

Saim Ayub shines as Pakistan beat Australia in T20I series opener

Sports Desk

LAHORE: Pakistan opener Saim Ayub's all-round performance helped Green Shirts secure a 22-run victory over Australia in the first T20I of three-match series at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday.

Ayub backed his blazing 40-run knock with two wickets to help the Green Shirts to defend a modest total 168. Set to chase 169, Australia's batting unit faltered and could accumulate 146/8 in 20 overs.

The touring side got off to a briefly flamboyant start to the pursuit, with their opening pair of Matthew Short and stand-in captain raising 21 runs off the first 10 deliveries before Ayub gave Pakistan the breakthrough by dismissing the former, who made a four-ball five. The 23-year-old all-rounder struck again in his next over to get rid of Head, who smashed two sixes and as many fours on his way to a 13-ball 23.

Following Ayub's twin strike, Cameron Green and Matt Renshaw (15) attempted to anchor the run chase by knitting a 40-run partnership for the third wicket, which culminated with the latter's run out on the first delivery of the eighth over.

His dismissal sparked

a collapse as Australia began to lose wickets at an alarming rate, including that of mainstay Green, who remained their top-scorer with a cautious 36 off 31 deliveries, and consequently slipped to 112/8 in 15.4 overs.

No. 10 batter Xavier Bartlett then played a quickfire cameo at the backend, scoring an unbeaten 34 off 25 deliveries, but his efforts were insufficient to steer Australia over the line.

For Pakistan, Abrar Ahmed and Ayub claimed two wickets each, while Shabaz Khan and Mohammad Nawaz chipped in with one apiece.

Pakistan captain Salman Ali Agha's decision to bat first backfired as his team's batting unit could accumulate 168/8 in their allotted 20 overs.

The home side got off to the worst possible start to their innings as they lost opener Sahibzada Farhan for a diamond duck.

Following the early stunner, Saim Ayub and captain Agha stabilised the innings by putting together 74 runs for the second wicket.

Adam Zampa spearheaded Australia's bowling attack with economical bowling figures of 4/24 in his four overs.

His dismissal sparked



LAHORE: Pakistani batter Babar Azam playing shot during the first Twenty International Cricket match between Pakistan and Australia at the Gaddafi Cricket Stadium.

Three terrorists..

Continued from page 1

launched in the area to apprehend the fleeing terrorists. Security personnel had cordoned off the surroundings to ensure that no suspect escaped.

DIG Bannu Region Sajid Khan said that terrorists would be taken to their logical end and that the situation of law and order would be maintained at all costs.

He reaffirmed the resolve of police and security forces to continue operations against anti-state elements to ensure lasting peace in the region.

Armed forces..

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Thursday lauded the police and security forces for conducting a successful operation against militants in Bannu, neutralizing three terrorists and thwarting their subversive designs.

The prime minister paid tribute to the timely and coordinated action by the police and security forces, and underlined that their joint operation prevented a potential threat and safeguarded lives, a Prime Minister's Office news release said.

The COAS & CDF later visited the EME Regional Workshop, where he was briefed on maintenance regime to sustain modern platforms through advanced technologies, indigenization and other combat support measures.

Earlier, upon his arrival at Bahawalpur Garrison, the COAS & CDF was received by Commander Bahawalpur Corps. He also laid a floral wreath at Yadgar-e-Shuhada and offered Fataha, paying tribute to the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs.

CJP consults..

Continued from page 1

water facilities to their Bar. In response, the Chief Justice highlighted Continuing Legal Education programs offered by the Federal Judicial Academy, encouraging young lawyers to benefit from the training. He added that the academy's training calendar is available on its official platform.

Meanwhile, the Manshera Bar delegation raised concerns regarding infrastructure and water availability at the Judicial Complex in their district.

Taking notice of the matter, the Chief Justice directed the relevant Resident Additional Secretary to visit the site and ensure swift resolution of the issues.

The engagement reflects the judiciary's broader commitment to sustainable reforms, improved legal services, and stronger collaboration with the legal community.

CORRIGENDUM
With reference to the previous PRQ No. 3319 dated 19th January, 2026, it is hereby notified for the information of all concerned bidders that:

1. In continuation of the Balochistan Public Procurement Regulatory Authority's directions vide its letter No. BP/PRA/Pr-Sp/G&S/01/2025/1565-70 dated 21 January, 2026, necessary changes have been made relating to the location of delivery of items as per Rule 27, sub-rule (1), the delivery period as per Rule 27, sub-rule (1) the eligibility criteria as per Rule 27, and the tender document fee as per Rule 26, sub-rule (2). Accordingly, the evaluation criteria have been revised/updated as per rules.

The last date for submission of tender documents has been extended up to 05th February, 2026.

All other terms, conditions, specifications, and information of the tender shall remain unchanged as mentioned in the earlier Notice Inviting Tender

**SECTION OFFICER (B&A)
LAW & PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS
DEPARTMENT**
PRQ No.3535/29-1-2026
www.dprgob.pk [@dpr_gob](#) [@dprgob](#) [@dgprebalochistan](#)

TENDER NOTICE
The EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (Building), City QUETTA CWPP&H invites bids from eligible Bidders for supply of following items: TSE-252601960331 Only electronic bid will be submitted, No physical bid is required. Note: In All Procurements of GOB Whether Through Electronic or Manual Bid Submission, It is Mandatory For All Bidders to Get Registered At Electronic Public Procurement System of BPBRA GOB. T/Fee Not Required
S.No Class of Object Bid Security
1 Machinery & Power Plant (Total Item(s) Count: 1) 2%
Procurements shall be made under the Balochistan Public Procurement Rules – 2014. **Eligibility of Bidders:** 2 Assignments of Similar Nature and Complexity 20,000,000 in Previous 3 Years Turn over of at least 20,000,000 PKR in 3 Subsequent Previous Years Presence in Active Tax Payer List Sales Tax Certificate The bidding firm must not be currently blacklisted by any procuring agency of Pakistan JI is not permissible Submission of the required Bid Security In Case Bid Security is not found as required during financial evaluation the bidding firm shall be declared as in-eligible and non-responsive **Procedure Of Procurement:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure **Bid Security:** The bids must accompany Bid Security in the form of Bank Guarantee/Deposit at Call of 2 % specified above in the name of the under-signed from a scheduled bank. **Document:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bpbra.gov.pk **Issuance of tender Documents:** Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bpbra.gov.pk **Last Date of bid submission:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 12 February, 2026 till 11:00 AM through supplier dashboard. **Tender opening:** All tenders will be opened on same day at 12:00 PM on EPPS System Address: whyte Road Quetta Phone no: 0819203188 Email: executiveengineerquettafcy@gmail.com

**EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (Building),
City QUETTA CWPP&H**
PRQ No.3526/29-1-2026
www.dprgob.pk [@dpr_gob](#) [@dprgob](#) [@dgprebalochistan](#)



DUBAI: President Asif Ali Zardari is seen off by His Excellency Abdul Rahman bin Mohamed Al Owais, Cabinet Member and Minister for Federal National Council Affairs of UAE, at the airport.

Balochistan Officers begin study tour Civil service training key to strong governance, says Gujranwala Commissioner

Independent Report

GUJRANWALA: Commissioner Gujranwala Division, Syed Naved Haider Shirazi, emphasized that rigorous and effective training of civil service officers is essential for establishing a responsive, transparent, and people-oriented administrative system. He was speaking at a high-level meeting of assistant commissioners held at the Commissioner's Office Gujranwala in connection with the 1st Inland Study

Tour of Balochistan Civil Service officers. The study tour has been organized under the leadership of Director Civil Services Academy Quetta, Shabana Sultan. The commissioner stated that the tour, comprising 55 officers, is designed to expose Balochistan Civil Service officers to practical and successful models of governance in Punjab, particularly in areas of revenue administration, development

planning, and public service delivery. He directed assistant commissioners to fully share their professional knowledge, field experience, and administrative practices with the visiting officers to ensure meaningful learning outcomes.

Syed Naved Haider Shirazi noted that thorough preparation of training sessions, a well-coordinated schedule, and high-quality briefings are critical for the success of the study tour.

Pakistan committed..

Continued from page 1

added that the revised travel advisory reflects Pakistan as a safer destination for travel.

Andrabi said President Asif Ali Zardari is currently on an official visit to the United Arab Emirates, which reflects the long-standing and brotherly relations between Pakistan and the UAE.

The spokesperson said that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar recently visited Davos, where he held meetings with several global leaders, and during his return journey also held meetings with senior officials during a stopover in

Journalists'..

Continued from page 1

Abu Dhabi. He added that Ishaq Dar also met senior officials of Etisalat in Abu Dhabi.

The Foreign Office spokesperson said that the deputy prime minister held two separate telephone conversations with Iran's Foreign Minister Seyed Abbas Araghchi.

He said that Ishaq Dar also held telephonic contacts with the foreign ministers of Qatar, Egypt and Bangladesh.

The spokesperson further said that a round of bilateral political consultations was held between Pakistan and Belgium, while Pakistan and Ghana also held their first-ever political consultations.

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry talking to Rwandan High Commissioner Hareminana Fatou who called on him.

Pakistan moves to..

Continued from page 1

only viable path to resolving regional disputes, warning that the Middle East could not afford another war that would derail economic development and regional stability.

He said Pakistan had consistently opposed the use of force, interference in internal affairs and the imposition of unilateral sanctions, particularly against "brotherly country" Iran.

"As war clouds hover, Pakistan has always advocated peace and diplomacy to settle all outstanding issues," he said, adding that FM Dar held two telephone conversations this week with his Iranian counterpart to discuss the evolving situation.

Separately at a weekly news briefing, Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi reiterated Pakistan's long-standing position that dialogue and diplomacy remained the mainstay of the situation.

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RAKHNI: MPAs Haji Ali Madad Jattak, Zarak Khan Mandokhail and others addressing public gathering on the eve of establishing Koh-e-Suleman as Division and Rakhnias Divisional Headquarter.

Minister slams disinformation campaign, dismisses social media claims as fabricated

Independent Report

QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering and WASA Balochistan, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, has firmly denied statements circulating on social media that are being falsely attributed to him, terming them baseless, misleading, and entirely fabricated.

In a clarification issued through the minister's spokesperson, it was stated that the news items and remarks being shared

under the name of Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran did not originate from him or his office. The spokesperson emphasized that such claims have no connection whatsoever with the minister's official views, policies, or decisions.

The spokesperson further explained that the minister's authentic stance is conveyed exclusively through official press releases, recognized and credible media outlets, and verified social media platforms.



QUETTA: Secretary Livestock Muhammad Tayab Lehi and Secretary Women Development Sara Atta presenting shield to Provincial Minister for Livestock Sardar Faisal Khan Jamali.

PPAF supporting climate resilient community development in Balochistan

KILLA SAIFULLAH (APP): Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF), through its partner organizations, is playing a vital role in restoring essential social services and strengthening climate resilience in flood-affected communities across Pakistan.

The devastating floods of 2022 severely disrupted access to health, education, water and sanitation, and livelihoods in many vulnerable districts.

In response, PPAF launched the Restoring Social Services and Climate Resilience (RSSCR)

project, a two-year initiative aimed at rebuilding damaged infrastructure, improving service delivery, and enhancing communities' ability to cope with future climate-related shocks.

Funded by PPAF and implemented through its partner organizations, the project focuses on addressing critical gaps in social services by working on both the supply and demand sides.

It also emphasizes citizen engagement with local governments and the promotion of local leadership to ensure climate-resilient and



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan presenting bouquet to Ex-DGPR Muhammad Noor Khetran.

Musakhel administration takes firm stance on border disputes with Barkhan

Independent Report

MUSAKHEL: Deputy Commissioner Musakhel, Abdul Razaq Khajak, convened a meeting with tribal elders from Tehsil Kangri to address concerns related to law and order, regional stability, and border issues with Barkhan District.

During the discussions, the elders raised complaints about alleged encroachments by Barkhan authorities into Musakhel's territorial areas, noting that these disputes were causing local unrest and required immediate attention.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razaq Khajak assured the delegation that the district administration is fully committed to protecting Musakhel's territorial

boundaries. He confirmed that the encroachment issue would be formally addressed with the relevant authorities and the Barkhan administration to ensure that boundaries are clearly defined based on ground realities.

The deputy commissioner stressed that the district administration's approach would prioritize public interest while remaining fully compliant with legal frameworks and principles of justice.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the elders of Tehsil Kangri expressed confidence in the administration's efforts and pledged their full cooperation to maintain peace, uphold law and order, and reinforce government authority in the region.



QUETTA: Members of Balochistan Grand Alliance hold protest for demands on Jinnah Road in Quetta.

Notice for Change of Address

It is hereby notified for general information that the address of the firm Build Max Construction Co, PEC Constructor License No. C4/20864, has been changed as under:

Old Address: House No 2 Ward No 06, Ghousia Road Sialkot Cantt Sialkot
New Address: Seed Noor House Shekhan Town Zohb, Balochistan, Pakistan all concerned are requested to note this change.

Build Max Construction Co

Loralai mobilizes against polio as district admin kicks off Door-to-Door vaccination drive

Independent Report

LORALAI: An anti-polio vaccination campaign was officially launched in Loralai, with Deputy Commissioner Miran Baloch inaugurating the drive by administering polio drops to children, marking the start of intensified efforts to protect young lives from the crippling disease.

A ceremony was organized in this connection, which was attended by Deputy District Health Officer Dr Shah Zaman Hamzai, N-Staff Dr Farhan, Divisional Coordinator Dr Zarak Khan, Focal Person Muhammad Hashim Kakar, Mukhtar Ahmed Luni, officials of the Health Department, representatives of the Polio Programme, security personnel, and polio workers.

Addressing the par-

cial Welfare Ismatullah Qureshi, Additional Secretary for Social Welfare, Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai, announced that concrete steps are being taken to further strengthen transparency and accountability in the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund (BPEF), a flagship initiative providing free medical treatment to financially vulnerable patients suffering from expensive and critical illnesses.

He made these remarks while chairing the 24th meeting of the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund Board held on Thursday. The session was attended by Secretary So-

cial Welfare Ismatullah Qureshi, Additional Secretary for Social Welfare, Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai, announced that concrete steps are being taken to further strengthen transparency and accountability in the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund (BPEF), a flagship initiative providing free medical treatment to financially vulnerable patients suffering from expensive and critical illnesses.

During the meeting, Progarmme Director Sameena Ehsan Babch presented a comprehensive overview of cases previously supported by the fund. These included treatments for cancer, cardiac

ailments, implants and limb-saving surgeries, end-stage renal disease and dialysis, hepatitis, liver transplants, thalassemia, cochlear implants, and other serious health conditions, along with details of inspections of panel hospitals.

The board was informed that 404 cases had been approved in the previous meeting with a total financial implication of Rs 930 million. Of this amount, Rs 269 million had already been utilized for the treatment of 321 patients, while medical care for the remaining 83 cases was still underway.

Members were further briefed that 1,054 new

cases, carrying an estimated cost of Rs 2.72 billion, were placed before the board and approved. It was also disclosed that Rs 520 million held by panel hospitals under the Endowment Fund had been recovered, out of which Rs 242 million had been adjusted against approved cases, while the remaining amount was sanctioned for adjustment.

The meeting was told that medicines worth Rs 200 million had already been procured, raising the total number of beneficiaries to 492 patients. However, an additional Rs 200 million was required to meet further medicine requirements, which the

Programme Director was also directed to complete the necessary formalities for the inclusion of Arya Hospital in the panel of approved hospitals.

Haji Wali Muhammad Noorzai informed participants that discussions had also taken place with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, who assured full support for further strengthening the fund. Stressing that public health remains a top priority, he said the Balochistan Public Endowment Fund represents a public trust and its transparent, efficient, and responsible utilization is a collective obligation of all concerned.

GoB moves to tighten oversight of public endowment fund as billions approved for lifesaving treatment

Independent Report

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Khetran denounces killing of Colonel Imran, promises firm action against terrorists

Independent Report

QUETTA: Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran expressed deep sorrow over the killing of Colonel Imran in a shooting by unidentified assailants in Dera Ismail Khan, describing the officer's martyrdom as an irreparable loss for the nation. In his condolence message, the minister paid tribute to Colonel Imran's dedicated ser-

vice to the country, affirming that the sacrifices of martyrs would never be forgotten. He stated that the entire nation shares in the grief over this tragic incident.

Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran underscored the government's unwavering support for the Pakistan Army and law enforcement agencies in the ongoing fight against terrorism. He vowed that terrorist ele-

ments would be brought to justice and that anti-state actors would face strict accountability, stressing that the war on terrorism will continue until its objectives are fully achieved.

The minister also conveyed his prayers for the speedy recovery of those injured in the attack and prayed that Almighty Allah grant patience and strength to the bereaved family of the martyr.

During the ceremony, Executive Engineer Roads, Saryab Division, Habib Ahmed, and other officials briefed the secretary on construction progress, quality, and remaining tasks. Babar Khan directed that the Gah Khan Flyover be opened to traffic within 15 days to immediately alleviate congestion of both flyover projects. The Gah Khan Flyover is approaching its final phase, while work on the Customs Flyover is advancing rapidly. Both structures are expected to ease congestion around major commercial

centers, including Hazar Ganji Market, and improve connectivity with Sindh, Punjab, and other parts of the province.

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During the ceremony, the provincial minister

lauded Saira Atta's dedication and professional excellence, highlighting the pivotal role of the Women Development Department in advancing women's rights and fostering social development throughout the province.

Secretary Livestock Muhammad Tayab Lehi underscored the importance of strengthening cooperation between departments to enhance the effectiveness of welfare initiatives and ensure sustained progress in social development pro-

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Daily Voice of Masses
Independent

Friday January 30, 2026

Super tax

The Federal Constitutional Court's short order upholding the legality of the contentious super tax on high-earning individuals and businesses signifies an important turn in Pakistan's struggle between fiscal expediency and tax certainty.

The FCC judgement settles more than 2,200 pending cases and secures recovery of an estimated Rs310bn in unpaid tax revenues — no doubt, a big relief for a fiscally strained state. Only the petroleum exploration sector has been granted relief because even a constitutionally valid fiscal step cannot be arbitrarily enforced where it risks breaching contractual obligations and triggering international arbitration.

The ruling reaffirms parliament's exclusive authority to impose taxes, declaring that earlier high court interventions staying super tax recoveries amounted to judicial overreach. A precedent has thus been set that is likely to deter future judicial interference in tax collection.

However, the judgement does not address the question of whether legal certainty on a contentious tax measure can be equated with tax equity and sound economic policy. The super tax's evolution from a temporary levy to a permanent feature of the tax regime shows it cannot. Introduced in 2015 as a one-time levy to fund the rehabilitation of people displaced by the Zarb-i-Azb military operation in KP, the tax was repeatedly extended and expanded from select sectors to virtually the entire corporate landscape, as well as high-income individuals to bolster FBR collections. This gradual institutionalisation of an emergency levy as a permanent revenue spinner signals fiscal compulsions originating from the state's failure to broaden the tax base. The levy confirms the state's inability to effectively bring untaxed or undertaxed segments — notably large parts of retail, real estate and agriculture — into the net.

No wonder successive governments have either turned to a narrow pool of documented taxpayers — extracting more from those already compliant — or relied on more borrowings to finance and sustain their budgets. It is rightly feared by compliant businesses that the FCC decision may embolden the state to continue down this path. In other words, the ruling might have brought legal finality on the impugned levy but it has also exposed deep structural flaws in the taxation framework. A tax system dependent on easy-to-collect withholding taxes, surcharges and super taxes is neither equitable nor sustainable. Without expansion of the tax base, improved enforcement and compliance and a shift away from stop-gap revenue measures, levies like the super tax risk becoming a permanent substitute for tax reform. It may suit the FBR but is costly for economic growth and investment. The FCC has spoken on the constitutionality and legality of the super tax. The answer to the question on how to fix the broken tax system has to come from our political leadership.

Asif Durran

The announcement by the Afghan Taliban regime of a new penal code to govern their country's criminal justice system should concern not only the Afghans but anyone who is attentive to the relationship between law, power and social order. What has emerged from Afghanistan through official statements and media reporting is not a coherent legal framework aimed at justice or social stability. Rather, it reflects a deliberate regression towards pre-modern norms that institutionalise inequality, undermine accountability and legitimise coercion under the guise of religious authority.

A penal code is intended to be the backbone of the legal system. As such, it defines crimes and prescribes punishments. But most importantly, it signals who is equal before the law. Against that measure, the proposed framework fails at the foundational level.

A most disturbing feature of the code is the apparent exemption given to religious scholars and the

ruling elites from prosecution, or their insulation from ordinary judicial processes. Not only is this kind of selectivity incompatible with the principles of modern constitutionalism, it also contradicts the very Islamic legal tradition that the Afghan Taliban claim to uphold. Classical Islamic jurisprudence is rooted in the principle that no individual, regardless of his or her status or piety, is above the law. The insistence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on equality before justice is a well-established axiom across Islamic legal schools.

By putting clerical authorities beyond legal scrutiny, the Taliban are not reviving religious law but are transforming it into an instrument of clerical absolutism. Historically, legal systems that fuse unchecked religious authority with political power have tended towards arbitrariness and abuse. The law is no longer a mechanism of justice; instead, it turns into a means of enforcing obedience.

What is just as troubling is the reported recognition of social categories that resemble 'slaves' or, in other words, permanently

subordinate classes that are subject to differential punishment. This kind of stratification goes against the fundamental principles of justice across legal traditions. While historical Islamic societies grappled with the legacy of slavery, Islamic jurisprudence evolved mechanisms which were aimed at restriction and gradual elimination — and not the creation of new, legally entrenched underclasses.

From a sociological perspective, penal systems that codify inequality generate deep and lasting instability. They erode social cohesion, delegitimise authority, and foster resentment. No society in the modern world has achieved stability by formally declaring that some people are less protected by the law than others.

Perhaps the most alarming element of the Taliban's penal framework is the declaration that nine-year-old girls are legally women eligible for marriage. While child marriage has existed in Afghanistan's past (as it has in many traditional societies) the decision to codify it into a contemporary legal system is not cul-

tural inevitability; it is political choice.

Scholarly discourse in Islam does not equate biological age with moral or legal adulthood. Classical jurists emphasised rush (intellectual maturity), welfare (maslahah) and consent as essential components of marriage. Contemporary Muslim scholarship has overwhelmingly recognised that child marriage is harmful and not aligned with religious ethics. The Taliban's interpretation represents a selective reading of tradition, stripped of its moral safeguards.

The economic context matters. In many parts of Afghanistan, the practice of walwar (whereby families receive money in exchange for marrying off daughters) has long commodified girls. Afghan reformers, clerics and civil society actors have criticised this practice for decades. Enshrining it in law does not preserve culture; it perpetuates exploitation and poverty while entrenching gender-based violence.

Beyond individual provisions, the broader structure of the penal code reveals a troubling philosophy of governance. Women

and girls are reduced to legal dependents without agency, while male guardians, clerics and enforcers are granted expansive authority. This is not merely a gender issue; it is a systemic one. Societies that deny half their population legal autonomy inevitably suffer economic stagnation, social decay and moral erosion.

Comparative legal research has demonstrated consistently that legal systems which are exclusionary correspond with greater rates of violence, poverty and institutional collapse. Afghanistan has already been devastated by decades of war and isolation, and it cannot absorb the long-term consequences of such regression.

Seen in this context, the penal system appears to be designed less to deliver justice than to discipline society by employing fear and hierarchy. Discretionary power replaces legal protections and judicial independence submits to clerical decree. Accountability flows downward; and not in the opposite direction.

If we compare the situation to that in other coun-

tries, it is clear that even states that incorporate elements of Islamic criminal law do so within a framework that includes procedural safeguards, evidentiary standards and appellate mechanisms. The Taliban's approach is different to this, not because it is 'more Islamic', but because it is less legal.

Just as stark are the international implications. A penal code that basically institutionalises discrimination, child marriage and immunity for the elite will only isolate Afghanistan further, complicating humanitarian engagement and deepening sanctions-related pressures. The highest cost will not be borne by the international community but by ordinary Afghans who are trapped in a system that offers them neither justice nor recourse.

How Afghan society responds is not certain. Some may endure in silence; others may resist quietly or choose pragmatism. History suggests, however, that legal systems that are built on coercion instead of consent rarely endure. Obedience imposed through fear is brittle, and legitimacy without justice is temporary.

Rebuilding reserves**Khurram Husain**

The State Bank left the interest rate unchanged this week, surprising some observers, but it had good reason to do so. In the narrative it built to support its decision, the State Bank effectively argued that that battle against inflation has been won, but the battle to rebuild the external sector remains a work in progress despite significant strides.

These are the two large battles in the war the country waged against economic volatility since July 2023. I use that date because that is when Pakistan had veered perilously close to the edge of a sovereign default and was rescued by an extraordinary bailout arranged by the IMF, China, Saudi Arabia and the UAE. Had that bailout not come, the country was going to shut down, perhaps within weeks. We move on too fast and forget too much in this country.

Two tasks were of the utmost urgency starting then. First was to

douse the flames of the inflation that had engulfed the country since early 2021, rising to an unprecedented inferno by May 2023. Never had we seen inflation reach 38 per cent year on year like we did that month. And never had we seen devaluations of the sort that began to hit in 2021. By the time that wave of devaluations peaked a few years later, the dollar had nearly tripled in value against the rupee. Never have we seen a devaluation of this magnitude in such a short period of time.

Two successive IMF programmes have been required to pull back from the brink of this near catastrophic volatility that ran between 2022 and 2023. The first was the Stand-by Arrangement in July 2023, and the second was the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) in September 2024. The latter programme is still running, and going by the numbers it contains, Pakistan is still far from being out of danger.

When the EFF began

Pakistan's Net Interna-

tional Reserves (NIR) were negative \$11 billion.

If you took all the money

Pakistan owed in the short term out of the re-

ported foreign exchange

reserves, you were left

\$11bn in the hole. That's

how dire the situation

was. This number had

gone negative in 2017 for

the first time after a few

decades, and had barely

managed to reach the

zero line a few years later,

when it plunged once

again when the external

sector drains of the PIT's

much-vaunted growth

rates began.

The Fund programme set a strin-

gent timeline for raising

this figure, slowly but

surely, back up to the zero

line. At the time of signing,

the Fund targeted that

Pakistan's NIR

should break into positive

territory by 2028, four

years into the future.

Based on that timeline,

Pakistan is slightly ahead

of the curve. By now the

NIR were supposed to be

aiming for a target of

negative \$7.5bn. The data

shows that they were at

negative \$6.6bn by

September of 2025 and

could realistically touch negative \$4.8bn by June of this year, if things keep moving as they are.

This is good news certainly. But notice the figure is still negative, meaning all the dollars and gold and other re-

serve assets that the country has are still over-

shadowed by the claims

that non-residents have

on the country. To put it

simply, we owe more than

what we have when it

comes to foreign ex-

change, and while that is

the case, the country

cannot be said to be

ready to grow.

A war began in July

2023. A war against cata-

strophic economic vola-

tility. That volatility was

showing up in two areas:

inflation and foreign ex-

change depletion. Each

front required a full-

fledged battle to put the

fire out. Against inflation

they won the battle many

months ago. But against

the depletion of foreign

exchange reserves, the

battle is still on.

This is probably one

of the reasons why the

State Bank is so aggres-

sive in 'buying' dollars

from the banks. I put the word buying in quotation marks because banks don't always get to de-

cidate the price at which they will sell these dollars, and in some cases they don't even get to de-

cide whether they will sell or not. What is puzzling, however, is the sheer zeal with which this goal is being pursued, to the point where they are over-

performing on the targets set by the IMF. In September and October of 2025, for example, they bought up more than a billion dollars each month. This is unusual.

The long hard slog

to bring the foreign ex-

change reserves back

into positive territory is

going to continue for at

least another year to 18

months — despite the

over-performance so far.

To do this, it is necessary

not only to accumulate

reserves, but also to re-

turn the liabilities that were

built up during the period

of the great volatility of

2022 and 2023. The im-

provement is happening

but it is far from over. And

the last thing the econo-

my can afford at

this time is a resurgence of the trade deficit to act as a drain on the reserves.

This is what the State Bank pointed to in its monetary policy announcement. It pointed out that "economic activity continues to gain momentum faster than anticipated" and that "the trade deficit has widened in the wake of a substantial increase in imports". These trends are expected to gather more momentum, it says, upgrading its growth forecast slightly to the 3.75-4.75 range, with the possibility that "[t]his economic momentum is likely to strengthen further in FY27".

The economy has started showing signs of an incipient revival with the result that the current account immediately registered a deficit of \$1.2bn in from July to December. This is manageable. But the wheels can come off very fast if this trend picks up. So the State Bank has done the right thing to not juice the trajectory further. The battle to rebuild reserves is still on.

Towering hubris**F.S. Ajazuddin**

The First World has Davos, the Middle World has United Nations conferences, and the Third World has fests. Davos, UN meets and fests serve as a speaker's corner where academics, intellectuals, politicians (serving and retired), movers and shakers collect to ventilate their opinions. Much carbon dioxide is emitted, much 'sound and fury' released, but all too often they signify nothing.

This year, the World Economic Forum at Davos was hijacked by President Donald Trump. Around 80 years ago, in February 1945, a triumvirate consisting of US president Franklin D. Roosevelt, British prime minister Winston Churchill and USSR general secretary Joseph Stalin met to delineate the contours of post-war Europe. Together, they midwifed the UN. Trump, by announcing his Board of Peace (BoP) at Davos, effectively trashed Yalta and in a side-swipe also emasculated the UN.</

Rwandan Trade Minister says: Rwanda opens for business, investment for Pakistani entrepreneurs

Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 to open new chapter in Pakistan, Rwanda trade ties: Jam Kamal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Rwanda has declared itself fully open for business and investment for the Pakistani business community, inviting stronger engagement between entrepreneurs, business chambers of commerce, and investors of both countries.

Minister of Trade and Industry of the Republic of Rwanda, Prudence Sebahizi, stated this while addressing the Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 in Pakistan held at a local hotel on Thursday.

The minister emphasized that Rwanda offers a highly business-friendly environment and serves as a strategic hub for regional trade in Africa.

The Rwandan Trade Minister highlighted that Rwanda's central location provides access to a vast African market of nearly 1.5 billion consumers.

He noted that goods

produced in Rwanda can be exported across African markets without hindrance, making the country an ideal gateway for Pakistani businesses seeking to enter Africa.

Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, on Thursday said that the "Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 in Pakistan" will give a new dimension to cultural and trade partnership between Pakistan and Rwanda, reflecting a growing commitment to strengthening bilateral economic ties.

Speaking in his keynote address at the Rwanda Coffee Festival, the Minister emphasized Pakistan's keen interest in expanding trade relations with Rwanda, particularly through increased imports of coffee and tea.

He noted that such ini-

tatives would help foster closer business and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Calling for enhanced cooperation, Sebahizi said Rwanda is keen to import high-quality Pakistani rice, textiles, and pharmaceutical products, sectors where Pakistan holds strong competitive advantages.

He added that in Rwanda, Pakistani rice, particularly "Basmati" is widely recognized for its superior quality.

The Minister described the Rwanda Coffee Festival as a symbol of resilience, hard work, and cultural pride, reflecting the strong potential for promoting both business and cultural ties between Pakistan and Rwanda.

"Each cup of Rwandan coffee tells a story of resilience, hard work, and dedication of our farmers," he remarked.

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EU top diplomat urges 'more European' NATO as Trump upends ties

BRUSSELS (AFP/APP): Europe must step up efforts on defence and play a bigger role in NATO as US President Donald Trump has "shaken the transatlantic relationship to its foundation", EU top diplomat Kaja Kallas said Wednesday. "Let me be clear: we want strong transatlantic ties. The US will remain Europe's partner and ally. But Europe needs to adapt to the new realities. Europe is no longer Washington's primary centre of gravity," Kallas told a defence conference in Brussels.

"This shift has been ongoing for a while. It is structural, not temporary. It means that Europe must step up—no great power in history has outsource its survival and survived."

Trump rocked European allies this month by threatening to seize Greenland from NATO and EU member Denmark—before eventually backing off.



Residents stand next to burned cars near an apartment building damaged during Russian missile strikes in Zaporizhzhia.

Greenland's elite dogsled unit patrols desolate, icy Arctic

COPENHAGEN (AFP/APP): Donald Trump has ridiculed Denmark's defence of Greenland as amounting to "two dogsleds", but the Sirius Dogsled Patrol is no joke: the elite navy unit works in extreme conditions where only the toughest survive. Denmark has allocated billions to beef up security of its vast Arctic island, but when it comes to policing the frozen wilderness of northern and eastern Greenland in winter, it relies on six low-tech two-man teams with a dozen dogs each. Between January and June, when the sun begins to reappear after falling below the horizon for two months, the dogsled patrols set off for four to five months, in temperatures that can drop to -40C (-40F) and where they may

not encounter another soul. They skialongside the dogs, covering around 30 kilomètres (19 miles) a day.

The dogs pull a 500-kilo (1,100-pound) sled packed with tents specially designed for the harsh weather, food supplies, fuel and other provisions to last them to the nearest of the 50 or so supply depots dotted around the region, typically located 7-10 days' journey apart.

The patrol monitors an area measuring 160,000 square kilometres (60,000 square miles)—the size of France and Spain.

"The reason we use a dog sled, rather than a snowmobile, is that the sled and dogs are durable. We can operate for a very, very long time over enormous distances in extremely isolated environments."

Heavy security near Niger capital's airport after gunfire, blasts

NIAMEY (AFP/APP): Security forces were deployed around the international airport in Niger's capital on Thursday after heavy gunfire and explosions erupted overnight in what several observers said bore the hallmark of a militant attack. Niger, a Sahelian country regularly hit by militant violence, has been led for more than two years by Abdourahamane Tiani, the head of a junta that overthrew the elected civilian president in 2023. The shooting began shortly after midnight, according to residents of a neighbourhood near the airport in Niamey. Calm returned two hours later, they told AFP.

Videos filmed by local people showed streaks of light in the sky with the sound of loud explosions, while other images showed flames several metres high and charred cars.

The capital's Diori

Hamani International Airporhouses an air force base and is located about 10 kilometres (six miles) from the presidential palace.

A heavy security deployment was seen early Thursday in the area of the airport, where police and soldiers controlled access, especially to the military base, and an armoured vehicle was stationed, an AFP journalist saw.

It was not immediately clear what had caused the gunfire and whether there were any casualties.

Residents recounted their nighttime "fear" including from "roofs that were shaking", as people in the capital went about their normal business early on Thursday. The country's largest international airport is the headquarters of a joint force created by Niger, Burkina Faso and Mali to combat militant groups waging deadly violence in the region.



Storm Kristin had 'caused significant damage across several parts of the country.'

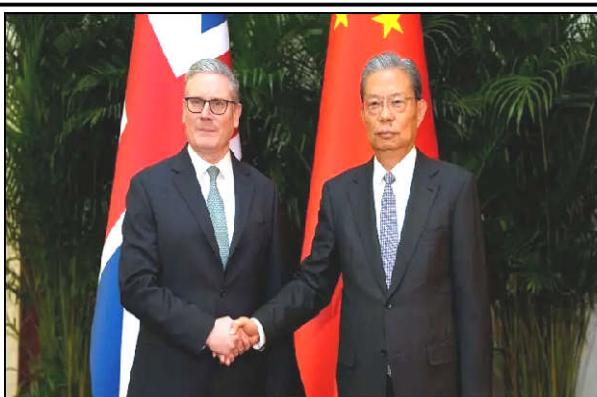
The EU last year also launched a raft of initiatives that it says could see its members plough an additional 800 billion euros into defence.

Washington meanwhile has said it wants European allies to take over more responsibility for the conventional defence of the continent as US focus switches to other threats like China.

"The risk of a full-blown return to coercive power politics, spheres of influence and a world where might makes right, is very real," Kallas said.

She insisted Europe "must acknowledge that this tectonic shift is here to stay. And to act with urgency."

Kallas' comments come after NATO chief Mark Rutte told EU lawmakers to "keep on dreaming" if they thought Europe could defend itself without the United States.



Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer shakes hands with National People's Congress Chairman Zhao Leji at the Great Hall of the People in Beijing, China.

Starmer, Xi stress need for stronger UK-China ties to face global headwinds

BEIJING (AFP/APP): Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer and Chinese leader Xi Jinping stressed the need for closer relations between their countries in order to face geopolitical headwinds, as the two met in Beijing on Thursday.

Starmer's visit to China is the first by a British prime minister since 2018 and follows a slew of Western leaders seeking a rapprochement with Beijing recently, pivoting from an increasingly unpredictable United States.

The leaders met at the

opulent Great Hall of the People, with Starmer telling Xi during their meeting that China is a "vital player on the global stage".

"It's vital to build a more sophisticated relationship where we identify opportunities to collaborate, but also allow a meaningful dialogue on areas where we disagree," Starmer told Xi.

Xi also stressed the need for stronger ties with a "long-term view" in the context of what he called a "complex" international situation.

The leaders met at the

UK and the UK

Fifteen dead, including lawmaker, in Colombia plane crash

BOGOTÁ (AFP/APP): An airplane carrying 15 people, including a lawmaker, crashed near Colombia's border with Venezuela on Wednesday, killing all passengers and crew, Colombia's civil aviation authority said.

The plane, which was operated by state airline Satena, took off from the border city of Cucuta and lost contact with control towers shortly before it was due to land in nearby Ocana around noon (1700GMT). "There are no sur-

vivors," an official from the aviation authority told AFP.

There were 13 passengers and two crew members aboard.

The Cucuta area is mountainous with highly changeable weather and swaths are controlled by Colombia's largest guerrilla group, the National Liberation Army, better known by its Spanish acronym ELN.

The government deployed the Air Force to search for the plane and recover the bodies.



US President Donald wants to create conditions for 'regime change' after crackdown crushed a nationwide protest movement earlier this month. Above, anti-US rhetoric on a billboard in Tehran.

US judge blocks Trump admin from detaining refugees in Minnesota

MINNEAPOLIS (AFP/APP): A US federal judge temporarily blocked the Trump administration on Wednesday from detaining refugees in Minnesota awaiting permanent resident status and ordered the release of those in detention. President Donald Trump has sent thousands of federal immigration agents to the Democratic state as part of a sweeping crackdown that has sparked outrage over the deaths of two US citizens at the hands of officers.

Immigration authorities launched a program this month to re-examine the legal status of the ap-

proximately 5,600 refugees in Minnesota who have not yet been given green cards. In his order Wednesday, US District Judge John Tunheim said that the Trump administration's

action could continue to enforce immigration laws and review refugees' status, but that it must do so "without arresting and detaining refugees."

Refugees have a legal right to be in the United States, a right to live peacefully—and importantly, a right not to be subjected to the terror of being arrested and detained without warrants.

Ghana moves to rewrite mining laws for bigger share of gold revenues

ACCRA (AFP/APP): Ghana is preparing to overhaul its mining laws to increase its share of the revenues generated by the surge in the precious metal's price, sparking concern among foreign mining companies in Africa's top gold producer.

By revising its mining code, which currently offers foreign mining firms favourable tax and royalty terms, leaving the state with a limited stake, Ghana is following in the footsteps of other African countries.

They are looking to tighten control over natural

Russia's sanctioned oil firm Lukoil to sell foreign assets to Carlyle

MOSCOW (AFP/APP): Russia's oil giant Lukoil, sanctioned by Washington over the Ukraine war, said Thursday that it would sell its foreign assets to the US investment firm The Carlyle Group.

At the end of October 2025, in order to put pressure on Russia's state finances, the United States added Moscow's two largest oil producers, Lukoil and Rosneft, to its blacklist of sanctioned entities.

Companies working with the Russian giants risk secondary sanctions that would deny them access to US banks, traders, transporters, and insurers—the backbone of the commodities market.

Lukoil "informs that it signed an agreement with US investment company Carlyle on the sale of LUKOIL International GmbH," Russia's second-biggest oil producer said, without disclosing the deal's value.

The deal excluded assets in Kazakhstan and still requires US Treasury approval, Lukoil said, adding that it was still negotiating with other investors.

The US had initially

given the company one month to sell the holdings but then gradually extended it as negotiations dragged on.

Lukoil shares rose 3.5 percent on the news, according to the Moscow stock exchange.

SpaceX plans to launch solar powered AI data center satellites

resources as global demand for gold and critical minerals such as cobalt soars.

Among those that have recently introduced new mining laws are the Democratic Republic of Congo, Mali and Tanzania.

Gold prices have skyrocketed recently, jumping more than 65 percent in 2025, climbing to fresh records above \$5,100 on Monday. "What we have since 2014 is a policy that has not been reviewed," Isaac Andrews Tandoh, acting chief executive officer of the Minerals Commission, told AFP.

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SpaceX plans to launch solar powered AI data center satellites

Ahsan chairs mid-year review meeting of Annual Plan 2025-26

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Thursday chair the mid-year review meeting of the Annual Plan 2025-26, setting a new tradition to strengthen planning, monitoring, and implementation mechanisms.

"Traditionally, this process was conducted on an annual basis; however, to make it more effective and results-oriented, it has now been decided that the Annual Development Plan will be reviewed on a quarterly basis to ensure timely achievement of national objectives," he said while addressing the meeting.

The meeting was attended by Secretaries of all Ministries and Divisions, senior officials, members of the Planning Commiss-

sion, and relevant stakeholders including Provincial government representatives.

The minister emphasized that governance was not merely about performance delivery, but about building institutional capacity to not only achieve defined targets but also to continuously improve future goals.

He said the Annual Development Plan served as a guiding framework for the entire economy and provides a clear pathway toward achieving the country's five-year development objectives.

Highlighting the government's long-term vision, Ahsan Iqbal stated that under the "URAAN Pakistan" initiative, the national target has been set to transform Pakistan into a "one

trillion-dollar economy by 2035.

He added that regular review meetings would be held to monitor progress on these goals and ensure effective implementation.

The minister further noted that following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, most social and economic sectors fall under provincial jurisdiction; therefore, close coordination between the federation and provinces is essential for achieving national economic targets.

He identified agriculture, services, Information Technology and particularly the social sector as key drivers of economic performance, stressing that sustainable economic growth is not possible without improving productivity in these sectors.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Ahsan Iqbal, chairing the Mid-Year Review Meeting of the Annual Plan 2025-26.

Dialogue opt always available but PTI politicizing threatens KP: Aqeel

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister of State for Law and Justice Barrister Aqeel Malik Thursday reiterated that the dialogue option remains on the table but warned that PTI's negative political narrative risks destabilizing governance in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

While speaking to a local media channel, he strongly criticized the statements made by the Chief Minister of Khyber

Pakhtunkhwa, stating that such remarks were unnecessarily politicized and lacked a constructive approach toward government.

He emphasized that turning administrative matters into political controversies undermines institutional stability and warned that such practices could create serious challenges for effective governance in the province.

President departs for Pakistan after concluding UAE visit

DUBAI (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday departed for Pakistan after completing a four-day official visit to the United Arab Emirates aimed at strengthening bilateral ties and economic cooperation.

At Dubai Airport, the president was seen off by UAE Minister of State Abdul Rahman bin Mohammed Al Owais, Pakistan's Ambassador to the UAE, the UAE's Ambassador to Pakistan, and the Consul General of Pakistan in Dubai, a Presidency's news release said.

During the visit, President Zardari held important meetings with UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan and Prime Minister Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum. The discussions focused on enhancing bilateral relations, expanding economic partnership, and exploring avenues for deeper cooperation. The two sides also exchanged views on progress in defence and security cooperation, as well as strengthening people-to-people contacts, reflecting the longstanding fraternal ties between Pakistan and the UAE.

Pakistan, Egypt strengthen bilateral ties with focus on health sector cooperation

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ambassador of the Arab Republic of Egypt to Pakistan called on the Federal Minister for Health, Syed Mustafa Kamal, to discuss matters of mutual interest with a particular focus on cooperation in the health sector.

During the meeting, both sides exchanged views on strengthening bilateral collaboration, including enhanced cooperation in the pharmaceutical sector and capacity building. The

progress made so far in these areas was reviewed, and avenues for further expanding collaboration were explored.

The Federal Minister underscored that Pakistan and Egypt share strong, longstanding, and brotherly relations, rooted in mutual respect and shared values.

He noted that cooperation in the health sector has emerged as a key pillar of bilateral relations between the two countries.



QUETTA: Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar inspecting the various departments during his visit to Mir Abdul Ghafoor Teaching Hospital.

Quetta's chaotic growth under scrutiny as Commissioner orders swift finalization of master plan

Independent Report QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division, Shahzad Khan Kakar, has instructed concerned authorities to promptly complete the Quetta Master Plan and ensure its strict execution to control haphazard urban growth and improve the delivery of basic civic services to the city's residents.

He issued these directives while chairing a meeting of the Urban Planning and Designing Committee, which was attended by Administrator Metropolitan Corporation Quetta Majeed ur Rehman Qambrani, SSP Traffic Quetta Mirza Bilal Hassan, Deputy Project Director QDP Abid Mahmood, Director QDA Asif Ali, DSP Traffic Saifullah Durrani, SP City Quetta Noman Zafar, Chief Architect

Abdul Aziz Zehri, and officials from QDA, BPA, and other relevant departments.

The meeting conducted an in-depth review of the formulation and execution framework of the Quetta Master Plan. Participants examined key urban challenges, including enforcement of building regulations, drainage infrastructure, parking arrangements, and both ongoing and proposed development schemes across the city.

Emphasizing the need for discipline in urban construction, the commissioner directed that building codes must be enforced without exception and that all future constructions should mandatorily include sufficient parking facilities. He further ordered that comprehensive drainage solutions be integrated into the mas-

ter plan to permanently address Quetta's persistent waterlogging problems and safeguard the city against urban flooding.

Decisions were also taken to strengthen institutional oversight, with the Administrator Metropolitan Corporation included in the ACS Standing Committee, while the SSP Traffic and Chief Architect were inducted into the Technical Committee. The move aims to ensure that all development projects remain aligned with traffic management needs, civic requirements, and established technical standards, thereby supporting sustainable urban growth. Shahzad Khan Kakar also directed all concerned departments to improve coordination among themselves and maintain transparency at every stage of planning.



Chief of Army Staff & Chief of Defence Forces, Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, addresses troops at Bahawalpur Garrison.

Pak backs US-led Board of Peace's UNSC-mandate to chart path to Palestinian self-determination

UNITED NATIONS (APP): Pakistan told UN Security Council Wednesday that it has joined the US-led Board of Peace (BoP) in support its mandate under the 15-member body's resolution 2803 that reaffirms its commitment to efforts aimed at achieving a lasting peace based on Palestinian self-determination and statehood in accordance with international law.

"The international community, particularly this Council, bears the responsibility to translate renewed engagement into measurable change on the ground for the betterment of the Palestinian people," Ambassador Asim Iftikhar Ahmad, permanent representative of Pakistan to the UN, said during a debate on the situation in the Middle East, including the Palestinian Question, which coincided with the announcement of the 26-member Board.

He said the unresolved Palestinian question remains at the core of instability in the Middle East, stressing that decades of Israeli occupation have resulted in dispossession, repression and the denial of the Palestinian people's right to self-determination.

Noting that the commencement of the second phase of the Peace Plan – including the establishment

of the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza (NCAG), and the establishment of the BoP and Executive Committee – were "important steps," the Pakistani envoy said, these measures should now help consolidate the ceasefire, secure a permanent cessation of hostilities, facilitate transitional arrangements, enable recovery and reconstruction, ensure the provision of humanitarian assistance at scale, and prepare the ground for a sustainable and credible political process toward Palestinian self-determination and statehood.

At the same time, Ambassador Asim Ahmad voiced deep concern over the fragile situation in Gaza, with ceasefire violations continuing unabated and civilian lives remaining at risk.

Ameer Muqam vows implementation of JAAC agreement in Azad Kashmir

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday chaired a meeting to review implementation status of the agreement with the Joint Action Committee.

The Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved to date and directed all concerned departments to further speed up the implementation work, said a press release here on Thursday.

He said that Azad Jammu & Kashmir is a top priority of the Prime Minister and providing relief to the people is a joint responsibility of the federal and AJK governments.

Engineer Amir

Muqam assured that, in line with the Prime Minister's instructions, full and effective implementation of the agreement with the Joint Action Committee would be ensured.

Coordinator to Prime Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Shabir Ahmad Usmani, Secretary Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Zafar Hasan, Chief Secretary Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Khushal Khan and Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman Khan also attended the meeting.

Officials from relevant ministries and departments briefed the meeting on the steps taken so far, while the Chief Secretary AJK shared a detailed update on the implementation process.

Religious ministry announces to issue unified calendar for Azan, prayer timings

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Ministry of Religious Affairs, along with eminent scholars representing all schools of thought, clerics and members of the business community on Thursday agreed to issue a unified calendar for Azan and prayer timings. The decision was taken at a consultative meeting on the standardization of Azan and prayer times for Rawalpindi and Islamabad, a top priority of the Prime Minister and providing relief to the people is a joint responsibility of the federal and AJK governments.

Addressing the meeting, the minister recalled that uniform prayer and Azan timings had been implemented during a previous government but were later discontinued following a change in administrations.

EU Ambassador calls on PM Shehbaz, assures effort to strengthen bilateral ties

GSP+ in spotlight as PM affirms commitment to EU cooperation on trade ventures

ISLAMABAD (APP): Ambassador of the European Union, Raimundas Karoblis Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here at the Prime Minister's Office news release said.

Welcoming the EU Ambassador, who recently assumed his responsibilities in Pakistan, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen cooperation with the EU in all areas of mutual interest, particularly trade, investment, development, security, migration and climate change.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

NHA to connect Kartarpur, Nankana Sahib with motorways

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan has announced a landmark decision to link the holy sites of Kartarpur and Nankana Sahib with the national motorway network.

Presiding over a high-level meeting, Federal Minister directed the National Highway Authority

(NHA) to commence construction on the Sialkot-Kartarpur Motorway which will be named the "Guru Nanak Expressway," said a press release issued on Thursday.

Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted that 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels will be developed along the Highway to facilitate pilgrims.

Pak Navy takes over command of Combined Task Force-150

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan Navy took over the command of Combined Task Force-150 (CTF-150) for the 14th time during a change of command ceremony held at the Headquarters of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Bahrain.

Commander of CMF, Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir also reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's resolve to counter illicit maritime activities while ensuring the safety and security of vital sea lines of communication, it further said.

CTF-150 is one of the five task forces operating under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).



the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF), said a press release issued by Director General Public Relations (Pak Navy).

During the visit, the First Lady toured the museum's immersive exhibitions focused on innovation, sustainability, science and creative approaches to future challenges.

She appreciated the museum's role as a global platform that encourages forward-looking thinking, inspires young people and brings together ideas across cultures and generations.

First Lady Aseefa Bhutto visits Dubai's Museum of Future

DUBAI (APP): First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari MNA, visited the Museum of the Future in Dubai on Thursday on the invitation of the government of the United Arab Emirates.

During the visit, the First Lady toured the museum's immersive exhibitions focused on innovation, sustainability, science and creative approaches to future challenges.

While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150 assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this

prestigious responsibility and contribute towards maritime security and stability across the region.

Commander of CMF, Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir also reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's resolve to counter illicit maritime activities while ensuring the safety and security of vital sea lines of communication, it further said.

CTF-150 is one of the five task forces operating under the Combined Maritime Forces (CMF).

Its mission is to deter and disrupt non-state actors engaged in the trafficking of weapons, narcotics, and other illicit goods across the Indian Ocean, Arabian Sea, and the Gulf of Oman.

JI Emir urges opposition to oppose govt move to send troops to Gaza

Independent Report LAHORE: Jamaat-e-Islami Pakistan Emir Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman has called on opposition parties to openly oppose the government's decision to send troops to Gaza, saying such a move is unacceptable and damaging to Pakistan's dignity and sovereignty.

Addressing participants of a central training camp at Mansoorah on Thursday, Rehman strongly criticized the government's blind reliance on US President Donald Trump, calling it equivalent to submission before unjust global powers. He said the prime minister's move to nominate a US president, whom he said was destroying global peace, for the Nobel Peace Prize had seriously damaged national honour. The JI chief con-

demned a proposed bill in the Punjab Assembly seeking to establish "red zones" in districts to restrict protests, calling it yet another undemocratic spectacle. Questioning the legitimacy of Form-47 imposed rulers, he asked who they were to snatch the public's constitutional right to protest. He criticized provisions in the bill that would empower intelligence committees under deputy commissioners to grant or deny permission for protests, asking whether elected representatives would now be required to seek approval from bureaucrats. He said the colonial-era bureaucratic system had been imposed on the country for seven decades, while political parties were dominated by family monopolies, resulting in the worst form of governance.

Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir are expected to receive rain, while snowfall is forecast in mountainous regions.



RAKHNE: Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti meeting with tribal elites during his visit to Rakhni

CM's Adviser applauds newly elected BUJ leaders, stresses press freedom & accountability

Independent Report QUETTA: Shahid Rind, Political and Media Adviser to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, has extended warm congratulations to the newly elected office-bearers of the Balochistan Union of Journalists (BUJ) on their recent electoral victory.

Shahid Rind commended the BUJ for its steadfast role in maintaining professional standards, protecting freedom of expression, and safeguarding the rights of journalists throughout Balochistan.

He highlighted that an independent and well-informed press is essential in democratic societies, serving as a crucial bridge between the state and the public while promoting transparency and accountability.

He recognized President Manzoor Ahmed, Senior Vice President Fareedullah, General Secretary Shah Hussain Tareen, Vice President Zafar Baloch, Finance Secretary Ismat Sumalani, Senior Joint Secretary Kifayat Ali, Joint Secretary Adnan Saeed, and executive coun-

tee members Raza Rehman, Saleem Shahid, Khalil Ahmed, Shehzada Zulfiqar, Arshad Butt, Murtaza Zehri, Muhammad Amir, and Mohibullah.

Shahid Rind commended the BUJ for its steadfast role in maintaining professional standards, protecting freedom of expression, and safeguarding the rights of journalists throughout Balochistan. He highlighted that an independent and well-informed press is essential in democratic societies, serving as a crucial bridge between the state and the public while promoting transparency and accountability.

He said that the bar also works within the framework of the Constitution and law and stands with its lawyers.

The Secretary High Court Bar said that the Islamabad High Court Bar handles the matters and affairs related to the Bar in a good manner in accordance with the law.

He said that the bar also works within the framework of the Constitution and law and stands with its lawyers.

The IHCBA's Secretary Manzoor Jaja said in his statement that there is no truth in the remarks regarding the involvement of the High Court Bar in the arrest of two lawyers.

He said that the bar also works within the framework of the Constitution and law and stands with its lawyers.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan presides over the Introductory meeting of DPR Officers.

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