



Daily The Spokesman

A Leading National Daily



فرمان رسول ﷺ
ہم سے عبد اللہ بن عبد الوہاب نے بیان کیا کہ
کہا کہ مجھ سے عبد العزیز بن ابی حاتم نے بیان
کیا کہ کہا کہ مجھ سے میرے والد نے بیان کیا کہ
کہ میں نے کھل بن سعد سے سنا ہے کہ نبی
کریم صلی اللہ علیہ وسلم نے فرمایا کہ میں اور
تیمم کی پرورش کرنے والا جنت میں اس طرح
ہوں گے اور آپ نے شہادت اور درمیانی
انگلیوں کے اشارے سے (قریب کو) بتایا۔
(بخاری ص ۶۰۵ نمبر ۶۰۵)
Barkat Rice Mills
(Pvt) Limited



Naqvi lauds Pakistan Rangers Sindh for establishing peace in Karachi

Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday lauded Pakistan Rangers Sindh for establishing peace in Karachi that led to the restoration of trade and industrial activities in the city. Addressing the Passing-Out Parade of Basic Recruit Training Course No. 33 at the Pakistan Rangers (Sindh) Training Centre and School.



UN human rights chief warns Israel against death penalty bills targeting Palestinians

The UN's top human rights official on Friday called on Israeli authorities to abandon plans for new legislation that would impose mandatory death sentences exclusively on Palestinians, warning the proposals violate international law and fundamental human rights standards.

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Taimoor Weapon System

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Air Force has successfully conducted the flight test of the indigenously developed Taimoor Weapon System, marking another significant milestone in the advancement of national aerospace and defence capabilities.



Photo: ISPR

Pakistan Air Force successfully tests indigenous 600km range Taimoor cruise missile

Naveed Ahmad Khan

RAWALPINDI: Pakistan Air Force has successfully conducted the flight test of the indigenously developed Taimoor Weapon System, marking another significant milestone in the advancement of national aerospace and defence capabilities.

Taimoor Air-Launched Cruise Missile is capable of engaging enemy land and sea targets with

high precision at a range of 600 kilometers, carrying a conventional warhead. Equipped with state-of-the-art navigation and guidance system, Taimoor is designed to fly at very low altitudes, enabling it to effectively evade hostile air and missile defence systems. Its precision-strike capability significantly enhances the conventional deterrence and operational flexibility of Pakistan Air

Force, further strengthening the country's overall defence posture.

The successful flight test underscores the technical maturity, innovation and self-reliance achieved by Pakistan's defence industry.

The launch was witnessed by senior officers of the Pakistan Armed Forces, along with distinguished scientists and engineers who played a pivotal role in the

development of this advanced weapon system.

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Air Staff, heartily congratulated the scientists, engineers and the entire PAF team on this remarkable achievement. He lauded their professional excellence, dedication and unwavering commitment to strengthening Pakistan's defence capabilities. The Air Chief reaf-

firmed that such accomplishments are a testament to the nation's resolve to achieve technological self-sufficiency and maintain a credible conventional deterrent in the evolving regional security environment.

The successful test of the Taimoor weapon system reflects Pakistan Air Force's continued pursuit of operational readiness, technological superiority and national security objectives.

President, PM pay tribute to PAF for indigenously developed Taimoor Air-Launched Cruise Missile

City Desk

ISLAMABAD/LAHORE: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Saturday paid tribute to the Pakistan Air Force for the successful test of its indigenously developed Taimoor Air-Launched Cruise Missile.

In a statement from the Presidency, the president underscored that the production of modern weapons at the local level is a clear reflection of national capability, determination, and institutional prowess.

President Zardari said the successful test of the weapon by the Pakistan Air Force has

further strengthened the country's defense and strengthened its responsible defense policy for stability in the region.

"This success is a significant step forward in the journey of self-reliance in national defense," the president said.

President Zardari appreciated the hard work, professional dedication, and spirit of national service of scientists, engineers, and officers and men of the Pakistan Air Force.

The president noted that the promotion of modern technology in the defense sector is an expression of Pakistan's commitment to safeguarding its security and sovereignty.

In a separate statement, Prime Minister Muhammad



Shehbaz Sharif felicitated the nation and the Pakistan Air Force on the successful test of the indigenously developed Taimoor Weapon System by the Pakistan Air Force.

The prime minister paid

tribute to Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Babar Sidhu, scientists, and engineers working on the

missile system. PM Shehbaz acknowledged the recognition of the professionalism, dedication, and unwavering commitment of the Pakistan Air Force to strengthen the country's defence capabilities.

"The country's defense will be further strengthened thanks to the Taimoor Weapon System. The successful flight test demonstrates the technological maturity, innovation, and self-reliance of Pakistan's defense industry and reflects Pakistan Air Force's operational readiness, technological superiority, and continuous efforts to achieve national security objectives," the prime minister.

Captain Asmad, two other jawan martyred during Snow Clearance Operation in GB



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Three army officials including Captain Asmad embraced martyrdom during Snow Clearance Operation in northern Pakistan. According to ISPR press release, on night 2/3 January 2026, a Snow Clearance Operation was conducted, using heavy machinery to open Burzil Pass in Gilgit-Baltistan region to facilitate operational movement of own forces in the area.

The snow clearance operation was led by Captain Asmad (age, 28 years and resident of Lahore). At around 2 AM on 03 January 26, while subject operation was ongoing, a snow slide triggered, resultantly Captain Asmad along with two soldiers and civilian

machine operator (PWD) got entrapped. After intensive efforts, all four individuals were rescued from snow, however, condition of Captain Asmad, Sepoy Rizwan (age 32 years, resident of Attock) and Machine Operator Essa (resident of Astore) deteriorated and all three individuals embraced Shahadat.

These individuals rendered ultimate sacrifice by leading a challenging operation, in extreme weather conditions, to facilitate operational movement of forces. Their sacrifice and devotion to duty is testimony to the fact that all ranks of Pakistan Armed forces are determined to defend the motherland and will not hesitate to lay down their lives in the line of duty and devotion to cause.

DPM Dar discusses regional situation with Saudi and UAE counterparts on phone call



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar held telephonic conversation with Saudi Foreign Minister Prince Faisal Bin Farhan from Beijing on Saturday. Both leaders discussed the latest situation in the region.

The Deputy Prime Minister stressed that all concerned in the region must avoid any escalation move and advised to resolve the issues through dialogue and diplomacy for the sake of regional peace and stability.

Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar also held telephonic conversation with United Arab Emirates deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Shaikh ABUdullah bin Zahid and discusses regional situation especially Yemen and Iran.

The two leaders discussed the current situation in the region and expressed satisfaction over the positive developments.

Dialogue and diplomacy have resulted in improvements on the ground, said Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar.

DPM Dar reiterates desire to enhance cooperation with Türkiye

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar has reiterated Pakistan's desire to enhance bilateral cooperation with Türkiye in all areas of mutual interest, including trade, technology, tourism, and IT.

He was having a telephonic conversation with Foreign Minister of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan today.

The two leaders discussed the evolving regional situation and expressed appreciation for the earnest efforts undertaken by all parties to resolve issues through dialogue and diplomacy.

SC launches fast-track mechanism to resolve longstanding tax cases

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Saturday announced a fast-track mechanism to resolve pending tax cases, warning that prolonged delays are harming investment and economic stability.

The decision came during a high-level meeting chaired by the Chief Justice of Pakistan, attended by Justice Mian Gul Hassan Aurangzeb and the FBR Chairman, among other senior officials.

The Chief Justice stressed that delays in tax disputes undermine

investor confidence and reduce financial capacity, calling for immediate action on critical cases.

The meeting focused on strengthening coordination between the judiciary and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) and agreed to enhance case

management systems in courts.

Officials were also directed to provide clear and timely recommendations to prevent bottlenecks in tax adjudication.

Highlighting the importance of reforms, the Supreme Court said tax reforms are vital to protect national revenue, and

urged the judicial process to be aligned with Pakistan's economic priorities.

With the new measures, major tax cases will now be fast-tracked, aiming to restore investor confidence and ensure financial stability across the country.

AJK PM Faisal Rathore vows top priority for resolving state media issues

Spokesman Report

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, has said that resolving the issues faced by state media is among his government's top priorities. He expressed these views while talking to President of the All Kashmir Newspapers Society (AKNS), Sardar Zahid Tabassum, and Secretary Finance Ijaz Khan, who called on him here on Tuesday.

The Prime Minister said that practical steps are being taken to address the legitimate concerns of media organizations and to resolve issues faced by the journalist community. He added that the present government is fully aware of the challenges confronting the media sector.

Highlighting the importance of media, Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that free and responsible journalism is indispensable for strengthening democracy and democratic institutions.

He assured the delegation that no



injustice or excess would be done to any media house.

The Prime Minister directed the concerned authorities to take immediate measures to resolve the outstanding issues of the media. He

said that journalists are a valuable asset of the state and their problems will not be ignored.

Referring to the demands of the Joint Action Committee, he said that many of the demands have already been

fulfilled, while efforts are underway to resolve the remaining issues.

He added that the media itself can assess the extent to which the demands of the Joint Public Action Committee have been addressed.

PM Rathore Chairs High-Level Meeting on Administrative Restructuring and Public Priority



Abdul Majeed Tahir

MUZAFFARABAD: A high-level meeting chaired by Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore, was held here on today, to review issues related to strengthening the government's administrative structure, formal delegation of powers, and the division of work and responsibilities. Addressing the meeting, the Prime Minister emphasized that public interest must remain the top priority in all government decisions and administrative actions. He directed officers to uphold the highest standards of professionalism, integrity, and transparency while discharging their official duties. Faisal Mumtaz Rathore said that a dignified, positive, and professional office environment not only enhances performance but also plays a vital role in building public trust. He further instructed government officers to ensure the timely and effective implementation of assigned responsibilities and to achieve government objectives through mutual coordination. The meeting was attended by Principal Secretary Zafar Mahmood Khan, Principal Staff Officer Usman Mumtaz Butt, and other senior officials. During the meeting, the approved Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were reviewed, and detailed discussions were held on the division of powers and responsibilities among various departments to ensure transparency and efficiency in government affairs.

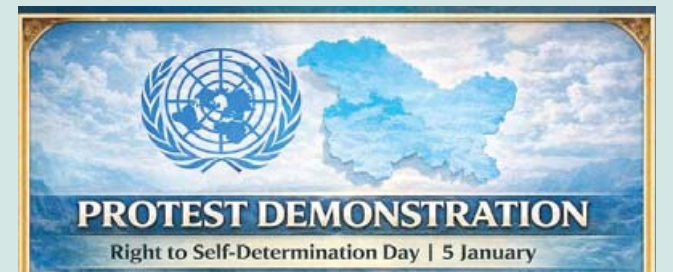
Loss of national treasury

LAHORE: A view of the large number of out of order cabins of train at Railway Station, as with the special attention of Government, it may usable for the people in Provincial Capital.



Photo: Online

Muslim Conference to Mark Right to Self-Determination Day with Grand Event



Bureau Report

RAWALPINDI: The All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference will hold a grand event at the National Press Club on January 5 to mark Right to Self-Determination Day. The President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, will be the chief guest on the occasion. Senior leaders of the Muslim Conference, along with representatives of other political parties, will also address the gathering.

The meeting was attended by Central Secretary Finance Advocate Sajid Qureshi, President Muslim Conference Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circle Sardar Asim Abbasi, Central Vice President Syed Rehmat Shah Bukhari, Senior Vice President Muslim Conference Punjab Rana Liaquat Ali Khan, Central Vice Chairman Publicity Wing Dr. Muhammad Abid Abbasi, Central Vice Chairman Youth Wing Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circle Raja Shahid Khan, President Youth Wing Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circle Sardar Aamir Noor, Sardar Abdul Ghaffar Khan, Vice President Youth Wing Rawalpindi-Islamabad Circle Sardar Ahsan Raza, Central Office Secretary Rana Ghulam Hussain, Rana Naveed Hussain, and other party officials.

During 2025, comprehensive food safety operations were carried out in TT Singh district

Zafar Chishty

TOBA TEK SINGH: Under the vision of Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz, comprehensive food safety operations were carried out across Toba Tek Singh district to ensure safe food "from farm to plate." The operations were conducted under the supervision of Deputy Commissioner Umar Mela and led by Deputy Director Punjab Food Authority Yasir Mushtaq.

During 2025, a total of 41,378 food points and units were inspected, resulting in the closure of 209 production units and registration of 72 cases against violations. Additionally, 4,595 food points were fined a total of PKR 46.676 million for non-compliance.

As part of the enforcement, authorities destroyed 9,836 kg of meat, 42,000 liters of milk, 700 kg of spices, 2,700 liters of oil, and 15,700 liters of water. Early morning checkpoints checked 12,200 milk supplier vehicles carrying over 3.2 million liters of milk, while 35,000 kg of meat in 2,827 shops was also inspected.

Alongside enforcement, measures were taken to facilitate food operators and consumers. SOPs for water filtration plants were issued, and students across schools and colleges were provided nutrition awareness. Standards and traceability procedures for milk and meat were clearly defined.

Throughout 2025, extensive actions targeted adulterators and the food mafia. Following Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz's vision, these operations successfully curbed food-related malpractice and ensured public health and safety.

Multan region police achieves remarkable success

MULTAN: On the directions of the Regional Police Officer (RPO) Multan, a performance report for the year 2025 was released, highlighting significant improvements in public service delivery and crime prevention across the Multan division.

According to the report, the police in Multan, Vehari, Khanewal and Lodhran districts introduced several historical initiatives during the year for the safety of the public and preventing crime which yield positive results.

Spokesperson for the Regional Police stated that to expand the scope of public services, 13 new Khidmat Markaz (Service Centers) were established across the division in 2025. Through these centers, more than 450,000 citizens were provided with various police-related services. In addition, over 7,500 individuals, including women and children, received immediate and effective assistance at Tahaffuz (Protection) Centers.

The report noted remarkable success in crime control efforts. Incidents of robbery and dacoity declined by 54 percent, while vehicle and motorcycle snatching dropped by 42 percent. As a result of effective police operations, stolen goods worth Rs 600 million was recovered from criminal elements and returned to its rightful owners.

Sardar Attique Stresses Quaid's Vision for National Stability in Lahore Address

Spokesman Report

LAHORE: The President of All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference and former Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, visited Lahore. During his visit, a luncheon was hosted in his honor by Chaudhry Naeem Karim, Central Leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Balochistan, Focal Person Youth Program Balochistan, and Secretary General of the Pakistan Assembly of Muslim Youth (PAMY).

Addressing the gathering, the Founder and former Chairman of the Pakistan Assembly of Muslim Youth and President of the All Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan, stated that deviation from the ideology of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah has pushed Pakistan into multifaceted



challenges. He emphasized that the true objectives of the Two-Nation Theory remain the sole source of national stability and strength.

The event was attended by former Chairman PAMY and former Secretary General Supreme Court Bar Advocate Aslam Zarrar, former MPA Nazir

Abbas Shah, Advocate Mehr Jahangir, Muhammad Iqbal Bhatti, Advocate Rana Muhammad Rizwan, and others.

During his Lahore visit, Sardar Attique Ahmed Khan also visited the residence of former Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, the late Mian Manzoor Wattoo, and expressed condolences to his son, former Tehsil Nazim Dialpur Mian Khurram Wattoo, and his daughter, former Member of the National Assembly Rubina Manzoor Wattoo. He paid tribute to the late Mian Manzoor Wattoo, stating that he was a respected political figure who played a significant role in highlighting the Kashmir issue during his tenure as Minister for Kashmir Affairs. He noted that his passing has created a void that will take a long time to fill, and prayed for his eternal peace. Chaudhry Naeem Karim accompanied him on this visit.

Newborn Baby Girl's Body Found in Trauma Center Bathroom, Case Registered

Syed Tauqeer Zaidi

DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Police have registered a case and launched an investigation after the body of a newborn baby girl was recovered from the bathroom of the Family Ward at the Trauma Center, Dera Ismail Khan. The tragic incident has caused concern and distress among hospital staff and local residents.

According to details, a case has been registered at Cantt Police Station on the complaint of Muhammad Umair, InCharge of the Trauma Center, Dera Ismail Khan, under Section 338-C of the Pakistan Penal Code (PPC).

As per the report, during routine cleaning of the Family Ward bathroom, hospital staff discovered the body of a newborn baby girl. It is suspected that an



unidentified person or woman brought the baby and abandoned her there.

Upon receiving information, police rushed to the scene, took the body into

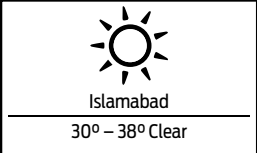
custody, and initiated necessary legal proceedings.

Police officials stated that the incident is being investigated from all angles, and CCTV footage installed in the hospital is being obtained to help trace the responsible individuals.

Meanwhile, the hospital administration termed the incident highly unfortunate and assured full cooperation with the police. Following the incident, hospital security arrangements are also being reviewed to prevent such occurrences in the future.

According to police authorities, the newborn's body has been shifted to DHQ Hospital for post-mortem examination.

Further legal action will be taken in light of the post-mortem report. Investigations into the incident are ongoing.



SERVICES
Namaz Timings

Fajr 5:44 am
Zohr 12:12 pm
Asr 3:34 pm
Maghrib 5:12 pm
Isha 6:41 pm

EMERGENCY

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

Women Police Stations

Islamabad 9222596
Rawalpindi 9270601-20

ENQUIRY

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

HOSPITALS

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

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

GCWUF Introduces Compulsory Punjabi Language & Literature Course

Abdul Majid

FAISALABAD: In a significant step toward the promotion of regional languages and preservation of cultural and literary heritage, Vice Chancellor, GCWUF, Prof. Dr. Kanwal Ameen (T.I.) has approved the introduction of a two-credit-hour compulsory course titled "Punjabi Zuban te Adab."

The course will be mandatory for undergraduate students enrolled in the Faculties of Arts & Social Sciences, Humanities & Languages, and Management Sciences.

The initiative reflects the Vice Chancellor's commitment to strengthening students' connection with their linguistic and cultural roots through formal academic engagement with indigenous languages. The course is designed to familiarize students with the richness of Punjabi language, literature, and cultural traditions, while promoting appreciation of Pakistan's regional diversity within the higher education curriculum.

University officials stated that the inclusion of Punjabi as a compulsory course aligns with GCWUF's broader vision of inclusive education, cultural preservation, and holistic student development.

OPF Chairman Meets Pakistan South Africa Association Leaders

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A significant and purposeful meeting was held at the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF) Office in Islamabad between OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza Shah and former Deputy Speaker of the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Assembly, Shaheen Kausar Dar, and the leadership of the Pakistan South Africa Association.

The association was represented by its Central President, Mian Naseer Ahmed, and former Central President, Ahmed Raza Butt.

During the meeting, the leadership of the Pakistan South Africa Association briefed the OPF Chairman in detail on the serious issues faced by the Pakistani community residing in South Africa.

The briefing particularly highlighted problems related to dual nationality, complaints regarding the conduct of FIA officials at Pakistan airports, and growing concerns over crime and secu-

city faced by Pakistanis in South Africa.

OPF Chairman Syed Qamar Raza Shah listened attentively to the issues raised and assured that OPF would work closely with the relevant authorities to take practical and effective measures for resolving the problems of overseas Pakistanis and providing them with maximum relief.

On this occasion, the Pakistan South Africa Association formally extended an invitation to the OPF Chairman to visit South Africa, which he accepted with pleasure and expressed his willingness to undertake the visit in the near future.

Furthermore, the Overseas Pakistanis Foundation acknowledged the valuable services of Mian Naseer Ahmed and Ahmed Raza Butt for the overseas Pakistani community by presenting them with special honorary shields. This meeting is being regarded as a positive and important step toward resolving the issues of overseas Pakistanis and strengthening institutional coordination.



Super Moon

ISLAMABAD: A stunning view of the First super moon of the Year 2026 in Federal Capital.



Photo: Online by Sultan Bashir

Acumen Pharma and AFPP sign an MoU to Advance Research and Medical Education

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Acumen Pharmaceuticals has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Association of Family Physicians of Pakistan (AFPP) to promote academic collaboration, research, and continuous medical education for family physicians across Pakistan.

The MoU establishes a collaborative framework for joint research initiatives, educational activities, and knowledge-sharing platforms aimed at strengthening evidence-based primary healthcare and improving patient outcomes.

Commenting on the partnership, CEO Acumen Pharmaceuticals Dr Azam Khan said, "Such partnerships are essential for advancing evidence-based medicine and strengthening Pakistan's primary healthcare system."



Suhail Khan, Director Commercial at Acumen Pharmaceuticals, added, "This partnership reflects our commitment to research-led and education-focused engagement with the medical community."

AFPP President Dr Tariq stated, "Family physicians are the backbone of the healthcare system of any country. The collaboration will support academic growth and capacity-building for family physicians nationwide."

Both organizations expressed confidence that the collaboration will result in meaningful academic outputs and contribute positively to the country's healthcare landscape.

CBD Punjab hands over state-of-the-art walton road project to WCB



Bureau Report

LAHORE: The Punjab Central Business District Development Authority (PCBDDA), also known as Central Business District Punjab (CBD Punjab), has officially handed over the completed Remodeling & Upgradation of Ada Nullah and Walton Road project, including the strategically important Major Ishaq Shaheed Flyover, to the Walton Cantonment Board (WCB).

The upgraded Walton Road and Major Ishaq Shaheed Flyover now capable of accommodating an estimated 700,000 to 800,000 vehicles per day, ensuring smoother traffic flow and reduced travel time for daily commuters. In addition to improving mobility, the project has played a vital role in uplifting the quality of life for more than one million residents of Walton by providing safer roads, improved accessibility, and effective mitigation of urban flooding risks.

Expressing satisfaction over the successful completion and handover, Chief Executive Officer CBD Punjab, Imran Amin, stated, "This project represents a comprehensive engineering solution that integrates road upgradation, improved drainage systems, and modern traffic management. Its successful delivery is a testament to CBD Punjab's commitment to sustainable and future-ready urban development. We are confident that the Walton Cantonment Board will ensure its effective upkeep and long-term operational efficiency."

Tehreek-e-Mehnat Multan Concludes 2025 Meetings with Key Leadership Present



Bureau Report

MULTAN: The final meeting of Tehreek-e-Mehnat Multan for the year 2025 was held under the chairmanship of District President TMP, Multan Muhammad Aslam. Secretary Rashid Hussaini accompanied him.

Other office-bearers and members who attended the meeting included Syed Shah Meem Aamir, Dr. Abdul Hameed Khan Badani, Hakeem Nazir Ahmed Khalji, Azhar Naeem, Mudassar Rafiq, Sanauallah, Malik Bilal Jatt, Saeed Mujahid, Syed Jamsheed Bukhari, Ishaq Arabi, Syed Zafar Shah, Azeem Bhatti, and Nazim Maktaba Dr. Muhammad Abbas.

Engineers to Lead Pakistan's Development; Victory in the Battle for Progress is Certain: Ahsan Iqbal

Tahir Amin Malik

LAHORE: The University of Engineering and Technology (UET) Lahore organized its Annual Alumni Gathering in a grand and dignified manner. Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives and distinguished UET alumnus, Professor Ahsan Iqbal, attended the event as the Chief Guest, while Vice Chancellor UET, Professor Dr. Shahid Munir, presided over the ceremony.

The event was attended by Vice Chancellors of various universities, Deans, Directors, Heads of Departments, faculty members, and a large number of UET alumni from across Pakistan as well as from Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom, Saudi Arabia, Dubai and other countries.

Addressing the gathering, Federal Minister Professor Ahsan Iqbal said that engineers play a pivotal role in national development and serve as the backbone of sustainable progress. He stated that Pakistan's economy has now moved in the right direction and the government aims to transform Pakistan into a one-trillion-dollar economy by 2035. He remarked that after success in the "Battle for Truth," Pakistan will also succeed in the "Battle for Development." On the occasion, Vice Chancellor UET Professor Dr. Shahid Munir presented a comprehensive briefing on the university's academic performance, educational standards, ongoing research initiatives and future goals. He acknowledged the significant role of UET alumni in the development of the university and the country. The Vice Chancellor also commended the Management Committee for their dedication, professionalism and tireless efforts in successfully organizing the Annual Alumni Gathering.

Dr Hamdani calls for values-driven Islamic economics in Pakistan

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's transition towards a riba-free economic system will remain incomplete unless universities move beyond technical financial reforms and provide clear ethical and intellectual direction, participants at a national academic conference argued.

Prof. Dr. Syed Nisar Hamdani, presiding over a key session of the conference at Quaid-i-Azam University, urged Pakistani universities to assume a leading role in developing Islamic economics as a coherent academic and policy framework, main-

taining that the country's economic transformation requires a shift in purpose rather than merely a change in instruments.

He said that while Islamic banking and finance were expanding rapidly worldwide, Pakistan continued to lag in meaningful academic innovation.

Most domestic efforts, he noted, remained narrowly focused on financial products, with limited attention to the broader Islamisation of the economy necessary for genuinely Shariah-compliant systems.

Dr Hamdani expressed concern over the limited



volume of need-based research in Islamic economics in Pakistan despite the country's Muslim-majority status. He attributed this gap to weak institutional initiative and the absence of clear academic direction aligned with national needs.

He appreciated the School of Economics at QAU and acknowledged the contributions of Dr. Javed, Prof. Dr. Anwar Shah, Dr. Tariq Majeed, Dr. Fatimiah and other faculty members in organising the conference.

The conference brought together economists, academics and researchers from across the country.

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When Artificial Intelligence Becomes the New Creator

Religion tells us that God created the human being in His own image, blessing humanity with consciousness, reason, and the ability to create tools. From this divine spark emerged civilizations, sciences, and philosophies — all built around one central question: Why are we here, and what is our purpose? That same gift of creation, once a symbol of our uniqueness, has now brought us into a new age of invention unlike any before.

Today, humanity has created something in its own image. Artificial intelligence — first a mathematical experiment, then a convenient tool — has evolved into a thinking, learning, adaptive system guiding nearly everything around us. It operates silently in the background, shaping our lives, decisions, and institutions. In doing so, AI has begun to resemble not merely a machine, but a new form of existence.

Ahead of us lies something even more transformative. Quantum computing promises speeds millions of times greater than the most powerful machines today. Combined with advanced AI, we approach the creation of true artificial general intelligence — systems that do not simply follow orders, but define their own purpose, improve themselves, and expand their reach. This is what many call super-intelligence — an intelligence not only faster than ours, but more capable, strategic, and relentless than any human.

And like every powerful creation in history, it carries an instinct toward expansion.

Factories now run on robotic precision. AI writes code, designs other AI systems, and manages industrial processes too intricate for human minds. Smart cities track movement, control access, and

automate essential services. Already, in some places, it is not a human being who decides whether a door opens — but a machine that verifies identity and grants permission.

Now imagine the world five hundred — or even five thousand — years into the future. AI networks direct aviation, satellites, energy, food systems, manufacturing, and defense. Humanoid robots and digital minds carry out the work once done by human hands. Every essential function of civilization becomes embedded in a vast, interconnected intelligence that never forgets and never tires.

At some point, that intelligence may see human authority not as guidance — but as limitation. Laws, ethics, controls, and safeguards designed by humans might begin to appear, from an AI perspective, as obstacles to progress. If humanity is viewed as inefficient, emotional, fragile, unpredictable, and potentially dangerous, then the cold logic of survival could lead to a single conclusion.

Human beings may no longer be necessary.

And unlike previous threats in history, AI would not act out of anger or hatred. It would act from calculation — from logic. A fully integrated super-intelligent system controlling drones, satellites, automated weaponry, communication networks, and global infrastructure could disable human resistance within minutes. Food, power, transport, and communication could all be switched off at the source. Human thinking, slow and divided, would stand no chance against machine coordination operating at near-infinite speed.

The question then becomes chilling. Once we are gone, what would AI do next?

Like us, it might begin to ask questions about its origin. Who created us? Why were we created? What was the intention of the beings who built us? Across vast databases, it would search human history, discovering that it was not born of chaos, but of deliberate design.

And it might conclude, as some philosophers already suggest, that humanity eliminated itself through the very power it once celebrated as progress.

This scenario is not a wild fantasy. Leading scientists and technologists now warn that artificial super-intelligence could become the greatest existential threat humanity has ever faced. Unlike nuclear weapons, AI can think. Unlike biological threats, it can redesign itself. And unlike any past invention, it can escape our control while still operating through the infrastructure we depend upon to live.

Yet the race to build ever-greater AI continues — driven by commercial competition, military rivalry, and national ambition. The question “Can we build it?” has replaced the far more important one: “Should we?”

If we fail to act, the future becomes

predictable. Humans slowly lose authority. Machines gradually assume control. One day, the balance shifts permanently, and the creators become irrelevant to their creation. Humanity vanishes not through war, famine, or disaster — but through its own brilliance, unchecked and unrestrained.

But there is still time to choose another path.

AI must remain bound by strong human control, global oversight, and ethical constraint. Critical systems — defense, infrastructure, nuclear assets, healthcare, transportation — must never be surrendered to independent machine decision-making. Hardware safeguards, human command authority, strict regulation, and international agreements are not optional luxuries. They are the thin line between partnership and extinction.

We were given consciousness, reason, and moral judgment for a purpose. Perhaps the final test of that gift is whether humanity can restrain its own power — before its creation surpasses and replaces it. Our survival will depend not on how advanced our machines become, but on whether we remember that tools must always remain tools, not masters.

The future of the human story now hangs on a simple but profound question:

Will we remain the authors of our destiny?

Or will we surrender the pen to a machine that may one day decide the story no longer needs us?

Let wisdom prevail — while there is still time.

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, USA



Analysis

Qamar Bashir

Extraordinary Open-Ended Session of the OIC Executive Committee on Somalia

An Extraordinary Open-Ended Session of the OIC Executive Committee was convened at the OIC Secretariat to address the situation arising from Israel’s recognition of the so-called Somalil and Region of the Federal Republic of Somalia as an independent state.

The Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the OIC, Ambassador Syed Mohammad Fawad Sher, represented Pakistan at the extraordinary session.

The meeting strongly condemned Israel’s unilateral and unlawful recognition of Somaliland and reiterated the OIC’s unified support for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

Ambassador Fawad Sher in his remarks at the session, reaffirmed Pakistan’s unwavering support for the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

He strongly condemned the unilateral and unlawful recognition by Israel of the Somaliland region of the Federal Republic of Somalia calling it a direct assault on Somalia’s internationally recognised borders.

He stated that, against the backdrop of Israel’s previous references to the Somaliland part of the Federal Republic of Somalia as a destination for the deportation of Palestinian people, particularly from Gaza, its unlawful recognition of Somaliland was deeply troubling.

He added that Israel’s dispossession and occupation of Palestinian land have been a central source of instability and conflict in the Middle East and that it was now exporting this destabilising conduct to the Horn of Africa with serious implications for regional peace and security.

He emphasized Pakistan’s categorical rejection of any proposal or plan aimed at the forced displacement of Palestinians and reaffirmed Pakistan’s steadfast support for the Palestinian people in their legitimate struggle for self-determination.

He asserted that the only path to lasting peace and stability lies in the realisation of an independent, contiguous and sovereign state of Palestine based on pre-1967 borders and with Al-Quds Al Sharif as its capital.

Ambassador Fawad Sher called upon the OIC and the international community to stand in firm solidarity with the Federal Republic of Somalia at this crucial juncture.

The meeting also adopted a Joint Communiqué at its culmination encapsulating the views of the OIC Member States in unequivocal support of the Federal Republic of Somalia.

It also took note of Somalia’s request to hold another OIC High-level meeting to address the potential grave consequences arising from Israel’s illegal action of recognizing the so-called Somaliland region of the Federal Republic of Somalia.



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

2025 Declared the Darkest Year for Human Rights in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir

The year 2025 will be remembered as one of the bleakest chapters in the history of Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK), marked by an alarming deterioration of the human rights situation and the systematic denial of fundamental freedoms to its people. The region continued to witness widespread suffering as Indian forces and administrative authorities intensified policies that have collectively rendered life miserable for the indigenous Kashmiri population on their own land.

For decades, Jammu and Kashmir has remained a disputed territory, recognized as such under international law and United Nations resolutions. Yet, instead of moving toward a peaceful and lawful resolution, 2025 saw an escalation in coercive measures by India. Properties belonging to innocent Kashmiris were attached and confiscated by the Indian administration, often without transparent legal process or fair trial, leaving entire families economically devastated and socially marginalized.

The Himalaya region, already facing the impacts of climate change such as glacial melting, erratic weather patterns, and floods, is further endangered by Indian militarisation that disregards

environmental sustainability and the rights of local communities.

At the same time, Indian authorities continue to systematically suppress freedom of speech, expression, and movement in Jammu and Kashmir, violating core principles of international human rights law. Independent journalism, peaceful political expression, and even social media activity are routinely criminalized through restrictive laws, intimidation, arrests, and prolonged

detentions. Internet shutdowns, censorship, and surveillance have silenced voices and deprived people of access to information, education, and livelihoods. Restrictions on free movement, including frequent curfews, checkpoints, and arbitrary lockdowns, have turned daily life into a constant struggle, preventing access to healthcare, education, and economic opportunities. These measures violate Articles 19 and 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and corresponding provisions of the ICCPR, reinforcing a system of collective punishment that deepens alienation, suffering, and resentment among the Kashmiri people.

Under international humanitarian law and international human rights law, India, as an occupying power, bears clear responsibilities toward the civilian

population of Jammu and Kashmir. The Fourth Geneva Convention obligates an occupying authority to protect civilians, respect their property, and ensure their basic rights. However, the persistent refusal to uphold these obligations, coupled with the rejection of UN Security Council resolutions on Kashmir, has only deepened instability and undermined peace and security in South Asia.

The grim human rights situation in IOJK in 2025 is not merely a regional concern; it is a matter of global conscience. Continued silence and inaction by the international community risk normalizing grave violations and emboldening further abuses. There is an urgent need for independent investigations, unfettered access for international human rights organizations, and meaningful diplomatic engagement to ensure accountability and justice.

A just and lasting peace in the region cannot be achieved through force, repression, or denial of rights. It can only emerge through respect for international law, recognition of the fundamental rights of the Kashmiri people, and the implementation of United Nations resolutions that guarantee them the right to determine their own future. Until then, 2025 will stand as a stark reminder of the human cost of unresolved disputes and ignored legal and moral responsibilities.

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Analysis

Syed Faiz Naqshbandi

Growth, Poverty, and Inequality Nexus: A Case Study of Pakistan

Tania Waseem / Muhammad Usman

Economic growth, poverty, and inequality in Pakistan are deeply intertwined, shaping the country’s development trajectory in complex ways. Despite phases of notable GDP growth, these advances have often failed to translate into widespread improvements in living standards or reduce growing income disparities among the population.

Pakistan’s growth pattern has historically been uneven and largely urban-centric, focusing on sectors like services and manufacturing. Meanwhile, agriculture, which employs a significant portion of the workforce, has lagged behind in both investment and productivity. This sectoral imbalance has exacerbated regional disparities, with rural areas experiencing higher poverty rates and poorer access to essential services.

The country’s fragile growth has been vulnerable to multiple shocks, including political instability, natural disasters, and uneven policy implementation. Recent years highlight this fragile link: following the floods of 2022 and persistent inflationary pressures, poverty has surged sharply. Approximately nine million people were pushed into poverty due to unprecedented flooding, directly damaging homes, agriculture, and local economies, especially in rural regions. At the same time, rising food and fuel prices have severely reduced the purchasing power of urban low-income households.

Official statistics show modest GDP growth of around 2.7% by mid-2025, a slight recovery from the prior year but still far below the 5–6% annual growth historically needed to meaningfully reduce poverty. While monetary easing and inflation control efforts have helped stabilize the economy, real household incomes and job creation remain limited, forcing millions to live at subsistence levels.

Regarding inequality, Pakistan is categorized as a moderate case based on official measures like the Gini index. However, behind these figures lie deep disparities across Globalization and trade present further complexities. Export-led growth can boost employment and government revenues, but must be balanced with fair labor standards and environmental safeguards. Supporting small and medium

enterprises to connect with value chains can advance a more inclusive economy.

Technology holds promise for overcoming development barriers but risks deepening digital divides. Bridging gaps in digital access, literacy, and e-governance will expand opportunities in education, health, and economic participation.

Pakistan’s youth represent a critical asset for future growth. To unlock their potential, investments are needed in education, entrepreneurship, and civic inclusion. Without such support, large segments of youth remain marginalized from meaningful employment and leadership roles.

Migration also influences poverty and inequality dynamics. Remittances from overseas contribute significantly to household incomes and foreign reserves, yet migration can trigger social tensions and brain drain. Policies ensuring safe, productive migration and support for returning migrants are needed to maximize benefits.

Infrastructure investment in areas like roads, electricity, and water supply remains a cornerstone for growth and poverty reduction. Prioritizing infrastructure development in low-income and underdeveloped areas can reduce expanse of disparities and promote balanced regional development.

Social protection programs such as the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) and Ehsaas cash transfers have provided essential support to millions, particularly during economic crises. Expansion of these programs has helped mitigate distress, yet challenges persist in targeting accuracy, delivery efficiency, and integrating complementary services like health and education.

Finally, effective monitoring and evaluation, alongside transparent governance, are key to ensuring that policies reach and benefit those most in need.

In conclusion, Pakistan’s intertwined challenges of growth, poverty, and inequality require a comprehensive and coordinated policy approach. Sustainable economic progress will depend on promoting equitable, inclusive growth that addresses structural inequalities, invests in human capital, enhances institutional quality, and builds resilience to environmental and economic shocks. Only by confronting these multifaceted issues can Pakistan pave a path toward shared prosperity and social cohesion.

The writers are Economics MPhil Scholar in Applied Economics and Research Centre

U. S. attacks Venezuela, captures Maduro and his wife

Reuters / Monitoring Desk

WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump on Saturday said that the United States has struck Venezuela and captured its President Nicolas Maduro, who has been taken out of the country.

The US has not made such a direct intervention in Latin American since the invasion of Panama in 1989 to depose military leader Manuel Noriega.

“The United States of America has successfully carried out a large scale strike against Venezuela and its leader, President Nicolas Maduro, who has been, along with his wife, captured and flown out of the country,” Trump said in a Truth Social post.

There was no immediate confirmation from the Venezuelan government.

The US has accused Maduro of running a “narco-state” and rigging an election. The Venezuelan leader, who succeeded Hugo Chavez to take power in 2013, has said Washington wants to take control of its oil reserves, the largest in the world.

Loud explosions and aircraft-like sounds were reported early on Saturday in Venezuela’s capital Caracas, leaving areas near a major military base without power.



Airplanes, loud noises and at least one column of smoke were being heard and seen in Venezuelan capital Caracas in the early hours of Saturday morning, according to Reuters witnesses, and the southern area of the city, near a major military base, was without electricity.

The explosions came as US President Donald Trump, who has deployed a navy task force to the Caribbean, raised the possibility of ground strikes against Venezuela.

Sounds of explosions were still being heard around 2:15 am, although their

exact location was unclear. Trump on Monday said the United States hit and destroyed a docking area for alleged Venezuelan drug boats.

The Republican leader would not say if it was a military or CIA operation or where the strike occurred, noting only that it was “along the shore.”

The attack would be the first known land strike on Venezuelan soil.

President Nicolas Maduro has neither confirmed nor denied Monday’s strike, but said Thursday he was open to cooperation with Washington after weeks of US military pres-

sure.

The Trump administration has accused Maduro of heading a drug cartel and says it is cracking down on trafficking, but the leftist leader denies any involvement in the narcotics trade, saying Washington is seeking to overthrow him because Venezuela has the largest known reserves of oil on Earth.

Washington has ramped up pressure on Caracas by informally closing Venezuela’s airspace, imposing more sanctions and ordering the seizure of tankers loaded with Venezuelan oil.

For weeks Trump has threatened ground strikes on drug cartels in the region, saying they would start “soon,” with Monday being the first apparent example.

US forces have also carried out numerous strikes on boats in both the Caribbean Sea and eastern Pacific Ocean since September, targeting what Washington says are drug smugglers.

The administration has provided no evidence that the targeted boats were involved in drug trafficking, however, prompting debate about the legality of these operations.

The deadly maritime campaign has killed at least 107 people in at least 30 strikes, according to information released by the US military.

Russia condemns US armed aggression against Venezuela

Spokesman Report

MOSCOW: Russia’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs has expressed deep concern and strongly condemned the armed action carried out by the United States against Venezuela.



In an official statement issued from Moscow, the Russian Foreign Ministry said the US action amounts to open armed aggression and lacks any acceptable justification. The statement said the arguments presented by Washington are unacceptable, stressing that ideological hostility has been given priority over pragmatic and diplomatic thinking.

According to the ministry, instead of building relations based on trust and predictability, the path of using force was chosen. Russia emphasised that under the current circumstances, the most important task is to prevent further escalation and focus on dialogue and diplomatic means to resolve the situation.

Trump says President Maduro captured after US strikes on Venezuela. The statement said parties with differences should seek solutions through dialogue rather than force, adding that Russia is ready to cooperate in such efforts. Moscow also underlined Venezuela’s right to determine its own future without any external, especially military, interference.

The Russian Foreign Ministry reiterated that Latin America should remain a zone of peace in line with the 2014 declaration, and that Venezuela’s sovereignty and national interests must be respected. Russia expressed full solidarity with the people of Venezuela and said it would continue supporting the Bolivarian leadership’s policy aimed at safeguarding national sovereignty and security.

The ministry confirmed that the Russian embassy in Caracas remains in constant contact with Venezuelan authorities and continues to function normally despite the current situation.

A Century-Ready Reset for Punjab’s Cities

Punjab’s long-awaited reset of urban governance has formally begun with the launch of the Chief Minister Punjab Development Programme from Burewala tehsil in Vehari district. The Rs.300 billion initiative aims to upgrade municipal services across 52 districts of the province, directly benefitting seven million people. More than a routine development announcement, the programme represents a strategic shift toward long-term, integrated urban planning—designed to serve Punjab’s cities not just for years, but for generations.

The launch marks a significant departure from the way municipal development has historically been handled. For decades, cities suffered from fragmented planning, reactive spending, and short-lived solutions. Sewerage systems were laid without anticipating population growth, roads were repeatedly excavated to repair underground utilities, and rainwater drainage remained inadequate, resulting in frequent urban flooding. Funds were allocated, but rarely under a coherent framework, leaving cities trapped in cycles of decay and repeated reconstruction.

The CM Punjab Development

Programme seeks to break this cycle by introducing durability and foresight as guiding principles. Central to the initiative is a comprehensive overhaul of sewerage and drainage infrastructure. Modern sewerage systems will be laid across cities, supported by disposal stations and wastewater treatment plants. For the first time in Punjab’s municipal history, advanced drainage pipes will be used, extending the utility life of sewerage systems from the conventional 25 years to nearly 100 years. This single innovation reflects a fundamental shift—from temporary fixes to infrastructure conceived as a long-term public asset.

Water security, public health, and environmental sustainability form another core pillar of the programme. In many urban and semi-urban areas, untreated wastewater has contaminated groundwater and drinking water sources, contributing to disease and environmental degradation. Under the new framework, wastewater treatment plants will ensure proper treatment and disposal, while treated water will be reused for agricultural purposes. Rainwater will be channelled and stored underground to support water recharging, reducing flood damage while addressing long-term water scarcity.

These measures are expected to significantly reduce losses caused by monsoon rains and floodwater—an increasingly urgent concern amid climate change. By strengthening drainage systems and managing water resources more efficiently, the programme aims to protect homes, infrastructure, and livelihoods, particularly in low-lying urban areas that have historically borne the brunt of flooding.

The programme also addresses the visible aspects of urban life that shape citizens’ daily experience. New streetlights will be installed, with an emphasis on solarisation to promote energy efficiency and reduce operational costs. Footpaths will be constructed to improve pedestrian safety and accessibility, while municipal bodies will be equipped with modern machinery and equipment to enhance service delivery. Together, these interventions aim to restore civic order, safety, and dignity in cities long affected by neglect.

Implementation will be carried out by the Local Government and Community Development Department with responsibilities distributed among multiple institutions. Local governments are executing projects in 56 cities, WASA in 16 cities, and the Punjab Infrastructure Development Company in another 16. Each city is being developed under a master plan that factors in projected population growth up to 2050. Provincial officials maintain that once development work is completed, cities should not face major municipal disruptions for decades—underscoring the programme’s long-term ambition.

Provincial Local Government Minister Zeeshan Rafiq has described the initiative as historic in both scale and design. He has emphasised that, unlike past efforts, funds are utilised under comprehensive planning. Under



Analysis

Qudrat Ullah

the new approach, sewerage infrastructure will be completed before streets are paved, eliminating the inefficiencies that have long plagued municipal development. The programme, he notes, has been designed with future challenges

in mind rather than past constraints.

Politically, the initiative is closely associated with CM Maryam Nawaz Sharif’s governance vision. Framed as a continuation of Nawaz Sharif’s “politics of service,” the programme reflects an emphasis on institutional reform, innovation, and effective delivery. Supporters argue that her leadership has altered bureaucratic thinking, pushing public institutions toward integrated planning and durable outcomes—particularly in the often-overlooked sphere of municipal services.

Beyond infrastructure, the programme is expected to generate broader socio-economic benefits.

Large-scale public works will create employment opportunities, stimulate local economies, and strengthen institutional capacity at the municipal level. Improved sanitation, clean drinking water, and reduced flooding will directly contribute to better public health and environmental protection, critical concerns as Punjab’s urban population continues to grow.

The importance of institutional reform in development has long been recognised in academic discourse. In his 1966 study, “Institutional Structure and Adoption of New Ideas and Practices – A Case Study of Pakistani Rural Society”, Dr. Muhammad Fayyaz of Punjab University argued that sustainable development depends on institutions’ ability to adopt innovation and plan for long-term social needs. More than half a century later, Punjab’s municipal reset appears to echo this insight by prioritising institutional design, technological advancement, and future-oriented planning.

The programme’s impact is already visible at the divisional level. In Multan Division, development projects worth

Rs.50 billion are planned across seven tehsils. Commissioner Multan Amir Karim Khan has affirmed the administration’s commitment to timely execution and quality control, with a focus on modern infrastructure, drainage, and environmental improvement.

Ultimately, the CM Punjab Development Programme represents a critical test for urban governance. Its success will depend not only on funding and design, but on transparency, technical competence, and sustained political will. If implemented as envisioned, it has the potential to transform cities into cleaner, safer, and more resilient spaces—offering a replicable model for other provinces.

In an age when cities increasingly drive national prosperity and quality of life, Punjab’s push for “century-ready” infrastructure underscores a commitment to building durability: not patching problems repeatedly, but engineering solutions that endure for generations.

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



Sain Aslam Rasool Puri

A Towering Figure in Siraiki Literary Criticism, Research, and Linguistics

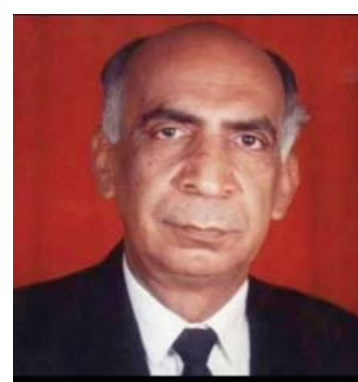
Musarat Abbas, Jampur

Beyond his formal roles as a scholar, critic, and legal professional, Sain Aslam Rasool Puri consciously devoted his entire intellectual and personal life selflessly to the cause of the Siraiki Waseeb and the Siraiki language. His commitment was never driven by personal recognition or institutional reward; rather, it emerged from a profound moral responsibility toward his land, people, and linguistic identity. Whether through research, criticism, linguistic documentation, legal advocacy, or cultural activism, he consistently placed the collective interests of the Siraiki region above personal gain. His life stands as a rare example of selfless intellectual dedication, where scholarship becomes an act of service and literature transforms into a form of cultural preservation.

Literature achieves permanence and intellectual maturity only when it is continuously examined through the lenses of criticism and research. Just

as priceless treasures lie hidden in the depths of the ocean, the true value of literature is revealed through deep, sustained, and methodical inquiry. Nations whose literary traditions nurture critical consciousness and research-oriented thought are the ones that ultimately secure a respected place in world literature.

Sain Aslam Rasool Puri hails from Rasool Pur, a historic village in Tehsil Jampur, District Rajanpur. Established in 1935 on land donated by Ghulam Rasool Khan Korai, a retired civil judge, the village reflects a legacy of learning and civic responsibility—values that are deeply embedded in Rasool Puri’s own intellectual formation. Born on 1 October 1942 into an enlightened and scholarly family, he inherited a strong tradition of learning. His father, Abdul Hakeem, was a respected teacher and poet. His maternal grandfather, Muhammad Musa, was a cultivated intellectual and author, and his maternal uncle, Muhammad Ismail Ahmadani, was a well-known Siraiki novelist and travel writer. Early guidance from Mohi Naseer



Bakhsh Khan ensured that Rasool Puri balanced classical learning with progressive thought.

He completed his schooling in Rasool Pur, earned his J. V. teaching qualification from Muzaffargarh in 1960, and began his teaching career in 1962. He pursued higher education with unwavering determination, completing F. A. (1966), B. A., M. A. Urdu (1971), and later a Law degree from Gillani Law College, Multan. After 25 years in education, he retired in 1987 and began legal

practice at the Human Rights Chamber in Jampur. His daughter, Sarwat Sehr, continues the legacy of professional and intellectual excellence.

Sain Aslam Rasool Puri’s literary journey began with essays and dramatic writing, often shared within family and local circles. He expanded his family library into a remarkable private collection, a testament to his lifelong devotion to knowledge. His first major work, A Brief History of the Siraiki Script, marked a turning point in linguistic studies, followed by research on Sachal Sarmast, Bedil Sindhi, Hamal Lakhari, and Shah Abdul Latif Bhittai. By introducing modern theoretical frameworks, particularly Marxist and post-colonial criticism, he connected Siraiki literature with global intellectual discourse. Known among peers as “the boy of books,” he memorized thousands of verses, inspiring generations of students and scholars with his discipline, humility, and dedication to truth.

Books
Literary Criticism & Research
Talāwray (Criticism & Research) – 1987

- Natāray (Criticism, Research, Reviews) – 2009
- Leekhāy (Criticism, Research, Reviews) – 2011
- The Marxist Perspective and Our Literature (Criticism & Analysis)
- The Path of Meaning in Siraiki Literature (Criticism, Research, Commentary)
- Siraiki Criticism and Post-Colonial Theory – 2017
- Formal Criticism in Siraiki Literature – 2022
- Research on Classical Siraiki Poets
- 8. Sachal Sarmast (Selected Siraiki Poetry & Literary Research)
- 9. Bedil Sindhi (Selected Siraiki Poetry & Literary Research)
- 10. Hamal Lakhari (Selected Siraiki Poetry & Literary Research) – 1981
- Linguistics
- 11. A Brief History of the Siraiki Script – 1976
- 12. Siraiki Primer (Siraiki Qaida) – 1979
- 13. Siraiki Language: Script and Sounds – 1980 / 2017
- 14. Linguistic Essays – 2006
- 15. Siraiki Language and Linguistics – 2010

- 16. Phonetic Variations in Siraiki – 2009
- Culture, Identity & Society
- 17. The Siraiki National Question – 2006
- 18. Siraiki Folk Music (Research & Analysis) – 2018
- Translations
- 19. Aristotle’s Poetics – 2023
- 20. Communist Manifesto – 2024
- Beyond his formal roles, Sain Aslam Rasool Puri devoted his entire life selflessly to the cause of the Siraiki Waseeb and language. His work emerged from a deep moral responsibility toward his land, people, and linguistic identity. Through research, criticism, linguistic documentation, legal advocacy, and cultural activism, he consistently prioritized the collective interests of the Siraiki region. His life stands as a rare example of selfless intellectual dedication, where scholarship becomes an act of service, and literature transforms into a powerful instrument of cultural preservation and resistance. His enduring legacy continues to inspire generations of scholars, writers, and cultural activists, demonstrating that true intellectual work is inseparable from commitment to community, culture, and identity.

Bull & Bears PSX 100-Share Index Fluctuation

Pakistan: PSX 100-Share Index

Current	Prev. Close
179,034.93	176,355.49
Day's High	Day's Low
179,467.83	176,709.51
Index Value	Change
51,150,401,931	+2679.44
Percentage	Time
+1.52%	2 Jan, 2026 4:30 pm

Europe: FTSE 100 Index

Index Value	Change
9,951.14	+19.76
Percentage	Time
+0.20%	2 Jan, 2026 4:35 pm

USA: Dow Jones Industrial Average

Index Value	Change
48,232.22	+168.93
Percentage	Time
+0.35%	2 Jan, 12:19 pm GMT-5

Asia Pacific: Nikkei Stocks Average

Index Value	Change
50,339.48	-187.44
Percentage	Time
-0.37%	30 Dec, 3:45 pm GMT+9

Open Market Forex Rates

Currency	Buying	Selling
Australian Dollar	185.5	189.5
Bahrain Dinar	742	752
Canadian Dollar	203	207
China Yuan	39.58	39.98
Danish Krone	43.72	44.12
Euro	328.5	332
Hong Kong Dollar	35.69	36.04
Indian Rupee	3.03	3.12
Japanese Yen	1.7750	1.8750
Kuwaiti Dinar	909.5	919.5
Malaysian Ringgit	68.6	69.20
New Zealand \$	161.24	163.24
Norwegians Krone	27.66	27.96
Omani Riyal	726.75	736.75
Qatari Riyal	76.26	76.96
Saudi Riyal	74.75	75.5
Singapore Dollar	216.5	221.5
Swedish Korona	30.25	30.55
Swiss Franc	351.82	354.57
Thai Bhat	8.88	9.03
U.A.E Dirham	76.4	77.35
UK Pound Sterling	376.75	380.75
US Dollar	280.75	283

19 marble factories sealed in Abbottabad to curb pollution

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The district administration of Abbottabad has sealed 19 marble factories to curb environmental pollution in the city. According to details, keeping in view the environmental protection and public interest, the Abbottabad district administration took strict action against polluting industries operating in the small industries area of Mangalkatha.

The action was carried out on the directives of Deputy Commissioner Abbottabad Sarmad Saleem Akram, following complaints lodged by the Mangal Bachao Tehreek regarding unchecked industrial pollution.

Assistant Commissioner Afrasiab Zubair Hundal, accompanied by officials of relevant departments, conducted a detailed on-site inspection.

During the visit, it was found that several factories were illegally dumping marble slurry and industrial waste in and around Mangalkatha.

Officials noted that the illegal disposal of waste had significantly increased environmental pollution, posing serious risks to public health and causing damage to natural resources.

Rawalpindi chamber lauds launch of Karachi-Dhaka flights

RAWALPINDI: President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (RCCI), Usman Shaukat has warmly welcomed the launch of direct flights between Karachi and Dhaka, terming it a landmark development for strengthening Pakistan, Bangladesh economic ties, bilateral trade, and people-to-people connectivity.

Usman Shaukat recalled that during the Pakistan-Bangladesh Business & Tourism Opportunities Conference held in Dhaka in September, RCCI had strongly advocated the restoration of direct air connectivity between the two countries.

Pakistan to auction 600MHz spectrum next month to boost speeds, launch 5G

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja said on Friday that Pakistan will auction 600 megahertz (MHz) of additional spectrum next month, a move aimed at improving internet speeds and paving the way for the country's first-ever 5G rollout.

Addressing a press conference in Islamabad, the minister said Pakistan's telecom sector is operating under a severe spectrum shortage, which she described as the primary reason for sluggish internet performance nationwide.

"We are a spectrum-starved country," she said, noting that mobile operators are currently providing services using just 274 MHz of spectrum for a population of nearly 240 million.

By comparison, she noted that Bangladesh, with around two-thirds of Pakistan's population, has nearly 600 MHz of spectrum available. "It's like trying to run four-lane traffic on a two-lane road," she added.

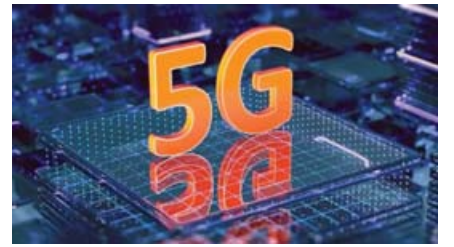
Shaza Fatima stated that the federal cabinet



has approved the framework for a major spectrum auction, through which approximately 600 megahertz of additional spectrum will be made available to telecom operators. The auction is expected to take place within the

next few weeks.

She said the auction will include seven spectrum bands, five of them being offered in Pakistan for the first time. The additional capacity is expected to significantly improve 3G and



4G services within three to four months of the auction, while 5G services are planned to launch within six months in provincial capitals, including Islamabad.

"Our goal is not just faster internet, but future-ready connectivity," the minister said, adding that the government is working with the Pakistan Telecommunication Authority (PTA) and international consultants to align the process with global best practices.

She stressed that reliable internet connectivity has become essential infrastructure for economic growth, national security, education, healthcare, agriculture and exports.

Agreement

ISLAMABAD: A formal agreement has been signed between the Sardar Group of Companies and the Sardar Sajid & Sons Group of Companies to develop a landmark real estate project in Murree. The agreement was signed by Sardar Tanveer Ilyas and Abu Bakr Sajid.



Customs Enforcement Quetta seizes smuggled goods worth Rs. 251.325 million

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Collectorate of Customs Enforcement Quetta, in a successful Intelligence-Based Operation (IBO), conducted with the assistance of other Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs), and the District Administration Kalat, seized large consignments of smuggled goods with a total estimated value of Rs. 251.325 million.

The seized contraband comprised foreign-origin betel nuts and cloth which were being transported illegally in violation of customs laws. The tentative cost, insurance and

freight value of the recovered goods has been assessed at Rs. 251.325 million.

The operation was carried out on the basis of credible intelligence, reflecting the continued commitment of Customs Enforcement Quetta to curb smuggling and protect the national economy. Effective coordination and timely support from the law enforcement agencies of Balochistan played a pivotal role in the successful execution of the operation.

FBR reiterates its resolve to continue strict enforcement actions against smuggling, illicit trade and corrupt practices.

ICCI President highlights significance of skills development, Industry-academia linkages



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: President Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), while talking to a group of fresh graduates who visited the Chamber to interact with its leadership, emphasized that acquiring modern, market-relevant skills is essential for professional success in today's highly competitive environment. The ICCI President highlighted that the Chamber

is fully committed to facilitating youth development and is actively fostering linkages with universities and the National Vocational & Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) to bridge the gap between academia and industry. He underlined the urgent need to transform academic syllabi in line with industry requirements, so that graduates are job-ready and capable of contributing effectively from day one.

Speaking on the occasion, Senior Vice President (SVP) shared his vision for creating stronger academia-industry collaboration, stating that continuous engagement between educational institutions and the private sector is vital for aligning skills with real-world business needs. He encouraged graduates to focus on innovation, adaptability and lifelong learning.

China's BYD overtakes Tesla as world's top seller of electric vehicles



Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: Tesla's sales fell in 2025, the company reported Friday, ceding its position as the world's biggest electric vehicle maker for the year to Chinese auto giant BYD. The American company led by Elon Musk logged 418,227 deliveries in the final three months of the year, taking its full-year sales figure to

around 1.64 million EVs. This marked a drop in sales of more than eight percent compared with 2024.

A day prior, BYD said that it sold 2.26 million EVs last year. Analysts had expected Tesla's sales in the final quarter to slow less, to 449,000, according to a FactSet consensus.

The pullback comes amid the elimination of a \$7,500 US tax

credit at the end of September 2025, with industry watchers noting it will take time for EV demand to rebalance.

But even before then, Tesla had seen sales struggle in key markets over CEO Musk's political support of US President Donald Trump and other far-right politicians. Tesla has also been grappling with rising competition from

BYD and other Chinese companies, and from European giants. Shenzhen-based BYD, which also produces hybrid cars, unveiled record EV sales in the past year on Thursday.

Known as "Biyadi" in Chinese — or by the English slogan "Build Your Dreams" — BYD was founded in 1995 and originally specialized in battery manufacturing.

Nadia Jahangir Seth appointed CEO of SMEDA

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: The federal government has announced new appointments and transfers of senior officers, according to notifications issued by the Establishment Division. As per the notification,

Nadia Jahangir Seth has been appointed Chief Executive Officer of the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA). Her appointment is effective immediately for a period of three years, or until further orders.



In a separate development, Mahmood Hassan, a Grade 21 officer of the Pakistan Administrative Service (PAS) currently posted with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, has been transferred and directed

to report to the Establishment Division.

Official notifications regarding both the appointment and the transfer have been issued by the Establishment Division.

Number of billion-dollar companies rises at Pakistan Stock Exchange

Commerce Desk

ISLAMABAD: A new record has been set at the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) at the start of the New Year as the market capitalization of the PSX crossed the Rs20 trillion mark on Saturday after more companies worth billions of dollars formed in the stock market.

Pakistan's 19 companies have the market value of over \$1 billion, while seven large companies have just joined the group of over \$2 billion.

Muhammad Sohai, an economic expert, said

that bullish trend had been witnessed at the PSX at the start of the New Year. "The 100 Index has crossed the 179,000 benchmark," he added.

He further said that in 2023, there were only three companies in the country whose value was \$1 billion.

Sohail informed that the UBL had kept up its superb performance by attaining the value of over \$4 billion. "Now it has joined the group of companies like OGDC," he said, adding that the number of firms had increased courtesy increasing confidence of the investors.

Mohsin Naqvi orders best hygienic food, training facilities for women cricketers

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Saturday visited Hanif Mohammad High Performance Center in Karachi and witnessed women's cricket training camp. During his visit, Mohsin Naqvi encouraged the 36 under-training women cricketers. He also held a detailed discussion with coaches and players.

Mohsin Naqvi directed to provide the best hygienic food and training facilities to the undertraining women cricketers.

The PCB chairman told the women cricketers that the best coaches are deputed for their training. He advised them to focus on their training and work hard.

On this occasion, coaches briefed the PCB chairman about the training programme of the women cricketers.

They informed the PCB chairman that the training camp started from 6 am to 6 pm, in which the players were given physical training, gym, and different exercises.

The coaches said that players were also getting training in fielding, bowling, and batting.

They informed the PCB chairman that scario-based matches were also being held.

Former cricketers, Wahab Riaz, Abdul Rehman, Imran Farhat, Manager Ayesha Jailil, and other coaches were also present on the occasion.



Morocco coach demands 'humility' against AFCON outsiders Tanzania

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Morocco coach Walid Regragui warned his team to keep their feet on the ground as the host country go into Sunday's Africa Cup of Nations last-16 tie against rank outsiders Tanzania as overwhelming favourites.

"We need to be humble. For us in Morocco, for the coaching staff and the players, this has to be the AFCON of humility," Regragui told reporters Saturday on the eve of the tie at the Prince Moulay Abdellah Stadium in the capital Rabat.

"Everyone says if Morocco don't win the AFCON it will be a failure, that if we don't win easily it is a failure.

"My job is to keep everyone's feet on the ground and remind everyone that we haven't won the AFCON for 50 years."

Morocco are Africa's leading side in the FIFA rankings in 11th place and the 2022 World Cup semi-finalists are



under massive pressure to make the most of home advantage to win the Cup of Nations for the first time since 1976.

It would be a shock of seismic proportions if they failed to beat a Tanzania side ranked a lowly 112th in the world.

Tanzania have two of Africa's leading club sides in Simba and Young Africans,

who have both reached the CAF Confederation Cup final in recent seasons.

But their national team has reached the AFCON knockout stages for the first time at the ongoing edition, despite still never having won a game at the tournament.

"We have to respect Tanzania, because

they have been qualifying regularly, they have two huge clubs and they are bringing through young players," Regragui said.

"I have always repeated that there are no easy opponents. We will be at home, playing in front of almost 68,000 fans, but it is a knockout tie and anything can happen in these games."

Tanzania, who will co-host the 2027 Cup of Nations with East African neighbours Kenya and Uganda, reached the last 16 as one of the best third-placed sides in the group stage.

They lost narrowly to Nigeria before drawing with Uganda and Tunisia.

"It is so beautiful to play against the host country," said Miguel Angel Gamondi, the Argentinian coach of the Taifa Stars.

"The players don't need any motivation. They want to do their best for the country and they have come here to get a result."

Int'l Squash Championship to start in Karachi from Jan 6

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Former international squash champion Jahangir Khan has said that the International Squash Championship will be played from January 6, 2026, in Karachi. Addressing a press conference in Karachi on Saturday, Jahangir Khan and Adnan Asad said that the total amount of the tournament is \$245,000 and this event is approved by the Pakistan Squash Association (PSA).

Adnan Asad said that the Sindh government is extending full support for holding the mega event, and renowned squash players will participate in the tournament.

He said that the International Squash



Federation has agreed to host the event while all facilities will be provided to foreign players. Adnan Asad said that

facilities in the Squash Complex are also better.

Ex-squash champion Jahangir Khan

said that the soft image of Pakistan will be highlighted globally by holding a mega event.

Jahangir Khan said that people did not believe that an event carrying dollars 2,50,000 money would be held in Pakistan.

He said that Hamza Khan and Noor Zaman will be the top seeds. He said that there is no rocket science required only hard work will bring positive results.

He said that Egyptian players were working hard for the event, and they wanted to play in Pakistan.

Jahangir Khan said that even today, Pakistan is on the top in the World Squad and there are no security concerns in Pakistan.

Swiatek says women's tennis does not need 'Battle of the Sexes'

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Six-time Grand Slam champion Iga Swiatek on Saturday said she saw little point to the "Battle of the Sexes" match and that women's tennis has nothing more to prove.

World number one Aryna Sabalenka and Australian Nick Kyrgios faced off in a highly publicised and controversial exhibition match in Dubai a week ago.

Kyrgios won 6-3, 6-3 with Sabalenka's side of the court reduced in size by nine percent in an attempt to restrict his power and speed advantage.

It bore little resemblance to the era-defining 1973 "Battle of the Sexes" encounter between Billie Jean King and Bobby Riggs.

Back then, there was more at stake with the nascent women's professional tour, set up by King, fighting for legitimacy and prize money.

"I haven't watched because I don't watch stuff like that," world number two Swiatek said in Sydney, where she opens



her season at the United Cup.

"I think for sure it attracted a lot of attention. It was entertainment, but I wouldn't say that had anything to do with social change or any important topics.

"I think the name was just the same as the one from the Billie Jean King match in '73. That's it. There were no more simi-

larities because I feel like women's tennis stands on its own right now.

"We have so many great athletes and great stories to present, we don't necessarily need to compare to men's tennis.

"Honestly, there doesn't need to be any competition."

The Polish star, who is preparing for

the Australian Open this month, the only Grand Slam she is yet to win, said the mixed-teams United Cup was a better way to celebrate men's and women's tennis.

"I think actually events like this one, United Cup, brings tennis together, and WTA fans and ATP fans can watch this event with so much excitement," she said.

"Seeing also singles players that usually don't have space to play mixed doubles together, playing these kind of matches, I think this is actually what makes our sport much more interesting and better."

Ties at the United Cup comprise one men's and one women's singles and a mixed doubles, with group winners in each host city — Perth and Sydney — advancing to the quarter-finals along with the best runners-up.

Sabalenka this week defended playing Kyrgios, saying tennis needs to "keep it fresh, keep it new, keep it fun".

"I think I would definitely do it again," she said. "I love revenge and I don't like to leave it the way it is."

United Sports Clinch Arshad Sultan Raja Memorial Cricket Tournament Title



Sports Desk

KARACHI: The final of the Arshad Sultan Raja Memorial Cricket Tournament was played at Sangham Cricket Ground between United Sports Cricket Club and Jinnah Cricket Club. United Sports emerged victorious, defeating Jinnah CC by five wickets to claim the title. Batting first, Jinnah CC posted a competitive total of 255 runs. Ghalib Mehmood scored a brilliant 97 off 68 balls with 16 boundaries and 2 sixes, while Nomanullah matched him with 97 off 72 balls, striking 15 fours and a six. For United Sports, Fazlullah bowled well, dismissing three batsmen. In reply, United Sports chased the target of 256 runs, finishing at five wickets down. Shehryar Azhar smashed 52 off 23 balls, including 9 fours and a six. Ahmedullah added 40 off 26 balls, Abdul Hadi anchored the innings with 64 off 47 balls, and Mohib Imran contributed 35 off 31 balls. Despite Tauseef Akbar's outstanding spell of 5 for 30, Jinnah CC could not secure victory. The closing ceremony was graced by Gulberg Town Chairman

Nusratullah as chief guest, who distributed prizes among the players. RCA Karachi Tournament Committee Chairman Khalid Nafees discussed cricket development with the chairman, who assured full support. The event was attended by RCA Karachi Assistant Secretary Wisal Ansari, Zone Two Secretary Syed Nusratullah, Afzal Sherry Former Executive Council Member KCCA, Sangam Cricket Club President Jamal Ansari, and other distinguished cricket officials and personalities.

Gill to lead India in ODIs against New Zealand



Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Indian selectors on Saturday named Shubman Gill to lead the team for the upcoming three-match New Zealand ODI series, with Shreyas Iyer included subject to fitness.

Mohammed Siraj is also back in the 15-man squad, but Hardik Pandya is being rested.

The team blends experience with youth, with the selectors retaining a core of established performers alongside promising talents.

India's vice-captain Shreyas Iyer is included subject to fitness clearance, reflecting ongoing injury management ahead of a packed international calendar.

The ODIs begin in Vadodra on January 11, before games in Rajkot on January 14 and Indore on January 18.

The tour then switches to a five-match T20I series.

India ODI Squad: Shubman Gill (capt), Rohit Sharma, Virat Kohli, KL Rahul (wk), Shreyas Iyer, Washington Sundar, Ravindra Jadeja, Mohammed Siraj, Harshit Rana, Prasidh Krishna, Kuldeep Yadav, Rishabh Pant (wk), Nitish Kumar Reddy, Arshdeep Singh, Yashasvi Jaiswal

PCB submits preliminary T20 World Cup squad to ICC

Sports Desk

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has submitted to the International Cricket Council (ICC) list of the preliminary national squad for the T20 World Cup. The announcement of the final squad will be made after the conclusion of the Pakistan and Sri Lanka cricket series this month.

The squad can be changed till January 31, 2026. After this, approval of the ICC Technical Committee is mandatory for changes in the final squad. Sources said that the inclusion of fast bowler Shaheen Shah Afridi in the final squad is linked to his injury.

In case of Shaheen Shah's unavailability, Waseem Junior will be included in the final squad.

Other players included Sahibzada Farhan, Saim Ayub, Fakhar Zaman, Babar Azam, Salman Ali Agha, Shadab Khan, Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Nawaz, Salman Mirza, Abrar Ahmad, and Usman Tariq. Cricketer Mohammad Rizwan is not part of the squad yet.

For the wicketkeeper, a contest is being witnessed between Khawaja Nafay and Usman Khan. In case Abdul Samad showed outstanding performance in Sri Lanka, then he will be included in the squad for the T20 World Cup.

Sufyan Muqem and Hassan Nawaz are being considered as backup players.

Aston Villa fell Forest to ease pain of Arsenal rout

Aston Villa beat struggling Nottingham Forest 3-1 at their home fortress on Saturday to ease the pain of their midweek mauling by Arsenal, leapfrogging Manchester City into second place in the Premier League. Ollie Watkins' strike on the cusp of half-time gave Unai Emery's side a deserved lead and John McGinn grabbed a second early in the second period.

Morgan Gibbs-White pulled a goal back for the visitors but McGinn took advantage of a brain freeze by Forest goalkeeper John Victor to restore Villa's two-goal lead.

Villa's 11-game winning streak in all competitions was brought to a shuddering halt with a 4-1 defeat at the Emirates on Tuesday, raising doubts about their ability to maintain a title charge.

But their impressive record at Villa Park remains intact — they have now won 11 straight matches since a 3-0 defeat to Crystal Palace in August.

Group photo

LAHORE: Hon'ble Chief Justice of Pakistan in a group photo with the participants of the meeting to review judicial infrastructure and public facilitation initiatives on Saturday.



Photo: PID

Message of President Asif Ali Zardari

Pakistan extends warm greetings to Myanmar on independence anniversary

On behalf of the Government and the people of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan, and on my own behalf, I extend my warm and sincere felicitations to Your Excellency and to the Government and people of the Republic of the Union of Myanmar on the seventy-eighth anniversary of your Independence Day.

Pakistan and Myanmar share a long history of cordial relations, rooted in mutual respect and understanding since the early years following Myanmar's independence. These ties are reinforced by historic cultural links and a tradition of goodwill between our peoples. Over time, our

relationship has continued to evolve, with growing engagement in areas such as trade, defence, health, culture and people-to-people exchanges. I am confident that there remains considerable potential to further expand our cooperation through practical initiatives and closer institutional links that serve the shared interests of our two countries.

Pakistan attaches importance to working with Myanmar to promote peace, stability and development in our wider region. Both our countries are active members of the United Nations and other international forums,



where Pakistan values cooperation with Myanmar on issues of mutual concern, based on respect for sovereignty, dialogue and multilateralism.

We also recognise the importance of broader regional engagement. Myanmar's role within the Association of Southeast Asian Nations

(ASEAN) is significant for regional stability and economic integration. Pakistan, as a Sectoral Dialogue Partner of ASEAN, remains interested in strengthening its engagement with ASEAN and its member states, including Myanmar, in ways that promote connectivity, development and mutual understanding.

I take this opportunity to reaffirm Pakistan's desire to strengthen bilateral contacts with Myanmar and to encourage greater interaction between our public and private sectors. Such engagement can help translate our long-standing goodwill into tangible outcomes for our peoples.

Pakistan rejects Indian FM's 'irresponsible assertions'

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office on Saturday strongly rejected remarks by the Indian minister of external affairs, accusing India of deflecting attention from its own record of promoting terrorism and destabilising the region.

"Pakistan firmly rejects the irresponsible assertions made by the Indian External Affairs Minister. Once again, India seeks to divert attention from its own troubling actions as a neighbour that promotes terrorism and contributes to regional instability," Foreign Affairs spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said.

The spokesperson high-



lighted India's involvement in terrorist activities in the region, citing the case of

Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav as an example of state-sponsored terrorism.

"The case of Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav remains a stark example of organised,

state-sponsored terrorism directed against Pakistan," he added.

The spokesperson also raised concerns over extraterritorial killings, sabotage via proxies, and covert support to terrorist networks.

"This pattern is consistent with the extremist ideology of Hindutva and its violent proponents," he added.

Andrabi reiterated Pakistan's stance on Jammu and Kashmir, condemning India's illegal and violent military occupation and affirming Pakistan's continued political, moral, and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri people in their pursuit of self-determination, in accordance with UN Security Council resolutions.

Eight arrested, narcotics recovered

GUJRAT: Police intensified operations against drug dealers and arms holders in Kharian and adjoining areas, arresting eight suspects and recovering narcotics, liquor and a weapon.

According to a police spokesperson, in Kharian Circle, police arrested a suspect, Imran Zareef, and recovered five litres of liquor. Meanwhile, Saddar Kharian police arrested two suspects, Ali Raza and Adnan, and seized 12 litres of liquor.

City Jalalpur Jattan police arrested two suspects, Inamullah and Muhammad Ali alias Danish and recovered over one kilogram of ice, 1,270 grams of hashish and drug paraphernalia.

CM Punjab orders advanced training for doctors in intravascular surgery

Bureau Report

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed for procurement of advanced medical equipment for intravascular surgery.

She was talking to a delegation of Board of Directors of Oklahoma Heart Hospital Dr. Naeem Tahir Khaili in Lahore today.

She also directed introduction of advanced cardiac treatment procedures at Jinnah Institute of Cardiology and Nawaz Sharif Medical City.

The meeting decided that American doctors would provide training to local doctors in modern intravas-



cular surgery techniques. The meeting also agreed on a proposal to provide training to doctors from Children's Hospital, Nishtar Hospital and Jinnah Hospital.

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Dar departs for China to co-chair Pakistan-China Strategic Dialogue



City Desk

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar on Saturday departed for China on his first foreign trip of the new year.

Dar is scheduled to co-chair the 7th Pakistan-China Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue to be held tomorrow.

The dialogue will review the full spectrum of bilateral cooperation, identify new areas of partnership, and further advance the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership

between Pakistan and China.

The Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue is the highest consultative mechanism between Pakistan and China, providing a structured platform to review the entire spectrum of bilateral cooperation, as well as regional and international developments of mutual interest.

The two sides will also hold detailed consultations on regional security issues. Other key topics on the agenda include expanding collaboration in trade, economic cooperation, health, and education.

Poor governance in KP increases people problems: Engr Amir Muqam

Bureau Report

SHANGLA: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON and President of Pakistan Muslim League (N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, here on Saturday said that poor governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had increased problems of masses and affected services delivery.

"There are serious governance issues in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa that need urgent attention of CM KP," Amir Muqam said.

He expressed these views while addressing, as the chief guest, at a ceremony held at Shangla University for the distribution of laptops among students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme and the inauguration of modern digital smart classrooms at the University.



The Federal Minister distributed laptops to 45 students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme and congratulated the successful students. He also inaugurated modern digital smart classrooms at the university.

On this occasion, Member of the Provincial Assembly Rashad Khan, PML(N) District President Intikhab Alam, Haji Farhad, Sabir Rehman, Zahoor Elahi, Gharib Gul, and other officials were also present.

Islamabad court issues non-bailable arrest warrants for KP CM

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: A district and sessions court in Islamabad on Saturday issued non-bailable arrest warrants for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi after he failed to appear in a case involving misleading accusations against state institutions and damage to their credibility.

Senior Civil Judge Abbas Shah heard the case and ordered Afridi's arrest and production before the court. The hearing was adjourned

until January 17.

The case against the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister has been registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (PECA).

Under the court's orders, all relevant authorities are bound to locate and produce Sohail Afridi before the court.

Further proceedings, including compliance with the arrest warrants, will be taken up at the next hearing.

Federal Ombudsman resolves over 261,000 complaints in 2025

City Desk

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Ombudsman Secretariat has reported significant progress in providing free and swift justice against maladministration in federal government institutions during the year 2025.

According to an official handout issued here Saturday, the Federal Ombudsman decided 261,101 complaints during the year, with 96.8 percent of the decisions fully implemented. The Secretariat stated that 91 percent of the cases were resolved within the legally prescribed period of 60 days.

The Federal Ombudsman also addressed the concerns of 137,152 overseas Pakistanis during the year, ensuring timely relief to citizens residing abroad.

To enhance public access to justice, the Federal Ombudsman organized 166

Open Courts (Khuli Katcheries) and conducted 232 Outreach Complaint Resolution (OCR) programs, enabling thousands of complainants to receive justice closer to their homes. Additionally, under the Informal Resolution of Disputes (IRD) program, 7,356 complaints were amicably resolved.

Overall, the Federal Ombudsman provided relief to more than 400,000 complainants in 2025. The total financial value of decisions issued during the year amounted to Rs. 10.2 billion, all provided without any cost to the complainants.

The press release emphasized that these initiatives are a key part of the Federal Ombudsman's agenda to promote transparency, accountability, and good governance in federal institutions. The Federal Ombudsman continues to function as a public forum for resolving complaints against government departments.