

New enrollment campaign launched in KP

A new enrollment capaign is being launched in the province, under which a target has been set to enroll 2.6 million children in schools. It is hoped that, for the first time, this enrollment drive will achieve 100 percent results through a well-organized mechanism, with proper data records maintained and reviewed on a daily basis.

Detailed story on Page 2

PCB withholds PSL 11 ...

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has sold the international broadcasting rights for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11, while withholding media rights for the Indian market.

— Story on Page 7

The Province

Wednesday January 4, 2026 | **Peshawar** | Volume: 26 | Issue: 20 | Pages: 8 | Price: 20

Wisdom Quote!



With faith, discipline and selfless devotion to duty, there is nothing worthwhile that you cannot achieve.

— **Muhammad Ali Jinnah**

News DIGEST

CM's aide congrats office bearers of Kohat Press Club

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Special Assistant to Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on Information and Public Relations Shafi Jan visited the Kohat Press Club on Monday and met with the newly elected office bearers and congratulated them on their election.

Speaking on the occasion, Shafi Jan said that journalism is a sacred profession and fourth pillar of state adding that provincial government firmly believes in free and independent journalism. He emphasized that free and responsible journalism is a guarantee for the stability of democracy.

The CM's aide stated that provincial government welcomes positive and constructive criticism by journalists on its performance. He assured that if the journalist community highlights any shortcomings in public welfare projects, the government would take immediate action.

He further said that role of journalists in highlighting public issues is of utmost importance. He said that that the provincial government is taking serious and practical steps for the welfare of journalists and provision of professional facilities. He said the government is fully aware of the issues faced by journalists and effective measures would be taken under a comprehensive strategy to resolve them.

Four bullet-riddled bodies found in Bara

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The bodies of four men, riddled with bullets were recovered from Bar Qambar Khel area of Bara tehsil in Khyber district on Tuesday.

According to police, the bodies were discovered earlier today, after which law enforcement personnel reached the scene to initiate further investigation.

Police stated that motive behind the killings has not yet been determined.

Initial observations suggest that the deceased appeared to be militants and were killed in a firing incident. However, police added that investigations are ongoing to ascertain circumstances behind the killings and identities of the bodies.



ISLAMABAD: A high-level Libyan delegation comprising H.E. Dr. Osama Saad Hamad, Prime Minister of the Libyan Government and Field Marshal Khalifa Abu-al-Qasim Haftar, Commander-in-Chief of the Libyan Arab Armed Forces called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif , in Federal Capital. — PHOTO: ONLINE

Pakistan takes diplomatic seat at US-Iran negotiations

FM Dar likely to join high-stake Istanbul talks; US shoots down Iranian drone approaching aircraft carrier

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan will join upcoming direct talks between Washington and Tehran aimed at seeking a deal to avert a potential United States-Iran conflict, officials confirmed on Tuesday.

Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi told that Pakistan was invited to join the negotiation process expected to take place in Istanbul on Friday.

This will be the first direct talks between Iran and the US since President Donald Trump returned to the White House in January last year.

Trump's Middle East Adviser Steve Witkoff and his son-in-law Jared Kushner will lead the US side, while the Iranian foreign minister will represent Tehran.

Foreign ministers from Pakistan, Turkiye, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates and Oman have been invited to the much-anticipated talks in Istanbul. The format of the process is yet to be finalised, but Pakistan's participation in the high-stakes dialogue underscores its enhanced geostrategic role in the region.

However, Axios later reported, citing two sources with knowledge of the matter, that Iran has demanded that the talks be moved to Oman from Istanbul and be held in a bilateral format.

The US military also shot down an Iranian drone that approached the Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier in the Arabian Sea, a US official told Reuters today. The Iranian Shahed-139 drone was flying towards the carrier and was shot down by a F-35 US fighter jet.

However, the White House said the US is still planning talks with Iranian officials this week, even after the incident.

"I just spoke with special envoy [Steve] Witkoff, and these talks as of right now are still scheduled," Press Secretary Karoline Leavitt told reporters, adding that they were due to happen "later this week". "President Trump is always wanting to pursue diplomacy first, but obviously it takes two to tango," Leavitt said outside the West Wing.

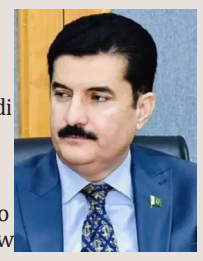
Sources said Pakistan, along with other regional countries, had been working actively behind the scenes to prevent potential US strikes on Iran. Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif spoke to the Iranian president, while Deputy PM and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar remained in contact with his Iranian counterpart amid renewed US threats.

Meanwhile, Pakistan also reached out to other key players, as well as Washington, as part of diplomatic efforts to avert renewed hostilities.

Sources said FM Dar is likely to represent Pakistan at the Istanbul talks.

KP Governor, New York Mayor agree to make Peshawar, New York sister cities

STAFF REPORTER



PESHAWAR: Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi and the Mayor of New York have agreed to grant sister city status to Peshawar and New York, marking a significant step toward strengthening international municipal cooperation.

The Governor welcomed the approval of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Cabinet for declaring Peshawar and New York as sister cities, terming it a milestone in promoting people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the United States.

Following the cabinet's approval, the New York Mayor's Office has forwarded a draft agreement to the Governor House.

The Mayor's Office described the partnership as a positive example of promoting urban cooperation at the global level and an important initiative to strengthen public-level relations between Pakistan and the United States.

Under the sister city arrangement, Peshawar and New York will cooperate in various fields including economy, education, youth skill development, scientific and technological activities, cultural exchanges, and reciprocal visits of high-level delegations. The partnership aims to open new avenues for collaboration and mutual learning between the two cities.

Governor Faisal Karim Kundi reiterated his commitment to restoring Peshawar as a city of flowers and peace. He said that the sister city status would create new educational and technical opportunities for youth and improve access to employment in modern industries.

The Governor expressed confidence that this collaboration would play a vital role in empowering young people and contributing to the socio-economic development of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Counter-terrorism, public safety remain top priorities: IGP KP

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Inspector General of Police (IGP) KP, Zulfiqar Hamid, chaired a high-level meeting at the Central Police Office (CPO) Peshawar to thoroughly reviewed law and order situation. During the meeting, participants were issued necessary instructions for tightening the noose around the neck of miscreants.

Additional IGs Operations Mohammad Ali Babakhel, Special Branch Kashif Alam, Headquarters Abbas Ahsan, Commandant SSU Ghulam Mubashir Maiken, DIG Operations Shakir Hussain Dawar, CCPO Peshawar Dr. Mian Muhammad Saeed and DIG Headquarters Abbas Majeed Marwat attended the meeting. While all Regional and District Police Officers participated via video link.

IGP Zulfiqar Hamid emphasized that eliminating terrorism and lawlessness was the prime responsibly of the KP Police. He directed officials to strengthen Human Intelligence network to track down terrorists and criminals effectively.

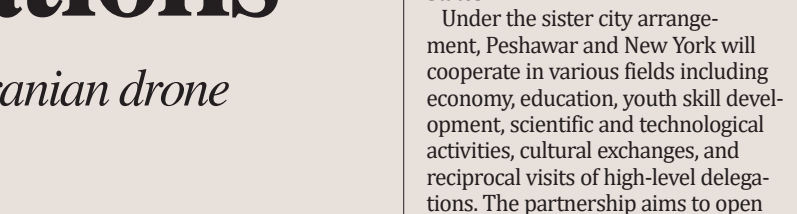
"We will bring every perpetrator and facilitator to justice by leveraging robust intelligence and proactive policing," the IGP stated.

The IGP directed the participants to chalk out a comprehensive security plan for the coming holy month of Ramazan.

It was also directed to carryout security audit of all mosques and places of worship to ensure the safety of citizens during the prayers.

CM Afridi increases youth loan scheme from Rs3 billion to Rs5 billion

STAFP REPORT



PESHAWAR: Chief Minister Muhammad Sohail Afridi has announced an increase in the interest-free loan scheme from Rs3 billion to Rs5 billion for the youth of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

"A great person is not one who possesses degrees and wealth, but one who has a great vision. Nations progress only when they carry the pain of the country in their hearts," he said. Addressing the Young Leaders Convention at Nishtar Hall, Peshawar, the chief minister said while KP was being deprived of its due share, corruption at the federal level has reached Rs5,300 billion, as reported by the International Monetary Fund.

"Corrupt rulers face no scrutiny for spending looted public money on overseas islands and apartments, yet the provincial government is criticised for allocating Rs4 billion for Tirah's affected and displaced population," he said.

CM-KP also criticized the federal government for denying the province its financial rights following the administrative merger of the erstwhile FATA in 2018, calling it a "clear violation of the Constitution."

Afridi noted that the federal government currently owes KP Rs4,758 billion. He added that despite limited resources, his government was serving the province for the third term on the basis of performance and service delivery, and that timely release of outstanding dues would further enhance public services.

Afridi also strongly criticized the Punjab government, accusing it of imposing a de facto civil martial law, curbing political freedoms, and exhibiting an authoritarian mindset.

He condemned the imprisonment of senior politicians, describing it as "the worst form of political victimization," and alleged that the wife of former Prime Minister Imran Khan was unlawfully detained while poisonous water was reportedly released at night outside Adiala Jail against his sisters protesting the arrests.

He urged the youth to raise their voices in all forums and emphasized that their struggle remains strictly within the law and Constitution.

Three-day Balochistan operation leaves 197 militants dead, 22 soldiers martyred

At least 36 civilians, including women and children, were martyred in coordinated terror attacks targeting 12 locations

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: A sweeping counterterrorism crackdown in Balochistan has left 197 militants linked to India-sponsored Fitna al-Hindustan dead, after security forces moved in following coordinated terror attacks that ripped through 12 towns across the province over three days.

The February 31 attacks brought Pakistan's largest province to a near standstill as the separatist Baloch Liberation Army (BLA) struck nearly a dozen targets in one of their largest-ever operations, martyring 17 security officials and 31 civilians.

Terrorists struck civilians in Quetta, Mastung, Nushki, Dalbandin, Kharan, Panjgur, Tump, Gwadar, and Pasni on the weekend.

Security sources said 22 Pakistani soldiers were martyred over the past three days while defending the country and protecting civilians.

The sources added that 36 civilians were also martyred in terrorist attacks, including women and children.

Saturday's attacks came a day after the military's media wing said that forces had killed 41 insurgents in two separate operations in the province.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said in a statement released after the first wave of the clearance operation that terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan had maliciously targeted 18



innocent civilians —including women, children, the elderly, and labourers — who embraced shahadat.

The statement said the attacks targeted innocent civilians in Gwadar and Kharan and were intended to disrupt daily life and development in Balochistan.

Security forces and law enforcement agencies responded immediately and launched intense clearance operations across the province, killing 92 India-backed terrorists, including three suicide bombers. The ISPR stated that security forces "successfully thwarted the evil design of terrorists displaying unwavering courage and professional excellence".

"Our valiant troops carried out the engagement of terrorists with precision," the statement added.

However, 15 security personnel embraced martyrdom, having fought gallantly during clearance operations and intense standoffs, it added.

Security forces then launched sanitisation operations in the affected areas to bring to justice the instigators, perpetrators, facilitators and abettors of the attacks, targeting civilians and LEAs.

"Intelligence reports have unequivocally confirmed that the attacks were orchestrated and directed by terrorist ring leaders operating from outside Pakistan, who were in direct communication with the terrorists throughout the incident," the ISPR stated. The BLA has intensified attacks on Pakistanis from other provinces working in the region in recent years, as well as foreign energy firms.

China condemns Balochistan attacks

Beijing: China on Tuesday strongly condemned the recent spate of terrorist attacks in Balochistan and reiterated its unwavering support for Pakistan in the fight against terrorism. The remarks came after a series of coordinated attacks at multiple locations in Balochistan over the weekend. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), 92 terrorists were killed as security forces repelled the attacks across the province on Saturday, while 15 security personnel were also martyred in combat. Security sources later said that 22 more terrorists were killed with the latest casualties bringing the total number of terrorists killed in operations to at least 177. Speaking at a press briefing, Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Lin Jian expressed deep condolences for the victims and extended sincere sympathies to the injured and the bereaved families.He emphasised that China firmly opposed all forms of terrorism and reaffirmed that it would continue to resolutely support Pakistan in counterterrorism efforts, as well as in maintaining social harmony and stability and ensuring the safety of its people. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar held a meeting with Chinese Ambassador to Pakistan Jiang Zaidong in Islamabad. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, both sides exchanged views on bilateral matters of interest and recent regional developments. The deputy prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening the all-weather strategic cooperative partnership between Pakistan and China, it added. The banned Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA) militant group had claimed responsibility for the attacks in a social media post, describing them as the second phase of "Operation Heroof".

The SPACE

Irfanullah and Riaz successfully defended their MPhil dissertations



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Irfanullah and Mr Riaz Ahmad, MPhil Scholars in Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand have successfully defended their MPhil dissertations under the supervision of Prof Dr Syed Sultan Alam Kakakhel, Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand. The External Examiners were Prof. Dr. Khalid Saeed, Bacha Khan University, Charsadda and Dr Zarshad Ali, Hazara University, Mansehra. The Chairperson, Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand Prof Dr Mumtaz Ali & Faculty Members Congratulated the MPhil Scholars & Research Supervisor in this regard.

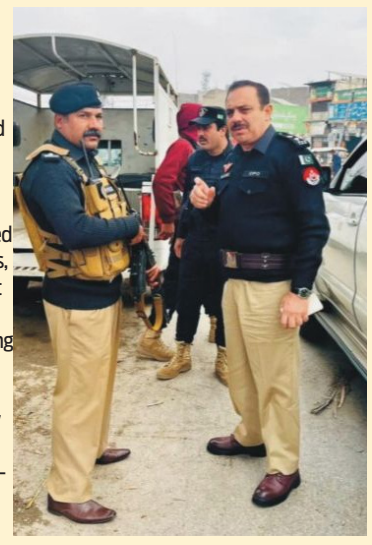
Ali Umar successfully defended his PhD dissertation

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Ali Umar, PhD Scholar in Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand has successfully defended his PhD dissertation titled "Synthesis And Characterization Of Trimetallic [Cu-A-B-L (A, B = Cr, Fe, Ni, Zn)] Metal Organic Frameworks For The Removal Of Organic Contaminants Through The Adsorption Oriented Process" under the supervision of Prof Dr Sultan Alam, Department of Chemistry, University of Malakand. The External Examiners were Prof Dr Khalid Saeed, Department of Chemistry, Bacha Khan University Charsadda& Prof Dr Zarshad Ali, Department of Chemistry Hazara University, Mansehra.

The VC UoM Prof Dr Rashid Ahmad, Prof Dr Mumtaz Ali, Chairperson, Department of Chemistry, UoM & Faculty Members Congratulated Dr Ali Umar & Research Supervisor for PhD Public Defense.

DPO Dera made surprise visit to checkpoints



DI KHAN: DPO Dera made a surprise visit to the checkpoints on various highways of the district, officers should focus on protecting the public and solving problems, officers will never be forgiven for complaints, DPO Dera Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada. According to the details, District Police Officer Dera Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada made a surprise visit to various important highways and checkpoints across the district, checked the checkpoints made on the issued instructions, while warning the checkpoint personnel of strict action against the use of helmets, dark glasses on vehicles, and display of illegal weapons, saying that no one is allowed to take any illegal action that spreads fear and panic among the public. All officers should perform their duties vigilantly for the safety of the police and the public. The problems of the people coming to the police stations should be listened to and solved, and the problems faced by the public should be focused on. Officers will never be forgiven for complaints. Sharif behaved with citizens politely during blockades and snap checks.

Dera police foil armed attack on NBP branch in Paroa

MUHAMMAD REHAN



DERA ISMAIL KHAN: Police foiled an attempt by armed men to rob the National Bank located within the limits of Parwa police station, injuring a bank security guard in the firing.

According to details, 20 to 25 armed suspects attacked the National Bank located in Parwa with the intention of robbing it, however, thanks to the quick response of the police, the suspects could not succeed in their nefarious objectives. As a result of the attack, the bank security guard Muhammad Amin was injured.

As soon as the information was received, the police immediately reached the spot, due to which the armed men were forced to flee.

As soon as the information was received, DPO Dera Sajjad Ahmed Sahibzada himself left for the spot, while a heavy contingent of police was also called.

According to DPO Dera, the suspects were trying to rob the bank, however, a major incident was averted due to the timely and effective action of the police.

The police have cordoned off the area and started a search operation, while raids are being conducted at various places to arrest the suspects. Police say the situation is completely under control and the safety of public life and property is being ensured.

Kohat Bar Association launches development drive with govt Support

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOHAT: The District Bar Association Kohat has launched a comprehensive development initiative aimed at improving facilities for the legal community, Bar President Aman Khan Bangash Advocate and General Secretary Mudassar Advocate said on Monday. The office-bearers said multiple key projects have successfully been completed with the financial support from the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa government, reflecting a renewed focus on welfare, sustainability and inclusivity within the Bar. Among the completed initiatives are the installation of a solar-powered water filtration plant for the Bar chambers, the establishment of a dedicated sitting area for women lawyers and the provision of hundreds of furniture items to facilitate members of the legal fraternity.

New enrollment campaign launched in KP

All relevant authorities should ensure the success of the new campaign — directives of Minister for Education Arshad Ayub Khan

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: A new enrollment capaign is being launched in the province, under which a target has been set to enroll 2.6 million children in schools. It is hoped that, for the first time, this enrollment drive will achieve 100 percent results through a well-organized mechanism, with proper data records maintained and reviewed on a daily basis.

These views were expressed by Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Minister for Elementary and Secondary Education, Arshad Ayub Khan, while presiding over a review meeting on Tuesday in Peshawar regarding the Green Enrollment Campaign 2026.

The meeting was attended by Secretary Elementary and Secondary Education Muhammad Khalid, Special Secretary Masood Ahmed, Managing Director of the Elementary and Secondary Education Foundation Qaiser Alam, Chief Planning Officer Zainullah, Director Elementary and Secondary Education Numanah Sardar, while District Education Officers from across the province participated online.

The Provincial Minister for Education said that the Green Enrollment Campaign 2026 is being launched to equip the province's children with education and to promote forestry, and that concerned officers should utilize all their energies to ensure the success of this campaign.

He urged all stakeholders of the Green Enrollment Campaign 2026 to run the newly launched enrollment drive in an organized manner and successfully achieve the set targets, while strictly implementing all government-issued directives. He emphasized placing special focus on girls' education and ensuring maximum enrollment of female students.

He stated that providing education to the children of the province is the top priority of the department, therefore the Directorate and all District Education Officers should make the campaign successful through media, social media, madrasas, and the holding of open courts (khuli kacheris).

The Provincial Minister also directed that cooperation be sought from local Members of the Provincial Assembly to ensure the success of the new enrollment campaign. He said that special age relaxation would be given to children under the new enrollment drive, and that the digitized data of enrolled students would be collected.

On this occasion, the new enrollment drive for 2026 was formally named the Green Enrollment Campaign, under which tree plantation will also be carried out across the province alongside the enrollment drive to promote forestry.

Various opinions and suggestions were also presented during the meeting to ensure the success of the enrollment campaign.

The Provincial Minister further stated that the Private Schools Regulatory Authority should further simplify the registration procedure for private schools and provide maximum facilities to these institutions. He added that the current government will prepare a five-year plan for future enrollment campaigns.

Chief of Social & Behavior Change visits UoP



STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Chief of Social and Behavior Change (SBC), Mr. Elnur, along with his team, visited the University of Peshawar to strengthen ongoing collaboration and acknowledge the university's support in promoting youth-led SBC initiatives.

During the visit, the delegation met with Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Johar Ali and formally thanked him for his leadership and continued support in the establishment of the SBC Volunteer Task Force at the university. Mr. Elnur appreciated the role of the University of Peshawar in facilitating the successful implementation of SBC Co-Designing Workshops and Social Action Projects, which have enabled students to acquire practical skills and contribute to positive social change.

Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Johar Ali welcomed the delegation and expressed satisfaction over the progress of SBC-related activities at the university. He assured full institutional support for future initiatives and highlighted the importance of such partnerships in empowering students and strengthening their engagement with community issues.

As part of the visit, the SBC team attended presentations by students who shared their Social Action Projects implemented in their respective districts during the training period. The presentations provided insights into the students' ideas, the challenges they are addressing, and the social impact they aim to achieve.

Mr. Elnur commended the students for their dedication, creativity and commitment to making a positive contribution to society. He also paid special tribute to Assistant Professor Dr. Muhammad Ibrar, Deputy Director Students' Societies and focal person for SBC activities at the University of Peshawar, acknowledging his sustained efforts and support in advancing SBC initiatives on campus.

SAA Scholarships Interviews Continue at ICP

NEWS DESK

Peshawar: The interviews for the SAA Scholarship Program for first-year and second-year students of islamia college Peshawar are under way. This year, around 60 students have been shortlisted under the program.

The Senior Alumni Scholarship Program awards scholarships worth 10,000 every year to deserving students. Speaking to the Media Senior Alumni Association islamia college President Baba-e Islamia College, Muhammad Zaman Khan Muhammad zai said that the prime objective of the alumni association is to support and compensate students who are in need of financial assistance.

He expressed gratitude to the respected alumni members for their valuable contributions and said that, with their continued support, the alumni association plans to further increase the scholarship amount in the coming years.

Commissioner Kohat joins Unicef to push for 100% polio vaccination coverage

OUR CORRESPONDENT



KOHAT: Commissioner Kohat Division Syed Motasim Billah Shah has on Tuesday conducted a field review of the ongoing polio vaccination campaign in the district, accompanied by a UNICEF delegation, on the second day of the drive.

The commissioner inspected vaccination coverage, staff attendance, security arrangements and field operations, praising polio teams for their efforts. He emphasized that the campaign's success is vital to protecting the children from polio and other preventable diseases. He urged the parents and local communities to fully cooperate with the vaccination teams to ensure every child in the target age group receives the oral drops. Security personnel were also commended for their timely presence and crucial role in the campaign.

The UNICEF team, including Provincial Team Lead Dr. Anowa and Qazi Saifullah, observed service delivery and real-time monitoring, especially in remote and hard-to-reach areas. Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Hamid Iqbal, N-Stop Officer Dr. Ahmad Amin and District Health Officer Dr. Gul Syed accompanied the review.

Reviewing the field reports and data, the Commissioner identified gaps and underscored the importance of strong coordination, continuous monitoring and strict supervision. Officials highlighted that community engagement and active field oversight are key to achieving full vaccination coverage.

KMU organizes practical session on resilience and disaster preparedness

STAFF REPORTER



PESHAWAR: In accordance with the directives and annual calendar of activities issued by the Government of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Higher Education, Archives & Libraries Department, Khyber Medical University (KMU) Peshawar, in collaboration with Civil Defence Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Peshawar, organized an awareness and practical training session titled "Resilience and Disaster Preparedness – Be Ready, Stay Safe."

The primary objective of the session was to enhance disaster preparedness, resilience, and effective emergency response among students and staff through hands-on training and practical drills. The activity witnessed the participation of more than 420 students from the Institute of Pharmaceutical Sciences, Institute of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation, Institute of Allied Health Sciences, Institute of Nursing Sciences, Institute of Public Mental Health & Behavioral Sciences, Institute of Public Health & Social Sciences, and Institute of Basic Medical Sciences. Faculty members, along with administrative and laboratory staff, also actively took part in the session.

Mr. Abdul Nasir, Commandant, Civil Defence Training School Peshawar, along with his team, provided comprehensive awareness to the participants on various types of disasters, personal and family-level preparedness, and essential safety measures during emergency situations. Emphasis was laid on timely and organized response to minimize potential risks and protect human lives.

To strengthen workplace resilience, participants were guided through a structured building evacuation drill, which included identification of designated emergency assembly points and instruction on their proper utilization. In addition, a practical demonstration on the correct use of different types of fire extinguishers was conducted. Students were also given the opportunity to perform hands-on fire safety procedures under expert supervision.

Speaking at the concluding session, Director Academics & Admissions, Prof. Dr. Zilli Huma, stated that the activity reflects Khyber Medical University's strong commitment to fostering safety awareness, preparedness, and resilience within its academic environment, in line with its policy of developing a safe and responsible educational community. She expressed her appreciation for the administration and trainers of Civil Defence Training School Peshawar for their valuable support and dedication and presented commemorative shields in recognition of their services.

Five-day training program launched at GU

MUHAMMAD REHAN

DI KHAN: A five-day training program under the National Outreach Program has been launched at Gomal University. A five-day training program for the administrative department of the university has been formally launched in collaboration with Gomal University and the National Academy of Higher Education, Higher Education Commission (HEC) Islamabad. This training program is being organized under the National Outreach Program, which aims to make the administrative system of higher educational institutions compatible with modern requirements and more effective.

On the special instructions of Vice Chancellor Gomal University, Professor Dr. Muhammad Zafar Iqbal, Pro Vice Chancellor Professor Dr. Naimatullah Khan formally inaugurated the program. On this occasion, he shed detailed light on the importance and effectiveness of the training program and said that such training measures play a key role in establishing better governance and effective administrative systems in universities.

Professor Dr. Hamid Rafique Khattak, a renowned educationist and experienced trainer from the Higher Education Commission Islamabad, served as a trainer in the program. During the training sessions, the administrative officers and staff of the university are being provided comprehensive training on modern administrative matters, governance, policy management, office management and improvement of professional skills.

The main objective of the program is to enhance the professional skills of the administrative officers and staff, adapt to the changing educational and administrative requirements and further improve institutional performance. The participants are being fully guided through practical exercises, group discussions and question and answer sessions in the training sessions.

Japan fortifies grassroots development in Pakistan with strategic infrastructure, healthcare investments

Ambassador Akamatsu Signs Grant Agreements Targeting Maternal Health and Rural Connectivity in Punjab and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa

NADEEM FAISAL BAIGA

ISLAMABAD: Demonstrating a steadfast commitment to human security and sustainable development, the Government of Japan today formalized a significant grant assistance package totaling USD 85,429 (approximately PKR 23.9 million) for two pivotal community projects in Pakistan. The grants were awarded under Japan's Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP) Program.

Investing in Life-Saving Maternal and Child Healthcare

A grant of USD 55,230 (approx. PKR 15.5 million) has been allocated to the Bin Qutab Foundation for the construction and equipping of a dedicated Maternal and Child Healthcare Center at Begum Noor Memorial Hospital in rural District Chakwal, Punjab. This modern facility will provide integrated, 24-hour services including safe delivery, emergency obstetric care, and comprehensive neonatal support. By offering subsidized care and promoting family planning awareness, the center is projected to serve over 10,000 patients annually, directly combating maternal and infant mortality and strengthening the region's primary healthcare infrastructure.

Enhancing Rural Prosperity through Critical Infrastructure

A grant of USD 30,199 (approx. PKR 8.4 million) has been awarded to the Saibaan Development Organization for the improvement of a vital link road in Village Makrriha, District Mansehra, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. The project encompasses road paving and the construction of protective retaining walls, designed to ensure all-weather access and enhance safety for residents. This upgraded connectivity is expected to benefit over 2,400 direct beneficiaries, alongside thousands more in adjacent communities, by facilitating reliable access to markets, healthcare facilities, and educational institutions, thereby catalyzing local economic and social development.



A Partnership Rooted in Shared Development Goals

At the signing ceremony, Ambassador AKAMATSU underscored the strategic philosophy behind Japan's assistance. "For decades, Japan has stood alongside Pakistan as a partner in progress, focusing on fundamental human needs," stated Ambassador Akamatsu. "The GGP Program embodies our belief in direct, community-driven development through capable local partners. These projects in healthcare and infrastructure lay the essential groundwork for human security and sustainable growth—principles borne from Japan's own development experience."

The Ambassador further affirmed Japan's enduring commitment: "As a longstanding friend, Japan will continue to empower local organizations across Pakistan. Our goal remains unambiguous: to tangibly improve the well-being and daily lives of people at the grassroots level, building a more secure and prosperous future for all."

About the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP):

The GGP program provides direct, rapid-impact grant funding to non-profit organizations for community-level projects addressing basic human needs. It is a cornerstone of Japan's official development assistance, emphasizing human security and sustainable socio-economic development.

News BRIEFS

ANF arrests five, seizes 22.7 kg of narcotics in nationwide operations

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI: The Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) arrested five suspects and seized 22.7 kilograms of drugs worth more than Rs 190,000 in a series of operations across the country, an ANF spokesman said on Tuesday.

In an operation, ANF officials recovered 12 kg of hashish from a vehicle near the Fateh Jang Interchange and arrested the driver. Another suspect was detained near Chak 196 in Faisalabad with 7.2 kg of hashish, while a third was arrested in Johar Colony, Faisalabad, with 1.6 kg of the drug.

In Sialkot, ANF officials seized 1 kg of crystal meth (ice) concealed inside an electric heater at a courier office on Diska Road and arrested the accused. Separately, 400 grams of ice and 500 grams of hashish were recovered from a cement-laden truck near GT Road in Burhan, Attock district.

Tasneem Nasir Gujjar elected Jhelum district president of PPP



MAKHDOOM HUSSAIN CHAUDHRY

JHELUM: All the office bearers of the PPP have been eliminated in Jhelum district. Those who are in the race to get tickets should show their performance first. Former Pakistan Peoples Party MPA Chaudhry Tasneem Nasir Gujjar elected as the district president. While holding a press conference at the Jhelum Press Club yesterday, he said that reorganisation will be carried out and new office bearers will be elected soon. There is disagreement among the parties. We are a democratic party. According to the details, the Pakistan Peoples Party has re-elected former MPA Chaudhry Tasneem Nasir Gujjar as the district president. Mirza Ghaffar will be the general secretary. While holding a press conference at the Jhelum Press Club yesterday, District President Chaudhry Tasneem Nasir Gujjar said that a new organization will be formed in the district. The youth will be given an opportunity to join the Pakistan Peoples Party because our leader Bilawal Bhutto is also a youth, so priority will be given to the youth. We will unite the PPP. By bringing the youth forward, the party's position will also be strengthened. We have to go with the institutions. There are differences in the parties and ours is a democratic party. The party has honored us once. We are being loyal. Chaudhry Tasneem Nasir further said that the so-called people came to enjoy themselves and tried to create differences. Now the notified office bearer of the district president will be the one who will be in charge. Wrong opinions and comments will be prevented. The party is an ocean, not a river. The tout mafia from the institutions will be eliminated. The Chief Minister of Punjab is doing good work for the country, which is commendable. Personal Secretary Chaudhry Naveed said in the press conference. A large number of workers including Akhtar Arain Youth District President Chaudhry Mudassar Abbas, Tehsil President Shahzad Ashraf Bhatti, City President Mian Asif, Chaudhry Ali Asghar Arain, Malik Arafat, Raja Haq Nawaz Kiani and others were present.

Shahbaz Qalandar taught humanity the values of love: Qamar Raza

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: Chairman Overseas Pakistanis Foundation (OPF), Syed Qamar Raza Naqvi, said that Hazrat Lal Shahbaz Qalandar taught humanity the values of love, tolerance, and service to mankind. He added that if the teachings of saints are adopted in practical life, half of society's problems would automatically be resolved. He expressed these views while addressing the concluding ceremony of "Sham-e-Qalandar", jointly organized by the National Press Club and Daily Sada-e-Sach at the Mehdi Hassan Auditorium, Radio Pakistan, Islamabad where awards and honors were distributed among outstanding individuals from various fields across the country.

The evening began with soulful Qawwali performances by Jawad Ali Malang and Bakht Ali Dhudial, which were taken to spiritual heights by renowned Pakistani qawwal Arif Feroz Khan. His distinctive style filled the gathering with deep spiritual emotion, leaving many in the audience moved to tears. Addressing the ceremony, the OPF Chairman said that personalities like Arif Feroz Khan are a national pride who



have spread the true message of Islam and introduced many non-Muslims to its teachings. He emphasized that the awards presented to high-achieving individuals from diverse fields are not merely honors but beacons of guidance for the entire nation, reminding everyone that true success lies in service and dedication.

Chief Editor Daily Sada-e-Sach, Syed Tabassum Abbas Shah, and President National Press Club, Azhar Jatoi, welcomed all participants. Prominent personalities and experts from various walks of life attended the ceremony. Chairman OPF Syed Qamar Raza Naqvi was the Chief Guest and Prime Minister's Focal Person for the Youth Programme Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi attended as Special Guest.

During the awards ceremony, honors were conferred upon distinguished individuals for their exceptional services. Arif Feroz Khan (Qawwal) was awarded the title "Safeer-e-Mawaddat" for conveying the true message of Islam to non-Muslims. Renowned geologist Dr. Rafiq-ul-Hasan Baqri, author of over 100 books and discoverer of several oil and gas reserves, was also honored. Dr. Hussain Ahmed, a PhD scholar who did PhD on Hazrat Ameer Kabeer Syed Ali Hamdan (Shah Hamdan) from NUML University, and Dr. Shahid Abbas, recognized globally for research in allergy, vaccines, and modern medicines, received awards for bringing international recognition to Pakistan.

Former Director General Federal Directorate of Education Dr. Ali Ahmed Kharal was honored for improving educational standards in the federal capital. Environmental writer Chaudhry Muhammad Arshad was recognized for raising awareness about climate change in Pakistan and abroad. Raja Haroon Hafeez received an award for his valuable services in sports nationally and internationally, while businessman Chaudhry Farrukh Raza was honored for organizing Pakistan's largest celebration on the birth of the grandson of the Holy Prophet (PBUH).

Dr. Abbas Shah was awarded the title "Health Ambassador" for successfully treating thousands of patients and encouraging medical tourism to Pakistan. For promoting the message and remembrance of Imam Hussain (AS) among youth, Syed Joun Ali Kazmi (Salar Karwan-e-Shah-e-Chiragh) was awarded "Salar-e-Pakistan." Prime Minister's Focal Person Syed Zeeshan Ali Naqvi received the title "Youth Ambassador" for his continuous efforts toward youth development beyond political affiliations. Chairman OPF Syed Qamar Raza Naqvi was conferred "Overseas Ambassador" for his services to overseas Pakistanis and for improving Pakistan's global image. Jawad Ali Malang and Bakht Ali Dhudial received "Young Singer Awards." Principal Information Officer Press Information Department Mubashir Hassan was honored as "Best PR Professional" for strengthening government-media relations, while Ali Nawaz Malik received the "Best Press Minister" award for effectively highlighting Pakistan's stance abroad and countering negative propaganda.

Awards were announced for Provincial Secretary Information & Culture Syed Tahir Raza Hamdani, Director General Radio Pakistan Saeed Ahmed Sheikh, DG PID Lahore Shafqat Abbas, and Director Minister Office Ministry of Information & Broadcasting Amir Raza Malik for their services. Additionally, President PFUJ Afzal Butt was honored for his notable services for press freedom, Dr. Syed Nasir Ali Shah was honored for services in cardiac care, Dr. Tafazal Malik for rehabilitation of disabled patients in Pakistan and USA and Director Federal Government Employees Housing Authority Syed Kazim Abbas for his outstanding public service.

ADC Karak cracks down on negligence during surprise school inspections

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KARAK: Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Sahibzada Samiullah has under the Chief Minister Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's Good Governance Roadmap, conducted surprise inspections of the Rural Health Center in Nari Panos and Government High School Dagar Nari, expressing strong anger over observed negligence.

At the health center, the Additional Deputy Commissioner found key medical staff, including the Women Medical Officer, Dispenser and Attendant, absent and noted that the February attendance register was not properly maintained. He ordered immediate legal action against the responsible officials and emphasized that timely and quality healthcare for the public remains a top priority. Measures were also directed to improve cleanliness, monitor staff attendance and maintain proper records.

During the school inspection, the ADC evaluated academic standards, student attendance, classrooms, furniture and hygiene facilities. He stressed the importance of a clean and conducive learning environment, instructing the staff to implement effective measures to improve teaching quality. Essential facilities, including water and toilets, were also reviewed, with monthly attendance and teaching reports mandated.



Sahibzada Samiullah reaffirmed the administration's commitment to supporting health and educational institutions, ensuring that residents and students have access to quality services.

KP raises alarm over high-dose nicotine standards

TP REPORT

PESHAWAR:A new policy controversy has emerged as Shazia Tehmas Khan, Member of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Assembly, tabled a resolution questioning the Federal Government's fast-tracked move to make nicotine pouch standards mandatory, warning that the proposed policy could expose children and young people to high-dose nicotine addiction.

The resolution draws attention to the proposed standard that would legally permit up to 20 milligrams (mg) of nicotine per pouch, a level public health experts describe as highly addictive, particularly for adolescents and first-time users. Lawmakers and health advocates caution that formalising such a threshold could lead to wider availability, increased experimentation among youth, and long-term dependency, especially in settings where age enforcement remains weak.

By raising the issue on the Assembly floor, the MPA has formally questioned whether economic and export considerations are being prioritised over public health and youth protection. A key concern highlighted in the resolution is



whether the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Health Department was consulted at all before advancing the proposed standardisation, and if so, what position the Province took on allowing such high nicotine limits. The move has triggered debate over federal decision-making without provincial health input on an issue with direct public health implications.

Civil society organisations have welcomed the Assembly intervention, calling it a necessary political check on what they describe as an industry-driven regulatory push. They argue that converting a voluntary technical standard into a mandatory one effectively normalises nicotine consumption, rather than preventing addiction, and risks creating a new pathway to nicotine dependence among young people.

Reacting to the development, Qamar Naseem, a public health advocate, said: "This is not a routine technical matter. Fixing a 20 mg nicotine limit through standardisation risks legitimising addiction, especially among young people. Raising this in the Assembly was both timely and necessary.

The move was also supported by the National Alliance for Sustainable Tobacco & Nicotine Control. Its Coordinator, Usman Afridi, stated: This resolution sends a clear signal that nicotine products, regardless of form, carry serious risks. Protecting young people from nicotine addiction is a shared responsibility of the state, civil society, and all stakeholders.

By tabling the resolution, the issue has now entered the formal legislative record, calling the federal authorities to justify the proposed standardisation, disclose provincial consultations, and explain how youth health risks will be addressed. Observers note that continued silence or lack of clarity could lead to further parliamentary scrutiny and expanded public debate in the coming days.

Kashmir, where life is all about what if

FARHAN KHAN

There are places in the world where time does not move in a normal way. Days pass, seasons change, and children grow up, but life feels paused. Not because people stop living, but because they are forced to live carefully, quietly, and with constant uncertainty. For many families in Kashmir, life often feels like this long pause.

Imagine planning your day while also planning for "what if." What if the roads close? What if communication stops? What if schools do not open? What if markets shut down? In many parts of the world, people worry about traffic, deadlines, and weather. In Kashmir, people often worry about whether the day will remain peaceful enough to complete simple daily tasks.

This is not only a story about conflict. It is a story about time — how difficult conditions slowly take away normal time from normal people.

A student may start homework not knowing if school will open the next day. A shopkeeper may arrange goods without knowing if customers will reach the market. A family may plan a wedding while keeping an eye on the news. Life continues, but every plan carries a question mark.

When people think about such regions, they often think about big events and headlines. But the real effect is small and silent. It is seen in how people learn to lower expectations. Children grow up learning caution before confidence. Families celebrate happiness softly, as if loud joy might disturb something fragile.



One of the most painful effects is how it changes people's thinking about the future. Instead of dreaming far ahead, they begin to think only about tomorrow. Long-term plans feel risky. Hopes become smaller and more practical. Over time, this careful way of living becomes normal.

And yet, despite this pause, life does not stop. Children still play when they can. Students still study even during difficult days. Farmers still work in their fields. Mothers still prepare meals with love. People still laugh, still hope, and still pray for better days. This quiet strength is rarely noticed by the outside world.

The natural beauty of the region is often praised — the mountains, lakes, and gardens. But the real beauty lies in the patience and dignity of its people. Their ability to continue living with hope, even in uncertainty, is remarkable.

This situation teaches an important lesson: peace is not only the absence of violence. Peace is the freedom to plan life without fear. Peace is when a child worries about exams, not emergencies. Peace is when families can plan celebrations without checking the news first.

For many outside, life moves fast. For many inside, life often waits — for calm days, for stability, and for a future where planning tomorrow becomes simple again. Sometimes, the greatest wish is not for a better life, but for a normal one.

Pakistan has consistently maintained that Kashmir is an unresolved issue that should be settled according to the wishes of the Kashmiri people. It refers to United Nations resolutions that call for a plebiscite to allow the people of the region to decide their future. Pakistan views Kashmir not only as a territorial matter but as a humanitarian and political issue linked to the rights and aspirations of Kashmiris.

Over the years, Pakistan has raised the Kashmir issue at international forums, urging the global community to pay attention to the situation and support a peaceful solution. It emphasizes dialogue, diplomacy, and international involvement for resolving the dispute. Pakistan also observes days and events to express solidarity with Kashmiris and to keep global awareness alive about their situation.

After a Long Night

The coordinated attacks across Balochistan over the weekend were not simply another spike in a familiar graph. Instead, they seemed to be an effort to demonstrate the attackers' reach, challenge established security assumptions, and remind the country that its most strategically significant province can still feel uncontrollable after dark.

According to the provincial government, 31 civilians and 17 security personnel were killed, and 145 attackers were eliminated within roughly 40 hours; the chief minister described the killing of five women and three children as the most painful episode of the onslaught.

The state's instinct (understandably) is to answer force with force. There is no moral ambiguity in the targeting of civilians. Any politics that arrives by suicide vest and gunpoint collapses into criminality the moment it treats ordinary Pakistanis as expendable bargaining chips. Yet the hardest lesson of Pakistan's counterterror decades is that even when militants are pushed out of one corridor, they regenerate through financing, recruitment, local coercion, and cross-border facilitation.

Islamabad, to its credit, has articulated the shape of a fuller response. The government has ruled out talks with terrorists, while the upper house demanded a "transparent, swift and conclusive" investigation that reaches not only perpetrators but facilitators and sponsors. Crucially, it has also recognised (explicitly) that sustainable security is inseparable from socio-economic progress, good governance, and respect for constitutional rights. No qualms about the need to treat the financing ecosystem with the same urgency as the gunman. Militant movements in Balochistan have long fed on illicit economies–smuggling routes, extortion, and coercive taxation. Disrupting that ecosystem means following money through facilitators, transporters, and protectors. It also means cleaning up the political economy that allows violence to purchase silence.

It is entirely possible to be uncompromising on violence while being disciplined about rights. When anger is treated as evidence, not a condition to be addressed, the state inadvertently widens the very reservoir of resentment that militants exploit.

Officials have repeatedly pointed to foreign direction and support for these networks. Such claims are well-grounded in intelligence. Still, if the state wants diplomatic pressure to translate into action, it must be prepared to present evidence through credible channels.

Behind every cycle of violence sits an old structural truth. Balochistan is routinely discussed as a strategic asset, but rarely governed as a citizen's home. This gap does not cause terrorism, as nothing can justify the deliberate slaughter of civilians. However, it provides the context that militants exploit, creating a grievance theatre in which they seek recruits and sympathisers.

Pakistan's security forces have shown again that militants can be met, engaged, and defeated in an open contest. The next phase must be quieter and harder: building institutional coordination, dismantling financing, prosecuting facilitators, strengthening border management, and, most importantly, governing in a way that denies militants their favourite weapon.

Investing in Homegrown Talent

The Imperative for Strengthening Pakistan's Indigenous Graduate Programs

KHAN SHAHZADA



> **The support** of strong local programs should not be confused with academic isolationism. World-class research can only be done with global exposure and collaboration

Pakistan is at a very crucial point of development in which there is a big paradox. As the country faces a deep rooted and intertwined water security, sustainable energy, food production, and health issues, its strategic investment in human capital is not in line with its interests. Statistics provided by the UNESCO Institute of Statistics have demonstrated the fact that Pakistan maintains a high level of outbound mobility of students in South Asia, with a significantly large percentage of its most promising graduates applying to other countries in search of master's and doctoral degrees. Though this is an effective channel towards personal career growth, it creates a loop of brain drain that, in most cases, causes permanent loss of talent and a general misfit between foreign obtained skills and the local ground-based needs that Pakistan has. A strategic need to come out of this paradox must be achieved through radical strategic reorientation to the mission, promoted by the Higher Education Commission (HEC): a firm determination to enhance the strength of indigenous MSc and PhD programs, tactically complemented by organized, short-term overseas research exposure to avoid academic insularity.

The scepticism about local graduate education, with references to the obsolete infrastructure and poor research culture, is no longer a reflection of the on-the-ground reality of the last twenty years. Since its inception in 2002, HEC has been able to spearhead high and continuous investment in the physical and human capital of the public universities. The development spending on higher education has remained one of the priorities, as indicated by the governmental reports such as the Pakistan Economic Survey 2022-23. The results are physical: the Pakistan Institute of Engineering and Applied Sciences (PIEAS), the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST), Universities of Engineering and Technology (UETs) and major agricultural and general universities now have the capability to run their laboratories and research facilities to the same level as highly respected international centers of excellence in areas of critical national development, such as biotechnology, materials science and engineering. More importantly, it has become established with a quantifiable research culture. The performance reports of the HEC themselves testify to an incredible jump in the volume of national research work, since in Scopus-indexed journals, less than 2,000 citable documents were produced in 2002; in 2021, more than 27,000. At the same time, PhDs are now produced annually at a rate higher than 1,800, which is a tenfold increase since the beginning of the 2000s. Such expansion is supported by merit-based grants such as the National Research Programme for Universities (NRPU) and Technology Development Fund (TDF).

The tactical case of the importance of these homegrown programs is powerful and multi-dimensional. First of all, it makes sure that the top-level research in the country is suited and applicable to the most urgent issues. In foreign universities, there is no way in which research agendas are influenced by priorities, financing environments, and geographical circumstances of their countries of residence. Comparatively, a doctoral degree in water resource management taught in Pakistan on its own Indus Basin and using local data sets and taught by faculty who are very well acquainted with the socio-political and environmental realities of the area will produce actionable information to the policymaker and community much more readily than a degree offered in some other river system halfway around the world. Pakistan Vision 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are the key pillars of the national frameworks that can be structurally organized as indigenous programs and direct the intellectual capital towards mission-focused issues such as creating drought-resistant crops, diagnosing endemic diseases, or developing renewable energy grids at affordable prices.

This model is not only relevant, but it has high cost-effectiveness and an effective talent retention mechanism. The entire expense to sponsor one doctoral student in North America or Europe, including high tuition fees and living costs, can cover multiple high-quality indigenous PhD fellowships. More to the point, researchers who complete their formative research years integrated into the local academic and social networks exhibit a much greater tendency to pursue long-term careers in the ecosystem of research and development in Pakistan. Although international mobility is still a valuable quality, a more robust domestic graduate system leads to a positive brain circulation effect. In this model, scholars go abroad for special, advanced training or cooperation, but they are encouraged to go home to well-established groups with substantial capital to conduct research that can lead to permanent loss of human capital and create the critical mass of knowledge required to innovate.

Lastly, long-term capacity building of the institution can only be achieved through indigenous doctoral education. It forms a self-perpetuating cycle of virtue in that senior professors mentor PhD-level students, who are later appointed to the faculty of the next generation of the national university system. This is an endogenous growth that strengthens the departments in an organic and predictable manner, so that the teaching and research come to respond directly to the needs of the local academic and national development. On the other side, excessive dependence on foreign-trained PhDs to replace the faculty is a volatile policy; this method may not cover the particular departmental needs, and the probability of turnover is high since the returning scholars may encounter challenges of re-entering the workforce or may be tempted by other options.

The support of strong local programs should not be confused with academic isolationism. World-class research can only be done with global exposure and collaboration. The strategic innovation is thus the fact that it is a built-in, systematic six-month research trip to a highly technological collaborative institution overseas that is part of the heart of the local PhD programme. This type of hybrid model provides focused advantages–practical training and use of specialized equipment, exposure to high-throughput research settings, and the development of enduring international partnerships–without cutting off the main academic foundation of the scholar. The home base of the programme is on firm ground in the country of origin, which is Pakistan: the research problem is locally specified, the main supervision is local, and an explicit return requirement helps in the systematization of the repatriation of learned skills and knowledge as well as international networks. This is a strategic and economical approach to technology transfer and the integration of world science.

To translate this vision into practice requires that the HEC deal with endemic systemic challenges through steel-hardened policy determination. To begin with, the growth of doctoral programmes should be accompanied by an intolerance to quality assurance. This must involve making the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) do a strict anonymous external thesis evaluation by forums that will also have international scholars. Funding of universities should also be more closely related to the quantifiable outcomes of research quality publications, patenting, and provisional contributions to society, but not just the enrolment rates. Second, the sustainable financing model should be instituted. The HEC should also be a tireless supporter of increasing the national spending on research and development in Pakistan, which is at present under 0.16% of the GDP, to the international average of 2.5%, and it should also design potent fiscal and regulatory support for industry-academia collaborations and collaborate in funding applied research. Thirdly, the key to quality is constant faculty growth. Faculty sabbatical programs in the major international centres should be institutionalized so that even the supervisors are at the forefront of their respective areas.

The process of sustainable development and economic sovereignty thereof in Pakistan cannot be outsourced. It requires the nurturing of a generation of scientists and problem solvers who are educated to use profound scientific understanding of the specifics of the country. The HEC can fully reinvent universities as degree-awarding institutions by leading high-quality, well-resourced, and globally connected indigenous graduate programs that would make universities engines of national innovation. This calculated, strategic methodology enables the empowerment of the local institutions, spurs talent retention, and results in the creation of globally competitive researchers with their main interest in the future of Pakistan. The groundwork is already done; what is now desperately needed is the commitment of the HEC together with the government and the business community at large to investing in the most resourceful aspect of the country, or more precisely, in the intellectual strength of the folks at home, so that the prosperity of the mother country can be achieved.

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No Permanent Friends

MUHAMMAD MOHSIN IQBAL



Positive thinking and optimism are among the noblest ways to approach life, for they inspire resilience and hope. Yet optimism, when detached from ground realities, can become a dangerous illusion. Nations, like individuals, suffer when emotions replace judgment and wishful thinking substitutes for strategy. In this context, certain memories frequently return to my mind—memories shaped not merely by personal observation but by Pakistan's long and often painful engagement with global power politics.

When the renowned American intellectual and analyst Noam Chomsky visited Pakistan, he was asked a question that has troubled this country since its earliest years; how should Pakistan understand its relationship with the United States? Chomsky responded with disarming honesty. America, he said, has always pursued its own interests, irrespective of who sits in the White House. Where its interests lie, it cooperates generously; where they do not, it withdraws without hesitation. To support his argument, he recalled several historical examples and, with a touch of sarcasm, remarked that the much-promised "Enterprise" fleet sent to "help" Pakistan had yet to arrive. Smiling, he added that Pakistanis are an emotional nation; say a few affectionate words to them and they become elated, a vulnerability that has led to repeated betrayals.

I was present on that occasion and was struck by the frankness with which an American described American policy. It was unsettling because it rang true. We are, indeed, a deeply emotional people. If a foreign leader laughs with our rulers or speaks to them in an unusually warm tone, we are quick to imagine a relationship of kinship, as though he were a close relative rather than the head of a powerful state guided by hard interests. Sentiment often clouds our judgment, and we mistake courtesy for commitment.

History, faith, and experience all counsel caution. The Qur'an clearly warns that Jews and Christians will not be friends in the sense of guardianship or unconditional loyalty. Yet the Holy Prophet (peace be upon him) entered into diplomatic and necessary agreements with them on the basis of equality and mutual obligation. He safeguarded the interests of the Muslim community, dealt with others fairly, but did not harbour illusions about their intentions. This balance between realism and principle offers a timeless lesson for statecraft: cooperation without naïveté, engagement without surrender.

Recent history provides painful confirmation. When the United States abruptly withdrew from Afghanistan, it did so with little regard for the consequences borne by neighbouring states, particularly Pakistan. Vast quantities of advanced military equipment—arms, night-vision devices, sophisticated communication tools, and heavy weaponry—were left behind. Instead of stabilising the region, these weapons seeped into the black market, empowering militant groups and criminal networks. Pakistan, already struggling with internal security challenges, has paid a heavy price.

> **The Qur'an** clearly warns that Jews and Christians will not be friends in the sense of guardianship or unconditional loyalty



Cross-border terrorism intensified, arms flowed freely into volatile areas, and hard-won gains against extremism were undermined. Once again, America exited when its interests shifted, leaving others to manage the fallout.

This behaviour echoed an earlier episode, candidly acknowledged years later by former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton. She admitted that after the Soviet Union withdrew its forces from Afghanistan, the United States simply walked away, abandoning the region and Pakistan alike. Having used Pakistan as a frontline ally, Washington disengaged without assisting in reconstruction or stabilisation. The resulting vacuum plunged Afghanistan into chaos, nurtured extremism, and eventually produced consequences that haunted the entire world. Clinton conceded that this abandonment was a grave mistake—an admission that confirmed what Pakistan had long experienced: partnerships are often transactional, not enduring.

Contemporary American politics further illustrates this pattern. The current US President is known for rapid shifts in tone and policy. Statements made during the day are frequently contradicted by actions taken at night. Policies toward China, Iran, and other countries oscillate according to immediate calculations. Not long ago, he appeared visibly displeased with the Indian Prime Minister; yet when strategic interests aligned, displeasure melted into public warmth. In international affairs, affection is rarely personal; it is dictated by advantage.

The events of May 2025 stand as a sobering reminder. At that critical juncture, divine help was with us and our military leadership remained vigilant. By the grace of Almighty Allah, Pakistan emerged successful. Had circumstances been otherwise, it is unlikely that today's diplomatic posture toward Pakistan would be what it is. International respect follows strength and preparedness, not expectations or appeals.

The lesson is unmistakable. Pakistan must place Pakistan first. Relations between states inevitably fluctuate, shaped by interests rather than emotions. There is nothing immoral in this; it is the essence of global politics. What matters is that Pakistan safeguard its dignity, sovereignty, and integrity while engaging others on equal terms.

Above all, Pakistan should avoid the urge to put all its eggs in one basket. Overdependence on any single power has repeatedly constrained our options and weakened our negotiating position. A diversified foreign policy, rooted in realism and national consensus, is not a luxury but a necessity. Nations are ultimately remembered not for their hopes or sentiments, but for the decisions they make—and those decisions determine the path of their future.

Printed & Published by Fazli Haq on behalf of The Province | Printed at Gul Zaman Printing Press Mohallah Jangi, Peshawar Khyber Pakhtunkhwa | Phone; 091 221 6407 | Published from: 2nd floor flat no 01 Darul Slaam Plaza Sikanderpura Chowk, Pehsawar | Editor-in-Chief: Fazli Haq | Editor: Ameer Mavia | email: theprovince@gmail.com |

Gaddafi's son Saif killed by 'four-man commando'

Details surrounding circumstances of Saif al-Islam Gaddafi's death were not immediately clear

ZINTAN: Saif al-Islam Gaddafi, the son of Libya's late longtime ruler Muammar Gaddafi, was killed on Tuesday by a "four-man commando" in his home in western Libya´s Zintan, his French lawyer, Marcel Ceccaldi, told AFP.

"For now, we don't know" who was behind the killing, Ceccaldi said, adding that he was told by one of Saif's close associates about ten days ago "that there were problems with his security."

Saif went from his ather's heir apparent to a decade of captivity and obscurity in a remote hill town before launching a presidential bid that helped derail an attempted election.

Sources close to the family, his lawyer Khaled el-Zaydi and Libyan media on Tuesday confirmed the assassination.

Details surrounding the circumstances of his death were not immediately clear.

Despite holding no official position, he was once seen as the most powerful figure in the oil-rich North African country after his autocratic father, Muammar Gaddafi, who ruled for more than four decades.

Saif shaped policy and mediated high-profile, sensitive diplomatic missions.

He led talks on Libya abandoning its weapons of mass destruction. He negotiated compensation for the families of those killed in the bombing of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988.

Determined to rid Libya of its pariah status, Saif engaged with the West and championed himself as a reformer, calling for a constitution and respect for human rights.

Educated at the London School of Economics and a fluent English speaker, he was once seen by many governments as the acceptable, Western-friendly face of Libya.

But when a rebellion broke out against Gaddafi's long rule in 2011, Saif immediately chose family and clan loyalties over his many friendships to become an architect of a brutal crackdown on rebels, whom he called rats.

Speaking to Reuters at the time of the revolt, he said: "We fight here in Libya, we die here in Libya."

He warned that rivers of blood would flow and the government would fight to the last man and woman and bullet.

"All of Libya will be destroyed. We will need 40 years to reach an agreement on how to run the country, because today, everyone will want to be president, or emir, and everybody will want to run the



country," he said, wagging his finger at the camera in a TV broadcast.

'I'm staying here'

After rebels took over the capital, Tripoli, Saif tried to flee to neighbouring Niger dressed as a Bedouin tribesman.

The Abu Bakr Sadik Brigade militia captured him on a desert road and flew him to the western town of Zintan about one month after his father was hunted down and summarily shot dead by rebels.

"I'm staying here. They'll empty their guns into me the second I go out there," he said in comments captured in an audio recording as hundreds of men thronged around an old Libyan air force transport plane.

Saif was betrayed to his rebel captors by a Libyan nomad.

He spent the next six years detained in Zintan, a far cry from the charmed life he lived under Gaddafi when he had pet tigers, hunted with falcons and mingled with British high society on trips to London.

Human Rights Watch met him in Zintan. Hanan Salah, its Libya director, told Reuters at that time that he did not allege ill treatment. "We did raise concerns about Saif being held in solitary confinement for most, if not all, of the time that he had been detained," she said.

Saif was missing a tooth and said he had been isolated from the world and had not received visitors.

He was, however, granted access to a television with satellite channels and some books, she added.

In 2015, Saif was sentenced to death by firing squad by a court in Tripoli for war crimes.

Saif is also wanted by the International Criminal Court (ICC) at The Hague for war crimes. The court issued an arrest warrant against him for "murder and persecution".

Russia says India has not said it will halt oil purchases

MOSCOW: The Kremlin said on Tuesday it had not received any indication from India that it would stop buying Russian oil following the announcement of a trade deal with US President Donald Trump.

Trump said he had struck a deal to reduce tariffs on India and that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had promised to stop buying Russian oil over the war in Ukraine.

India's purchases of Russian oil — discounted due to Western sanctions complicating logistics and cutting off markets — have surged since Russia launched its full-scale military offensive on Ukraine in February 2022.

Ukraine and its Western allies have been seeking to cut off the billions of dollars in revenue, a vital source of income for Russia's stretched economy and its military.

"So far, we haven't heard any statements from New Delhi on this matter," Kremlin spokesperson Dmitry Peskov told reporters, including AFP.

Trump said he was cutting levies on Indian goods to 18%. He had previously imposed 25% "reciprocal" tariffs on many products, plus an additional 25% for New Delhi's purchases of Moscow's oil.

While Modi thanked Trump for the "wonderful" phone call and the easing of tariffs, he made no reference to Trump's assertion about halting oil purchases.

In 2024, Russia supplied nearly 36% of India's total crude imports, around 1.8 million barrels of discounted oil per day.

UAE urges political solutions for Gaza and Iran, warns against new wars

DUBAI: The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has warned that stabilising Gaza requires simultaneous progress on Palestinian statehood and Israeli security, built through regional and international cooperation, saying that the same political urgency is required to prevent tensions with Iran from spiralling into another Middle East crisis. The message was delivered by Dr Anwar Gargash, diplomatic adviser to UAE President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during a session at the World Government Summit in Dubai on Tuesday, where he said the region could not afford to deal with either Gaza or Iran through force or repeated confrontation.

"The way forward in Gaza is political," Gargash said. "The Middle East has already witnessed calamitous confrontations, and it does not need another escalation, whether in Gaza or with Iran." He said any sustainable outcome for Gaza must emerge from a joint framework involving Palestinians, Egypt, Israel, Jordan and key international partners, with the United States playing a central role in shaping a political settlement. Gargash reiterated that the UAE has no ambition to administer Gaza, rejecting speculation that Abu Dhabi could take on a civilian governing role in the enclave. "The UAE has no separate national agenda for Gaza," he said, adding that while the country remains a major humanitarian donor, governance and reconstruction must be rooted in a broader political process.

UK police launch probe into ex-envoy Mandelson over alleged links to Epstein

Starmer's govt handed material to police to investigate whether Mandelson leaked info to Epstein during financial crash

LONDON: British police on Tuesday launched an investigation into Peter Mandelson, Britain's former ambassador to the US, over alleged misconduct in public office, following claims that he leaked market-sensitive information to the late sex offender Jeffrey Epstein.

London's Metropolitan Police said in a statement that the investigation follows the receipt of reports alleging misconduct in public office, including a referral from the British government.

Prime Minister Keir Starmer's government handed material to the police to investigate whether Mandelson leaked information to Epstein during the financial crash. Starmer told his ministers on Tuesday that Mandelson's alleged leaks to Epstein were "disgraceful." A few hours later, Mandelson said he would retire from parliament's upper house, the House of Lords.

"The Met will continue to assess all relevant information brought to our attention as part of this investigation and won't be commenting any further at this time," Police Commander Ella Marriott said.

Separately, Thames Valley Police said in a statement they were reviewing a new claim against the former Prince Andrew.

Mandelson, a major player in the Labour governments of Tony Blair and Gordon Brown more than two decades ago, is facing possible criminal charges after emails released by the US as part of the Epstein investigation suggested he had leaked confidential government documents to the financier.

The Times newspaper, which first reported the police investigation, said officers were expected to interview Mandelson and take statements from senior Labour figures, including former Prime Minister Brown.

Following the announcement of the investigation into Mandelson, a government spokesperson said it stood "ready to provide whatever support and assistance the police need."

The emails suggest that in 2009, Mandelson sent Epstein a memo written for Brown about possible UK asset sales and tax changes, and in 2010, gave Epstein advance notice of a 500-billion-euro ($590 billion) bailout by the European Union.

Mandelson, 72, was fired from his ambassadorial role in September, seven months after being appointed, after documents emerged showing he had remained close to Epstein for much longer than he had previously acknowledged.

In one message, he appeared to tell Epstein that his earlier conviction, for procuring a child for prostitution, was wrong and he should fight for early release. On Tuesday, Starmer told his cabinet he was not reassured that the totality of the information had yet emerged, according to his spokesperson.

His comments marked his strongest condemnation yet of the man he appointed ambassador to Washington last year despite his known association with Epstein, who committed suicide in prison in 2019. "The prime minister said he was appalled by the information that had emerged over the weekend in the Epstein files," his spokesperson said. Late on Sunday, Mandelson resigned from the Labour Party to prevent "further embarrassment", after a new release of millions of documents exposed details of his closeness to Epstein, including suggestions of payments to Mandelson and his husband.

US shoots down Iranian drone approaching aircraft carrier: official

Centcom spokesperson says drone shot down "in self-defence" and to protect aircraft carrier, personnel

TEHRAN: A US stealth warplane shot down an Iranian drone that "aggressively" approached an American aircraft carrier as it sailed in the Arabian Sea on Tuesday, a US military spokesperson said.

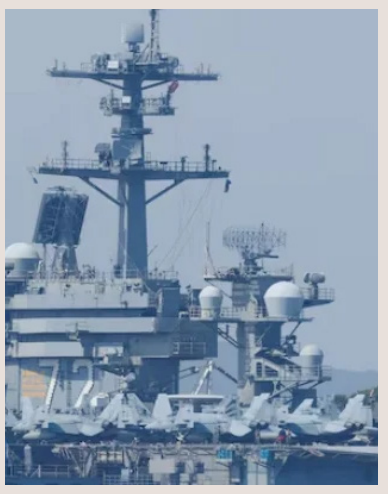
"An F-35C fighter jet from Abraham Lincoln shot down the Iranian drone in self-defence and to protect the aircraft carrier and personnel on board," Central Command spokesperson Captain Tim Hawkins said in a statement.

No American service members were harmed during the incident and no US equipment was damaged, he added.

The incident comes days after the US Central Command (Centcom) warned Iran's Islamic Revolutionary Guard Corps (IRGC) against "any unsafe and unprofessional behaviour near US forces".

Washington has deployed a naval strike group to the Middle East led by the USS Abraham Lincoln aircraft carrier, with President Donald Trump threatening to intervene militarily following anti-government protests in Iran that peaked last month.

Meanwhile, maritime sources and a security consultancy said that a group



of Iranian gunboats approached a US-flagged tanker in the Strait of Hormuz north of Oman.

The Iranian boats ordered the tanker, the Stena Imperative, to stop its engine and prepare to be boarded before it could speed up and continue its voyage, maritime risk management group Vanguard said.

The vessel did not enter Iranian internal territorial waters and was escorted by a US warship, the maritime risk management group said. An American official confirmed it was US flagged.

The United Kingdom Maritime Trade Operations earlier said that a group of armed boats attempted to intercept a vessel 16 nautical miles (30 km) north of Oman, without identifying the vessel or the boats.

The agency said it was investigating the incident, which happened in the inbound Traffic Separation Scheme of the Strait of Hormuz.

Iran's semi-official Fars news agency cited unnamed Iranian officials as saying later on Tuesday that a vessel had entered Iranian territorial waters without the necessary legal permits, was warned and left the area "without any special security event taking place."

The strait links the Persian Gulf to the Gulf of Oman and the Arabian Sea beyond.

Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries members Saudi Arabia, Iran, the United Arab Emirates, Kuwait and Iraq export most of their crude via the strait, mainly to Asia.

Three vessels, two in 2023 and one in 2024, were seized by Iran near or in the strait. Some of the seizures followed US seizures of tankers related to Iran.

Turkiye's Erdogan visits Saudi Arabia as ties between two nations warm

RIYADH: Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan arrived in Riyadh on Tuesday, Saudi media said, his first visit to the kingdom in over two years.

Ties between Turkiye and Saudi Arabia have steadily recovered in recent years, with the countries cooperating on a range of diplomatic issues.

This includes support for Gaza and backing Syria's new government in the wake of the overthrow of Bashar al-Assad in 2024.

Erdogan is set to meet Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman during the visit — his first to the kingdom since July 2023, which was part of a Gulf trip aimed at drumming up investments.

There was no official indication of what the two sides would discuss.

But Turkish state-run news agency Anadolu reported that they would discuss the "deepening cooperation" between the countries, as well as regional and global developments.

It added that Erdogan would then travel to Cairo on Wednesday.

The meeting in Riyadh comes days ahead of a potential round of talks in Turkiye between the United States and Iran on February 6, an Arab official told AFP early Tuesday, after Tehran called for the restart of nuclear talks and Washington warned of consequences if a deal was not reached.

Erdogan has emerged as one of the key mediators leading a diplomatic push to find a resolution between the long-time foes to head off open conflict between the two sides.

Pakistan and Kazakhstan commit to strategic defence partnership



Lt. General Dauren Kosanov, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, calls on Defence Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif

OUR CORRESPONDENT

ISLAMABAD: In a significant step to fortify strategic bilateral relations, His Excellency Lieutenant General Dauren Kosanov, Minister of Defence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, held a pivotal meeting with Pakistan's Federal Minister for Defence, Mr. Khawaja Muhammad Asif, today in Islamabad.

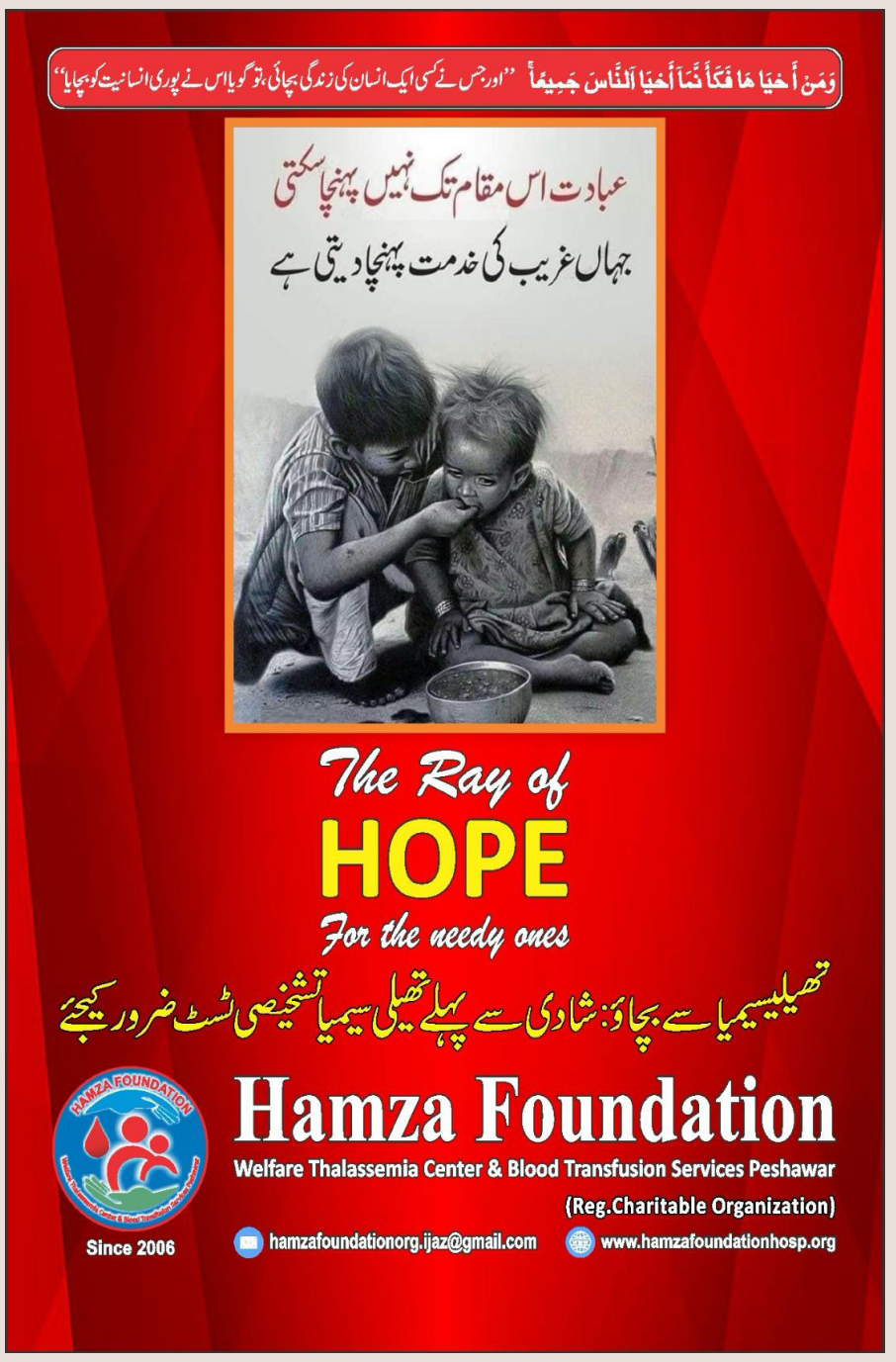
The high-level discussion served as a robust reaffirmation of the enduring friendship and expanding defence partnership between the two nations. Both ministers expressed considerable satisfaction with the positive trajectory of existing defence cooperation and outlined a concrete vision for its future advancement.

Minister Khawaja Muhammad Asif underscored Pakistan's steadfast commitment to elevating the strategic defence and security partnership with Kazakhstan. He emphasized a multi-faceted approach centered on continuous high-level dialogue, enhanced training exchanges, and robust institutional linkages between the defence establishments of both countries.

The dialogue encompassed a comprehensive review of regional security dynamics and matters of mutual strategic interest. Both sides engaged in substantive discussions on identifying and capitalizing on new avenues to strengthen military-to-military engagements and broader defence collaboration.

His Excellency Lieutenant General Dauren Kosanov acknowledged Pakistan's pivotal role in fostering regional peace and stability. He conveyed Kazakhstan's keen interest in significantly expanding the scope of cooperation between the armed forces of the two brotherly nations.

The meeting culminated in a shared and resolute commitment to further deepen the bilateral defence relationship. Both dignitaries agreed to advance this crucial partnership underpinned by the principles of mutual trust, shared interests, and strategic cooperation.



Over 5.5 million cotton bales reach ginneries across Pakistan, up by 0.62 per cent

OUR CORRESPONDENT

MULTAN: Seed cotton (Phutti) equivalent to over 5.5 million bales have reached ginning factories country wide till Jan 31, 2026, registering a marginal percentage increase of 0.62 per cent compared to corresponding period of last year.

According to statistics shared with media by Pakistan Cotton Ginners Association (PCGA) here Tuesday, out of the total arrival figure, the seed cotton pressed into bales was calculated at over 5.5 million or exactly 5,510,393 bales, leaving over 34000 bales in the form of Phutti.

Punjab share in the total arrivals was calculated at over 2.6 million bales, down by 2.74 per cent compared to last year while ginneries in Sindh received over 2.9 million bales recording a 3.86 per cent increase compared to last year.

Out of the total, over 5.1 million bales have been sold out including over 4.9 million bought by textile millers, and 177,600 by exporters, leaving an unsold stock of 380,321 bales.

District Sanghar in Sindh topped the list with highest arrival figure of 1.2 million while Bahawalnagar in Punjab stood second with 734,614 bales and Bahawalpur 411,246 bales.

Total 100 factories remained operational during the period including 84 in Punjab and 16 in Sindh.

CCoSOEs,reviews procurement Policy of EXIM, Bank of Pakistan 2025

ISLAMABAD: The Cabinet Committee on State-Owned Enterprises (CCoSOEs) on Tuesday reviewed and approved the Procurement Policy of the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of Pakistan 2025, aimed at streamlining EXIM Bank's procurement operations. The CCoOEs at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb, said a release issued here. The meeting was attended by the Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry (virtually), along with Secretaries and senior officials from the relevant ministries, divisions, and regulatory bodies. The Committee evaluated and approved the Procurement Policy of the Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of Pakistan 2025, aimed at streamlining EXIM Bank's procurement operations and is aligned with the State-Owned Enterprises Act, 2023, while ensuring compliance with CIPS global standards and PPRA regulations. Additionally, the Committee reviewed and approved agenda items submitted by the Ministry of Commerce. These included the filling of one vacant position of Independent Director and appointment of Chairman of the Board of NICL; filling of one vacant position of Independent Director on the Board of SLIC; and appointment of an Independent Director on the Board of the Trading Corporation of Pakistan (TCP) against one of two vacant positions.

PM's relief package to strengthen export base: ICCI President

ISLAMABAD: The Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI) has highly appreciated Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif for rolling out a comprehensive relief package for industries and exporters, describing it as a timely and positive step towards reviving economic activity, restoring investor confidence and strengthening Pakistan's export base. Addressing a well-attended press conference, ICCI President Sardar Tahir Mehmood said that the Prime Minister announced the relief measures, for which the press conference was convened, primarily to express gratitude and acknowledgement. He also lauded the Prime Minister and Chairman Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) for reviewing and restructuring the Islamabad immovable property valuation table in line with the outcomes of extensive discussions held between ICCI leadership and FBR authorities at the FBR headquarters. He stated that this rationalization would help restore market confidence and encourage genuine investment in the real estate sector. The ICCI President highlighted that the relief package includes a Rs 4.04 per unit reduction in electricity tariffs, lowering of industrial wheeling charges to below Rs 9, reduction in the Export Refinance Scheme (ERS) rate from 7.5 percent to 4.5 percent, and the issuance of blue passports to leading exporters for two years. He termed these measures a clear reflection of the Prime Minister's commitment to promoting trade, investment and exports, and reiterated ICCI's full support for the government's economic vision.



Federal Minsiter for BOI , Qaiser Ahmed Shaikh chairs a detailed meeting with key stakeholders to deliberate upon issues faced by industries in Pakistan on Tuesday. Photo: PID

FinMin chairs ECC meeting, approves grants

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: The Economic Coordination Committee (ECC) of the Cabinet met Tuesday at the Finance Division under the chairmanship of the Federal Minister for Finance and Revenue, Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb.

During the meeting, the ECC considered a summary submitted by the Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) seeking the release of a Technical Supplementary Grant amounting to Rs. 455 million for the conduct of local government elections in Punjab, Islamabad Capital Territory, Sindh and Balochistan during the current financial year 2025–26, said a release issued here on Tuesday.

After deliberation, the ECC directed the Election Commission of Pakistan to resubmit the summary with clearer specification of the nature of expenditure and proposed utilization of funds against the requested amount.

On two separate summaries submitted by the Interior and Narcotics Division, the ECC approved a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 100 million for the execution of Sustainable Development Goals Achievement Programme (SAP) schemes through the Capital Development Authority.

The Committee also approved a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 8.79 million, within the sanctioned budget, for the purchase of spare parts and routine maintenance of helicopter under the Frontier Corps Balochistan, during the current financial year.

The ECC further approved a proposal submitted by the Federal Education and Professional Training Division for a Technical Supplementary Grant of Rs. 1 billion to ensure continuity of existing scholarship programmes and the launch of new initiatives, including schemes targeting out-of-school children.

Towards the conclusion of the meeting, the ECC approved a proposal from the Revenue Division regarding the allocation of two consignments of relief goods, including tarpaulin tents and winter clothing, confiscated by Pakistan Customs and now vested as state property, to the Government of Gilgit-Baltistan for utilization by the Gilgit-Baltistan Disaster Management Authority in emergency relief operations in calamity-affected areas.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan, Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Ahsan Iqbal, Federal Minister for Power Sardar Awais Ahmad Leghari, who participated virtually, and Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain, along with federal secretaries and senior officials from the concerned ministries, divisions and regulatory bodies.

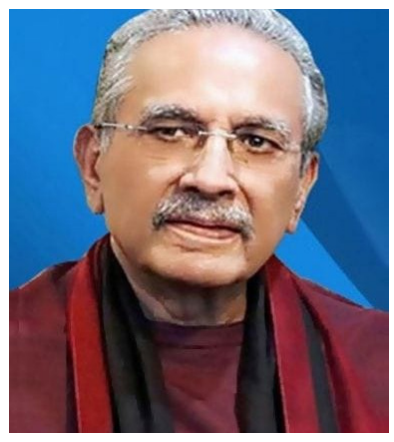
Government reforms aimed at boosting exports

Move expected to strengthen export performance

TARIQ KHATTAK

ISLAMABAD: The government's recent economic measures are expected to support export growth after months of distress signals from the textile and allied industries, business leader and former president of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce, Shahid Rasheed Butt, said on Tuesday.

In a statement, Butt said Prime Minister Shahbaz Sharif announced a package of reforms after repeated warnings from exporters about high energy costs, weak demand, and tight financing. He said parts of the business community had positively received the steps and were providing limited but timely relief to textile and selected industrial sectors that are important for Pakistan's export earnings.



Shahid Rasheed Butt said the package included a reduction in industrial electricity tariffs by Rs 4.04 per unit, reducing costs for export-oriented units. He added that the export refinance rate had been cut by 300 basis points, lowering borrowing costs for firms already struggling with high working capital costs. According to him, electricity-wheeling charges had also been rationalised to below Rs 9 per unit, allowing industries greater flexibility in sourcing power.

He said changes to the Export Facilitation Scheme had removed disadvantages faced by upstream manufacturers, creating a more level playing field within the textile value chain.

Linking the measures to longer-term goals, Butt said value-added textile exports could rise from about 18 billion dollars to 30 billion dollars over the next five years if policies remained consistent. He said the industry was targeting annual export growth of around 10 percent.

He argued that Pakistan's strength in value addition, which accounts for roughly three-quarters of textile exports, could be enhanced if the private sector were involved in economic decision-making. However, he cautioned that headline measures would not be enough without credible implementation. Energy bills remain volatile due to fuel price adjustments and taxes, while refund delays continue to strain cash flows. Higher exports must translate into job security and wage growth.

Export recovery would help ease pressure on foreign exchange reserves and reduce reliance on external borrowing, he said.

KP Higher Education Secretary opens two-day KUST jobs & industrial expo

OUR CORRESPONDENT

KOHAT: A two-day KUST Jobs and Industrial Expo opened at Kohat University of Science and Technology (KUST) on Tuesday, aiming to bridge academia and industry and expand employment opportunities for the students.

The expo was inaugurated by the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Secretary for Higher Education Dr. Muhammad Israr as chief guest. The event is being jointly organized by the KUST and the Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) and drew a large turnout of university officials, business leaders, students and members of the public.

Vice Chancellor Dr. Zafar Ilyas, ORIC Director Dr. Zeeshan Bungash and the university administration were praised for their efforts by KCCI President Rasheed Paracha and other chamber officials, who lauded the university's role in promoting industry-academia linkages.

On the first day, a large number of students and visitors explored stalls showcasing local products, skilled artisans,



industrial displays and cultural exhibits, which remained a major attraction throughout the event.

Addressing the gathering, representatives of the business community described the expo as a timely and positive initiative for students' professional development, stressing that the chamber played an active role in ensuring the event's success and would continue to support similar educational and economic initiatives in the future.

Dr. Muhammad Israr was presented with a commemorative shield by the Kohat Chamber of Commerce and Industry, while Kohat University also offered special souvenirs in recognition of his participation.

The expo will continue on Wednesday, with additional industrial organizations, entrepreneurs and students expected to take part.

Minister chairs stakeholders' meeting on industrial closures in Faisalabad

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment (BOI), Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh on Tuesday chaired a detailed consultative meeting with key stakeholders, including representatives of major Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the All Pakistan Textile Mills Association (APTMA), to deliberate upon issues highlighted in recent news reports regarding the closure of industries in Faisalabad, on which the Prime Minister has taken notice.

Welcoming the participants, the Federal Minister apprised the forum that the Prime Minister has desired a comprehensive assessment and policy-oriented recommendations from the Ministry and stakeholders, said a release issued here.

He recalled that during his recent visit to FIEDMC, the President of Faisalabad Chamber of Commerce & Industry (FCCI) had briefed him on serious concerns relating to industrial closures, which subsequently appeared in the media.

Senior officials of the Board of Investment, including Additional Secretary Dr. Erfa Iqbal, Additional Secretary Mr. Zulfiqar Ali, and Director General Mr. Mahmood Tufail, were also present. All participants were given adequate time to share their views and challenges faced by the industrial sector.

Mr. Farooq Yousaf, President FCCI, informed the meeting that approximately 193 industrial units have shut down in recent times, and detailed data would be shared with the BOI.

He highlighted that Pakistan's tax incidence ranging between 55–60% is significantly higher than regional competitors, alongside persistent electricity-related issues.

He reiterated that all chambers stand united and emphasized the need for consensus-based solutions, adding that FCCI would formally share its recommendations via email. He also referred to figures indicating USD 15 million in exports and USD 34 million in imports.

APTMA Chairman Kamran Arshad termed the cost of doing business as the foremost challenge, pointing to higher electricity tariffs, elevated interest rates, expensive gas, and tax-related issues compared to the region. He emphasized that resolving these challenges would lead to enhanced industrialization and job creation.

He stressed that instead of expanding the tax base, the burden continues to fall on existing taxpayers.

He suggested that BOI could work alongside ongoing efforts on industrial and commerce policies, introduce investment incentives through structured brackets, and assign clear export targets to trade attachés in Pakistani missions abroad.

Briefing the participants, the Federal Minister highlighted that BOI is actively engaged in regulatory reforms and deregulation, including initiatives such as the Asaan Karobar Act and the BOI-led Business Facilitation Center (BFC) Single Window, aimed at easing business operations and investor facilitation.

Zia-ul-Arfeen from KCCI raised the long-pending refund issues, echoed concerns regarding high energy and tax rates, and emphasized the need for long-term planning.

He referred to Bangladesh's SME-focused policies and appreciated the Prime Minister's initiative. He noted that despite Pakistan's potential to export USD 15 billion, especially in view of opportunities such as the SCO Summit, current exports remain around USD 3 billion. He

also recommended a single-point sales tax system.

The federal minister and Additional Secretary Dr. Erfa Iqbal requested all chambers and associations to submit their issues and proposals in writing to enable structured follow-up with the Prime Minister's Office.

The minister further briefed participants on the government's broader efforts under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, including incentives under the Special Economic Zones (SEZ) policy, such as 10-year tax holidays, duty-free import of machinery, and the availability of 6,000 acres of land near Port Qasim, to be allocated in 500–1,000 acre clusters free of cost, subject to industrial development and at least 50% export orientation.

Stakeholders again referred to Bangladesh's collaborative policymaking model and suggested drawing insights from Dr. Muhammad Yunus's approach, while urging the FBR to focus on broadening the tax base rather than increasing the burden on compliant taxpayers.

Kamran Saeed of LCCI informed the meeting about a recent interaction with the Secretary Industries, Commerce and Food, where issues such as high policy rates, final tax regime, Sindh Cess, non-tariff barriers, freight costs, and long-term export financing were discussed and flagged for government attention.

Concluding the meeting, the minister reiterated that the government is committed to transitioning towards export-led growth. He emphasized that the Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is personally overseeing these matters and assured stakeholders that BOI will continue to play a proactive facilitation role in close coordination with all relevant ministries and the private sector.



LAHORE: Girls Students are participating in the 100 meters running competition during annual sports Gala at University of Home Economics, in Provincial Capital. PHOTO: ONLINE

Under-21 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games to kick off today

SPORTS REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The Under-21 Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Games will kick off today, Wednesday, 4th February, at the Peshawar Sports Complex under the auspices of the Directorate General of Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. More than 5,000 male and female athletes from 7 regions and 36 districts of the province will be seen in action. This was stated by Director General Sports Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Tashfeen Haider, while presiding over a meeting held in connection with the games. Director Operations Jamshed Baloch, Assistant Director Finance Shah Faisal, and other concerned officers were also present on the occasion. During the meeting, DG Sports was briefed that the Under-21 Games include 38 events for men and 18 events for women. Men's competitions will be held at Peshawar Sports Complex, Hayatabad Sports Complex, Kohat Sports Complex, and Mardan Sports Complex. Women's competitions will take place at Abdul Wali Khan Sports Complex Charsadda, Shaheed Benazir Bhutto Women University Peshawar, Peshawar Board Ground, and Hayatabad Sports Complex.

Men's events include badminton, table tennis, squash, athletics, volleyball, karate, football, gymnastics, throwball, basketball, boxing, taekwondo, hockey, judo, handball, wushu, archery, jujitsu, tennis, weightlifting, wrestling, snooker, lacrosse, teqball, mas-wrestling, futsal, kickboxing, bodybuilding, full-contact karate, kabaddi, muay thai, baseball, tug of war, rugby, and zor-khana.

Burraq 62nd National Badminton C'ship: team event semi-finals concluded

SPORTS REPORTER

PESHAWAR: The semi-finals of the men's and women's team events of the Burraq 62nd National Badminton Championship have concluded, with Pakistan WAPDA and Pakistan Army producing impressive performances to qualify for the finals.

The occasion was attended by Director Forest Peshawar Shakeel Khan, Director General Sports Tashfeen Haider, Director Tribal Districts Umar Arshad Khan, Organizing Secretary Mian Sadaqat Shah, and other dignitaries.

In the first women's team event semi-final, Pakistan WAPDA defeated Punjab 3–0 to secure a place in the final. WAPDA players dominated both singles and doubles matches, giving their opponents no chance to recover. In the first singles semi-final, WAPDA's Mahoor Shehzad defeated Punjab's Humna Irshad 21–10, 21–6. In the second singles, Pakistan WAPDA's Zubaira Islam beat Punjab's Samha Naveed 21–9, 21–8.

In the second women's team event semi-final, Pakistan Army defeated SNGPL 3–0 to reach the final. In the first singles, Army's Amara Ishtiaq defeated SNGPL's Aimal Munib 2–0, while in the second singles, Army's Aljah Tariq beat Imama Usman 2–0 to secure qualification for the team event. In the women's doubles, the Pakistan Army pair of Aljah and Soumia defeated SNGPL's Aimal Munib and Imama.

PCB withholds PSL 11 broadcast rights in India

One-year agreement for global media rights awarded to Walee Technologies

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has sold the international broadcasting rights for the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11, while withholding media rights for the Indian market.

Preparations for PSL 11 are progressing steadily, with the tournament scheduled to run from March 26 to May 3, and the players' auction is set to take place on February 11.

The one-year agreement for global media rights, excluding India, has been awarded to Walee Technologies, the highest bidder, surpassing the PCB's reserve price.

On a comparable basis, this deal represents a 149% increase in value over the previous cycle, highlighting the growing brand value and international reach of the PSL.

Salman Naseer, CEO of PSL, expressed his satisfaction with the outcome, highlighting the league's expanding influence and commercial potential.

"We are extremely pleased with the outcome of the International Media Rights sale, which has delivered a remarkable 149% increase over the last cycle for the same regions," said Naseer, adding that this growth validates the PSL brand, its competitive quality, and its increasing appeal to cricket fans worldwide.

The PSL continues to attract strong global interest, and this agreement reinforces our confidence in the league's long-term commercial trajectory and its ability to deliver value across diverse international markets.

"We are grateful to Walee Technologies for breaking records. The continued rise in international media rights value reflects the collective efforts of franchises, players, and partners who have helped position the PSL as a globally recognised cricketing property."

Walee Technologies, the successful bidder, also shared its excitement about partnering with the PSL.

Muhammad Ahsan Tahir, CEO of Walee Technologies, describes the achievement as a milestone for Pakistani innovation and technology: "This is a victory for every Pakistani who believes in 'Made in Pakistan' technology."



"This is just the start of our PSL journey. We have a lot of plans, and we'd like everyone to eagerly await everything Walee is about to do."

Since its inception in 2016, the PSL has shown consistent commercial growth in media rights, sponsorships, and digital platforms, establishing itself as Pakistan's premier sporting brand and a key fixture in the global T20 cricket ecosystem.

The PCB and PSL management remain committed to enhancing the international broadcast experience and expanding the league's reach, ensuring fans worldwide can enjoy the PSL at an unprecedented scale.

Sialkot Stallionz sign Australia's Steve Smith for PSL 11

Stallionz secures former Australian captain through direct signing, allowed under the new model



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Sialkot Stallionz, Pakistan Super League's newest franchise, on Tuesday confirmed the signing of former Australian captain Steve Smith for the PSL's 11th edition, set to take place from March 26 to May 3.

The announcement was made via the franchise's official social media channels, confirming the first and biggest direct signings.

Stallionz secured the right-handed batter through the direct signing, as each is permitted to make one such move under the new model.

The right-handed batter has featured in top leagues including the Big Bash League (BBL), The Hundred, Indian Premier League (IPL), Bangladesh Premier League (BPL), and Caribbean Premier League (CPL).

In domestic and franchise T20 cricket, Smith has played 272 matches, amassing 6,242 runs at a strike rate of 131.38, with 30 half-centuries and five centuries.

Most recently, he featured in BBL 15 for Sydney Sixers, scoring 299 runs in six matches at a strike rate of 167.97, including a century and two fifties, helping his team reach the grand finale.

Earlier, on January 29, Sialkot Stallionz appointed former Australian wicket-keeper-batter and captain Tim Paine as their head coach.

Paine brings extensive experience, having represented Australia in 35 Tests and 35 ODIs, while also captaining the national side in the longest format.

The franchise is owned by OZ Developers, led by Hamza Majeed, who acquired the team during a high-profile auction held at the Jinnah Convention Centre on January 8.

After FKS Group secured the first new franchise with an offer of Rs 1.75 billion ($6.25 million), OZ Developers won the bid for the Sialkot team with Rs 1.85 billion, naming the franchise after the historic city of Sialkot.

This expansion marks the second major addition in PSL history. Multan Sultans were the first new team, joining the league during its third season and increasing the number of teams from five to six.

With PSL 11, two additional franchises have been introduced, bringing the total number of teams to eight.

England beat Australia to reach ICC Men's U19 World Cup final

Captain Thompson Rew played brilliant 110-run innings



BULAWAYO: England on Tuesday defeated Australia by 27 runs to secure a place in the ICC Under-19 World Cup final.

Batting first, England posted a competitive 277-7 in their 50 overs, thanks to a brilliant century from skipper Thomas Rew and crucial contributions from Caleb Falconer, Joseph Moores, Ben Mayes and Farhan Ahmed.

Rew led from the front, scoring 110 off 107 balls, including 14 fours and a six. Falconer added a valuable 40 from 53 deliveries, while Farhan remained unbeaten on 28 off 26 balls.

Moores and Mayes contributed 25 and 24 runs respectively.

For Australia, Naden Cooray and Hayden Schiller claimed two wickets each, while Will Byrom and Aryan Sharma took one apiece.

In reply, the Australians were restricted to 250 all out in 47.3 overs despite a valiant century from captain Oliver Peake, who scored 100 off 88 balls, featuring 10 fours and a six.

Nitesh Samuel supported with 47 off 83 deliveries, and Aryan Sharma added 34 off 23 balls, but the rest of the batting lineup faltered.

England's bowlers made full use of the situation, with Ralphie Albert, Manny Lumsden, James Minto, and Sebastian Morgan taking two wickets each, while Alex French and Farhan Ahmed chipped in with one each. The Lions will now face the winner of the second semi-final between India and Afghanistan in the final, scheduled for Friday at Harare.

Zalmi retain Babar as franchises announce retentions ahead of PSL 11 auction

Lahore release Fakhar Zaman, Haris Rauf; Karachi decide not to retain David Warner in Platinum category

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD: Peshawar Zalmi on Tuesday announced retaining Babar Azam in the Platinum category ahead of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) 11 players' auction, scheduled to take place on February 11.

The announcement comes as franchises unveiled the lists of their retained players for the upcoming edition of the league.

For the first time in the PSL's history, the player selection process has undergone a major overhaul, with the traditional draft system replaced by an auction-based model.

Previously, franchises were allowed to retain up to eight players, a rule that remained in effect for the first 10 seasons.

Islamabad United

Islamabad United were the first franchise to announce their retention list from a total of 15 players across various categories. The Platinum category included skipper Shadab Khan, Naseem Shah, Sahibzada Farhan, Salman Ali Agha, Mohammad Nawaz and Imad Wasim, while no players were listed in the Diamond category.

The Gold category featured Azam Khan, Haider Ali, Salman Irshad and Rumman Raees, while Mohammad Faiq and Hunain Shah were named in the Silver category. Saad Masood, Mohammad Shahzad and Ghazi Gouri were placed in the Emerging category. The United retained Shadab (Platinum), Salman (Gold), Andries (Silver), leaving Diamond and Emerging slots empty.

Karachi Kings

For the Kings, a total of 16 players were placed across various categories. The Platinum category included skipper David Warner and Hasan Ali, while Abbas Afridi and Shan Masood were listed in the Diamond category.

The Gold category featured Khushdil Shah, Aamer Jamal, Irfan Khan Niazi, Mir Hamza, Zahid Mahmood, Omair bin Yousuf, Shahnawaz Dahani and Arafat Minhas. Mirza Mamoon Imtiaz was named in the Silver category, while Razaullah, Fawad Ali and Saad Baig were placed in the Emerging category.

From these options, the Kings retained Hasan in the Platinum category, Abbas in Diamond, Khushdil in Gold, and Saad in the Emerging category, while opting not to retain any player from the Silver category.

Quetta Gladiators

A total of 14 players were placed across various categories. The Platinum category included Faheem Ashraf, Mohammad Amir and Abrar Ahmed, while Saud Shakeel, Mohammad Wasim Jr and Usman Tariq were listed in the Diamond category. The Gold category featured Khurram Shahzad, Haseebullah Khan, Khawaja Mohammad Nafay, Hassan Nawaz and Danish Aziz. Ali Majid was the sole player in the Silver category, while Mohammad Zeeshan and Shamyl Hussain were placed in the Emerging category. The Gladiators retained Abrar in the Platinum category, Usman in Diamond, Hassan from Gold and Shamyl from the Emerging category while opting not to retain any player from the Silver category.

Lahore Qalandars

A total of 13 players were placed across various categories. The Platinum category included captain Shaheen Afridi, Fakhar Zaman and Haris Rauf, while Momin Qamar featured in the Emerging category.

The Silver category comprised Mohammad Akhlaq, Mohammad Naeem and Mohammad Azab, whereas the Gold category included Zaman Khan, Jahandad Khan, Asif Afridi and Asif Ali. The Diamond category featured Abdullah Shafique and Mohammad Salman Mirza.

From these options, the Qalandars retained Shaheen in the Platinum category, Abdullah from Diamond, Sikandar from Gold, Naeem from Silver, while opting not to retain any player from the Emerging category.

Peshawar Zalmi

A total of 14 players were placed across various categories. The Platinum category included skipper Babar Azam and Saim Ayub, while Sufiyan Muqeem was the sole player listed in the Diamond category.

The Gold category featured Mohammad Haris, Mohammad Ali, Abdul Samad, Hussain Talat, Ahmed Daniyal and Ihsanullah. Arif Yaqoob and Mehran Mumtaz were named in the Silver category, while Maaz Sadaqat, Ali Raza and Abdullah Fazal were placed in the Emerging category.

The Province

Wednesday January 4, 2026 | Peshawar



Halle Berry: Oscar award fails to transform career

ISLAMABAD: Halle Berry has opened up about the reality of her historic Oscar win and why it did not transform her professional journey as she once expected. In 2002, the Never Let Go actress won the Academy Award for Best Actress for her role in Monster's Ball, making her the first Black woman to receive the honor. In a recent interview with The Cut, she acknowledged that the achievement did not immediately lead to an abundance of opportunities. "That Oscar didn't necessarily change the course of my career," Berry stated, adding, "After I won it, I thought there was going to be, like, a script truck showing up outside my front door." Halle Berry clarified that although receiving the prize was a gratifying accomplishment, she still faced systemic difficulties in Hollywood. "While I was wildly proud of it, I was still Black that next morning," she said, recalling how directors questioned if her casting would fundamentally alter a film's narrative. She continued, "Directors were still saying, 'If we put a Black woman in this role, what does this mean for the whole story? Do I have to cast a Black man? Then it's a Black movie. Black movies don't sell overseas.'" Halle Berry also shared the counsel she gave to other actors, such as Oscar nominee Cynthia Erivo. "You goddamn deserve it, but I don't know that it's going to change your life," she told her. "It cannot be the validation for what you do, right?" The 59-year-old star is now focusing on the satisfaction of her longevity in the industry. "As a Black woman, now almost 60, I still get to work in movies and do what I love," she added. "I'm winning."



Buneer: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON and President PML-N Khyber Pakhtuankhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam is distributing laptops among the students of University of Buner under the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme Phase-iV. — PHOTO: PID

Pakistan is on the path to economic recovery: Muqam

The laptop scheme aims to align youth with modern education, digital skills, research, and innovation, says Federal Minister Engineer Amir Muqam

OUR CORRESPONDENT

BUNER: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON and President PML-N Khyber Pakhtuankhwa, Engineer Amir Muqam, said that Pakistan is once again moving on the path of economic recovery and stability, and that the purpose of the laptop scheme is to equip the country's youth with modern education, digital skills, research, and innovation.

He expressed these views on Tuesday while addressing, as chief guest, a ceremony at the University of Buner for the distribution of laptops to students under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme.

The Federal Minister said he felt great pleasure and pride to be present among students at this important and emerging educational institution of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. He said it was an honor that, on one hand, 152 talented male and female students were being given laptops under the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme, and on the other hand, important projects related to educational, infrastructure, and digital development at the university were also being inaugurated.

He said the Prime Minister's Youth Laptop Scheme is not merely a project but a practical manifestation of Prime Minister Mian Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif's vision to connect the country's youth with modern education, digital skills, research, and innovation. He added that the laptop is not just a machine but a symbol of a bright future, self-confidence, self-reliance, and national development for the youth.

The Minister stated that Pakistan is once again on the road to economic recovery and stability, attributing this success to the Prime Minister's prudent leadership, timely decisions, and tireless efforts. He said that despite difficult economic conditions, global pressures, and internal challenges, the Prime Minister guided the nation at every front and steered Pakistan toward progress and improvement.

He also said that the nation cannot forget Pakistan's responsible, courageous, and dignified stance during the recent tense environment with India, where the entire nation demonstrated unity, resilience, and national dignity. The Federal Minister paid tribute to Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and Pakistan's brave armed forces, saying their professional leadership and timely decisions have made the country's defense strong and impregnable. He added that the entire nation stands shoulder to shoulder with its armed forces.

Engineer Amir Muqam also appreciated Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, Chairman of the Prime Minister's Youth Programme, for opening doors of education, skills, employment, and digital opportunities for youth, stating that the laptop scheme is a continuation of this vision.

KP CS reviews flood response plan

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Shahab Ali Shah, was presented with a comprehensive flood response plan during a meeting held on Tuesday, aimed at ensuring enhanced preparedness for the upcoming monsoon season. The plan has been developed in light of the damages caused by last year's floods and focuses on strengthening the province's capacity to respond effectively to potential flood-related disasters.

The meeting was attended by the Secretary Relief, Planning, Director General Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA), DG Rescue 1122 and other relevant officials.

The meeting was informed that a consolidated and proactive plan has been formulated, which includes the establishment of pre-fabricated and portable structures at 60 water rescue points identified in vulnerable districts. Timelines have been finalized for the installation of these structures, while the procurement process for specialized rescue equipment is already underway.

The equipment to be procured includes water rescue gear, inflatable boats, rope throw guns, as well as surveillance and recovery drones. To improve access to hard-to-reach areas, enable real-time tracking, and enhance coordination during emergencies, medical motorbikes will also be acquired. Furthermore, rescue services will be digitized through the upgradation of communication systems and specialized software. The plan also envisages the establishment of an early warning and community mobilization system to ensure timely preparedness of communities in the event of a disaster. In addition, technical working groups comprising specialists will be engaged to introduce innovative ideas and develop effective strategies for flood response.

The Chief Secretary directed that work on the plan be expedited and emphasized that the Chief Secretary's Office will regularly review both the progress and implementation of the plan.

Media plays a key role in highlighting public issues; will raise voice for Journalists' rights at every forum: Dr. Ibadullah Khan

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: Leader of the Opposition in the Provincial Assembly, Dr. Ibadullah Khan, administered the oath to the newly elected cabinet of Video Journalists at the Peshawar Press Club. Addressing the journalist community on the occasion, he said that the media—especially cameramen—plays a vital role in highlighting public issues, and he would continue to raise his voice for the rights and protection of journalists at every possible forum.

Dr. Ibadullah Khan stated that he is fully aware of the problems faced by journalists and will continue his struggle for their resolution at all forums.

Talking to the media, he said that Chief Minister Sohail Afridi misled the public by calling a public gathering in Bara a jirga, and that his statements regarding law and order are completely false. He added that if the Chief Minister holds the position of Chief Executive today, it is due to the political struggle of Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif.

He said that during PTI's tenure, more than one hundred terrorist incidents occurred in the country, yet facts are being distorted. Dr. Ibadullah Khan revealed that on the floor of the assembly, Murad Saeed labeled him, Mohsin Dawar, and Mahmood Khan Achakzai as traitors, which is a clear violation of democratic norms.

He accused PTI leaders of facilitating terrorists and announced that offices would be provided to the Taliban. According to him, the Chief Minister is currently focused only on political mobilization while completely ignoring public issues.

Dr. Ibadullah Khan said that the Chief Minister himself accepted Shehbaz Sharif's mandate, making the logic behind the February 8 protest incomprehensible.

Speaking about the Tirah affectees, he said that the Tirah agreement was concluded between the provincial government and the Deputy Commissioner Khyber, and that there are no outstanding liabilities on the federal government.



He added that funds had already been released to Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on December 25.

He expressed regret that due to political point-scoring, the Tirah affectees are suffering further, while the Chief Minister made no clear or practical announcement for them during the rally.

In a sarcastic remark, Dr. Ibadullah Khan said that the Chief Minister is sometimes seen eating burgers outside Adiala Jail and at other times eating samosas outside the Supreme Court, but pays no attention to public issues.

He further alleged that the provincial government demanded cash from donors and claimed that people became billionaires within a hundred days, which he said is clear evidence of corruption.

In conclusion, Dr. Ibadullah Khan said that the opposition will continue its struggle for the rights of journalists, the public, and especially the Tirah affectees, and will expose the government's failures at every forum.

Spot ON

Charsadda Police arrest murderer

PESHAWAR: Charsadda police successfully conducted operation, arrests accused involved in murder of 9th-grade student Salman and also recovered murder weapon, a pistol. The police took legal action on the report of the plaintiff Shahzad son of Faridullah, resident of Jamalabad, Mandani, district Charsadda. According to the plaintiff, his brother Salman was a student of class 9 at Allama Iqbal Public School. On the day of the incident, he received information that his brother had an argument at school. When he reached the school, his brother was engaged in a verbal altercation with a student, Faizan son of Imran, resident of Jolagano Bari Band.

450 kites recovered



SARGODHGA: Police on Tuesday recovered more than 460 kites and strings during raids.

According to a police spokesperson, Factory Area police seized 120 kites from Umar Farooq, while Midh Ranjha police recovered 200 kites from Rafaqat. Kirana police confiscated 50 kites and urban area and Jhal Chakian police arrested three individuals for flying kites.

Cases have been registered against the accused under the Kite Flying Act, and further legal action is underway.

Jamrud police recover 62kg of hashish, arrest smuggler

PESHAWAR: Jamrud Police on Tuesday carried out a major operation and recovered 62 kilograms of hashish worth millions of rupees, arresting an inter-provincial drug smuggler during the action. The accused has been taken into custody and shifted to the police lock-up, while security checks across the district have been further tightened on the directives of the District Police Officer (DPO) Khyber. According to Jamrud police, acting on the instructions of DPO Khyber Waqar Ahmed, Khyber Police have intensified ongoing operations against drug dealers and smugglers across the district.

CM inaugurates DSNG,OB van

LAHORE: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif inaugurated the Directorate General Public Relations (DGPR) Punjab's first DSNG and OB van and inspected the state-of-the-art vehicle, here on Tuesday. The chief minister also met the project staff and appreciated their efforts to enhance media outreach across the province. Provincial Minister for Information and Culture Azma Zahid Bokhari provided a detailed briefing on the project. The CM was briefed that the DSNG and OB van, equipped with an advanced AI-based audio and video transmission system, would be deployed across Punjab for high-quality live news coverage, outdoor broadcasting, mobile live streaming, and field-based production.

Severe water crisis hits KSM in Peshawar Cantt

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR: A severe water shortage has gripped the Khyber Super Market area located in Peshawar Cantonment, causing serious difficulties for thousands of residents including students, families and office workers. The crisis has now entered its third consecutive week with no permanent solution in sight.

Khyber Super Market consists of nearly one hundred plazas housing residential apartments, offices and commercial units. According to residents, water supply from the tube well has been disrupted after underground pipelines were damaged during excavation work for a plaza currently under construction by the Cantonment Board.

Despite repeated complaints, the broken pipelines have not been properly repaired.

Residents further report that the situation has worsened due to the relocation of transformers in the area, leading to frequent electricity shutdowns. As a result, the tube well remains non-operational for extended periods, severely affecting water distribution.

Previously, water was supplied for approximately three hours daily; however, it has now been reduced to barely one hour and even that supply is inconsistent. In many buildings, water fails to reach water storage tanks, leaving them completely empty.