



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے بچیں سیر قتلان نے انہوں نے
سٹان بن عبید اور لہا مالک سے ان دونوں
نے کہا ہم سے عبید اللہ بن ربیع نے بیان کیا کہا
میں نے عبید اللہ بن عمر سے سادہ کہتے تھے
بھی کہ ہم اللہ نے فرمایا ہودی لوگ جب
تم مسلمانوں میں سے کسی کو سلام کرتے ہیں تو
«سام علیک» کہتے ہیں تم بھی جواب میں
«علیک» کہنا کرو۔
(سنن ابی داؤد ج 2 ص 278)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



Shaheed Lt Col Shehzada Gul Faraz, Sepoy Karmat Shah laid to rest with full military honours

Lieutenant Colonel Shehzada Gul Faraz and Sepoy Karamat Shah, who embraced martyrdom in a cowardly attack by Fitna al Khwarij in Bannu, laid to rest with full military honours in their native hometowns. The funeral prayer for Shaheed Lt Col Gul Faraz was offered in Mansehra, while the funeral prayer of Sepoy Karamat was held in Peshawar.



Ambassador Qureshi, WB Special Representative discuss ways to collaborate

Pakistan's ambassador to Belgium and European Union Rahim Hayat Qureshi met the World Bank Group Special Representative to Belgium, European Union and Luxembourg Ms. Veronique Jacobs. During the meeting they discussed the World Bank's ongoing engagement with Pakistan, and avenues to further strengthen collaboration in Brussels.

Simultaneously published from Islamabad, Lahore and Multan

Ramazanul Mubarak 6, Tuesday, February 24, 2026

www.dailyspokesman.net

@daily_spokesman



Daily Spokesman Vol: 19, Issue: 310 Price Rs. 25.00 Pages 8

PM visit

DOHA: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif is being received by Minister of State for Foreign Affairs of State of Qatar, H.E. Dr. Muhammad bin Abdulaziz Al-Khulaifi at King Hammad International Airport, as he arrives in Qatar on two day official visit on Monday.



Photo: PID

PM Shehbaz to undertake two-day official visit to Qatar from today

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif will undertake an official visit to Qatar from today, at the invitation of the Amir of the State of Qatar Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. The prime minister will be accompanied by Deputy Prime

Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, other ministers and senior officials, according to a Foreign Office statement. During the visit, Prime Minister Shehbaz will hold a bilateral meeting with Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani, covering the entire spectrum

of bilateral relations, including political engagement, economic collaboration, energy partnership, and people-to-people exchanges. The two sides will also explore new avenues of cooperation, particularly in the areas of trade, investment, energy, infrastructure development, and manpower

export. The visit reflects the deep-rooted fraternal ties between the two countries and underscores their shared commitment to further strengthening multifaceted cooperation. Both countries share a long-standing partnership characterized by mutual trust and close

coordination at regional and international forums. The visit will also provide an opportunity for the leadership of both countries to exchange views on regional and global developments of mutual interest, reaffirming their resolve to work closely for peace, stability, and prosperity in the region.

Democracy strengthens through dialogue, not deadlock: Rana Sanaullah

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Adviser to the Prime Minister on Political and Public Affairs Rana Sanaullah Khan on Monday said that democracy is strengthened through dialogue rather than confrontation and deadlock. Responding to various points raised by Leader of the Opposition in the Senate, Raja Nasir Abbas, he urged the opposition to actively participate in the political process to help resolve national issues and reinforce democratic institutions. He said the incumbent government had consistently invited the opposition to come forward and settle matters through dialogue. The government wants the opposition to play an effective role in the democratic process, he added. However, he regretted that the opposition was not



willing to become part of the political process, leading to repeated deadlocks. Regarding the provision of health facilities to the PTI founder, he said all entitled facilities were being provided in accordance with the law. He said that medical assistance was extended to the PTI founder as per the directions of the Supreme Court. On the directives of Supreme Court, a panel of doctors examined the PTI founder in Jail. Regarding cases against the PTI founder, he said the courts were the appropriate forum and could grant relief in accordance with the law.

No compromise on national security, says Tariq Fazal

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry while vowing that there would be no compromise on national security, on Monday informed the Senate that no one would be allowed to weaken Pakistan's defence. Speaking in the Senate, he said that the government is not oblivious to the protection of its people and territory, adding that the Pakistan Air Force (PAF) on February 21 carried out intelligence-based airstrikes in three provinces of Afghanistan to target safe hideouts of Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and Fitna al Khwarij terrorists. He said that over 100 terrorists have been killed in the airstrikes. The minister said Pakistan had presented solid evidence of terrorism originating from Afghanistan to the Taliban government. Details of

terrorist safe havens and training camps were also shared with Afghan authorities, he added. However, he said that no serious effort was made by the Taliban government to dismantle these networks. "In negotiations, Rs 10 billion was demanded from Pakistan to resettle terrorists on the other side," he said, adding that Islamabad was not provided with any written guarantee ensuring that there would be no further infiltration into Pakistan. He said that the airstrikes were carried out on the basis of intelligence, during which terrorist safe havens and training camps were successfully targeted. No action was taken against civilians during the strikes, he added.



Mohsin Naqvi praises security Forces after five militants killed in Pishin operation

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Monday lauded security forces for eliminating five militants linked to the outlawed group Fitna al-Khawarij during an intelligence-based operation in Pishin. In a statement, the minister praised the "professionalism and timely action" of the forces, saying their swift response had thwarted what he described as the terrorists' "nefarious designs." He added that the country "takes pride in the courage and capability of its security personnel." Naqvi said ongoing security operations in Balochistan were vital for maintaining peace in the province and reaffirmed the government's commitment to supporting law-enforcement agencies in counterterrorism.

Over 80 militants killed in Pakistan's air strikes in Afghanistan

News Desk

ISLAMABAD: More than 80 militants were killed after Pakistan conducted intelligence-based air strikes in Afghanistan's border areas on Saturday night, according to sources on Monday. The sources said that Pakistan's strikes successfully destroyed seven centres of the Fitna Al Khawarij group. The air strikes targeted several locations in Afghanistan, including the provinces of Nangarhar, Paktika, and Khost. According to security sources, the air raids specifically targeted militant strongholds in the regions of Nangarhar (4 centres), Paktika (2 centres), and Khost (1 centre). The destroyed centres included Khawarij Maulvi



Abbas centre Khost, Khawarij Ibrahim centre Nangarhar, Khawarij Mullah Rahbar centre Paktika and Khawarij Mukhlisar centre Paktika. The Ministry of Information said that Pakistan has concrete evidence linking Fitna Al Khawarij militants to recent terrorist activities in Pakistan, including attacks at the Islamabad Mosque, Bajaur, and Bannu. These attacks were carried out by the Fitna Al Khawarij militants on the instructions of the group's leadership and handlers based in Afghanistan.

Four Indian-sponsored terrorists neutralised in DI Khan operation

Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Security forces carried out a precision intelligence-based operation (IBO) on Monday in Dera Ismail Khan district of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, targeting the reported presence of terrorists linked to the India-backed Fitna al Khwarij group. During the operation, troops engaged the militants at the identified location. After an intense exchange of fire, four khwarij were neutralised. Weapons and ammunition were recovered from the militants, who had been actively involved in numerous terrorist activities across the area. The targeted operation aimed to dismantle a cell actively plotting attacks and destabilising the region. Sanitisation operations are underway to identify and neutralise any remaining



India-sponsored khwarij in the district. This operation is part of the ongoing counter-terrorism campaign under the national vision "Azam-e-Istehkam," approved by the Federal Apex Committee on the National Action Plan. Security forces and law enforcement agencies say they are continuing their relentless campaign to eradicate foreign-sponsored terrorism across Pakistan. The initiative remains at full pace to ensure the safety and stability of vulnerable regions.

President, PM hail security forces for killing four Indian-backed Khawarij in D. I. Khan IBO

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Monday paid tribute to the security forces for successfully eliminating four Indian-backed terrorists of Fitna al-Khawarij in an intelligence-based operation (IBO) in Dera Ismail Khan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. In separate statements issued by the Presidency and the Prime Minister's Office, the two leaders lauded the professionalism, courage and resolve of the armed forces in neutralizing the terrorists and recovering arms and ammunition during the operation. President Asif Ali Zardari commended the security forces for carrying out a successful intelligence-based operation against Indian-sponsored Fitna al-Khawarij elements in Dera Ismail Khan. He said the killing of the khawarij terrorists and recovery of weapons during the operation reflected



the high professional capabilities and unwavering commitment of the forces. The president emphasized that operations against Indian-backed terrorist elements were indispensable for safeguarding national security. "The nation takes pride in the sacrifices rendered by its brave armed forces and law enforcement agencies," he said. Issuing a strong warning to foreign sponsors of terrorism, President Zardari stated that Pakistan would not only eliminate their foot soldiers but would also reach those patrons backing terrorism against the country. Meanwhile, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif also praised the security forces for killing four

AJK Prime Minister declares 5G Launch a “Historic Milestone” for digital transformation

Bureau Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that the provision of advanced digital facilities in line with contemporary needs remain to be a key priority of his government.

In his special message the AJK premier said that 5G services would be launched all across the liberated territory from March 10, and trials would begin shortly, for which a policy letter has already been issued.

Terming the launch of 5G services as a historic milestone, he said that it would usher the region into a new



era of high-speed internet, modern education, e-health, e-governance,

and a digital economy.

“This technology would be instrumental in boosting business activities, in addition to creating job opportunities for youth in IT sector”, he said, adding that the initiative would go a long way to enable the region’s talented youth to connect directly with the global market.

The government, he said, wants every city, town and village of the state to be an equal partner in the journey of digital development.

In order to achieve this goal, the prime minister said that telecommunication infrastructure would be

further strengthened to make sure that high-speed internet services reaches to remote areas.

He congratulated Chief Secretary Azad Kashmir Khushhal Khan, Secretary Information Technology Rashid Hanif, and their entire team for their dedicated efforts that made this historic success possible.

He further stated that while recognizing the importance of the telecom sector, the government has abolished Right of Way charges and introduced a one-window facility to create a more competitive environment for telecom operators in Azad Kashmir.

Sardar Attique Demands International Action on Indian Army Atrocities in Kashmir

Spokesman Report



RAWALPINDI: President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister Sardar Attique Ahmad Khan has said that the tragedy of Kunan Poshpura Mascare of India is a smear of UN injustice. In his special statement, he paid tribute to the women affected by the Poshpura tragedy as the sacrifices of those affected women will never be forgotten. India will have to answer for every injustice committed against them. They said

that the UN, international human rights organizations and the International Court of Justice (ICC) should realize their responsibilities and commit atrocities committed by the Indian army in occupied Jammu and Kashmir. One must take notice of actions. They added that the Indian government has allowed the occupying army to commit all kinds of atrocities. Such laws are in force in occupied Kashmir. Under these laws, one side is targeting oppressed Kashmiris in death penalty torture in Occupied Khans and the other side is giving cocaine to the officials involved in these crimes.

Philanthropist Dr. Ijaz Bashir mourns loss of esteemed poet Syed Salman Gilani



Anwar Chohan

GUJRAT: Dr. Ijaz Bashir, a renowned philanthropist and humanitarian, has expressed deep sorrow over the passing of the celebrated Naat reciter, poet, and author. In his message, Dr. Bashir extended heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family, describing the loss as profoundly painful.

He said that Syed Salman Gilani was an extraordinary personality, widely respected for his remarkable contributions as a Naat reciter, poet, and author. Dr. Bashir added that the late poet was a sincere friend who consistently encouraged him and his colleagues in their welfare and humanitarian efforts.

Recalling Syed Salman Gilani’s visit to Cleft Hospital Gujrat, Dr. Bashir shared that the poet had come to appreciate the hospital’s welfare services and had described the institution as his “good deeds for the afterlife.” He further mentioned that the late poet had inaugurated a Cleft Camp at Cleft Hospital Gujrat, marking a significant moment of support and encouragement for the organization’s mission to serve underprivileged patients.

RPO Sohail Sukhera reviews security arrangements at Ramazan Sahulat Bazaar, Jhang Road



Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Regional Police Officer (RPO) Sohail Akhtar Sukhera paid a visit to the Ramazan Sahulat Bazaar located on Jhang Road to review the security arrangements put in place for the convenience and safety of citizens during the holy month of Ramazan.

During the visit, the RPO Sohail Sukhera thoroughly inspected the overall security setup and issued clear instructions to ensure fool-proof security at all Sahulat Bazaars across the region. He emphasized continuous monitoring through CCTV cameras and directed police officials to keep a vigilant eye on suspicious individuals at all times.

Special instructions were issued for the establishment of separate security and guidance desks for women and elderly citizens to facilitate them and ensure a safe shopping environment. The RPO further directed Elite Force and Dolphin Squad units to continue effective patrolling in and around the bazaar premises.

The RPO also directed that response teams must remain on high alert to deal with any emergency situation promptly. Speaking on the occasion, he said that ensuring the protection of life and property of the public during Ramazan is the police’s top priority.

Literature Ambassador Dr. Rehana Qamar Awarded Doctorate by US Institution

Abdul Majid



FAISALABAD: The daughter of Toba Tek Singh, Ambassador of Literature Dr. Madam Rehana Qamar was presented with a doctorate degree by the international educational institution UNI American Eagles (USA) in recognition of her outstanding services in literature, women empowerment, and promotion of world peace. According to the

official letter received, this honor was presented by the University Council in recognition of Dr. Rehana Qamar’s literary efforts, social services, intellectual and social guidance of women, and efforts made to promote peace and harmony at the global level. Former President Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry Rehana Naseem Bharara has congratulated Dr. Rehana Qamar on this global honor from the bottom of her heart and prayed that Allah Almighty may grant her further academic, literary and intellectual achievements and that her pen and thoughts continue to be a beacon of light for the society.

Security arrangements

ISLAMABAD: A view of the safety grill in the front of buses stand at Faizabad area as after the recent terrorists attack and threats of targeting the public places by militants groups, the Federal Administration advised the stations to make the safety wall and install walk through gates for the safety of passengers in the Twin Cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

AJK PPP hails Govt’s First 90 Days as ‘Exemplary,’ Dismisses Opponents’ Critiques

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Azad Jammu & Kashmir (AJK) chapter of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) has termed the performance of the government led by Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore during its first 90 days as exemplary, rejecting allegations made by political opponents.

Addressing media representatives in Muzaffarabad after issuing a detailed performance report, PPP Central Deputy Secretary Information and candidate for LA-7 Leepa Valley, Shaukat Javed Mir, stated that the government’s initial three months have strengthened the ideology of stability of Pakistan, effectively highlighted the Kashmir freedom movement in consultation with the



Hurriyat leadership, promoted good governance, restored merit, upheld constitutional supremacy and rule of law, provided interest-free loans to

youth, increased subsistence allowances for refugees, and ensured equitable development opportunities across the region.

The PPP expressed gratitude to President of Pakistan Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister of Pakistan Shehbaz Sharif, Chief of Army Staff Syed Asim Munir, national security institutions, and the federal government for their continued support toward the development of Azad Kashmir.

Shaukat Javed Mir said that under the leadership of President Asif Ali Zardari, Chairman Bilawal Bhutto Zardari, Chairperson Faryal Talpur, Acting President AJK Chaudhry Latif Akbar, Prime Minister Raja Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, senior party leader Chaudhry Riaz, and PPP AJK President Chaudhry Muhammad Yasin, the cabinet and parliamentary party will play a key role in securing a clear majority in the upcoming general elections through an organized campaign based on governance performance.

PML (Q) Holds Open Court in Central Secretariat

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: An open court was held at the central secretariat of Pakistan Muslim League (Q). According to details, practical steps are being taken in line with the vision of Chaudhry Salik Hussain, Senior Vice President of the party and Federal Minister for Overseas Pakistanis, to address the issues faced by overseas Pakistanis and the general public.

Among those present on the occasion were Farukh Khan, Member of the National Assembly; Atif Mahmood Mughal, In-charge Public Complaint Forum PML-Q; Dr. Rahim Awan, Member of NADRA; Malik Kamran Munir, Central Deputy Information Secretary;



Amna Saleem, former Member of the National Assembly; Chaudhry Yaseen, Chairman Labour Union; Fauzia Naz; and Sherbaz Khan Magsi, Director at

the Ministry of Overseas Pakistanis. A large number of citizens also attended the event.

Atif Mahmood Mughal, In-charge

Public Complaint Forum, listened carefully to the problems, suggestions, and concerns of the participants and initiated action with the relevant departments for their resolution.

MNA Farukh Khan said that resolving the issues faced by the public is their top priority and that organizing such open courts is a commendable initiative. Atif Mahmood Mughal further stated that the event was arranged to ensure prompt and effective resolution of public problems so that citizens can receive timely justice.

Malik Kamran Munir, Central Deputy Information Secretary, said that holding an open court to address the difficulties faced by overseas Pakistanis and citizens is a positive step.

Islamabad
30° - 38° Clear

SERVICES

Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:21 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:19 pm
Maghrib	5:59 pm
Isha	7:22 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

Ramzan Bazaar initiative praised by former federal minister in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Former Federal Minister and MNA Sheikh Aftab Ahmed visited the Nigehban Ramzan Relief Bazaar. On this occasion, ADCC Anil Saeed, former Municipal Chairman Nasir Mehmood Sheikh, CO Municipality Sardar Aftab Ahmed Khan, and In-charge Nigehban Ramzan Bazaar Mubashir Ali were also present.

Sheikh Aftab Ahmed reviewed the prices of essential commodities during his visit. He said that the Nigehban Ramzan Relief Bazaar is a welcome initiative for the public under the directions of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. He appreciated Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza, ADCC Anil Saeed, Assistant Commissioner Arif Qureshi, and the entire team for their efforts in making the Ramzan Bazaar spacious and well-organized.

He also praised In-charge Mubashir and Huzayfa for closely overseeing the arrangements and promptly addressing public complaints.

CDA Hospital hosts International Obesity Seminar, featuring live bariatric surgery

Amjad Mehmood

ISLAMABAD: A two-day International Seminar on modern surgical and pharmacological therapies for obesity concluded successfully at CDA Hospital, attracting more than 160 medical professionals from across the country. The seminar was organized on the directives of Chairman CDA Muhammad Ali Randhawa and Member Administration Talat Mehmood Gondal, with the objective of strengthening obesity treatment through global collaboration and practical learning.

Held under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Naeem Taj, Executive Director of CDA Hospital, the seminar brought together distinguished national and international experts to deliberate on the rapidly evolving field of obesity management. The sessions emphasized advanced bariatric and metabolic surgical procedures, emerging anti-obesity pharmacotherapy, and the importance of sustained multidisciplinary care.

A major highlight of the seminar was a live surgical demonstration by Prof. Khaleel Gawadat, President of the International Federation for the Surgery of Obesity. He performed a Roux-en-Y

Gastric Bypass (RYGB) surgery and provided a detailed step-by-step explanation of the procedure and its clinical benefits, offering participants a rare and valuable hands-on educational experience.

The international faculty also included Prof. Antonio Torres from Spain, a pioneer of the SADI-S procedure, who shared insights into emerging global innovations in bariatric surgery. Dr. Imran from the United Arab Emirates contributed expert perspectives on evidence-based strategies for comprehensive obesity management.

The scientific program, organized by Prof. Dr. Muhammad Naeem Taj, Dr. Syed Tanseer Asghar, and Dr. Sartaj Ali, comprised expert lectures and interactive case-based discussions. Key sessions focused on contemporary bariatric techniques such as SADI-S and RYGB, patient selection protocols, and the prevention and management of surgical complications.

Medical management of obesity as a chronic disease was addressed in detail by Dr. Farhan Ali and Dr. Sarwar Malik, who underscored the integration of modern pharmacological therapies with lifestyle modification and long-term patient monitoring.



Daily problem

ISLAMABAD: A large number of the vehicles are stuck in the massive traffic jam at Express Way as people rush to reach their homes before Iftar in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Foundation University Islamabad Holds Orientation Ceremony for Spring 2026

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Foundation University Islamabad successfully organized the Orientation Ceremony for the Spring 2026 intake of Doctor of Physical Therapy (DPT), BS Medical Laboratory Technology (BS MLT), BS Medical Imaging Technology (BS MIT), BS Human Nutrition & Dietetics (BS HND), BS Operation Theatre Technology (BS OTT), and BS Optometry (BS OPT) programs. The ceremony was held at Jinnah Auditorium, Foundation University School of Health Sciences (FUSH).

The ceremony was honored by the presence of Maj Gen



Prof. Dr. Qudrat Ullah Malik (Retd.) (HI) (M), Director FUSH, as the Chief Guest, and Associate Professor Dr. Hafiz Muhammad Manan Haider Khan, Federal Member/Registrar, Allied Health Professionals Council (AHPCC), Government of Pakistan, as the Guest of Honor.

The proceedings commenced with the recitation from the Holy Quran, followed by the National Anthem. Prof. Dr. Furqan Ahmed Siddiqi, Principal/Dean, FUCP & FUCHAS, formally welcomed the newly admitted students and administered the oath-taking ceremony, reaffirming their commitment to professional excellence, ethical conduct, and dedication to healthcare services.

Dr. Muhammad Ehab Azim, Associate Dean/Vice Principal, delivered a comprehensive presentation outlining the vision, academic achievements, and future direction of FUCP and FUCHAS.

Nigehban Iftar Dastarkhwan' A Commendable Initiative by the Chief Minister: Fasting Citizens

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: In line with the public welfare vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, the fifth Iftar under the "Nigehban Iftar Dastarkhwan" initiative was organized at Shehbaz Sharif Park, Rawal Road, Rawalpindi, drawing a large number of fasting citizens who appreciated the Chief Minister's continued commitment to public service. Addressing the gathering, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister on Price Control and Essential Commodities, Salma Butt, said that fasting is an essential part of faith and serving humanity brings immense reward. She stated that Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz stands with the people at every stage of life and is ensuring practical relief measures during Ramadan for the underprivileged, daily wage earners, and deserving citizens. On the occasion, Association President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry, Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed, Senior Member Huzaifa Ansar, Shakir Sharif, along with officials from the district administration, Punjab Food Authority, and law enforcement agencies, were present in large numbers. Salma Butt emphasized that collective efforts are needed to fulfill the Chief Minister's vision and make this mission of public service a success. Association President Muhammad Farooq Chaudhry and Chairman Mumtaz Ahmed reiterated that providing a dignified Iftar to deserving and fasting individuals during Ramadan is their social responsibility, and with the cooperation of the district administration, the initiative will continue throughout the holy month.

Crackdown on Overpricing: 4,857 Inspections, Rs 506,000 Fines, 46 Arrested

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: Following the special directives of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a comprehensive crackdown against overpricing of essential commodities was carried out in Attock from February 19 to February 23.

Under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza, price control magistrates conducted a total of 4,857 inspections across the district. Fines were imposed on 103 violators, with a total amount of Rs 506,000 collected. In cases of serious violations, one FIR was registered, three shops were sealed, and 46 individuals were arrested.

Deputy Commissioner Rao Atif Raza stated that providing relief to the public in line with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif is the district administration's top priority, and overpricing will not be tolerated under any circumstances. He directed price control magistrates to ensure their presence in the field and strictly enforce the official price lists.

Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Anil Saeed said that the price control mechanism is being further strengthened across the district, with daily monitoring to maximize public relief.

Mushaal Slams World Community's Silence Over Abuses of Kashmiri Women

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson of the Peace and Culture Organisation and wife of incarcerated Kashmiri leader Mohammad Yasin Malik, has strongly condemned what she described as the continued silence of the international community and global women's rights organisations over the grave human rights situation faced by women in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

In her message marking the International Day for the Elimination of Violence against Women, Mushaal expressed deep frustration at the "deaf and dumb approach" of global powers and rights bodies toward what she termed the systematic use of sexual violence and repression to silence dissent in the occupied territory. She said that while the world observes international days and issues statements, Kashmiri women continue to suffer without meaningful intervention or accountability.

Citing the latest data released by Kashmir Media Service, she highlighted the scale of the humanitarian crisis. According to KMS figures, since 1989, 96,483 Kashmiris have been killed, including 7,411 custodial or fake encounter deaths. The report further documents that 22,991 women have been widowed and 108,007 children orphaned during the conflict. It also records that 11,269 women have been gang-raped or molested and 110,562 homes and structures destroyed.

Mushaal called upon the United Nations, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, and other credible international bodies to move beyond symbolic concern and initiate concrete, independent, and transparent accountability mechanisms. She urged the global community to recognise that justice for Kashmiri women is a moral and humanitarian imperative.

"Violence against women anywhere is a stain on humanity," she said. "But when it is ignored for decades, it becomes a collective failure of the international conscience."

Beaconhouse International Student Convention Unites Six Countries in Malaysia

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Beaconhouse International Student Convention was held in Malaysia this February, bringing together students from Beaconhouse schools in Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Thailand, the Philippines, and the UAE. Over two days in Kuala Lumpur, students competed and collaborated through a shared international forum that reflects the global footprint of the Beaconhouse network.

Held under the theme Global Connections for Common Goals, the convention challenged students to think and perform beyond borders.



Discussions ranged from climate responsibility to digital equity and cultural understanding, with cooperation across differences and disciplines at

the core of each engagement. Students engaged across four arenas: Sports, Creative, Knowledge, and Gaming.

The introduction of debating strengthened the intellectual dimension of the convention, while Spark-Tank@BISC translated the theme into action. Students from the six countries participated in four pre-event mentoring sessions led by Beaconhouse-Yamsaard Thailand, forming cross-border teams to develop joint entrepreneurial ventures before meeting in person for the first time in Kuala Lumpur, where they finalised their ideas and pitched to a panel of distinguished judges.

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

Tucker Carlson's Revolt Against America's Israel Policy

If there is one American media figure who has done more than any other to rupture the long-standing conservative consensus on Israel, it is Tucker Carlson. A son of a diplomat and a deeply patriotic American, Carlson has positioned himself as the most relentless critic of Israel's outsized influence over U.S. foreign policy, congressional decision-making, business networks and geopolitical strategy. In his telling, Washington's reflexive alignment with Israel has drawn the United States into wars, drained its treasury and compromised its sovereignty.

During the interview, Carlson raised the issue of Christian casualties in Gaza and the West Bank, as well as the destruction of churches, hospitals, and schools operated by Christian communities. He questioned the ambassador about reports that Christian civilians had been killed and Christian institutions damaged during military operations. The ambassador acknowledged that such incidents had occurred, describing them as unintended consequences of war and stating that Israel had expressed regret over those events.

He said that Israel used Epstein's facility to compromise influential political figures, royalty, senators, and members of Congress through illicit activities involving minors and used their engagement as a blackmailing tool to garner support for Israel in the important decision making in Washington and other influential political capitals. He confronted the Ambassador to hold the Israelis accomplices of Epstein accountable. The Ambassador admitted the connection between Epstein and Mossad but evaded the question by stating the responsibility for prosecuting crimes committed on U.S. soil lies with American authorities, since Epstein operated primarily within the United States.

He was aligned with the Israel dream of greater Israel and was playing his part to pursue the elusive Israeli dream.

During the exchange, Carlson raised the issue of civilian casualties, specifically asking about how thousands of children had been killed during Israeli military operations. The ambassador acknowledged that large numbers of civilians, including thousands of children, have died in the conflict, but maintained that the Israel Defense Forces (IDF) attempt to minimize civilian harm even much better than the US army does.

Carlson then pressed further, asking whether the ambassador was implying that the U.S. military operates with lower moral standards than the IDF. In response, the ambassador cited historical examples of American warfare, including the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the flattening of the entire Germany during World War-II during and civilian casualties in Iraq, Libya and Afghanistan. The Ambassador seemed so bought up by Israel that in defence of the IDF that he blamed the US army as worse than the IDF, clearly reflecting where his loyalties are and how, instead of defending the interests of the US in Israel, he was defending Israel which was against the term of employment of an Ambassador.

Under the Vienna Convention an ambassador's foremost duty is to represent and protect the interests of the sending state—not to advocate for the host country. In a high-profile interview, the ideal ambassadorial posture would

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

That argument was on full display in February 2026 at Ben-Gurion Airport, where Carlson conducted a combative, two-and-a-half-hour interview with U.S. Ambassador to Israel Mike Huckabee. Carlson accused American officials of "prioritizing Israel" over their own country, pressing Huckabee over civilian casualties in Gaza, biblical rhetoric invoked by Israeli leaders, extradition disputes and the scale of U.S. military aid.

Carlson's contention was blunt: if American taxpayers provide billions in assistance — at least \$16.3 billion in direct military aid since October 2023, with broader estimates exceeding \$21 billion — then American officials have a duty to ask hard questions. He framed the issue as a defense of U.S. sovereignty. Why, he asked, should a prosperous, technologically advanced nation with a strong per-capita income require continuous American subsidy?

The debate intensified when the ambassador argued that Christians enjoy greater protection in Israel than in many Muslim-majority countries. Carlson challenged that assertion, claiming that there are more Christians in Qatar alone than in Israel. He further argued that Qatar has provided land for churches, schools, and hospitals and that Christians there live openly and peacefully. In contrast, Carlson alleged that Christians in Israel face intimidation and harassment and that their numbers have declined in recent years due to emigration.

While referring to the Epstein files that have been made public in the United States, Carlson raised the issue of connections between Jeffrey Epstein, the established paedophile and blackmailer and Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, and the present President and former prime

ministers of Israel. He said that Israel used Epstein's facility to compromise influential political figures, royalty, senators, and members of Congress through illicit activities involving minors and used their engagement as a blackmailing tool to garner support for Israel in the important decision making in Washington and other influential political capitals. He confronted the Ambassador to hold the Israelis accomplices of Epstein accountable. The Ambassador admitted the connection between Epstein and Mossad but evaded the question by stating the responsibility for prosecuting crimes committed on U.S. soil lies with American authorities, since Epstein operated primarily within the United States.

During the interview, Carlson directly confronted a theological claim of Israel for the land promised to them by God "from the Nile to the Euphrates." He pointed out that, if interpreted literally in contemporary geopolitical terms, such a claim would encompass parts of present-day Jordan, Syria, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and beyond.

Carlson pressed the ambassador on whether this scriptural narrative could justify territorial expansion under the banner of a so-called "Greater Israel." In response, the ambassador said that if Israel conquered those territories then why not. The tone and tenor of the Ambassador clearly suggested that

FC sacrifices in war against terrorism

In a quiet ward of the Federal Constabulary (FC) Hospital in Peshawar, where the scent of antiseptic lingers in the air and machines hum softly beside hospital beds, two brave young soldiers spoke not of body pain but of purpose, vowing to make every sacrifice for the protection of their motherland.

FC soldiers Adnan and Imtiaz, both wounded while foiling a terrorist attack, lie recovering from injuries sustained in a fierce exchange of fire with militants a few days ago. Their wounded bodies bear the marks of battle fought by them with exemplary bravery, but their spirits, devotion to duty and love for Pakistan remain even bigger and unshaken.

"Pakistan is our motherland," says Adnan, his voice steady despite visible body weakness due to blood loss. "We are ready to make every sacrifice for Pakistan's protection and security against all threats."

These valiant soldiers were injured while thwarting an attack by terrorists, inflicting heavy losses on the assailants and saved many precious lives. Their swift response not only saved lives of colleagues and civilian population but once again underscored the unwavering resolve of Pakistan's security forces in the ongoing fight against terrorism.

"I have always prayed for either martyrdom or to live as a Ghazi," he shared with APP. "That is why I joined the FC to fulfill that wish of my childhood." Even after coming face-to-face with death, neither of these soldiers expressed fear or regret; instead, both vowed to return to duty soon after recovering.

"Such cowardly acts cannot weaken our determination and evil designs of the enemy would be destroyed," Adnan reiterated. "Pakistan has given us identity, prestige and honour. We will give everything for its defence."

Imtiaz echoed his comrade's resolve, expressing gratitude for the extensive care and treatment being provided at their hospital and for the recognition of their sacrifices for Pakistan. To acknowledge the sacrifices of FC troops, Interior Minister Syed Mohsin Naqvi visited the FC Headquarters and later the hospital to personally inquire about the health of the injured personnel.

Directing hospital authorities to ensure the best possible medical treatment, he praised the injured soldiers' courage, morale and steadfastness. "You are the pride of the nation," he told them, assuring full support for their recovery.

Saving Children's Hearts Forever

The measure of a humane society is found in how it protects its children, especially those standing at the fragile intersection of illness and hope. In Pakistan, congenital heart disease remains one of the most devastating threats to childhood survival. Thousands of families confront a harsh clinical reality each year when their children are diagnosed with structural cardiac abnormalities that demand urgent surgical correction. In this difficult landscape, the Chief Minister's Children Heart Surgery Program under the leadership of CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif has emerged as one of the most compassionate and transformative public health interventions in Pakistan's history. It has restored not only heart function but also dignity and faith for thousands of vulnerable families across the country.

The successful completion of more than 10,331 free pediatric cardiac surgeries represents a milestone of profound national significance. These are not routine procedures but highly complex surgical interventions involving correction of congenital malformations such as ventricular septal defects, atrial septal defects, patent ductus arteriosus and cyanotic heart conditions. Each surgery requires advanced cardiopulmonary bypass support, meticulous intraoperative precision and intensive post-operative monitoring in specialized pediatric cardiac intensive care units. Without such intervention, these children may face progressive hypoxia, impaired organ perfusion and ultimately premature mortality. By providing these procedures free of cost, the program has transformed what was once an unattainable medical privilege into a guaranteed public service.

The scale of the program also reveals its national humanitarian reach. Children from every corner of Pakistan have benefited from

Punjab's advanced cardiac care infrastructure. The highest number of surgeries were performed for children from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, numbering 425, followed by 250 from Azad Jammu and Kashmir, 107 from federal regions, 34 from Gilgit Baltistan, 28 from Balochistan and 27 from Sindh. These figures illustrate a powerful truth. Punjab continues to serve as a clinical lifeline for families beyond its geographic boundaries. Its pediatric cardiac centers have become referral epicenters where medical expertise transcends provincial divisions and reinforces national solidarity through healing.

This achievement must also be understood in light of Pakistan's epidemiological reality. According to leading pediatric cardiologists, nearly 50,000 children are born with congenital heart disease each year and approximately 25,000 require immediate surgical intervention to survive. These conditions disrupt normal hemodynamics, compromise oxygen delivery and impair physiological development. Without timely surgical correction, many children experience irreversible myocardial stress, growth retardation and reduced life expectancy. The Chief Minister's Children Heart Surgery Program addresses this critical healthcare gap by ensuring early surgical correction, restoring circulatory stability and enabling normal childhood development.

Institutional strengthening has been central to the success of this initiative. The expansion of pediatric cardiac capacity at the Children's Hospital Lahore reflects strategic investment in human capital and clinical excellence. The number of cardiac surgeons has been increased to 12 and cardiac physicians to 34, ensuring sustained procedural capability and continuous patient care. This expansion enhances surgical throughput, reduces waiting times

and improves clinical outcomes. The inauguration of a modern pediatric intensive care unit represents another landmark advancement. Equipped with advanced ventilatory support systems, invasive monitoring technology and specialized nursing care, the ICU ensures optimal postoperative recovery and minimizes complications such as arrhythmias, infection and hemodynamic instability.

Equally important is the leadership dimension that has guided this program. CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif's direct engagement with pediatric patients reflects a model of governance grounded in empathy and accountability. Her visit to the newly inaugurated ICU at Children's Hospital Lahore, where she met young patients and offered reassurance, symbolized the human connection at the heart of public service. Her presence at the ceremony marking the completion of over 10,000 surgeries was not merely ceremonial but a reaffirmation of the state's enduring commitment to the impecunious strata. Such gestures strengthen public trust and reinforce the moral legitimacy of healthcare institutions.

The program's broader pediatric health vision is equally noteworthy. Through the Chief Minister Transplant Card initiative, 800 cochlear transplants and 200 bone marrow transplants have also been performed for children. These procedures represent some of the most sophisticated domains of modern medicine. Bone marrow transplantation restores hematopoietic function in children suffering from life-threatening blood disorders, while cochlear implantation restores auditory perception and cognitive development. Together, these interventions signal the emergence of a comprehensive pediatric healthcare paradigm centered on functional restoration and long-term well-being.

From a global health perspective, this initiative aligns with the highest standards of universal health coverage and equitable health

Continued on Page 7



Analysis

Qudrat Ullah

UAF-China Collaboration and the Strategic Role of the Confucius Institute

Over the last four decades, China has accomplished one of the most profound agricultural transformations in modern history. From a nation once grappling with food scarcity, China has strategically repositioned agriculture as a pillar of national security, scientific progress, and economic stability. Today, it stands as a global leader in agricultural innovation, offering scalable solutions to some of the most urgent challenges confronting world agriculture—climate change, food insecurity, pest resistance, soil degradation, and water scarcity.

This transformation has been driven by sustained investment in science, human capital, and institutional coherence. Leading universities such as China Agricultural University (Beijing), Nanjing Agricultural University (Nanjing), Northwest A&F University (Yangling), Zhejiang University (Hangzhou), Huazhong Agricultural University (Wuhan), South China Agricultural University (Guangzhou), Northeast Agricultural University (Harbin), Qingdao Agricultural University (Qingdao), Jiangxi Agricultural University (Nanchang), Central South University of Forestry and Technology (Changsha), Anhui Agricultural University (Hefei), Beijing University of Agriculture (Beijing), Fujian Agriculture and Forestry University (Fuzhou), Hebei Agricultural University (Baoding), and Gansu Agricultural University (Lanzhou), along with the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS), Beijing, and the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences (UCAS), Beijing, have set

global benchmarks in precision agriculture, biotechnology, climate-smart farming, and digital crop management. Additional prominent institutions include Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Tianjin University of Agriculture, Hunan Agricultural University, Shandong Agricultural University, and Yunnan Agricultural University. Their defining strength lies not merely in research productivity, but in demand-driven innovation and the rapid translation of laboratory discoveries into farmers' fields.

At the national level, the Chinese Academy of Agricultural Sciences (CAAS) represents the backbone of China's science-led agricultural revolution. With world-class laboratories and a disciplined research culture, CAAS has delivered breakthroughs in hybrid seed technology, genomics, Integrated Pest Management (IPM), water-efficient farming systems, smart mechanisation, and livestock health. These innovations have enabled China to achieve food security for its vast population while significantly reducing environmental footprints.

China's agriculture today is characterised by AI-based advisory systems, agricultural drones, insect-monitoring radar technologies, smart greenhouses, and data-driven decision-making. These advancements exemplify how agriculture can evolve into a high-technology sector without compromising sustainability—an achievement of immense relevance for developing economies.

Lessons for Pakistan: Innovation as a Necessity, Not a Choice

For Pakistan, where agriculture underpins

Continued on Page 7



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

Defender of the Fatherland Day

Ambassador Khorev says unity of Army, People guarantees Russia's survival, future



Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Albert P. Khorev, Ambassador of Russia to Pakistan, said on Monday that the unity of the army and the people guarantees the survival and future of Russia, emphasizing that history has consistently demonstrated this at decisive moments.

He made these remarks while addressing a reception organized by the Embassy of Russia in Islamabad to mark "Defender of the Fatherland Day", a holiday he described as holding a special place in the history and hearts of the Russian people.

Air Marshal Shakil Ghazanfar, Deputy Chief of the Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, graced

the occasion as the chief guest. Dean of the Diplomatic Corps and Ambassador of Turkmenistan to Pakistan H. E. Mr. Atadjan Movlamov, and Defence Attache Colonel Vadim N. Fenchenko also present on the occasion.

"It is a great honor to welcome you today to the Defender of the Fatherland Day reception. This holiday brings generations together, reminding us of the enduring legacy of military honor and service to our country," Ambassador Khorev said.

The envoy noted that the holiday dates back to the early 20th century, when Russia's regular armed forces were established during a challenging

period in the nation's history. He recalled that in January 1918, the Workers' and Peasants' Red Army and Navy were formed, and on February 23 of that year, the Council of People's Commissars issued a decree titled "The Socialist Fatherland Is in Danger!" calling on citizens to defend their homeland.

"Although eras, state names, and the structure of the armed forces have changed, the readiness of the defenders of the Fatherland to protect their country's sovereignty and security has remained the same," he said.

Highlighting key moments from Russian history, the ambassador referred to the 13th-century leadership of Alexander Nevsky, who repelled foreign

aggression on Russia's western borders and was later canonized for defending national interests through diplomacy and military action.

He also cited the naval victories under Peter the Great, particularly during the Great Northern War, which secured Russia's access to the Baltic Sea and elevated its status among major world powers.

Ambassador Khorev paid tribute to renowned military commanders such as Alexander Suvorov, who never lost a battle and is remembered for his 1799 Alpine campaign, and

Mikhail Kutuzov, whose leadership during the Patriotic War of 1812 contributed to the defeat of Napoleon's forces.

He also honored Soviet military leaders of World War II, including marshals Georgy Zhukov, Konstantin Rokossovsky, and Alexander Vasilevsky, describing the Soviet victory in the Great Patriotic War as an unparalleled feat achieved at enormous sacrifice.

"The unity of the people and the army demonstrated the futility of any plans to invade Russia," he said.

Turning to contemporary

issues, the ambassador stated that the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation continue their historic mission, strengthening combat capabilities and professionalism while relying on modern domestic military technology.

Referring to the ongoing conflict in Ukraine, he said Russia is facing opposition from what he termed the "collective West," which he accused of attempting to inflict a strategic defeat on Russia.

"Amid unprecedented global pressure and tension, our armed forces valiantly play a

pivotal role in safeguarding the state, protecting civilians, and defending Russia's right to an independent developmental path," Khorev said. He expressed confidence that Russia would achieve the goals of what he described as the "special military operation" in Ukraine.

Concluding his address, the ambassador expressed gratitude to Russian military personnel for their service and dedication.

"I wish for peaceful skies above our heads, the swift resolution of conflicts, and good health and prosperity for you and your families," he said.

NUML Inaugurates newly Azerbaijan Language and Culture Center in Collaboration with Embassy of Azerbaijan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The National University of Modern Languages (NUML), in collaboration with the Embassy of the Republic of Azerbaijan, inaugurated the newly Azerbaijan Language and Culture Center here on Monday.

The inauguration ceremony was graced by His Excellency Khazar Farhadov, Ambassador of the Republic of Azerbaijan to Pakistan, as the Chief Guest. The Rector of NUML warmly welcomed the distinguished guests and underscored the significance of strengthening academic and cultural ties between Pakistan and Azerbaijan

through sustained institutional collaboration.

The Rector expressed confidence that the newly inaugurated Center would provide students with valuable opportunities to learn the Azerbaijani language, explore Azerbaijani culture, and engage in joint academic and research activities. He emphasized that Pakistan and Azerbaijan share strong historical, cultural, and brotherly relations, and such initiatives further reinforce people-to-people connectivity and mutual understanding between the two nations.

In his address, Ambassador Khazar Farhadov appreciated NUML's role in advancing cultural diplomacy and

highlighted the longstanding friendship between Azerbaijan and Pakistan-rooted in shared values and consistent support at bilateral and international forums.

A video message from Kamal Abdullah, Rector of the Azerbaijan University of Languages, was also presented during the ceremony. He expressed gratitude to the leadership of NUML and the Embassy of Azerbaijan for their support in establishing the Center and reaffirmed his institution's commitment to expanding academic collaboration between the two universities.

The Azerbaijan Language and



Culture Center is expected to serve as a dynamic platform for academic

exchange, cultural engagement, and future collaborative initiatives, further

strengthening the enduring partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan.

Challenges in Enhancing Furniture Exports

Pakistan's furniture manufacturing sector holds immense potential to contribute meaningfully to national export earnings and sustainable economic growth. With a long-standing tradition of craftsmanship, particularly in hand-carved solid wood furniture, the country possesses a unique cultural and artistic advantage. Cities such as Chinot, Gujrat, Peshawar, and parts of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa are historically known for intricate woodwork that reflects centuries-old craftsmanship traditions. This artisanal strength, if strategically aligned with global demand patterns, could significantly enhance Pakistan's share in the international furniture trade.

Globally, the furniture market is valued at hundreds of billions of dollars annually and continues to expand due to urbanization, rising middle-class incomes, real estate development, and increasing consumer interest in interior aesthetics. Major exporting countries such as China, Italy, Vietnam, Malaysia and Turkey have successfully capitalized on this demand through industrial modernization, advanced design ecosystems, efficient logistics networks, and strong branding strategies. In contrast, Pakistan's furniture exports remain modest relative to its potential, primarily due to structural, technological, and policy-related challenges. One of the core structural issues is the dominance of the informal sector.

A substantial portion of Pakistan's furniture production is carried out by small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating outside formal regulatory frameworks. While these enterprises excel in handcrafted wooden furniture known for durability and aesthetic value, they often lack access to international certifications, standardized production processes, and globally competitive branding. The absence of uniform quality standards results in inconsistent product specifications, which undermines buyer confidence in international markets.

Technological backwardness is another major impediment. Modern furniture production in leading exporting countries relies heavily on Computer Numerical Control (CNC) machines, automated cutting systems, precision engineering tools, and digital design software. Pakistani manufacturers, particularly SMEs, largely depend on manual processes. Although this preserves the uniqueness of handcrafted products, it limits scalability, raises production costs, and reduces competitiveness in price-sensitive markets. Without adopting advanced machinery and digital design platforms, it is increasingly difficult to compete in markets that demand both quality and volume. Design innovation also requires urgent attention. Global consumers today prefer minimalist, modular, ergonomic, and eco-friendly furniture aligned with contemporary interior trends. Pakistani furniture, while rich in

traditional aesthetics, often fails to align with modern global preferences. The absence of professional design institutes dedicated specifically to furniture design and product development restricts innovation. Establishing specialized institutions focused on research, development, and international trend analysis could bridge this gap and connect local artisans with evolving global tastes. Financial constraints further hinder export growth. SMEs frequently encounter

difficulties in securing affordable credit due to high interest rates, collateral requirements and complex banking procedures. Limited access to export financing discourages investment in machinery upgrades, certifications, and international marketing. Additionally, high energy costs, fluctuating exchange rates and inconsistent tax policies create uncertainty that discourages long-term strategic planning. A stable, export-oriented policy environment is crucial to encouraging private sector investment.

Regulatory complexity and bureaucratic hurdles also restrict expansion. Export documentation procedures, compliance requirements, and customs inefficiencies increase transaction costs. Competing nations have streamlined export facilitation processes through digital trade portals and one-window clearance systems. Pakistan must

similarly modernize its trade facilitation infrastructure to reduce delays and improve efficiency.

Despite these challenges, the opportunity landscape remains promising. Emerging consumer markets in Africa, Latin America, Southeast Asia, and the Middle East are experiencing rapid urbanization and growing demand for affordable, durable furniture. Pakistani products, known for solid wood construction and competitive pricing, can capture significant market share if supported by effective branding and logistics strategies. Participation in international trade fairs, digital marketplaces, and e-commerce platforms can enhance visibility and direct-to-consumer sales.

Environmental sustainability is becoming a defining factor in global furniture trade. International buyers increasingly demand certification for sustainable forestry practices, eco-friendly materials, and reduced carbon footprints. Pakistan's furniture exporters must adopt internationally recognized certifications such as FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) standards and integrate sustainable sourcing practices. Doing so would not only expand access to premium markets but also strengthen Pakistan's environmental credibility. Joint ventures and interna-

tional collaborations present another growth avenue. Partnerships with established foreign manufacturers can provide access to modern technology, advanced design expertise, and established distribution networks. Such collaborations can integrate Pakistani firms into global value chains and accelerate skill transfer. Encouraging foreign direct investment in furniture clusters would ensure a steady pipeline of skilled labor aligned with modern production requirements. At the policy level, a comprehensive National Furniture Export Strategy is essential. This should include low-interest financing schemes, export rebates for value-added products, cluster-based industrial zones equipped with shared modern machinery, and targeted trade diplomacy to secure favorable market access. Policy consistency and long-term planning are critical to building investor confidence and attracting both domestic and international investment.

Branding is equally important. Pakistani furniture often reaches global markets through intermediaries, which limits brand recognition and

profit margins. Developing national branding initiatives that highlight craftsmanship, cultural heritage, and quality standards could enhance international perception. A unified "Made in Pakistan" brand strategy for furniture would position the industry more prominently in global markets. In a broader economic context, strengthening the furniture export sector would contribute to employment generation, rural industrialization, and foreign exchange earnings. The industry's labor-intensive nature makes it particularly valuable for inclusive growth, providing opportunities across skill levels. Furthermore, modernization of the sector would stimulate related industries such as forestry management, hardware manufacturing, logistics, and design services. Ultimately, enhancing furniture exports is not solely about increasing trade figures. It represents an opportunity to transform a traditional craft into a globally competitive, innovation-driven industry. By combining technological modernization, financial facilitation, institutional support, sustainable practices, and strong branding, Pakistan can reposition its furniture sector as a dynamic contributor to national economic transformation. The success of this sector would symbolize not just industrial progress but also the global recognition of Pakistan's craftsmanship, creativity and economic resilience.



Mian Kashif

The writer is CEO of Chen One and Pakistan Furniture Council

Bull & Bears
PSX 100-Share
Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index	
Current	Prev. Close
167,691.08	173,169.71
Day's High	Day's Low
174,336.85	166,886.63
Index Value	Change
20,607,048,231	-5478.63
Percentage	Time
-3.16%	23 Feb, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index	
Index Value	Change
10,676.94	-9.95
Percentage	Time
-0.093%	23 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average	
Index Value	Change
48,907.33	-718.64
Percentage	Time
-1.45%	23 Feb, 11:02 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	196.34	201
Bahrain Dinar	742.02	751.52
Canadian Dollar	203.60	207.12
China Yuan	38	39.25
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	330.63	335.15
Hong Kong Dollar	35.29	36.16
Indian Rupee	2.8	3.25
Japanese Yen	1.7988	1.8993
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.68	915.12
Malaysian Ringgit	66.60	68.35
New Zealand \$	165.98	168.45
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	726.76	736.26
Qatari Riyal	76.07	79.06
Saudi Riyal	74.85	75.55
Singapore Dollar	219.73	223.64
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	360.07	364.85
Thai Bhat	8.55	8.7
U.A.E Dirham	76.3	77.3
UK Pound Sterling	378.20	382.44
US Dollar	280.30	282.25

FPCCI demands activation of RMS of other OGAs like DPP & PSQCA: Atif Ikram Sheikh

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh, President FPCCI, has hailed the vision of the Honorable Prime Minister of Pakistan regarding his digital transformation plan to facilitate trade in Pakistan; including, the implementation of faceless assessment and the pre-arrival facility through the post-payment mechanism.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh highlighted, that despite these improvements, challenges still persist in the regulatory sphere of imports and exports; whereas, majority of regulatory trade is being managed through Pakistan Single Window (PSW) and major Other Government Agencies (OGAs) have been integrated with PSW, consignments are still being cleared only after mandatory inspections unnecessarily.

Mr. Atif Ikram Sheikh strongly proposed that the Risk Management Systems (RMS) of the Department of Plant



Quality Control Authority (PSQCA) and other relevant OGAs should be activated on

can further streamline import and export processes; reduce unnecessary inspections; minimize dwell time and enhance ease of doing business in Pakistan.

Mr. Saquib Fayyaz Magoon, SVP FPCCI, maintained that initially several challenges and teething problems were faced when the faceless assessment system was deployed - however, after the posting of Chief Collector Mr. Wajid Ali and his continuous consultation with the trade and industry, a number of genuine issues have been addressed eventually. The faceless assessment process is now significantly, effectively benefiting trade and industry - and, the dwell time of consignments is gradually reducing as well, he added.

FPCCI reiterates its whole-hearted commitment and willingness to engage in the consultative process with the authorities and government departments to ensure smooth, fair, transparent and efficient trade facilitation mechanisms in the country.

Hard work

ISLAMABAD: The custodians of buses stand at Faizabad area hire the welders and iron smith to install safety grills surround the stations as according to the Instructions of Federal Administration after the recent terrorists attack and threats of targeting the public places by militants groups, the Federal Administration advised the stations to make the safety wall and install walk through gates for the safety of passengers in the Twin Cities.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SECP clarifies misreported figures on dissolution of foreign companies

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Securities and Exchange Commission of Pakistan (SECP) has observed that certain media reports have inaccurately interpreted the data relating to ceased foreign companies available on its website.

These reports do not reflect the factual position, particularly with regard to the year of cessation. The list published by the SECP clearly specifies the year of cessation against each company's name, ensuring transparency and accuracy of information.

It is further clarified that only 19 foreign companies have ceased operations in Pakistan during 2022 to 2025, whereas 79 new foreign companies were registered during the same period (2022 - 2025).

It is pertinent to clarify that the list of 125 foreign companies referred in media is the total number of companies that ceased operations since 1977 to date. This list does not pertain to last three years alone.

Additionally, in the last month alone,



foreign investment has been recorded in 82 local companies. These investments originated from multiple jurisdictions, including China, United States, Australia, Turkey, United Kingdom, South Africa, Denmark, Germany, Malaysia, South

Korea, and Spain.

As of February 2026, a total of 1,157 foreign companies remain registered with the SECP, reflecting sustained foreign business presence and continued confidence in Pakistan's regulatory environment.

Prime Minister's visit to Qatar will strengthen bilateral economic relations, Malik Bostan

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Chairman of the Exchange Companies Association of Pakistan (ECAP), Malik Muhammad Bostan, has welcomed the government's preparation of a comprehensive and long-term wheat policy for 2026-2030. He stated that this policy and modern reforms would help strengthen national food security.

Malik Muhammad Bostan said that the proposed policy, prepared by the Federal Ministry



of National Food Security and Research, includes a digital traceability system, improved supply chain monitoring, enhanced transparency, and sustainable price stability. These measures

would ensure effective coordination between federal and provincial governments.

He further stated that although there is no threat of wheat shortage in Pakistan and coordinated measures are being taken to ensure uninterrupted supply in markets, wheat procurement should be carried out through the public sector to maintain supply stability and ensure effective price management. If surplus wheat is available in the country, it should be exported.

Regarding Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Qatar, Malik Muhammad Bostan said that Qatar is a brotherly Muslim country, and a large number of Pakistanis are employed there. He expressed confidence that Prime Minister Mian Shehbaz Sharif would discuss bilateral economic cooperation and investment with the Amir of Qatar, Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad Al Thani. He hoped that this visit would further strengthen economic relations between Pakistan and Qatar.

CCP Approves Acquisition of First Women Bank Limited by Abu Dhabi based Eve Holdings

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) has approved the proposed acquisition of First Women Bank Limited by Eve Holdings RSC Limited, pursuant to a Share Purchase Agreement executed as part of the privatization process, following a Phase-I competition assessment under the Competition Act, 2010.

Eve Holdings RSC Limited, the acquirer, is a special purpose holding company incorporated in Abu Dhabi. First Women Bank Limited, the target, is a public unlisted commercial bank in Pakistan engaged in providing banking and financial services.

Under the approved transaction, Eve Holdings

RSC Limited will acquire the entire shareholding of First Women Bank Limited from the Government of Pakistan and existing institutional shareholders, including Habib Bank Limited, MCB Bank Limited, Allied Bank Limited, National Bank of Pakistan, and United Bank Limited. Upon completion, Eve Holdings will assume full ownership and control of First Women Bank Limited.

CCP's competition assessment noted that the target has a limited presence in the commercial banking market, while the acquirer does not have any existing operations in the relevant or related market. The transaction therefore constitutes a conglomerate merger and does not raise competition concerns.

External debts have become a threat to the economy: Syed Aman Shah



Commerce Desk

KARACHI: Syed Aman Shah, The Provincial Convener of the Awaam Pakistan Party Balochistan, has stated that the growing burden of external debt has placed severe pressure on the national economy. He said that heavy borrowing in recent years, along with a sharp increase in government expenditures, has weakened the financial system, resulting in rising inflation and unemployment, which have severely affected the lives of ordinary citizens.

He noted that, according to available government statistics, by 2025 Pakistan's total debt has exceeded 70 percent of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP), indicating a worrying trend. He added that in order to repay loans and service interest payments, the government is compelled to take on more loans, causing the debt volume to continuously increase and trapping the country in a cycle of debt.

Syed Aman Shah further stated that a large portion of the external loans obtained was spent on non-productive projects, yielding little benefit for the economy. He argued that if these resources had been invested in industrial development, export promotion, agricultural improvement, and sustainable energy projects, the country's economy could have achieved greater stability.

BankIslami's aik enables digital payment facility at Islamabad International Airport

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: aik by BankIslami has enabled fully digital payments across all passenger touchpoints at Islamabad International Airport. Travelers and visitors can now complete transactions without cash across the airport environment.

Merchants across the airport have been onboarded, and QR code deployments have been integrated at key touchpoints. This will allow passengers and visitors to make secure, seamless, and Shariah-compliant digital transactions at all counters, retail outlets,

and service points. The implementation complies with the regulations and framework set by the SBP and is a working model for a large-scale adoption of cashless systems in public infrastructure.

The initiative was marked at an event at the Islamabad airport by officials of aik by BankIslami, the IIAP, and the SBP.

Commenting on the occasion, Ashfaq Ahmed, Chief Officer at aik, said, "This deployment reflects our commitment to building practical digital infrastructure that improves everyday transactions."

SBP injects Rs 425 billion in the market

KARACHI: The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), Monday, injected Rs 425 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) to maintain liquidity in the market.

The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 4-day tenor on February 23, 2026, and injected Rs 75 billion while other Rs 350 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO.

The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase of 4-day tenor, received 9 bids

cumulatively offering Rs 381.05 billion at the rate of return ranging between 10.51 to 10.57%. The SBP accepted Rs 75 billion against 5 quotes at 10.55% rate of return. The total amount offered at 10.55% was Rs 329.5 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 60 billion on a pro-rata basis.

Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operation for the 4-day tenor. The central bank received 6 quotes offering Rs 396 billion at rate of return ranging between 10.54 to 10.58%. SBP accepted Rs 350 billion against 6 bids at 10.54% rate of return.

ICC Men's T-20 Cricket World Cup Super Eight

West Indies Score Record 254 Runs and Thrash Zimbabwe By 107 at T20 World Cup

Asim Tanveer

MUMBAI: West Indies posted the second highest total in Twenty20 World Cup history and thrashed Zimbabwe by 107 runs in the Super Eights on Monday.

West Indies finished with a team record 254-6 after Shimron Hetmyer — dropped on 9 and 70 — bashed 85 off 34 balls with seven sixes, and Rovman Powell hit 59 off 35.

The West Indies batters hit 19 sixes, the joint most in a T20 World Cup innings. Their total was just six runs from the all-time World Cup high of 260-6 by Sri Lanka against Kenya in 2007.

Zimbabwe was all out for 147 in 17.4 overs. Left-arm spinners Gudakesh Motie (4-28) and Akeal

Hosein (3-28) did most of the damage. No. 8 batter Brad Evans led with 43 off 21.

In all, 31 sixes were hit during this game, a record in men's T20 World Cups.

West Indies led Group 1 on net run-rate from South Africa. Defending champion India and Zimbabwe have lost their first matches in the tournament.

West Indies next plays South Africa in Ahmedabad on Thursday, when India also takes on Zimbabwe in Chennai.

On Tuesday, England and Pakistan meet in Pallekele.

Hetmyer, batting at No. 3, would have gone in the fourth over but Tashinga Musekiwa failed to catch him out at the square leg boundary.



Hetmyer made Zimbabwe pay. He lost Shai Hope on 14 but was setting the pace with 50 off 19 balls with five sixes. He and Powell brought 100 up in only 9.1 overs. They added 122 off 52 balls, the third highest West Indies partnership for any wicket in T20

World Cups until Hetmyer fell in the 15th over to Graeme Cremer's wrist spin.

"I like batting at No. 3 and understand the role better because I have been doing it for a while now," Hetmyer said. "I know how the situations unfold and try not

to overthink. It is just one game and there is still a long way to go (for us)."

Powell brought up his 50 off 29 balls. Straight after his fourth six, he whacked a full toss that Zimbabwe captain Sikandar Raza stopped with his left hand. Raza

needed bandaging and the players hugged. Raza said afterward he planned to have the hand scanned.

Sherfane Rutherford added 31 not out off 13 balls, Romario Shepherd hit three sixes in 10 balls, and Jason Holder crunched two sixes in the four balls he faced.

Zimbabwe also gave up 21 extras. It added up to West Indies' third ever 250-plus total in T20s, and a target beyond Zimbabwe's reach.

That was certain after Hosein bowled a double-wicket maiden, bowling Zimbabwe heavy hitters Brian Bennett (5) and Ryan Burl for a three-ball duck in the third over.

Motie ran through the middle order, including the wicket of Raza.

"We thought when we batted (the pitch) will stay true but it started to turn," Raza said. "Motie's spell changed the game."

Evans, under no pressure with a T20 average of 8, improved his career-best score from 24 to 43 when he was the last man out.

Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology Multan, is Providing the Best Treatment Facilities: Dr Farhan Khan Babar

Interview By Kiran Asim

MULTAN: Director Technical Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology Multan Dr Farhan Khan Babar During Interview Said. Chaudhry Pervaiz Elahi Institute of Cardiology Multan, is Providing the Best Treatment Facilities for Heart Diseases Patients For South Punjab KPK Sindh and Balochistan Peoples In a comprehensive overview of the city's Premier cardiac facility, Dr. Farhan Khan Babar Future Said (CPEIC) detailed the hospital's journey from its modest 2005 origins to becoming the largest cardiac center in Punjab.

Construction of the institute began in 2005, with the facility becoming fully functional by 2007. Originally designed as a 279-bed hospital, its emergency department initially housed a mere 12 beds. Today, following decades of dedicated provincial focus and philanthropic support, the infrastructure has undergone a massive metamorphosis.

"In 2024, the Government of Punjab gifted us a 208-bed indoor block extension," Dr. Babar stated. He further highlighted the pivotal role of private donors, noting that a 30-bed angiography ward, a 20-bed CCU, and a recent contribution of 60 emergency beds and 90 motorized



beds from board member Madam Sadia have bolstered the facility. Following these expansions, the emergency department now boasts 1,023 beds, while the total institutional reach and capacity have scaled to 6,014 beds. CPEIC Multan has evolved into more than just a local hospital; it is now a critical hub for the entire region. Patients from 12 districts of South Punjab, the whole of Balochistan, and areas of KPK such as D. I. Khan and Tank regularly seek treatment here.

"Since the completion of the motorway, we are seeing patients from as far as Rohri in interior Sindh," Dr. Babar noted. The numbers reflect this heavy footfall:

Daily Emergency Cases: 500+ patients. Daily OPD: 3,000+ patients. Home Delivery: 1,500 to 2,000 patients receive medications at their doorstep daily



through a government-led initiative. Technological advancement remains at the heart of the institute. With 6 fully functional Cath labs performing up to 150 angiographies daily, the hospital also operates a 24/7 Primary PCI Program. This life-saving service ensures that heart attack victims arriving within a 4-6 hour window receive immediate stenting to prevent permanent muscle damage.

On the surgical front, the institute performs over 2,000 bypasses annually. A major highlight is the Children's Heart Surgery Program, an initiative by the Chief Minister of Punjab that provides free cardiac surgery to all children, regardless of socioeconomic status. Plans are also underway to expand from 5 to 9 model operation theaters once pending equipment arrives via recently opened Letters



of Credit (LCs).

Concluding the interview, Dr. Babar issued a stern warning regarding the rise in cardiac ailments linked to modern habits. He urged the public to return to "nature," criticizing the shift toward synthetic foods and sedentary lifestyles driven by excessive phone usage and societal anxiety.

"We must avoid broiler chicken and processed fats," he advised. Interestingly, he pointed to a shift in nutritional science: "After 40 years of promoting vegetable oils, recent research now suggests that Desi Ghee is actually better for the heart than its synthetic counterparts."

Dr. Babar invited the public to support the mission through the "Friends of Cardiology" donation platform, ensuring the institute continues to provide international-standard care to the people of Pakistan.

Federal Secretary Education visits Daanish School, appreciates timely completion of construction work

ISLAMABAD: Federal Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training, Nadeem Mahbub, paid a detailed visit to Daanish School, Kuri Road, Islamabad, and reviewed the timely completion of construction work. Senior officials of the Ministry of Education and the administration of Daanish School accompanied him during the visit.

The Federal Secretary inspected the school building, classrooms, administrative block, and other facilities. Expressing satisfaction over the timely completion of the construction work, he appreciated the efforts of the concerned officials and management.

On the occasion, Nadeem Mahbub stated that regular academic activities at Daanish School would formally commence within the next few days, while the process of appointing teaching and administrative staff is also progressing swiftly.

President, PM hail security forces

Continued from Page 1

terrorists belonging to Indian-supported Fitna al-Khawarij in Dera Ismail Khan. He said that under the vision of "Azm-e-Istehkam," security forces were achieving major successes in the fight against terrorism.

The prime minister reaffirmed that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the

Armed Forces of Pakistan in the war against terrorism. "We are determined to completely eradicate terrorism from the country," he added.

Both the president and the prime minister reiterated the government's resolve to continue decisive actions against terrorists and their facilitators to ensure lasting peace and stability in Pakistan.

Saving Children's Hearts Forever

Continued from Page 4

care delivery. Pediatric cardiac surgery is among the most technically demanding and financially prohibitive medical services worldwide. By providing these services free of cost, the state has effectively removed financial barriers that historically condemned poor families to therapeutic exclusion. This transition from selective care to inclusive care represents a structural transformation in public health governance. It demonstrates that advanced tertiary care can be delivered as a public good when supported by political will and institutional competence.

The economic and social implications are equally profound. Children who receive timely cardiac surgery regain normal physiological function, enabling them to grow, learn and participate fully in society. This preserves

human capital and strengthens the country's developmental foundation. Families are spared catastrophic health expenditures that may lead to intergenerational poverty. Communities retain their social fabric when children survive and thrive. These outcomes illustrate how pediatric cardiac surgery functions as both a medical intervention and a socioeconomic stabilizer.

There is also a deeper symbolic meaning embedded in this achievement. Every successfully treated child represents a victory over structural inequality and biological vulnerability. Each restored heartbeat affirms the principle that survival should not be determined by wealth or geography but guaranteed through collective responsibility. Punjab's leadership in delivering advanced pediatric cardiac care has positioned it as a beacon of humane governance and clinical excellence. It

has demonstrated that compassion, when combined with medical expertise and institutional commitment, can transform the trajectory of an entire generation.

In protecting the hearts of children, the state protects its own future. The Chief Minister's Children Heart Surgery Program stands as one of the powerful expressions of public service in Pakistan. It reflects a vision in which governance is measured not merely through infrastructure or economic indicators but through the lives it saves. Thousands of children now live healthy and productive lives because the state chose to intervene at their most vulnerable moment. This is not only a medical achievement but a moral triumph that will resonate for decades to come.

(The writer is a Lahore-based public policy analyst and can be reached at qudratu@gmail.com)

Tucker Carlson's Revolt Against America's Israel Policy

Continued from Page 4

have re-centered the discussion on U.S. interests rather than theological or expansionist narratives.

Now the question has been raised as to why Israel has strengthened its regional deterrence capabilities while the United States has borne significant costs—deploying troops, maintaining military bases across the region, committing naval assets to protect sea lanes and allied interests, and providing substantial financial and military assistance. They argue that this burden has placed American personnel and infrastructure at heightened risk while increasing fiscal and geopolitical strain.

As a result of Carlson's crusade against Israel's tyranny in Gaza, West

Bank, Lebanon, Syria, Qatar and Iran and its support based in Congress, Senate and White House, according to Pew Research Center, the public's views of Israel have turned more negative over the past three years. More than half of U.S. adults (53%) now express an unfavorable opinion of Israel, up from 42% in March 2022 — before the Hamas attack of Oct. 7, 2023, and the ensuing Israeli invasion of the Gaza Strip.

What began as a series of interviews has now evolved into a defining ideological confrontation within American conservatism. Carlson is not merely questioning battlefield tactics or diplomatic language; he is challenging the moral, financial, and strategic foundations of America's unconditional alignment with Israel. By forcing

senators and ambassadors to defend casualty figures, regime-change rhetoric, and billions in aid, he has exposed a widening rift between interventionist orthodoxy and nationalist restraint. Whether one views his campaign as courageous accountability or destabilizing provocation, it has undeniably shattered the illusion of consensus. The Republican Party may still stand institutionally with Israel, but the grassroots conversation has changed — and once a foreign policy doctrine is dragged into open public trial, it rarely returns to unquestioned authority.

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

UAF-China Collaboration and the Strategic Role of the Confucius Institute

Continued from Page 4

livelihoods, exports, and food security, China's experience offers invaluable lessons. Climate volatility, declining soil health, water stress, and escalating pest pressures demand a decisive shift from conventional practices to innovation-led agricultural systems. China's model demonstrates that success lies in integrating universities, research institutions, and industry within a unified national vision.

University of Agriculture Faisalabad: A Hub of Knowledge and Transformation

Founded in 1961, the University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF) has remained central to Pakistan's agricultural development. With a legacy of producing scientists, policymakers, and extension professionals, UAF has consistently translated academic knowledge into national impact.

Recognising China's rise as a scientific and technological

powerhouse, UAF has proactively positioned itself as a bridge between Pakistani agriculture and Chinese innovation. Today, the University maintains over 100 formal Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) with Chinese universities and research institutions, covering joint research, faculty exchange, postgraduate supervision, and technology transfer in crop genetics, soil science, climate-smart agriculture, and sustainable production systems. Collaboration with institutions such as Northwest A&F University, Huazhong Agricultural University, and Zhejiang University has further strengthened this partnership.

Together with Chinese partners, the University of Agriculture Faisalabad has completed 14 joint research projects and, in 2025 alone, submitted 130 new research proposals valued at Rs. 1,437 million. Nearly 100 UAF faculty members are alumni of Chinese universities, more than

50 have received advanced professional training in China, and several joint laboratories have been established—clear evidence of the depth, maturity, and sustainability of this academic partnership.

The Confucius Institute at UAF: Knowledge Diplomacy in Action

The establishment of the Confucius Institute at UAF (CI-UAF) in 2015 marked a defining milestone in Pakistan-China educational cooperation. Founded through a strategic partnership between UAF and Xinjiang Agricultural University, CI-UAF was envisioned as more than a language centre; it was designed as a platform for academic mobility, scientific collaboration, and cultural connectivity.

The formal agreement, signed in Beijing in 2014, reflected the Institute's strategic importance within the broader architecture of Sino-Pak relations. Over the years, CI-UAF has earned global recognition, including placement

among the Top 100 Model Confucius Institutes worldwide and designation as an Outstanding International HSK Testing Centre.

Currently, CI-UAF and its satellite centres in Lahore, Gilgit, Dera Ghazi Khan, and Bahawalpur have educated more than 40,000 students through accredited Chinese language programmes, internships, cultural exchange initiatives, proficiency testing, academic seminars, and scholarly dialogue. The Institute has played a transformative role in equipping Pakistani students with linguistic and cultural competence—an essential asset in diplomacy, science, trade, and higher education.

Strategic Leadership and Global Perspective

The international orientation of UAF has been significantly strengthened under the leadership of Dr. Zulfiqar Ali, Vice Chancellor of the University of Agriculture Faisalabad. He has made conscious and sustained efforts

to strengthen and empower the Confucius Institute at UAF, positioning it as a flagship platform for China-Pakistan academic cooperation.

In addition to his academic leadership, Dr. Zulfiqar Ali brings valuable international experience through his association with the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) and its specialised institution, the Organization of Islamic Food Security (OIFC), where he rendered commendable services in strengthening regional food security frameworks and fostering multilateral collaboration. His exposure to global food-security initiatives has further enriched UAF's strategic outlook.

At the operational level, the Confucius Institute has benefited from the committed stewardship of Dr. Saddam Hussain, Dean CI-UAF. Through focused academic management, expansion of language pathways, and facilitation of student exchanges and scholarships, he has significantly

strengthened the Institute's academic, cultural, and international footprint.

China-Pakistan Academic Mobility and Research Integration

China has emerged as one of the world's most influential destinations for higher education. Currently, approximately 40,000 Pakistani students are pursuing MSc and PhD programmes in China under fully funded scholarship schemes. CI-UAF serves as a key gateway facilitating this academic mobility by providing language training, testing services, and institutional linkages.

This movement of students represents strategic human-capital development. Returning scholars are contributing meaningfully to Pakistan's research capacity, innovation ecosystem, and institutional reform—particularly in agriculture and allied sciences.

Conclusion: Shared Futures through Science and Education
China's rise as a global leader

in agriculture is the outcome of vision, discipline, and unwavering commitment to science-led development. Through institutions such as CAAS and innovation-driven universities, China has demonstrated how agriculture can be transformed into a resilient, high-technology sector.

The Confucius Institute at UAF exemplifies how this knowledge is shared, adapted, and institutionalised in Pakistan. More than an academic collaboration, it represents knowledge diplomacy in action—linking language, culture, science, and innovation.

As global agriculture confronts unprecedented challenges, the China-Pakistan partnership—anchored at the University of Agriculture Faisalabad—offers a powerful model of collaborative learning, sustainable development, and shared prosperity.

The writer is Former Professor and Chairman, Department of Entomology, University of Agriculture Faisalabad (UAF)

Called on

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of Lebanon to Pakistan Mr Abdulaziz Issa called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf at Naval Headquarters in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online

Benazir Nashonuma Programme marks new era in nutrition management

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety, Syed Imran Ahmad Shah Monday said that over 4.3 million mothers and children had benefited from the Benazir Nashonuma Programme so far and that the government was determined to eliminate malnutrition and stunting from Pakistan.

Imran Shah said the Benazir Nashonuma Programme provided health and nutrition-linked financial assistance to ensure deserving mothers and children received both cash support and supplementary food.

He said the government viewed social protection not as charity but as a long-term investment in human capital, adding that BISP would continue to uphold transparency, quality and accountability across all its programmes. He extended gratitude to WFP, UNICEF and WHO for their



invaluable technical assistance in making the programme a success.

Speaking on the occasion,

Chairperson BISP, Senator Rubina Khalid reaffirmed the government's strengthened commitment to the millions

of mothers and children at the heart of the programme.

She said that since joining BISP, she had made field visits

a personal priority, believing firmly that the real hardships of people in remote areas could never be grasped from Islamabad and had to be seen firsthand.

She stressed the need for full coordination across all government departments, saying the vision of the President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif for national progress could only be achieved when all institutions worked as one.

She welcomed the dashboard as an essential tool to eliminate data delays, ensure real-time programme oversight, and keep empowered mothers at the center of policy while bringing greater transparency and accountability to the programme.

DG CCT/NSER BISP, Azam Ejaz, said the Benazir Nashonuma Programme was far more than a cash transfer initiative, as it actively worked to protect the health of mothers and children and tackle stunting at its root.

Justice Jahangiri has no valid degree at time of appointment: IHC

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) has stated in a written judgment that Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri has no valid degree at the time of his appointment as judge thus his appointment is declared null and void.

A detailed decision has been issued declaring the appointment of Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri as a judge as illegal and unconstitutional.

Chief Justice Sardar Sarfaraz Dogar and Justice Muhammad Azam Khan issued a 116-page decision.

It said that Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri will be deemed to be removed from the post of High Court judge with immediate effect as he did not have a valid law degree at the time of appointment.

The order said that no person without a valid law degree is eligible for enrollment as a lawyer.

The basic condition for becoming a High Court judge due to lack of qualification as a lawyer was not fulfilled.

The court said that the University records prove that Tariq Mehmood took exams under two enrollment numbers and two different

names. The Higher Education Commission told the court that the degree was never submitted for verification to it.

The written order said that the degree obtained on the basis of fraud and forgery is legally null and void.

Punjab Governor praises orphan students' achievements at Pakistan Sweet Home

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan praised the talent and academic accomplishments of orphaned children during the annual Iftar dinner hosted by Pakistan Sweet Home.

Addressing the ceremony attended by students, donors and community members, he urged philanthropists to broaden their support for vulnerable youth, highlighting the importance of collective efforts to nurture their future.

Punjab Governor praises orphan students' achievements at Pakistan Sweet Home

The governor said he was deeply impressed by the abilities of the children, noting that they had excelled across diverse fields of education. He also paid tribute to the administration and staff working



behind the scenes to provide care, education and training to the children. Punjab Governor praises orphan

students' achievements at Pakistan Sweet Home. He described Pakistan Sweet Home's

now extends from North Waziristan to Azad Kashmir and Sukkur, reflecting its expanding national footprint.

educational, training, medical and welfare initiatives as exemplary, urging affluent individuals to actively participate in supporting the organization's programmes to ensure sustainable opportunities for underprivileged children.

Speaking on the occasion, Pakistan Sweet Home Patron-in-Chief Zamurrad Khan said many of the institution's students are currently enrolled in leading universities as well as medical, IT and engineering colleges across the country.

He reaffirmed that supporting orphaned and destitute children remains his life's mission, pledging to continue working for their welfare "until his last breath." He added that the organization's outreach

IHC scraps contempt proceedings against PM in Aafia Siddiqui case

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A larger bench of the Islamabad High Court has withdrawn contempt of court proceedings against the prime minister and the federal cabinet in the Dr Aafia Siddiqui case, ruling that the July 21, 2025, order initiating the action was issued by a forum that was not lawfully constituted.

In a detailed judgement issued on Monday, the bench reaffirmed that the chief justice is the sole "master of the roster" and holds exclusive authority to constitute benches.

It ruled that any judicial proceedings must be conducted by a bench



formed through the chief justice's lawful authority.

The court recalled the July 21 single-bench order passed by Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, stating that the bench which issued it had not been legally constituted.

It emphasised that no judge could exercise jurisdiction unilaterally outside the established framework.

Ayaz lauds security forces for Killing four militants in D. I. Khan operation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq has paid tribute to the country's security forces for eliminating four militants belonging to "Fitna al-Khawarij" during an operation in Dera Ismail Khan.

In a statement issued on Monday, the Speaker commended the professionalism and operational capabilities of the security forces for carrying out a successful action against the Indian-sponsored militant group.

He praised their effective response and unwavering commitment in confronting terrorism.

Ayaz Sadiq said that the sacrifices rendered by security personnel in the war against terrorism are a source of immense pride for the nation.

He reiterated that Pakistan's resolve to completely eradicate foreign-sponsored terrorism from the country remains firm and unwavering.

Appointment of Mehmood Achakzai as Opposition Leader challenged in FCCP

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Akbar S. Babar, a founding member of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), has filed a petition in the Federal Constitutional Court challenging the appointment of Mehmood Khan Achakzai as Leader of the Opposition in the National Assembly. The petition has been filed through Advocate Shaukat Aziz Siddiqui.

The petition contends that there is no evidence on record to show that independent members formally authorized Aamir Dogar to represent them.

It further raises the question whether a convicted and disqualified individual can control parliamentary proceedings from jail. The petitioner points out that in the

past, Speakers have summoned members in person to verify resignations, but in this instance the prescribed procedure was allegedly ignored.

The petition also argues that the office of the Leader of the Opposition plays a key role in important appointments to bodies such as the Judicial Commission and the Election Commission. Issuing a notification without proper verification of signatures, it maintains, is not merely an irregularity but a violation of the Constitution.

The petitioner has requested the Court to declare the notification appointing Mehmood Khan Achakzai as Leader of the Opposition null and void, and to suspend the notification until a final decision on the case is rendered.

Gilani felicitates security forces on successful operation in D.I. Khan

ISLAMABAD: Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani, on Monday extended heartfelt congratulations to the security forces on the successful operation conducted in Dera Ismail Khan (D.I. Khan), commending their professionalism, bravery, and timely execution of strategy.

In a statement, the Chairman Senate lauded the elimination of four terrorists during the operation, describing it as a clear manifestation of the security forces' superior training, unwavering resolve, and operational excellence. He emphasized that the armed forces and law enforcement agencies remain steadfast and vigilant in thwarting the nefarious designs of anti-state elements.

Reaffirming the nation's collective commitment to eradicating

terrorism, Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani said the entire nation and all state institutions stand united in the fight against the menace of terrorism.

He underscored that the people of



Pakistan stand shoulder to shoulder with the armed forces and law enforcement agencies, adding that the sacrifices rendered for peace and stability will not go in vain.

The Chairman Senate further asserted that decisive and effective measures will continue to ensure the complete and permanent elimination of terrorism from the country.