Commissioner, Assistant Commissioner, police officers and other officials were



also present during the visit.

The minister said the bazaars

are offering vegetables, fruits, flour, sugar, ghee, pulses and other daily-use items at government-approved rates. He added that the administration is strictly monitoring prices and quality of the items.

During the visit, he also inspected various stalls and expressed satisfaction with the

quality of the fruits and vegetables. He said that prices were being charged according to the official list.

He further said that the Metropolitan Corporation and district administration are not charging any rent from stallholders during Ramazan so that prices remain affordable for the public.

## Pakistan receives extraordinary welcome at Board of Peace meeting: Atta Tarar

Agencies

WASHINGTON: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar has said that Pakistan had received an extraordinary welcome during the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace, held in Washington earlier in the day.

Talking to the media, the minister said US President Donald Trump specifically praised the leadership of Pakistan, including Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief of the Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, acknowledging Pakistan's vital role in fostering global peace.

"This high-level commendation has significantly enhanced Pakistan's international prestige and serves as a moment of pride for Pakistanis living across the globe," he added. He said this was a clear manifestation of Pakistan's successful foreign policy and the result of dedicated teamwork.

Atta Tarar noted that Pakistan is now emerging as an influential and effective player on the world stage, moving away from a past era of diplomatic isolation.

He emphasized that such outcomes are inevitable when leadership remains honest and prioritizes national interest.



**Ramadan Crackdown**

# Muzaffarabad PM orders firm action against price gougers

**Bureau Report**

MUZAFFARABAD: An extraordinary meeting held here today with Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore in the chair decided to launch a crackdown against those involved in price hiking and hoarding of essential food commodities during the holy month of Ramadan.

Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister directed the authorities concerned to ensure strict implementation of government instructions and implementation of government rates so that maximum relief could be extended to ordinary citizens.

He directed the district administration to regularly monitor the markets and take strict action against the elements involved in profiteering. The meeting resolved to strengthen the price control mechanism during Ramadan, with a daily performance report to be submitted to facilitate prompt relief to the public. Earlier, the



meeting took a detailed review of the prices of essential commodities and the price control mechanism during the holy month of Ramadan.

On this occasion, Commissioners gave a detailed briefing to the Prime Minister regarding the rising inflation

and the steps taken by the administration.

The Prime Minister was informed that monitoring of the prices of food items, fruits, vegetables and other essential commodities was being carried out on daily basis.

The meeting was attended by Senior Member Board of Revenue Muhammad Zafar Khan, Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan, along with the Commissioners and Deputy Commissioners, who participated via video conferencing.

## AJK Health Chief conducts surprise inspection of Muzaffarabad Cardiac Surgery Hospital

**Bureau Report**



MUZAFFARABAD: On the special directives of the Minister for Public Health, Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Sardar Bazil Ali Naqvi, the Director General Health Services AJK, Dr. Sardar Aftab Hussain, paid a surprise visit to the Cardiac Surgery Hospital, Muzaffarabad. The purpose of the visit was to conduct a comprehensive review of the medical facilities being provided at the hospital, staff attendance, and the overall quality of treatment available

to patients.

During the visit, the Director General inspected various wards, met and inquired after patients, and directly asked them about the availability of medicines, treatment, and other facilities to ensure that no patient was facing any difficulties. A detailed inspection of all major departments was carried out, including the Angiography Section, X-Ray Laboratory, ECG, ETT, Echocardiography, ICU, and CCU. Relevant officials briefed him on operational matters and service delivery.

The Deputy Medical Superintendent of the Cardiac Surgery Hospital, Dr. Hafiza Ishtiaq, gave a comprehensive briefing on the hospital's overall performance, available machinery, ongoing medical services, and the challenges being faced. Cardiologists and Interventional Cardiologists were also present on the occasion.

## Haider Ali appointed new AD Passport Office TT Singh

**Zafar Chishti**

TOBA TEK SINGH: The Assistant Director of the Regional Passport Office Toba Tek Singh Idrees Sheikh has been transferred and Haider Ali has been appointed as the new Assistant Director in his place. According to sources, following the issuance of official transfer orders, the newly appointed Assistant Director Haider Ali formally assumed charge of his office at the Regional Passport Office Toba Tek Singh and has begun performing his duties. Upon his arrival, officers and staff members welcomed him and extended their best wishes.



Speaking on the occasion, Haider Ali stated that resolving issues faced by citizens in obtaining passports and ensuring improved service delivery would be his top priorities.

## New Chief Election Commissioner sworn in for Azad Jammu and Kashmir

**Bureau Report**



MUZAFFARABAD : Ghulam Mustafa Mughal has taken oath as the newly appointed Chief Election Commissioner of Azad Jammu and Kashmir. The oath was administered by Chief Justice of AJK, Raja Saeed Akram Khan.

The oath-taking ceremony was held at the Supreme Court Building in Muzaffarabad. The event was attended by Member Election Commission Syed Nazir ul Hassan Gillani, Inspector General of Police Liaquat Ali (Retd. Captain), secretaries of the government, members of the district judiciary, and a large number of lawyers.

Earlier, Amjad Ali Minhas, Draftsman of the Department of Law, Justice and Parliamentary Affairs, read out the official notification regarding the appointment of Justice (Retd.) Ghulam Mustafa Mughal as Chief Election Commissioner of AJK.

## Sports are Very important For a Good Body: Dr Farid Sharif

**Quratulain Asim**

MULTAN: DPI Colleges South Punjab Professor Dr. Farid Sharif has said that sports are very important for a good body and mind and that is why private educational institutions are playing the best role and Punjab colleges are at the forefront in this. Here, along with education, attention is also paid to sports. This is the reason why the students here take the best position in the field of education and are not behind anyone in the field of sports. He expressed these views while addressing the prize distribution ceremony at the end of the annual sports at Punjab College for Women as a special guest yesterday. The other special guest, former President Chamber of Commerce Sheikh Fazal Elahi, said that sports teach us discipline and tolerance. Director Punjab Group of Colleges Professor Usama Bashir Qureshi said that our students play while playing and study while playing, this is the reason why we are on the victory stands of the university and the education board. And sportsmen and sportswomen are also given special concessions in education. At the end, prizes were given to the students who took the positions. Principal Professor Saima Fayyaz, Nazia Fayyaz, a large number of students and teachers attended.

## First Friday prayers

ISLAMABAD: A large number of people are arriving to Shah Faisal Mosque for offering the first special prayers of Juma-tul-Mubarak during the holy month of Ramadan as the security by Capital Police was extremely strict and full proof in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# PML-N AJK leadership vows historic victory based on performance

**Abdul Majeed Tahir**

ISLAMABAD: The leadership of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has expressed confidence that the party will secure victory in the upcoming elections on the basis of its performance and public service.

This was stated during a special meeting of PML-N AJK held at the residence of Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Amir Muqam. The meeting was chaired by the President of PML-N AJK, Shah Ghulam Qadir. Federal Minister Amir Muqam and Senator Rana Sanaullah attended the meeting as special participants.

Among those who attended the meeting were former Prime Minister of AJK Raja Farooq Haider Khan, Senior Vice President Mushtaq Minhas, Secretary General Chaudhry Tariq Farooq, Vice President Dr.



Najeeb Naqi, Secretary Information Iftikhar Gilani, and Coordinator to the Minister for Kashmir Affairs Sardar

Tariq. At the conclusion of the meeting, special prayers (Fateha) were offered

for the freedom of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir and for the eternal peace of the martyrs.

# Seminar on Ramadan-ul-Mubarak: A Month of Spiritual Renewal, Mercy, and Divine Blessings

**Iram Asim**

MULTAN: The Department of Islamic Studies and Arabic at Women University Multan organized a spiritually enriching seminar titled "Ramadan-ul-

Mubarak. A Month of Spiritual Renewal, Mercy, and Divine Blessings." The seminar aimed to welcome the holy month of Ramadan and highlight its spiritual, moral, and social

significance in the light of Islamic teachings.

The seminar was graced by the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Dr. Kalsoom Pracha, as the Guest of Honor and chief organizer. In her address, she emphasized that Ramadan is a divine opportunity for self-purification, moral reform, and strengthening one's bond with Allah Almighty. She said that Ramadan is a month of immense blessings, mercy, and forgiveness,

offering believers a valuable opportunity to strengthen their faith and reform their character.

Distinguished Islamic scholar Prof. Dr. Saeed ur Rehman delivered an insightful lecture on the true essence and objectives of fasting. He explained that Ramadan serves as a means of attaining piety (Taqwa), self-control, and spiritual purification. Chairperson Department of Arabic BZU, Prof. Dr. Azra Parveen

and other distinguished speakers also highlighted the spiritual and social dimensions of Ramadan, emphasizing forgiveness, unity, and empathy towards others. Prof. Dr. Munazzah Hayat, Director Institute of Islamic Studies BZU, in her address, highlighted the spiritual wisdom and transformative power of Ramadan.

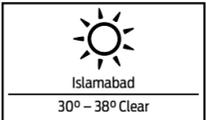
The seminar was gracefully hosted by Dr. Ruqia, who, in her remarks, appreciated the participation of the



honorable guests and highlighted the importance of welcoming Ramadan with sincere intentions and spiritual readiness.

The seminar concluded with prayers for peace, prosperity, and unity of the

Muslim Ummah. The event proved to be highly inspiring and served as a meaningful platform to spiritually prepare students to welcome the blessed month of Ramadan with devotion and commitment.



**SERVICES**  
**Namaz Timings**

Fajr	5:24 am
Zohr	12:22 pm
Asr	4:17 pm
Maghrib	5:56 pm
Isha	7:20 pm

**EMERGENCY**

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

**Women Police Stations**

Islamabad	9222596
Rawalpindi	9270601-20

**ENQUIRY**

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

**HOSPITALS**

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

**DEPARTMENTS**

CDA	9221334-43
CDA	9208301-04
Met Office	9250360-6
RDA	5555864
TMA	5770886
Cantonment Board	9270151-3
Islamabad Metropolitan Corporation	9209224
Potohar Town	9209224
Rawal Town	5773343

**COMPLAINTS**

Water Tanker Service	
E-7, F-10 & F-11	9204654
G-5, G-6, G-7, G-8	9203883
G-9, G-10, G-11, G-12, H-8	9266316
Wapda Islamabad	9217579-80
Sui Gas Complaint	119, 9272249
Wasa Water Tank	
Rawalpindi	0331-5022125

# Dera Ismail Khan leaders defect to PML-Q in major blow to opposition

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: A large number of nazims, local government representatives, and district-level political leaders from Dera Ismail Khan, Lakki Marwat, and Bannu have joined Pakistan Muslim League (Q). The joining delegation met the Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis and Human Resource Development and Senior Vice President Chaudhry Salik Hussain at his residence to formally announce their inclusion in the party.

The delegation was led by Provincial President Intikhab Khan Chamkani of Pakistan Muslim League and District President Khan Muhammad Wazir of Pakistan Muslim League Paharpur. Nazims, local representatives, and party workers from various union councils were also present on the occasion.

The delegation included district leaders and nazims who previously belonged to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf, Pakistan Peoples Party, and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan. Among them were Malik Altaf, Malik Faheem, Wajid Baloch, Sardar Tanveer Baloch,

Muhammad Asif Khan, Malik Nasrullah, Malik Daniyal, and Fareedullah.

Also present at the meeting were PML Deputy Information Secretary Malik Kamran Munir, Provincial Additional General Secretary Muhammad Bilal Muhammadzai, Deputy General Secretary Abdul Basit, and Deputy Information Secretary Shahid Ilyas Marwat, who welcomed the newly joined leaders and workers.

On this occasion, Chaudhry Salik Hussain welcomed the delegation and said that all nazims, leaders, and workers joining the party would be given respect, recognition, and full representation. He added that party organization in southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa would be further activated and every possible support would be provided to address the issues faced by local government representatives.

The meeting also included a detailed discussion on organizational matters, future political strategy, and making public outreach campaigns more effective. Participants reiterated their commitment to continue joint efforts for public service and political stability.



# PSCA's Virtual Center for Child Safety Team Reunites 6-Year Old Missing Child from Karachi with Parents

**News Desk**

LAHORE: Reunification Team of the Virtual Center for Child Safety, established under the Punjab Safe Cities Authority, has successfully reunited a 6-year old missing child named Babar with his parents through the use of modern Artificial Intelligence mechanism and social media platforms. Babar was found abandoned in 2022 within the jurisdiction of Malir Police Station in Karachi. A responsible citizen immediately shifted the child to a nearby shelter home. The availability of data of abandoned children residing in Karachi's welfare institutions within the Safe City system significantly assisted the search and identification process.

According to PSCA's spokesperson, VCCS "Mera Pyara" team conducted a detailed interview of the child, gathered key information and launched a social media awareness campaign to trace his family. The child's uncle, residing in Rahim Yar Khan, recognized Babar after seeing social media post and immediately contacted Punjab Safe Cities Authority. Further verification



confirmed that the child's parents reside in New Abadi, Gulshan Ghazi, Karachi. The family is extremely underprivileged and does not have access to a mobile phone. After completing all legal formalities, Safe City "Mera Pyara" team safely handed over the child to his parents.

The spokesperson added that the Virtual

Center for Child Safety continues to utilize modern technology, AI-based systems and social media platforms to reunite missing and abandoned children with their families. Citizens are requested to immediately report any missing or abandoned child by calling 15 and pressing 3 to ensure onward timely action.

# Mono Marvel Competition Showcases Artistic Flair at FASP Magnolia Gathering



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: The meeting of FASP Magnolia at Serena Hotel Islamabad, in an atmosphere filled with creativity and enthusiasm.

The highlight of the gathering was a competition titled "Mono Marvel," featuring around seventeen participants. Each display reflected originality and artistic excellence, with every arrangement presenting a distinct concept and style. The audience greatly admired the thoughtful presentations and applauded the participants for their remarkable efforts.

The competition was judged by Ayesha Zahid, Sarwat Aslam, and Wiqarunnisa Boolani who appreciated the high standard of creativity demonstrated by the contestants. Parwana Maqsood won the first prize Ghazala Abdullah and Nageen Malik secured second prize Nasreen Mazhar was awarded third prize. Nuzhat Saeed received the distinction of "Very Highly Commended." Shakila Khalil and Tabassum Anjum were also honored with "Highly Commended" awards.

# Young Poets Battle for Glory in Iqbal Poetry Competition



**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: An Intercollegiate Bait Bazi Competition based on the poetry of Allama Muhammad Iqbal was held at Islamabad Model College for Girls F-6/2 under the auspices of Bazm-e-Adab Society. Renowned journalist Hamid Mir attended the event as Chief Guest, while Dr. Khurram Elahi was the Guest of Honour. Students from various Federal Model Colleges participated enthusiastically and presented selected verses from Iqbal's poetry. After a keenly contested competition, IMCG F-6/2 (Host College) secured first position through Tehreem Babur and Tarfa Majeed; the position was later withdrawn to IMCG G-10/4 represented by Minahil Seher and Faria Naeem. Second position was awarded to IMCG F-7/4 represented by Syeda Amna Zaidi and Fizzah Bibi, along with ICG F-6/2 represented by Zainab Abrar and Laiba Abbasi. Third position was secured by IMCG I-10/4 through Areesha Usman and Hafsa Mehmood. A special prize for best delivery was awarded to Tehreem Babur of IMCG F-6/2. Shields and certificates were distributed among the winners at the end of the ceremony.

# 10-year-old student dies after collapsing in classroom in Hassan Abdal

**Raza Naqvi**

ATTOCK: A 10-year-old student died after suddenly collapsing during class at a primary school in the village of Jallo, Tehsil Hassan Abdal, officials confirmed.

According to initial reports, Abdul Wahab was attending class when he suddenly lost consciousness. Teachers immediately responded and called for emergency help.

A rescue team from Rescue 1122 arrived promptly at the school and provided first aid, including CPR, in an attempt to revive the child. He was then shifted in critical condition to Tehsil Headquarters Hospital Hassan Abdal.

However, doctors at the hospital declared the child dead after examination. The exact cause of death could not be determined immediately.

Authorities stated that further medical evaluation would be conducted to determine the cause of the sudden death. The tragic incident has left teachers, classmates, and local residents in deep shock and grief.

# ASAS International School F8 Campus Celebrates Power Play Day 2026

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: ASAS International School F8 Campus proudly hosted its annual Power Play Day 2026, bringing together students from across all academic tiers — including the Inclusive Education Department (IED), Preschool, and Grades 3 to A-Levels — in a dynamic celebration of sportsmanship, unity, and holistic growth.

The celebration was further elevated by the presence of distinguished chief guests Ms. Masooma Kamal Zubairi, entrepreneur, and Mr. Shujaat Ali Khan, Pakistani badminton gold medalist, who appreciated the vibrant performances and applauded the school's commitment to inclusive and progressive education.

Ms. Saba Mubashar, Branch Head, shared "Power Play Day embodies the spirit of unity within our school. Watching students from Preschool to A-Levels participate with passion and confidence reaffirms our mission to nurture resilience, teamwork, and self-belief at every stage of learning."

Dr. Muhammad Arshad Zia, Director,



remarked "Our vision is to cultivate an environment where every child is empowered to grow, participate, and succeed.

Today's event beautifully reflects our values of inclusion, opportunity, and holistic development."

# HSA, PNC Join Hands to Strengthen Collaboration in Areas of Mutual Interest

**City Desk**

ISLAMABAD: Health Services Academy and Promoting National Cohesion have agreed on a broad frame of activities for improving public health sector in Pakistan. The initiative includes several activities including Capacity Building of Health Workers. A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed by Dr. Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice Chancellor HSA and Ms. Misha Mazhar, Chief Executive Officer PNC here at Health Services Academy, Islamabad.

Chancellor Health Services Academy commented that he looks forward to the implementation of this understanding towards benefit of masses across the country. "This partnership could help millions of people in getting access to the public health infrastructure adopting unique communication, community mobilization and SBCC approaches," added Dr. Khan.

Ms. Misha Mazhar, Chief Executive Officer PNC stated that the partnership will provide HAS with direct engagement with the communities across the country owing to

a large network of the organization. She added that PNC's V4C Network includes several thousand young people who could assist in implementing complex project activities by involving energetic and motivated youth specifically from the region.

Under the agreement, HAS will provide technical support, guidance, and cooperation to PNC in the implementation of health projects including ECD, RHR, CHWs trainings, Eye health care etc. It will also facilitate capacity building initiatives, support provision of services related to health program implementation as

well as assist in required documentation, approvals, and coordination with relevant stakeholders. HAS will also provide support in establishment of Social Franchising and CHW trainings.

Health Services Academy (HSA) is premier research & teaching institute of public health under Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination. Promoting National Cohesion (PNC) is a women led not for profit organization creating a harmonious and inclusive society where every individual feels valued and empowered.



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## Role of Social Media in Disaster Awareness and Evacuation Preparedness

Pakistan is among the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters. From devastating floods and earthquakes to heatwaves and urban fires, the frequency and intensity of disasters have increased over the years, largely due to climate change, rapid urbanization, and environmental degradation. In such a context, timely information can mean the difference between life and death. Social media, once regarded primarily as a platform for social interaction, has now emerged as a critical tool in disaster awareness and evacuation preparedness.

Over the past decade, platforms such as Facebook, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, Instagram, and YouTube have transformed the way information is shared and consumed. In Pakistan, where millions actively use social media, these platforms offer unprecedented opportunities for disseminating early warnings, coordinating emergency responses, and educating communities about disaster risks.

In Pakistan, where literacy rates vary significantly across regions, visual and audio content shared on social media can bridge communication gaps. A simple animated video demonstrating how to respond during an earthquake or how to purify contaminated water can have far-reaching impact. Moreover, local language content in Urdu, Punjabi, Sindhi, Pashto, and Balochi ensures inclusivity and wider outreach.

Social media also strengthens community-level coordination. During disasters, individuals often post real-time updates

about their local conditions – such as blocked roads, damaged bridges, or areas requiring urgent assistance. This user-generated content provides authorities and humanitarian organizations with ground-level insights that may not be immediately available through official channels. Volunteers and civil society organizations frequently use social media groups to mobilize resources, coordinate rescue efforts, and distribute relief supplies efficiently.

The 2022 floods demonstrated how digital platforms could mobilize public support at an unprecedented scale. Fundraising campaigns, volunteer networks, and donation drives were organized and promoted through social media, connecting donors with affected communities. This digital solidarity highlighted the power of online networks in complementing formal disaster response mechanisms.

However, while social media offers immense potential, it also presents serious challenges. The rapid spread of misinformation and rumors during emergencies can create panic and confusion. False reports of dam collapses, exaggerated casualty figures, or fabricated evacuation orders can undermine public trust and disrupt official response efforts. In some cases, misinformation may lead to unnecessary evacuations or hinder rescue operations.

To address this challenge, government

agencies must maintain verified, active, and responsive social media accounts. Blue-tick verification, timely updates, and clear communication help build credibility. Citizens, on their part, must be encouraged to verify information before sharing it. Media literacy programs and public awareness campaigns can play a crucial role in promoting responsible digital behavior.

Another concern is the digital divide. While urban populations in Pakistan have significant access to smartphones and internet connectivity, many rural and underprivileged communities remain digitally excluded. During disasters, power outages and network disruptions further limit online access. Therefore, social media should complement – not replace – traditional communication systems such as radio broadcasts, mosque announcements, community networks, and SMS-based alerts.

To maximize the effectiveness of social media in disaster preparedness, a comprehensive strategy is required. First, disaster management authorities should integrate social media into their formal early warning systems. Automated alerts, geotagged warnings, and interactive dashboards can enhance responsiveness. Second, partnerships between government institutions, telecom companies, and social media platforms can ensure priority messaging during emergencies.

Third, training programs for local officials and community leaders are essential.

Effective crisis communication requires clarity, empathy, and accuracy. Officials must be trained not only in disaster management but also in digital engagement and rumor management. Furthermore, collaboration with journalists, influencers, and community organizations can amplify credible messages and reach diverse audiences.

Educational institutions also have a role to play. Schools and universities can incorporate digital disaster preparedness modules into their curricula. Young people, who constitute a significant portion of Pakistan's population and are active social media users, can become ambassadors of disaster awareness within their families and communities.

Ultimately, social media is a powerful tool – but its impact depends on how responsibly and strategically it is used. In a disaster-prone country like Pakistan, strengthening evacuation preparedness and public awareness is not optional; it is a national necessity. By leveraging social media effectively, Pakistan can enhance early warning systems, improve community resilience, and save lives.

The future of disaster management lies in combining technology with community engagement. When used wisely, social media can transform from a platform of casual interaction into a lifeline during crises – ensuring that timely information reaches every citizen, and that preparedness becomes a shared responsibility across society.

*The writer holds a PhD in Media Sciences, Rawalpindi. He can be reached at malik tariq.media@gmail.com*



Analysis

Dr. T. M. Malik

## Pakistan urges 'meaningful dialogue' as deadly Sudan conflict nears third year

As Sudan marks 1,000 days of a brutal war between its rival military factions, a senior Pakistani diplomat Thursday told the UN Security Council that the only viable path forward lies in meaningful dialogue as he backed the efforts and peace plan presented by the transitional Sudanese Government.

"We stress that there is no military solution to this conflict," Ambassador Usman Jadoon, deputy permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said in the 15-member Council's debate on the sharply deteriorating situation in Sudan where violence is intensifying, famine conditions looming and civilians remaining trapped between shifting front lines.

"The Sudanese people have suffered for far too long; The guns must fall silent, and a credible political horizon restored," he said.

Sudan has been engulfed in the conflict since April 2023, when fighting erupted between former allies — the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF) and Rapid Support Forces militia (RSF).

What began as a power struggle metastasized into deadly conflicts across the country, most devastating in the Darfur region, which also saw longstanding ethnic tensions that prompted allegations of genocide in the early 2000s to be reignited.

In his remarks, Ambassador Jadoon condemned in "the strongest terms" the atrocities committed by RSF in Darfur, including in El Fasher and earlier in El Geneina, as well as the continued violence now unfolding in Kordofan. "We reiterate that deliberate attacks against Peacekeepers, United Nations personnel, humanitarian workers and facilities are unacceptable and may amount to war crimes," he said while stressing the need for holding those responsible for the atrocities accountable.

Pointing out that Pakistan's position on Sudan remains firmly anchored in the principles of the UN Charter, the Pakistani envoy said, "We reaffirm our unwavering support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Sudan. The preservation of a unified Sudan is essential not only for its people but also for the peace and stability of the Horn of Africa, the Sahel and the Red Sea region."

In this regard, Ambassador Jadoon urged all parties in Sudan to demonstrate the requisite flexibility and sagacity to reach peaceful and sustainable settlement that preserves the unity of the country and prioritizes the interests and well being of the brotherly people of Sudan.

Highlighting Sudan's dire humanitarian situation, he called for sustained, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access to the affected areas of the country. The recent delivery of aid by the UN in South Kordofan with the assistance of Sudan government was a welcome development, he said, while calling for an urgent scaling-up of international funding for the humanitarian response, which remains severely under-resourced despite the immense needs.



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

## Faith over Finances: The Cost of Ramzan for Families in Pakistan

In Pakistan, Ramzan holds great importance both culturally and religiously. However, the cost of observing Ramzan for families in Pakistan can sometimes be overwhelming, especially for those already struggling financially. The challenges faced by families in Pakistan who prioritize faith over finances during the holy month of Ramzan.

Ramzan is a month of spiritual reflection, prayer and fasting for Muslims. In Pakistan, the month of Ramzan brings about a sense of community, charity and devotion to religious practices. The significance of this month is deeply ingrained in the cultural fabric of Pakistani society, with mosques being filled with worshippers, businesses altering their working hours and families coming together for Iftar (the evening meal to break the fast).

Another factor that contributes to the overwhelming nature of Ramzan for families in Pakistan is the need to balance religious observance with daily responsibilities. Many individuals have to juggle work, household chores, and caring for children alongside fasting and engaging in additional prayers during the month. This can lead to fatigue, stress, and a sense of overwhelm as families try to fulfill their religious duties while also meeting their everyday commitments.

During Ramzan, there is a surge in the demand for certain food items, leading to price hikes in the market. Families often find themselves paying more for basic groceries and essential items, making it difficult to manage their daily expenses. Additionally, the tradition of giving zakat (charity) and sadaqah (voluntary donations) during Ramzan adds to the financial burden on families who are struggling to make ends meet.

In Pakistani society, customs and traditions can

put families under immense strain emotionally and financially. For families praying in poverty or financial hardships, the burden of meeting these social expectations can be overwhelming.

The aspect of faith during Ramzan cannot be understated, as it provides a sense of purpose, spiritual fulfillment, and moral guidance to many Pakistanis. The teachings of Islam emphasize compassion, empathy and charity which are exemplified through the acts of generosity and benevolence that characterize the month of Ramzan. The act of giving is highly encouraged during this time, as Muslims are reminded of the importance of sharing their blessings with those less fortunate.

While faith is paramount for many Pakistanis during Ramzan, the aspect cannot be ignored. Families are often torn between upholding their religious duties and managing their financial obligations. Some families may sacrifice basic necessities to ensure they can observe Ramzan properly, while others may struggle to strike a balance between faith and finances.

Despite the emphasis on faith and religious observances during Ramzan, it is essential to acknowledge the socioeconomic challenges and disparities that persist in Pakistani society. The country grapples with issues such as poverty, food insecurity, lack of access to basic amenities and unequal distribution of resources. These challenges are exacerbated during Ramzan, as the cost of living rises, and many disadvantaged individuals struggle to make ends meet.

The poverty rate in Pakistan stands at around 24%, with a significant portion of the population living below the poverty line. During Ramzan the demand for essential goods such as food, beverages and clothing increases, leading to inflation

and financial strain for many families. In addition, marginalized communities, including daily wage earners, laborers, and street vendors, face heightened vulnerabilities during this time, as they grapple with limited resources and unstable livelihoods. Pakistani society humanitarian issues come to the forefront during Ramzan. While many individuals and organizations engage in philanthropic efforts and charitable activities, there remains a pressing need for sustained support and interventions to address the root causes of poverty, hunger, and social injustice. The concept of Zakat, or obligatory charity in Islam, serves as a reminder of the importance of uplifting the marginalized and vulnerable members of society.

Several NGOs, charities and community-based organizations in Pakistan run initiatives and campaigns during Ramzan to provide food aid, clothing, healthcare services and educational support those in need. These efforts aim to alleviate the suffering of disadvantaged individuals and families, promote social cohesion a foster a culture of compassion and solidarity. However, the scale and scope of humanitarian challenges require collective actions, sustain long-term investments in social welfare programs and poverty alleviation strategies.

Ramzan teaches that faith, patience, and generosity matter more than material abundance. Families learn to focus on gratitude, self-discipline, and caring for others, even when money is tight. In this way, the challenges of Ramzan in Pakistan also become lessons in resilience and compassion. Ultimately the month reminds everyone that true blessings are measured not by the richness of meals, but by the strength of family, faith, and community. Even in difficult times, Pakistani families continue to celebrate Ramzan with devotion, humility and hope.

*The writer is Post-Doctorate (Peace Education), International Islamic University Islamabad*



Analysis

Dr. Muhammad Shahzad Ashfaq

## Colonial Economics in Indian Occupied Kashmir: The Final Loot

The neoliberal trade agreements currently devastating Indian Occupied Kashmir (IOK) represent not merely policy failures but the calculated economic liquidation of a captive population. As the Modi regime finalizes the May 2025 India-EFTA Trade and Economic Partnership Agreement (TEPA) and accelerates RCEP-style accords, the structural genocide of Kashmiri self-sufficiency enters its terminal phase. These agreements, negotiated without Kashmiri representation, deliberately dismantle the region's agricultural and industrial base while accelerating resource extraction—a blueprint for reducing Kashmir to a strategic colony servicing Indian and Western capital.

The scale of betrayal defies ordinary political analysis. By allowing European and ASEAN agricultural imports duty-free access while maintaining the 2019 siege conditions on local producers, New Delhi has declared economic war on its own subjects. The 10,000% tariff escalation on Kashmiri apples mirrors the punitive economics of settler-colonial projects worldwide, where indigenous food systems are systematically destroyed to create dependency. When Swiss dairy and New Zealand lamb undercut indigenous pastoralists, when Norwegian salmon floods markets alongside occupying military convoys, the message is unmistakable: Kashmir must consume what it cannot produce, and produce what it cannot consume, forever chained to Indian supply chains.

The amended mining laws—permitting non-local extraction of lithium, boron, and rare earth elements without environmental safeguards—complete the transformation of Kashmiri territory into an open-pit mine for corporate profit. When Swiss conglomer-

ates and Indian cronies jointly plunder these resources under TEPA protections, the occupation reveals its true economic function: securing strategic minerals while pacifying the population through calculated impoverishment.

The abolition of Article 370 appears now as the essential prerequisite for this plunder. By eliminating Kashmiri land rights and industrial protections, the 2019 constitutional coup enabled the current fire-sale of the region's productive capacity. The domestic industry that once provided resilience against occupation-era shocks has been systematically dismantled, leaving Kashmir without defense against import surges or price volatility. The resulting agricultural collapse—hundreds of thousands of orchard acres abandoned, traditional seed varieties lost to corporate hybrids—represents cultural erasure masquerading as market efficiency.

For Kashmiris, the question is existential: survival or subjugation. The current trajectory leads inexorably to a landscape where Swiss pharmaceuticals treat diseases caused by Norwegian-farmed salmon, where European luxury goods circulate in military-protected enclaves, and where Kashmiri apples exist only in memory. The orchards that sustained resistance through decades of occupation now stand as monuments to economic treason, their fallen fruit marking the path of a people forced into permanent dependency. When the occupation finally ends—as all occupations must—it will inherit not a vibrant economy but a hollowed colony, its wealth extracted, its resilience broken, its future mortgaged to foreign capital by collaborators who never spoke its name.

*The writer is research associate at Kashmir Institute of International Relations and can be reached at: shaziakawajha@gmail.com*



Analysis

Shazia Ashraf Khawaja

# The Crown Prince visits Prophet's Mosque



News Desk

MADINAH: Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, Crown Prince and Prime Minister, visited the Prophet's Mosque on Friday and performed prayers there.

The Crown Prince was received upon arrival at the Prophet's Mosque by President of Religious Affairs

at the Grand Mosque and the Prophet's Mosque Sheikh Dr. Abdulrahman Al-Sudais, Minister of Hajj and Umrah Tawfiq Al-Rabiah, and a number of the mosque's imams and preachers.

The Crown Prince was accompanied by Governor of Madinah Region Prince Salman bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, Minister of State and Cabinet Member Prince

Turki bin Mohammed bin Fahd bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Riyadh Region Prince Mohammed bin Abdulrahman bin Abdulaziz, Deputy Governor of Madinah Region Prince Saud bin Nahar bin Saud bin Abdulaziz, Prince Saud bin Salman bin Abdulaziz, Minister of Culture Prince Bader bin Abdullah bin Farhan, and several other officials.

# European diplomatic missions voice concern over closure of Burj Al-Luqluq community center in Jerusalem

Wafa

RAMALLAH: European diplomatic missions in Jerusalem and Ramallah said on Thursday that the Israeli authorities' decision to close the Burj Al-Luqluq Community Association in Jerusalem's Old City for six months is concerning and further restricts Palestinian civic and cultural space in East Jerusalem.

The joint statement was issued by missions representing the European Union as well as Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

"For decades, the center has provided vital educational, cultural and sports programs, particularly for children and youth. This decision risks undermining the indispensable work of independent Palestinian civil society organizations in East Jerusalem," the statement read.

The missions called on Israeli authorities to safeguard civic space, ensure continued access to essential social and cultural services in East Jerusalem, and allow the Burj

Al-Luqluq Community Association to resume its activities without delay.

On Tuesday, Israeli forces closed the association's headquarters in the Old City of Jerusalem for six months.

According to the Jerusalem Governorate, Israeli forces raided the premises, handed the administration a six-month closure order, then sealed the building's doors by welding them

shut and prevented access.

The governorate described the move as a serious escalation in a policy of targeting Palestinian institutions in Jerusalem and a direct blow to residents' rights to dignified living, community development and safe spaces for children and youth.

In a separate statement, the association said Israeli police closed its

offices and facilities under an arbitrary order issued by National Security Minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, citing a law that prohibits activities linked to the Palestinian Authority in Jerusalem.

The association rejected the decision, saying it has no legal basis and stressing that it is a registered social organization in Jerusalem operating lawfully through educational, cultural and sports programs that serve thousands of children, women and youth in the city. It added that it would challenge the order through all available legal means to reopen its facilities and resume services.

Established in 1991 on land adjacent to the historic walls of the Old City and spanning about 9.5 dunams, the association is considered the second largest open space within the Old City walls after Al-Aqsa Mosque. Over more than three decades, it has provided sports, cultural and social programs, including football, basketball, judo and taekwondo, as well as women's empowerment initiatives, a kindergarten, a computer lab, life skills programs and a ceramics workshop, serving between 300 and 500 beneficiaries daily.



# Israeli colonists attack home in Bedouin community near Jerusalem

Wafa

JERUSALEM: Israeli colonists on Friday attacked the home of a Palestinian citizen in the Bedouin community of Khallet Al-Sidra near the village of Mekhmas, northeast of occupied Jerusalem.

According to the Jerusalem Governorate, colonists stormed the tin-structured home of Yousef Zawahreh in Khallet Al-Sidra while he was attending Friday prayers, stealing and vandalizing its



contents. In a related incident, Israeli forces raided the Al-Qubba neighborhood in Mekhmas, though no detentions or further raids were reported.

On Wednesday evening, 19-year-old Nasrallah Mohammad Jamal Abu Siyam was killed and others were injured during an attack by colonists under the protection of Israeli forces, on Mekhmas village. The assault included the theft of dozens of sheep.

Residents of Mekhmas and the nearby Khallet Al-Sidra Bedouin community have faced repeated attacks by colonists, carried out under the protection of Israeli forces,

including physical assaults, live gunfire, destruction and arson of homes, animal shelters and vehicles, as well as damage to and theft of solar panels and surveillance cameras.

Khallet Al-Sidra is located about 800 meters northeast of Mekhmas and is home to 16 families from the Kaabneh and Jahalin tribes, comprising 59 individuals, nearly half of them children, who rely primarily on livestock herding for their livelihood.

## UN warns of ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank

Wafa

NEW YORK: The United Nations expressed concern Thursday about the potential for ethnic cleansing in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank as a result of intensified Israeli attacks and the forced displacement and transfer of Palestinian civilians.

A report by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights stated, "The intensified attacks, the systematic destruction of entire neighborhoods, and the obstruction of humanitarian aid appear designed to create a permanent demographic change in Gaza."

The report emphasized that "this, along with forced displacement that appears aimed at creating a permanent displacement, raises concerns about ethnic cleansing in Gaza and the West Bank."

## The Year Began with Sustained Growth in Business Activity Across Uzbekistan's Regions - CERR

Sultonmurod Ozodov

Comprehensive monitoring of key business activity indicators across the regions of Uzbekistan shows growth across all major metrics.

According to оперативные данные from the Tax and Customs Committees, the Central Bank, and the Uzbek Republican Commodity Exchange, the Center for Economic Research and Reforms conducts ongoing monitoring of regional business activity in the Republic of Uzbekistan.

As of January this year, tax revenues demonstrated stable positive dynamics, increasing by 39.2% compared to the same period last year.

The most notable increase in revenues was recorded in the Syrdarya, Navoi, Khorezm, and Kashkadarya regions, where growth rates averaged approximately 49%.

Personal income tax revenues increased by 15.1%, property tax revenues by 19.6%, and land tax revenues by 20.3%.

Customs payments grew by 19.8% year-on-year. The highest growth rates were observed in the Navoi, Jizzakh, and Namangan regions, averaging approximately 67%. Stable positive dynamics were also recorded in the Samarkand region and the Republic of Karakalpakstan, where revenues increased on average by 31%.

According to the analysis of foreign economic indicators, exports of goods increased by 19.5%. The most significant growth in export deliveries was observed in the Tashkent and Navoi regions, increasing on average by 47%.

At the same time, a notable expansion in lending activity was recorded. During the reporting period, the volume of loans issued by commercial banks increased by 2.7%. The highest growth was observed in the Samarkand, Bukhara, and Khorezm regions, averaging approximately 58%.

The active development of the private sector is confirmed by a significant increase in the number of newly registered business entities. In January 2026, a total of 7,116 new enterprises were registered. The largest number of new business entities was recorded in the city of Tashkent (1,712). Among the regions, the leaders were Tashkent region (735), Samarkand region (610), and Khorezm region (550).

The volume of transactions on the Uzbek Republican Commodity Exchange increased 1.8 times. Growth in exchange activity was recorded in most regions of the country, particularly in the Syrdarya region, where activity increased 11.1 times. In addition, growth was observed in the Khorezm, Surkhandarya, Bukhara, Jizzakh, and Kashkadarya regions, averaging 6.5 times.

The writer is associated with Center for Economic Research and Reforms

## Boeing 787 deliveries to enable direct Kazakhstan-U.S. air service in 2026

ASTANA: Paying a working visit to the United States, Kazakh President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev met with the leadership of Boeing, the world's leading manufacturer of aviation, defense, and space technology, Qazinform News Agency cites Akorda.

The President noted that carriers Air Astana, SCAT, and Vietjet Qazaqstan are interested in further advancing joint projects that are of utmost importance for the development of the nation's aviation industry.

In this context, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev welcomed the agreement reached between Air Astana and Boeing for the delivery of new aircraft.

For the launch of direct flights to the U.S., Boeing 787 Dreamliners are expected to be delivered to Kazakhstan in the second half of the year.

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Moreover, SCAT Airlines plans to purchase additional Boeing aircraft and is exploring the possibility of opening its first maintenance, repair, and overhaul center at Shymkent Airport in partnership with the American corporation.

In turn, Jeff Shokey shared the company's digitalization plans and hailed Kazakhstan's transit and transport potential. He highlighted the significant potential for productive cooperation in the air freight sector.

During the meeting, the parties also discussed the training of domestic specialists for the aviation industry and prospects for expanding Kazakhstan's cargo aircraft fleet.

Earlier, Qazinform News Agency reported that Kassym-Jomart Tokayev arrived in Washington, D.C. on a working visit.

# Multan Press Club Moves Toward Democracy

A prominent name on the intellectual, literary, and journalistic horizon of South Punjab, the Multan Press Club has once again emerged as a ray of hope. The results of the recent 2026-27 elections have not only infused new energy into the house of journalism but have also signaled the clearing of long-standing doubts and concerns. This change appears to be more than a mere shift in officeholders; it represents a serious step toward restoring trust and institutional reform.

For several years, a strong perception had been growing within journalistic circles that the club's control had become concentrated in limited hands. Allegations regarding a lack of transparency in plot allotments, questionable use of the Journalists' Welfare Fund, ambiguous membership rules, absence of proper audits, and the alleged use of the press club premises for unrelated or unlawful activities had clouded the environment. Many journalists repeatedly asked whether the

institution truly represented the collective voice of journalists or had become the domain of a few individuals.

The recent elections have attempted to break this stagnation. After a closely contested race, the Professional Journalists Group secured key positions, including General Secretary and Finance Secretary. For the post of General Secretary, reporter Mazhar Khan won with 305 votes, while his opponent, Jamshed Rizwani, received 295 votes. For Finance Secretary, Rauf Man secured 316 votes, defeating his rival by a clear margin. For one seat of Vice President, Hafiz Sarfraz Ali Ansari obtained 295 votes, while Khalid Chaudhry was declared successful with 320 votes. These results demonstrate that while opinions within the journalistic community may be divided, the desire for change has clearly prevailed.

Importantly, the media statements of the successful candidates reflect a firm commitment to accountability, transparency, and institutional reform. If a formal audit of past financial matters is conducted, membership rules are

revised, irregularities in plot allotments are addressed, and the Welfare Fund is directed to genuinely deserving journalists, it would not merely constitute administrative reform but a historic restoration of trust.

The essence of democracy lies not only in casting votes but also in accountability, transparency, and the supremacy of law. An institution that avoids self-accountability cannot credibly advocate accountability in society. Therefore, the recent developments at the Multan Press Club should be viewed in a broader context. If unrelated and unlawful activities are curtailed and the institution is confined strictly to professional, intellectual, and welfare objectives, it will mark the beginning of a new chapter for journalism in South Punjab.

It is equally important to note that next year's success will depend not on

slogans but on practical measures. The journalistic community is now alert; it seeks results rather than promises. If the current leadership successfully addresses past grievances, it will likely regain trust. Otherwise, the wheel of democracy will not hesitate to turn in another direction.

There is no doubt that the Multan Press Club has once again become the center of a serious debate on institutional reform. Recently, journalists in Multan have raised two significant and principled demands that are not merely administrative in nature but are deeply connected to institutional dignity, professional respect, and the rule of law.

First, the participation of women in journalism is not a matter of concession but recognition of their competence, dedication, and intellectual contribution. In this context, the demand for a separate and dignified room for women

journalists within the press club is both reasonable and timely. Such a space would not only enable professional focus but also provide a secure environment for thoughtful engagement on social and community issues. It is also noteworthy that cigarette smoking by some male journalists in the main hall creates discomfort for women due to smoke. In light of health standards and professional decorum, it is essential either to impose a complete ban on smoking or to allocate a separate designated area. A civilized and conscious institution prioritizes the dignity and convenience of all its members, especially women.

The second demand is fundamentally legal: the full restoration of the press club's constitution to ensure transparent scrutiny of the voter list under the "rule of law." The foundation of any democratic institution rests on its constitution, rules, and a fair electoral process. If there is even a hint of ambiguity or irregularity in the preparation and scrutiny of the voter list, the entire electoral structure becomes

questionable. Therefore, it is imperative that a comprehensive and impartial review of the voter list be conducted in accordance with the constitution, that eligibility criteria be clearly defined, and that every member feel assured that their vote carries equal weight. The supremacy of law means that decisions are made not according to individual preferences but in accordance with written rules. This approach frees an institution from personal influence and establishes it on principled foundations.

Today, the Multan Press Club stands at a delicate yet hopeful crossroads. If the leadership remains committed to sincerity, integrity, and adherence to the law, the institution will not remain merely a building but will emerge as a symbol of journalistic freedom, professional dignity, and democratic values in South Punjab. This is the path that leads any institution away from the shadows of personalities into the light of principles—and it appears that the Multan Press Club has begun to move in that very direction.



Analysis

Zain-ul-Abideen Abid

## Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

### Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
173,169.71	172,170.29
Day's High	Day's Low
174,148.32	169,592.52
Index Value	Change
17,898,540,478	+999.42
Percentage	Time
+0.58%	20 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

### Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
10,686.89	+59.85
Percentage	Time
+0.56%	20 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

### USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,520.39	+125.23
Percentage	Time
+0.25%	20 Feb, 11:48 am GMT-5

### Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
56,825.70	-642.13
Percentage	Time
-1.12%	20 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9

### Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	195.37	200.11
Bahrain Dinar	742.02	751.52
Canadian Dollar	203.35	206.87
China Yuan	38	39.50
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	328.97	332.69
Hong Kong Dollar	35.29	36.16
Indian Rupee	2.85	3.30
Japanese Yen	1.7908	1.8909
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.68	915.12
Malaysian Ringgit	66.60	68.35
New Zealand \$	165.05	168.75
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	726.76	736.26
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.75	75.35
Singapore Dollar	219.03	223.96
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	358.78	361.78
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.65
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.4
UK Pound Sterling	376.29	380.51
US Dollar	280.30	282.25

# PC Hospitality Celebrates the Graduation of Star of the Future 3.0 Leadership Development Program

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: PC Hospitality celebrates the successful graduation of the third cohort of its flagship leadership development initiative, Star of the Future 3.0. This fast-paced and dynamic program, designed to identify and nurture high-potential internal talent, marks another significant milestone in the organization's commitment to investing in its people and shaping the future of its leadership.

Star of the Future serves as a critical sourcing tool for developing exceptional leaders within PC Hospitality. The program aims to equip participants with the necessary skills, knowledge, and experience to take on key leadership roles within the organization, ensuring a sustainable and impactful future for PC Hospitality.

The graduation ceremony for Star of the Future 3.0 took place at Pearl-Continental Hotel, Lahore attended by senior leadership, mentors, and the graduates themselves. The ceremony was an opportunity to reflect on the journey, celebrate achievements, and acknowledge the unwavering commitment of each participant in their pursuit of leadership excellence.



Bastien Blanc, CEO – PC Hospitality, shared his thoughts on the program's significance: "The Star of the Future program is not just a leadership development tool; it's a testament to our

belief in the power of internal growth. Investing in our people is investing in the future of PC Hospitality and overall supporting tourism growth. We are proud to witness the dedica-

tion, hard work, and enthusiasm of our graduates who are ready to step into leadership roles and make an even greater impact within the organization."

## Called on

WASHINGTON: CEO of United States International Development Finance Corporation (DFC) Mr. Benjamin Black called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday.



Photo: PID

## PTCL Flash Fiber wins Ookla Awards for Best Fixed Network and Best ISP Gaming Experience in Pakistan

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited's flagship broadband service, PTCL Flash Fiber, has been recognized by Ookla, the global leader in internet testing and analysis, with two prestigious accolades 'Best Fixed Network' for the entire year 2025 and 'Best ISP Gaming Experience' for H2 2025 in Pakistan.

The awards are based on data from the Speedtest Connectivity Report for Pakistan (H1 and H2 2025) and reflect PTCL Flash Fiber's consistent performance in delivering superior speed, low latency, and enhanced user experience across the country.

The Best Fixed Network award is determined through Ookla's comprehensive KPI

evaluation model, assessing key parameters including download and upload speeds, latency, video streaming performance, and web browsing experience. It represents the highest recognition in fixed broadband



network performance.

During H1 2025, PTCL Flash Fiber was recognised as the Fastest Provider in four regions of Pakistan. In H2 2025, the service further strengthened its market leadership, emerging as the Fastest Provider across

the majority of regions, based on Ookla's published data.

In addition, PTCL Flash Fiber earned the Best ISP Gaming Experience Award for H2 2025, reflecting its optimised network architecture designed to support seamless online gaming through reduced latency and stable connectivity. This recognition underscores PTCL's commitment to meeting the evolving digital needs of gamers and high-bandwidth users across Pakistan.

PTCL remains committed to expanding its fiber footprint nationwide, investing in next-generation infrastructure, and delivering world-class digital experiences aligned with Pakistan's growing connectivity demands.

## SECP approves full digitization of share ownership for unlisted companies

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has initiated the second phase of reforms to fully digitize share ownership of unlisted companies by transitioning from physical share certificates to electronic (book-entry) form through the Central Depository System (CDS), operated by the Central Depository Company (CDC).

The move will eliminate risks associated with paper certificates, enable faster and more secure share transfers, and improve transparency of ownership records. At present, the unlisted companies maintain physical share certificates, are vulnerable to loss, damage, theft, and forgery, resulting



in numerous ownership disputes pending before courts. Transitioning to digital shares in book-entry form will make shareholding records secure, transparent, and tamper-proof, significantly reducing the risk of fraudulent transfers and related litigation.

Electronic shares will also reduce paperwork and administrative costs while enabling faster transfers, quicker settlement, and accu-

rate real-time records of ownership. Book-entry shares can be pledged as collateral for financing, improving access to credit and supporting business growth. The centralized electronic system will further enhance regulatory oversight, increase transparency of ownership structures, and strengthen corporate governance among unlisted companies.

Under this phase, all existing unlisted companies with physical shares will be required to convert their shares into book-entry form before undertaking any share-related transaction. Thereafter, all transfers, allotments, and other share transactions must be executed through the CDS, and all parties involved must maintain their holdings in electronic form. The Commission will issue a formal notification in this regard.

## APCAA Calls for Suspension of FBR's Point Deduction System

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: The All Pakistan Customs Agents Association (APCAA) has called for the immediate suspension of the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) point scoring and deduction system for licensed customs agents, urging authorities to undertake proper recalibration in consultation with stakeholders before its continuation.

In a statement issued, APCAA Chairman Arshad Khurshid said that while the system was a "positive and progressive initiative in principle," its current implementation was flawed and causing undue hardship to licensed customs agents across the country.

He said the mechanism, designed to identify genuine violations involving revenue impact, was being applied in a manner that resulted in point deductions even in cases where no fault or violation existed on the part of customs agents.

"Despite repeated identification of anomalies and representations made to the FBR, corrective measures have yet to materialise," he said, adding that the lack of proper calibration and seriousness in implementation had led to operational hurdles and business uncertainty.

Mr. Khurshid noted that both the Faceless Assessment System and the Point Deduction Mechanism were introduced as part of the government's reform agenda aimed at enhancing transparency and efficiency in customs processes. The customs agents had welcomed these initiatives despite initial challenges, he added.

He acknowledged the efforts of Chief Collector Customs Appraisal South Wajid Ali in addressing operational issues related to faceless assessment, saying that several concerns of the trade had been streamlined under his tenure.

## ADCG Aneel Saeed orders maximum Ramadan relief, cleanliness, uninterrupted civic services

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Attock, Aneel Saeed, on Friday directed all concerned departments to ensure maximum relief to citizens during the holy month of Ramadan by maintaining cleanliness, availability of essential commodities and uninterrupted civic services.

He issued these directions while presiding over an important meeting held at the Municipal Committee, which was attended by officers of the relevant departments.

The meeting reviewed in detail the arrangements regarding provision

of essential items, sanitation measures and public facilities during Ramadan. The ADCG stressed that all necessary steps must be taken to prevent inconvenience to the public and to ensure smooth delivery of services.

He also instructed the departments concerned to take proactive measures for the improvement and beautification of the city.

Emphasising strict action against illegal encroachments, Aneel Saeed said that no negligence or slackness would be tolerated in the ongoing anti-encroachment campaign and that operations would continue under a coordinated strategy. #

## Pakistan's total liquid foreign reserves stand \$ 21.30 billion

KARACHI: The total liquid foreign reserves of Pakistan stood at US\$ 21,301.5 million as of February 13, 2026 while the reserves held by the State Bank of Pakistan increased to \$ 16,196.9 million.

"During the week ended on 13-Feb-2026, SBP's FX reserves increased by US\$ 19 million to US\$ 16,196.9

million," the central bank reported on Thursday in its weekly statement on the position of liquid foreign reserves.

However, the net foreign reserves held by the commercial banks decreased by \$ 92.3 million to \$ 5,104.6 million, as shown in the break up of forex reserves for the period under review.

## Activate Pakistan-Philippines Joint Business Council, Urges Malik Khuda Bakhsh



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: President of Pakistan Business Forum (Sindh Region), Malik Khuda Bakhsh, has called for activating the Pakistan-Philippines Joint Business Council to strengthen bilateral trade and investment ties.

He appreciated the proposal by Pakistan and Philippines to further deepen economic cooperation and promote investment through a Memorandum of Understanding between the respective investment boards and the establishment of a joint working group on investment.

Malik Khuda Bakhsh emphasized that there is a pressing need to enhance trade and investment cooperation with all friendly business nations around the world. He noted that there is significant potential to expand collaboration between Pakistan and the Philippines. He also highlighted the importance of organizing trade exhibitions and dedicated business forums between the two countries, stating that the Pakistan Business Forum is ready to play its role in this regard.

## ICC Men's T-20 Cricket World Cup 2026

# Zimbabwe Beat Sri Lanka By Six Wickets and Join West Indies in Finishing T-20 World Cup group Stage Unbeaten

Asim Tanveer

COLOMBO: Brian Bennett finished what captain Sikandar Raza started as Zimbabwe beat Sri Lanka by six wickets to head into the T20 World Cup Super Eights unbeaten on Thursday.

Zimbabwe topped a Group B including former champions Sri Lanka and Australia.

Zimbabwe will meet the West Indies in their Super Eights opener in Mumbai on Monday. Sri Lanka will host England in Pallekele on Saturday.

West Indies also completed the group stage undefeated after dismissing Italy for 123 and winning by 42 runs in Kolkata.

Afghanistan was playing Canada in Chennai in Thursday's last match to wrap up Group D. Both teams had already failed to advance.

Bennett still unbeaten Zimbabwe and Sri Lanka had already booked their Super Eights spots after both dominated Australia, and still entertained.

Sri Lanka opted to bat first and notched 178-7 and Zimbabwe overhauled it with 182-4 and three balls to spare.

"I don't think anyone gave us a chance (of reaching the Super



Eights)," captain Raza said. "To win everyone's hearts and respect, it is a good position to be in. If we can win two out of three games who knows what can happen. Everyone loves an underdog story."

Zimbabwe was behind the chase for most of the game until Raza hit four sixes and two boundaries in 45 off 26 balls to catch up with the asking rate. When Raza and Tashinga Musekiwa fell to leg-spinner Dushan Hemantha in the 19th over, Sri Lanka supporters suddenly had new hope.

But Tony Munyonga hit a six to start the last over and Bennett's eighth boundary finished off Zimbabwe's third win over Sri Lanka in the last five months.

Opening batter Bennett anchored the chase and was unbeaten on 63 off 48. He still

hasn't been dismissed in the World Cup after scoring 48 against Oman and 64 against Australia.

Sri Lanka's total was held up again by Pathum Nissanka, who backed up his unbeaten 100 against Australia with 62 off 41 including eight boundaries.

Pavan Rathnayake hit two sixes and three boundaries in a 25-ball 44 to help Sri Lanka to a competitive total.

"We need to be more confident in the field. I felt that is what we lacked today," Sri Lanka captain Dasun Shanaka said. "Hopefully we come with a better attitude the next time."

West Indies has Hope

Italy and the West Indies struggled on what appeared to be a good batting pitch at Eden Gardens.

West Indies captain Shai



Hope starred with 75 off 46 balls, his second straight World Cup half-century, and the next best score was Ben Manenti's 26 for Italy.

West Indies defended a sub-par 165. Italy lost three wickets in the powerplay thanks to medium-pacer Matthew Forde, and pacer Shamar Joseph limited Italy in the middle and death overs with 4-30. Joseph also took four catches.

Hope kept the West Indies from floundering, opening the batting and hitting four sixes and six boundaries until he was bowled by Crishan Kalugamage in the 16th over.

In the Super Eights, the West Indies will face 2024 champion India, 2024 runner-up South Africa, and Zimbabwe, which

knocked out Australia.

"We'll have to find ways to be more forceful when the crunch time comes," Hope said. "We have batting depth but we need to be smart. Need to be clinical with strokeplay. Need to capitalize on deliveries. (We're) in good shape going into the Super Eights."

Italy finished its maiden World Cup appearance with plaudits after stunning Nepal and losing to England narrowly, Scotland and the West Indies. Captain Harry Manenti said he was proud of their ability to stay in the fight.

We haven't played the perfect game despite showing promise in moments," Manenti said. "It's important for all associate nations to be funded and well looked after, which is tough. If we keep



getting support from the ICC, if we get more cricket, we'll get more competitive. Lack of games have hurt us (but) the more we play the higher are the chances to close out games like this.

## Pakistan's Girls Talent Hidden from Mohsin Naqvi's Eyes

Little Fast Bowler Aina Wazir Khan From Waziristan Offered Opportunity by Peshawar Zalmi



Kiran Asim

MULTAN: An agile run-up, an action reminiscent of South African fast bowler Dale Steyn, and a ball speed so intense the moment it leaves the hand that it puts the batsman in trouble.

Eight-year-old Aina Wazir is a young girl whose viral videos on social media have amazed former cricketers and local cricket teams alike.

Hailing from North Waziristan, a former tribal district of Pakistan, Aina Wazir has gained immense recognition within just a few days thanks to these videos.

Now, Javed Afridi, the owner of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) franchise Peshawar Zalmi, has announced that Aina will be made a part of the Zalmi Women's League.

Javed Afridi wrote on his X (formerly Twitter) account: "Mashallah, Aina Wazir is an extremely talented player and deserves to be on a good platform."

Javed Afridi also noted that he would ensure Aina Wazir is provided with all cricket gear and facilities so she can polish her talent and emerge as an excellent player like Saira Jabeen.

A few days ago, in Aina Wazir's viral video, she was seen fast bowling and batting in Shaga Zalool Khel, Tehsil Shewa, North Waziristan, nestled in the foothills of the mountains.

Following Javed Afridi's announce-

ment, BBC Urdu spoke with Aina Wazir and the Peshawar Zalmi management.

Aina Wazir says she has been passionate about cricket since childhood. "Now I have my own cricket team, and we have won two tournaments."

Talking alongside her cousin, Aina shared that she likes Babar Azam's batting, but she personally prefers bowling because she doesn't find batting enjoyable.

Aina's cousin, Manzoor, mentioned that Aina has four brothers and three sisters, but only Aina possesses this passion for cricket.

Aina Wazir's age is reported to be eight years. Manzoor explained that children in their neighborhood play cricket together; they have even made their own uniforms and hold tournaments.

He mentioned that people from Peshawar Zalmi did contact them, but they aren't sure yet what will happen next.

When BBC Urdu contacted the Peshawar Zalmi management regarding this, Zalmi Women's League official Abad Khan stated that their team has contacted the girl's family.

Initially, she will be provided with a Zalmi kit and a bag (containing a bat, ball, pads, gloves, and other equipment).

He added that when the Zalmi Women's League takes place, Aina Wazir will be included, and she will be provided with coaching along with all necessary



facilities. Aina hails from North Waziristan, a region from which news of violence, attacks, target killings, and clashes frequently emerges.

The video of a young girl from this underprivileged area did not just go viral in moments; it also drew reactions from cricketers and others.

Pakistan Women's team captain Fatima Sana said: "Wonderful, Mashallah. May the little superstar be blessed with more success."

Pakistan Women's team player Aliya Riaz wrote: "Mashallah, talented Aina, you are a star. Keep playing like this. My best wishes are with you, and one day you will be the pride of Pakistan."

Mohsin Dawar, head of the National Democratic Movement and a former Member of the National Assembly from North Waziristan, praised Aina Wazir, saying: "This girl has received no formal

training or coaching, yet she is bowling and batting so well; it is truly magnificent."

While a large number of people responded to Aina Wazir's video by praising her cricketing style, some locals argued that, according to Waziristan's traditions and culture, a girl should not participate in sports in this manner.

North Waziristan has been witnessing incidents of violence for a long time.

Pakistan launched an operation in North Waziristan in 2014 against terrorism, leading to the displacement of hundreds of thousands of people.

A few years after the operation, conditions began to improve slightly, but for the past few years, incidents of violence have once again been occurring in various areas of North Waziristan.

Tehsil Shewa in North Waziristan is a remote and underdeveloped area that shares a border with Thall.

## Pakistan men's cricket team will tour Bangladesh for a three-match ODI series

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will arrive in Bangladesh on Monday, 9 March and will undergo a training session on Tuesday, 10 March, ahead of the opening ODI against the hosts at the Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium (SBNCS) in Dhaka on Wednesday, 11 March.

The second ODI will be played on Friday, 13 March, while the third and final match of the series is scheduled for Sunday, 15 March. All three matches will take place at the Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium in Dhaka.

This will be Pakistan's second tour of Bangladesh since July 2025. Pakistan last toured Bangladesh for a three-match T20I series in July, which the hosts won 2-1. Bangladesh, meanwhile, toured Pakistan for a three-match T20I series in May/June last year, which Salman Ali Agha-led side won 3-0.

Series schedule:  
March 9 - Pakistan arrival  
March 10 - Practice  
March 11 - First ODI at Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Dhaka  
March 13 - Second ODI at Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Dhaka  
March 15 - Third ODI at Shere Bangla National Cricket Stadium, Dhaka

## Upgradation of Punjab Swimming Pool is being done according to international standards: Secretary Sports

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali visited the under construction Punjab International Squash Complex and Swimming Pool on Friday.

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali was accompanied by Director Admin Abid Shaikat, General Manager Swimming Pool Mustafa Shah and PMU officers during his inspection visit. During his visit, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali inspected the construction work of swimming pool thoroughly and directed the officers concerned to complete the upgradation of swimming pool as early as possible.

The PMU sports officials briefed Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali about the construction work of Punjab International Squash Complex where Secretary Sports Punjab Muhammad Ali also inspected the multiple courts which are constructed for national, international and practice matches.

While talking on this occasion, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali said that the upgradation of Punjab Swimming Pool is being done according to international standards.



## All Sindh Foot tennis Championship Concluded

Sports Desk

KARACHI: The Hyderabad Council for Sports and Education successfully organized the All Sindh Foot tennis Championship at Board Stadium Hyderabad, bringing together talented teams from Karachi, Hyderabad, Mirpurkhas, Benazirabad, and Sukkur divisions in both men's and women's categories.

The championships witnessed thrilling and competitive matches

filled with sportsmanship, discipline, and unity among the divisions of Sindh.

Final Results:  
Men's Champion: Karachi beats Hyderabad by 11/6 and 11/5  
Women's Champion: Hyderabad beats Karachi 13/11, 11/7 and 7/6.

Organizing Secretary Syed Faham Ali thanked all participating teams, officials, supporters, and volunteers for their cooperation and dedica-

tion in making the championship a grand success.

National Selection Committee members Mr. Rizwan Lodhi, Mairaj Khan, Ms. Nuzhat Sultana, and Mr. Faraz were also present at the event. After closely observing the performances, they selected Hashim, Aamir, Adil, Ayaz, Husnain, Ms. Bushara, and Ms. Sheerain for the Elite Prep's Boot Camps (Pre National camp) in preparation for the upcoming World Championship.

Mr. Ahsan from Mirpurkhas was also present at the championship, supporting the players and encouraging youth participation from his division.

Address by President PCSE Syed Asrar-ul-Hassan Abidi  
In his motivational and patriotic speech, Syed Asrar-ul-Hassan Abidi said "Today we are not only organizing a championship; we are strengthening unity among the divisions of Sindh and building a powerful message of

brotherhood through sports. This ground is not just a stadium it is a symbol of discipline, respect, and national pride.

Sports eliminate differences of language, city, and background. When our youth play together, they stand together. This unity is the real strength of Pakistan.

We also express our heartfelt solidarity with the brave people of Kashmir. Through this championship, we send a message that the youth of Pakistan stand

united for peace, dignity, and justice. Our prayers and moral support are always with the Kashmiri nation. Just like in sports, where struggle leads to victory, we believe that perseverance and faith lead to success and honor.

I urge our young players to stay away from negativity and focus on sports and education. With hard work, determination, and discipline, you can represent Pakistan at the highest interna-

tional level. Always remember, when you win, Pakistan wins.

Let us continue to promote sports in every city, every school, and every community so that our green flag flies high across the world with pride and dignity."

The championship concluded with great enthusiasm and patriotic spirit, reaffirming the commitment to grassroots development, youth empowerment, unity, and national solidarity through sports.

## Preparation of jummah prayer

ISLAMABAD: A large number of people are arriving to Shah Faisal Mosque for offering the first special prayers of Juma-tul-Mubarak during the holy month of Ramadan as the security by Capital Police was extremely strict and full proof in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

# Azad Kashmir Govt Scraps RoW Fees to Turbocharge High-Speed Internet Rollout

### Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir, under the leadership of Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has abolished "Right of Way (RoW) Charges" for telecom companies across the State to ensure the provision of high-speed internet services. Additionally, a "One Window Facility" has been introduced to simplify and streamline the

installation process of IT and telecom infrastructure.

This landmark initiative, undertaken through the efforts of the Information Technology Department, aims to accelerate the expansion of digital infrastructure and improve internet services throughout the State. The abolition of Right of Way fees will significantly reduce the cost of laying optical fiber cables for telecom operators, resulting in faster project completion and wider

service coverage.

The decision will not only facilitate IT companies and investors but will also benefit students, the business community, freelancers, and government institutions by providing access to reliable and high-speed internet services.

Under the newly introduced One Window Facility, telecom operators will no longer need to approach multiple departments separately to obtain No Objection Certificates

(NOCs). Instead, they will be able to submit their applications at a single office and receive all necessary departmental approvals from the same platform. This streamlined process will enhance transparency while saving time and resources.

This progressive decision is expected to play a pivotal role in advancing the State on the path of digital development. Furthermore, following the Government's measures and

the anticipated completion of optical fiber expansion announced by Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the issue of substandard mobile and internet services in Azad Kashmir is expected to be effectively resolved.

The Government of Azad Jammu & Kashmir remains committed to promoting digital transformation and ensuring improved connectivity for its citizens.

# LHC constitutes full bench to hear property ownership ordinance case

### Bureau Report

LAHORE: A significant development has emerged in the case concerning the enforcement of the Property Ownership Ordinance, as the Lahore High Court (LHC) has constituted a three-member full bench under the leadership of Chief Justice Alia Neelum.

The bench is scheduled to hear the matter on February 23.

The case stems from over 200 petitions filed challenging the ordinance.

Petitioners claim that committees formed under the supervision of Deputy Commissioners have begun reclaiming land from citizens using paramilitary forces, a power that legally rests with



the relevant tribunals.

Allegations also include that these committees are exceeding their legal authority

and that the ordinance is being misused.

LHC seeks province-wide ventilator data in measles

deaths case

During preliminary hearings, the LHC temporarily suspended the implemen-

tation of the ordinance and sought a response from the Punjab government, recommending the formation of a full bench to examine the matter thoroughly.

The three-member bench will include Chief Justice Alia Neelum, Justice Javed Zafar Zafar, and Justice Abhar Gul Khan.

Notices have been issued to the Punjab government and other relevant parties by the LHC registrar's office, ensuring all stakeholders are informed ahead of the hearing.

The full bench will now review the petitions, examine alleged irregularities, and decide the future course regarding the enforcement of the Property Ownership Ordinance in Punjab.

# Punjab govt issues list of banned organizations

### News Desk

LAHORE: The Government of Punjab on Friday issued a list of banned, unregistered charity organizations and advised general public not to give their Zakat, donations, and charities to these organizations. These organizations include Sipah-e-Sahaba, Tahreek-e-Jafaria, Tehreek Nafaz Shariat-e-Mohammadi, Tehreek-e-Islami, Al-Qaida, Millat Islamia, Khudamul Islam, Islami Tahreek, Jamaatul Ansar, Jamaatul Furqan, Hizbul Tahreer, Khairun Nas Trust, B.L.A. and other organizations.

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi, Sipah Muhammad, Jaish-e-Muhammad, Al-Rahmat Trust, Al-Furqan Trust, and Lashkar-e-Taiba, Balochistan Liberation Front, Lashkar Balochistan, Balochistan Liberation United Front, Balochistan Armed Defense Organization, Shia Students Action Committee Gilgit are among the banned organizations.

The banned organizations include



the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan, Islamic Jihad Union, 313 Brigade, Tehreek-e-Taliban Bajaur, Amr Bil Ma'ruf Wa Nahi An Munkar (Haji Namdar Group), Baloch Students.

United Baloch Army, Jai Sindh United Front, ISIS, Jamaat-ul-Ahrar,

Lashkar-e-Jhangvi Al-Alam, Ansarul-Hussain, Jammu and Kashmir Freedom Movement, Jundullah, Al-Rahmat Welfare Trust Organization.

Jamaat-ud-Dawa, Al-Anfal Trust Lahore, Idara Khidmat-e-Khalq

Lahore, Al-Dawa-ul-Irshad Pakistan Lahore, Al-Hamd Trust Lahore/Faisalabad, Mosque and Welfare Trust Lahore, Al-Madinah Foundation Lahore, Muaz Bin Jabal Educational Trust Lahore.

The non-existent organizations include Khatam al-Anbiya, Ghazi Force, Zainabiyun Brigade, Majeed Brigade, Hafiz Gul Bahadur Group, Pashtun Tahafuz Movement, and Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan.

Ghulam-e-Sahaba, Maymar Trust, Sachal Sarmast Welfare Trust Karachi, Al-Jaza Patient Welfare Society Karachi, Al-Akhtar Trust, Al-Rashid Trust.

The people are urged to report donations collected by banned organizations on the toll-free number 080011111 or the helpline number 04299213871

For verification of registered civic organizations, contact the Punjab Charity Commission on WhatsApp number 03134995564 round the clock.

# PM Shehbaz holds cordial interactions with world leaders at BoP meeting



### Spokesman Report

WASHINGTON: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif engaged in warm and informal interactions with several world leaders on the sidelines of the inaugural meeting of the Board of Peace held here on Thursday.

The prime minister, who is on a three-day official visit to the United States at the invitation of US President Donald Trump, interacted with the participating leaders, including King of Bahrain Hamad bin Isa Al Khalifa, President of Azerbaijan Ilham Aliyev, President of Uzbeki-

stan Shavkat Mirziyoyev, President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev and President of Indonesia Prabowo Subianto.

During the conversations, the leaders discussed important global and regional issues, displaying genuine warmth and a spirit of close friendship.

Pakistan's inclusion in the Board of Peace reflects the country's growing success in diplomatic efforts and foreign policy, particularly its contributions toward establishing peace in Gaza, reconstruction efforts, and broader global peace initiatives.

# Pakistan, UK agree to further strengthen cooperation

### News Desk

NEW YORK: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Thursday met UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, Yvette Cooper and exchanged views on key regional and international developments, reaffirming their commitment to dialogue, multilateralism, and effective cooperation, including within the UN framework.

On sidelines of the high-level UN

Security Council meeting on Palestine in New York, the Ishaq Dar met the UK Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs, who chaired the briefing. Ishaq Dar appreciated her for convening the important meeting.

The two leaders reviewed Pak-UK relations and underscored the importance of sustained high-level engagement. They agreed to further strengthen bilateral cooperation across diverse sectors, including enhanced people-to-people exchanges.

# Bajaur attack suicide bomber identified as Afghan national

### Correspondent

BAJAUR: A suicide bomber involved in the February 16, 2026 attack at the Malangi Post in Bajaur has been identified as an Afghan national named Ahmad, also known as Qari Abdullah Abu Zar.

He was a resident of Afghanistan's Balkh province and reportedly a former member of the Taliban's Special Forces.

The attack resulted in the martyrdom of 11 security personnel and two innocent civilians. This incident further exposed the growing involvement of Afghan nationals in terrorist activities within Pakistan, pointing to the Afghan Taliban regime's active support and

facilitation of such elements.

On February 6, 2026, a suicide bomber, who conducted attack in Tarlai area of Islamabad, had received training in Afghanistan. Additionally, terrorist groups behind the November 2025 attacks in Islamabad and Peshawar also had ties to Afghanistan.

The terrorists involved in attack on Islamabad judicial complex in October 2025 and FC Headquarters in Peshawar in November 2025 were also Afghan nationals.

Furthermore, the captured suicide bomber from South Waziristan in October 2025, identified as Nematullah, hailed from Afghanistan's Kandahar province.

# Iran determined to implement strategic partnership treaty with Russia: President Pezeshkian

TEHRAN: President Masoud Pezeshkian has emphasized his administration's serious determination to implement the Comprehensive Strategic Partnership Treaty signed between Iran and Russia.

In a meeting with Russian Energy Minister Sergey Tsivilyov and his accompanying delegation on Wednesday in Tehran, Pezeshkian expressed satisfaction with the accelerated bilateral interactions between Iran and Russia, describing their cooperation as excellent and expanding.

He also referred to his meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, saying those meetings resulted in important and strategic decisions that ensured not only the common interests of the two countries but also

opened new horizons for Tehran-Moscow relations.

On the strategic partnership treaty, which he signed with Putin in Moscow in January last year, Pezeshkian said Iran is determined to implement the document with strength, speed, and precision, adding that the implementation process is being pursued in all agreed areas, including transportation, energy, oil and gas, agriculture and food products, defense and security cooperation.

The president clarified that he was personally following the progress of the agreement on a weekly basis, and has tasked different ministers with following up and accelerating the implementation of joint commitments.