

PM Rathore chairs crucial health meeting focused on ambulance deployment

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: An extraordinary meeting, held here today under the chairmanship of Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, reviewed matters related to the Department of Public Health, with particular focus on making the newly purchased ambulances operational.

Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister stated that the health sector was his government's top priority. He said that ensuring the timely provision of emergency medical services to the public was the government's responsibility.

The PM emphasized the need for proper management of the ambulance service and the prudent use of state resources. He reaffirmed the government's commitment to improving health infrastructure and providing quality medical facilities to the public. On the occasion, the Prime Minister was given a detailed



briefing on the key challenges faced by the health sector. The meeting was attended by Minister for Public Health

Syed Bazil Ali Naqvi, Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood, Secretary Public Health Aamir Raza Tipu, Senior Addi-

tional Secretary Syed Mohsin Gilani, Secretary Electricity Chaudhry Tayyab, and other relevant officials.

AJK PM vows priority for public welfare projects, stresses transparency



Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: Prime Minister Azad Kashmir Faisal Mumtaz Rathore has said that the government was utilizing all available resources to accomplish public welfare projects on a priority basis. He expressed these views during a meeting with Minister for Physical Planning and Housing Chaudhry Yasir Sultan who called on him here today.

He said that special emphasis was being placed on urban development, improved housing facilities, and the provision of modern infrastructure.

He also stressed on upholding transparency and merit to reinforce public trust. During the meeting, the duo celebrated on the issue of mutual interest with particular focus on upcoming presidential election.

Earlier, the minister, while briefing the Prime Minister regarding the ongoing development projects said that all the projects would be completed within the stipulated timeframe. Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan and DG Political Affairs Aamir Zeeshan Jarral were also present.

Traders' association meets with Hanif Abbasi

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: The Traders Association of Commercial Market, Rawalpindi, met Federal Minister Muhammad Hanif Abbasi to seek business facilitation during Ramadan and raise concerns over delays in ongoing construction work. On his instructions, Municipal Officer (Infrastructure) Rifaqat Gondal and Sub-Engineer Muhammad Qasim visited Commercial Market.

President Malik Sohail Awan, General Secretary Raja Zafar Yousaf, Joint Secretary Tahir Ismail, Vice President Raja Rashid Mahmood, Ifikhar Ali, Owais Butt, Chaudhry Imran Gujjar, and Malik Ahsan briefed officials on the slow pace of work and fears of business disruption during Ramadan.

Rafaqat Gondal assured that traders' issues would be addressed on priority and development work accelerated. Although Tango Market was not initially part of the project, it was later included due to the personal interest of Muhammad Hanif Abbasi and the Traders Association. Traders expressed gratitude, calling it effective representation of the business community.

ADCG Aneel Saeed Chairs meeting on anti-encroachment drive, reviews Ramadan arrangements

Raza Naqvi,

ATTOCK: Aneel Saeed, Additional Deputy Commissioner General, chaired an important meeting at the Municipal Committee office on Monday, attended by officers from all relevant departments to review the anti-encroachment campaign and preparations for Ramadan.

The meeting discussed in detail the removal of illegal encroachments across Attock, urban beautification, and the provision of basic facilities to citizens. The ADCG directed departments to launch effective operations to eliminate encroachments in order to ensure smooth traffic flow and improve the city's appearance.

Emphasizing proactive governance ahead of the holy month of Ramadan, he instructed officers to enhance public facilitation measures. Arrangements for Ramadan bazaars were also reviewed, with a focus on the availability of essential commodities at controlled and affordable prices.

Aneel Saeed directed the concerned authorities to ensure the supply of quality food items in Ramadan bazaars and to maintain strict price monitoring. He further stressed the need for strong inter-departmental coordination and a clear implementation strategy.

All departments were instructed to perform their duties diligently and ensure full compliance with official directives to provide maximum relief to citizens during Ramadan.

Takht Bhai Traffic Gridlock Paralyzes Daily Life, Patients at Risk



Tariq Khan Yousafzai

TAKHT BHAI: The traffic system in Takht Bhai has fallen into severe disarray, causing serious difficulties for residents, especially patients, the elderly, and students. Traffic jams on the city's main roads have become a daily routine, while the chaotic rush of vehicles has made life miserable for the public. According to local sources, the situation becomes even more critical during iftar hours. At this time, handcart vendors occupy the roads, bringing traffic to a complete standstill. In particular, the road from Phatak to Baz Plaza remains completely blocked during iftar.

In addition, traffic flow on Takkar Road, School Road, Pat Baba Road, and Mazdoor Abad Road is also severely affected. In these areas, long queues of vehicles form, and even pedestrian movement becomes difficult. Ambulances and vehicles carrying patients are also stuck in traffic jams, posing serious risks to precious human lives. Residents state that the absence of traffic police and the lack of action against encroachments have caused the problems to worsen day by day. Public circles have demanded immediate and strict action against illegal encroachments, handcart vendors, and traffic law violators so that citizens can breathe a sigh of relief.

The public has also urged higher authorities to ensure an effective traffic management system in Takht Bhai and to make special arrangements during iftar hours to prevent further inconvenience to the people.

Iftar

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani attending the Iftar dinner being hosted by H.E. Mr. Nawaf Bin Saeed Al-Malky, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

AJK PM meets ex-minister, discusses political climate and public welfare agenda

Bureau Report

MUZAFFARABAD: The Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Chaudhry Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, held a meeting with former Minister for Information Sardar Abid Hussain Abid in Muzaaffarabad. During the meeting, matters of mutual interest and the prevailing political situation were discussed in detail.

The Prime Minister stated that the government remains fully committed to its agenda of public welfare, development, and good governance across the state. He emphasized that ensuring the provision of basic facilities to the people, upholding merit, and maintaining transparency are among the government's top priorities.

He further remarked that the challenges faced by the state can be effectively addressed through political stability and mutual consultation. The Prime Minister reiterated that the government believes in inclusive decision-making and in taking all political



stakeholders along for the collective progress of the state. On the occasion, Sardar Abid

Hussain Abid expressed confidence in the leadership of the Prime Minister and appreciated the government's

efforts aimed at resolving public issues and promoting sustainable development in Azad Jammu and Kashmir.

Multan High Court Bar Association Annual Elections held on 28 February

MULTAN: The annual elections of the High Court Bar Association Multan will be held on 28 February 2026. For the first time, Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology is being used to make the electoral process transparent, organized, and convenient.

Chairman Election Board and senior lawyer Advocate Syed Riaz-ul-Hasan Gilani, while addressing a press conference along with Election Board members Azhar Hayat, Faheem Gardazi, and Coordinator Sabir Hussain Bhudwal, stated that the services of the National Center for Artificial Intelligence Islamabad have been obtained for this purpose. The center has



developed a special software for the bar free of cost.

He said that through the modern system, voters will receive their vote number

and polling booth number via SMS and WhatsApp one day before polling. Voters will also be able to send their names to a designated number to

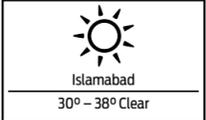
instantly receive their details. The purpose of this initiative is to provide convenience to voters and prevent any difficulties on polling day.

According to the Chairman Election Board, a total of 13,083 registered voters will exercise their right to vote this year, for whom 30 polling booths have been established. Polling will continue from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM, with a break from 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM for Zuhr prayer.

He further stated that voters must present their original identity card along with their Punjab Bar Council or Pakistan Bar Council card; voting will not be allowed without these documents. A separate color

ballot paper has been assigned to each polling booth, and any ballot paper of a different color found in a booth will be considered invalid.

Advocate Syed Riaz-ul-Hasan Gilani also announced that Aamna Khan, Syed Hasnain Shah Gilani, Furqan Ahmad Khan, Sheikh Junaid Iqbal, Mehr Ghulam Shabbir Sial, Syed Mubarak Ali Shah, and Muhammad Ilyas have been elected unopposed to the seven seats of the Executive Committee. He appealed to the legal community to participate fully to make the democratic process successful and to strictly follow the election code of conduct.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr	5:20 am
Zohr	12:21 pm
Asr	4:20 pm
Maghrib	6:00 pm
Isha	7:23 pm

EMERGENCY

Rescue (Police)	15
Bomb Disposal	15
Fire Services Rawalpindi/ Islamabad	1122 & 16
Emergency Ambulance	1122 & 4451122
& Rescue Services	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

PSCA launches crackdown against one-wheelers and underage drivers

News Desk

LAHORE: Punjab Safe Cities Authority has launched a special crackdown against one-wheeling, reckless driving and underage drivers during the holy month of Ramadan to ensure protection of citizens' lives and property. In view of increasing trend of one-wheeling and over-speeding during Sehri and Iftar hours, Safe City's Virtual Patrolling Officers are continuously monitoring major roads and highways in a vigilant manner.

According to PSCA spokesperson, several one-wheelers and underage drivers were identified through modern cameras and effective surveillance system. Acting promptly on Safe City's alerts, the field force apprehended more than 12 one-wheelers and impounded their motorcycles. Legal proceedings have also been initiated against the violators.

The spokesperson further stated that special surveillance will continue throughout the holy month of Ramadan, and a strict crackdown against lawbreakers will remain in effect with the help of latest AI-based cameras monitoring system to provide a safe and secure environment for citizens. Punjab Safe Cities Authority has urged parents not to allow underage children to drive cars or motorcycles, as it not only amounts to committing legal offense but can also lead to causing serious accidents.

PRCS, TRCS Sign MoU, Launch Ramadan Relief for Vulnerable Families

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Her Excellency Prof. Dr. Fatma Meriç Yılmaz, President of the Turkish Red Crescent Society along with Alper Kucuk, Director General for International Affairs and Migration led a high-level delegation from Türkiye on an official visit to the National Headquarters of the Pakistan

Red Crescent Society, reaffirming the long-standing, trusted and brotherly humanitarian partnership between the two sister National Societies.

During the visit, H. E. Prof. Dr. Yılmaz held a cordial courtesy meeting with Honorable Chairperson PRCS Mrs. Farzana Naek. The two sides discussed ways to further deepen cooperation,

expand joint humanitarian programmes, and enhance outreach to vulnerable communities across Pakistan, reflecting the historic bonds of friendship between the peoples of Pakistan and Türkiye.

The visit culminated in a Ramadan food parcel distribution ceremony and Iftar programme at PRCS Headquarters, attended by His Excellency Dr Irfan

Neziro lu, Ambassador of the Republic of Türkiye to Pakistan along with the representatives Turkish Cooperation and Coordination Agency (TIKA), Yunus Emre Institute, Turkish Airline, International Maarif School, Albayrak Pakistan, Anadolu Ajansi and ASELSAN. Under this joint initiative, 3,000 food packages will be distributed to conflict-affected and vulner-

able families, including those in hard-to-reach areas of Tirah and Kurram Valley.

Speaking on the occasion, Chairperson PRCS Mrs Farzana Naek said that the partnership between PRCS and TRCS stands as a powerful symbol of brotherhood between Pakistan and Türkiye, forged through decades of cooperation in times of crisis and need.



Eyes Test

ISLAMABAD: A female eye specialist examine the eyes of students at Open Air school of Master Ayub at Sector F-6 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Prime Minister's Laptop Distribution Ceremony held at GCWUF

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: Government College Women University Faisalabad organized the Prime Minister's Laptop Distribution Ceremony under the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, awarding laptops to 637 meritorious students on the basis of academic excellence.

The ceremony was graced by Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (T.I.), Vice Chancellor GCWUF, as Chief Guest, while Ms. Qudsia Batool, MPA, attended as Guest of Honour. Dr. Shazia Riaz, Focal Person for the Laptop Scheme, delivered the welcome note.

Qudsia Batool congratulated the students and stated that national leadership is connecting youth to the digital world. She urged them



to treat the laptops not merely as devices but as tools for skill development, learning, and nation-building in the digital age. Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr.

District Welfare Committee Reviews Measures for Special Persons in Attock

Raza Naqvi

ATTOCK: A meeting of the District Welfare Committee was held under the chairmanship of Additional Deputy Commissioner General Aneel Saeed, with heads of relevant departments in attendance.

The meeting conducted a detailed review of matters related to the welfare and rehabilitation of special persons and other underprivileged segments of society.

Addressing the participants, the ADCG directed concerned officers to further improve government facilities and relief measures for special persons. He emphasized that their assistance and rehabilitation remain among the government's top priorities and warned that no negligence in this regard would be tolerated.

During the session, various departments presented briefings on ongoing welfare initiatives, while future strategies were also discussed. It was agreed to enhance inter-departmental coordination to ensure effective implementation of welfare programs.

Aneel Saeed instructed officers to adopt proactive and coordinated measures to ensure timely assistance, improved service delivery, and prompt redressal of complaints so that maximum relief could be provided to special persons.

Chaudhry Inam strongly condemned the attack on the FC Fort

City Desk

RAWALPINDI: Political and social leader Chaudhry Inam Zafar strongly condemned the attack on the FC Fort, in which five personnel were injured and three personnel were martyred when an ambulance came under fire. He termed the incident a cowardly and inhumane act. He stated that attacking an ambulance carrying the injured is open terrorism and a grave violation of fundamental human values.



In his important statement, Chaudhry Inam Zafar expressed heartfelt sympathy and condolences to the families of the martyrs and urged the government to immediately arrest those involved in the incident and bring them to justice. He also emphasized the provision of the best possible medical treatment to the injured personnel and called for further strengthening of security measures.

COVITEX 2026 Set to Spotlight Global Innovations in Sustainable Textiles & Global

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: The 8th COVITEX International Conference on Value Addition and Innovation in Textiles will be held from 25-26 March 2026, positioning Pakistan at the forefront of global conversations on textile innovation, sustainability, and advanced manufacturing. Organized under the patronage of National Textile University (NTU) and supported and sponsored by the Higher Education Commission Pakistan (HEC) The conference aims to unite researchers, industry experts, policymakers, and international stakeholders on one platform. There will be 20 international speakers, and 70 National speakers and industrial delegations from 60 different organizations.

COVITEX has evolved into a significant forum for knowledge exchange, especially at a time when the global textile supply chain is undergoing rapid transformation. This year's conference centers on the central theme of sustainable production of value-added textiles, clothing, and smart fashion. The focus reflects the growing global need for eco-conscious materials, circular design systems, and climate-responsible production approaches.

A wide range of sub-themes has been announced, highlighting the breadth of innovation within the textile sector. These include sustainable polymers and fibers, advanced and functional clothing, sports and activewear textiles, smart and intelligent textiles, nanofibers and nano-membrane technologies, and denim innovation linked with circular fashion systems. The program also incorporates topics such as medical and healthcare textiles, sustainable textile business strategies, fiber-reinforced polymer composites, military and defense textiles, and eco-friendly material developments. Additionally, the conference will explore sustainable garment design, circularity models, and the increasing relevance of AI and Industry 5.0 applications in textiles and apparel manufacturing.

The conference is being coordinated by Dr. Usman Zubair, with Dr. M. Qamar Khan serving as chief organizer and Prof. Dr. Zulfiqar Ali chairing the conference. Rector NTU Prof Dr Rashid Masood with the Patron in chief of this 8th Conference. The registration deadline has been set for March 20, 2026, while sessions and technical discussions will be held on March 25 and 26 at NTU.

As sustainability, digitalization, and material innovation continue to reshape the global textile landscape, COVITEX 2026 is anticipated to provide critical insights, valuable networking opportunities, and pathways for advancing Pakistan's textile future.

Crackdown against profiteers is underway, says Ch Naeem price control magistrate

Zafar Chishti

TOBA TEK SINGH: In line with the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, a crackdown against profiteering and other violations is underway in Toba Tek Singh to ensure price control across the district.

District Health and Population Welfare Officer and Price Control Magistrate Toba Tek Singh Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem stated that on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Umar Abbas Mela, around 50 shops are being inspected daily to ensure the availability of essential commodities

at officially notified prices. He further said that during inspections, strict action is being taken against shopkeepers involved in overcharging, failing to display price lists and selling expired items. On-the-spot fines are being imposed on violators, while some have also been issued stern warnings. Chaudhry Muhammad Naeem emphasized that providing relief to the public is the top priority of the district administration. He appealed to citizens to check price lists while shopping and report any cases of overcharging or irregularities to the relevant authorities.



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Mechanising Farmers' Path to Prosperity

Punjab's agricultural sector is undergoing an important structural transformation, driven by a planned push for farm mechanisation, targeted subsidies and institutional reforms. This initiative, spearheaded by Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, transcends simple subsidy distribution; it represents a calculated investment to modernise agriculture, bolster rural incomes and fortify Pakistan's economic foundations.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of the national economy, contributing nearly a quarter of the GDP and employing over a third of the labour force. Within this framework, Punjab serves as the primary engine, accounting for approximately 70 percent of the country's total agricultural output. As the principal producer of wheat, rice, cotton and sugarcane, Punjab is central to national food security, industrial supply chains and export stability. Consequently, enhancements in Punjab's agricultural productivity have a direct and profound impact on national economic growth, inflation management and rural prosperity.

Despite its pivotal role, Punjab's agriculture has often been hampered by structural constraints, most notably a low level of mechanisation. Tractor density, a key indicator of agricultural modernisation, lags significantly behind global benchmarks. Currently, Punjab has approximately 140 tractors per 10,000 acres, a rate that limits operational efficiency and restricts potential crop yields. Mechanisation is crucial, not just for boosting productivity, but for ensuring timely land preparation, optimal sowing schedules and the efficient application of water, fertiliser and pesticides. Tractors, as the backbone of farm mechanisation, are versatile power units that enable ploughing, laser land levelling, precise planting and efficient harvesting. This

translates to improved labour productivity, reduced post-harvest losses and enhanced resource efficiency. Studies show that timely sowing, made possible by mechanisation, can increase wheat yields by up to 15 percent.

Recognising these limitations, the Punjab government has accelerated farmers' access to machinery through the revamped Green Tractor Program. In a prudent departure from the past, over 31,000 tractors have been distributed in the last two years, surpassing the total provided in the preceding quarter-century. The first two phases delivered 21,000 tractors, while Phase III will add another 10,000 units, specifically in the 50- to 65-horsepower range, ideally suited for small and medium-sized farms. The program's overwhelming popularity is evident in the latest phase, which attracted applications from more than 427,000 small farmers. This fervent response underscores both the acute need for mechanisation and the program's credibility within rural communities. For smallholders, tractor prices, which have more than doubled in five years, posed an insurmountable barrier. The government's targeted 60 percent subsidy for the first 9,500 farmers in Phase III directly addresses this capital constraint, democratising access to productivity-enhancing technology.

The impact of this mechanisation drive extends far beyond the individual farmer, creating ripples throughout the agricultural value chain and the broader economy. By improving the efficiency of land, labour and capital, mechanisation boosts total factor productivity. This leads to higher crop outputs, lower per-unit production costs and improved

farm profitability. These gains, in turn, strengthen rural purchasing power, stimulate local economies and contribute to poverty reduction. Furthermore, tractor ownership creates secondary income streams as farmers can also provide custom-hiring services to other farmers. This service model expands access to mechanisation across entire communities, ensuring that even those who cannot afford a tractor can still benefit from its efficiency. The mechanisation push also provides a powerful stimulus to Pakistan's domestic tractor manufacturing industry. Increased demand fuels industrial production, strengthens local engineering capabilities and generates employment across the manufacturing and supply chains, creating a virtuous cycle where agricultural growth fuels industrial expansion.

Punjab's mechanisation drive is not an isolated initiative but a core component of a broader, two-year agricultural reform agenda. Complementary programs are working in tandem to create a more resilient and productive farming ecosystem. The Kissan Card, for instance, is improving farmers' access to subsidised inputs and formal credit, reducing their reliance on exploitative informal lenders. Simultaneously, the solarisation of agricultural tube wells is cutting energy costs and promoting sustainable irrigation, addressing one of the largest input expenses for farmers while contributing to environmental goals. The Punjab government has also facilitated access to modern implements like super seeders and precision equipment, which enable conservation agriculture. These technologies help retain soil moisture, reduce stubble burning, improve soil health and

support climate-resilient farming practices, aligning Punjab with the global transition toward sustainable intensification.

The timing of these reforms is important. Pakistan is confronting the dual pressures of a rapidly growing population and the intensifying impacts of climate change, which threaten water availability and crop stability. Improving agricultural productivity through mechanisation is not merely an economic objective but an essential strategy for ensuring long-term food security and maintaining price stability. By enabling more efficient resource use and strengthening the sector's resilience to shocks, mechanisation provides a clear pathway to navigate these challenges.

Punjab's evolving agricultural policy represents a paradigm shift from traditional, consumption-based support towards long-term, productivity-enhancing investment. The focus has moved beyond price subsidies to capital investment, technological adoption and structural modernisation. The Green Tractor Program is the most visible symbol of this transition. Each subsidised tractor is more than a machine; it is an investment in a farmer's economic empowerment, in higher productivity and in a more prosperous future for rural Punjab.

Agriculture has historically been the backbone of Punjab's economy. Its future, and by extension Pakistan's, depends on the continued momentum of such innovation and reform. By aggressively pursuing mechanisation and integrated support policies, Punjab is not just modernising its farms; it is reinforcing its role as the indispensable engine of Pakistan's economic growth and food security, paving a well-mechanised path to shared prosperity.

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



Analysis

Qudrat Ullah



Cartoon by Amjad Rasmī. (Courtesy of Ashraf Al-Azcat)

CDF ups soft, hard state power integration

Pakistan stands today at one of the most intricate and consequential junctures in its national journey. The traditional understanding of national security—once largely confined to troop deployments, frontier fortifications, and classical battlefield manoeuvres—has undergone a profound and irreversible transformation. Contemporary national security is now recognised as a comprehensive, multi-layered state endeavour. It embraces internal political and social stability, the pursuit of genuine economic self-sufficiency, deft diplomatic manoeuvring in an increasingly polarised world, robust defences against information and psychological warfare, advanced cybersecurity architecture, deliberate cultivation of societal harmony, and the careful construction of a unifying national narrative that resonates across all segments of society.

The global geopolitical landscape is shifting with unprecedented speed. New power constellations are forming across South and Central Asia; hybrid warfare has become the preferred instrument of many state and non-state actors; terrorist organisations are reorganising, adapting, and regenerating; and cross-border sanctuaries continue to provide operational breathing space to hostile elements. These developments have collectively pushed Pakistan into a security environment that requires not incremental adjustments but a complete paradigm shift in strategic thought and institutional behaviour.

The opening months of 2025 and the first weeks of 2026 brought a stark escalation in threat intensity and diversity. Along the western border, militant violence surged dramatically, most notably in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan. The Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) intensified attacks on security forces, civilian infrastructure, and public spaces, while the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) and associated outfits expanded their campaign of targeted assassinations, improvised explosive devices, and large-scale coordinated assaults. Urban centres across the country experienced renewed pressure: attempted strikes on sensitive installations, intensified suicide-bombing threats, and a flood of sophisticated propaganda disseminated through digital channels. These realities have made one fact abundantly clear: national security can no longer be treated as the exclusive preserve of the armed forces. It demands instead a fully synchronised national response involving military power, intelligence dominance, diplomatic leverage, economic fortitude, political consensus, and deep societal cohesion.

In response, Pakistan authorised and executed a series of precise cross-border operations in 2025. The most significant of these occurred in October, when targeted airstrikes neutralised key TTP command-and-control nodes and training facilities located in Kabul, Khost, Jalalabad, and Paktika provinces of Afghanistan. These actions were taken only after exhaustive diplomatic efforts failed to persuade the de facto Afghan authorities to dismantle TTP infrastructure on their soil. In Balochistan the situation deteriorated further with the BLA's so-called "Operation Herof 2.0", launched in late January and continuing into early February 2026. Over those weeks, militants struck schools, district hospitals, commercial banks, bustling markets, police stations, Frontier Corps checkpoints, and civilian gatherings across several districts. The cumulative toll in lives and property was severe, and the psychological impact on local populations was profound. Such operations do far more than

inflict tactical damage; they directly undermine investor confidence, slow progress on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and threaten the broader national development agenda. It is precisely within this demanding context that the leadership of Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir assumes historic importance. In December 2025, through the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment, he became the first officer in Pakistan's history to hold the newly created office of Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) while simultaneously serving as Chief of Army Staff (COAS). This dual appointment is far more than an administrative arrangement. It institutionalises unified command and control over the Army, Navy, and Air Force; guarantees seamless continuity of strategic direction; and provides the structural framework necessary for the joint, theatre-level operations that modern multi-domain conflict demands.

Field Marshal Munir has consistently articulated a forward-leaning vision on international stages. He has emphasised that the contemporary battlespace now extends decisively into the economic, informational, technological, and cognitive domains. Artificial intelligence, autonomous systems, cyber resilience, and the ability to shape narratives are no longer peripheral concerns—they are central pillars of national power. He has also reiterated Pakistan's firm belief that lasting peace in the region is not merely desirable but essential to the country's own security, and that Islamabad remains committed to genuine, broad-based international cooperation in the struggle against terrorism in all its forms.

Institutional coherence has therefore been deliberately placed at the very heart of the current defence posture. The three services now engage in regular joint operational planning, accelerated technology absorption (including AI-driven decision support, unmanned aerial

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Analysis

Sardar Abdul Khaliq Wasi

Kashmiri Women: Systemic Sexual Violence and Impunity in a Protracted Conflict

In Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir, sexual violence has functioned as a calculated instrument of state policy, deployed systematically by security forces to punish, intimidate, and degrade entire communities. This weaponization of rape, occurring within a landscape of prolonged military occupation and mass troop deployment, has created a pervasive climate of terror specifically targeting women. Despite international frameworks mandating protection of women in conflict zones, Kashmiri women remain trapped in a cycle of abuse marked by institutional impunity and international silence.

The scale of gender-based violence in the region is staggering. Since 1989, conflict has claimed about 100,000 lives, leaving approximately thousands of women widowed and "half-widows"—women whose husbands have vanished through enforced disappearances. Documentation by regional rights groups indicates that more than 11,000 women have suffered molestation or gang-rape, while over 23,000 have been widowed and 107,805 children orphaned. In October 2013, then-Chief Minister Omar Abdullah acknowledged over 5,000 registered rape cases since 1989, though independent observers maintain this represents merely a fraction of actual incidents given severe underreporting in militarized zones.

The methodology of sexual violence follows distinct patterns designed to maximize humiliation and collective trauma. Security forces frequently employ rape during cordon-and-search operations, entering civilian homes,

removing or killing male family members, and assaulting women inside. The 1991 Kunan Poshpora mass rape, where scores of women in a single village were assaulted by Indian troops, remains the most horrific exemplar of this tactic. Similar patterns emerged in documented cases from Shopian and Anantnag (Islamabad), where sexual violence accompanied murder. As documented by Human Rights Watch and Norwegian psychologist Inger Skjelsbæk, these assaults constitute deliberate counter-insurgency tactics rather than isolated criminal acts, intended to fracture community cohesion and deter resistance.

The psychological toll manifests in epidemic proportions. A 2016 study by IMHANS and ActionAid found that 11.3% of Kashmir Valley residents suffer from mental health disorders—significantly exceeding national averages. Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) research reveals that 50% of Kashmiri women suffer from depression, 36% from anxiety disorders, and 22% from PTSD, compared to lower rates among men. The perpetual threat of abduction and sexual violence has effectively confined many women to their homes, disrupting education and economic participation while creating generations traumatized by militarized patriarchal violence.

The August 2019 abrogation of Article 370 intensified this repression. Women activists including Asiya Andrabi, Nahida Nasreen, and Fahmeeda Sofi face prolonged detention under draconian laws without formal charges, reportedly suffering physical and psychological

Continued on Page 7

Pakistan-Iran Relations: An enduring partnership in a changing region

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Centre for Afghanistan, Middle East and Africa (CAMEA) at the Institute of Strategic Studies Islamabad (ISSI), under its Ambassador's Platform, organized a public talk titled "Pakistan-Iran Relations: An Enduring Partnership in a Changing Region." H. E. Reza Amiri-Moghaddam, Ambassador of the Islamic Republic of Iran to Pakistan, Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, Chairman, Board of Governors, ISSI and Dr. Amina Khan, Director CAMEA spoke on the occasion.

The distinguished speaker, H. E. Reza Amiri-Moghaddam while stating his views said that the two neighboring countries share a long common border and together represent a population of nearly 350 million people. Robust people-to-people ties, a strategically significant geographic location, substantial complementary, and non-competitive economic structures create extensive opportunities for mutually beneficial cooperation. He further opined that Iran and Pakistan also maintain closely aligned positions



on numerous regional and international issues, including the question of Palestine. He noted that terrorism and separatist movements are other serious challenges requiring enhanced cooperation and coordination between the two neighbors.

Ambassador Khalid Mahmood, while expressing his views, said that Pakistan and Iran are two brotherly countries bound by culture, history

and religion and relations with Iran predate the existence of Pakistan. Ties further deepened after Pakistan came into being and Iran was the first country to recognise Pakistan. Furthermore, Iran's support for Pakistan during the 1965 and 1971 wars is also a testament to their close ties. There have been difficult phases in the relationship, which have strained the relationship at times.

Dr. Amina Khan, while giving her remarks stated that Pakistan and Iran share a long-standing bilateral relationship grounded in historical ties, geographic proximity, and intertwined security and economic interests.

The talk was attended by diplomats, academics, students, practitioners and members of the civil society and ended with an engaging Question and Answer session.

Faysal Bank Recognized for CSR excellence at NFEH Awards

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Faysal Bank Limited (FBL) has been honored with eight prestigious awards at the National Forum for Environment & Health (NFEH) CSR Awards, recognizing the Bank's leadership in sustainability, inclusive development, and measurable social impact across Pakistan.

The awards span key areas including CSR reporting, partnerships, climate resilience, education, innovation, impact measurement, inclusivity, and women's empowerment — reflecting the Bank's holistic and ESG-aligned approach to responsible banking.

These recognitions underscore Faysal Bank's commitment to transparent sustainability reporting, collaborative multi-stakeholder engagement, climate action, educational uplift, vocational support, and women's economic participation across its nationwide footprint.

Commenting on the achievement, Mr. Yousaf Hussain, President & CEO of Faysal Bank stated, "These awards reaffirm our commitment to responsible and inclusive growth. At Faysal Bank, we believe sustainable



progress is driven by strong governance, meaningful partnerships, and measurable impact. We remain dedicated to strengthening communities

and contributing to Pakistan's long-term socio-economic development."

This milestone reinforces Faysal Bank's position as a purpose-driven

Islamic bank, integrating environmental stewardship, social responsibility, and governance excellence into its core strategy.

Thatta DC Holds Open Court, Issues On-Spot Orders for Public Grievances

Correspondent

THATTA: Under the open-door policy of Sarmad Ali Bhagat, the Deputy Commissioner of Thatta, the process of promptly resolving public issues continues consistently. As a result, citizens are freely presenting their problems before the district administration without any hindrance.

During the daily open-court style meeting held at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Thatta, citizens from various areas submitted complaints related to electricity, water, revenue, health, and municipal matters. The Deputy Commissioner attentively listened to each applicant and issued on-the-spot directives to the



concerned department officials for the immediate resolution of their issues.

On this occasion, Sarmad Ali Bhagat stated that public service is

the top priority of the district administration, and the purpose of the open-door policy is to ensure that citizens receive redress at a single place instead of having to make repeated visits to different offices. He also instructed officers not to confine public complaints to files only, but to address them through practical measures.

Citizens welcomed the open-door policy and described the Deputy Commissioner's initiative as an important step toward reducing the gap between the public and the administration. They expressed hope that the continuation of this policy would further improve the resolution of issues and strengthen public trust.

Unveiling Rural Brilliance: A Call for Educational Support in Underserved Areas

With over 13 years of experience in the field of education, I have had the privilege of teaching and mentoring students from a variety of backgrounds. Among them, the ones who have left an indelible mark on my heart and mind are the students from rural areas, young minds filled with curiosity, resilience, and untapped brilliance. These students are, without exaggeration, born with the spark of scientists, thinkers, and innovators.

In rural classrooms, despite limited resources and often under-equipped facilities, I have witnessed students solving complex problems, asking deep questions, and demonstrating a natural aptitude for science, mathematics, arts,

and languages. Their hunger to learn, their dedication, and their ability to absorb knowledge rival that of any student from urban centers. These are not just learners; they are diamonds waiting to be discovered and polished.

However, talent alone is not enough. What stands between these gifted students and their dreams is the lack of infrastructure and institutional support. Rural schools frequently face challenges such as dilapidated buildings, insufficient teaching staff, outdated materials, and limited access to technology. While their minds

are ready to soar, the wings they need are yet to be provided.

We must prioritize building more schools in rural areas, safe, welcoming spaces that inspire learning. These schools must be equipped not only with modern facilities and laboratories but also with libraries, internet access, extracurricular programs, and trained, motivated teachers. Equal emphasis must be placed on both boys' and girls' education so that all students, regardless of gender, can confidently step into any field of competition, be it science, medicine, technology, civil

services, or the arts.

In many cases, one strong push, a scholarship, a mentor, a well-equipped classroom can change the trajectory of a rural student's life. It is our collective responsibility as educators, policymakers, and society to ensure that no talent goes unrecognized simply because of a lack of opportunity.

Rural areas do not lack intelligence or creativity; they lack resources. If we want to see real progress, we must invest in the potential that lies hidden in these corners of our country. Every child deserves the chance to dream, to achieve, and to contribute. Let us bring the light of education to where it is needed most, and in doing so, we will help shape a brighter, more inclusive future for all.



Analysis
Dr. Mushtaq Ahmed Rahu

Parliamentary Panel Slams Health Ministry Over Flawed Policies and Rejected Schemes

Abdul Waheed Khan.

ISLAMABAD: The recent meeting of the National Assembly Standing Committee on National Health Services turned from a routine briefing into an open parliamentary accountability session, as members sharply criticized the federal Ministry of Health over flawed policies, poor planning, and failure to provide basic medical facilities to patients. Lawmakers declared in clear terms that the public would no longer be deceived through "paper projects."

The meeting, Chaired by MNA Dr. Mahesh Kumar Malani, rejected 28 out of 33 new health schemes proposed for the fiscal year 2026-27. MNA Aliya Kamran Khan emerged as the most prominent voice during the session, delivering strong criticism of the Ministry's planning. She stated:

Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan raised serious objections regarding financial transparency. She questioned how the Border Health Services project cost

Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro stated that the Ministry was ignoring the real disease burden of the country. She highlighted that screening and treatment programmes for hepatitis, HIV, and diabetes remained underfunded despite being national health emergencies.

Dr. Shaista Khan Jadun described the condition of Basic Health Units as "the system's biggest failure." She said many BHUs lacked doctors, laboratories, and medicines, yet new repair schemes were introduced every year.

Farah Naz Akbar criticized the Ministry for incomplete and non-transparent briefings, questioning how projects were being included in the PSDP without CDWP and ECNEC approvals.

Zahra Wadood Fatemi said repeated redesigning of projects amounted to a waste of national resources and demanded accountability.

Sabheen Ghouri termed the "One Patient, One ID" system ineffective, arguing that expanding it to rural areas was merely cosmetic when it was not fully functional even in major hospitals.

The meeting was attended by MNAs Dr. Darshan, Farrukh Khan, Aliya Kamran Khan, Farah Naz Akbar, Zahra Wadood Fatemi, Dr. Shazia Sobia Aslam Soomro, Dr. Nikhat Shakeel Khan, Dr. Shaista Khan Jadun, Sabheen Ghouri, along with senior officials from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Planning and Development.

JS Bank Reports Profit Before Tax of PKR 6.191 Billion for year ended December 2025

Commerce Desk

KARACHI: JS Bank Limited (PSX: JSBL) today announced its financial results for the year ended December 31, 2025. The bank demonstrated growth in total income and continued its strategic focus on long-term value creation, with total income rising to PKR 40.313 billion, a 4% increase from PKR 38.644 billion earned in the prior year.

The Bank reported a Profit before tax of PKR 6.191 billion for the year 2025, as against PKR 6.366 billion for last year. Amidst a lower interest rate environment, the Bank's Net Interest Income ended flat year on year, and was reported at PKR 27.149 billion, while Non mark-up income rose by 17% Year on Year to end at PKR 13.164 billion, driven by healthy fee, commission and other income, dividend income, and notable gains on securities.

Consequently, the Bank's earnings per share (EPS) stood at PKR 1.36 for the year 2025, compared to PKR 1.39 for the year 2024. The Bank's Profit After Tax was PKR 2.79 billion this year.

JS Bank's balance sheet showed steady growth and total assets were reported at PKR 655.64 billion, growing by 3% over December 2024. The Bank's deposit base showed further strengthening, with non-remunerative deposits rising to PKR 222.12 billion from PKR 198.41 billion at December 2024, improving the non-remunerative deposit mix to 41% against 38% last year. On a year on year basis, non-remunerative deposits improved by PKR 23.71 billion or 12%. Savings deposits expanded significantly to PKR 204.27 billion, compared to PKR 172.84 billion in last year, while term deposits stood at PKR 117.11 billion, reflecting a strategic shift towards more liquid and cost-efficient deposit products.

Operating expenses grew in line with continued investment in people, technology, and infrastructure to support long-term growth and the bank's efforts towards enhancing customer experience.

Commenting on the results, Basir Shamsi, President & CEO of JS Bank, said "In 2025, the Bank remained focused on creating long-term value for its stakeholders, with customers at the core of its strategy. Despite evolving market conditions, we strengthened income diversification, enhanced resilience, and continued investing in digital capabilities and service excellence. The growth in non-markup income and securities gains reflects the progress made in building a more sustainable earnings profile. We are optimistic that the years ahead will further strengthen our ability to deliver sustainable growth and long-term value for all our stakeholders."

Dubai Municipality Ramadan Souq 2026 achieves record success, attracting 1.82 million visitors

DUBAI: Dubai Municipality announced that the Ramadan Souq 2026, held on Old Baladiya Street within Deira Grand Souk, achieved record success, welcoming 1.82 million visitors.



The event recorded growth of 12.4%, attracting more than 200,000 additional visitors compared with the 2025 season, supported by an authentic heritage-inspired atmosphere and a diverse programme of cultural, community and interactive entertainment activities.

The strong turnout reflects Dubai Municipality's ongoing efforts to strengthen the market's position as one of the emirate's most prominent annual community and heritage events.

The souq coincided with the "Al Welfa" season, which promotes family cohesion and celebrates Emirati cultural and social traditions. It also contributed to stimulating tourism and economic activity in historic markets while supporting small and medium-sized enterprises through a community-driven platform that encourages family participation, promotes economic sustainability and reinforces the role of traditional markets as key cultural and tourism destinations.

Dubai Municipality organises the Ramadan Souq annually as a destination that brings families and communities together through a shopping and entertainment experience that combines traditional Ramadan preparations with cultural and community activities. The initiative forms part of the Municipality's wider efforts to support tourism, entertainment and commercial activity across Dubai while encouraging engagement with public facilities and historic destinations.

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
10,680.59	-4.15
Percentage	Time
-0.039%	24 Feb, 4:35 pm GMT

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
49,162.79	+358.73
Percentage	Time
+0.74%	24 Feb, 12:06 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
57,321.09	+495.39
Percentage	Time
+0.87%	24 Feb, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	196.11	200.50
Bahrain Dinar	742.12	751.62
Canadian Dollar	203.09	206.58
China Yuan	38.25	39.30
Danish Krone	43.32	43.72
Euro	329.04	333.54
Hong Kong Dollar	35.25	36.1
Indian Rupee	2.85	3.30
Japanese Yen	1.7896	1.8897
Kuwaiti Dinar	905.73	915.17
Malaysian Ringgit	66.50	68.45
New Zealand \$	165.33	168
Norwegians Krone	27.61	27.91
Omani Riyal	726.86	736.36
Qatari Riyal	76.12	78.25
Saudi Riyal	74.75	75.5
Singapore Dollar	219.28	223.22
Swedish Korona	30.1	30.4
Swiss Franc	358.42	362.85
Thai Bhat	8.5	8.65
U.A.E Dirham	76.35	77.35
UK Pound Sterling	376.98	381.23
US Dollar	280.25	282.2

PTCL posts 12 per cent revenue growth in 2025

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Telecommunication Company Limited (PTCL), the country's leading telecom and ICT services provider, recorded a 12% year-on-year (YoY) increase in consolidated revenue for the year ended December 31, 2025, driven by 50% growth in Flash Fiber and 16% growth in Business Solutions compared to the previous financial year.

PTCL announced its consolidated annual financial results, highlighting strong revenue growth and reaffirming its position as Pakistan's premier integrated telecom and ICT services provider.

Consolidated revenue rose by 12% YoY, supported by robust performance across fixed broadband, enterprise, wholesale, and mobile services.

Consolidated operating profit surged by 216% year-on-year, reflecting improved operational efficiency. However, the Group recorded a net loss of Rs. 9.7 billion, primarily due to accelerated Expected Credit Loss (ECL) provisions

at Ubank following revisions to the Prudential Regulations.

The Carrier and Wholesale segment maintained strong momentum, posting 28% growth,

while the international segment registered a 3% YoY revenue increase.

At the standalone level, PTCL's operating profit reached Rs. 18.2 billion, marking a 49%

YoY increase. The company posted a net profit of Rs. 1.4 billion despite the one-off booking of an additional pension liability amounting to Rs. 6.9 billion, pursuant to a decision by the Supreme Court of Pakistan.

Ufone recorded 14% YoY revenue growth, driven by retail and corporate segments. Its operating profit reached Rs. 17.6 billion, reflecting a 283% increase year-on-year, while the net loss narrowed significantly by 89%.

PTCL achieved a major milestone with the successful acquisition of Telenor Pakistan after securing all requisite regulatory approvals. The transaction was formally completed on December 31, 2025. However, Telenor Pakistan's operational results will be consolidated from January 1, 2026.

With Telenor Pakistan and Orion Towers operating as wholly owned subsidiaries, the acquisition marks one of Pakistan's most significant telecom consolidations. PTCL has initiated steps toward the planned amalgamation of Telenor Pakistan and Ufone, subject to regulatory approvals.



Digital Screens Installed

ISLAMABAD: Workers of local Administration are busy in installing "Digital Screens" on green belt along the Constitution Avenue, which is a good step towards modern advertisement, instead of that pan flexes and banners.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

SMEDA offers 70% matching grant for international certification of SMEs

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: The Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) is offering 70% matching grant under the SME Certification & International Accreditation Grant Programme. According to the grant managers, the program has gained traction as entrepreneurs from several parts of the country have shown interest in obtaining globally recognized certifications to enhance their competitiveness and export potential.

Having 70% of the cost from grant program the SMEs will have to bear 30% cost by themselves to cover the certification cost up to Rs800,000 and related consultancy cost up to Rs200,000 under the project.

The grant program has been launched under the Prime Minister's vision for enhancing exportability of the SMEs in world market. The program is focused to help SMEs get key international certifications by reducing the financial and technical barriers associated with compli-



ance. The initiative is part of the Ministry of Industries and Production's strategy to strengthen small and medium enterprises (SMEs) by enabling them to formalize, accessing the markets for enhancing export capabilities, as per advice of the PM.

Officials say SMEDA, through this highly significant project, offers matching grants

and advisory support to entrepreneurs to enable them to meet global standards related to quality, safety, environmental management and operational systems. The response from entrepreneurs has been quite encouraging, they say, adding that the Authority aims to support more than 100 SMEs in the current fiscal year.

Tribunal Upholds CCP's PKR 40 Million Penalty on UDPL & IBL for Anti-Competitive Agreement

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD, FEB 24, 2026: The Competition Appellate Tribunal (CAT) has upheld the cumulative penalty of PKR 40 million imposed by the Competition Commission of Pakistan (CCP) on United Distributors Pakistan Limited (UDPL) and International Brands (Private) Limited (IBL) for entering into an anti-competitive non-compete agreement in violation of Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2010.

In its order, the Tribunal affirmed that the appellants, by their own conduct, acknowledged the agreement as a non-compete arrangement and endorsed the CCP's finding that the agreement restricted competition and constituted a prohibited market-sharing arrangement.

CCP had initiated proceedings after

UDPL publicly disclosed to the Pakistan Stock Exchange that it had entered into a non-compete agreement with IBL. Under the agreement, UDPL agreed not to distribute human pharmaceutical products in Pakistan for a period of three years in exchange for a payment of PKR 1.131 billion from IBL. CCP found that the agreement effectively eliminated UDPL as a competitor in the relevant market and restricted competition. The substantial payment was deemed a financial incentive to ensure UDPL's exit from the market, thereby protecting IBL from competitive pressure and creating barriers to entry.

Although the agreement contained a clause requiring regulatory approval, both companies failed to obtain prior exemption from CCP and applied for exemption only after the issuance of show cause notices.

CCP rejected the exemption application, concluding that the agreement did not meet the legal criteria for exemption and that the violation had already occurred.

Accordingly, CCP imposed a penalty of PKR 20 million each on UDPL and IBL under Section 38 of the Competition Act, 2010, for entering into and giving effect to the anti-competitive agreement.

The Tribunal upheld CCP's findings on the violation and endorsed CCP's view that, following the dismissal of their exemption application, the appellants did not pursue any further legal remedy, thereby implying acceptance of the contravention. The Tribunal held that the penalties of PKR 20 million each imposed on UDPL and IBL were justified and warranted, and accordingly maintained the cumulative penalty of PKR 40 million.

NGC Raises Serious Concerns Over NEPRA's FY 2024-25 Transmission Performance Report

Commerce Desk

LAHORE: National Grid Company of Pakistan has expressed serious reservations regarding the questions raised in NEPRA's performance evaluation report of the transmission sector for FY 24-25. While highlighting the importance of a reliable national transmission system, the Company stated that it always remains fully committed to maintaining system stability, operational efficiency and as such playing a pivotal role in ensuring stabilization of the power

system—an effort that needs to be acknowledged by all stakeholders.

Asset management records confirm that during FY 2024-25, instances of transformer loading above 80% at a limited number of grid stations occurred only for short durations during peak summer hours, remained within design limits, and did not result in any transformer damage or allied equipment alarms or load shedding. This demonstrates that the system continued to operate within safe operational margins.

Pakistan attracts strong foreign investment across sectors: SECP

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan is attracting substantial foreign investment across a wide range of sectors, particularly energy, logistics, information technology, and agriculture, largely through partnerships with Pakistani companies. Foreign investors are entering the market through new business establishments, joint ventures, acquisitions, and the expansion of existing operations, reflecting growing economic activity and investor interest.

In this context, 79 new foreign companies commenced operations in Pakistan over the past three years, while foreign firms invested Rs 40.7 billion in key sectors during the same

period. A total of 61 foreign companies also carried out shareholding transactions involving local entities. Of the 61 shareholding transactions, 29 involved transfers to other foreign companies, four to foreign individual investors, 20 to local individual investors, and eight to local corporate entities.

As per SECP's records, 1,157 foreign companies are currently registered and operational in Pakistan. Only 19 foreign companies exited the market during the past three years.

In 2023, 31 companies entered Pakistan while six ceased operations. In 2024, 21 entered and nine exited. In 2025, 27 new companies registered while only four closed operations.

Two-day forum 'Re-imagining Governance' under URAAN Pakistan begins today

ISLAMABAD: A flagship Pakistan Governance Forum-2026 would open here on Wednesday, bringing together top federal and provincial leadership, policy experts and development partners for a two-day high-level dialogue titled "Re-imagining Governance" under the vision of URAAN Pakistan.

The forum, organized by the Ministry of Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, would outline a forward-looking reform agenda focused on institutional modernization, economic resilience and sustainable development.

Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal

would deliver the opening remarks, setting the tone for deliberations centered on governance reforms, policy coherence and improved service delivery.

The forum would convene key members of the federal cabinet and provincial leadership to deliberate on cross-sectoral reforms and coordinated implementation mechanisms.

Chief Minister Sindh Murad Ali Shah, Chief Minister Balochistan Sarfaraz Bugti and Chief Minister Gilgit-Baltistan Yar Muhammad are scheduled to address the forum, sharing their respective provinces' reform initiatives and development priorities.

Pakistan's EV Surge Meets Smart Charging Innovation with Livoltek

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD:—Pakistan is rapidly entering an electric mobility era as electric vehicles (EVs) become an increasingly visible part of the country's transportation landscape. With tens of thousands of EVs already on the road and national targets aiming for a substantial share of EVs in total vehicle sales by 2030, the demand for reliable, efficient, and intelligent charging infrastructure is accelerating. Under the National Electric Vehicle Policy (NEVP), Pakistan targets 30% EV share in new vehicle sales by 2030 — translating into approximately 2.21 million cumulative vehicles — with a long-term vision of achieving a 100% zero-emission fleet by 2060. The success of Pakistan's EV transition will depend not only on vehicle adoption but on the rapid deployment of scalable, investment-ready charging infrastructure — a strategic opportunity that Livoltek is well positioned to support.



To enable this transformation, the government has mandated the deployment of 3,000 EV charging stations by 2030 through a phased implementation roadmap. The first year includes 240 stations, with Islamabad envisioned as a model EV city. Level 3 fast chargers are planned every 15-30 kilometers along major motorways including M1-M5, M9, and N5, while urban centers will see DC fast chargers installed at 3x3 km intervals to ensure network density and accessibility. Although infrastructure gaps, grid connectivity delays, and import-related costs remain challenges, progressive regulatory measures — including a reduced 1% customs duty on EV charging equipment and NEECA's onboarding of internationally compliant brands — are improving the investment climate and creating strong entry opportunities for advanced technology providers.

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

England Batsman Harry Brooke's Excellent Century helps beat Pakistan by 2 wickets



Asim Tanveer



PALLEKELE: T20 World Cup, England reaches semi-finals, Pakistan almost out. England has qualified for the semi-finals of the ICC T20 World Cup 2026. In the most important match of the Super 8 played in Pali Kele, England defeated Pakistan by wickets after a thrilling match. Pakistani bowlers made the match interesting by doing some work in the final moments but could not avoid defeat. After this failure, Pakistan's entry into the semi-finals has now become

very difficult. Captain Harry Brook's century in the victory of the English team was a timeless performance, which also failed Shaheen Afridi's 4-wicket bowling. Pakistan won the toss and elected to bat first and scored 164 for 9. Sahibzada Farhan played an innings of 63 runs off 45 balls. Saim Ayub made 7 and

Salman Ali Agha made 5. Babar Azam made 25 off 24 balls and Fakhar Zaman made 25 off 16 balls. Shadab Khan made 23 off 11 balls to lock Pakistan at 164 for 9. England's Liam Dawson took 3 for 24 runs. Jofra Archer and Jamie Overton took 2 wickets each. In reply, the English team had a disastrous start. Shaheen Afridi

bowled classically. Shaheen took 3 wickets for 35 runs. Full salt zero, Jos Buttler 2 and Jacob Bethell scored 8 runs. England's fourth wicket fell at 58, when Tom Bunton became the victim of Usman Tariq in the 8th over. He could make 2. In the next overs, although Sam Curran could only make 16, Harry Brook's lightning-fast innings

took the total to 103. Pakistan were back in the match with the 5th wicket here. Will Jacks tied the score here and Harry Brook marched towards his century. As a result, when Shaheen took his fourth wicket by dismissing Harry Brook, the match was in Pakistan's hands, because England's score was 155 in 17

runs off 51 balls. He hit 10 fours and 3 sixes. This was the first time in T20 International cricket that he had scored 100 runs in 51 balls. He hit 10 fours and 3 sixes. It was the first century of Pakistan and the fourth century of the current event. Will Jacks made 28. Pakistan eventually took 2 wickets up and down, but England won the match by

2 wickets, scoring 166 runs for 8 wickets with 5 balls to spare. Thus, they became the first team to reach the semi-finals. Pakistan continued the tradition of losing to England in T20 World Cup history. For Pakistan, Shaheen took 4 wickets for 30 runs. Mohammad Nawaz took 26 and Usman Tariq took 2 wickets for 31 runs.

Skipper Imran's 37-ball 80 takes Bahawalpur to victory in final of National T20 Cup Qualifier

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Bahawalpur Region romped to victory in the final of the National T20 Cup Qualifier against Karachi Region Blues here at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore on Tuesday night. After posting 172-5 in 20 overs on the back of explosive 80-run knock by captain Muhammad Imran, Bahawalpur bowled out Karachi Blues for 113 in 16 overs.

The two teams had already secured the qualification for the 10-team National T20 Cup 2026 after topping their respective pools.

Karachi Blues had won four matches on the trot before succumbing to loss in the final, while Bahawalpur ended the title-winning campaign with four successive wins after losing their first match against Rawalpindi.

Bahawalpur were sluggish after opting to bat first as they scored only 45 runs off the first 10 overs of their innings. Imran walked in at no.5 and changed the complexion of the innings as the eventual winners ransacked 127 runs off the last 10 overs.

Imran first stitched a 45-run stand with



Mohammad Ammar (30, 36b, 2x4s, 1x6) before going out all guns blazing in a 37-ball 82-run partnership with Mohammad Faizan Zafar (35, 15b, 2x4s, 3x6s). Bahawalpur skipper laid the foundation of his team's triumph with his career-best T20 score with the help of five fours and six sixes.

Off-spinner Wahaj Riaz picked up two for 22 in his four overs to collect best bowlers and player of the tournament awards.

In turn, Karachi Blues scrambled to 93-3 in 12.1 overs before a spectacular batting collapse set in as they lost seven for 20. Bahawalpur pacer Ali Shabbir

picked three of these wickets as he gave away 21 runs in his four overs.

For Karachi Blues, only best batter of the tournament Ahsan Ali could cross the 20-run mark as he hit a threatening 29-ball 43 with the help of three fours and as many sixes. Bahawalpur's trio of Mohammad Umair, Mohammad Junaid and Mohammad Basit picked up two wickets each.

Scores in brief
Final - Bahawalpur Region beat Karachi Region Blues by 59 runs at the Gaddafi Stadium, Lahore
Bahawalpur 172-5, 20 overs (Muhammad Imran 80, Mohammad

Faizan Zafar 35 not out, Mohammad Ammar 30; Wahaj Riaz 2-22)

Karachi Blues 113 all out, 16 overs (Ahsan Ali 43; Ali Shabbir 3-21, Mohammad Umair 2-9, Mohammad Junaid 2-15, Mohammad Basit 2-20)

Player of the match - Muhammad Imran (Bahawalpur)

Best batter of the tournament - Ahsan Ali (Karachi Blues)

Player of the tournament and best bowler of the tournament - Wahaj Riaz (Karachi Blues)

Best wicketkeeper of the tournament - Mohammad Akram (Bahawalpur)

UNPF delegation calls on Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali



Tahir Amin Malik

A delegation from United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) called on Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali at his office at the Punjab Stadium on Tuesday. The measures for the development of youth were discussed in detail during the meeting.

The United Nations Population Fund delegation was consisted of Madam Tania Durrani and Zohra Jabeen. Additional Secretary Sports Shabbir Hussain Cheema, Director Sports Rana Nadeem Anjum and Director Admin Abid Shaukat were also present on this occasion.

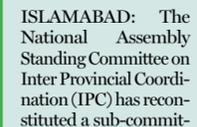
Talking to UNPF delegation, Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali said that the Punjab Youth Affairs Department is playing an effective role for the development of the youth. "Millions of young people visit youth centers and e-libraries in several districts of Punjab every day".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali said that Punjab Youth Affairs Department will continue to guide the youth in the right direction in collaboration with the private sector. "A comprehensive policy can be formulated in education, health and other sectors with the collaboration of UNFP".

Secretary Sports and Youth Affairs Punjab Muhammad Ali further said that the prime objective of Punjab Youth Affairs Department is to equip the younger generation with multiple skills for the development of the country.

NA body reconstitutes sub-committee to examine PSB performance

Sports Desk



ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) has reconstituted a sub-committee to examine the performance of the Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) over the last five financial years.

The sub-committee, led by Dr. Mahreen Razaq Bhutto, will focus on reviewing major achievements, development and non-development funds, grants provided, and unsettled audit objections.

The other sub-committee members include Members National Assembly (MNAs) Anjum Aqeel Khan and Khawaja Izhar Ul Hassan. The meeting was held here at Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC), on Tuesday under the Chairmanship of MNA Khawaja Izhar Ul Hassan.

In the meeting, the Ministry of Inter Provincial Coordination (IPC) presented details of 34 approved unapproved and unfunded projects related to sports and tourism, valued at PKR 23,776.302 million, for the 2025-26 PSDP. The estimated expenditure for 2025-26 is PKR 1,179.84 million, while PKR 13,184.145 million is demanded for 2026-27.

The Secretary IPC informed the committee that cycling has been introduced for the first time in sports in Pakistan, and e-sports has been introduced in the curriculum, with coaches hired in five schools. Pakistan has won e-sports prize globally.

The Ministry of Planning apprised the committee that 700 guides are being trained and in this regard data will be available for services on the website.

While explaining the problems faced by the players of Pakistan hockey team during the recent tour of Australia in pro league tournament, Secretary said that incompetency and lack of internal accountability were the cause of embarrassment.

The meeting was attended by MNAs Muhammad Idrees, Babar Nawaz Khan, Anjum Aqeel Khan, Sheikh Aftab Ahmad, Waseem Qadir, Ms. Syeda Shehla Raza, Dr. Mahreen Razaq Bhutto, Muhammad Iqbal Khan and Senior Officers from the IPC Ministry, Ministry of Planning and Ministry of Finance.

Australia Women thrash India by 6 wickets in ODI

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Australia Women defeated India Women by six wickets in the opening day-night ODI to take a 1-0 lead in the ODI series in Brisbane, Australia, on Tuesday.

Chasing a target of 215, the hosts reached 215/4 in just 38.2 overs.

Star opener Beth Mooney led the charge with a fluent 76 off 79 balls and was named Player of the Match for her match-winning knock.

Captain Alyssa Healy contributed a crucial 50 at the top of the order, setting the tone for the chase, while Annabel Sutherland remained unbeaten on 48 to steer the team home comfortably.

Earlier, India Women were bowled out for 214 in 48.3 overs after opting to bat.

Smriti Mandhana top-scored with 58, while captain Harmanpreet Kaur added 53.

Kashvee Gautam chipped in with a valuable 43 to bolster the total.

For Australia, Ashleigh Gardner claimed three wickets, while Megan Schutt picked up two, helping restrict India to a manageable total.



Kashmiri Women: Systemic Sexual Violence and Impunity in a Protracted Conflict

Continued from Page 4

abuse in Tihar Jail. A 2019 fact-finding mission documented premature births attributed to extreme maternal stress and alarming increases in cardiac events among women, illustrating how structural violence penetrates biological and reproductive health.

The category of "half-widows" represents perhaps the most acute gendered dimension of this conflict. Thousands of women trapped in legal limbo—unable to remarry, access property, or obtain death certificates for disappeared husbands—face compounded

economic and social vulnerabilities. Their endless search for missing partners, conducted within a system that denies both information and justice, exemplifies the gender-specific cruelty of enforced disappearance as a tactic of occupation.

Central to this crisis is absolute impunity. Despite documented evidence implicating specific military units in sexual violence, not a single Indian army officer or soldier has been convicted. The Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) effectively shields personnel from prosecution, requiring central government approval for legal proceed-

ings that is never granted. This institutional protection transforms sexual violence from individual criminality into state policy, violating the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court and Geneva Conventions, which explicitly classify rape as a war crime and crime against humanity.

International human rights mechanisms, including UN Special Rapporteurs, have repeatedly demanded accountability, yet realpolitik continues to override legal obligation. The occupation's designation as a "no-go zone" for international monitors ensures that statistics remain incomplete and perpe-

trators unidentified.

Sexual violence in Kashmir functions as an instrument of territorial control, systematically destroying women's bodily autonomy and community structures. Without dismantling the legal architecture of impunity and enabling independent international investigation, the international community remains complicit in these ongoing crimes against Kashmiri women.

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CDF ups soft, hard state power integration

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systems, and next-generation cyber-defence architectures), and near-real-time intelligence fusion. Campaign frameworks such as Operation Azm-e-Istehkam are explicitly designed with a dual horizon: decisive action against present threats combined with deliberate preparation for challenges that have not yet fully materialised. At the same time, military leadership attaches equal weight to the ideological and informational front. Extremist groups invest heavily in digital propaganda, exploit cross-border sanc-

tuaries to maintain operational tempo, and leverage social-media platforms to radicalise vulnerable segments of youth. The response cannot be kinetic alone; it requires the parallel construction of a credible, inclusive, state-backed national narrative capable of mobilising society as a whole against the appeal of violence and division.

The objective realities Pakistan confronts—persistent instability across the Durand Line, unresolved tensions in the east, economic coercion attempts by various actors, and the persistent shadow of hybrid threats—

make it imperative that political, diplomatic, economic, and military policies move in lock-step. The encouraging reality is that senior state leadership has internalised this requirement with clarity and determination. The degree of policy alignment currently visible among Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar, and the military high command is unprecedented in recent memory. This harmony is not cosmetic; it reflects a shared understanding that institutional silos serve no national purpose

in an era of compound threats.

Within this unifying framework, the political maturity, long experience, and steady temperament of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif continue to provide indispensable ballast. His counsel—rooted in decades of public life—lends depth and perspective to critical decisions, particularly during periods of heightened sensitivity. His repeated demonstrations of trust in institutional continuity and constitutional processes remain powerful symbols of commitment to democracy, the rule of law, and the long-term resilience

of the Pakistani state.

Recent diplomatic gains, deepening defence cooperation with key partners, and a more assertive use of economic diplomacy all signal that Pakistan increasingly perceives its security as inseparable from broader regional stability. Field Marshal Munir's stewardship has lent added momentum and credibility to this orientation. The guiding philosophy of the National Security Policy 2022-2026—elevating economic security to a core objective and subordinating geostrategic considerations to a geo-economic vision—continues

to animate statecraft.

Ultimately, durable defence rests upon unshakable internal foundations. Political consensus, inclusive economic growth, social solidarity, respect for the ballot, and fidelity to constitutional norms are the true guarantors of military effectiveness. In today's Pakistan, democracy, mutual tolerance, and open dialogue are no longer viewed as optional luxuries; they are recognised as essential sources of national strength.

The challenges are undoubtedly severe and multi-dimensional, yet the present conver-

gence of purpose among political, diplomatic, and military leadership offers powerful reassurance. Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir's integrated command in his CDF and COAS capacities, coupled with the government's unstinting support and consultation, has raised the national security architecture to a new level of coherence and effectiveness.

This is the course that will see Pakistan through present dangers and position it, in the years ahead, as a stable, respected, economically dynamic, and authentically democratic nation.

ECC meeting

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb chaired a meeting of the Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet at the Finance Division on Tuesday.



Photo: PID

ECC approves sale of 500,000 tonnes of wheat at revised prices

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met today at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb. The ECC considered a proposal of the Ministry of National Food Security & Research regarding the disposal of 500,000 metric tons of wheat stock held by

PASSCO through competitive bidding. The Committee was informed that an earlier attempt to sell the wheat at previously approved reserve prices could not be finalized due to lower bids received. In view of the existing stock position and associated carrying costs, the ECC approved the sale of 500,000 metric tons of wheat through competitive bidding on a First-In-First-Out (FIFO) basis at revised reserve prices of PKR 4,150 per 40

kg for local wheat and PKR 3,800 per 40 kg for imported wheat.

The ECC also approved a Technical Supplementary Grant amounting to Rs. 536 million for PSDP projects of the defunct Pakistan Public Works Department (Pak-PWD). The approved amount will be transferred to the Governments of Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa for specific ongoing projects in accordance with the relevant legal and constitutional

provisions.

In addition to the regular agenda items, a summary by the Petroleum Division regarding a fact-finding report on the Deed of Settlement with Energyco PK Limited, submitted in compliance with earlier ECC directions concerning delayed payment of Petroleum Levy, was also tabled and returned with the observations that a more comprehensive presentation be made in a subsequent

meeting.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik, Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh (virtually), Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan (virtually), and senior officials from the relevant ministries and divisions.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan agree to enhance energy cooperation, regional connectivity

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Energy (Power Division) Sardar Awais Ahmed Khan Leghari on Tuesday reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening energy cooperation and regional connectivity with Turkmenistan during a meeting with Ambassador Atadjan Movlamov.

Pakistan, Turkmenistan agree to enhance energy cooperation, regional connectivity

The ambassador called on the federal minister at the Ministry of Energy (Power Division), where matters of bilateral interest, particularly in the energy sector, came under discussion, said a press release.

The minister extended



a cordial welcome to the Ambassador and conveyed sincere greetings on the auspicious occasion of

Ramazan, wishing peace, blessings, and prosperity to the people of both nations. Ambassador Movlamov

highlighted the deep-rooted historical and cultural ties between Pakistan and Turkmenistan, noting that these

shared bonds provide a strong foundation for expanding bilateral cooperation across multiple sectors.

The meeting accorded special emphasis to strengthening regional connectivity between Pakistan and Central Asian Countries. Both sides discussed the strategic significance of robust energy infrastructure and cross-border projects in promoting economic integration, energy security, exchange of relevant data, and sustainable development across the region.

The two sides reaffirmed their determination to work closely together to advance energy cooperation and promote greater regional integration for the mutual benefit of Pakistan, Turkmenistan, and the wider region.

Punjab becomes first province to launch PIFTAC, approves anti-drone unit

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab has become the first province to establish the Provincial Intelligence Fusion and Threat Assessment Centre (PIFTAC), marking a significant move to strengthen law and order through technology-driven oversight.

Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif visited the new facility in Lahore, where she was briefed on PIFTAC's operational framework and the broader security landscape in the province. Officials outlined plans to enhance intelligence coordination and improve real-time threat monitoring.

During the meeting, it was decided that Punjab will set up its first dedicated anti-drone unit. The chief minister approved the proposal on the spot and directed authorities



to establish a cybercrime cell across the province without delay.

Maryam Nawaz instructed law enforcement agencies to continue sustained combing operations to ensure the

protection of citizens' lives and property. She also ordered immediate steps to install advanced special digital scanners at all major entry and exit points of the province.

To strengthen adminis-

trative oversight, the chief minister directed that a dedicated dashboard be created for deputy commissioners in all districts. The platform is expected to support faster decision-making and improve

coordination on security matters.

She further ordered the reinforcement of the whistleblower system to intensify action against terrorists and criminal elements. Officials said the mechanism would help authorities receive timely intelligence from the public and internal sources.

According to the chief minister, PIFTAC will also house an AI hub to support cyber security and other advanced analytical functions. She emphasised the need to move from a reactive approach to a proactive security policy focused on prevention.

Maryam Nawaz stated that the provincial government aims to make Punjab the safest province in the country and will utilise all available resources to ensure public protection.

Ishaq Dar to attend OIC meeting in Jeddah on Palestine situation



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar will depart for Saudi Arabia on Tuesday to participate in an emergency meeting of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) foreign ministers in Jeddah.

According to diplomatic sources, the executive committee meeting at the foreign ministers' level will be held on February 26 at the OIC General Secretariat. The meeting holds significant importance in light of the evolving situation in the Middle East and Palestine.

Sources said the session will strongly condemn decisions and measures declaring lands in the occupied West Bank as Israeli prop-

erty. Muslim countries are expected to jointly denounce Israeli actions aimed at altering the legal, political, and demographic status of the occupied Palestinian territories.

Diplomatic sources further stated that Dar will convey Pakistan's firm condemnation of what it terms Israel's illegal decisions, actions, and policies. The meeting will also deliberate on a coordinated strategy among Muslim countries against Israeli measures.

During his visit, the deputy prime minister is also expected to meet Saudi Foreign Minister Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud and hold interactions with other participating leaders on the sidelines of the meeting.

Medical board examines PTI founder at PIMS: Senate told



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Law and Justice Azam Nazeer Tarar on Tuesday informed the Senate that the founder of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) was examined by a medical board comprising four expert specialist doctors at Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS).

Responding to various points raised by leader of the Opposition in Senate Raja Nasir Abbas, he said that the former prime minister was taken to PIMS with his consent, where a board comprising both government and private specialist doctors conducted a detailed medical examination.

He said the medical board evaluated the patient's health condition, including ophthalmological assess-

ment, cardiac evaluation and general medical review.

The minister said the examination was carried out within the framework of the law and jail manual, emphasising that medical procedures for prisoners were governed strictly under existing legal provisions.

Azam Nazeer Tarar said that the law did not permit special arrangements outside the prescribed rules, noting that medical assessments must be conducted in accordance with established regulations.

He informed the House that specialist doctors, including Prof. Nadeem Qureshi from Al-Shifa Trust Eye Hospital, a retinal expert, and Prof. Arif, Head of Ophthalmology at PIMS, participated in the medical evaluation.

Sindh cabinet approves Rs33.7bn to modernise firefighting infrastructure

Bureau Report

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah, chairing a provincial cabinet meeting, approved a Rs33.7 billion package on Tuesday to modernise the province's firefighting and emergency response system and introduce a new Early Warning Public Alert System.

The meeting, held at the CM House, was attended by provincial ministers, advisors, special assistants, the chief secretary, chairman of Planning & Development (P&D), the principal secretary to the CM (PSCM), and other relevant officials.

The chief minister approved a landmark proposal to overhaul the province's emergency response infrastructure, green-lighting a multi-

billion-rupee plan to modernise the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) and Sindh Emergency Rescue Service (SERS) 1122.

The Cabinet approved engaging the Chinese Consulate to source specialised equipment and vehicles under a government-to-government (G2G) arrangement.

The procurement includes 100 fire trucks, 35 water bowlers, specialised snorkels, and 50 all-terrain fire vehicles. In a shift toward modern firefighting, the province will acquire 8 firefighting drones, 12 multi-purpose drones, and a new Early Warning Public Alert System.

Total project cost is estimated at Rs33.7 billion, spread across three fiscal years, covering equipment, infrastructure development, and human resources.