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## New Pakistani Consulate building inaugurated in Jeddah by Ishaq Dar

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The new chancery building of the Pakistani Consulate in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, has been officially inaugurated by the foreign minister.
According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Foreign Affairs Ishaq Dar chaired the opening ceremony.
The event was attended by Pakistan's Ambassador to Saudi Arabia, Ahmed Farooq, and prominent Saudi dignitaries.
During the ceremony, the Pakistani flag was hoisted, tree plantation was conducted, a ribbon-cutting took place, and the plaque of the new building was unveiled. Prayers were offered for the safety and prosperity of both Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.
The Ministry of Foreign Affairs also presented a brief video highlighting the features of the new building. Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar praised the efforts of the Pakistani Consulate and cooperation extended by the Saudi authorities.
Speaking on the occasion, Ishaq Dar emphasized that the government is committed to providing efficient consular services to Pakistanis living abroad.

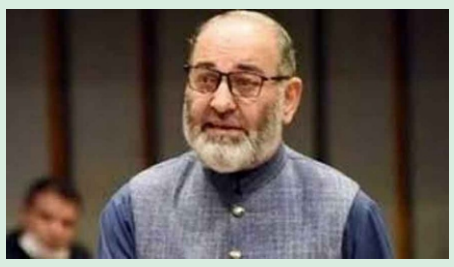



## Pakistani nationals advised to avoid unnecessary travel to Iran due to protests

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Foreign Office on Saturday advised Pakistani nationals to avoid all unnecessary travel to Islamic Republic of Iran for their safety and security until conditions improve.
In its travel advisory, the foreign office has also urged Pakistani nationals currently residing in Iran to exercise extreme caution, remain vigilant, minimize non-essential travel and stay in regular contact with the Pakistani Missions.
Citizens can contact the Pakistani Missions through following numbers:
Tehran:
+98-21-66-9413-88/89/90/91 (landline)
+98-21-66-9448-88/90 (landline) and +98 910 764 8298 (mobile).
Zahidan: +98 54 33 22 3389 (landline) and +989046145412 (mobile)
Mashhad: +98 910 762 5302 and +98 937 180 7175



## Mushtaq Ahmad launches new political party in Islamabad

WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Former senator Mushtaq Ahmad has announced the formation of a new political party, the Pakistan Rights Movement.
According to media reports, the launch ceremony was attended by the party's central leadership, workers, associates, and members of civil society.
Addressing the gathering, Mushtaq Ahmad said his party would operate strictly in line with the principles of the 1973 Constitution. He added that the common citizen has been deprived of basic rights, and therefore, the party aims to serve all people on an equal basis.
The formal inauguration of the Pakistan Rights Movement was held at a private hotel in the federal capital, where a large number of party leaders, workers, and supporters were present.
On the occasion, former senator Mushtaq Ahmad Khan said the party would adhere to the 1973 Constitution, which recognizes the sovereignty of Allah Almighty and guarantees Islamic principles.



Children enjoying swings at a local park near F-6 sector

## Pakistan Navy conducts successful live firing of surface-to-air missile

- Pakistan Navy showcased operational readiness in the North Arabian Sea with live-fire SAM tests, Loitering Munition strikes, and successful USV trials, highlighting advanced naval capabilities.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Navy demonstrated its operational readiness and combat preparedness through a comprehensive exercise in the North Arabian Sea, showcasing both conventional and unmanned capabilities, as per dictates of evolving naval warfare.
The exercise included the




successful live firing of LY-80(N) Surface to Air Missile (SAM) from Vertical Launching System at extended range, validating the long-range capabilities of Pakistan Navy's modern air defence systems. LY-80(N) SAM successfully engaged and neutralized an aerial target, demonstrating Pakistan Navy's robust air defence capabilities.
The exercise also featured the successful engagement of surface targets using Loitering Munition (LM), demonstrating Pakistan Navy's precision strike capabilities.
Loitering Munition (LM) successfully engaged and destroyed surface targets, showcasing its effectiveness in modern naval warfare.
Successful open-sea trials of Unmanned Surface Vessel (USV) were also conducted, marking a significant leap in autonomous naval technology.



## JUI-F leader Maulana Hafiz Sultan killed in Wana IED attack

WEB DESK

WANA

Senior Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam (Fazl) leader and religious scholar Maulana Hafiz Sultan Muhammad has been killed in a terrorist attack in Wana, the main town of Lower South Waziristan, police and party officials confirmed on Saturday.
His young daughter was also injured in the incident.
According to police, a remote-controlled improvised explosive device (IED) was planted near a religious seminary to target Maulana Sultan Muhammad, who was serving as the district president of Wafaq-ul-Madaris al-Arabia. The device was detonated as he passed the area in Wana, causing critical injuries to him and wounding his child.
The cleric was rushed to Dera Ismail Khan for emergency treatment but succumbed to his injuries on the way, police said.
Lower South Waziristan District Police Officer (DPO) Muhammad Tahir Shah Wazir confirmed that an investigation is under way. He said law-enforcement agencies are examining all aspects of the attack, and that evidence collected from the scene is being analysed to identify and trace those responsible.
JUI-F said the killing once again highlighted the grave security risks faced by religious scholars who advocate peace and moderation in areas such as Bajaur and South Waziristan, which have a strong religious identity and have repeatedly been targeted by militants.

## PM Shehbaz Sharif resolves to address people's problems in KP

- He forms a committee headed by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal regarding federally sponsored development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has said resolving People's problems in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) is the top priority of the government. Public representatives from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa met Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here on Saturday. The meeting discussed overall political situation in the province and the problems faced by the people.Issues related to public welfare, development projects, and governance were also discussed.



On this occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said 'We are fully aware of the problems of the people of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and the government is taking serious steps to find sustainable solutions to the problems under its jurisdiction.Shehbaz Sharif said timely completion of federal development projects and resolution of public problems in the province are top priorities. The PM formed a committee headed by Planning Minister Ahsan Iqbal regarding federally sponsored development projects in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.
The committee will soon visit Peshawar and meet with public representatives to review the progress of federal development projects.

## Govt announces measures to address worsening water shortage in Islamabad

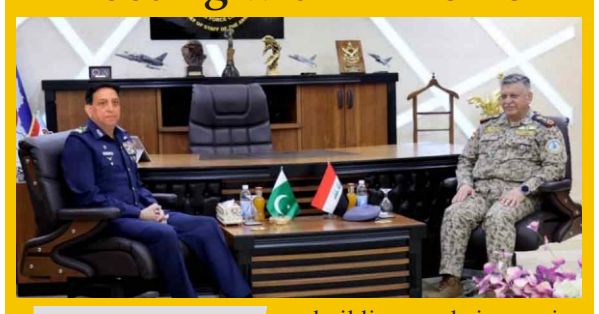


STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The government on Saturday decided to implement an emergency-action plan to address the worsening water shortage in Islamabad, as Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi chaired a high-level meeting to review both short- and long-term measures for enhancing water supply to the twin cities. The meeting, attended by Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry, Adviser to the Prime Minister Syed Tauqeer Shah, senior officials from the Ministry of Interior, CDA, WAPDA, and the Rawalpindi administration, examined multiple proposals to expand water storage and strengthen the distribution system.
Minister Naqvi announced that the Capital Development Authority (CDA), in collaboration with the Punjab government, will jointly construct new dams to meet the long-term water needs of Islamabad and Rawalpindi. Authorities also shared progress updates on planned small dams and water reservoirs, including the Chirah, Dotara, and Shahdara dam projects.
WAPDA and CDA officials presented feasibility reports, timelines, and various options aimed at increasing water supply to urban and rural areas of the capital. The Dotara Dam—designed to store 110 MGD—was approved for completion within two years. The minister expressed concern over gaps in the existing water-supply system and emphasized the need to overhaul the water distribution network. He instructed relevant departments to promptly identify system flaws and implement effective mechanisms to ensure uninterrupted water delivery.
Calling water supply to Islamabad residents his "top priority," Naqvi directed authorities to take swift and effective actions under a short-term plan, utilizing all available resources to meet immediate water needs. He also ordered a strict crackdown on water theft and misuse of connections.
To accelerate progress, the interior minister demanded a comprehensive 10-day roadmap outlining actionable steps for on-ground execution of all water projects.

## Iraqi air commander shows keen Interest in JF-17 Thunder jets during meeting with PAF chief



CITY REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Air Force Chief of Air Staff Air Chief Marshal Zaheer Ahmed Baber Sidhu held a meeting with Commander of the Iraqi Air Force, Lieutenant General Staff Pilot Mohanad Ghalib Mohammed Radi Al-Asadi, during his official visit to Iraq. The PAF chief was accorded a guard of honour at Iraqi Air Force Headquarters, symbolizing the strong bond of mutual respect. Discussions focused on enhancing bilateral military cooperation, with emphasis on joint training, capacity building and improving operational cooperation.
The air chief highlighted the deep-rooted religious, cultural, and historical ties between Pakistan and Iraq and reaffirmed PAF's commitment to support the Iraqi Air Force in training and capacity development.
Both commanders agreed to pursue joint exercises and training initiatives to strengthen interoperability.
The Iraqi air chief praised PAF's professionalism and technological advancement, expressed interest in benefiting from PAF's world-class training and expressed keen interest in JF-17 Thunder fighter jets.



First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardari in a group photo after meeting with Vice Minister of Trade of Indonesia, Dyah Roro Esti Widya. Chief Minister Sindh, Syed Murad Ali Shah is also present on the occasion

# CDA Hospital Privatization Faces Scrutiny Over Revised Tender

■ Revised tender raises concerns over transparency and healthcare standards.

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

The Capital Development Authority's (CDA) ambitious plan to transform the Capital Hospital into a 500-bed state-of-the-art facility under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model has been mired in controversy. Following a report publishd in destenation potential irregularities, the hospital administration issued a revised advertisement that has raised eyebrows by retracting several key technical requirements.

Dilution of Eligibility Criteria

The most significant point of contention is the sudden removal of experience-based conditions. The original Expression of Interest (EOI) mandated that bidders must have experience in operating at least a 150-bed multi-specialty hospital. However, the revised tender has reportedly scrapped this condition, effectively opening the floor to any investor or capitalist, regardless of their healthcare track record. ?Sources claim this move is aimed at facilitating a "preferred party" that lacks the necessary medical expertise but possesses significant financial and political clout. This has led to a critical question: how can a firm with no clinical background manage a complex 500-bed tertiary care hospital The Asian Development Bank (ADB), which is acting as the official Transaction Adviser for the project, is also facing scrutiny. Experts are questioning how a "non-technical" and diluted advertisement could be approved under the supervision of a global financial institution known for stringent transparency standards. Despite these glaring contradictions, the ADB has remained silent on the revised terms.

?The JCI Certification Paradox

?While the project aims for the prestigious Joint Commission International (JCI) accreditation, insiders reveal that none of the private parties currently favored in the process possess such a certification. This raises concerns that the promise of a "world-class facility" may be a mere facade to justify handing over public assets to private hands.

?Employee Anxiety and Union Silence.

?The project, which involves the redevelopment of 126,000 sq. ft. of prime land near Islamabad's Blue Area, has caused immense anxiety among CDA employees who rely on the hospital for free healthcare. Surprisingly, the CDA's largest labor union, usually vocal against privatization, has maintained a strategic silence, leading to allegations of a possible "behind-the-scenes" settlement.

?Under the proposed deal, the private partner will not only operate the facility but will also receive billions of rupees from the authority for the construction of new blocks. Critics argue that the project is being "tailor-made" to benefit specific individuals, potentially at the cost of the public exchequer and the quality of healthcare for the city's residents.

"SAY NO TO CORRUPTION"
GOVERNMENT OF PAKISTAN
MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS
NATIONAL HIGHWAY AUTHORITY
FINANCE WING (FRANCHISE RIGHTS SECTION)
URAAN PAKISTAN

OPEN BIDDING

REGARDING CONTRACTS FOR OPERATION, MANAGEMENT & MAINTENANCE OF SERVICE AREAS AND REST AREAS AT FOLLOWING SITES ON ADVANCE NET GUARANTEED REVENUE BASIS:

| S#. | SITES | S#. | SITES |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | **Muridwala** Service Area (North Bound) KM-974 **(M-3)** | 2 | **Muridwala** Service Area (South Bound) KM-974 **(M-3)** |
| 3 | **Rohri** Service Area (North Bound) KM-397 **(M-5)** | 4 | **Rohri** Service Area (South Bound) KM-397 **(M-5)** |
| 5 | **Quttub Din Shah** Service Area (North Bound) KM-460 **(M-5)** | 6 | **Quttub Din Shah** Service Area (South Bound) KM-460 **(M-5)** |
| 7 | **Azampur** Service Area (North Bound) KM-528 **(M-5)** | 8 | **Azampur** Service Area (South Bound) KM-528 **(M-5)** |
| 9 | **Zahirpir** Service Area (North Bound) KM-609 **(M-5)** | 10 | **Zahirpir** Service Area (South Bound) KM-609 **(M-5)** |
| 11 | **Uch Sharif** Service Area (North Bound) KM-679 **(M-5)** | 12 | **Uch Sharif** Service Area (South Bound) KM-679 **(M-5)** |
| 13 | **Band** Rest Area (North Bound) KM-495 **(M-5)** | 14 | **Band** Rest Area (South Bound) KM-495 **(M-5)** |
| 15 | **Muhammadpur** Rest Area (North Bound) KM-562 **(M-5)** | 16 | **Muhammadpur** Rest Area (South Bound) KM-562 **(M-5)** |

1. NHA envisages to engage Operation, Management & Maintenance (OM&M) Operator(s) for OM&M contracts of above mentioned Service Areas and Rest Areas on advance net guaranteed revenue basis. The prospective bidder should be on Active Tax payer list.
2. Each Area mentioned-above, will be awarded as a separate contract. The time period of each contract will be **Five (05)** years.
3. On completion of contract period, the operator shall hand over inventory of all the amenities/installations to NHA in a properly maintained and operational condition without any claim to cost of repair/maintenance.
4. The Bidding Documents comprising detailed terms, conditions and scope can be obtained from the office of the Director (FR/HB) NHA-HQ, Islamabad during office hours after **January 13, 2026 (Tuesday)** by depositing Rs. 5,000/- (Non-Refundable) in the form of a pay order in favour of NHA Road Maintenance Account, Islamabad. Bidding Documents can also be downloaded from NHA's website (**www.nha.gov.pk**)
5. In respect of above, a **Pre-Bid Meeting** is scheduled to be held on **January 21, 2026 (Wednesday) at 1130 Hours** in NHA Auditorium, Islamabad.
6. The **Technical Bid(s)**, complete in all respects, is to be submitted on **January 29, 2026 (Thursday) till 1100 Hours** in NHA Auditorium, Islamabad. The **Technical Bids** will be opened and evaluated on the same day. Thereafter, base prices shall be shared and the technically qualified bidders will be called upon to participate in open financial bidding on the same day at **1530 Hours.**
7. Further details can be obtained from the office of Director (FR/HB) NHA-HQ Islamabad during office working hours.
8. NHA reserves the right to reject any or all of the proposals as per PPRA Rules.
9. **All Firms are advised to get EPADS (PPRA) registration at www.eprocure.gov.pk immediately, as Manual Bids (hard copy) will be eliminated in upcoming procurements**
10. This advertisement is also available on PPRA website at **www.ppra.org.pk.**

**GENERAL MANAGER (REV-ROW)**
National Highway Authority
NHA-HQs, 27-Mauve Area, Sector G-9/1, Islamabad
Tel: +92-51-9032907 & Email: adrevenue@nha.gov.pk

محفوظ شاہراہیں محفوظ پاکستان

PID(I)5677/25

## Motorway sections closed as fog blankets parts of Punjab, Sindh, KP

News Desk

LAHORE

Heavy fog in plain areas of Punjab, Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa on night between Thursday and Friday forced closure of several motorway sections after visibility dropped, Dunya News reported.

According to the Motorway Police spokesperson, Motorway M1 from Swabi to Burhan, Motorway M2 from Islamabad to Lilla, Motorway M4 from Shershah to Shamkot, Motorway M5 from Shershah to Rohri and Motorway M14 from Fateh Jang to Kot Bailian have been closed for all kind of traffic.Moreover, dense fog also affected the traffic at the national highways. Due to dense fog, visibility on the Indus Highway from Sehwan to Larkana has dropped to 15 metres at various locations. Visibility on the national highway from Sakrand to Mirpur Mathelo has also been severely affected by fog.

Motorway Police spokesperson said the closures were necessary to protect lives and property amid hazardous weather conditions. Authorities have warned that lane violations during fog can lead to serious accidents, urging drivers to strictly follow lane discipline. Motorists have been advised to use fog lights, reduce speed, and maintain a safe distance from vehicles ahead.

## Police kidnapped lawyer who went to file nomination papers for PP-167 by-election, alleges JI

News Desk

ISLAMABAD

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) has alleged that its lawyer was kidnapped by police in an attempt to prevent the party's candidate from submitting nomination papers for the by-election in Punjab Assembly constituency PP-167. According to Jamaat-e-Islami, the incident occurred on the day nomination papers were to be filed for the PP-167 seat, which fell vacant following the death of Pakistan People's Party (PPP) candidate Irfan Shafi Khokhar. JI's candidate for the seat, Chaudhry Abdul Qayyum Gujjar, was represented by lawyer Ijaz-ul-Hassan Ghauri. JI Lahore Ameer Ziauddin Ansari Advocate claimed that Punjab Police kidnapped Ghauri before he could submit the nomination papers and took him to Mustafa Town Police Station.



## No Extension in Winter Holidays, Punjab Schools to Reopen on January 12: Education Minister

News Desk

LAHORE

Punjab Education Minister Rana Sikandar Hayat has clarified that there will be no extension in the winter holidays for educational institutions across the province, dismissing reports circulating on social media as completely false.The minister said that all schools and colleges will reopen according to the previously announced schedule, with academic activities resuming on January 12. He stressed that the Punjab Education Department has not issued any notification regarding an extension of holidays.Rana Sikandar Hayat further explained that a notification being widely shared on social media, claiming an extension in winter vacations, is fake and has no official backing.



## Collision between ten vehicles on the national highway near Piala Hotel in Rohri's limits

News Desk

Sukkur

Collision between ten vehicles on the national highway near Piala Hotel in Rohri's limits, according to a statement issued by Edhi Information Desk Sukkur, 5 vehicles including 2 trailers, 01 truck and 2 passenger coaches collided on the national highway near Piala Hotel in Rohri's limits, resulting in several people being injured and immediately shifted to the Taluka Hospital by Edhi Ambulance for treatment. According to Edhi sources, the accident occurred due to heavy fog.




## Punjab Launches Green Property Certificate System in Eight Districts to Secure Land Ownership

News Desk

LAHORE

In a major step toward land reform, the Punjab government has introduced the Green Property Certificate system in eight districts as part of its ongoing land reform initiative. The first phase of the project covers Lahore, Sheikhupura, Kasur, Narowal, Mandi Bahauddin, Gujrat and Wazirabad, with plans to extend the system to other districts in later phases.

The Green Property Certificate aims to safeguard citizens' property ownership and curb fraudulent practices in land transactions. Issued directly by the Punjab government, the certificates are designed to ensure authenticity and enhance transparency in property records.

# Advancing Digital Financial Inclusion Through the Offline Payments Innovation Challenge

Business Reporter

KARACHI

As we enter 2026, accelerating digital payments adoption remains a national priority, with intermittent connectivity persisting to be one of the most critical bottlenecks limiting scale and inclusion. While significant progress has been made in recent years, the inability to access stable internet or cellular coverage in many parts of the country continues to limit everyday digital transactions. Digital payments, in particular, remain elusive for millions of users and businesses, specifically in rural, remote, and disaster-affected areas.In response to this challenge, Karandaaz Pakistan convened the final pitch round of the Offline Payments Innovation Challenge, an extensive evaluation process to identify secure and scalable digital payment solutions leveraging Raast for environments with limited or no internet connectivity. The initiative marks a shift from problem recognition to solution development, bringing together innovators and ecosystem players to build practical, locally relevant technologies that can function beyond the constraints of always-on connectivity.The challenge attracted a strong response from across the financial ecosystem, with multiple high-quality and innovative proposals received from startups, fintech, and technology innovators, of which a select few were shortlisted for the pitch round. The participants presented their solutions over two days to a six-member national and international judging panel comprising Ms Layanah Al-Wreikat, Director, JoPacc, Jordan; Ms Sabiha Ahmed, Private Sector Development




Advisor, Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office; Mr Shauzab Ali, Principal Project Officer, Asian Development Bank; Mr Muhammad Imaduddin, Director, Digital Innovation & Settlement Department, State Bank of Pakistan; Dr Zartash Afzal Uzmi, Professor and Lead, Center for Digital Assets Research, LUMS; and Mr Sharjeel Murtaza, Chief Digital Officer, Karandaaz Pakistan. Proposals were assessed against criteria including technical robustness, security and risk controls, regulatory alignment, scalability, market relevance, and long-term sustainability. The solutions demonstrated strong potential to address connectivity challenges and enable secure digital payments in low or no-connectivity environments. The proposals with the highest potential were shortlisted for grant support, alongside technical and regulatory guidance, and opportunities for pilot implementation.Commenting on the initiative, Mr Waqas ul Hasan, Chief Executive Officer, Karandaaz Pakistan, said:"Digital payments in Pakistan cannot assume perfect connectivity, as large parts of the country operate in low- or no-connectivity environments. In line with the national vision for a Cashless Pakistan, led by the Prime Minister, and the broader Digital Pakistan agenda, the Offline Payments Innovation Challenge encourages locally relevant solutions that are secure, scalable, and aligned with the regulatory framework, with the potential to expand access to digital financial services where it is needed most."Looking ahead, initiatives such as the Offline Payments Innovation Challenge lay a sound foundation for addressing key constraints in the digital payments' ecosystem. By addressing the connectivity gap head-on, Karandaaz aims to spur adoption of digital payments leveraging Raast through cutting edge innovation leading to easy to use and affordable payment solutions that work in real-world conditions across the country.

# Gold prices surge by Rs3,400 per tola

■ Gold prices rose on Friday, with global gold climbing by $34 to $4,472/oz. Locally, 24K gold surged by Rs3,400 to Rs469,562/tola, while silver rose by Rs70 to Rs8,195/tola



Staff Reporter

KARACHI

Gold prices have surged in both international and local markets, marking a significant increase on Friday.

In the global bullion market, the price of gold saw a rise of $34 per ounce, bringing the new global price of gold to $4,472 per ounce.

On the local front, the price of 24-karat gold per tola surged by Rs3,400, reaching Rs469,562, while the price of gold per 10 grams increased by Rs2,915, reaching Rs402,573.

In addition to gold, the price of silver also experienced a notable increase. The price of silver per tola increased by Rs70, now standing at Rs8,195, while the price of silver per 10 grams moved up by Rs60, reaching Rs7,025.

# Govt finalises draft of Mobile and Electronics Manufacturing Policy 2026-30

■ The policy outlines the training of an additional 50,000 skilled workers for mobile and electronics manufacturing.

Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The Ministry of Industries and Production has finalized a draft of the Mobile and Electronics Manufacturing Policy 2026–30, aimed at boosting local production.

According to the draft, the government plans to produce up to 50 percent of mobile phone components locally over the next five to eight years. It also targets $700 million in exports of mobile and electronic devices, with the sector's potential estimated at $2 billion. The policy outlines the



training of an additional 50,000 skilled workers for mobile and electronics manufacturing. Laptops, tablets, and point-of-sale devices will be produced using at least 30 percent locally sourced components, which is expected to reduce production costs by up to five percent. The initiative is also projected to generate Rs148 billion in levies during the policy period. Officials from the Ministry of Industries and Production said the policy will be implemented in consultation with all relevant stakeholders. They emphasized that expanding local manufacturing will help attract investment, strengthen the economy, and support the government's broader economic objectives

As part of these objectives, the government aims to achieve 5 to 6 percent economic growth by the end of its term while keeping the IMF program on track. Prime Minister has instructed the Ministry of Finance and the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) to cooperate with the business community to facilitate investment.

# Pakistan Sees 16.5% Remittance Growth Led by Saudi Arabia

■ Workers' remittances to Pakistan rise sharply in December, led by Saudi Arabia, boosting economy, rupee stability, and foreign reserves.



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan received $3.6 billion in overseas workers' remittances in December 2025, showing a strong 17% year-on-year (YoY) growth and a 13 percent increase from the previous month, The State Bank of Pakistan data showed remittances during the first half of fiscal year 2026 reached $19.7 billion, up 11 percent compared to the same period last year.

The remittances growth momentum is continuing on the back of higher manpower exports in previous years, lower differential in formal and informal exchange market, and continuation of the remittances incentive package.

Saudi Arabia remained the top source of remittances in December with inflows of $813 million, up from $771 million in December 2024. This represented a 6% year-on-year increase and 8% month-on-month (MoM) growth.

Transfers from the United Arab Emirates reached $726 million in December, showing a 15% year-on-year (YoY) rise and 8% monthly increase from November's $631 million.

Remittances from the United Kingdom increased to $560 million, a 28% jump compared to last year. The UK continued to show strong growth momentum with a 16 percent month-on-month increase.

Inflows from the United States came in at $302 million, down 6% year on year but up 9% from November's $277 million.

European Union countries sent $499 million in December, marking a strong 39% increase year on year and 20% month on month growth.

Remittances from other GCC countries totaled $333 million, up 7% year on year and 12% from the previous month. Other global sources contributed $356 million, showing 34% year-on-year growth and a 24% monthly increase.

The steady growth in remittances provides crucial support to Pakistan's foreign exchange reserves and helps ease pressure on the current account balance.

Analysts attribute the sustained increase to improved economic conditions, competitive exchange rates in formal channels, and government incentives that have encouraged overseas Pakistanis to use official banking channels.

# SMEDA to host first 'Made in Pakistan' SME cluster expo this month

■ The three-day event will be organised by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) at Expo Center, Lahore

Web Desk

LAHORE

Pakistan will host first 'Made in Pakistan: SME Cluster Showcase Expo 2026' - a landmark exhibition which aims to strengthen the country's micro, small and medium enterprise ecosystem, expand market access and position SME clusters as a competitive pillar of the national economy.

The three-day (Jan 24-26, 2026) event will be organised by the Small and Medium Enterprises Development Authority (SMEDA) at Expo Center, Lahore.

"The expo is envisioned as a multi-year national platform that will evolve over time from product visibility and cluster recognition into structured B2B partnerships, subcontracting



ecosystems, export readiness and global buyer linkages," according to CEO SMEDA Nadia J. Seth.

Last week, Special Assistant to Prime Minister on Industries & Production Haroon Akhtar Khan announced that a historic national-level SME Cluster Expo would be held at Lahore's Expo Center from January 24 to 26 under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's vision to transform SME clusters into an organized, competitive and sustainable pillar of the national economy.

He emphasised that women-led enterprises and micro businesses would be given priority at the event aimed at enhancing market access, value-chain integration and export opportunities for MSMEs.

The CEO SMEDA says Pakistan's SMEs form the backbone of economy and are concentrated in regional and sectoral clusters but most of them, especially women-led businesses and microenterprises, face challenges related to visibility, investment readiness and access to high-value domestic and international markets.The 'cluster showcase' aims to bridge these gaps by providing a platform that will connect SMEs with corporate buyers, policymakers, investors, financial institutions and international stakeholders, she says. She says the inaugural edition will establish Pakistan's first national SME cluster exhibition baseline, promote local products and strengthen competitiveness in line with the vision of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. Over three days, it will combine a national exhibition.



**Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination Dr Musadik Malik chairs a high-level meeting on Environmental Protection of Pakistan**

# Kashmir: A Forgotten Land, a Forgotten People And the Cost of Disunity

**Dr. Ghulam Nabi Fai**

For more than three decades, Kashmir has lived through one of the gravest, yet least acknowledged, human rights crises of our time. Over 150,000 Kashmiris have lost their lives in the past 35 years alone. Between 8,000 and 10,000 people have been forcibly disappeared. More than 2,700 mass graves have been discovered in a single district—Kupwara. These are not contested figures; they are part of a grim and expanding record of suffering.

As Indian novelist Arundhati Roy once observed, nearly 900,000 Indian troops have turned Kashmir into the most militarized zone on earth. The consequences have been devastating: extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, arbitrary detentions, collective punishment, and the systematic silencing of dissent. Over time, the brutality has become so normalized that Kashmiris are increasingly condemned to invisibility—ignored not because the facts are unknown, but because the world has grown weary of acknowledging them. Kashmir has become a forgotten land, its people a forgotten people.



Inside Kashmir, however, these realities are deeply understood. Grassroots leaders such as Mohammad Yasin Malik, Shabir Ahmed Shah, and Masarat Aalam Bhat mobilized the population through peaceful calls to action until they were incarcerated by the Indian state. Their leadership was organic and responsible, and the people responded in the only way left to them—through mass protests, sometimes numbering in the thousands, at other times in the millions. The press reported these events, but often without sustained attention or urgency.

Yet the international record is unmistakable. A European parliamentary delegation famously described Kashmir as "the most beautiful prison on earth." In August 2019, major international newspapers documented a region cut off from the world, calling it a "living hell" of fear and anger, while warning that Indian democracy itself was being hollowed out in silence. In January 2022, genocide scholar Dr. Gregory Stanton testified before the U.S. Congress that there were early warning signs of genocide in Kashmir. International press freedom watchdogs have since reported that journalism in Kashmir is on the brink of extinction.

And still—after 79 years of occupation—we remain waiting, as if for a miracle.

At this critical juncture, the responsibility of the global Kashmiri diaspora cannot be overstated. Real change will not occur without a fundamental shift in how the diaspora organizes, advocates, and presents itself to the world. Fragmentation has been our greatest weakness. What is urgently needed is a united front—one that inspires people on the ground and reassures them that their voices are not diluted by competing narratives abroad. Unity does not require uniformity of opinion; it requires discipline of purpose. A united diaspora leadership would demonstrate that Kashmiris are Kashmiris first—not members of isolated political factions lacking a collective mandate. Only a united leadership can amplify the aspirations of the people and advance the ultimate objective: the right of self-determination.

Kashmiris themselves have never lost faith in that right. They do not need reminders; they need pathways. The role of the diaspora is not to



**By: Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan**

## Middle East: Ideological Contestation, Power Politics, and a New Strategic Balance

On the political chessboard of the Middle East, the struggle between power, ideology, and interest rarely remains confined to diplomatic rhetoric; rather, it directly shapes the nerves of global powers, the fragility of financial systems, and the subtle fabric of international relations. In recent years, the intellectual and strategic gulf that has emerged between two influential Islamic states of the region has highlighted this reality in a new and deeply complex manner. On one side stands a state that has sought to cool regional tensions, manage conflicts, and align its domestic and foreign policy with economic stability and the expansion of investment. On the other side is a country propelled by ideological motivations, expansive geopolitical outreach, and the operational politics of proxy networks a role which many analysts describe as reflecting imperial-style ambitions. These contrasting trajectories are not only fragmenting the new strategic order of the region but also raising serious questions about the balance of the global system.

According to international media and renowned research institutions, the conflicts emerging around Yemen, Sudan, and the Red Sea are no longer localized crises. Their reverberations now extend to foreign investment, global trade routes, energy supply chains, and highly sensitive diplomatic negotiations. Economic experts caution that when two states whose influence stretches from the Gulf to Africa and from the

Middle East into the broader international economy stand opposed in their policy orientations, the outcome is heightened uncertainty in global markets, anxiety within regional alliances, and growing complexity in international diplomacy. On the one hand, a conciliatory and pragmatic approach to defusing conflicts appears to be taking root; on the other, a model of ideological assertiveness and power projection through proxy structures is emerging a model capable of reshaping the balance of power across the region. Political and military analysts argue that the most delicate dimension of this situation lies in the fact that it cannot be reduced to a mere diplomatic coldness between two states. It has evolved into a clash of far broader strategic worldviews. One country, over recent years, has invested in reducing tensions, prioritizing diplomatic engagement, enhancing investment-based partnerships, and safeguarding its economic vision. In contrast, the other has works, and ideologically aligned groups a network that now extends beyond national borders into Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Red Sea corridor. This proxy-driven model not only disrupts military equilibrium but also complicates questions of state sovereignty and regional order.

been weaving a web of influence through non-state militias, parallel security networks, and ideologically aligned groups a network that now extends beyond national borders into Africa, the Eastern Mediterranean, and the Red Sea corridor. This proxy-driven model not only disrupts military equilibrium but also complicates questions of state sovereignty and regional order.

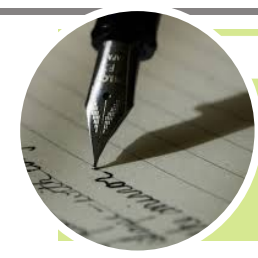
Within American and European policy circles, this scenario has assumed the form of a serious strategic challenge for Washington and global powers alike. Numerous international reports emphasize that if these bilateral divergences continue to deepen, they may disrupt global investment flows, inject uncertainty into financial initiatives, and stall sensitive negotiations at the international level whether related to energy corridors or security cooperation. For this reason, Western decision-makers increasingly view the situation not rategic outreach, and symbolic displays of power. These parallel paths have produced what some global observers describe as the rise of a "new Islamic axis" an axis that appears to be tilting more toward rivalry than partnership, with effects now extending well beyond the region itself.In this light, the real question is not which state is right or wrong; rather, it is where this new contest for power will ultimately lead the future of the region. Should diplomatic engagement recede and proxy confrontation advance to the forefront, the likely outcome would be a state of prolonged instability an imbalance capable

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as a routine regional disagreement, but as a potential threat to the broader balance of global power. History demonstrates that when ideological self-assertion collides with pragmatic statecraft in any region, its consequences rarely remain confined to diplomatic statements. Smaller states, fragile political systems, and economically vulnerable societies are often the first to fall within the blast radius of such confrontations. The same reality is visible today in the conflicts of Yemen and Sudan,

where proxy actors, competing loyalties, and external influences appear to be eroding the authority of state institutions. In this context, many experts regard the situation not merely as regional politics, but as an expression of a new global engineering of power one in which narrative warfare unfolds alongside military and diplomatic strategy with equal intensity.It is also important to recognize that this emerging tension is not moving nomic cooperation, investment-driven integration, regional reconciliation, and state stability; the other is defined by ideological expansion, proxy-based influence, strategic outreach, and symbolic displays of power. These parallel paths have produced what some global observers describe as the rise of a "new Islamic axis" an axis that appears .to be tilting more toward rivalry than partnership, with effects now extending well beyond the region itself.In this light, the real question is not which state is right or wrong; rather, it is where this new contest for power will ultimately lead the future of the region.



**By: Mehr un Nisa**

## Khurram Parvez: The Human Rights Defender India Fears Most

If you follow global human rights issues, you already know that some stories are too important and too uncomfortable for the world to ignore. One such story is that of Khurram Parvez, the Kashmiri human rights defender who has now spent four years in detention under India's sweeping anti-terror laws. And as you read this, I encourage you to ask yourself a simple question: Why would a state with aspirations of global leadership feel threatened by a man armed only with documentation, truth and empathy Let us begin with the date that changed everything once again: 22 November 2021. On that day, India's National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested Khurram under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA), a law notorious for enabling prolonged detention without trial. For many Kashmiris, it felt like déjà vu. Khurram had already been detained before, most notably in 2016, when he was stopped at the airport while heading to Geneva to address the UN Human Rights Council and then held for 76 days under the Public Safety Act (PSA). You might wonder: What makes him such a threat? Khurram is not a militant, not a politician and not a revolutionary calling for violent upheaval. He is, instead, the Coordinator of the Jammu Kashmir Coalition of Civil Society (JKCCS), the Chairperson of the Asian Federation Against Involuntary Disappearances (AFAD) and the Deputy Secretary-General of FIDH, one of the world's oldest human rights federations. He has documented enforced disappearances, extrajudicial killings, torture and mass graves, issues the international community has long raised, but rarely with such meticulous detail. And that detail is exactly what frightens states engaging in counter-narratives.

Khurram's work challenges India's preferred strategic communication framework on Kashmir. In international relations, states rely on soft power, the ability to shape global perceptions through diplomacy, branding and carefully curated narratives. But Khurram's reports, including the widely-cited "Structures of Violence" (2015) and the "Torture Report" (2019), disrupt that narrative by providing verifiable evidence of systemic abuses. Instead of engaging with the findings, the Indian state chose another path: criminalising the documentation process itself.

To understand why Khurram's arrest matters beyond Kashmir, let's place it within the framework of international norms and global governance. In 2023, the UN Working Group on Arbitrary Detention declared his imprisonment arbitrary and called for his "immediate release." The annual UN Secretary-General's Report on Reprisals has repeatedly listed his case since 2018, indicating a sustained campaign of harassment for engaging with UN mechanisms.

You'd think that a country seeking a larger leadership role in the rules-based international order would welcome scrutiny or at least respond constructively. But India did not comply, did not acknowledge the findings and did not provide any meaningful response. That ilence is telling. It reflects a state preference for security exceptionalism, where extraordinary measures become normalised under the pretext of counterterrorism.

But here's the twist: the FIR invoked against Khurram in 2020 did not even name him. And yet, two years later, he was arrested under far-reaching conspiracy charges. JKCCS's published human rights reports were cited as evidence, as though documenting violations is itself a crime. His real contribution lies in his connection to families of the disappeared, mothers, wives and children left in limbo, waiting for answers. Since the 1990s, JKCCS has documented over 8,000 enforced disappearances and thousands of torture cases. This kind of work is emotionally brutal, painstaking and dangerous.



**By: Raja Noor Elahi Atif**

## Chickpea: An Important Cash Crop of Pakistan

Pakistan is an agricultural country, and agriculture holds the status of a backbone in its economy. Among various agricultural commodities, chickpea is an important cash crop that not only helps fulfill the country's food requirements but also serves as an effective source of income for farmers. Chickpea is among those crops in Pakistan that provide higher returns with limited resources; therefore, it is often referred to as the crop of small farmers.Chickpea is widely cultivated in Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, and certain districts of Sindh. One of its major advantages is that it yields well even with low water availability and in relatively dry climatic conditions. In rain-fed areas, chickpea cultivation is an excellent alternative for farmers, as it offers better profits at a lower cost.From a nutritional perspective, chickpea holds great importance. It is a rich source of protein, fiber, minerals, and vitamins, making it highly beneficial for human health. In Pakistan, chickpea is consumed in various forms, including chickpea lentils, roasted chickpeas, chickpea chaat, and several traditional dishes. This is why its demand remains consistently high in local markets.From an economic point of view, chickpea is an excellent cash crop. Its production not only meets domestic needs but can also contribute to earning valuable foreign exchange through exports. By adopting modern agricultural technology, certified seed, and improved farming practices, a significant increase in per-acre yield can be achieved.Moreover, chickpea plays an important role in improving soil fertility. This crop helps fix nitrogen in the soil, enhancing soil health and increasing the productivity of subsequent crops. In this way, chickpea proves beneficial not only for farmers but also for the overall agricultural system.It is the responsibility of the government to promote chickpea cultivation by providing facilities to farmers, including easy loans, quality seed, agricultural inputs, and better access to markets. If chickpea growers receive adequate government support, this crop can play an even stronger role in strengthening the national economy.In conclusion, it can rightly be said that chickpea is an important cash crop of Pakistan with the potential to play a key role in achieving food security, improving farmers' livelihoods, and promoting agricultural development. There is a strong need to recognize the importance of this crop and adopt a comprehensive strategy to enhance both its production and quality.

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A 15-member delegation of the King Abdullah Bin Abdulaziz Command and Staff College, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, during a visit to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, where Additional Secretary (Middle East) Syed Ahmed Maroof briefed them on Pakistan's foreign policy and Pak–Saudi bilateral relations.

# Iran's Supreme Leader urges Trump to address domestic issues

■ President Trump warned that the United States would respond forcefully if Iranian authorities resorted to violence against protesters, saying Washington was watching the situation "very closely"

WEB DESK

TEHRAN



Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei on Friday urged US President Donald Trump to focus on domestic issues in the United States, responding to Trump's recent remarks about closely monitoring developments in Iran.

Earlier, President Trump warned that the United States would respond forcefully if Iranian authorities resorted to violence against protesters, saying Washington was watching the situation "very closely."

Iran was largely cut off from the outside world on Friday after authorities blacked out the internet to curb expanding protests, with phone calls not reaching the country, flights cancelled and online Iranian news sites only intermittently updating.

Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei accused protesters of acting on behalf of US President Donald Trump, saying rioters were attacking public properties and warning that Tehran would not tolerate people acting as "mercenaries for foreigners". The protests that began over soaring inflation in the Islamic Republic late last month have spiralled into the biggest for three years, with unrest reported in every province and rights groups documenting dozens of deaths.

Iran's fragmented external opposition factions called for more protests on Friday with Reza Pahlavi, exiled son of the late ruling shah, telling Iranians in a social media post: "The eyes of the world are upon you. Take to the streets."

Trump, who bombed Iran last summer and who last week warned Tehran it could come to the protesters' aid, said on Friday he would not meet Pahlavi and was "not sure that it would be appropriate" to back him.

The images published by state television overnight showed what it said were burning buses, cars and motorbikes as well as fires at metro stations and banks. It accused the People's Mujahedin Organisation, an opposition faction that splintered off after the 1979 Islamic Revolution and also known as the MKO, of being behind the unrest.

A state television journalist standing in front of the fires on Shariati Street in the Caspian Sea port of Rasht said "this looks like a war zone - all the shops have been destroyed".

Iran has quelled far bigger bouts of unrest before, but it now faces a graver economic situation and intensifying international pressure with global sanctions over its nuclear programme reimposed since September.

# Pakistan and OIC join 22 Muslim nations condemning Israeli visit

■ Muslim states, led by Pakistan and OIC, reject Israel's Somaliland recognition, warning it threatens Somalia's sovereignty and regional stability.

WEB DESK

OIC



Pakistan, along with 22 other Muslim countries and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), on Thursday strongly criticized Israeli Foreign Minister Gideon Saar's recent visit to Somaliland, calling it a breach of Somalia's sovereignty and territorial unity.

Saar traveled to Somaliland's capital, Hargeisa, on January 6, shortly after Israel announced its decision to recognize the region— which has broken away from Somalia— as an independent state. The move sparked widespread backlash across the Muslim world, including from Pakistan, which said the recognition violates the UN Charter and established principles of international law.

Earlier reports by international media had suggested that Israel had engaged with Somaliland regarding the possible resettlement of Palestinians displaced from Gaza. Muslim nations have expressed concern that Israel's recognition of the disputed territory may be linked to plans to relocate Palestinians from Gaza against their will.

According to the joint statement issued by Pakistan's Foreign Office, the visit was described as a "clear infringement of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Federal Republic of Somalia" and a direct challenge to internationally accepted norms and the United Nations Charter.

The joint statement was issued on behalf of 23 Muslim states, including Saudi Arabia, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Egypt, Iraq, Iran, Palestine, Jordan, Kuwait, Türkiye, Oman and others.It reaffirmed support for Somalia's territorial integrity and sovereignty, pointing out that respect for international law and non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states was necessary for regional stability.

# Trump signals possible military action against Mexican drug cartels

■ Trump threatens military action targeting drug cartels after U.S. forces captured Venezuela's Maduro, sparking regional criticism and Mexico's rejection.



WEB DESK

US – Mexico

U.S. President Donald Trump renewed his warnings toward Mexico, suggesting that military action could be taken against the drug cartels he claims are "controlling" the country. Speaking to Fox News host Sean Hannity, the 47th president stated, "We are going to start targeting the cartels on land. These cartels are running Mexico."

These remarks are a reiteration of his military threats against Latin American countries which he made after the U.S. forces conducted Operation Absolute Resolve in Venezuela resulting in the "capture" of Venezuelan President Nicolas Maduro and his wife, Cilia Flores. Mexico has yet to react to the latest threats. After the capture of Maduro, Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum criticised the U.S. actions, stating, "Intervention has never brought democracy, nor has it generated lasting well-being or stability."She added, "We categorically reject intervention in the internal affairs of other countries." The military operation also drew criticism from several other countries such as Russia, China, and Brazil, who slammed the move calling it a blatant violation of international law.

# Israeli strikes kill 11 In Gaza after failed rocket launch

■ Medics said an Israeli airstrike killed at least four people and wounded three others, including children, in a tent in the western area of Khan Younis

WEB DESK

CAIRO/DUBAI



Israeli strikes killed at least 11 Palestinians in separate strikes in the Gaza Strip on Thursday, medics said, in what the military said came in response to a failed rocket attack by militants in the enclave.

Medics said an Israeli airstrike killed at least four people and wounded three others, including children, in a tent in the western area of Khan Younis in the southern Gaza Strip. Another strike killed a person east of the city, near where Israeli forces operate. Later on Thursday, medics said a man was killed in an Israeli strike on a school sheltering displaced families in Jabalia in northern Gaza, while another strike killed a person in a tent near Deir al-Balah in the central Gaza Strip.

Four other people were killed in a separate strike in the Zeitoun neighbourhood of Gaza City.

The Israeli military said it struck several Hamas militants, rocket launch pits and what it described as "terror infrastructure," after a rocket was launched from the area of Gaza City toward Israel. The military said the rocket fell short and landed by a hospital in Gaza and accused Hamas of violating the ceasefire. A source from the Palestinian militant group told Reuters it was checking the allegation.

The ceasefire agreed in October has not progressed beyond the first phase, under which major fighting stopped, Israel withdrew from less than half of Gaza and Hamas released hostages in return for Palestinians detainees and convicted prisoners. Under future phases yet to be hammered out, US President Donald Trump's plan envisages Hamas disarming, Israel pulling out further and an internationally backed administration rebuilding Gaza.But little progress has been made on the next steps. More than 400 Palestinians and three Israeli soldiers have been reported killed since the ceasefire took effect, and nearly all of Gaza's more than 2 million people now live in makeshift homes or damaged buildings in a sliver of territory where Israeli troops have withdrawn and Hamas has reasserted control.




# Turkish Airlines Halts Istanbul-Tehran Flights Amid Iran Protests

■ Flight cancellations from Istanbul highlight how Iran's ongoing protests and economic crisis are disrupting travel, safety, and daily regional connections.

WEB DESK

Istanbul Airport

Flight cancellations, confirmed through the Istanbul Airport mobile app, come as unrest in Iran enters its second week. Protests erupted after sharp increases in the prices of basic goods, combined with the rapid fall of the Iranian rial, putting heavy pressure on everyday life for millions.Authorities in Iran have responded by imposing an almost complete internet shutdown, making it difficult to verify information from inside the country. State media has reported clashes in several cities, blaming the violence on what it described as "terrorist agents" seeking to destabilize the situation.Human rights groups, however, paint a grim picture. According to independent monitors, at least 36 people have been killed and more than 2,000 arrested since the demonstrations began in late December. Families of detainees remain largely in the dark due to communication restrictions.

The unrest has also started to affect regional travel. Five flights operated by Iranian airlines from Istanbul were canceled, adding to broader disruptions. Airport officials said the decision was taken as a safety precaution, especially ahead of large post-prayer gatherings expected in Iran.Together, the protests, security measures, and travel disruptions highlight how the crisis is spreading beyond Iran's borders, impacting daily life, regional connectivity, and international travel plans.



Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan Meets Chester King CEO British eSports Association

# Zoya Nasir's 'Kamariya' Saboor Aly turns heads in regal green

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

Saboor Aly is once again in the spotlight, this time for a striking fashion moment that has drawn a playful and appreciative response from fellow actor Zoya Nasir.The actress recently shared an Instagram carousel that showcases her in an elegant traditional ensemble, and Zoya's "Kamariyaa" shoutout has added a fun, filmi note to the moment, making it a quiet but buzzworthy update in entertainment circles.

In the image, Saboor is seen standing gracefully beneath a softly curved archway inside a



tastefully decorated indoor space. She is dressed in a rich teal-green lehenga set that immediately commands attention without feeling overwhelming.

The outfit features a fitted, short-sleeved blouse intricately embroidered with detailed patterns in complementary tones, highlighting fine craftsmanship.

The blouse sits neatly at her waist, paired with a flowing lehenga skirt that cascades to the floor with a smooth, structured fall.

The skirt is embellished with delicate motifs scattered evenly across the fabric, finished with a heavier embroidered border that adds depth and balance.

Saboor's dupatta, draped loosely over one arm, mirrors the lehenga's color palette and detailing.

It falls effortlessly, adding movement and softness to the frame. Her posture is relaxed yet poised, with one arm resting against the arch and the other lifted gently towards her hair, creating a composed and confident silhouette.

# Remembering Sultan Rahi: 30 years since iconic Punjabi actor passed away

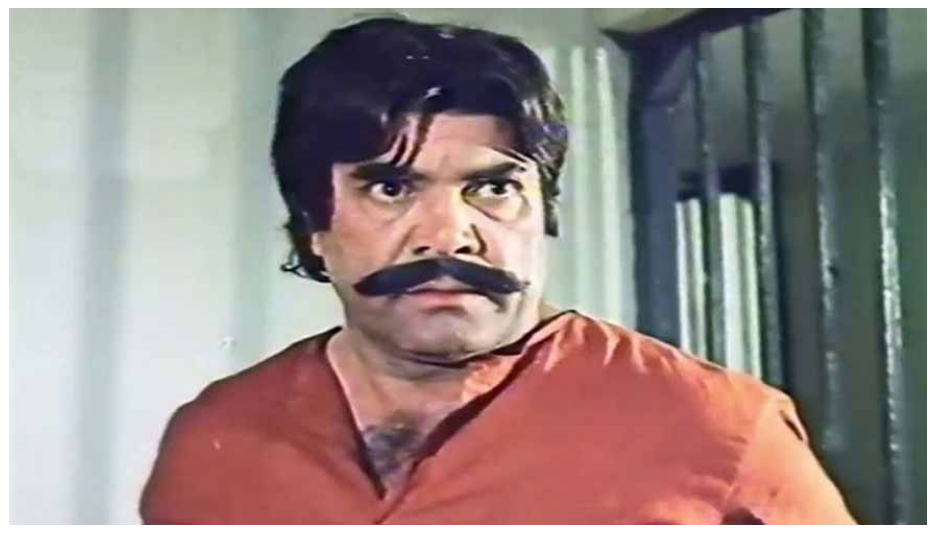
SHOWBIZ DESK

LAHORE

It has been 30 years since the legendary actor Sultan Rahi, known as the voice of rural youth and the "King of Art," passed away, leaving an indelible mark on Pakistani cinema.

Sultan Rahi was a prominent hero of Punjabi films in the 1980s and 1990s, appearing in over 700 films, including 500 as the lead actor, earning a spot in the Guinness World Records. He began his career with a minor role in the film Baghi, but the success of the Punjabi movie Bashira catapulted him to superstardom. His pairing with Mustafa Qureshi became synonymous with box-office hits, and the blockbuster Maula Jatt set new records in the industry.

Some of his other iconic films include Babul, Sadha Rasta, Sharif Badmaash, Salla Sahib, Chann Wariam, Athra Putar, Putar Jage Da, Milega Zulm Da Badla, Wahshi Jatt, Sher Khan, Sholay, Aakhri Jung, Jarnail Singh, Do Beghay Zameen, and Sheran De Putar. His talent earned him over 150 film awards, and he shared the screen with top actresses of his era, including Asia, Anjuman,



Saima, Gori, Neeli, and Babra Sharif.

Sultan Rahi was also deeply religious, performing five daily prayers and observing fasts during Ramadan. He used his personal wealth to build mosques and support orphaned girls' marriages, and once personally reopened and cleaned a locked mosque during a film shoot. He even released CDs of Quranic recitation and naats, which gained wide acclaim.



# Namaste Wahala: Filmmaker Hamisha Daryani Ahuja bridges Bollywood and

■ Varanasi is Babu's first collaboration with Rajamouli. The first look shows him as a fierce warrior covered in blood and riding a white bull with a trident in hand.

WEB DESK

LAHORE

Indian-Nigerian filmmaker Hamisha Daryani Ahuja has emerged as a key cultural bridge between Bollywood and Nollywood with her breakout film Namaste Wahala, a project that brought together the world's two largest film industries for the first time in a mainstream collaboration.

The title of the film itself reflects the fusion of cultures. "Namaste," a greeting closely associated with Indian tradition and yoga, paired with "wahala," a Nigerian pidgin word for trouble that has gained global recognition through Afrobeats, symbolises the shared influence of Indian and Nigerian cultures on the English language.

Despite the global reach and influence of both industries, Bollywood and Nollywood had long remained separate. Ahuja, however, questioned this divide.

"Nollywood has grown up on Bollywood," said the Mumbai-born, Lagos-raised filmmaker, pointing to the enduring popularity of Indian films in Nigeria. "How come they never came together?"

Released on Netflix during the COVID-19 pandemic, Namaste Wahala became a global hit and marked a turning point in cross-cultural storytelling. Its success was later acknowledged at the highest level, with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi mentioning the film during his visit to Nigeria in late 2024.

Building on that momentum, Ahuja has revealed that another Namaste Wahala film is currently in development, further strengthening ties between the two entertainment powerhouses.

Since her debut in 2020, Ahuja has expanded her collaboration with Netflix, creating the series Postcards and preparing to premiere her upcoming project, Simi and Friends, later this year.

With no formal training in filmmaking, Ahuja described Namaste Wahala as her personal "schooling" in cinema. Shot entirely in Lagos, the romantic comedy follows an Indian investment banker who falls in love with a Nigerian lawyer, exploring cultural differences, family resistance, and identity. The film features a rich blend of languages, with characters switching between English, Pidgin, and Hindi.



# 'Besties' Hania Aamir and Aena Khan dazzle in a BTS shoot

SHOWBIZ DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pakistani screen favourite Hania Aamir recently shared a lively behind-the-scenes look at her latest work with Sunsilk, and it features close friend and fellow actor Aena Khan. The Instagram post presents multiple video snippets from the Sunsilk shoot, offering a candid glimpse into the atmosphere and personalities on set.

In the clips Hania appears in a simple yet striking outfit.

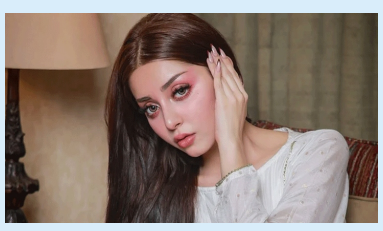
She wears a plain pink bodycon dress with fluttery half-sleeves that move as she shifts from pose to pose. In different moments she's shown posing for the camera, pouting thoughtfully, and even confidently walking through the set like it's her own runway. These short segments give a sense of both focus and ease, demonstrating how she engages with the camera and the team around her.

Alongside Hania, Aena Khan brings her own charm to the footage.

Dressed in a vibrant yellow coat and matching trousers, she shares multiple scenes of laughter and easy conversation with Hania Aamir.

In several BTS moments the two are seen giggling together with the Sunsilk crew, creating an atmosphere that feels collaborative and relaxed.

# Alizeh Shah teases fresh drama project as script reveal sparks



WEB DESK

LAHORE

Alizeh Shah has once again caught public attention, this time by subtly hinting at an upcoming project through a revealing Instagram story. The actress shared a black-and-white image of what appears to be a drama script cover, offering a quiet yet telling glimpse into her professional plans amid ongoing industry debates. The screenshot is posted from Alizeh Shah's verified Instagram account and shows a neatly laid-out script page photographed at a slight angle.The page is bordered with a simple patterned frame, giving it a formal, production-ready appearance. At the top, the heading reads the central title "Dil E Bekaraar," suggesting either the drama's main name.Below the title, the format becomes more technical. There are small boxed labels indicating "Episode 13" and "Drama Serial," clearly positioning the script within an episodic television project.

# UAE begins recall of infant formula of famous brand over safety issue

■ At least 37 countries have issued health warnings due to possible contamination

HEATH DESK

ISLAMABAD

The United Arab Emirates has begun recalling infant formula of a well-known brand in view of global food safety concerns. According to Arab media, the recall order was issued late Wednesday night in a statement by the Emirates Drug Establishment (EDE), which clarified that the move is voluntary and precautionary in nature.

According to the EDE, the products being recalled include five infant formula products for newborns from the internationally renowned brand.

It is noteworthy that trace amounts of a bacterium called Bacillus cereus were found in one of the raw materials used in the formula. This bacterium can, in certain



cases, produce a toxin known as cereulide, which may pose a risk to infants' health.

It is also worth noting that the company had earlier recalled certain batches of its products in Europe. Subsequently, similar recalls were carried out in Africa, Asia, and the United States.

At least 37 countries, including Australia, Brazil, China, Mexico, and South Africa, have issued health warnings due to possible contamination.

In the Gulf region as well, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Qatar have announced bans on the sale of this brand's infant formula.

# Ethiopia confirms outbreak of deadly Marburg virus

■ Last year, Rwanda trialled an experimental vaccine from the US-based Sabin Vaccine Institute.

HEALTH DESK

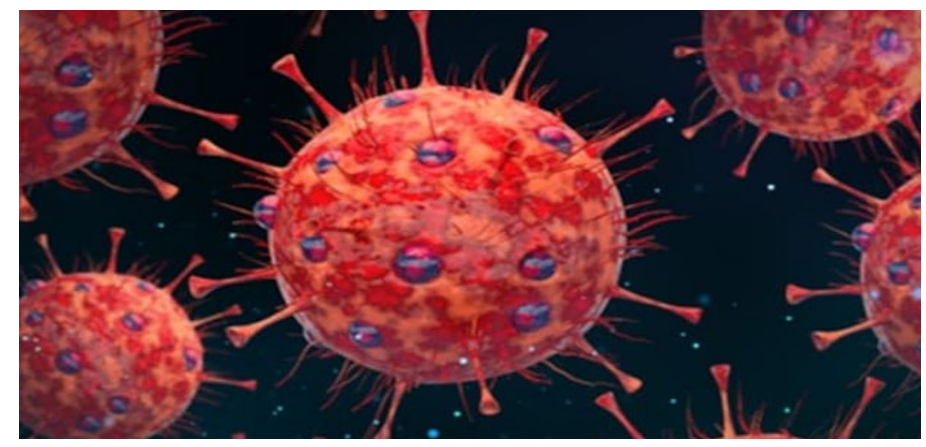
NAIROBI, Kenya

Ethiopia has confirmed an outbreak of the deadly Marburg virus in the south of the country, the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) said on Saturday. The Marburg virus is one of the deadliest known pathogens. Like Ebola, it causes severe bleeding, fever, vomiting and diarrhoea and has a 21-day incubation period. Also like Ebola, it is transmitted via contact with bodily fluids and has a fatality rate of between 25 and 80 percent.

The head of the World Health Organization, Ethiopia's Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, confirmed on Friday that at least nine cases had been detected in southern Ethiopia, two days after Africa CDC was alerted to a suspected haemorrhagic virus in the region.

"Marburg virus disease (MVD) has been confirmed by the National Reference Laboratory (in Ethiopia)," Africa CDC said.

"Further epidemiological investigations and laboratory analyses are underway and the virus strain detected shows similarities to



those previously identified in East Africa."

It said Ethiopian health authorities had acted swiftly to confirm and contain the outbreak in the Jinka area. It said it would work with Ethiopia to ensure an effective response and to reduce the risk of the virus spreading to other parts of east Africa.

An epidemic of Marburg virus killed 10 people in Tanzania in January before being terminated in March.

Rwanda said in December 2024 it had managed to stamp out its first known Marburg epidemic, which caused 15 deaths.

There is no approved vaccine or antiviral treatment for the Marburg virus, but oral or intravenous rehydration and treatment of specific symptoms increases patients' chances of survival.

# Pakistan-Sri Lanka second T20I abandoned due to rain

- Green Shirts lead three-match T20I series 1-0



Staff Reporter

ISLAMABAD

The second game of the three-match T20I series between Pakistan and Sri Lanka has been abandoned due to relentless rain on Friday at the Rangiri Dambulla International Stadium.

The weather caused repeated interruptions, preventing the toss from taking place and leaving no possibility for the match to proceed. Both teams will now turn their focus to the final encounter of the series.

The green shirts currently lead the series 1-0 after winning the opener at the same venue on Wednesday. In that match, the visitors successfully chased a modest target of 129, winning by six wickets with 20 balls to spare.

The third and final match of the series is scheduled to take place at the same venue on Sunday.

Pakistan got off to a strong start as openers Farhan and Saim Ayub put together a 59-run partnership until Ayub was dismissed by Maheesh Theekshana on the penultimate delivery of the batting powerplay.

Ayub scored 24 off 18 balls, including three fours and a six.

Farhan then added 25 runs for the second wicket with captain Salman Ali Agha before both batters fell in successive overs, leaving Pakistan at 101/3.

Farhan finished as the top-scorer with a quickfire 51 off 36 deliveries, featuring four fours and two sixes, while Agha contributed 16 off 11 balls, with two fours.

Pakistan lost another wicket when Fakhar Zaman was stumped off Dhananjaya de Silva in the 14th over after scoring five off 10 balls.

With 23 runs still needed, Usman Khan and Shadab Khan steadied the chase, putting together a match-winning partnership and guiding Pakistan to victory in the 17th over. Shadab remained unbeaten on 18 off 12 balls, while Usman finished 7 not out. For Sri Lanka, Wanindu Hasaranga, Dushmantha Chameera, Theekshana and de Silva each claimed a wicket.

Earlier, Pakistan captain Agha's decision to field first proved effective as his bowlers skittled the home side for 128 in 19.2 overs. Sri Lanka's innings started poorly, losing both openers—Kamil Mishara (0) and Pathum Nissanka—inside the powerplay with just 15 runs on the board.

Kusal Mendis (14) and Dhananjaya de Silva (10) attempted to stabilise the innings, putting on 22 runs for the third wicket before falling in quick succession, leaving Sri Lanka at 38/4 in 6.5 overs.

Janith Liyanage then anchored the middle order, scoring 40 off 31 balls, including two fours and a six, before being dismissed by Abrar Ahmed in the 18th over.

Left-arm pacer Salman Mirza added further damage, dismissing captain Dasun Shanaka (12) and tailender Chameera (0) in the penultimate over.

Mohammad Wasim Jr wrapped up the innings by catching Maheesh Theekshana off his bowling on the second ball of the final over.

Abrar Ahmed and Salman Mirza led Pakistan's bowling attack with three wickets each, while Shadab Khan and Mohammad Wasim Jr claimed two wickets apiece.

# 6th edition of 'Run Karachi' Marathon on Jan 25



STAFF REORTER

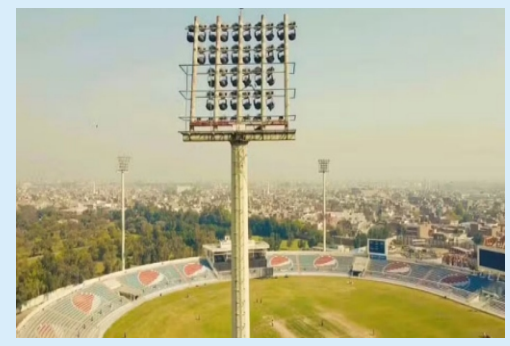
KARACHI

Commissioner Karachi, Syed Hassan Naqvi, has officially announced the schedule for the "10km Run Karachi" race, which will take place on January 25.

To ensure the seamless ex-ecution of the 6th Commissioner Karachi marathon, the Commissioner has constituted a high-powered organizing committee.

DIGP Traffic, Pir Muhammad Shah, has been appointed as the Chairman of the committee, while several key administrative and sports figures include Syed Ghulam Mehdi Shah (Additional Com-missioner), Abdul Nabi Bhutto (DDO), Hazim Bangwar (AC General,) and Ghulam Muham-mad Khan (Director Sports).

The announcement followed a high-level consultative meet-ing chaired by the Commis-sioner. The session was attend-ed by the committee members alongside DC Keamari, Raja Tariq Hussain Chandio, DC South, Javed Nabi Khoso, and PRO Abdul Sattar Javed.



# BN Polo and Master Paints reach main final of 6th Allama Iqbal Polo

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

BN Polo and Master Paints have qualified for the main final of the 6th Allama Iqbal Polo Cup 2025/26. The tournament, sponsored by Master Paints in the loving memory of late Sufi Haris, saw two high-octane semifinals on a cold Friday, attended by a large number of polo enthusiasts and families. In the first semifinal, BN Polo edged out favourites FG/Din in a nail-biting encounter with a final score of 7-6.5. Hamza Mawaz Khan was the star for BN Polo, firing in five fabulous goals, while Saim Abbas and Babar Naseem added one goal each. For FG/Din, who started with a half goal handicap advantage, Mekayial Sami fought valiantly with four goals, supported by one goal each from Sheikh Muhammad Farhad and Saqib Khan Khakwani.

The match began with FG/Din holding a 0.5-goal handicap advantage. The first chukka was a high-scoring affair as BN Polo immediately went on the offensive; Hamza Mawaz showcased his prowess by converting a 30-yard penalty and a 40-yard penalty, followed by a field goal. FG/Din stayed within striking distance through Mekayial Sami, who successfully converted both a spot penalty and a 30-yard penalty, leaving the score at 3–2.5 in favour of BN Polo.



In the second chukka, BN Polo extended their lead as Hamza Mawaz hammered in a spectacular 60-yard penalty. While Sheikh Muhammad Farhad pulled one back for FG/Din with a field goal, Babar Naseem responded with a field goal of his own to keep BN Polo ahead at 5–3.5. The third chukka saw a spirited comeback from FG/Din, who momentarily snatched the lead. Despite an early field goal by BN Polo's Saim Abbas, FG/Din dominated the rest of the period with Mekayial Sami converting two more 30-yard penalties and Saqib Khakwani adding a field goal. This surge placed FG/Din ahead by a narrow margin of 6–6.5 heading into the final chukker.

With the match on the line in the fourth chukka, both defences tightened, but it was the hero of the day, Hamza Mawaz, who proved decisive. Under immense pressure, he converted a 30-yard penalty to reclaim the lead for BN Polo. The match concluded at 7–6.5, securing BN Polo's place in the main final. The match was officiated by umpires Nicanor Bruz and Marcos Rivarola. The second semifinal was equally intense, as Master Paints defeated Diamond Paints 8-7 in a last-minute thriller. Amirreza Behboudi led the charge for Master Paints with four goals, complemented by two from Ch Fateh Mehmood, and one each by M. Ali Malik and Sufi M. Haroon. Diamond Paints' Raja Jalal Arslan showcased exceptional skill with five goals, while Mir Huzaifa Ahmed and Raja Temur Nadeem chipped in with one goal apiece.

# Omar Associates, Y.J. Sports Secure Second Straight Wins

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Omar Associates and Y.J. Sports continued their winning momentum in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament, securing their second consecutive victories on Wednesday. At the KCCA Stadium, a magnificent unbeaten 98 by Arbaz Khan powered Omar Associates to a commanding nine-wicket win over Pakistan Stallions. Earlier, disciplined bowling led by Waleed Ahmed helped restrict the opposition.In the second fixture at Agha Khan Gymkhana Ground, Y.J. Sports outclassed Pak Saudi International by seven wickets, thanks to a strong bowling display and a composed chase. The tournament is jointly organized by the Regional Cricket Association Karachi in collaboration with Wing 999 Sports

# Pakistan set for historic debut in UEFA Football Tournament 2026

- The UEFA Football Development Tournament is seen as an essential platform for young players to gain valuable experience and enhance their skills.



SPORTS REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

In a major milestone, Pakistan will participate in the prestigious UEFA Football Development Tournament for the first time.

The announcement was made by Mohsin Gilani, President of the Pakistan Football Federation (PFF), who hailed the development as a major achievement for football in Pakistan.

Pakistan's Under-16 football team will be competing in the tournament, which will be held in Kazakhstan from April 24 to 30.This event marks a historic moment for the country's footballing journey, as it will face off against teams from football-powerhouse nations, including Kazakhstan, Russia, and Azerbaijan.

Gilani emphasized that this participation offers young Pakistani footballers a unique opportunity to learn from international standards, providing them with exposure to top-level competition.

He stated that youth development has been a top priority for the PFF, and participation in such global events will help nurture and shape future football talent in the country.

# Pakistani sports giant Forward Sports plans Saudi expansion

- Forward Sports, Pakistan's top football manufacturer, plans Saudi Arabia headquarters as trade ties and World Cup demand grow rapidly.

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD



Forward Sports, a leading Pakistani sports goods manufacturer, is preparing to establish its headquarters in Saudi Arabia, according to the Kingdom's embassy on Thursday. Based in Sialkot, Pakistan, the company is renowned for producing high-quality footballs and exporting them worldwide. It manufactures Adidas' official World Cup match balls and has recently overtaken a Chinese competitor to become the German brand's largest football supplier.

In November, Pakistan's Finance Minister told Arab News that Forward Sports' officials met with Saudi representatives during the Future Investment Initiative summit in Riyadh in October. The discussions focused on a model where precise manufacturing remains in Pakistan, while finishing, packaging, and regional distribution would be handled in Saudi Arabia, aligning with the Kingdom's industrial localization strategy.

"In the context of strengthening trade relations between the two friendly countries, the ambassador of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques to Pakistan, Nawaf bin Said Al-Malki, met representatives of Forward Sports Industries to discuss preparations for opening the company's headquarters in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia," the Saudi embassy in Pakistan said.

The collaboration in manufacturing footballs takes place as Saudi Arabia gears up to host the 2034 FIFA World Cup, which is driving demand for sports-related goods in the Kingdom. Saudi businessmen have previously eyed collaboration with Pakistan, especially when it comes to importing sports goods and surgical instruments from the country.A Saudi business delegation in 2022 visited the manufacturing units of Forward Sports, Elmed Instruments (Pvt) Limited and Hilbro International (Pvt) Limited companies, all located in Sialkot, to assess the quality of sports and surgical instruments there.The development takes place as Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directs his government to increase its focus on enhancing exports. Islamabad has sought to escape a prolonged economic crisis over the past few years, seeing increased exports and foreign investment as key drivers of sustainable economic growth.



A young boy rides a donkey carrying a load of fodder

# Lahore Bar Association annual elections to be held tomorrow

■ According to election officials, polling will be conducted on eight seats, with a total of 27 candidates contesting

Staff Reporter
LAHORE

The annual elections of the Lahore Bar Association (LBA), the largest bar association in Asia, will be held tomorrow with biometric voting arrangements in place.

According to election officials, polling will be conducted on eight seats, with a total of 27 candidates contesting. A total of 15,851 registered voters are eligible to cast their votes, and 11 polling booths have been set up to facilitate the electoral process. Three candidates are contesting for the coveted post of President, including Adeeb Aslam Bhunder, Shahid Jamal Butt, and Irfan Hayat Bajwa.



For the Vice President seat, five candidates are in the race: Chaudhry M. Mushtaq, Hafiz Mushtaq Naeemi, Sheikh Kashif Ali, Mian Tahir Munir, and Humayun Zaheer Bhatti.

The Vice President Model are Town seat will see a contest between Asif Kanwal Khan, M. Naveed Hanif Kamboh, and Kashif Siddiq Gujar, while Zahid Mahmood Gul and Imran Olakh are contesting for the Vice President Cantt seat.

Four candidates are competing for the position of Secretary, including Chaudhry Afnan Munwar, Rizwan Arshad Bobak, Shoaib Ashraf Bhatti, and Malik Fahad Nisar Khokhar.

For the post of Joint Secretary, Asad Abbas, Samina Basra, and Salman

# Punjab freezes 680 TLP leaders assets, IDs; blocks 740 vehicles

● Govt's move targets movable and immovable assets of Fourth-Schedule leaders of banned TLP: Vehicles cannot be transferred or used for new registrations

SPECIAL REPORTER
ISLAMABAD







The Punjab Excise Department has blocked more than 740 vehicles belonging to 680 leaders placed on the Fourth Schedule of the banned organisation, Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP), following directives issued by the Punjab Home Department.

The Excise Department's officials confirmed that the move is part of a broader crackdown aimed at restricting both movable and immovable assets of individuals deemed a security risk.

the Home Department had shared detailed lists seeking the blocking of properties associated with Fourth Schedulers.

In response, the Excise Department blocked all identified vehicles linked with the provided 680 national identity card numbers of the TLP leaders.

Excise Department officers said the affected vehicles can neither be transferred nor used to register any new ownership under the same National ID cards.

Excise sources added that complete lists of the blocked vehicles had been dispatched back to the Home Department, while all Excise and Taxation Officers across the province were also notified to ensure implementation on the ground.



# Sindh Allows PTI Rally at Bagh-e-Jinnah

■ Government says political gatherings will be allowed under strict legal compliance.

Staff Reporter
Karachi

The Sindh government has approved Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf's request to hold a political rally at Bagh-e-Jinnah, underscoring its stance on upholding democratic values while ensuring compliance with the law. Sindh Local Government Minister Nasir Hussain Shah confirmed that PTI formally sought permission for the gathering, which is being granted. He said consultations with PTI leaders are underway to finalize logistical and security arrangements. Shah further stated that PTI would be allowed to organize rallies across Karachi, provided all activities remain within legal boundaries.

The minister emphasized that the peaceful struggle of any political party, including the PTI, cannot be stopped in a democratic society. However, he warned that violations of the law could create problems, stressing that there is no ban on the rally but legal compliance is essential.

He also confirmed that the PTI has applied separately to hold rallies in Korangi and Karachi South, which are also under consideration.

Shah stated that the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa chief minister is free to carry out political activities in Sindh and can also hold a rally. He saidAfridi would be warmly welcomed in Sindh in line with democratic traditions.

Sohail Afridi arrived in Karachi, where his flight landed at Jinnah International Airport. He was welcomed by Sindh Minister for Labour and Manpower Saeed Ghani, who presented him and other guests with Sindhi caps and Ajrak.

Several PTI leaders, including Salman Akram Raja, Shaukat Basra, and Haleem Adil Sheikh, were also present at the airport, along with KP government spokesperson Shafi Jan and Provincial Minister Meena Afridi. The arrival was marred by an altercation when PTI workers who had gathered to welcome the KP chief minister fought among themselves at the airport premises. Witnesses said workers kicked each other before people present at the scene intervened to restore calm.

# Punjab to Launch Satellite-Based High-Speed Broadband Services

■ Satellite-based internet to connect remote schools and hospitals.

Staff Reporter
ISLAMABAD



On the directions of Chief Minister Punjab, Ms. Maryam Nawaz Sharif, a high-level meeting was held at the Chief Minister's Office under the chairmanship of Senior Adviser to the Chief Minister, Senator Anusha Rehman, to review plans for providing high-speed broadband services to the people of Punjab.

During the meeting, detailed consultations were held on the provision of ultra-fast broadband connectivity to citizens across Punjab through satellite technology. The meeting was attended by Major General (R) Ali Farhan, Managing Director NTC; Mr. Muhammad Usman Sadiq, Director General Technical SUPARCO; Secretary Information Technology Punjab, and other relevant officials.

It was decided that, in line with the directions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif, all modern technological options—including satellite beam technology—will be utilized to ensure reliable broadband services in remote educational institutions and hospitals across the province. Pakistan possesses its own advanced satellite technology, and it is essential to fully leverage this national capability.

Punjab will become the first province in Pakistan where citizens will benefit from broadband services through Pakistan's own satellite. The Chief Minister Punjab is utilizing all available resources to fulfill her commitment to empowering skilled youth through the use of high-speed technology and by providing dignified employment opportunities.

SUPARCO and NTC presented a joint proposal to Senior Adviser Senator Anusha Rehman, under which satellite-based broadband services will be extended to remote areas of Punjab in accordance with the vision of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif. For this purpose, SUPARCO and NTC will establish two demonstration stations in North and South Punjab within the next two weeks. Following successful testing, satellite-based broadband services will be rolled out in remote areas of Punjab within the next six months.

# Punjab Speaker Meets US Business Delegation on Trade

■ Business leaders discuss expanding trade ties And investment cooperation.



ASIF IQBAL
LAHORE

A high-level delegation of American businessmen called on Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, in the Punjab Assembly Chamber. Prominent personalities from the business communities of Pakistan and the United States participated in the meeting. On this occasion, a detailed exchange of views was held regarding further strengthening Pak–US trade relations.

Special emphasis was laid on the promotion of business-to-business linkages and effective coordination.

Speaker of the Punjab Assembly, Malik Muhammad Ahmad Khan, stated that Pakistan and the United States are fully committed to the promotion of trade cooperation. He further stated that both countries are prepared to take their bilateral relations to new heights.

Bringing Madaris into the National Mainstream Is a State Responsibility: Punjab Speaker Says

The Speaker emphasized that the immediate resolution of the issues faced by the business communities of Pakistan and the United States is indispensable. He stated that Pak–US relations are based on mutual trust and strategic partnership. The Speaker of the Punjab Assembly stated that the Pakistani-American community is playing the role of a strong bridge between the two countries.

On this occasion, Mohsin Ranjha, David Scott, Dana Lloyd and William Paul, Christina Jane, Michael Berkeley, Dr. Rubina and Ashrah Mal, Secretary General Chaudhry Amer Habib, and Principal Secretary Amad Hussain Bhalli were also present in the meeting.



Street vendors display sweet potatoes to attract customers along Jail Road

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