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Pakistan ready to work with all nations for peace, sustainable development: President

ISLAMABAD (APP): President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday highlighting the rapid changes facing the world, ranging from geopolitical shifts and hybrid threats to cybersecurity, reiterated that, amidst all such challenges, Pakistan stood ready to work with all nations to build understanding, peace and sustainable development.

The president, during the interactive session with the participants of the 6th International Workshop for Leadership and Stability 2026, felicitated them at the

conclusion of the workshop. The workshop was attended by around 100 participants, including 69 hailing from different 49 countries.

Calling the leadership and stability the pillars of nations and institutions, the president highlighted that the world was currently facing rapid changes, with geopolitical shifts, emerging security threats and the growing role of technology in governance.

"Security is no longer only about conventional conflicts. It includes

cybersecurity, hybrid threats and information challenges. At the same time, climate change, resource scarcity and disinformation cross borders, demanding collaborative solutions," the president emphasized in his address.

President Zardari urged the participants of the workshop to translate discussions into real-world solutions, choosing dialogue over division and cooperation over conflict.

He commended the National Defence Univer-

sity (NDU) for organising this important forum and termed that such workshops bring together policymakers, diplomats, military officials, academics and private sector leaders.

President Zardari said that such forums offered a valuable space to discuss leadership and stability. "I hope these insights reach a broader audience across our institutions and society," he said.

He extended his grati

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ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari addresses the participants of the 6th International Workshop for Leadership and Stability (IWLS) during an interactive session at Aiwan-e-Sadr.



ISLAMABAD: US Chargé d'Affaires Natalie Baker meeting with Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar.

Air Chief Marshal Zaheer meets with Indonesia President Subianto

Indonesia shows interest in PAF's training ecosystem

RAWALPINDI (APP): Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu, NI (M), HJ, Chief of Air Staff, Pakistan Air Force, during his official visit to Indonesia, called on President Prabowo Subianto on Friday. During the meeting, the Air Chief underscored the shared values and longstanding brotherhood between Pakistan and Indonesia, said a press release issued here by Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR). President Prabowo expressed keen interest in leveraging PAF's state-of-the-art training ecosystem and aerospace development infrastructure to enhance Indonesia's defence capabilities.

Earlier, the Air Chief held separate high-level meetings with Defence Minister Lieutenant General (Retd) Sjafrie Sjamsoeddin, Commander of the Indonesian National

Armed Forces and Indonesian Air Marshal. He was accorded Guard of Honour at all venues.

During the discussion with the Indonesian Air Chief, both sides discussed enhanced Air Force-to-Air Force cooperation, joint training from basic to advanced levels, professional exchanges, and collaboration in emerging aerospace domains. The Indonesian Air Chief sought PAF's support in advancing operational and flying training, acknowledging PAF's rich combat experience. The Air Chief was conferred the Medal of Honour, the highest award of the Indonesian Air Force, in recognition of his role in strengthening bilateral air power cooperation. The Air Chief also held a joint meeting with the Indonesian Defence Minister and Chief of Defence Forces, where a wide range of defence and security matters.



Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber in conversation with his Indonesian counterpart during his visit to Indonesia.

DPM speaks with Egyptian FM, discusses bilateral ties

ISLAMABAD (APP): Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday spoke with Foreign Minister of Egypt, Dr. Badr Abdelatty and exchanged views on bilateral relations and discussed regional and international matters of mutual interest.

During the conversation, Ishaq Dar congratulated him on continuing in his role following the recent cabinet reshuffle and conveyed his best wishes for his continued success, a press release issued by the Foreign Office Spokesperson said.

ECP announces schedule for by-election on NA-256 Khuzdar

QUETTA (INP): The Election Commission of Pakistan has announced the schedule for the by-election on NA-256 Khuzdar, the seat vacated by BNP-Mengal chief Sardar Akhtar Mengal. According to the official notification, polling for the constituency will be held on April 5, while the public notice for the election will be issued on February 18.

The Election Commission stated that nomination papers may be submitted from February 20 to February 24. The list of nominated candidates will be published on February 25, and election symbols will be allotted on March 18.

Pakistan calls for multilateral coop. against terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan has called for resolution of Kashmir Dispute, stronger multilateral cooperation, and action against terrorism.

This was emphasized by Chairman Senate Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani during a meeting with President of the UN General Assembly Annalena Baerbock on the sidelines of the Annual IPU Parliamentary Hearing 2026 at the UN headquarters. The Chairman Senate underlined that while the UNSC resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir remained unimplemented, India has taken further destabilizing action in unilaterally holding the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance, arguing that this unlawful action constituted a

blatant violation of the Treaty's provisions and established principles of customary international law.

He said such actions threaten the lives and livelihoods of over 240 million Pakistanis and set dangerous precedents, particularly at a time when climate stress and water scarcity demand cooperation and strict respect for international agreements.

The Chairman Senate underscored that the people of Pakistan strongly support the United Nations' mission of promoting international peace and security, sustainable development, and the protection of human rights.

Speaking on the occasion, the President of the UN General Assembly conveyed her condolences to the government and people of Pakistan on the loss of lives in the recent terrorist incidents in Pakistan. She said it is in the interest of all countries to fight terrorism together.



NEWYORK: A Pakistan Parliamentary Delegation led by Chairman Senate, Syed Yusuf Raza Gilani, addressing the 2026 IPU Parliamentary Hearing at the UN Headquarters.

Governor urges peace, highlights education as catalyst for advancement of Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: Emphasizing that societal growth and prosperity hinge on non-violence, Sheikh Jaffar Khan Mandokhail called on Balochistan's citizens, particularly the youth, to embrace knowledge and skills as tools for progress and national development.

The Governor made these remarks while meeting with leaders of the Pakistan Muslim League (N)

Labour Wing, including Provincial President Munir Ahmed Masoori Bugti, General Secretary Khan Musa Khan Khajjak, and Mir Zahoor Ahmed Magsi.

Highlighting the importance of higher education, Mandokhail praised Mir Chakar Khan Rind University as a vital institution for students from Sibi and across Balochistan, of

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Pakistan remains important US partner in region, Congress told

WASHINGTON (INP): The Trump administration's point man for South and Central Asia has told Congress that Pakistan remains an important US partner in the region, with Washington seeking to expand trade, economic cooperation and security ties with the country.

Assistant Secretary of State Paul Kapur addressing the House Foreign Affairs Committee's Subcommittee on South and Cen-

tral Asia, underscored Pakistan's role in regional engagement and highlighted growing bilateral cooperation.

"Pakistan is another important partner in the region. We are working together with Pakistan to realise the potential of its critical mineral resources, combining US government seed financing with private sector know-how would benefit both of our countries," he told the subcommittee.

Sharif extends invitation to Tarique to visit Pak PM affirms resolve to work with Bangladesh's new Admin for regional peace

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif engaged the leadership of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) on Friday after its successful electoral performance and affirmed his resolve to work together with the new administration for regional peace.

The BNP won a landslide parliamentary election today, returning to power after nearly two decades and positioning party leader Tarique Rahman to become prime minister as the country emerges from months of unrest and economic disruption.

Rahman, the son of former premier Khaleda Zia and assassinated former president Ziaur Rahman, faces immediate challenges in restoring political stability, reviving investor confi-

dence and rebuilding key industries after prolonged turmoil following the collapse of former prime minister Sheikh Hasina's government in 2024.

A post on X by state broadcaster PTV News said that PM Shehbaz spoke with on the telephone to-night and extended "heartfelt congratulations on behalf of the people and the Government of Pakistan on the historic and splendid victory of his party in the general elections".

The premier congratulated the people of Bangladesh on the successful conduct of the general elections, which he said "reflects the democratic ideals and values" of their nation.

"Recalling the historic, fraternal relations between Pakistan and Bangladesh, the prime minister reiter-

ated his resolve to work together with the leadership of Bangladesh to further strengthen mutually beneficial bilateral cooperation in all areas of mutual interest, as well as for regional peace and development, while fully respecting each other's sovereignty," the statement said. It added that both leaders "fondly remembered" Begum Zia during their "pleasant conversation" and paid tribute to her "outstanding contributions" to Pakistan-Bangladesh relations and her "pivotal role in bringing the people of the two countries closer together".

PM Shehbaz extended an invitation to MTarique to visit Pakistan at the earliest convenience. The latter return also invited the prime minister to visit Bangladesh.

TTAP stages sit-in outside Parliament, seeks Imran's admission to Shifa Hospital

ISLAMABAD: A Tehreek-e-Tahaffuz-e-Ain Pakistan (TTAP) sit-in outside Parliament House was underway on Friday, vowing to continue the protest until Imran Khan is admitted to Shifa International Hospital in the federal capital.

In a post on X, the alliance said there would be no compromise on the health of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder, adding that all PTI parliamentarians would participate in the sit-in outside Parliament.

Security was tightened in and around Parliament House ahead of the protest, with police deploying a heavy contingent at its gates. The main entrance was reportedly closed to prevent unauthorised entry, while armoured vehicles were positioned nearby as a precautionary measure.

The protest follows submissions made to the Supreme Court of Pakistan, where Advocate Salman Safdar informed the court—citing a report commissioned by the bench.



QUETTA: Chief of JUI Maulana Fazlur Rehman, Provincial Ameer JUI Maulana Abdul Wahay, enquiring about the health of General Secretary JUI Maulana Abdul Ghafoor Haideri.

Food Minister leads rally of Pakistan & Pak Army Zindabad in Sanjawi

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Food Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummer on Friday led a grand rally of Pakistan and Pak Army Zindabad in Sanjawi.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudus Achakzai, tribal elders, civil society and thousands of people from different schools of thought participated in the rally with green crescent flags.

The participants of the rally raised slogans of Pakistan Zindabad and Pak Army Zindabad. Sanjawi Bazaar was decorated like a bride with Pakistani flags.

Speaking on the occasion, Provincial Food Minister Haji Noor Muhammad Khan Dummer said that Pakistan is the common home of all of us, we would protect it with our blood, sweat and tears and together we could play the role of every frontline for the development and security of the country, we stand shoulder to shoulder with our army and other security forces.

He said that we paid great tribute to the sacrifices of the Pak Army and civilian martyrs for the se

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SANJAWI: Provincial Minister for Food Haji Noor Muhammad Dummer and Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudus Achakzai addressing the Pakistan Zindabad Rally.

Executive Engineer,
Public Health Engineering

Minister takes notice of absence of field officers, directs to ensure development projects monitoring

QUETTA (APP): Balochistan Minister for Communications and Works (C&W) Mir Saleem Ahmed Khosa on Friday took strict notice of absence of field officers, directs to ensure monitoring of development projects.

He also issued instructions to ensure effective monitoring of development projects and timely provision of public services at all costs.

The provincial minister said that reports received from the district administration have pointed out that several field officers are not regularly present at their places of deployment, due to which not only public problems are increasing but the pace of ongoing development

schemes is also being affected. He termed this situation unacceptable and made it clear that the absence of government officers would not be tolerated under any circumstances.

He directed the concerned authorities to set up an effective monitoring system to ensure the attendance of all field officers and to start a series of surprise inspections.

The Minister said that the timely completion of development projects is the top priority of the government and strict disciplinary action would be taken against any kind of negligence or negligence in this regard.

He further said that the provision of basic facilities to the people, construction

and repair of roads and timely completion of residential projects are the responsibility of the government.

If field officers do not discharge their responsibilities properly, the public will have to bear the direct loss, which is unacceptable in any case, he said.

The Minister directed all the concerned officers to ensure their attendance, regularly monitor the ongoing schemes and submit detailed progress reports within the stipulated time.

He also instructed the district administration to continuously review the performance at the field level and provide immediate information to the concerned authorities about any kind of shortcomings.



QUETTA: Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini presides over the meeting to review progress on development works at Airport Road Quetta

Gwadar Development Authority resolves water shortages, elevates daily supply to over 25mln gallons

Independent Report
GWADAR: The Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has successfully addressed the city's longstanding water crisis, implementing sustainable measures that have boosted daily water supply to over 25 million gallons. At a media briefing, Director General Moeen-ur-Rehman Khan highlighted the significant improvements in Gwadar's water situation, despite severe shortages caused by consecutive years of low rainfall.

Over the past two years, the drying of Sood Dam and Ankrab Dam created acute scarcity. In August 2025, the provincial

government transferred water supply responsibilities from the Public Health Engineering Department to GDA, presenting an immediate challenge. GDA responded by launching both short-term emergency solutions and long-term infrastructure projects to stabilize water availability.

Chief Engineer Haji Syed Muhammad outlined a major 11 billion PKR federally funded water supply project, including roughly 150 km of main transmission lines, 150 km of distribution pipelines, four water tanks with a combined 10 million-gallon capacity, and 11 fully equipped pumping stations.

He noted that the Shadi Kor Dam-to-Sood Dam system, operational since 2019, had delivered 4,542 million gallons of water to Gwadar until September 2025.

During the crisis, emergency tanker supplies were arranged from Mirani Dam (84 million gallons), Shadi Kor Dam (173 million gallons), and the GDA desalination plant (78 million gallons), totaling 335 million gallons.

The tanker operations, previously prone to irregularities, were executed transparently at a cost of PKR 70 crore, with negotiated below-market rates for water delivery.



QUETTA: A delegation of Wapda Hydro Union (CBA) led by Haji Ramzan Achakzai meeting with Chief Executive Officer QESCO Engineer Yousaf Khan.

Quetta Metropolitan assets to be harnessed for public benefit, says Secretary Local Govt

Independent Report
QUETTA: Secretary for Local Government and Rural Development, Abdul Rauf Baloch, has called for the strategic use of Quetta Metropolitan Corporation (QMC) properties to generate revenue that directly benefits citizens, emphasizing transparency and efficiency in management.

Chairing a detailed review meeting, Abdul Rauf Baloch examined the legal status, leases, rents, and overall revenue potential of QMC assets. The session was attended by Chief Metropolitan Officer Nazir Zehri, Additional Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Sanaulah Qureshi, Administration Officer Mohammad Shahid, Legal Officer Abdullah Advocate, and other senior officials from QMC and the Local Government Department.

Officials briefed the Secretary on the current condition of properties, operational challenges, and opportunities to boost revenue streams.

Highlighting the link between revenue generation and service delivery, Abdul Rauf Baloch stressed that increased funds would support essential initiatives, including clean drinking water, improved drainage systems, street lighting repairs, road construction and maintenance, and effective sanitation across the city.

The Secretary directed all departments to promptly resolve legal and administrative hurdles, ensure timely collection of dues, and maintain strict transparency in all transactions. He underscored that these measures would strengthen institutional performance while delivering tangible benefits to residents. Concluding the meeting, officials reaffirmed their commitment to transforming Quetta Metropolitan Corporation into a dynamic, self-reliant, and citizen-focused organization, ensuring improved public services and better quality of life for the city's population.



Quetta Bar Association protests raid on senior lawyer Amjad Raisani's house with black flag hoisting.

Pishin DC urges transparent and lawful mining practices in Khanozai

Independent Report
PISHIN: Deputy Commissioner Pishin, Mansoor Ahmed Qazi, convened a high-level meeting in Khanozai to evaluate ongoing mining operations and administrative oversight. Senior officials from the Mines & Minerals Department and other relevant authorities attended the session. The discussion centered on current mining activities, lease management, enforcement of regulations, environmental safeguards, and revenue collection. DC Qazi instructed that all mining operations must follow transparent, merit-based procedures.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzaib Khan Kakar presides over the meeting regarding eradication of poppy cultivation.

PML-N lawmaker Mandokhail pledges rapid development and public welfare in Balochistan

Independent Report
QUETTA: Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail, Pakistan Muslim League (N) leader and Balochistan Assembly member, has pledged to prioritize public welfare and accelerate development initiatives throughout his constituency and the province.

Speaking to visiting delegations in Quetta, Mandokhail stressed that the trust placed in him by the people is sacred and that he remains committed to delivering tangible results rather than mere rhetoric. "The people have entrusted

us with their mandate, and we are obligated to serve them with integrity and dedication," he stated.

The lawmaker highlighted that the provincial government is actively addressing public grievances while working to enhance healthcare, expand educational opportunities, and strengthen law and order across Balochistan.

He emphasized that restoring citizens' confidence in governance is a key priority, with practical measures already underway to achieve it. Mandokhail credited

recent improvements in security and law enforcement to consistent government policies and cooperation between the public and state institutions. He noted that these joint efforts are creating new avenues for development and long-term stability in the province.

Urging citizens to embrace unity, peace, and mutual respect, Sheikh Zarak Khan Mandokhail emphasized that Balochistan's progress and prosperity depend on collective community and active participation from all segments of society.

Sibi DC orders tight security oversight and swift completion of development projects

Independent Report
SIBI: Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Major @ Ilyas Kibzai, emphasized enhanced security measures and diligent monitoring of public and student activities, urging parents to remain vigilant to prevent any involvement in suspicious or unlawful activities.

Chairing a joint ses-

sion of the District Coordination Committee and District Intelligence Coordination Committee, DC Kakar was joined by Wing Commander Colonel Shahryar, SSP Shah Nawaz Chachar, Assistant Commissioners Mansoor Ali Shah (Sibi) and Mir Bahadur Khan Bangulzai (Bakhtiarabad), Chairman Municipal Com-

mittee Sardar Muhammad Khan Khajjak, departmental heads, and law enforcement officials. The Deputy Commissioner instructed government offices to monitor staff performance closely and directed the Education Department to ensure the national anthem is recited and flag hoisting is carried out properly.



GWADAR: Deputy Commissioner Nageebullah Khan presides over the meeting of District Compensation Committee.

Balochistan Police launch massive crackdown, arrest 173 criminals and seize arms, drugs

Independent Report
QUETTA: In a sweeping province-wide operation, Balochistan Police, acting under the directives of IG Police Muhammad Tahir, have apprehended 173 individuals involved in serious crimes, including robbery, drug trafficking, and other offenses, while rescuing nine kidnapped persons.

The operations led to the recovery of 12 stolen vehicles, 42 motorcycles, 17 mobile phones, 153 pistols and revolvers, 20 Kalashnikov rifles, 1,397 cartridges, 119 magazines, 33 kilograms and 30 grams of explosives, one suicide jacket, and 59 hand grenades.

Targeted actions against drug trafficking resulted in the arrest of 230 suspects and the seizure of

narcotics, including 2,845.24 grams of hashish, 2,443.756 grams of ice/crystal meth, 114 grams of heroin, 15.740 kilograms of opium, 60 grams of morphine, 1.245 grams of crystal, 1,132 bottles of liquor, and 564 beer cans.

In total, police apprehended 472 wanted fugitives and absconders, along with 673 additional suspects involved in various criminal activities. Authorities also recovered PKR 632,500 in cash, 35 tolas of gold, and removed illegal black window tints from 2,782 vehicles.

The crackdown is ongoing in Quetta and seven other provincial ranges, aiming to create a safe, peaceful, and crime-free environment while preventing criminals from evading justice across districts.



USTA MUHAMMAD: Deputy Commissioner Muhammad Ramzan Palal being briefed by XEN Building Muhammad Yaseen about under construction District Complex.

Strengthen engagement in climate policy PPAF & YMSESDO in contribution of other sectors hold Youth-Led COP simulation

QUETTA (APP): The Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF) and YMSESDO, in collaboration with the (NYCCC) and the Directorate of Youth Affairs, successfully organized a Youth-Led COP Simulation on 31 January 2026 in Balochistan.

According to press release issued here on Friday, the full-day simulation brought together students, youth leaders, academics, policy practitioners, and civil society representatives to enhance youth understanding of global climate negotiations and bridge the gap between climate policy and grassroots action.

The initiative aimed to build practical knowledge of the Conference of the Parties (COP) process, empower young people, and promote meaningful youth participation in climate governance at both provincial and national levels.

The program commenced with an opening address by a representative of the Directorate of Youth Affairs, who emphasized the critical role of youth-led climate initiatives in fostering climate leadership, civic engagement, and policy awareness among Pakistan's youth. A key highlight of the

event was the panel discussion titled "Water for Life: Youth Rising for a Resilient Balochistan," featuring distinguished speakers from government, civil society, and the climate action space.

During the panel, Faizan Khan highlighted the importance of youth-led water governance and community-based conservation.

Wali Khilji, Director EPA, discussed regulatory challenges, groundwater depletion, and the urgent need for stronger environmental enforcement alongside enhanced youth-government collaboration. Seema Naz (IDSP) empha-

sized inclusive, community-driven approaches, underscoring women's participation and the integration of local knowledge in climate adaptation strategies.

Climate activist Zunaira Durrani focused on climate justice, youth advocacy, and amplifying marginalized voices through effective policy engagement.

Laraib Ehtasham (PMU-BESP) stressed the integration of environmental safeguards and social protection in development projects, highlighting youth involvement in sustainable and climate-resilient interventions.

Khetran mediates land dispute, promotes harmony in Union Council Sadar

Independent Report
BARKHAN: Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran, successfully mediated a land dispute between the Syed and Zakwani communities in Union Council Sadar, highlighting the importance of peaceful and lawful conflict resolution.

During his visit, Minister Khetran inspected the contested land and engaged with both parties, including local elders and community representatives, carefully considering their perspectives. He emphasized that disputes should be

settled through legal channels, justice, and mutual respect to maintain lasting social cohesion and stability. After reviewing records, local customs, and relevant facts, the minister issued an immediate decision, which was accepted by both communities. The parties expressed appreciation for his timely and equitable intervention.

The Balochistan government reiterated its commitment to addressing public grievances effectively and fostering peace, aiming to create an environment conducive to stability and regional development.



QUETTA: Secretary Local Government and Rural Development Abdul Rauf Baloch presides over the meeting regarding properties of Metropolitan Corporation Quetta.

Quetta Division launches aggressive campaign to eradicate opium cultivation

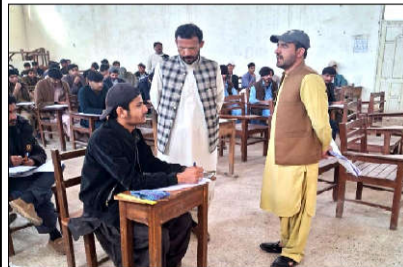
Independent Report
QUETTA: Authorities in Quetta Division have intensified efforts to eliminate illegal opium cultivation, targeting over 70,000 acres of land currently used for poppy farming. The crackdown is a coordinated operation involving the district administration, police, Frontier Corps, and Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF).

Operations have so far led to the destruction of more than 150 tube wells and associated structures, confiscation of 1,316 solar panels and 300 water tanks, filing of multiple FIRs, and the addition of several individuals to the Fourth Schedule list.

Commissioner

Shahzaib Khan Kakar has ordered all agencies to accelerate eradication activities to ensure crops are destroyed ahead of the March-April harvest. He stressed strict legal measures against offenders and instructed the ANF to complete surveys and submit detailed reports promptly.

Officials noted that the eradication campaign is in its initial phase, with further operations planned following comprehensive crop identification. The Commissioner emphasized that coordinated planning, vigilant monitoring, and timely enforcement are essential to fully eliminate narcotics cultivation across Quetta Division.



KACHHI: Assistant Commissioner Mach Liaquat Ali Jatoti visiting the Matric examination centre.

Kiran Baloch calls for strong legal framework and action to empower women in Pakistan

Independent Report
ISLAMABAD: Kiran Baloch, Chairperson of the Balochistan Commission on the Status of Women and senior Pakistan Peoples Party leader, highlighted the urgent need for robust legislation and effective enforcement to address the challenges faced by women in Balochistan and across Pakistan.

Speaking at a consultative session organized by the National Commission on the Status of Women in Islamabad, Kiran Baloch emphasized the importance of ensuring women's active and meaningful participation in policy-making. The meeting brought together officials from government departments, civil society representatives, and experts

to discuss strategies for safeguarding women's rights, promoting gender equality, and advancing sustainable development goals. Kiran Baloch underscored that genuine empowerment requires providing women with access to education, healthcare, economic independence, and political opportunities. She stressed that women must be placed at the core of decision-making processes to achieve lasting societal impact. Participants at the meeting pledged to enhance collaboration between state institutions, political leadership, and relevant organizations to implement practical measures aimed at strengthening gender equality and protecting women's rights throughout Pakistan.



QUETTA: Youth celebrate Basant Festival in Quetta by flying Kites.

BoP agenda

Donald Trump's Board of Peace is due to meet in Washington next week, with Pakistan among other Muslim states scheduled to attend. As per the meeting's reported agenda, it will examine the Gaza situation while also discussing the BoP's mandate and structure.

However, unless concrete proposals to stop the continuing Israeli violence in the occupied territories and hold the Zionist state to account for the atrocities it has committed in Gaza emerge, the meeting may prove to be nothing more than a photo op. The situation in the West Bank is critical, while new evidence has emerged of barbaric methods used by Israel in the Strip during its bloodthirsty campaign. Tel Aviv must be made to answer for these crimes if the BoP is to be taken seriously.

Regarding the West Bank, the Israeli cabinet has recently passed new regulations that allow settlers to buy land in the occupied territory — a clear violation of international law. As the UN rights chief has put it, these moves will lead to “rendering a viable Palestinian state impossible”. But that is what Tel Aviv appears determined to do.

Meanwhile, several Muslim states, including Pakistan, have also slammed “continued Israeli expansionist policies” in the West Bank. Separately, an Al Jazeera investigation has revealed that Israel used monstrous weapons in Gaza that may have left no trace of their victims. The internationally banned thermal and thermobaric weapons, many supplied by the US, were used to ‘evaporate’ nearly 3,000 Palestinians. These weapons generate unbearable temperatures, and usually no traces are found of the victims.

It is shocking that the Israelis — whose forefathers perished in Nazi gas chambers and ovens — are now using similarly horrific methods on innocent Palestinians. But perhaps such revelations should not shock, as the Zionists have a long history of committing war crimes.

In light of these facts, the Muslim bloc at the upcoming BoP meeting must take a firm stand. The illegal land grab in the West Bank must cease immediately. Moreover, Israel must be held accountable for using illegal weapons on Palestinian non-combatants. It should also be noted that nearly 600 Palestinians have been murdered by Israel in Gaza since last October's ceasefire. All these issues must be discussed at the BoP.

Instead of conjuring up strange fantasies of a ‘Gaza Riviera’, the board must focus on the immediate cessation of violence against the Palestinian people, commit to a clear roadmap for a viable Palestinian state, and hold Israel to account for its diabolical behaviour. But with Israel itself part of the BoP — and Mr Trump beholden to his powerful Zionist backers — it is difficult to see this happening. Unless firm steps are taken to confront these issues, the BoP will remain a pointless entity.

Faisal Bari

When I look back on my years of education — K-12 to university — and across cultures, and think of the good or outstanding teachers I had — and I did have some — among the many traits of such teachers, the one I find seldom talked about is their sense of humour. Without exception, all the teachers I remember as having a positive impact on me and my learning had a keen sense of humour. They used it to varying degrees, and in different ways, but they were also discerning: they could enjoy a good joke, see the funny side of things, and use humour when needed. But, it was always to create a more conducive learning environment or to enhance learning, and never to bring a student down. So, they could laugh with us, and did, but they never laughed at us.

I remember, with a lot of fondness, how one of our Urdu teachers had,

with one phrase, brought a classmate of ours out of his despondency when he was really down and out. A philosophy tutor was expounding on the limits of the possible. He was quite overweight, so he said that he could, of course, not outrun Ben Johnson (sprinter), but then he looked down, caressed his ample beer belly and said, “That does not mean I could not be a lot more fit than where I am right now.” The class had a good laugh. And understood what he was explaining quite well.

Literature that looks at the characteristics of ‘good and/or effective’ teachers finds that students do identify a ‘sense of humour’ as one of the traits that good teachers usually possess. But this should not be surprising. Humour is as basic a part of the human experience as any other. Good teachers have many traits that define good and balanced human beings. Why would humour not show up as a trait in good teachers?

However, research on whether humour helps with teaching and learning is more mixed. Humour can improve the class environment, enhance trust, help students open up, make material and context more memorable, improve retention, facilitate class management and sometimes even manage or resolve a clash.

It can be a difficult tool to use as well. If teachers use it to make fun of students, put them down, laugh at them or others, or crack jokes in a way that makes students uncomfortable, it can turn students away from learning and may even make classrooms less effective.

Humour is difficult to define, though most of us do find something or the other humorous. Humour is difficult to use as a lot depends on how it is received by students. And student diversity, which is evident in all classrooms, means that the teacher has to be aware of a multiplicity of tastes and sensibilities.

Some literature does show that course-related humour might work most easily as students are already attuned to this area.

This is no different from the use of humour in other aspects of our lives. Humour can be important in office settings, workplaces and meetings too. But, again, it can be used well or poorly; it can enhance comfort or reduce it; it can improve productivity or destroy it.

In the early years, when children are young, situations often turn amusing. And teachers have to be quite adept at managing them effectively. Not using these situations constructively and adopting strictness all the time is not an optimal state. Nor is letting go of class discipline. The ideal engagement with students lies in the reflective and effective use of humour.

In later years, especially at the university level, the use of humour has to be a lot more deliberate and thoughtful.

The use of humour is not subject-dependent. My good teachers specialised in different areas. In fact, one of the funniest teachers we had was a brilliant maths instructor. I have taught courses in philosophy, education, leadership, management, game theory and various sub-areas within economics. Classes, across all of these, have generated humorous situations or have afforded opportunities for the use of humour as a tool for enhancing learning and managing the class environment.

Prepared jokes or lines seldom work. They look too practised and come across as artificial. A genuine propensity for humour means recognising an opportunity — an opportune time and place — when humour can be used effectively. This is one reason why the use of humour as a technique and tool in teacher training is not often talked about. It is hard to train sensibility towards no humour. But there is no

reason why it cannot be cultivated through concerted effort and self-reflective practice on the part of teachers. If a teacher has many insecurities, it will be hard for him or her to be a good instructor or to use humour. Personality does play a role in this.

Parents know the value of humour when they interact and work with their children. The situation is not too different for teachers when they are interacting with young people for teaching and learning. Humour is an important part of human life. It should definitely be part of teaching and learning, and of our classrooms and intellectual interactions as well. But, as with other human capabilities, it can be used well or poorly — to build or to destroy. A teacher, a builder for sure, has to be extra vigilant in how he or she employs humour, but there can be no good teaching without some humour in the classroom.

Police reforms: missed opportunity**Afzal Ali Shigri**

In May 2018, when public confidence in the criminal justice system (CJS) was visibly eroding, nine retired and seven serving inspectors general of police, under the aegis of the Law and Justice Commission, came together to confront the question of why policing consistently failed to deliver justice. Months of intensive deliberation by the Police Reforms Committee resulted in the comprehensive report titled *Police Reforms: Way Forward* — a professional blueprint drafted by the highest ranks of the police service, with the active engagement of senior members of the judiciary. Yet it was ignored.

The central diagnosis of the report was stark but accurate. Flawed investigations are the primary cause of high acquittal rates in Pakistan, owing to poor evidence collection, weak forensic support, inadequate case preparation and interference in investigations. The result is not merely acquittal of the accused; it is systemic discrediting of the entire CJS. The police blame the prosecution, the prosecution questions the investigation,

the judiciary is accused of being lenient, and citizens lose faith in all three. The committee identified three structural weaknesses: politicisation of police command and transfers, weak accountability mechanisms and chronically deficient investigations due to lack of specialisation and resources. These observations were grounded in decades of operational experience and supported by professional analysis.

At the heart of the report was the drafting of a ‘Model Police Law’ to meet the demands of 21st-century policing, which sought to ensure that the police would be politically neutral, democratically controlled, administratively and operationally autonomous, effectively accountable and professionally specialised. It was an attempt to balance autonomy with structured oversight through public safety commissions and independent police complaints authorities. The report concluded that independence without accountability breeds impunity and accountability without independence breeds subservience. Sustainable reform requires

both.

The report examined the institutional evolution of policing — from the Police Act of 1861 to the Police Order 2002. It concluded that policing is interwoven with criminal law, criminal procedure and evidence. Fragmentation of police laws across provinces, without regard to constitutional jurisprudence and federal primacy in criminal matters, weakens uniform enforcement of fundamental rights. The Supreme Court, therefore, settled this by recognising the concurrent jurisdiction of the provinces and the federation over policing, in addition to criminal laws. In any case, equal protection under the Constitution cannot coexist with wildly divergent standards of police organisation and accountability.

The committee proposed the separation of investigation from public order. A distinct investigation wing, headed by an additional inspector general, would oversee crime, legal matters, forensic integration and data management. Special investigation units were recommended for crimes such as terrorism, kidnapping for ransom and

human smuggling. Forensic laboratories were to be made operationally autonomous. Scientific and digital evidence was to be given primacy. Without structural separation, investigation officers remain overburdened with law-and-order assignments, VIP security and other duties. The report recognised that improving conviction rates requires institutional redesign.

The section dealing with terrorism noted the abysmally low success rate in the prosecution of terrorism offences and the inconsistent conviction statistics claimed by different provinces. It observed the misuse of anti-terror laws for ordinary crimes. Recommendations included specialised training for investigators and prosecutors, clearer statutory definitions, improved evidentiary standards and stronger coordination among agencies. Another component of the report, urban policing, recognised the need for differentiated policing in densely populated centres. The committee proposed urban police divisions that would serve populations of up to half a million, each with func-

tional wings for operations, investigation, traffic, security, internal accountability, community relations and IT. The burdened court system was also addressed, and alternative dispute resolution mechanisms under legal safeguards were suggested to resolve minor conflicts swiftly and affordably. Accountability mechanisms were treated with equal seriousness. The report acknowledged public grievances such as failure to register cases, harassment, abuse of power, defective investigations and other abuses, and proposed strengthening internal accountability branches while also operationalising independent external complaints authorities.

So why was such an in-depth report sidelined? The answer lies less in constitutional debate and more in political economy. Professional reform reduces discretionary political control over postings, transfers, investigations, and law-and-order deployment. In a system where influence over police machinery is a tool of patronage, autonomy is perceived as loss of control. Political parties routinely promise police reforms in their manifestos.

Yet when presented with a professionally drafted framework requiring no external consultants and minimal structural experimentation, successive governments chose inaction. This was not a failure of capacity but of will, compounded by vested interests and short-term political calculations.

A malfunctioning CJS undermines economic growth. Investors want jurisdictions where property rights are protected and contracts are enforceable; businesses need predictable law enforcement and credible dispute resolution. Tourism, infrastructure development and foreign investment all depend on internal stability. Modern economies have not flourished in an environment where the CJS collapses owing to weak investigations and politicised policing. The report stresses that the police must serve the Constitution and the public, and not individuals or factions. Security of tenure for key appointments, transparent oversight mechanisms, functional specialisation and financial autonomy were not privileges for officers but safeguards for citizens.

Price of atheism**Sadiq Karim Soofi**

Perhaps the most significant implication of atheism — at least of the naturalist variety — is the foregoing of objective morality. If all that exists in the naturalist worldview is physical matter, then only that physical matter can be real. Moral values and beliefs are mere constructions of the human mind.

To say that anything is merely a product of the mind's activity, with no independent existence beyond that, is to deny the objective reality of that thing. The atheist, therefore, cannot help but conclude that morality deals with subjective opinions, not objective facts.

This view, that moral frameworks are merely agreements between human beings and nothing more, is widely popular today. However, this subjective conception of morality poses a serious challenge to our ordinary use of moral language and our innate understanding of the nature of moral beliefs.

Let me explain. When we condemn the slaughter of innocent women and children in Gaza, we don't say: this is wrong because, and only insofar as, I believe it to be wrong. No. We seem to say much more than that. What we really mean to say is: this is wrong, period.

Something about our moral claim feels so true to us that we make a claim to its objective truth. In that moment, morality is not something we have constructed through our interaction with each other. When we make moral claims, we reach out to a realm of being that is independent of human minds and their agreement.

Look at it another way. Some moral claims are so obviously true that

it is entirely conceivable for us that even if the entire world were to come together to say that those claims were wrong, it would do nothing to move us from our position.

Thus, we treat morality as a matter of objective reality. Take the example of an elderly lady walking with the help of her walking stick. A gang of youthful men decide to kick the stick away. As she falls down, they proceed to laugh at her. It doesn't take a book on ethics to tell us that what we have witnessed is plainly wrong. Something deep inside us bears witness to the reprehensibility of what we have seen. This is moral intuition.

Guided by our innate moral intuition, we are compelled to treat morality as a matter of objective truths, and not as a matter of socially constructed values. When we ordinarily employ moral language, we call it forth with all its objective import.

The problem is: the atheist has no justification for treating morality thusly. Since moral values are not physical, to deny the objective reality of all that is non-physical is to deny the objective reality of moral values as well. Of course, an atheist may continue making objective moral claims. But the point is: he wouldn't be justified in making them. For how could he say anything more than this: ‘the slaughter of innocent women and children in Gaza is wrong, but only according to my subjective moral framework?’

The genocidal Zionist may turn around to him and say, ‘So what? I have a different moral framework.’ And that is where the matter must end. When morality is entirely subjective, there is no common standard, independent of two moral

frameworks, that can help adjudicate between them.

There is no open field of objective morality to which the Zionist may be invited and in which the atheist's claim may be grounded. If the atheist is coherent and honest, he will pay the price of his atheism and will forgo objective morality, which is easier said than done.

The religious man, on the other hand, is perfectly justified in making moral claims with the force of objective truth. He may continue saying to the genocidal Zionist: you are wrong, period!

In the religious picture, there is no chasm between ‘is’ and ‘ought’. Every-thing that is necessarily has associated oughts. These duties are determined by the Creator who bestows things with their existence and maintains them in that state.

If nothing else, each created being stands in a moral relationship with its Creator, in whose mercy it is enveloped long before it becomes capable of doing anything to deserve it, for the act of creation is itself an act of mercy. Each existent being thus finds itself in a state of debt, which it can only repay in the currency of its own self.

Even the atoms, stones, and trees of the natural world are conscious beings preoccupied in glorifying their Lord. There is no such thing as inert matter devoid of duties.

If the basis of our moral duties is determined from the moment of our inception, we don't get to construct moral frameworks on our own. A theistic worldview can justify our ordinary use of moral language and can explain our innate sense that morality deals with an objective realm of values.

A new Bangladesh?**Aasim Sajjad Akhtar**

Eighteen months on from the momentous mass protests which upended political life in Bangladesh, the long-awaited general election has finally come to pass, ushering in what many are celebrating as a new era of popular sovereignty. Beyond surface appearances, however, there is a distinct sense that old wine is being repackaged in new bottles.

The Jamaat-i-Islami and Bangladesh National Party (BNP) will be the two biggest parties in parliament. The latter's leader, Tarique Rahman, son of military dictator Gen Ziaur Rahman, is set to become prime minister; his mother, the late Khaleda Zia was PM twice in the 1990s and early 2000s. The JI, meanwhile, has literally come back from the dead following the execution of its main leaders in the mid-2010s for their opposition to Bangladesh's independence movement.

The only genuinely ‘new’ actor in Bangladesh's latest chapter, the organic student leadership which spearheaded the movement to oust ex-PM Sheikh Hasina and her Awami League (AL) party, is represented to an extent by the recently formed National Citizen Party, which chose to ally with the JI in the lead-up to the poll.

Election day was notable for the fact that voters cast two separate ballots — one to elect members of parliament and the second as a referendum to introduce sweeping constitutional amendments. Bangladesh has held three referendums before this one — two were sham-bolic and designed to rubber-stamp military dictatorships. The present one has followed the banning of the AL under a dubious anti-terrorism law. It

remains to be seen whether Bangladesh's version of constitutional reform resembles the 26th and 27th amendment abominations in this country.

Bangladesh is, like Pakistan, an extremely young country. At least half of its 120 million voters have never voted before. The student-led movement to depose the Hasina regime was a coming-of-age moment for many young people. The further exercise of their political agency through the vote is no small matter. Yet most of the voting public has been swayed by rhetoric around ‘corruption’, that age-old empty signifier. Neither the interim government nor the three main political parties that contested seemed interested in naming, let alone addressing, deeper structural challenges like the limits of the cheap labour-centric export-oriented capitalist growth model and the powers of military, civil and judicial bureaucracies.

On the other end of the subcontinent, the establishment and mainstream intelligentsia celebrated recent events in Bangladesh, gleefully watching the India-friendly AL's demise and the resuscitation of right-wing forces that have a much greater ideological synergy with the usual suspects here. It should be noted, for instance, that the BNP and JI fielded very few women candidates. Pakistan's own embattled progressive forces can hardly be thrilled about Bangladesh's current direction. The re-emergence of the JI in particular inevitably throws up memories of 1971, an event that many here continue to see only through the prism of Indian designs; the aspirations of the Bengali masses remain absent from the narrative. Indeed, the fact that the main-

stream here continues to reduce the situation in Balochistan to a rendering of the proverbial foreign hand shows that few lessons have been learned from 1971.

Separately, Pakistan's exceedingly young population also craves a break from the security-centric system. But youth aspirations for change have repeatedly been suffocated by manipulation of poll mandates and/or outright repression. We have learned that getting rid of incumbents and bringing in ‘new’ faces can reinforce the under-lying structure of power rather than displacing it.

Bangladesh's youth, who in August 2024 proved that revolutionary imaginaries can still motivate a collective politics of the people, will have their work cut out to hold the new elected government to account, both with regard to the economic needs of young working people and the preservation of democratic freedoms. Yet it is true that the current political climate in Bangladesh feels more open and hopeful than the gloom engulfing young people here.

This despondency is not just due to state authoritarianism or the complicity of the PML-N and PPP. The differences between the two countries, and the organised power of young people in particular, are explained in part by the fact that student unions are alive and well in Bangladesh. This foundational democratic institution has been conspicuous by its absence in this country for 42 years now, the ban enforced by Gen Ziaul Haq's dictatorial regime in February 1984 still being in force. We need such nurseries of democracy to seed organised political forces that can genuinely challenge power wielders and their lackeys.

1st-ever national parliamentary dialogue calls for coordinated action against terrorism

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan on Thursday concluded its first-ever National Parliamentary Dialogue on Enhancing Parliamentary Engagement and Institutional Capacities for Counter Terrorism (CT), Countering Terrorist Financing (CTF), and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE), with participants calling for sustained and co-ordinated action by federal and provincial governments and legislatures.

The two-day dialogue, held in Islamabad, culminated in the unanimous adoption of a comprehensive resolution aimed at strengthening parliamentary oversight, institutionalised inter-agency coordination, and long-term investment in legal and operational capacities to address evolving security challenges.

The landmark dialogue, jointly organised by the Sustainable Social Development Organization (SSDO) and the British High Commission, brought together parliamentarians, government officials, law enforcement representatives, academia and civil so-

ciety actors on a single platform to collectively assess emerging security challenges and propose actionable policy responses.

Delegates unanimously adopted a resolution calling for the establishment of dedicated parliamentary committees on Counter Terrorism (CT), Countering Terrorist Financing (CTF), and Countering Violent Extremism (CVE) marking a significant shift toward institutionalised democratic oversight and engagement.

Speakers at the inaugural session reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to combat terrorism in all its forms and manifestations, while underscoring the importance of democratic oversight, whole-of-government approach, and community engagement in consolidating hard-won security gains.

Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi, addressing the opening session, emphasised the need for unity and collective responsibility.

"Terrorism remains a shared national challenge. Unity between federal and provincial governments is

not optional; it is essential," he stated. "Parliament must lead and engage the communities in our fight against terrorism."

National Coordinator of the National Counter Terrorism Authority (NACTA), Jawad Ahmed Dogar, noted that while Pakistan has developed a robust legal and operational framework, emerging and increasingly complex threats require closer inter-agency cooperation and enhanced institutional capacities. Representing the British High Commission, Alasdair Grant, Counsellor for Security and Justice, acknowledged Pakistan's significant progress in counterterrorism and countering terrorist financing efforts, and reaffirmed the United Kingdom's continued support. "The UK remains committed to strengthening Pakistan's counterterrorism framework through cooperation, capacity building, and institutional partnerships," he said. SSDO Executive Director Syed Kausar Abbas highlighted the importance of bridging the gap between policy formulation and implementation.

Maryam Nawaz also attended a special ceremony at the hospital marking the completion of 10,000 sur-



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi addressing Mediation Training Course ceremony at National Institute of Public Administration.

CM Maryam inaugurates new ICU, hails 10,000 free heart surgeries for children

LAHORE (APP): Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif on Friday expressed gratitude over the successful provision of free heart surgeries to more than 10,000 children from across the country under the Chief Minister Children Heart Surgery Program.

She expressed these views during her visit to the Children's Hospital Lahore, where she inaugurated a newly established intensive care unit (ICU). The chief minister toured the facility, met children undergoing treatment, and conveyed affection and encouragement to young patients and their families.

Maryam Nawaz also attended a special ceremony at the hospital marking the completion of 10,000 sur-

geries. She sat among the children and interacted warmly with those who had undergone cardiac procedures.

Provincial Health Minister briefed the chief minister that a total of 10,331 surgeries have been completed so far under the initiative.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Masood Sadiq informed participants that approximately 50,000 children are born with congenital heart disease in Pakistan each year, nearly half of whom require immediate surgical intervention.

To further strengthen pediatric cardiac care, the chief minister has increased the number of cardiac surgeons at the hospital to 12 and cardiac physicians to

34. Officials added that under the Chief Minister Transplant Card, 800 cochlear implant procedures and 200 bone marrow transplants for children have also been carried out free of cost.

According to official details, the highest number of free surgeries were performed on children from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (425), followed by Azad Jammu and Kashmir (250), federal areas (107), Gilgit-Baltistan (34), Balochistan (28), and Sindh (27), demonstrating the program's nationwide outreach. A special documentary highlighting the achievements and impact of the Chief Minister Children Heart Surgery Program was also screened at the ceremony.

Naqvi inspects Islamabad model jail, says long-delayed project nearing completion

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi visited the under-construction Islamabad Model Jail and the new trainee officers' hostel at the National Police Academy on Friday, reviewing progress on major security and training infrastructure projects.

Officials briefed the minister that the Islamabad jail project—pending for 15 years since its launch in 2011—has now achieved over 85 percent completion in Phase One and is ex-

pected to become functional in just two months. The facility will feature dual security walls, a digital monitoring system, and a centralized control room.

During his inspection, Mohsin Naqvi visited the barracks and expressed satisfaction over the pace and quality of construction. He emphasized that establishing a modern model jail in the capital is essential for security and directed authorities to accelerate work through double-shift operations.

IRSA releases 92,200 cusecs water

ISLAMABAD (INP): Indus River System Authority (IRSA) on Friday released 92,200 cusecs of water from various rim stations with inflow of 35,400 cusecs. According to the data released by IRSA, the water level in the River Indus at Tarbela Dam stood at 1486.07 feet which was 84.07 feet higher than the dead level of 1402.00 feet. Water inflow and outflow in the dam were recorded as 12,500 cusecs and 30,000 cusecs respectively. The water level in the Jhelum River at Mangla Dam was 1194.



Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan addressing Okara Bar Association.

Govt using AI to boost transparency: Bilal Azhar

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister of State for Finance and Railways Bilal Azhar Kayani on Friday said the government was actively leveraging artificial intelligence (AI) to promote transparency, improve decision-making, and ensure that Pakistan was well-positioned to benefit from emerging technologies.

Addressing the participants at the National Indus AI Week session, he said, "I would like to congratulate the Prime Minister, Minister for IT, Secretary IT and the Ministry of IT for conceptualizing and organizing this Indus AI Week 2026."

He termed the event a valuable opportunity to bring together Pakistan's promising IT and AI talent, saying the government had consistently tried to facilitate innovators in unlocking their true potential.

The minister observed that while AI presents vast opportunities, it also carries risks that require careful balancing through smart regulation. "We are students of this new technology and try to learn not only from our colleagues here but also from those working in more developed countries," he remarked.

He further highlighted that Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif personally monitored the progress of the project and regularly visited the construction site during its development phase.

Two labourers killed in Okara factory boiler explosion

OKARA (INP): At least two labourers were killed when boiler of a private factory located at the Dipalpur Road in Okara exploded on Thursday.

According to details, the labourers were working in the factory when the boiler suddenly exploded, as a result two labourers died on the spot.

On receiving the information, rescue teams immediately reached the spot, and started relief operations. Police and administrative officials also arrived at the scene and have begun investigation after collecting evidences.

PMD predicts cold, dry weather across country

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Pakistan Meteorological Department (PMD) has forecast mainly cold and dry weather across most parts of the country during next 24 hours. The PMD said the prevailing cold and dry spell is likely to persist in most regions during the coming days.

However, the hilly regions are expected to remain partly cloudy with very cold conditions during morning and night hours. Light rain and light snowfall may occur at isolated places in Gilgit-Baltistan. In the federal capital and adjoining areas, weather is expected to remain dry, with cold temperatures during early morning and night hours.

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Punjab Governor says: Democracy is strengthened when rule of law upheld

Independent Report

LAHORE: Governor Punjab Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the Pakistan People's Party is always present among the people whether it is in power or not. It has endured many political hardships to promote democracy in the political arena. Democracy is strengthened when the rule of law is upheld. The role of lawyers is key in the provision of justice.

He expressed these views while addressing the District Bar Association Okara and party officials and workers during his visit to Okara. On this occasion, the officials, workers, activists and the people of Okara warmly welcomed the Governor Punjab.

Punjab Governor Sardar Saleem Haider Khan said that the current system is functioning effectively due to President Asif

Ali Zardari's political savvy and his policy of reconciliation.

He said that the alliance with the PML-N is for the sake of the country. The Punjab Governor said that the PPP and the PML-N are two different political parties, adding that the PPP is actively working to solve the problems of the people.

The Punjab Governor said that whether the PPP is in power or not, it is always present among the people and raises its voice for their rights. The Punjab Governor said that the people of Okara have always expressed their trust in the PPP. He said that Chairman Pakistan People's Party Bilawal Bhutto Zardari is the voice of the aspirations of the people. The Punjab Governor said that Bilawal Bhutto Zardari will be the Prime Minister in the next elections with the people's mandate.



LAHORE: Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, addressing participants of the 124th National Management Course during the "Strategic Policy Dialogue" at the National School of Public Policy, Pakistan Administrative Staff College Lahore.

Punjab issues security guidelines ahead of Ramadan

LAHORE (INP): The Punjab Home Department has issued comprehensive security guidelines ahead of Ramadan, directing authorities to implement strict measures to maintain public safety and order.

Officials said security at mosques, religious sites and Ramadan bazaars will be given top priority. Under Ramadan regulations, eating and drinking in public places during fasting hours will remain restricted. Additional security personnel will be deployed at mosques, madrassas and imambargahs. Authorities have also ordered tighter security during Sehri, Iftar, Taraweeh prayers and Friday congregations to ensure things run smoothly and safely. Strict checking will be carried out at entry and

exit points of cities, with biometric verification systems also being used. Law enforcement agencies will enhance patrols, search operations and checkpoint monitoring around sensitive locations.

Authorities have instructed installation of CCTV cameras, walkthrough gates and search lights before Ramadan begins. A three-layer security system, along with barriers and razor wire, will be used at key worship sites during peak prayer times.

Security personnel deployed on duty during Iftar will be provided special arrangements for meals. Deployment of volunteers and private security guards will be done in consultation with local administration.



SARGODHA: Artist performs on stage during a cultural festival at the Sargodha Arts Council.

KP launches digitized billing system, 10 divisions shifted on digital network

PESHAWAR (APP): Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Minister for Public Health Engineering, Fazal Shakoor Khan, on Friday officially inaugurated a Digitized Billing System, shifting 10 divisions to the new digital framework in the first phase.

The department's manual billing system has now been converted into a fully digital system.

Out of 23 divisions, digitized billing has been initiated in 10 divisions during the first phase, including Peshawar One, Peshawar Two, Swat One and Swat Two.

Speaking at the inauguration ceremony, the provincial minister stated that

divisions including Mardan, Charsadda, Swabi, Malakand, Lower Dir and Haripur have also been included in the digital billing system.

He said the new digital billing initiative will ensure greater transparency, boost revenue collection and provide consumers with timely and accurate bills.

The minister further added that consumers will now be able to pay their bills through JazzCash, Easypaisa, and 1Link.

He also announced that the department's mobile application will be launched in March, allowing users to check bills and register complaints online.



Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah presents awards at Asia-Pacific Shelter and Settlements Forum 2026 in Karachi.

AJK cabinet cancels legislator's state subject being fake

MUZAFFARABAD (APP): Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) Cabinet on Friday approved cancellation of state subject and domicile of a member Legislative Assembly elected on refugees seat from Muzaffargarh after declared illegality issued to him through fake documents.

The cabinet meeting chaired by prime minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore also approved the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Service Tribunals (Amendment) Act, 2026, the revised budget for the Bag Development Authority for the fiscal year 2024-25, the estimated budget for 2025-26, and the allocation of state land (Khalisa Sarkar) for the establishment of Police Station Sharda.

The State Subject Certificate in favor of Muhammad Asim Sharif Butt, son of Muhammad Sharif Butt, resident of Mohalla Androon Haram Gate, Mohalla Talhan Wali, Muzaffargarh, was declared fake by an investigation team and was on cabinet agenda to approve cancellation which was accorded approval. Chief Secretary, government secretaries, and other relevant officials attended the meeting. The Cabinet was also briefed on Mirpur Healthcare Hospital. Furthermore, the Cabinet constituted a committee headed by the Minister for Finance to review the Azad Jammu and Kashmir Grant of Khalisa Sarkar (Ground Rent and Lease) Amendment Rules, 2025.

Minister hands over choice number plates to successful bidder

PESHAWAR (APP): The Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Department, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, on Friday organised a dignified ceremony for the formal handover of (choice) vehicle number plates to their successful bidders.

The ceremony was held at the Directorate General of Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, at Hayatabad here.

The ceremony was attended by Provincial Minister for Excise, Taxation and Narcotics Control Syed Fakhar Jehan as the chief guest.

Director General Excise Abdul Haleem Khan, senior officers of the department and owners of the number plates were also present on the occasion.

Spring tree plantation campaign launched in DIK

DERA ISMAIL KHAN (INP): The district administration, in collaboration with the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Forest Department, has formally launched the spring tree plantation campaign 2026 to provide clean and healthy environment for citizens.

According to the administration, the inauguration ceremony was led by the Commissioner of Dawood Khan and the Deputy Commissioner Abdul Nasir who planted saplings to mark the official start of the campaign.

Smog case: LHC seeks tree policy report

LAHORE (APP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Friday directed authorities to submit a report on the formulation of a comprehensive tree policy.

The court also ordered the Advocate General Punjab to appear at the next hearing. Justice Shahid Karim heard petitions filed by Haroon Farooq and others regarding measures to curb environmental degradation.

During the proceedings, Member Judicial Water and Environmental Commission Syed Kamal Haider informed the court that a meeting had been held under the commission's supervision concerning tree protection. It was decided that any decision regarding tree cutting must be made in consultation with the

commission.

The court expressed displeasure over the late appearance of Parks and Horticulture Authority (PHA) counsel Haris Azmat and observed that an alternative representative should appear if designated counsel was unavailable. A reply was also submitted by the University of the Punjab. The university's counsel informed the court that a committee had been constituted to take action against those responsible for cutting trees at the Sheikh Zayed Islamic Centre. Justice Shahid Karim remarked that it was surprising trees were being felled despite clear court directives and observed that those involved in illegal tree cutting should not be granted bail.



Activists of Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) protest in Karachi over health concerns of PTI founder Imran Khan.

**ISLAMABAD:** Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chairs a high-level review meeting on the Sea-to-Steel initiative at Port Qasim.

Commerce Minister calls for engineering-Led industrial transformation at NUTECH

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Wednesday emphasized the urgent need for aligning academia with industry and preparing Pakistan for the fast-evolving global technological landscape, while addressing a gathering at National University of Technology (NUTECH) as the Chief Guest.

The event was attended by senior faculty members, students, industry representatives and policymakers. Senator Nauman Wazir also addressed the audience and highlighted the importance of innovation-driven growth and policy consistency for sustainable industrial development, said a release issued here on Friday.

In his keynote address, Jam Kamal Khan underlined that the world is undergoing an unprec-

edented technological transformation driven by artificial intelligence, data analytics, quantum computing, automation and digital platforms. He stated that nations that invest in engineering, research and technical human capital are shaping the future global economy.

"Technology is no longer optional; it is foundational," the Minister said, adding that a single smartphone today empowers individuals with access to global knowledge. He observed that artificial intelligence tools are transforming decision-making, research, governance and business models, and Pakistan must position itself proactively within this emerging AI-driven ecosystem.

Drawing international comparisons, the Commerce Minister noted that

countries that prioritized engineering and technical skills at scale have rapidly advanced in industrial competitiveness. He cited the rise of technology-based manufacturing economies and stressed that Pakistan must strengthen its engineering base, technical institutions and industry-academia collaboration to remain competitive.

He further highlighted the global expansion of data centers, digital infrastructure and advanced manufacturing, explaining that the future economy will depend heavily on energy efficiency, semiconductors, critical minerals, and high-skilled engineers. Referring to Pakistan's mineral resources — including copper and rare earth elements — he said the country holds significant untapped potential that must be strategically utilized through modern technology and policy reforms.

The Minister stressed that policy frameworks must evolve with technological change. "Reforms cannot be delayed," he said, comparing economic reform to timely medical intervention — warning that postponement increases long-term costs. He emphasized governance reforms, industrial modernization, agricultural transformation, and digital policy upgrades as essential pillars for national progress.

of 51 items, prices of 15 (29.41 percent) items increased, 15 (29.41 percent) items decreased and 21 (41.18 percent) items remained stable.

Major commodities registering a week-on-week decrease included eggs (17.61%), tomatoes (12.02%), chicken (6.34%), onions (2.73%), potatoes (2.49%), salt powder (1.69%), LPG (1.57%), wheat flour (1.31%) and sugar (1.12%).

On the other hand, major commodities witnessing an increase included bananas (7.62%), garlic (4.35%), pulse mash (2.69%), chilies powder (1.68%), mutton (0.80%), beef (0.37%), mustard oil (0.34%), shirting (0.31%) and cigarettes (0.24%).

vegetable ghee 1Kg (0.08%), georgette (0.02%) and lawn printed (0.01%).

On a year-on-year basis, major increases were observed in the prices of tomatoes (73.36%), wheat flour (33.82%), gas charges for Q1 (29.85%), chilies powder (15.20%), beef (12.70%), eggs (11.76%), bananas (11.67%).

**ISLAMABAD:** Labourers sorting good quality of onions at Fruit and Vegetable Market.

President Agri Forum says: India deliberately manipulating water flows in River Chenab

ISLAMABAD (APP): President of Agri Forum Pakistan, Dr Ibrahim Mughal, has accused India of deliberately manipulating water flows in the River Chenab, calling it a clear example of "weaponizing water," which could have serious consequences for Pakistan's agriculture, food security, and overall regional peace.

In a telephonic conversation with APP, President of Agri Forum Pakistan, Dr Ibrahim Mughal, categorically rejected India's claim that the 1960 Indus Waters Treaty had been placed "in abeyance." He clarified that the treaty remains fully operational under international law and that no party has the authority to unilaterally suspend, terminate, or amend it.

Dr Mughal described the term "abeyance" as a fabricated expression with

no legal standing in international treaty law, intended solely to create ambiguity. He stated that India itself acknowledges it does not have the authority to unilaterally suspend the treaty.

He further noted that the Permanent Court of Arbitration, in its June 2025 decision, affirmed that India cannot suspend the Indus Waters Treaty without Pakistan's consent. Dr Mughal accused India of deliberately manipulating water flows in the River Chenab, calling it a clear example of "weaponizing water," which could have serious consequences for Pakistan's agriculture, food security, and overall regional peace.

He explained that the treaty guarantees Pakistan not a specific volume of water but the natural flow of the western rivers — Indus, Jhelum, and Chenab.

PSX sheds 908 points to close at 179,603 points

ISLAMABAD (APP): The benchmark KSE-100 Index of the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) on Friday witnessed a bearish trend, losing 908.92 points, a negative change of 0.50 percent, to close at 179,603.73 points compared to 180,512.65 points on the previous trading day, according to PSX data.

During the session, the ready market recorded a trading volume of 708,968 million shares with a traded value of Rs 38,887 billion, against 873,996 million shares valuing Rs 41,766 billion in the previous session. Market capitalization declined to Rs 20,359 trillion from Rs 20,438 trillion a day earlier. Out of 481 active companies in the ready market, 194 advanced, 231 declined, and 56 remained unchanged.

Rupee gains 03 paise against US Dollar

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Rupee on Friday appreciated by 03 paise against the US Dollar in interbank trading and closed at Rs 279.62 compared to the previous day's closing at Rs 279.65.

According to the Forex Association of Pakistan (FAP), the buying and selling rates of the Dollar in the open market were recorded at Rs 280.5 and Rs 282.15, respectively. The price of the Euro decreased by Rs 0.61 to close at Rs 331.57 from the previous day's close of Rs 332.18, according to the State Bank of Pakistan (SBP).

Aurangzeb urges officers to embrace forward-looking, solutions-driven leadership

ISLAMABAD (APP): Minister for Finance and Revenue Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Friday encouraged officers of 124th National Management Course to adopt a forward-looking and solutions-oriented approach in their respective domains.

Addressing the participants of 124th National Management Course at the National School of Public Policy (NSPP), Pakistan Administrative Staff College, the minister shared his perspective on Pakistan's economic direction, fiscal reform agenda, and the importance of institutional

resilience in navigating complex policy challenges, said a news release.

He highlighted the Government's ongoing structural reform initiatives aimed at strengthening macroeconomic stability, broadening the tax base, improving public financial management, and enhancing transparency and accountability in governance.

The minister emphasized the critical role of senior civil servants in policy execution and institutional reform, noting that sustainable economic progress depends not only on sound policy formulation.

SBP injects over Rs 12.89trln in market

KARACHI (APP): The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP) injected Rs 12,895.05 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) to maintain liquidity in the market.

The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 10 and 14-day tenors on February 13, 2026, and injected Rs 12,406.55 billion against 32 bids while other Rs 488.5 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO.

The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase

of 14-day tenor, received 27 bids cumulatively offering Rs 12,416.05 billion at the rate of return ranging between 10.51 to 10.59%. The SBP accepted Rs 12,200.05 billion against 27 quotes at 10.51% rate of return. The total amount offered at 10.51% was Rs 6,021 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 5,805 billion on a pro-rata basis.

Moreover, the SBP also received 5 quotes for the 10-day tenor, cumulatively offering Rs 206.5 billion at the rate of return ranging between 10.51% to 10.56%.

The SBP accepted the entire amount of the 5 bids at 10.51% rate of return.

**Participants in a group photo during Pakistan Sundar Industrial Expo 2026 concluding ceremony in which 500 companies participated.**

SCCI, DHA Peshawar to launch joint initiatives to facilitate business community

PESHAWAR (APP): Peshawar Chamber of Commerce and Industry and DHA Peshawar embarked on a journey to strengthen collaboration and facilitate the business community.

SCCI has shown keen interest to establish a state of the art, business-commercial complex, as well as education, health facility under a joint venture in DHA housing society Peshawar.

A highly productive meeting was held between SCCI President Junaid Altaf and DHA Peshawar Administrator Brigadier Haroon Rasheed Khan at the chamber house, said a press release issued here on Friday.

SCCI and DHA Peshawar have agreed to frame modalities to work together and launch joint initiatives to facilitate the business community.

Meeting was attended by SCCI senior vice president Muhammad Nadeem, vice president Sabir Ahmad Bangash, leader of Businessman Forum and former FPCCI president Ghazanfar Bilour, former presidents

Haji Muhammad Asif, Fuad Ishaq, Zahidullah Shinwari and Faiz Muhammad Faizi, former senior vice president Shahid Hussain, former vice president Haris Mufti, members of the executive committee Ziaul Haq Sarhadi, Sajjad Zaheer, Abbas Fuad Azeem, Aftab Iqbal, Saifullah Khan and Sadar Gul, Fazal e Wahid, WCCIP President Qurtul

Zaraa Imtiaz and vice president Zareen Akhtar, members and others.

Gold prices plunge Rs 8,600 per tola

ISLAMABAD (APP): The price of 24 karat per tola gold witnessed a decrease of Rs 8,600 and was sold at Rs 519,962 on Friday against its sale at Rs 528,562 the previous trading day. All Pakistan Sarafa Gems and Jewellers Association reported.

The price of 10 grams of 24 karat gold also decreased by Rs 7,373 to Rs 445,783 from Rs 453,156, whereas the price of 10 grams of 22 karat gold went down by Rs 6,759 to Rs 408,649 from Rs 415,408.

The rates of per tola and ten gram silver decreased by Rs 501 and Rs 430 to Rs 8,324 and Rs 7,136, respectively.

The price of gold in the international market decreased by \$86 to \$4,972 from \$5,058, whereas that of silver went down by \$5.1 to \$78.40, the Association reported.

Brig Haroon Rasheed invited SCCI to become a partner to establish health, education and other facilities in the DHA housing society.

The DHA administrator agreed with proposals tabled by President Junaid Altaf and called for formalizing the agreement with mutual consensus.

Earlier, President Junaid Altaf speaking on the occasion presented a comprehensive proposal to strengthen collaboration with DHA Peshawar.

He added SCCI is intending to enter a collaboration with DHA for which a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed.

The SCCI president sought special concessions and plots on easy installments for the staff members of the chamber.

Maritime Minister pushes for steel self sufficiency via Sea-to-Steel green corridor

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chaired a high-level review meeting Friday to accelerate the Sea-to-Steel Initiative at Port Qasim.

The meeting centered on the Integrated Maritime Industrial Complex (IMIC), a flagship initiative to modernize industrial operations through port infrastructure upgrades, shipbuilding and recycling facilities, and an integrated steel mill. Representatives from China's

Shandong Xinxu Group and senior Ministry of Maritime Affairs officials attended the meeting. Port Qasim Authority Chairman Rear Admiral @ Syed Moazzam Ilyas participated via video link from Karachi.

The IMIC features three core components, including the revival and upgrading of the Iron Ore and Coal Berth (IOCB) jetty. This facility will handle ship recycling and repair, with the resulting scrap

used to revive the steel mill. Branded the "Sea-to-Steel Green Maritime Industrial Corridor," the project connects ship recycling with domestic steel production to cut reliance on imported raw materials and leverage recyclable scrap.

The Chinese group, which has shown keen interest, will submit a comprehensive unsolicited feasibility study, including financial impact assessments, structural and hydrographic analyses, and

quantitative risk evaluations. Minister Chaudhry positioned IMIC as a key driver of blue economy, creating industrial value through maritime assets. "Once submitted, the proposal will undergo thorough review before any decision," Junaid Chaudhry stated.

"If approved, IMIC would rank among Pakistan's largest recent maritime and industrial investments, cementing Port Qasim as a regional hub for heavy industry and logistics."

**SIALKOT:** Consul General of the Republic of Türkiye in Pakistan Mehmet Eymen Azim Ayek along with President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Siddiqua inaugurates the fourth edition of "We Exhibit 2026" organized by WCCIS to promote women-led enterprises.

Shipping activity at Port Qasim

KARACHI (APP): Seven ships, MSC Aquarius-VII, Asphalt Alliance, Sereno, Ullswater, Al-Sene, Sea Spirit and Lilas Calm scheduled to load/offload Container, Bitumen, Mogas, LNG and Coal, berthed at Qasim International Container Terminal, Multi-Purpose Terminal, FOTCO oil Terminal, Pakistan Gas Port Terminal, Pakistan International Bulk Terminal and Port Qasim Power Electric Terminal respectively on Thursday. Meanwhile five more ships, CMA CGM Maupassant, Spirit of Bertram, Sidr Al-Wakra, Maritime Comity and Amilla scheduled to load/offload Container, Bitumen, Palm oil, and Coal also arrived at outer anchorage during last 24 hours.

A total of twelve ships were engaged at POA berths during the last 24 hours, out of them four ships, MSC Aquarius-VII, Pan Bonita, Astro Nembus and Greco Libero left the port on Friday morning, while three more ships, PVT Sunrise, Ullswater and Spirit of Bertram are expected sail on Friday afternoon.

Gold prices plunge Rs 8,600 per tola

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Turkish CG inaugurates "We Exhibit 2026" in Sialkot

SIALKOT (APP): Counsel General of Republic of Turkey in Pakistan Mehmet Eymen Simsek and President Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry Sialkot (WCCIS) Dr. Mariam Siddiqua inaugurated the fourth edition of "We Exhibit 2026" organized by the WCCIS here on Friday.

Addressing the participants, Counsel General of Republic of Turkey in Pakistan Mehmet Eymen Simsek said that the relationships between Turkey and Pakistan are based on a strong bond of social and cultural relations.

Counsel General of Republic of Turkey said that Turkey and Pakistan have perfect relationships in political area, in defense and military area and "We have great potential in trade domain".

He said that the currently our trade volume is 1.2 to 1.3 billion dollars, but our target is 5 billion dollars. So talking about \$5 billion trade volume target, achieving that of course is not possible without the women entrepreneurs.

That's why we attach great importance to such initiatives.

Climate-smart agronomy imperative to cut input costs: DG Agric research

FAISALABAD (APP): Director General Agriculture (Research) Punjab Dr Sajid-ur-Rehman called for accelerated transfer of modern research and climate-smart technologies to farmers to secure higher incomes and sustainable growth as reducing production costs while increasing per-acre yields in the wake of climate change is very imperative.

He was chairing the annual Kharif Research Program meeting of Agronomy Department at Ayub Agricultural Research

Institute (AARI) on Friday.

He stressed that all available resources were being mobilized to ensure profitability for growers through innovation-driven interventions.

He said that instead of burning paddy and other crop residues, converting them into biochar and biopolymers and incorporating them into soil could significantly enhance soil fertility, curb environmental pollution and contribute to improved carbon management.

Pakistan, China explore partnership to boost climate-resilient agriculture

ISLAMABAD (INP): Freedom Gate Prosperity (FGP) hosted a high-level meeting with Dr. Sayad Parastar, Chairman of China-based Henan Pallas Biotechnology Co. Ltd., to explore collaborative strategies aimed at restoring soil health and enhancing agricultural productivity in Pakistan's climate-stressed regions.

The meeting, held here at FGP's office brought together leading experts and stakeholders, including Pakistani-German scholar Sarmad Hussain, Shafqat Aziz, Dr. Shahbaz Tariq, Dr. Kausar Khan, Atif Saeed of FGP,

and Asad Rafi, CEO of Micronox.

The discussions focused on addressing critical challenges facing Pakistan's agricultural sector, particularly soil degradation, salinity, nutrient imbalance, and declining fertility, says a report carried by Gwadar Pro on Friday.

Participants described the engagement as a constructive step toward structured and science-driven cooperation between Pakistan and China in sustainable agriculture.

With climate change, water scarcity, and land degradation increasingly threatening food security,

**KARACHI:** A vendor sells spice at a wholesale market in Karachi. Pakistan's weekly inflation rose by 0.09 percent ahead of Ramadan, ending three weeks of decline, with the Sensitive Price Index (SPI) reaching 333.79 points, according to the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS). Tomato, onion, and diesel prices increased, while wheat flour and eggs declined. Inflation rose across most income groups, recording a 4.84 percent annual increase.

Bangladesh's BNP wins sweeping election majority, promises stability

Monitoring Desk
DHAKA: The Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) won an overwhelming two-thirds majority on Friday in general elections, a result expected to bring stability after months of tumult following the ouster of former Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a Gen Z-led uprising in 2024.

Latest counts in a vote seen as the South Asian nation's first truly competitive election in years gave the BNP and its allies at least 212 of the 299 seats up for grabs, domestic TV channels said.

The opposition Jamaat-i-Islami and its allies won 70 seats in the Jatiya Sangsad, or House of the Nation. The Election Commission put the BNP at 181 seats, the Jamaat-i-Islami at 61 and others at 7,

with full official results not expected before noon (11am PKT) on Friday.

The BNP, which returns to power after 20 years, thanked the people soon and called for special prayers on Friday for the nation and its people. "Despite winning... by a large margin of votes, no celebratory procession or rally shall be organised," the party said in a statement.

The National Citizen Party (NCP), led by youth activists who played a key role in toppling Hasina and was a part of the Jamaat-led alliance, won just five of the 30 seats it contested.

A clear outcome had been seen as key for stability in the Muslim-majority nation of 175 million after months of deadly anti-Hasina unrest disrupted everyday life and industries

such as garments, in the export of which Bangladesh is No.2 globally.

"A strong majority gives BNP the parliamentary strength to pass reforms efficiently and avoid legislative paralysis. That alone can create short-term political stability," Selim Raihan, an economics professor at the University of Dhaka, told Reuters.

BNP leader Tarique Rahman is widely expected to be sworn in as prime minister. The son of the party's founder, former president Ziaur Rahman, he returned in December to the capital, Dhaka, from 18 years abroad.

In its manifesto, the BNP promised to prioritise job creation, protect low-income and marginal households and ensure fair prices to farmers.



Protesters hold signs outside the Royal Courts of Justice, after High Court judges ruled the British government's decision to designate pro-Palestinian group Palestine Action as a terrorist organisation unlawful, in London, Britain

Sudan's RSF committed war crimes, possible crimes against humanity in El-Fasher: UN

Monitoring Desk
NEW YORK: Sudan's Rapid Support Forces unleashed a "wave of intense violence... shocking in its scale and brutality" during their final offensive to capture the besieged city of El-Fasher last October, committing widespread atrocities that amount to war crimes and possible crimes against humanity, the UN Human Rights Office said in a report published on Friday.

The report, based on

interviews with more than 140 victims and witnesses from Sudan's Northern State and eastern Chad in late 2025, documented more than 6,000 killings in the first three days of the RSF assault that followed 18 months of siege.

The report said at least 4,400 people were killed in El-Fasher during those initial days, and more than 1,600 others were killed while they attempted to flee.

The actual death toll during the week-long offen-

sive is likely to be significantly higher, the report added. In many cases, attacks were directed against innocent civilians based on their ethnicity or perceived affiliation, the report said.

"The wanton violations that were perpetrated by the RSF and allied Arab militia in the final offensive on El-Fasher underscore that persistent impunity fuels continued cycles of violence," said UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Volker Turk.

Russia, Ukraine to hold talks in Geneva on February 17-18

KYIV (AFP/APP): Russia and Ukraine will hold US-brokered talks on February 17-18 in Geneva, both countries said Friday, announcing the next leg in fraught negotiations seeking to end the four-year war.

US President Donald Trump is pushing to end the conflict, unleashed when Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022, but two previous rounds of US-mediated talks in Abu Dhabi have not yielded any signs of a breakthrough.

Both sides said publicly the discussions were productive, but Moscow and Kyiv remain far apart on the key issue of territory.

"The next round of talks on the Ukrainian settlement will be held in the same trilateral Russia-US-Ukraine format, on February 17-18 in Geneva," Russia's state-run RIA Novosti news agency cited Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov as saying.

An aide to Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy later confirmed to journalists that its delegation was preparing for the negotiations next week.

Moscow has stuck to its demands for sweeping territorial and political concessions from Ukraine—rejected by Kyiv as tantamount to capitulation.

Russia blocks WhatsApp and Telegram

Monitoring Desk
MOSCOW: Russia announced on Thursday it had blocked WhatsApp over its alleged failure to comply with Russian legislation, days after restricting access to rival messaging service Telegram for similar reasons.

Moscow has for months been trying to shift users onto Max, a domestic messaging service that lacks end-to-end encryption and which activists have called a potential surveillance tool.

Critics say the restrictions are part of a broader campaign by Russian authorities to tighten control over internet use and more easily monitor Russian citizens online.



Supporters of the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) chant slogans as they celebrate news of Tarique Rahman's win in his constituency in the 13th general election near the party's Gulshan office in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

DR Congo government accepts 'principle of a ceasefire': presidency

KINSHASA (AFP/APP): The Democratic Republic of Congo said Friday it had "accepted the principle of a ceasefire" involving a "strict and immediate" freezing of positions in the conflict in the east of the country.

It follows a proposal by mediator Angola for the Congolese government and the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group to respect a ceasefire starting from February 18.

"The president of the republic has accepted the principle of a ceasefire," the presidency of the DRC said in a statement, without giving a date for when it would take effect.

The resource-rich eastern DRC has been mired in unabated violence for 30 years by scores of armed groups. The region, which borders Rwanda and Burundi, has been targeted by the M23 anti-governmental group since its resurgence in 2021. Since then, half a dozen ceasefires and truces have been signed and broken. Peace efforts led by Qatar and the United States have recently sought to end the crisis, leading to the signing of two separate accords.

Three dead, many without power after storm lashes France and Spain

PARIS (AFP/APP): Three people have died in weather-related accidents in France and Spain after a storm tore through the region, officials said Friday, ripping up trees and flooding roads and leaving many thousands without power.

High winds and hard rain forced cancellations of flights, trains and ferries on Thursday and brought chaos to roads in southern France, northern Spain and parts of Portugal.

Spanish officials said a woman died after the roof of an industrial warehouse collapsed on her, while French officials

confirmed Friday that a person died after falling from a ladder in their garden, a day after a truck driver was killed when a tree smashed through his windscreen.

Dozens more were also injured in weather-related incidents in Spain, and a viaduct in Portugal partially collapsed because of flooding.

French forecasters said the storm, named Nils, was "unusually strong" and France's electricity distributor said it had mobilised around 3,000 workers as it battled to reconnect households to the grid.

Ukraine, China FM's discuss 'peace efforts' at Munich conference: Kyiv

MUNICH (AFP/APP): Ukraine's foreign minister said Friday he met his counterpart from China—a close partner of Moscow—at the Munich Security Conference, where the pair discussed ending the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

China and Russia are close partners and while Beijing has said it takes a neutral stance on the war in Ukraine, it has never condemned the invasion. "We discussed peace efforts and China's important role in facilitating an end to the war," Andriy Sybida said of his meeting with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi. "I reiterated Ukraine's interest in contacts with China at the highest level," Sybida added, referring to a push for a meeting between President Volodymyr Zelenskyy and China's leader Xi Jinping.

Western governments and Kyiv accuse Beijing of providing Russia with crucial economic support for its war effort, notably by supplying military components for its defence industry.

Sybida said the conversation was "meaningful and productive" and that he had updated Wang on the status of fighting and on Russian attacks that had damaged facilities linked to Chinese companies. He also said China would supply humanitarian energy assistance to Ukraine, in the wake of systematic Russian strikes on Ukraine's energy grid.

Second US aircraft carrier is being sent to the Middle East, AP source says

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: The world's largest aircraft carrier has been ordered to sail from the Caribbean Sea to the Middle East, a person familiar with the plans said Thursday, as US President Donald Trump considers whether to take possible military action against Iran.

The move by the USS Gerald R. Ford, first reported by The New York Times, will put two carriers and their accompanying warships in the region as Trump increases pressure on Iran to make a deal over its nuclear program. The person spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss military movements.

The USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier and three guided-missile destroyers arrived in the Middle East more than two weeks ago.

It marks a quick turn-

around for the USS Ford, which Trump sent from the Mediterranean Sea to the Caribbean last October as the administration build up a huge military presence in the leadup to the surprise raid last month that captured then-Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro.

It also appears to be at odds with Trump's national security strategy, which put an emphasis on the Western Hemisphere over other parts of the world. Trump on Thursday warned Iran that failure to reach a deal with his administration would be "very traumatic." Iran and the United States held indirect talks in Oman last week.

"I guess over the next month, something like that," Trump said in response to a question about his timeline for striking a deal with Iran on its nuclear program.

At BoP meeting, Trump to announce Gaza funding plan, ISF troop deployment

Monitoring Desk
WASHINGTON: President Donald Trump will announce a multi-billion dollar reconstruction plan for Gaza and detailed plans for a UN-authorised stabilisation force for the Palestinian enclave, at the first formal meeting of his Board of Peace next week, two senior US officials said on Thursday. Delegations from at least 20 countries, including many heads of state, are expected to attend the meeting in Washington, DC, which Trump will chair on February 19, the officials told Reuters on condition of anonymity.

Trump signed documents in Davos, Switzerland, on January 23 establishing the Board of Peace. The board's creation was endorsed by a United Nations Security Council resolution as part of Trump's Gaza plan.

While regional Middle East powers, including Turkey, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar, as well as major emerging nations such as Pakistan and Indonesia, have joined the board, global powers and traditional Western

US allies have been more cautious. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said on Wednesday, during his visit to Washington, that Israel has joined the board. Trump has stirred concerns that the Board of Peace might try to resolve other conflicts around the world and compete with the United Nations. The US officials said the meeting next week will focus solely on Gaza.

They said a central part of the meeting will be Trump's announcement of a multi-billion-dollar fund for Gaza, which will include monetary contributions from participating board members.

One official called the offers "generous" and said that the United States had not made any explicit requests for donations. "People have come to us offering," the official said.

"The president will make announcements vis a vis the money raised." The deployment of an International Stabilisation Force (ISF) is a key part of the next phase of Trump's Gaza plan, announced in September.

Denmark, Greenland PMs to hold talks with Rubio in Munich

MUNICH (AFP/APP): Danish Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen and her Greenlandic counterpart Jens-Frederik Nielsen will discuss Greenland with US Secretary of State Marco Rubio on Friday on the sidelines of the Munich Security Conference, they said.

Since returning to the White House last year, US President Donald Trump has argued that Washington needs to control Greenland—an autonomous Danish territory—for American national security.

"There will be a relatively brief meeting with the (Greenlandic) prime minister, the (Danish) prime minister, and the American secretary of state, where I hope and believe they'll confirm that the process we've started is a good one and should continue," Danish Foreign

Minister Lars Lokke Rasmussen told Danish media as he arrived at the conference.

Frederiksen told Danish news agency Ritzau: "We have agreed to hold several meetings with American politicians, including the secretary of state, also (about) Greenland."

Last month, Trump backed down from his threats to seize Greenland after striking a "framework" deal with NATO Secretary General Mark Rutte to ensure greater US influence.

A US-Denmark-actively brief meeting with the (Greenlandic) prime minister, the (Danish) prime minister, and the American secretary of state, where I hope and believe they'll confirm that the process we've started is a good one and should continue," Danish Foreign

Greenland working group has been established to discuss Washington's security concerns in the Arctic but details have not been made public.

A first meeting has already taken place and a second one is due soon, Rasmussen said.

AI's bitter rivalry heads to Washington

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Anthropic's major donation to a political group that competes with an OpenAI-backed organization has highlighted a bitter rift over AI regulation—a key issue heading into the US midterm elections.

With the artificial intelligence industry rapidly advancing, Democrats and Republicans alike have found themselves squeezed between a powerful tech lobby flush with cash and a broadly wary public.

Leading the charge on the industry side is Leading the Future, a pro-AI super PAC backed by OpenAI's Greg Brockman, venture capital behemoth Andreessen Horowitz, Palantir co-founder Joe Lonsdale, and AI search company Perplexity.

Brockman, OpenAI's longtime president, and his wife Anna are also among the largest recent donors to President Donald Trump's political coffers, to the tune of \$25 million last year.

Super PACs are political organizations in the United States that can raise and spend unlimited funds for media campaigns, but not give directly to candidates.

Leading the Future raised \$125 million in the second half of 2025, according to official filings, and is co-led by Josh Vlasto—a former adviser to Fairshake, the crypto-aligned super PAC whose playbook Leading the Future is looking to repeat.

That playbook proved devastatingly effective in the 2024 election cycle, when Fairshake poured money into races against candidates skeptical of cryptocurrency. Now spooked by the prospect of a repeat in AI, Anthropic has entered the fray. On Thursday, the company gave \$20 million to a competing super PAC, Public First Action, which supports AI guardrails—effectively setting up a direct fight against Leading the Future.



France's President Emmanuel Macron on Friday said he wanted "mandatory electoral bans" for officials guilty of "antisemitic, racist, and discriminatory acts and remarks."

Macron calls for stronger measures against antisemitism in France

Monitoring Desk
PARIS: French President Emmanuel Macron called for intensified efforts to combat antisemitism in France, as recent government data showed hostility toward Jews has remained high despite a decline in recorded incidents last year.

France, which has the largest Jewish community in Europe, documented 1,320 antisemitic acts in 2025, accounting for 53 percent of all anti-religious incidents, according to a report released on Thursday by the Interior Ministry.

Even incidents fell percent year-on-year, they remained at "historically" levels for three consecutive years, the Ministry said. The increase followed the October 7, 2023, Hamas attack on Israel and subsequent conflict in Gaza.

"Schools, the justice

system, elected officials: everyone must be mobilized," Macron said at a ceremony commemorating 20 years since the death of Ilan Halimi, a 23-year-old man who died after being kidnapped and held captive for 24 . A gang leader was sentenced in 2009 life in prison for his abduction, torture and murder.

Macron criticized what he called the "poison of online hatred" and urged the European Commission to hold big platforms accountable. "In the France of the Enlightenment, 'free speech' stops at antisemitism and racism," the French leader said. Antisemitic acts continue rising across Europe. Britain recorded 3,700 antisemitic incidents in 2025, a 4 percent increase and the second-worst year on record.

Shooting kills two, wounds one at southern US university

WASHINGTON (AFP/APP): Gunfire killed two people and wounded another in an apartment at a historically Black university in the southern United States on Thursday, officials said, marking at least the third shooting on the campus since October.

The United States, where firearms are readily available, has a long history of gun violence that kills thousands of people every year.

The shooting at South Carolina State University's Hugine Suites student residential complex was reported around 9:15 pm Thursday (0215 GMT Friday), the college said in a statement.

Nigeria to hold presidential election on February 20 next year

ABUJA (AFP/APP): Nigeria on Friday said it will hold its presidential election on February 20 next year and announced a staggered timetable for legislative elections in Africa's most populous country.

Election commission chief Joash Ojo Amupitan made the announcement and called the upcoming election a "significant milestone in our democratic journey".

Elections to pick state governors will be held on March 6, 2027, he said.

Earlier this week, the upper house of the Nigerian parliament adopted—after pressure and protests—an amendment allowing live publication of election results, after initially rejecting it.

Over the past decade, the Independent National Electoral Commission (INEC) has introduced technology designed to improve the integrity of election results.



Refugees displaced from El-Fasher after its fall to the RSF sit in the shade in a lawila camp.

Pakistan calls for peaceful dispute resolution, respect for international law at UN parliamentary hearing

ISLAMABAD (APP): Pakistan has called for greater respect for international law and renewed efforts toward the peaceful settlement of longstanding disputes in line with the UN Charter and relevant Security Council resolutions, Senate Chairman Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said during the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) Annual Hearing 2026 at the United Nations headquarters.

Delivering Pakistan's national statement at the inaugural session, Gilani emphasised the need for democratic, transparent and accountable decision-making to strengthen the credibility of the United Nations.

He said parliaments remained essential partners in ensuring national ownership of international commitments.

Highlighting the need for institutional reform, the Senate chairman remarked

that reforms should be inclusive, stressing the principle of "reform for all, privilege for none".

Gilani is leading a six-member high-level parliamentary delegation from Pakistan attending the two-day annual parliamentary hearing.

The delegation includes Senators Saleem Mandviwala, Farooq H. Naek, Muhammad Abdul Qadir, Syed Faisal Ali Subzwari, and National Assembly member Malik Muhammad Amir Dogar.

The Senate chairman underscored the continued importance of the United Nations as a cornerstone of multilateral cooperation, noting that its universal membership and Charter-based mandate remained central to promoting global peace and security.

Referring to multiple global challenges, including climate change, ongoing

conflicts and widening socio-economic inequalities, he said these overlapping crises were straining the UN's capacity to deliver effectively across its key mandates.

He observed that such pressures disproportionately affected developing countries, often reversing development gains.

Gilani stressed that no single country could address these systemic challenges alone and called for renewed trust in multilateral cooperation supported by predictable and sustainable financing for the UN system.

Recalling his role in last year's Inter-Parliamentary Speakers Conference, he reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to fostering closer coordination between the United Nations, the IPU and related parliamentary platforms to advance shared global objectives.



KARACHI: Federal Minister for Interfaith Harmony Sardar Muhammad Yousuf inspects facilities at Old Haji Camp during his visit to review arrangements for participants of the Hajj Training Programme.

Hajj 2026 arrangements finalized, 2nd phase of training scheduled after Ramazan: Sardar Yousuf

KARACHI (APP): Federal Minister for Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony, Sardar Muhammad Yousuf, Friday, said that arrangements for Hajj 2026 have been completed, with more than 179,000 pilgrims expected to travel to Saudi Arabia under government and private schemes.

The minister, while speaking to the media during a visit to the New Haji Camp, informed that Pakistan's total Hajj quota for 2026 stands at 179,210. Of these, 119,210 pilgrims will perform Hajj under the government scheme, while 60,000 will travel through private tour operators. Around 29,000 pilgrims will depart from Sindh province, he added.

According to Sardar Yousuf, the first phase of Hajj training was completed between 16 January and 2 February, with 24,000 pilgrims participating. The second phase, scheduled after Ramazan, will focus

on the practical performance of Hajj rituals, awareness of Saudi regulations and the importance of discipline during the pilgrimage.

All applications under the official Hajj scheme had been processed and the biometric verification of 29,000 pilgrims completed, he said, adding that arrangements for catering, accommodation and transport in Saudi Arabia had been finalized.

The minister framed the ministry's approach in moral terms, telling reporters that "worship leads to heaven, while service leads to Allah," and said the ministry was guided by this principle in facilitating pilgrims. He also credited the Saudi-led "Road to Mecca" initiative with streamlining immigration procedures for Pakistani pilgrims departing from Karachi and Islamabad, allowing them to proceed directly to their accommodation upon arrival.



Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, distributes laptops at Shaheed Benazir Women University in Peshawar.

CDWP, approve portfolio of development projects worth Rs160.2 billion in meeting

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Central Development Working Party (CDWP) considered and approved a portfolio of development projects worth Rs160.2 billion at a meeting chaired by Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Prof Ahsan Iqbal in Islamabad.

The forum reviewed proposals relating to the health, physical planning, housing, transport, and communications sectors, approving two projects with a cumulative cost of Rs8.5bn and recommending four major projects amounting to Rs151.7bn for consideration by the Executive Committee of the National

Economic Council (ECNEC), said a release issued here on Friday.

Presiding over the meeting, Prof Ahsan Iqbal underscored the importance of aligning development interventions with national priorities, stating that public investment must deliver measurable improvements in human development, urban services and connectivity, particularly in regions affected by climate-induced shocks. He said that the government remained committed to ensuring that federally supported and provincially implemented projects were designed for long-term sustainability and tangible socio-economic impact.



QUETTA: Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzaib Khan Kakar presides over the meeting regarding collection of Agricultural Income Tax.



JAMSHORO: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal distributes shields among participating students at the IMCS Tech Expo 2026 Final Year Projects Exhibition & Job Fair held at University of Sindh.

Pakistan, Russia discuss launch of direct Moscow-Islamabad flight

ISLAMABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Friday held separate high-level meetings with the transport ministers of Russia and Iran, focusing on enhancing transport, logistics, and bilateral connectivity among Pakistan, Iran, and Russia.

The meetings took place on the sidelines of the 2nd OIC Transport Ministers' Conference in Istanbul, where the State Secretary and Deputy Minister of Transport of the Russian Federation, Dmitry Stanislavovich Zverev, and Iran's Minister for Roads and Infrastructure, Ms. Farzaneh Sadegh, met with Abdul Aleem Khan, said a press release.

During talks with the Russian deputy minister, both sides agreed that expanding direct land and air connectivity between Pakistan and Russia would significantly enhance regional trade and economic activity. They emphasized initiating practical steps, including the launch of direct Moscow-Islamabad flights, without delay. During the meeting, Russian Deputy Minister Dmitry Stanislavovich Zverev formally invited Federal Minister Abdul Aleem Khan to participate in the International Transport and Logistics Forum, scheduled to be held from April 1-3, 2026, in the historic Russian city of Saint Petersburg.

Federal Minister Abdul

Aleem Khan underscored the need for concrete measures to enhance cooperation in the transport sector, stating that Pakistan is keen to collaborate with Russia in the development of road networks and logistics corridors. The two sides also expressed a firm commitment to resolving visa and related issues faced by Pakistani freight truck drivers. In addition, detailed discussions were held on expanding banking channels and removing financial bottlenecks between the two countries. Abdul Aleem Khan stated that Pakistan has a strong interest in establishing land corridors through China and other countries, enabling effective connectivity with Russia via Central Asian States.

Nation must win 'Battle of Economy' after military success against India, Ahsan

HYDERABAD (APP): The Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has said after the Pakistani forces in the "Battle of Truth" against India, the nation should now triumph in the "Battle of Economy" as well.

He expressed these views while addressing the academia and students at University of Sindh and Shaheed Allah Buksh Soomro (SABS) University of Art, Design and Heritage, in Jamshoro district on Friday.

He underscored that wars could only be won successfully when a country's economy was strong. He recalled that last year the enemy attacked Pakistan at night, but the country's response was so swift and strong that not only India but the entire world was astonished. Iqbal emphasized that a strong defense required a strong economy, adding that while the armed forces emerged victorious in the "Battle of Truth", it was now the nation's turn to succeed in the "Battle of Economy".

NEW YORK: Pakistani Parliamentary Delegation led by Chairman Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, meets with President of the General Assembly, H.E. Ms. Annaleena Baerbock, during the 2026 IPU Parliamentary Hearing at the UN Headquarters.

No durable peace in region without Kashmir solution: Amir Muqam

ISLAMABAD (INP): Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs Engineer Amir Muqam has said that the world has recognized that lasting stability in the region is not possible without a peaceful solution to the Kashmir dispute.

Engineer Amir Muqam, while addressing a ceremony in Islamabad, said that giving political and economic rights to the Kashmiri people was the need of the hour.

He said Pakistan stands with the Kashmiri people and will always stand with them, adding the entire nation is proud of the performance of the Pakistani forces.

He said he will continue to raise his voice for the Kashmiris' rights at every forum until the Kashmir dispute is resolved in accordance with the UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

PM expresses grief over traffic accident on M-9

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday expressed deep sorrow and grief over the traffic accident on the Karachi-Hyderabad Motorway (M-9).

The premier expressed his condolences to the families of the deceased. Shehbaz Sharif prayed for the speedy recovery of the injured and directed that they be provided with medical assistance.

Commissioner for accelerating procedures of collection agricultural income tax

QUETTA (APP): Commissioner Quetta Division Shahzaib Khan Kakar on Friday chaired a meeting regarding the collection of agricultural income tax.

The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioner Quetta Mehrullah Badini, Assistant Commissioner Revenue Quetta Division Bahadur Khan, Settlement Officer Quetta and Deputy Commissioners Chaman, Qila Abdullah and Pishin via

online. The meeting reviewed in detail the steps taken to make the collection of agricultural income tax effective, the registration procedure and the progress related to legal proceedings.

While giving a briefing, the officials said that the registration process of agricultural income earners and landowners is being expedited so that the tax net could be widened and revenue be increased.

The Commissioner

Quetta Division directed that transparency and speed should be brought in the process of collecting agricultural income tax. Those with unregistered agricultural income should be identified and registered immediately.

He said that an awareness campaign should be launched in all districts so that farmers could be provided with information related to tax laws saying that the concerned departments should ensure action by making mutual communication effective.

He further said that effective collection of agricultural income tax would increase provincial revenue and resources could be available for development projects. The participants of the meeting said that all resources would be utilized to achieve the set goals.

PM lauds UAE's unwavering support for Pakistan

LAHORE (APP): Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Friday held a telephone conversation with His Highness Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, President of the UAE and Ruler of Abu Dhabi.

During their warm and cordial conversation, the two leaders fondly recalled their recent meetings in Islamabad and Rahim Yar Khan last month, during the UAE President's first official visit to Pakistan.

The Prime Minister lauded the UAE's consistent and unwavering support to Pakistan, that had helped the country navigate through difficult challenges. This support, the premier said, was a manifestation of the historic, fraternal bonds between the leadership and the people of both countries. They reaffirmed their shared desire to further enhance mutually beneficial cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE.

The two leaders also

exchanged views on other matters of mutual interest and agreed to remain in close contact.

Both leaders reaffirmed their shared desire to further enhance mutually beneficial cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE. They also exchanged views on a range of other matters of mutual interest, agreeing to remain in close contact to ensure continued collaboration.

The friendly and co-operative relationship between Pakistan and the UAE is well-established, with leaders from both nations frequently visiting each other's countries.

In addition to the recent exchanges, last month, President Asif Ali Zardari made a four-day official visit to the UAE, where he met with President Zayed Al Nahyan. The two leaders reaffirmed their commitment to peace and stability, discussing key regional and international developments.



ISTANBUL: Russian Deputy Minister Transport Demitry Stanislavovich Zverev held meeting with Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan at Istanbul in OIC Transport Ministers Conference.

No negligence in medical care of PTI founder; matter should not be politicised: Tariq Fazal

ISLAMABAD (APP): Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhary said on Friday that claims of the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder suffering from an eye problem since October were baseless.

Speaking to the media outside Parliament House, he said the PTI founder formally raised concerns about his eye condition on January 16. Two days before that, the jail's eye specialist had already conducted an examination.

He said, on January 16, it was recommended that he be shifted to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) for further evaluation at a specialized eye care facility equipped with advanced treatment options.

He clarified that the decision to shift the PTI founder to PIMS was not made at the request of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI), but was taken by jail authorities and the government as part of their responsibility to ensure proper medical care.

PNS Khaibar visits Aksaz during maiden voyage, holds drills with Turkish Navy

RAWALPINDI (APP): The newly commissioned, state-of-the-art Pakistan Navy Ship (PNS) Khaibar, during its maiden voyage from Türkiye to Pakistan, visited Aksaz Naval Base, Türkiye, and participated in exercise TURGUTREIS-XIII and joint patrols with ships of the Turkish Navy.

During the stay at Aksaz, the Commanding Officer of PNS Khaibar called on the Turkish Southern Sea Area Commander, said a press release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

During the meeting, discussions focused on enhancing bilateral naval co-

operation and fostering regional stability through collaborative efforts.

Later, Southern Sea Area Commander and Commander Aksaz Naval Base, along with other Turkish Naval Forces officers, visited PNS KHAIBAR.

Following the port visit, PNS Khaibar participated in the PN-TN bilateral Exercise TURGUTREIS-XIII with Turkish Naval Forces ship TCG HEYBELIADA and a TNF SH-70 helicopter. The exercise featured a variety of sea evolutions to rehearse joint maritime operations and enhance interoperability.



QUETTA: Director General Public Relations Balochistan Askar Khan in a group photo with Chief Engineer QDA and others officers after meeting.

At least 13 killed as oil tanker collides with bus on M-9 Motorway near Karachi

HYDERABAD: At least 13 people, including four children killed, were killed when a passenger van collided with an oil tanker at the M-9 Motorway near Karachi, according to the police.

Malir Senior Superintendent of Police Syed Abdul Khaliq Pirzada confirmed the death toll.

A statement from the Sindh Police said the force was fully engaged in extensive rescue and safety measures.

"The police are cooperating in rescue activities while maintaining their presence on site, securing the area, and keeping the traffic situation under control. Coordination and monitoring with relevant agencies are ongoing."

Sindh Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho took immediate notice of the accident while ordering officials to reach the incident site to secure it

and the surrounding areas.

He also gave instructions to ensure safety and precautionary measures in cooperation with other departments considering the possible concerns from the oil spillage with further orders to keep the road clear for timely access of ambulance and rescue personnel.

The police chief also gave instructions to divert traffic to alternative routes. A statement from Sindh Home Minister Ziaul Hassan Lanjar said he gave directives to provide immediate and the best medical facilities to the injured, adding that Rescue 1122 teams were present at the accident site and relief operations were ongoing.

"The injured have been transported to hospitals. Heavy police presence from the local area is at the accident site, the situation is under control."