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Pakistan invited to participate in upcoming US-Iran talks: FO

NEWS DESK:

Pakistan has been invited to participate in the Iran-US talks aimed at de-escalation of tensions between Tehran and Washington, the Foreign Office (FO) confirmed on Tuesday.

"Pakistan has received the invitation for the upcoming talks between Iran and the United States," FO Spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said while responding to a query. "Pakistan's participation is seen as crucial to defusing tensions, as Islamabad has been quietly working to facilitate the talks," a diplomatic source told Dawn.

The diplomatic source added that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar is expected to participate in the meeting. The meeting is likely to take place in Turkey on Friday, an Arab official told AFP on condition of anonymity to discuss the sensitive matter.

US outlet Axios cited two unnamed sources and a US official as saying Iranian Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi was expected to meet with US envoy Steve Witkoff in Istanbul to discuss a possible deal on the nuclear issue. The priority of the talks is to avoid any conflict and de-escalate tensions between the

two sides, a regional official told Reuters, adding that some regional powers were also invited.

The official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said some of the countries invited to the talks at the foreign ministers' level included Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Egypt, Oman and the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

The person said the format of the meetings remained unclear, but that the "main meeting" would be on Friday and that it was important to start dialogue between the parties to avoid further escalation. Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian confirmed on Tuesday that he has instructed

FM Araghchi to pursue "fair and equitable negotiations" provided that an environment "free from threats and unreasonable expectations." The talks will be held "within the framework of our national interests," he said in a series of posts on X. Trump has maintained he is hopeful that Washington will "work something out" with Iran, but also warned on Monday that "bad things would happen" if no deal is reached. In an interview with CNN on Sunday, Araghchi said: "President Trump said no nuclear weapons, and we fully agree. We fully agree with that. That could be a very good deal." He added,

"In return, we expect sanctions lifting." However, Araghchi said Tehran was ready for war if talks fail and warned that a conflict would likely spiral beyond Iran, CNN added. Turkey has led a diplomatic push to defuse tensions, with FM Araghchi visiting Istanbul last week and speaking with other regional counterparts including in Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. Saudi Arabia and the UAE have assured Tehran that they would not allow their airspace or territory to be used for military action against Iran, while Jordan has also said it would not act as a "launching pad" for any such action.

Imran was taken to PIMS on own request, Azam Nazeer Tarar tells Senate

NEWS DESK:

Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar informed the Senate on Tuesday that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS) upon his own request.

PIMS previously confirmed that Imran was brought to the hospital, where, after his consent was obtained, he was administered an anti-VEGF intravitreal injection to treat a right central retinal vein occlusion.

The PTI rejected the PIMS report on Imran's eye treatment, demanding that he be treated at Shaukat Khanum Hospital and that his family be allowed to meet him.

Speaking in the Senate today, the law minister termed PIMS Islamabad's leading public-sector tertiary hospital, and said that a medical board had examined Imran, administered the required injection and noted positive progress.

Tarar stated that the former premier reportedly asked to be taken in the evening if there were any potential issues related to law and order.

"The PTI founder faced one specific issue," Tarar said, adding that Imran personally requested that the injection be administered to him at PIMS.

Stating that Imran's health was "completely fine" and that his procedure was successful, Tarar said that there was no further issue concerning the former premier.

He also stated that the diagnosis and treatment details had been officially shared through a press briefing by the executive director of PIMS.

Tarar assured the Senate that if any further medical need arose, all facilities would be provided as per the law.

He said the federal government fully respected human rights and had never issued any directive to deny medical treatment to any prisoner.

However, the law minister stressed that any further relief regarding medical care, meetings or prison conditions must be sought through the Islamabad High Court, which was the competent appellate forum in the matter.

Further, the minister stated that Imran was a convicted prisoner in corruption cases and was being provided all medical and legal facilities in accordance with the law and prison rules.

Pakistan, Azerbaijan naval chiefs pledge to strengthen bilateral defence ties: ISPR

NEWS DESK:

The naval chiefs of Pakistan and Azerbaijan have pledged to strengthen their existing bilateral defence relationship, the military's media wing said on Tuesday. Islamabad and Baku maintain robust defence cooperation.

In 2024, Azer-bai-jan signed a massive \$1.6 billion deal with Pakistan to acquire JF-17 Block III fighter jets, developed by Pakistan Aeronautical Complex and China's Chengdu Aircraft Industry Group.

According to a press release issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), Chief of Naval Staff Admiral Naveed Ashraf met with Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces (ANF).

Rear Admiral Shahin Mammadov, at the Naval Headquarters in Islamabad today, where the two leaders "pledged to further strengthen and diversify the scope of [the] existing bilateral defence relationship".

Balochistan Launches Province-Wide Polio Drive to Protect Over 2.6 Million Children

News Desk:

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday inaugurated a province-wide anti-polio vaccination campaign, calling on parents and communities to play their role in safeguarding children from the life-long threat of polio. The campaign aims to immunize more than 2.6 million children across the province through a coordinated effort involving around 11,000 vaccination teams. Health workers will operate door-to-door, while 822 fixed centres and 474 transit teams have been set up at bus terminals, highways and other key locations to ensure that no child is left unvaccinated.

Speaking at the launch, the chief minister said Balochistan has made encouraging progress in recent months, with no polio case reported in the last 15 months. He noted that out of 23 districts, the poliovirus has been detected in environmental samples from only two areas, reflecting the impact of sustained and well-planned vaccination efforts. Mir Sarfraz Bugti described 2026 as a decisive year in



the fight against polio, stressing that the virus has already been eliminated from 93 percent of areas in Balochistan. He added that focused and organized measures are underway to clear the remaining 7 percent and achieve complete environmental eradication.

Warning that children can be exposed to the virus at any time, the chief minister urged parents to ensure their children receive polio drops during every campaign. He emphasized that polio

is an incurable disease that can cause permanent disability, but is entirely preventable through timely vaccination.

"Protecting the health of our children is a shared responsibility," he said, adding that missing

even one child can put all children at risk. He reaffirmed the provincial government's commitment to running an effective, well-coordinated campaign to reach every child and move Balochistan closer to a polio-free future.

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

How Long Will Quetta Pay the Price for SSGC and Federal Negligence?

Editorial: Quetta is once again at the mercy of a winter crisis that has become all too familiar: low gas pressure, unannounced load shedding, and complete administrative silence. Every year, citizens are told to "bear with the situation" as temperatures fall and heaters, stoves, and geysers turn useless. Yet the authorities responsible — Sui Southern Gas Company (SSGC) and the federal energy managers — continue to operate without accountability.

A City Freezing While Authorities Look Away

The people of Balochistan are right to ask: Why Quetta suffer the same crisis every winter while no structural reform is introduced? Why are consumers forced to pay heavy bills for a service that barely exists? And why do officials in Karachi and Islamabad continue to treat Balochistan's gas issues as a seasonal inconvenience rather than a governance failure?

D e s p i t e Balochistan being an energy-producing region, its residents struggle every winter for the very resource extracted from their own soil. This contradiction reflects a deep-rooted policy imbalance in the federation,

where Balochistan remains last on the priority list — not because of a shortage of resources, but because of a shortage of political will.

SSGC's Repeated Excuses and Decades of Mismanagement

The SSGC's performance adds another layer of frustration. Each year, the company offers the same explanations: "excessive demand," "pipeline pressure issues," "technical challenges."

Yet no one explains why these problems remain unresolved despite decades of complaints.

Why have there been no significant infrastructure upgrades? Why has the company failed to introduce a clear winter management plan for the public, and honest communication with consumers absent?

The unannounced nature of the load shedding exposes a complete disregard for public convenience. When outages are not scheduled or announced, families cannot plan meals, heating, or even basic daily routines. Hospitals and clinics struggle to maintain warm environments for patients. Small businesses suffer.

And in a city where temperatures can drop below freezing, such negligence is not

just inconvenient — it is dangerous.

F e d e r a l Government's Weak Oversight and Balochistan's Low Priority

The federal government cannot escape responsibility either. Energy management is a national issue, and the pattern of winter mismanagement in Balochistan reflects weak oversight, poor planning, and an unfair allocation of resources. The silence of policymakers during these crises sends a clear message: Quetta's suffering is not a priority.

What Quetta needs is not another round of hollow statements. It needs a transparent winter gas plan, proper infrastructure investment, honest communication with the public, and real accountability for SSGC. Most importantly, it needs the federal government to finally treat Balochistan as an equal stakeholder in national resource management.

The people of Quetta have endured enough. Their patience should not be mistaken for acceptance. Without decisive action, this recurring winter crisis will continue to expose not only the inefficiencies of SSGC but also the federal government's unwillingness to address long-standing injustices.

It is noteworthy that almost 30 districts of Balochistan have been badly hit by the current climate emergency. People who were already drowning in man made disasters of inflation, poverty,

political crisis are currently drowning in a Natural disaster. Nushki, Khuzdar, Lasbela, Bolan and Jhal Magsi received much of the inflections of flash floods. People were left stranded to flow with the waves as seen in footages, circulating on social media. Unfortunately, disturbing pictures of dead bodies of children covered with mud, families who were sitting helplessly on debris of their houses and sinking valuables of the people couldn't awaken the government from its stupor. Even more gloomily, the enraging waves of floods-engulfing lives and property, converting everything into dust & debris and wreaking havoc all

The Looming threat of Climate Crisis in Pakistan



Sardar Mengal:

Climate change is unleashing its worst effects in the form of heavy rainfalls and disastrous floods. Inter-governmental Panel on Climate Change had already warned about dire consequences of climate change in Pakistan. The authorities should have been on their toes in response to the contours of the crisis but we witnessed everything otherwise.

Balochistan Vulnerable to Climate Crisis

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around- couldn't merit breaking news on national media. Prior disregard and later delayed response have multiplied inflections of the catastrophe.

Loss of land communication has further isolated the stricken areas making true estimation of destruction more exhausting. Timely decision and act can reduce the effect of Climate Change.

To stop ballooning problems into crisis; rescue, relief and rehabilitation operations should be carried out on full scale as the current pace is insufficient to meet the requirement. NDMA and PDMA need to reach out to the peripheral areas that are out of the

radar. It's high time for the provincial and federal coalition government to pay special attention to those whose lives are at the stake. Political parties need to rise above the traditional politics and launch concerted efforts to help out the calamity stricken at the earliest. Social welfare organisations should come forward to heal the lesions of suffering humans. On national level, there should be special discourse and discussion on settlement and rehabilitation of the affected people.

In addition to ensuring; re-building of eroded infrastructure, compensation for losses, clean water, adequate supply of food, there should be numerical

measures in pipeline to overcome the post-flood outcomes such as increased risk of infectious diseases. The flood-stricken area can become a breeding ground for many health related problems. Supplying preventive medicines and upholding precautionary measures can halt the onslaught of infectious diseases.

The state machinery in its all forms should come into play to navigate a safe passage out of this hurricane of climate emergency enveloping us now.

The author is a final year MBBS student at King Edward Medical University Lahore, Pakistan. He can be reached on twitter via @SardarMengal11.

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IRC reaches to 29,000 out of school girls in Balochistan

By Shakoor Khan: International Rescue Committee (IRC) under its Teach & Educate Adolescent Girls with Community Help (TEACH) project reached out to 29,000 out-of-school girls of 5 districts of Balochistan including Pishin, Killa Abdullah, Nushki, Kharan and Chagai.

"IRC is striving hard to promote girl's education in Balochistan besides imparting vocational trainings on financial literacy and trades to make them financially independent," said Shareef Mengal, Head of IRC Balochistan during a policy dialogue titled "Improving future of girl's education in Balochistan held in collaboration with UK aid at local hotel here.

Balochistan Education Minister Naseebullah Mari was the chief guest while representatives from the Education ministry, Directorate of Special Education,

Literacy, Non-Formal Education & Human Rights Department, Balochistan Assessment and Examination Commission, Balochistan Textbook Board, Policy Planning Implementation Provincial Institute of Teachers Education, Education Support Programme, Global Partnership of Education, German Agency for International Cooperation, United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund Society for Community Strengthening and Promotion of Education, Balochistan, Institute for Development Studies and Practices, Japan International Cooperation Agency also attended the event.

The event hosted conversations with mul-



iple stakeholders including education experts and government functionaries on the barriers faced by girls in the province in pursuing their education and discussed possible solutions to combat those barriers.

Salient feature of the project IRC

While highlighting the salient feature of the project IRC chief in Balochistan Shareef Mengal said under the 'Girls Learn' stream of the project, 22,000 girls received classes on Package A, B and C of non-formal curriculum, of them 4000 enrolled in mainstream formal schooling system.

stream of the project, 7000 girls completed Package A of the non-formal curriculum, out of these 7000 girls, 5000 received training on financial literacy and business development planning. 2400 girls received training on 8 vocational trades and toolkits and 250 girls received financial grants to start a business.

Naseebullah Mari, Education Minister Balochistan, on the occasion urged that "We must do our part to remove the barriers faced by girls in the region so that every girl can pursue her education and become a valuable member of society".

"The Government is making all out efforts to combat the low literacy rate which has affected

girls from all ethnic groups, and socioeconomic backgrounds." We are committed to assist and contribute to building economically prosperous, and educated Balochistan, so every child has access to education.

He however welcomed the support extended by the International Rescue Committee for providing educational and vocational training opportunities, saying he is very grateful for the on-ground initiative of community-based schools in Balochistan."

Abdul Rauf Baloch - Secretary Secondary Education on the occasion appreciated the contributions of IRC for girl's education in Balochistan.

He shared that education is a complex subject which cannot be discussed without WASH, health and other facilities.

This makes it a responsibility of all relevant departments and stakeholders who should play their role effectively.

Zain Ul Abedin Khan, Deputy Director Programs, IRC, in his remarks said that "We as a society need to commit to prioritize and focus on Girls' Education through adequate resources. Girls' education in Balochistan is one of the biggest challenges faced by the country and to deal with it we must work with innovative methods like Non-Formal Education."

He further added that, "Over the years, we have realized that if girls are unable to reach school, all stakeholders need to fill the gap and provide access to life-long learning opportunities like productive skills and life-skills within communities.

Girl's education is correlated with lower rates of poverty

The panel discussions established an opportunity for the policy makers and practitioners to understand that girl's education is correlated with lower rates of poverty and improved health outcomes. While stimulating dialogue, the stakeholders pledged to work together to eradicate the barriers to girls'

education by providing gender inclusive facilities and quality of education.

The event was a culmination of three sessions where the first was hosted to discuss the barriers faced by girls in pursuing their education.

The panelists recommended Accelerated Learning Programs (ALPs) as a viable option while integrated with skill-based trainings and digitalizing education.

Initiatives to combat the barriers to education

The second session was focused on sustainable initiatives to combat the barriers with the help of Non-Formal Education in bridging the gap between primary and secondary schooling.

Chairperson of the session, Mr. Abdul Khalique - Chief Planning Officer Policy, Planning, and Implementation Unit welcomed the participants and emphasized the importance of solutions to these barriers.

Mr. Ashraf Gichki - Director Literacy and Non-Formal Education shared contribution of NFE department toward provision of second chance of education to out-of-school children.

Personal struggles in overcoming the barriers to education

The third and final session gave the TEACH clients an opportunity to express their personalized struggles in overcoming barriers to education.

Anam - client of TEACH project from Pishin shared that after joining TEACH ALP center, she can read books and newspapers. Simra from the same district shared that her parents don't allow travelling long distances to attend school but after opening of ALP center at doorsteps, she was able to join the classroom for first time in her life.

Haleema from Nushki district shared that her mother is the only breadwinner of home and works at households of others to earn income. Haleema shared that she is the only child of her family who can read, thanks to joining ALP center.

Commission sues Trump administration over refusal to restore New York tunnel funding

NEWS DESK:The commission overseeing a massive \$16 billion Hudson River tunnel, the incline of rail travel between New York and New Jersey, filed suit to force the Trump administration to restore funding just days before construction is set to halt on Friday.

US President Donald Trump said in October he had terminated the project and the Transportation Department has refused to release any funding for the project approved during the prior administration.

The Gateway Development Commission, created by New York and New Jersey in 2019 to oversee the project, filed suit late Monday in the US Court of Claims, saying the US Transportation Department breached its contractual obligations by withholding more than \$205 million without any legal basis and was seeking to punish Democrats over last fall's government shutdown. The commission's suit said that, without federal funding this week, it



"will be unable to pay its contractors to continue construction activities, causing work on this critical project to grind to a halt—leaving unfinished work sites with massive holes in the ground, threatening the

livelihoods of the many hundreds of construction employees working on the project, burdening GDC with astronomical costs in delays and penalties, and putting into question the future viability of the

project." The White House and USDOT did not immediately comment, but the White House said last week that Democrats "are standing in the way of a deal for the Gateway Tunnel Project by refus-

ing to negotiate with the Trump administration. There is nothing stopping Democrats from prioritizing the interests of Americans over illegal aliens and getting this project back on track."

Chuck Schumer of New York said the "lawsuit would be unnecessary if President Trump did the right thing for New York and New Jersey and lifted his arbitrary freeze." Trump's Republican administration has repeatedly targeted major transit and infrastructure projects in Democratic-led states. New York Governor Kathy Hochul and New Jersey Governor Mikie Sherrill — both Democrats — praised the lawsuit and

urged Trump to relent.

Any failure of the existing Hudson tunnel, which was built in 1910 and heavily damaged by Hurricane Sandy in 2012, would hobble commuting in the metropolitan area that produces 10% of the country's economic output and is used by 200,000 travelers daily. Nearly \$2 billion has been spent on the project. The initiative, which received about \$15 billion in federal support — involves repairs to an existing tunnel and the construction of a new one for passenger railroad Amtrak and state commuter lines between New Jersey and Manhattan.

Gateway said it told USDOT that it was in compliance with federal law. Trump, a former New York City real estate developer, refused to approve funding for the project in his first term. The Trump administration is also trying to kill Manhattan's congestion pricing program introduced last year, designed to reduce traffic and raise billions in funds for mass transit.

Civil rights groups sue Trump administration over pause on immigrant visas

NEWS DESK:A group of civil rights organizations on Monday sued the State Department over its recent pause on the processing of immigrant visas for citizens from 75 countries, arguing the policy "reverses a half-century of settled immigration law."

The lawsuit filed in federal court in Manhattan asked a judge to issue a court order blocking the policy, which took effect on January 21.

The complaint asserted that the State Department's policy is "based on an unsupported and demonstrably false claim that nationals of the covered countries migrate to the

United States to improperly rely on cash welfare and are likely to become 'public charges.'"

"A visa is a privilege, not a right," State Department spokesperson Tommy Pigott said in a statement, adding that the visa policy prevents billions of dollars in waste, fraud, and abuse.

"The Department is pausing issuance to evaluate and enhance screening and vetting procedures—but we will never stop fighting for American citizens first," Pigott said.

The lawsuit was brought by the National Immigration Law Centre and other groups on behalf of a wide range of plaintiffs, including US

citizens who say they have been separated from family members because of the policy.

Another plaintiff is an endocrinologist from Colombia who was approved for an employment-based visa but cannot receive it because Colombia is one of the countries subject to the policy. The pause has impacted applicants from Latin American countries, including Brazil, Colombia and Uruguay. Balkan countries such as Bosnia and Albania, South Asian countries Pakistan and Bangladesh, and those from many nations in Africa, the Middle East and the Caribbean.

The State Department policy does not impact US visitor visas, which have been in the spotlight given that the United States is hosting the 2026 World Cup and 2028 Olympics.

A State Department cable outlining the move and seen by Reuters said the Department was undergoing a "full review" of all policies, regulations and guidance to ensure "the highest level of screening and vetting" for all US visa applicants.

The cable, sent to US missions, said applicants from the 75 impacted countries "are at a high risk for becoming a public charge and recourse to local, state and federal government resources in the United States."



India to ramp up US oil, arms, aircraft purchases in trade pact

NEWS DESK:India has agreed to buy petroleum, defence goods, and aircraft from the United States, while partly opening up its highly-guarded agriculture sector under a trade deal, according to a government official, as the two sides reconcile after months of tensions.

President Donald Trump announced a trade deal with India on Monday that slashes US tariffs on Indian goods to 18% from 50% in exchange for India halting Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers.

Trump said India agreed to buy more American goods with purchases rising to as much as \$500 billion including energy, coal, technology, agricultural and other products.

The Indian government official, who did not want to be named, said India has agreed to buy US goods immediately in an e-mail seeking comment.

India's exports to the US rose 15.88% year-on-year to \$85.5 billion in January-November,

while imports stood at \$46.08 billion, Indian government data showed.

"The commitment to buy US products covers sectors like pharmaceuticals, telecom, defence, petroleum and aircraft. It will be done over the years," the official told Reuters.

The official said a more comprehensive pact with the US will be negotiated over the coming months.

Deals lift sentiment in India's exports to the US rose 15.88% year-on-year to \$85.5 billion in January-November,

global uncertainty, India's economic affairs secretary, Anuradha Thakur, said at an event in New Delhi on Tuesday.

It also lifted investor sentiment. India's benchmark stock index, the Nifty 50, was up nearly 3% and the rupee climbed over 1% to 90.40 per dollar in early trading.

The 18% tariff offered to India is lower than its Asian peers and comes right in time as exporters are still negotiating annual contracts with their US customers, the official said.

The timing is symbolic of both countries to "commit to raising it to a new level."

While traditional export sectors like meat and soy have played a central role in the relationship, others, such as dairy, present considerable potential, said Dr Diego Telias, a professor at the Universidad ORT Uruguay and an associate researcher at ICLAC. This institute studies the impact of Chinese capital in Latin America.

A gap also remains in the area of service exports, he said, "an area in which Uruguay has successfully engaged with markets such as the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe, but not yet with China."

Israel bombs civilian areas in Lebanon



NEWS DESK:One person was killed and eight others were injured on Monday as the Israeli military conducted strikes on multiple locations in southern Lebanon, targeting civilian areas in two villages.

Despite a November 2024 truce that sought to end more than a year of hostilities including two months of all-out war between Israel and the group, Israel has kept up regular strikes on

Lebanon and has maintained troops in five areas it deems strategic.

Justifying the destruction, the Israeli military claimed that it was targeting "weapons storage facilities."

The Israeli army had previously sent evacuation warnings for the towns of Kfar Tibnit and Ain Qana in southern Lebanon.

Lebanon's state-run National News Agency (NNA) reported strikes on the targeted buildings in both towns.

Earlier on Monday, the Lebanese health ministry said an Israeli strike on Ansariyah in southern Lebanon killed one person and wounded four others.

Another strike on Qleileh, elsewhere in the south, also wounded four people, according to the ministry.

The NNA reported Israeli strikes on vehicles near both areas, which came without warning.

Lebanon has repeatedly protested Israeli strikes on Lebanon as violations of the ceasefire.

More than 360 people have been killed by Israeli fire in Lebanon since the ceasefire.

China's Xi urges Uruguay to back 'orderly multipolar world' as ties deepen

NEWS DESK:China and Uruguay should work together to advance an "equal and orderly multipolar world," President Xi Jinping told his counterpart Yamandu Orsi on Tuesday, according to a media pool report.

Xi's visit is the first by a South American leader to the Chinese capital since the United States invaded Venezuela in January and kidnapped then-President Nicolas Maduro on a raid.

China and Uruguay should "work together to advance an equal and orderly multipolar world and an inclusive, universally beneficial economic globalisation," Xi said in his remarks, aiming to build a community with a shared future for mankind.

The meeting comes in the wake of a flurry of visits to China by Western leaders this year, from Britain's Prime Minister Keir Starmer to Canadian Prime Minister Mark Carney and Finland's Prime Minister Petteri Orpo.

Orsi said his visit aimed to "empower Uruguay in the world and generate opportunities, investment and development" in a Facebook comment following his arrival in Beijing.

He is leading a delegation of 150, including business leaders, on a visit that runs until February 7, which will also take in his commercial capital of Shanghai.

The timing is symbolic of both countries to "commit to raising it to a new level."

China and Uruguay signed a joint declaration to deepen their strategic partnership on Tuesday, along with 12 cooperation documents covering science and technology, environmental cooperation, meat exports and increasingly polarised geopolitical environment.

China was the top destination for Uruguayan exports in 2025, taking agricultural products from wood pulp to soybeans and beef. Uruguay ran a trade surplus of \$187.1 million with China in the first half of 2025. The South American nation imports machinery, electronics, and chemicals from China.

Agreements signed, deeper cooperation

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Agreements signed, deeper cooperation



High-level committee will directly monitor KMC's development projects

KARACHI (INP): A meeting of the high-level committee constituted on the directives of the Chief Minister Sindh was held under the chairmanship of Provincial Minister for Local Government, Syed Nasir

Hussain Shah. The meeting was attended by Mayor Karachi Murtaza Wahab, Commissioner Karachi Muhammad Hussain Naqvi, Additional Chief Secretary Local Government De-

partment Waseem Shamshad, Chairman Chief Minister's Inspection Team Bilal Ahmed Memon, a representative of the Planning and Development Department, along with senior officers of relevant de-

partments. During the meeting, a detailed and comprehensive review was conducted of the ongoing and proposed development projects and schemes of KMC under the Karachi Infrastruc-

ture Development Policy. The pace, quality, transparency, and public utility of the ongoing development works in the city were also thoroughly discussed.

It was decided in the meeting that the high-level committee would directly monitor KMC's development projects. Clear priorities would be set for the projects, and a detailed progress report would be submitted to the Chief Minister Sindh on

a monthly basis. Provincial Minister Syed Nasir Hussain Shah categorically stated that all development projects would be completed within the prescribed time, and schemes would be taken

to completion on an end-to-end basis, as incomplete and delayed projects lead to increased public inconvenience and cost overruns, which are unacceptable under any circumstances.



ISLAMABAD: Commander Azerbaijan Naval Forces (ANF), Rear Admiral Shahin Mammadov called on Chief of the Naval Staff, Admiral Naveed Ashraf, at Naval Headquarters.

Jammu and Kashmir Journalists Forum (KJF) delegation apprised of IOJK's grave situation

MUZAFFARABAD (INP): A delegation led by President of Jammu and Kashmir Journalists Forum (KJF) Muhammad Iqbal Mir held a meeting with All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter General Secretary Advocate Pervaz Ahmed in Muzaafarabad in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5.

During the meeting, Advocate Pervaz Ahmed apprised the delegation in detail of the grave situation in Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir. He said the Kashmiri people are facing systematic state oppression, extensive military presence and continuous human rights violations.

He said the Kashmiri struggle is not a military conflict but a political, popular and principled resistance movement, the aim of which is the protection of the right to self-determination and fundamental human rights. Advocate Pervaz Ahmed, while emphasizing the key role of the media, said in the current digital era, narrative creation has assumed extraordinary importance, and only truthful, responsible journalism can convey the voice of the oppressed people to the global conscience.

He appealed to all journalists and institutions associated with the electronic media of Azad Kashmir to play their moral and professional responsibility in the resistance movement and raise their voice effectively against the ongoing oppression, illegal arrests, extrajudicial measures and demographic change in occupied Kashmir. He further said on February 5, Kashmir Solidarity Day, a grand and historic rally and public meeting is being organized in collaboration with the All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir, the Government of Azad Kashmir and the Muhajireen Forum, the aim of which is to express full solidarity with the Kashmiri people and draw the attention of the international community to this long-standing conflict. He appealed to the media representatives to give full and effective coverage to this program of national and humanitarian importance. On this occasion, President of Jammu and Kashmir Journalists Forum, Muhammad Iqbal Mir, expressed deep concern over the uncertain and alarming situation in occupied Kashmir and assured that he would provide responsible, comprehensive and comprehensive media coverage to the legitimate struggle of the Kashmiri people. Hurriyat leaders Zahid Ashraf, Mushtaqul Islam, Abdul Majeed Mir and Mushtaq Ahmed Butt were also present in the meeting. The Journalists Forum included Bashirullah Khan, Muhammad Ilyas, Muhammad Mubshir, Arifullah Mahmood, Madiha Azeem, Zeeshan Ali, Gulshad Ahmed Butt, Pervez Durrani, Syed Basir Ali, Syed Saqib, Zafar Asghar, and Abdul Qayyum.

Kashmir Solidarity Day to be observed on Thursday

ISLAMABAD (INP): Preparations for observing Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 05 (Thursday) have begun across Pakistan, with a series of activities being arranged to express solidarity with the people of Indian illegally occupied Jammu and Kashmir in their just and principled struggle for their inalienable right to self-determination through a UN-mandated plebiscite.

The people and the governments of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir observe Kashmir Solidarity Day every year not only to renew their bond of love and affection with the people of Kashmir, but also to reiterate their unwavering commitment to the liberation of the occupied territory from illegal Indian occupation. The day will be marked by extensive programmes, including day-long rallies, demonstrations, and seminars across the country, as well as the formation of human chains by joining hands with Pakistani brethren at all entry points of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

The human chains formed by Pakistani and Kashmiri people aim to reaffirm unity and fraternity, reflecting the deep bonds of love and affection shared by the two peoples. Various public and private departments, educational institutions, and literary and cultural organizations have planned conferences, rallies, seminars, discussion programmes, and competitions to highlight the Kashmiri people's struggle for their right to self-determination in accordance with United Nations resolutions. The print and electronic media will highlight the Kashmiri people's struggle for their just right to self-determination, the gross human rights violations in the Valley, and Pakistan's stance on resolving the Kashmir dispute in line with UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. The day will dawn with special prayers for the martyrs of Kashmir, the success of the freedom struggle, and the expression of solidarity with the Kashmiri people. Messages from high-level officials will also be issued on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day to reaffirm support for the Kashmir cause. To commemorate the sacrifices of the Kashmiri people of Indian illegally occupied

Jammu and Kashmir and to express solidarity with them, a group of federal ministers will lead a solidarity walk on February 05, 2026. The observance of the day also aims to highlight the long-standing unresolved Jammu and Kashmir dispute at the international level and to convey to the people of Jammu and Kashmir that they are not alone in this hour of trial and turmoil, as the people of Pakistan and Kashmir beat in unison. The hearts of the people of Pakistan and Kashmir beat in unison. Pakistan will continue to extend full moral, political, and diplomatic support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their just and principled struggle for freedom until it reaches its logical conclusion.

152,906 children vaccinated in first day of anti-polio campaign in capital

ISLAMABAD (INP): Islamabad completed the first day of four-day anti-polio campaign with 152,906 children vaccinated, achieving 33 percent of the overall target, officials said on Tuesday.

The figures were shared during a review meeting chaired by the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Islamabad, where progress and arrangements were assessed to ensure full coverage in the remaining days.

According to officials, the first day of the campaign concluded as planned, with vaccination teams deployed across urban and rural areas of the federal capital. The DC said the campaign was progressing

according to schedule and teams were reaching households to vaccinate children against polio. A detailed review of field performance was conducted during the meeting. Officials discussed coverage data, team movement, and access to hard-to-reach areas. The DC directed field officers to address public places, schools, and hospitals to ensure no child is missed during the remaining period of the campaign.

Meanwhile, to improve coordination for the second day, morning assemblies of assistant commissioners were held to review daily plans and assign responsibilities. The DC instructed officers to

highlighting the unity of all political leadership and their collective stance with the armed forces against terrorism, stressing that this united front ensures the protection of the nation and its people. They discussed key issues concerning the country, including maintaining peace and rooting out terrorism, prioritizing national security over politics, he added.

Responding to a query, he explained that India has been involved in funding and training terrorists, highlighting the external support that fuels destabilizing activities in the region. He warned that no one will be allowed to destabilize Pakistan, and this treatment will continue and the armed forces will stand with them firmly until they fully accept Pakistan's constitution.

He said public cooperation is essential to meet daily targets and complete the campaign within the scheduled four days. Irfan Memon said community support plays a key role in ending polio. He stated that with cooperation from families, the goal of eliminating polio can be achieved. He added that teams were working under a structured plan and data was being reviewed daily to track progress. The four-day polio campaign will continue across Islamabad, with authorities aiming to vaccinate all targeted children by the final day. Officials said daily reviews would remain part of the process to ensure transparency, accountability, and full coverage.

Rana Sanaulah reaffirms gov't firm commitment to eliminating terrorism

ISLAMABAD (INP): Prime Minister's Advisor on Political Affairs Senator Rana Sanaulah on Tuesday reaffirmed the government's firm commitment to eliminating terrorism and said from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) to Balochistan the state and armed forces remain fully united to safeguard the land and the Constitution.

Sanaulah, speaking to a local news channel raised that enemies use hidden tactics of adversariness, and exposing their actions to the world. He praised the meeting between PM Shehbaz Sharif and KP CM Sohail Afridi as positive and fruitful,

highlighting the unity of all political leadership and their collective stance with the armed forces against terrorism, stressing that this united front ensures the protection of the nation and its people. They discussed key issues concerning the country, including maintaining peace and rooting out terrorism, prioritizing national security over politics, he added.

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He said Pakistan is taking the international community on board, raising awareness about hidden tactics of adversariness, and exposing their actions to the world. He praised the meeting between PM Shehbaz Sharif and KP CM Sohail Afridi as positive and fruitful,

highlighting the unity of all political leadership and their collective stance with the armed forces against terrorism, stressing that this united front ensures the protection of the nation and its people. They discussed key issues concerning the country, including maintaining peace and rooting out terrorism, prioritizing national security over politics, he added.

Responding to a query, he explained that India has been involved in funding and training terrorists, highlighting the external support that fuels destabilizing activities in the region. He warned that no one will be allowed to destabilize Pakistan, and this treatment will continue and the armed forces will stand with them firmly until they fully accept Pakistan's constitution.

LHC seeks replies over Bhati Gate manhole tragedy

LAHORE (INP): The Lahore High Court (LHC) has taken up a petition seeking registration of a case against the Punjab Information Minister and action against officials over the tragic deaths of a mother and daughter who fell into an open manhole near Bhati Gate.

Justice Syed Shahbaz Raza Rizvi heard the petition, which names the Punjab government, the Lahore Development Authority (LDA), and other relevant departments as respondents. The court directed all parties to submit their replies by March 3.

During the hearing, the petitioner's counsel argued that leaving an open manhole in a densely populated area amounted to gross negligence. He alleged that instead of holding those truly responsible accountable, the govern-

ment had taken only symbolic measures. The court was told that more than 10,000 manhole covers are stolen annually in Lahore, yet no effective preventive steps have been taken. The lawyer maintained that registering a case under Section 322 was insufficient, as the deaths were not accidental but the result of clear criminal negligence. Officers named for spreading misinformation in Bhati Chowk manhole tragedy. The petition further alleged that the victim's family was harassed by police and government officials following the incident. It requested the formation of a judicial commission to determine responsibility and compensation, and demanded Rs250 million be recovered from negligent officers and paid to the bereaved family.



ISLAMABAD: Chairperson Peace and Culture Organization Mushal Malik Parliamentary Secretary Education Farah Naz Principal Prof Rozina Fahem along with students chanting slogans to mark solidarity day of Kashmir in a rally held at F-G Institute of Home Economics and Arts on Tuesday.

Shireen Mazari moves IHC seeking permission to meet her daughter, son-in-law in jail

ISLAMABAD (INP) Former federal minister Shireen Mazari on Tuesday moved the Islamabad High Court (IHC), seeking urgent judicial intervention to allow her to meet her daughter Imaan Zainab Mazari and son-in-law Hadi Ali Chatha, who are held in Adiala Jail.

In her petition, Mazari stated that both Imaan and Hadi were recently sentenced to a combined 17 years in prison by sessions court on multiple charges related to controversial social media posts. She stated that the writ petition, filed under Article 199 of the Constitution, has been submitted through a legal team comprising senior advocates Kamran Murtaza, members of

the Islamabad Bar Council, office-bearers of the Islamabad High Court Bar Association, and the District Bar Association, among others. Mazari alleged that jail authorities have completely severed all contact between the detainees and their family as well as their legal counsel, without any written order, recorded reasons, or lawful basis. She maintained that despite repeated requests, she has been denied visitation rights and has not been informed about the physical, medical and mental health, or living conditions of her daughter and son-in-law.

Mazari also cited the Punjab Prison Rules, 1978, along with international standards including the UN Nelson Mandela Rules, asserting that the state bears a heightened duty of care toward individuals in custody. As interim relief, she requested the IHC to immediately direct jail authorities to allow family visits and legal consultations until their final adjudication of the petition. The respondents named in the case include the Federation of Pakistan through the Interior Secretary, the Inspector General of Police Islamabad, and the Superintendent of Adiala Jail. The IHC has yet fixed a date for hearing on the petition.



QUETTA: Jahlawan Awami Penal Leader Nadeem ur Rehman addressing a press conference.

Balochistan: Internet and Train Services Remain Suspended for Fourth Consecutive Day

NEWS DESK: Internet services remained suspended across several parts of Balochistan for the fourth consecutive day following a deadly attack carried out by the Balochistan Liberation Army (BLA), as authorities continued heightened security measures across the province.

Railway operations linking Balochistan with other parts of the country were also fully suspended, leaving passengers stranded and disrupting travel and trade. Officials said the decision was taken as a precautionary step in view of security threats after the attack.

In Quetta, internal roads near key government offices and sensitive installations were blocked, severely affecting traffic movement and daily routines. Heavy contingents of security personnel were deployed, while barricades were placed around important official buildings to restrict access. The prolonged suspension of internet services has caused significant hardship for residents, particularly students, journalists, freelancers and businesses dependent on online connectivity. Mobile data and broadband services remained unavailable in most areas, adding to public frustration.



Authorities maintained that the restrictions were necessary to prevent further attacks and to ensure public safety following the BLA-led assault. However, no timeline was announced for the restoration of internet, rail services or normal traffic flow. The continued shutdown reflects the wider impact of militant violence in the province, with ordinary citizens facing extended disruptions as security forces remain on high alert.

Balochistan Health Minister Chairs Key Meeting on PPHI to Improve Primary Healthcare Services

QUETTA: An important meeting regarding the People's Primary Healthcare Initiative (PPHI) was held under the chairmanship of Provincial Health Minister Balochistan, Bakht Muhammad Kakar. The meeting reviewed the basic healthcare facilities being provided under PPHI across the province, with special focus on remote and rural areas.

During the meeting, the Provincial Health Minister emphasized the need to further enhance the provision of quality and timely medical services for the public. He stressed that improving access to essential healthcare is a top priority of the provincial government.

Officer (CEO) of PPHI were also present on the occasion.

They briefed the meeting on PPHI's overall performance, existing challenges, and future plans to strengthen primary healthcare services in Balochistan.

Provincial Health Minister Bakht Muhammad Kakar directed the concerned officials to improve service delivery, ensure transparency, and further strengthen monitoring mechanisms to make the healthcare system more effective across the province.

DC Naseerabad Chairs Meeting on Recovery of Government Dues, Orders Strict Action Against Negligence



DC Naseerabad, Deputy Commissioner Naseerabad, Captain (R) Zulfikar Ali Karim, chaired an important meeting regarding the recovery of government dues. He issued strict orders to immediately serve show-cause notices to officials found negligent in their duties.

The Deputy Commissioner directed that all statements and records related to Agricultural Income Tax, Abiana (water charges), Ushr, and other government dues be compiled without delay.

He further instructed that the meeting agenda be documented in writing, and other concerned officers must submit their performance reports within two weeks for a comprehensive review of the recovery process.

He also ordered that notices be issued to landowners with outstanding government dues, emphasizing that no delay or leniency in recovery operations will be tolerated.

The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that the revenue staff must focus resolutely on achieving recovery targets within the stipulated timeframe, otherwise strict disciplinary action will be taken against those responsible.

Pakistan Zindabad Rally Held in Barkhan Under Leadership of Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran

BARKHAN: A "Pakistan Zindabad" and "Long Live Pakistan Armed Forces" rally was organized in Barkhan district of Balochistan under the leadership of Provincial Minister for Public Health Engineering (PHE), Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran.

Thousands of people participated in the rally, carrying Pakistan's green crescent flags and expressing solidarity with the country and its armed forces.

Addressing the gathering, Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran said that Pakistan is our homeland, and the people of Barkhan stand on the front line for its defense and security.

He emphasized that the nation's sovereignty, peace, and stability are the top priorities for all Pakistanis. He paid rich tribute to the sacrifices of the Pakistan Armed Forces and civilian martyrs for the security and development of the country, stating that their everlasting sacrifices send a clear message that a handful of terrorists will never succeed in their nefarious designs.

He added that the entire nation is proud of its martyrs and brave security forces. The provincial minister further said that all Pakistanis must unite to further strengthen the hands of the Pakistan Armed Forces and the government so that the last terrorist can be completely eliminated from this sacred land of Pakistan.



Dr. Muhammad Naseem Lango conducted a detailed visit to Union Council Gazgi in connection with the National Anti-Polio Campaign. The purpose of the visit was to monitor the polio drive, review the administration of polio drops to children, and assess the overall performance of polio teams in the field.

During the visit, the DHO went door to door and checked the polio findings. He also inspected the availability of vaccines, and safety measures adopted during the campaign.

Dr. Muhammad Naseem Lango directed the polio teams to carry out their duties with full responsibility, honesty, and dedication, and emphasized the need to effectively educate parents about the importance and benefits of polio vaccination to ensure the complete eradication of the virus.

On this occasion, Medical Superintendent Civil Hospital Zehri, Dr. Milad Zehri, was also present alongside the DHO Khuzdar and assisted in reviewing the performance of the polio teams.

Khuzdar DHO Dr. Muhammad Naseem Lango Reviews Polio Campaign in UC Gazgi

KHUZDAR: District Health Officer (DHO) Khuzdar Dr. Muhammad Naseem Lango conducted a detailed visit to Union Council Gazgi in connection with the National Anti-Polio Campaign.

The purpose of the visit was to monitor the polio drive, review the administration of polio drops to children, and assess the overall performance of polio teams in the field. During the visit, the DHO went door to door and checked the polio findings.

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On this occasion, Medical Superintendent Civil Hospital Zehri, Dr. Milad Zehri, was also present alongside the DHO Khuzdar and assisted in reviewing the performance of the polio teams.

Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Visits Hospitals in Quetta, Inquires After Victims of Terrorist Attacks

QUETTA: Governor Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, paid separate visits to the Trauma Center at Civil Hospital on Jinnah Road and Combined Military Hospital (CMH) Quetta Cantt, where he inquired about the well-being of those injured in terrorist attacks at various locations a day earlier.



During his visits, the Governor individually met the injured persons, reviewed their medical condition, and issued special instructions to the concerned authorities to ensure the provision of all necessary medical facilities without delay. Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail appreciated the doctors and paramedical staff for providing the best possible medical care to the injured and praised their dedication and professionalism under challenging circumstances.

He also inspected the availability of vaccines, and safety measures adopted during the campaign.

Foreign Investment Opportunities in Mining Sector with Focus on Saudi Investors

QUETTA: An important meeting was held under the chairmanship of Vice Chairman of the Balochistan Investment Board, Bilal Khan Kakar, to review prospects of foreign investment in the province's mineral resources sector, with a particular focus on cooperation with Saudi investors.

The meeting was attended by Chief Executive Officer of Balochistan Mineral Exploration Company (BMEC) Shahzad Jamaldini, Head of Exploration at Balochistan Mineral Resources Limited (BMRL) Hafiz Baloch, along with representatives and officials from the Mines and Minerals Department. During the meeting, participants were given a detailed briefing on various mining and mineral projects in Balochistan, followed by comprehensive discussions on potential investment opportunities in these sectors.

It was emphasized that partnerships with Saudi investors could help modernize the mining sector, create employment opportunities, and bring long-term stability to the provincial Minerals Department. Addressing the meeting, Vice Chairman Bilal Khan Kakar said that Balochistan is rich in natural resources and offers immense investment potential in the mines and minerals sector. He stated that the Government of Balochistan is fully committed to providing all possible facilitation to foreign investors, especially investors from Saudi Arabia.

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The office of Executive Engineer (Buildings) CWPPH Department District Naseerabad invites sealed bids from eligible bidders on National Competitive Bidding (NCB) who can prove their eligibility and qualification as mentioned in the Bidding Documents for the works mentioned below. Earnest Money 2% in shape of call deposit. Tender Fee Rs. 2000/- (in shape of green challan form deposited in head of account C-22715). Time Limit: 12 months.

S.No.	Name of Work	Estimate	EMoney
1	CONSTRUCTION OF NEW MIDDLE SCHOOL KOT ARSALAN	49,524-M	10,00,000/-

DISTRICT NASEERABAD, TSE-2526296533

ONLY ELECTRIC BID WILL BE SUBMITTED. NO PHYSICAL BID IS REQUIRED.

Bidding process of aforementioned works shall be carried out in accordance with the rules of Balochistan Public Procurement Authorities 2014 & Pakistan Engineering Council By-Laws. **BASIC ELIGIBILITY:** The contractors must have valid Registration of firm with PEC in category C-8 with specialization codes CE91 and CE19 in relevant discipline, and registration along with all date renewal with Tax Authorities (i.e. NTN, Sales Tax Department and SPA), where applicable. The prospect bidders must meet the eligibility alongside qualifying criteria as mentioned in the Bidding Documents available on BPPRA website (it's mandatory). **METHOD OF PROCUREMENT:** Single Stage Two Envelope Bidding Procedure. **BIDDING/TENDER DOCUMENTS ISSUANCE:** The NIT & Bidding Document can be obtained electronically from www.bppra.gov.pk. Complete Bidding Document can be viewed at www.bppra.gov.pk. **BID SECURITY & FEE:** The contractors/Firms who obtain bidding document by downloading them from BPPRA website will also be required to produce deposited green challan form of above mentioned fee under head C-22715 in the Bank of PSP (Dera Murad Jamal). The bids must have accompanied Bid Security with "Technical Bid" for the work in the form of Call at Deposit above in the name of the undersigned from a Scheduled Bank. **DEAD LINE OF SUBMISSION:** Bid can only be submitted electronically latest by 27 February 2026 at 12:00 PM through supplier dashboard. **OPENING OF BIDS:** Envelope containing "Financial Bid" will be opened on the same day i.e. 27 February 2026 at 1:00 PM on EPPS System. Second Envelope containing "Financial Bid" of technically qualified bidder(s) will be opened later, the date of which will be communicated after evaluation of the Technical Bid. Financial Proposal of Technically non-qualified bidders will be automatically dropped/withdrawn from EPPS. **Financial opening of Bid, VALIDITY: Ninety (90) days. PLACE OF ISSUANCE AND SUBMISSION:** Executive Engineer (Buildings) CWPPH, District Naseerabad, Dera Murad Jamal. Telephone No. 0838-719015. Email address: kafatamirna22@gmail.com.

TERMS & CONDITIONS: Terms & Conditions are mentioned (incorporated) in detail in Bidding Documents. The bidders providing underspecified and/or incorrect information will be liable to disqualification and/or legal action.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (BUILDINGS) CW, PPHI DEPARTMENT DISTRICT NASEERABAD AT D.M. ANJALI

PRQ No. 3593-03-02-2026

CORRIQENDUM

With reference to the subject mentioned above, it is submitted that PRQ No. 3416 dated 22nd January, 2026 under TSE-252601981733, TSE-252601981723, TSE-252601981703, TSE-252601981963, TSE-252601981633, TSE-252601981583, TSE-252601981943, TSE-252601981473, TSE-252601981393, TSE-252601981313, TSE-252601981223, TSE-252601981213, TSE-252601981203, TSE-252601981193, TSE-252601981183, TSE-252601981173, TSE-252601981163, TSE-252601981153, TSE-252601981143, TSE-252601981133, TSE-252601981123, TSE-252601981113, TSE-252601981103, TSE-252601981093, TSE-252601981083, TSE-252601981073, TSE-252601981063, TSE-252601981053, TSE-252601981043, TSE-252601981033, TSE-252601981023, TSE-252601981013, TSE-252601981003, TSE-252601980993, TSE-252601980983, TSE-252601980973, TSE-252601980963, TSE-252601980953, TSE-252601980943, TSE-252601980933, TSE-252601980923, TSE-252601980913, TSE-252601980903, TSE-252601980893, TSE-252601980883, TSE-252601980873, TSE-252601980863, TSE-252601980853, TSE-252601980843, TSE-252601980833, TSE-252601980823, TSE-252601980813, TSE-252601980803, TSE-252601980793, TSE-252601980783, TSE-252601980773, TSE-252601980763, TSE-252601980753, TSE-252601980743, TSE-252601980733, TSE-252601980723, TSE-252601980713, TSE-252601980703, TSE-252601980693, TSE-252601980683, TSE-252601980673, TSE-252601980663, TSE-252601980653, TSE-252601980643, TSE-252601980633, TSE-252601980623, TSE-252601980613, TSE-252601980603, TSE-252601980593, TSE-252601980583, TSE-252601980573, TSE-252601980563, TSE-252601980553, TSE-252601980543, TSE-252601980533, TSE-252601980523, TSE-252601980513, TSE-252601980503, TSE-252601980493, TSE-252601980483, TSE-252601980473, TSE-252601980463, TSE-252601980453, TSE-252601980443, TSE-252601980433, TSE-252601980423, TSE-252601980413, TSE-252601980403, TSE-252601980393, TSE-252601980383, TSE-252601980373, TSE-252601980363, TSE-252601980353, TSE-252601980343, TSE-252601980333, TSE-252601980323, TSE-252601980313, TSE-252601980303, TSE-252601980293, TSE-252601980283, TSE-252601980273, TSE-252601980263, TSE-252601980253, TSE-252601980243, TSE-252601980233, TSE-252601980223, TSE-252601980213, TSE-252601980203, TSE-252601980193, TSE-252601980183, TSE-252601980173, TSE-252601980163, TSE-252601980153, TSE-252601980143, TSE-252601980133, TSE-252601980123, TSE-252601980113, TSE-252601980103, TSE-252601980093, TSE-252601980083, TSE-252601980073, TSE-252601980063, TSE-252601980053, TSE-252601980043, TSE-252601980033, TSE-252601980023, TSE-252601980013, TSE-252601980003.

It is further submitted that the venue for tender opening was earlier mentioned as 114 Hing Headquarters, Dera Murad Jamal, scheduled to be held on 09th February, 2026 at 11:00 A.M. Now, may held on 09th February, 2026 at 11:00 A.M. in the office of the Deputy Commissioner, Dera Murad Jamal. (All other terms and conditions to remain same).

Executive Engineer (Buildings) CW, PPHI DEPARTMENT DISTRICT NASEERABAD AT D.M. ANJALI

PRQ No. 3594-03-02-2026

Oil falls on possible US-Iran de-escalation, firm dollar

NEWS DESK: Oil prices fell on Tuesday, as market participants weighed the possibility of a de-escalation in US-Iran tensions, while a firmer dollar placed greater downside pressure on prices.

Brent crude futures fell 34 cents, or 0.5 per cent, to \$65.96 per barrel by 06:23 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate crude was at \$61.81 a barrel, down 32 cents, or 0.5pc. Oil prices fell more than 4pc on Monday after US President Donald Trump said Iran was "seriously talking" with Washington, signaling a de-escalation of tensions with the Opec member.

Iran and the US are expected to resume nuclear talks on Friday in Turkey, officials from both sides told Reuters on Monday, and Trump warned that with big US warships heading to Iran, bad things could happen if a deal was not reached.

Talks with the US should be pursued to secure Iran's national interests as long as



"threats and unreasonable expectations" are avoided, Iranian President Pezeshkian posted on X on Tuesday. "The volatile price

actions of oil seen in the last four weeks have been driven by the geopolitical risk premium factor that is linked to the current US administration's

expansive foreign policy, especially the "on-off" threats towards Iran," said OANDA senior market analyst Kelvin Wong. Weighing on

prices further, the US dollar index hovered near its highest in more than a week. A stronger greenback hurts demand for dollar-denominated crude from

foreign buyers. "The continued recovery in the US dollar yesterday, following President Trump's nomination of Kevin Warsh as the

next Federal Reserve chair, also exerted downward pressure on oil prices," ING analysts said in a note. On the trade front, Trump on Mon-

day unveiled a deal with India that slashes US tariffs on Indian goods to 18pc from 80pc in exchange for India halting Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers.

"Overnight, the US and India agreed on a trade deal... if we do see this happen, it will only lead to a further increase in the amount of Russian oil floating at sea," the ING analysts said.

Trump announced the deal on social media following a call with Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi, noting that India had agreed to buy oil from the US and possibly Venezuela.

Some analysts said they were expecting volatile price movements this month. "Looking ahead into February, prices are likely to remain choppy and range-bound... (they) are expected to stay highly reactive to headlines and macro cues rather than a decisive trend, with risk skewed to the downside," said Phillip Nova's senior market analyst Priyanka Sachdeva.

5-year plan targets gemstone exports

NEWS DESK: The federal government has decided to introduce a comprehensive five-year plan aimed at promoting the export and registration of Pakistan's precious gemstone sector, which officials estimate to be worth billions of dollars.

Under the plan, 610 exporters will be facilitated to participate in exhibitions in international markets over the next five years to expand market access and promote legal trade.

The plan also proposes the establishment of a central authority responsible for business registration, provincial coordination and facilitation across the gemstone value chain.

According to sources, the authority will include representation from both the federal and provincial governments and will be tasked with overseeing the implementation of the National Gemstone Policy.

As part of the proposed framework, a National Variety Office will be set up to support regulation and classification, while mechanisms will be introduced to ensure the return of unsold export consignments, addressing a longstanding concern of exporters involved in overseas exhibitions.

To further facilitate exporters, e-payment gateway facilities will be introduced to

simplify financial transactions and reduce procedural delays.

Officials said that six working groups have already been formed to promote legal trade in precious stones.

These groups include those focusing on improving banking and financial matters, streamlining refunds for unsold goods, promoting innovation in the mining sector and strengthening business registration processes.



Uptick in exports after five months

NEWS DESK: Pakistan's merchandise exports posted a modest rebound in January after recording five consecutive monthly declines in the current fiscal year, offering tentative relief to exporters and reviving expectations of a potential recovery in overseas shipments.

In absolute terms, export proceeds reached \$3.061 billion in January, up from \$2.951bn in the corresponding month of last year, reflecting an increase of 3.73 per cent, the Pakistan Bureau of Statistics (PBS) said on Monday.

On a month-on-month basis, export proceeds grew by 34.96pc in January. Negative growth in exports has continued since August of the current fiscal year, barring July, when proceeds grew 16.43pc year on year.

Export earnings posted negative growth, with proceeds declining by 20.41pc in December. This follows a 14.54pc drop in November, 4.46pc in October, 3.88pc in September, and 12.49pc in August, reflecting persistent pressures on the country's external trade performance.

In the first seven months (July-January), export proceeds recorded negative growth of 7.09pc to \$18.195bn compared with \$19.583bn in the corresponding period last year.

Trade gap widens 28.22pc to \$22.038bn in July-January FY26.

The government has recently announced several measures, including a reduction in the energy rates and others, to minimise pres-

sure on the country's neighbouring industries. Last week, the prime minister announced a decrease of Rs4.4 per unit in the electricity tariff for the industrial sector, in a bid to improve productivity and exports.

He also announced a reduction in wheeling charges for industries, stating that "it will be less than Rs9 per unit".

He hoped that the move would help "industries sell their power to

neighbouring industries". To provide additional relief, the premier said that "with the cooperation and support of Pakistan's banks, we are announcing a reduction in the export refinancing rate from earlier 7.5pc to 4.5pc".

Currently, the exporters are grappling markets and the high cost of doing business in the country.

The textile exporters have already con-

tracted owing to the high cost of doing business. In FY25, export proceeds rose 4.67pc to \$32.106bn against \$30.675bn in the preceding year.

According to the PBS data, imports fell 1.44pc to \$5.786bn in January from \$5.904bn over the corresponding month of last year. Month-on-month, imports decreased 4.83pc, from \$6.077bn in the corresponding period last year.

The import rose 6.57pc to \$58.38bn in July-January FY25 from \$54.78bn over the previous year.

The trade deficit narrowed 6.61pc to \$2.75bn in January from \$2.918bn over the corresponding month of last year.

The trade deficit swelled 28.22pc to \$22.038bn in July-January 2025-26, up from \$17.188bn over the corresponding period last year. The trade deficit for FY25 widened by 26.27pc to \$24.11bn in the preceding year.



Iran-US tensions delay ferry service

NEWS DESK: Mounting tensions between the United States and Iran have impeded the launch of ferry service between Pakistan and Iran.

Pakistan has already issued its first-ever international ferry service licence, paving the way for licensed passenger ferry operations between Pakistan and member countries of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), including Oman, the United Arab Emirates and Bahrain, as well as the licensing frame-

work is expected to provide regulatory clarity, encourage private-sector participation and boost maritime trade and connectivity in the region.

The first ferry licence, approved by the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, has been given to international operator Sea Keepers, which authorises the company to operate on routes connecting Pakistan with Iran and the GCC countries.

"The company has booked return tickets at Rs50,000 for travel be-

tween Gwadar and Iran," a source revealed. The operator has also hired a vessel with capacity of 250 passengers.

However, rising tensions between the US and Iran delayed the launch of ferry service between Pakistan and Iran, sources said, adding that the operator now plans to launch a service between Karachi and Gwadar keeping in view the current Iran-US standoff.

The ferry service provider got the licence after a delay of around five years during which

its request remained pending and its files moved from one department to another. A terminal has also been set up at Gwadar Port to facilitate passengers and the ferry operator.

It came in the wake of Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry's keen interest in launching ferry services between Pakistan and Iran and other Gulf states. The step was taken in line with directives from Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, aimed at boosting commercial activities at Gwadar Port.

The maritime affairs minister was of the view that the ferry service would ease pressure on land routes and reduce travel costs compared to air transport for the Pakistani diaspora and pilgrims.

Initial operations were to commence from the ports of Karachi and Gwadar by running modern vessels equipped with essential amenities to ensure safe and affordable travel.

Expansion of routes and port calls are also planned based on demand and bilateral agreements.



Urea sales plunge to six-year low

NEWS DESK: Urea sales are expected to clock in at 218,000 tonnes in January, a 75-month low and down by 84 per cent month-on-month and 51pc year-on-year.

Topline Securities, in its report on Monday, noted that the sharp slowdown follows advance purchases in December 2025, driven by higher manufacturer discounts, which pushed December 2025 sales to an all-time high of 1.36 million tonnes.

Discounts offered by select manufacturers decreased in January, with Engro Fertilisers Ltd offering Rs100-150 per bag, down from Rs400 in December 2025, while Fauji Fertiliser Company did not offer any discounts in January after offering Rs150-200 per bag in December 2025.

The closing inventory of urea is expected to be around 0.63m tonnes in January, up from 0.32m tonnes in December 2025.



The inventory rise reflects normalisation after an exceptionally strong December 2025, as discounts were rolled back, seasonal Rabi demand tapered, and production remained steady, leading to an inventory build-up. Company-wise, Fatima Group holds the highest inventory of 220,000 tonnes, followed by Engro Fertilisers of 264,000

tonnes, and Fauji Fertiliser Company (FFC) of 90,000 tonnes.

Among the companies, Engro Fertiliser is anticipated to record a massive 96pc month-on-month and 77pc year-on-year decrease in urea sales to 24,000 tonnes in January.

While Fauji Fertiliser is expected to record urea sales of 175,000 tonnes, down

54pc month-on-month and 10pc year-on-year.

Followed by Fatima Fertiliser of 7,000 tonnes, down 97pc month-on-month and 93pc year-on-year, in January.

Total DAP (Diammonium Phosphate) sales in January is likely to be at 34,000 tonnes, down 58pc month-on-month and 45pc year-on-year.

Pakistan's India boycott splits fans

NEWSDESK: Pakistan's decision to boycott its Twenty20 World Cup match against India has drawn widespread support from fans and administrators who hailed the move as a long-overdue stand in a rivalry in which sport and geopolitics have collided.

The government on Sunday cleared Pakistan to take part in the tournament beginning February 7 but barred the team from playing India in a February 15 group match in Colombo, a decision the International Cricket Council (ICC) said was not in the interests of the global game.

The boycott deepened a long freeze in bilateral cricket between the nuclear-armed neighbours — who have not played a full series since 2012-13 and now meet largely at neutral venues — and dealt a blow to the ICC's marquee event, with India-Pakistan matches the biggest drivers of global viewership and revenue.

Enough is enough For many in Paki-



stan, however, the boycott was less about cricketing issues, with Pakistan forfeiting two points by skipping the match, and more about

symbolism. "Enough is enough," former Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Najam Sethi told Reuters, accusing India's board of

politicising the ICC. "It's time to challenge this duplicitous approach by exercising PCB's options in alliance with Bangladesh."

The Indian government, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and the International Cricket Council (ICC) did not respond to re-

quests for comment. The ICC said it was still awaiting an official communication from the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) conveying their

"position of selective participation." "While the ICC respects the roles of governments in matters of national policy, this decision is

not in the interest of the global game or the welfare of fans worldwide, including millions in Pakistan," the Dubai-based body said in a statement on Sunday.

The government has not publicly detailed its reasoning, but Mosharraf Zaidi, a spokesperson for Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, linked the move to security tensions with India. "Nothing is more important than the memory of Pakistani citizens and troops murdered by Indian proxy terrorists over the weekend," Zaidi said. "With funerals taking place today, this was the least that could be done."

The remarks followed coordinated attacks by Baloch separatist militants across Pakistan's southwestern Balochistan province over the weekend that killed nearly 50 people. India's foreign ministry rejected Pakistan's accusations, calling them "baseless" and accusing Islamabad of deflecting attention from its own internal issues.

Man City and Villa slip up in title race

NEWSDESK: Manchester City and Aston Villa both slipped up in their pursuit of Premier League leaders Arsenal on Sunday with City drawing 2-2 at Tottenham Hotspur and Villa slipping to defeat at home to 10-man Brentford.

After a wobble of their own, Arsenal returned to form with a 4-0 hammering of Leeds United on Saturday opening a seven-point gap and throwing down the gauntlet to their title rivals.

Villa went down 1-0 to Brentford before City kicked off at a Tottenham Hotspur side who have been woeful at home.

City were cruising with goals by Rylan Cherkil and Antoine Semenyo on the first. But everything changed after the break with Dominic Solanke halving the deficit before equalising for the rejuvenated hosts with his heel.

City were left kicking themselves and their players trudged off dejectedly after more dropped points. They have won only once in six league games and are on 47 points from 24 games, now six points behind Arsenal with 14 games left.

"In general it was a really good performance. Unfortunately we could not win," City manager Pep Guardiola said. "We didn't have the consistency to win the games when others were able to do it. Fourteen games is a lot. Six points (behind). Next one."

Tottenham, whose dire Premier League form has been in stark contrast to their Champions League displays, were booted as they left the field at halftime.

But they left to Chelsea, who drew 1-1 at home to Crystal Palace after being reduced to 10 men, edging six points above the relegation zone in 17th position.

Morgan Gibbs-White netted for Forest after five minutes but the hosts had defender Neco Williams sent off when he used his hands to keep out Jefferson Lerma's goal-bound header.

Manchester United made it three wins from three games under interim manager Michael Carrick as Benjamin Sesko struck deep into stoppage time in a dramatic 3-2 home win against Fulham that kept United in fourth place with 41 points.

United led 2-0 after goals from Brazilians Casemiro in the 19th minute and Mathew Cunha in the 56th.

Fulham battled back with Raul Jimenez scoring from the penalty spot in the 85th and then Kevin Curran in a superb 91st-minute equaliser.

But second-half substitute Sesko had the Old Trafford crowd roaring in the fourth minute of stoppage time after Bruno Fernandes touched the ball past Fulham's Calvin Bassey and picked out the Slovenian striker who turned and smashed a shot into the top corner.

"This was a big game," Carrick, a multiple title winner as a United midfielder, told Sky Sports. "I'm so delighted for Ben. To win the game in front of the Streford End, there's not much better than that."

Nottingham Forest drew 1-1 at home to Crystal Palace after being reduced to 10 men, edging six points above the relegation zone in 17th position.

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Carlos Alcaraz makes tennis history as youngest man to complete career Grand Slam as he beats Novak Djokovic

NEWSDESK: Carlos Alcaraz has rewritten tennis history by becoming the youngest man ever to complete a career Grand Slam after an epic victory over Novak Djokovic in the men's final at the 2026 Australian Open in Melbourne.

The 22-year-old Spaniard fought back from losing the first set to beat the 38-year-old Serbian legend in four sets 2-6, 6-3, 7-5, adding the only major title that had previously eluded him and securing all four Grand Slam trophies before his 23rd birthday.

Alcaraz's win at Rod Laver Arena not only marked his first Australian Open title and his seventh major overall but also set a new record as he completed the career Grand Slam younger than any man in tennis history.

He surpassed the decades-old mark first set by Don Budge in 1938, achieving the feat at 22 years and 272 days.

The final was a meeting of generations, pitting the world number one against one of the sport's most decorated champions.

Djokovic, who had been unbeaten in ten previous Australian Open finals, was seeking an unprecedented 25th Grand Slam singles title but was unable to maintain his

early momentum after taking the first set. Despite the loss, Djokovic's presence in another major final highlighted his enduring excellence in the sport.

Fans quickly flooded social media and discussion forums with praise for Alcaraz and admiration for his performance under pressure. Some comments noted that Alcaraz's win kept Djokovic from making history with 25 major titles, adding intrigue to both players' legacies.

Observers also pointed to Alcaraz's resilience throughout the tournament. He dropped only a handful of sets on the way to the final, including a grueling five-hour semifinal match before

Friday that tested his physical and mental stamina. His comeback in the final after losing the opening set underlined his ability to adapt and elevate his game against the very best competition.

In the trophy ceremony moments after his historic win, Alcaraz spoke about what the achievement meant to him and acknowledged the influence of tennis greats he grew up watching.

Completing the Grand Slam set before the age of 23 has placed him among the sport's elite, alongside players like Rafael Nadal, Roger Federer and Djokovic himself, who have each reached the same milestone later in their careers.

But the home side took only five minutes to equalise through Guela Doue, whose younger brother, France international Desire, came on at halftime for the visitors.

PSG played the 10 minutes down to 10 men after Hakimi was sent off for a studs high challenge on Panichelli.

The African Footballer of the Year was initially cautioned but that was changed from yellow to red after a VAR review.

Hakimi's sending-off meant Warren Zaire-Matye Safonov.

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Hazlewood unlikely to be fit for half of T20 World Cup, says Cummins

NEWSDESK: Australia fast bowler Josh Hazlewood may not return to action until halfway through the T20 World Cup, injured teammate Pat Cummins said on Tuesday.

Hazlewood, arguably the squad's most important bowler, has struggled with hamstring and Achilles injuries, and missed the entire Five-test Ashes series against England.

Australia head coach Andrew McDonald said in mid-January that Hazlewood was on track to be fit for the squad's World Cup opener against Ireland on February 11 but Cummins' update was less optimistic.

"I caught up with Joshy a couple of days ago and he's working so hard. I really feel for Joshy, he's



had a few setbacks, (he's) one of the hardest trainers," Cummins told Australian broadcaster Nine Network.

With Mitchell Starc having retired from the format and Cummins sidelined with back problems,

Cummins said players' late arrival to Pakistan after the domestic Big Bash League had not helped. It wasn't the series we were hoping for," he said.

"It's always better when you're winning but they'll shake that one off pretty quickly."

Cummins, who played only one test of the Ashes due to lumbar bone stress, said he had run out of time to be fit for the World Cup squad.

"We wanted to give the back a little rest to make sure it's right for what's going to be a big rest of the year," he said.

"Minor setback, I should be right to go in a few weeks."

Cummins will put to lead Sunrisers Hyderabad in the Indian Premier League which starts on March 26.

Australia head into the February 7-March 8 World Cup undermanned and in poor form following a 111-run humiliation by Pakistan, which completed a 3-0 series whitewash.

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PSG score late winner to reclaim top spot

NEWSDESK: Ten-man Paris St-Germain scored a late winner to claim a 2-1 win at Strasbourg on Sunday and return to the summit of Ligue 1.

Nuno Mendes secured three vital points in the 81st minute, six minutes after the champions had been reduced to 10 men with the dismissal of right back Achraf Hakimi.

Senny Mayulu had put PSG ahead in the 22nd minute, one minute after Strasbourg's Jozequin Panichelli saw his penalty saved by

Matvey Safonov.

But the home side took only five minutes to equalise through Guela Doue, whose younger brother, France international Desire, came on at halftime for the visitors.

PSG played the 10 minutes down to 10 men after Hakimi was sent off for a studs high challenge on Panichelli.

The African Footballer of the Year was initially cautioned but that was changed from yellow to red after a VAR review.

Emery had to move back to cover at right back and it was from his run down the flank and subsequent cross that Mendes headed home with nine minutes remaining as he stole in unmarked from the left.

"We were fortunate to win this match when most people would have thought it was impossible," said PSG coach Luis Enrique.

"It was not our best performance. In the end I don't know if we deserved to win or not but it was very important."

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National Assembly debates Balochistan security, adopts anti-terror resolution

NEWS DESK: The National Assembly on Tuesday continued debate on the security situation in Balochistan, with lawmakers across party lines questioning counterterrorism responses, governance failures and policy direction, while unanimously adopting resolutions condemning terrorism and expressing solidarity with the armed forces and victims.

Opening the debate, JUI-F MNA Alia Kamran raised questions over official claims related to recent security operations, asking why responses to attacks were delayed and what happened to the remaining terrorists if 177 had been killed. Stressing that her party did not support terrorism in any form, she called for an examination of the factors pushing women in Balochistan towards suicide attacks and urged the state to protect the province's youth by addressing the root causes of militancy.

MQM-P MNA Sofia Saeed said there should be no leniency for terrorists or for those who sympathise with them, adding that national unity against terrorism required an effective local government system.

Highlighting socio-economic grievances, JUI-F MNA Usman Badini said hostile forces had filled the vacuum created by the state's failure to provide basic rights and oppor-

unities to Balochistan's youth. He questioned disparities in electricity supply, access to scholarships under CPC and the state's response to coordinated attacks across multiple districts. He said denying rights would provoke reaction and pointed to the lack of basic infrastructure, including fuel facilities, across much of the province.

The debate intensified as opposition MNA and former National Assembly speaker Asad Qaiser said terrorism in Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa could not be addressed through condemnations alone. He argued that when the state failed to act responsibly and ignored public grievances, alienation followed. Referring to political developments, he questioned the message being sent by the continued imprisonment of what he described as the country's most popular leader and said public trust in institutions, including the judiciary, was eroding.

Qaiser also pointed to what he termed political double standards, questioned foreign policy priorities and urged dialogue with neighbouring countries, including Afghanistan. He said the opposition supported the National Action Plan but demanded inclusion and confidence-building on security policy.

MNA Ijazul Haq, questioning the effectiveness of measures against oil smuggling, asking how fuel continued to travel from border regions to major cities despite the presence of security forces. He alleged foreign involvement in Balochistan, raised concerns over the supply of weapons to terrorists and called for accountability over the use of development funds and the province's share under the NFC Award.

Recalling past insurgencies, Haq referred to military operations and reconciliation efforts in earlier decades, arguing that inclusive policies and general amnesties had previously resulted in prolonged peace. He urged the formation of a national consultative committee to address the crisis and called on the government to revisit its strategy.

Following the debate, the House unanimously adopted a resolution condemning recent terrorist attacks in Balochistan, describing them as inhumane crimes targeting innocent civilians, including women and children. The resolution praised the armed forces, law enforcement agencies, the Balochistan government and civil administration for their response, expressed solidarity with the families of martyrs and the injured, and called for zero tolerance and decisive action against terrorist networks.

In its submission, the CDA defended the campaign as a "well-planned operation" aimed at removing Paper

PIA signs cargo partnership with Air France—KLM to expand global reach

NEWS DESK: Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) has secured a strategic cargo partnership with Air France—KLM, deepening its global freight connectivity at a time when the national carrier is also undergoing major institutional changes.

The cargo agreement, effective from January 15, grants PIA Cargo access to the Air France—KLM global network.

Under this arrangement, exporters will be able to dispatch consignments across Europe and the United States using a single air waybill that covers both PIA and the Air France—KLM system.

PIA Cargo will link to the wider network via regional hubs including Dubai, Riyadh and Dammam, with key destinations such as Amsterdam,



Paris, Brussels, Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Düsseldorf, as well as New York, Atlanta and Los Angeles now reachable through the combined network.

The partnership builds on broader PIA initiatives to restore and expand international operations.

French Ambassador Nicolas Galey has

indicated that the recent resumption of direct flights between Islamabad and Paris, operating twice weekly from January 10, reflects strengthened bilateral ties and improved connectivity between Pakistan and Europe.

The ambassador observed that the route and the Air France—KLM partnership pro-

vide streamlined connections to some 21 European destinations, with associated benefits for economic and cultural exchange.

The cargo pact and expanded passenger links coincide with the conclusion of PIA's privatisation process. In late January, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif presided over a ceremony

in Islamabad marking the signing of transaction documents between the government and the Arrif Habib Consortium, which acquired a 75 per cent stake in PIA through a competitive bidding process.

PM Shehbaz described the transparent process as a milestone in Pakistan's privatisation agenda and expressed confidence that the new ownership would invest in service quality and reconnect the airline with its historical prominence.

The expanded cargo network, the resumption of direct European flights and the transition to private-sector management point to a renewed focus on strengthening PIA's role in supporting trade and travel between Pakistan and key global markets.

Tree-cutting drive in Islamabad conducted on orders from PM Office, IHC told

NEWS DESK: The Capital Development Authority (CDA) told the Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Tuesday that its recent tree-cutting drive in the capital was conducted on the direct instructions of the Prime Minister's Office (PMO).

The statement was part of a written report submitted to the court in response to a petition challenging the CDA's tree-cutting drive, which had drawn significant public criticism.

Recently, large-scale tree removal took place in at least three locations in Islamabad, including areas of tree cover around Shakarparian, drawing criticism alleging large-scale environmental damage.

However, authorities have maintained that only Paper Mulberry trees were cut down as they were a major cause of allergies. In its submission, the CDA defended the campaign as a "well-planned operation" aimed at removing Paper



Mulberry trees, which it described as a major source of pollen allergies and asthma in Islamabad. The authority cited scientific research, including a study published in the Journal of Global Health, linking Paper Mulberry pollen to increased asthma attacks and hospital visits. The authority further claimed that the tree species deteriorated air quality and soil health. The CDA stated

that the decision to remove the trees followed a multi-step process: a 2022 order from the IHC led to the formation of an Environment Committee, which recommended the trees' removal in May 2023. A public hearing was later held in July 2023, it said. According to the CDA report, the issue gained attention after a journalist's column in November 2024, prompting the PMO to direct the Ministry of

Health and CDA to take action. Subsequent meetings resulted in the PMO issuing formal directions to implement a pollen allergy management plan, the authority said.

The CDA denied allegations that it cut down trees other than Paper Mulberry, or that the drive was a cover for development projects.

It stated that trees for projects like the 'Marka-i-Haq Monument' were transplanted

to other locations. The authority also argued that no separate environmental approval was needed because the Pakistan Environmental Protection Agency (PAK-EPA) was part of the committee that recommended the action.

The CDA has asked the court to dismiss the petition, calling it "without merit".

It is worth mentioning that environmental conservation organisation WWF-Pakistan, in a statement, had disputed Islamabad authorities' stance that paper mulberry trees were removed due to a rise in pollen allergies, stating that the action was also linked to infrastructure development.

"WWF-Pakistan's field assessments indicate that vegetation loss in the capital is not limited to Paper Mulberry management alone, but is also linked to infrastructure development in multiple locations," the environmental body had said.

IMCTC Chief Meets COAS at GHQ to Discuss Counter-Terrorism Cooperation

NEWS DESK: Dawood Ahmed: The military's media wing. Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said that, Major General Mohammed Bin Saeed Al-Moghedhi, Secretary General of the Islamic Military Counter Terrorism Coalition (IMCTC), held a meeting with Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, at General Headquarters in Rawalpindi.

The discussion focused on matters of mutual interest, particularly the evolving regional security situation and the need to strengthen cooperation in counter-terrorism efforts.

Both sides reiterated their commitment to addressing terrorism and extremism through coordinated approaches, including intelligence sharing, joint strategies, and capacity building among member states.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir acknowledged the role of IMCTC in promoting collective security and enhancing coordination among Islamic countries to counter security threats.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's continued support for regional and international initiatives aimed at ensuring peace and stability. Major General Al-Moghedhi appreciated Pakistan's contributions and sacrifices in

the fight against terrorism and praised the professionalism and operational preparedness of Pakistan's armed forces.

The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further enhance institutional collaboration to promote lasting peace, stability, and security in the region.

An IMCTC delegation is visiting Pakistan from February 2 to 6, 2026, to conduct a week-long training programme at the National University of Sciences and Technology. The training includes integration and rehabilitation of extremist elements as part of broader counter-extremism efforts.

According to state-run Radio Pakistan, a 21-gun salute was presented to the visiting dignitary.

Tokayev is accompanied by a high-level delegation comprising senior cabinet ministers and other high-ranking officials. A video shared by his office showed the streets in Islamabad adorned with Kazakhstan's national flag.

In a handout issued earlier in the day, the President's Secretariat said that President Zardari will confer the Nishan-i-Pakistan,

Kazakhstan president arrives in Islamabad on 2-day visit

NEWS DESK: Kazakhstan President Kassym-Jomart Tokayev arrived in Islamabad on Tuesday for a two-day official visit as the two nations seek to bolster bilateral ties further.

The two countries maintain friendly diplomatic relations, with Kazakhstan being Pakistan's top export destination among Central Asian countries.

President Asif Ali Zardari, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and Deputy PM Ishaq Dar welcomed President Tokayev upon his arrival at Rawalpindi's Nur Khan Base.

the country's highest civilian award, on the Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan presidents; the latter is expected to visit the country sometime this month.

According to the Foreign Office (FO), President Tokayev is expected to hold meetings with President Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, as well as address the Pakistan-Kazakhstan Business Forum.

This visit is seen as a win-win situation by both countries. For Pakistan, it will help



to undertake a comprehensive review of bilateral relations, the FO had highlighted.

It added that the two sides will discuss new avenues for broadening cooperation, particularly in trade, logistics, regional connectivity and people-to-people contacts, as well as explore collaboration at regional and international forums.

This visit is seen as a win-win situation by both countries. For Pakistan, it will help

Islamabad position itself as a land bridge between Central and South Asia and beyond. For Kazakhstan, it will help diversify its international trade amid turbulence in Eurasia in the wake of the Russia-Ukraine war.

Kazakh Minister of Science and Higher Education Sayasat Nurbek was already on a visit to Pakistan. Eight memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed on Monday between the higher education institutions of the two countries to promote

joint research collaboration, faculty and student exchanges, collaborative academic programmes, and capacity-building initiatives.

As part of the collaboration, Kazakhstan educational centres were inaugurated at three public sector universities in Islamabad.

In September, when then-Kazakh deputy premier Murat Nurlieu visited Pakistan, the two sides signed the Action Plan of Cooperation to boost bilateral ties.

