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# QUETTA VOICE

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## Quetta Train Services Resume as Jaffar Express and Chaman Passenger Restart

### Staff Reporter:

Train services from Quetta, which had been suspended following serious security incidents across Balochistan, have begun resuming, bringing relief to stranded passengers.

Railway authorities confirmed that operations halted for the past five days are now gradually being restored as the security situation improves.

According to officials, rail services were suspended after

multiple militant attacks on January 31 damaged railway tracks at various locations in the province. Citing safety concerns, Pakistan Railways temporarily stopped all train operations from Quetta to other parts of Balochistan and the rest of the country.

Several major services, including the Jaffar Express (Quetta-Peshawar), Bolan Mail (Quetta-Karachi), and the Chaman Passenger train, were affected. The Jaffar Express travelling from Peshawar was also stopped at Jacobabad, while

ticket refunds were issued to impacted passengers.

With conditions stabilizing, the railway administration has announced the phased restoration of services. The Chaman Passenger train has departed from Quetta according to its regular schedule, while the Jaffar Express bound for Peshawar has also resumed operations from today.

Passengers have expressed satisfaction over the restart, describing the route as a vital transport link for the province.

Railway officials stated that

the Bolan Mail service between Quetta and Karachi has not yet fully resumed, but is expected to restart within the next few days.

They added that repair work on damaged tracks and security clearance procedures are progressing swiftly to ensure safe operations.

The restoration comes amid ongoing security operations by law enforcement agencies, which have led to an improvement in the overall situation.

Passengers said the suspension of train services had caused

significant hardship and disrupted Balochistan's connectivity with other provinces.

Authorities further emphasized that enhanced security arrangements have been put in place along railway routes to prevent any untoward incidents. Travelers have been advised to confirm train schedules before departure. The resumption of rail services is seen as a significant development, as Quetta Railway Junction serves as a key link connecting Balochistan with the rest of the country.

## PAA issues kite-flying alert for Lahore airport during Basant festivities

### NEWS DESK:

The Pakistan Airports Authority (PAA) on Thursday issued an alert warning pilots of intense kite flying in the airspace around Lahore airport during Basant festivities, citing potential risks to aircraft operations.

After years of silence in Lahore's winter skies, Basant is set to return, cautiously and tightly regulated, as the Punjab government prepares to revive a festival once synonymous with colour, rooftops and springtime renewal, yet long shadowed by tragedy and controversy.

Punjab has granted special permission for Basant celebrations from Feb 6 to 8, restricting the festival exclusively to Lahore under a comprehensive set of legal, administrative and safety measures aimed at preventing the fatalities that had earlier prompted its ban. In a Notice to Airmen (NOTAM), the authority said heavy kite flying is expected in Lahore, particularly during aircraft take-off and landing phases at low altitude.

"Due to Basant celebrations, pilots are advised to exercise extra caution during approach and take-off," the NOTAM said.

According to the alert, the warning will remain in effect from midnight on Thursday until midnight on February 8.

Basant, traditionally observed on the fifth day of the month of Magh in late January or early February, marks the arrival of spring and has historically been celebrated across Punjab, including in India and among Punjabi diaspora communities, with kite flying at the heart of the festivities.

In Pakistan's Punjab, however, the festival acquired a darker reputation during the early 2000s, as celebratory gunfire, glass-coated strings, metallic wires and rooftop accidents resulted in numerous deaths, prompting authorities to impose a blanket ban in 2007. This year's revival follows the promulgation of the Punjab Kite Flying Ordinance 2025, which formally reopens the door for Basant while placing unprecedented restrictions on every aspect of the festival, from kite dimensions and string material to sound systems and rooftop access.

Under official notifications issued by the Lahore district administration on the instructions of Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz,

## Bhati Gate case suspects remand extended

### NEWS DESK:

A judicial magistrate on Wednesday extended the physical remand of five suspects in the case involving the death of a mother and her minor daughter who fell into an open manhole near Bhati Gate.

On completion of the previous four-day physical remand, police produced all five suspects before the court and sought a further 10-day remand.

Magistrate Shaqir Abbas asked the investigating officer (IO) what progress had been made during the four days of remand.

The IO told the court that the suspects had not disclosed anything so far during the investigation.

Advocate Ahmad Chicher, the defence counsel, argued that the site work had been completed and handed over to Wana.

He said his clients were the representatives of the contractor company and they had nothing to do with the construction site after the completion of the project. He said not a single official of any government department had been arrested by the police so far.

### News Desk:

At least 36 security personnel and 22 civilians were martyred during recent terrorist violence in Balochistan, while 216 terrorists were killed in a sustained counterterrorism operation, Special Assistant to the Chief Minister for Media and Political Affairs Shahid Rind said while briefing the media in Quetta.

Shahid Rind said banned militant groups launched coordinated attacks on multiple locations, including sensitive government installations.

He added that the swift and effective response by security forces prevented the attackers from achieving their objectives and protected civilians in targeted areas.

Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1 Intensified

Following the attacks, security forces intensified Operation Radd-ul-Fitna-1, targeting terrorist hideouts, leadership,

and support networks. According to officials, the operation severely damaged

militants' command-and-control structures and disrupted their ability to operate across

the province. Law enforcement agencies have detained several sus-



pects during ongoing search and clearance operations.

Authorities urged citizens to cooperate with security institutions by reporting suspicious activity to help prevent future attacks.

Situation Returning to Normal

Shahid Rind stated that the overall security situation in Balochistan has improved significantly, with normal life resuming in most areas.

Educational activities and public health campaigns are continuing as planned, reflecting a gradual return to stability.

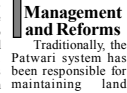
Reaffirming the government's zero-tolerance policy against terrorism, Shahid Rind said no leniency would be shown to militants, their facilitators, or supporters.

He stressed that all institutions remain united in their efforts to ensure lasting peace and security in Balochistan.

## **Pakistan-Saudi Arabia Defense Pact – A Historic Milestone in Bilateral Relations**

This historic step deserves to be celebrated as a national achievement. It is a reflection of Pakistan's enduring diplomacy and its ability to transform longstanding friendships into strategic partnerships that ensure stability, prosperity, and peace for generations to come.

After independence in 1947, these laws continued to guide Pakistan's land management system. Today, major statutes like the West Pakistan



significant reforms through the Punjab Land Records Authority (PLRA) and other provincial projects to digitize land records and reduce human in-

Pakistan continues to face issues like illegal possession (land grabbing), forged documents, and slow judicial processes. These problems create un-

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enforcement efforts have failed to stem the tide. Quetta's traffic police estimate that 40% of vehicles in the city are

Unauthorized stalls and illegal parking occupy nearly 30% of road space in busy commercial zones such as Prince

**Weak Traffic Management and Enforcement**  
A lack of proper traf-

• Widen key roads such as Masjid Road, Jinnah Road, and Zarghoon Road to accommodate growing traf-

- Impose heavier fines and penalties on reckless drivers.

6. Removing Encroachments and Illegal

Citizens, too, have a role to play—by obeying traffic rules, avoiding illegal parking, and discouraging encroachments.

Economically, Communism eliminates private property and discourages entrepreneurship. Without personal incentive, individuals lose motivation to innovate and work for economic growth. As a result, this system ham-

pers development and limits prosperity. The severe restrictions on basic rights and freedoms make Communism unsustainable in modern nation-states.

The Problems with Capitalism

On the other end

ies Capitalism, which has enabled just 1% of the world's population to control more wealth than the remaining 99% combined.

alists while exploiting the working class. Under Capitalism, profit takes precedence over people — workers are overburdened, and ethical values are often sacrificed for industrial gains.

Furthermore, Capitalism's obsession

with rapid industrialization and profit maximization has led to environmental destruction, resource depletion, and climate crises.

growing inequality, moral decay, and ecological harm — make Capitalism an unfit model for an equitable, sustainable society.

The Islamic Socio-Economic Philosophy: A Balanced Approach

Both Capitalism and

The Islamic socioeconomic model, however, offers the ideal middle path — balancing individual rights with collective welfare. With its emphasis on justice, equality, and moral responsibility, Islam presents the most sustainable and humane political and economic philosophy for the modern world.

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## Last US-Russia nuclear treaty ends in 'grave moment' for world

**NEWS DESK:** The last nuclear treaty between Russia and the United States expired Thursday, abruptly ending decades of restrictions on how many warheads the two top powers can deploy and triggering fears of a global arms race.

New START (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty), signed during a warmer period of relations, ended with the turn of the calendar to February 5, with US President Donald Trump not following up on Russian counterpart Vladimir Putin's proposal to extend the treaty's limits for one year.

United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres called it a "grave moment for international peace and security" and urged Washington and Moscow to head quickly to the negotiating table.

"For the first time in more than half a century, we face a world without any binding limits on the strategic nuclear arsenals of the Russian Federation and the United



States of America," the risk of a nuclear weapon being used is the highest in decades," he said, after Russian suggestions of using tactical nuclear weapons early in the Ukraine war.

Pope Leo XIV said each side needed to do "everything possible" to avert a new arms race. "I urge you not to abandon this instrument without seeking to ensure that it is followed up in a concrete and effective manner," the American-born pope said at

his weekly general audience. Russia's foreign ministry said it considered that both countries are "no longer bound by any obligations or symmetrical declarations within the context of the treaty."

"The Russian Federation intends to act responsibly and prudently," it added, but warned it was ready to take "decisive" countermeasures if its national security is threatened. US demands China

involvement

Trump has frequently lashed out at international limits on the United States and called for nuclear testing to resume after a long moratorium, although he has not followed up.

But some observers say the expiration of New START owes less to ideology than to the workings of the Trump administration, where career diplomats are sidelined, simply not having the bandwidth to negotiate a complex agreement.

Trump, asked in October in front of his helicopter about Putin's proposal for a one-year extension, said it sounded "like a good idea", but there were no subsequent negotiations.

US Secretary of State Marco Rubio said on Wednesday that Trump would make a decision later and reiterated a call for a new agreement that includes China.

"The president's been clear in the past that in order to have true arms control in the 21st century, it's impossible to do something that doesn't include China, because of their vast and rapidly growing stockpile," Rubio said.

## Trump suggests 'softer touch' needed on immigration

**NEWS DESK:** United States President Donald Trump suggested on Wednesday that a "softer touch" may be needed on immigration, as his administration said 700 federal officers would be pulled from Minnesota but that mass deportations would not stop.

The fatal shootings of two protesters by federal officers in Minneapolis last month sparked widespread outrage in the United States and calls for an end to immigration raids in the Midwestern city, but Trump's administration has been reluctant to shift course.

"I learned that maybe we could use a little bit of a softer touch. But you still have to be tough," Trump said in an

interview with NBC's "Nightly News" when asked what he had learned from Minneapolis.

Trump's border chief Tom Homan had earlier announced that 700 federal officers would be withdrawn from Minnesota, but said the contentious deployment would continue, with about 2,000 agents remaining after the draw-down.

And in an interview with Laura Ingraham on Fox News later in the day, he vowed that removals of undocumented migrants would continue. "Mass deportations are here, they're coming, we're already breaking records, and we're not going to stop," Homan said.

"A step in the right direction," the mayor of Minneapolis said as anger over the pullback from the city as "a step in the right direction," but called for the federal government to move faster in winding down its immigration operations in the state.

Homan also stressed he would stay in Minneapolis — which has become a major flashpoint in Trump's overall immigration policy — "until we get it all done."

"President Trump fully intends to achieve mass deportations during this administration, and immigration enforcement actions will continue every day throughout this country," Homan said.

Minneapolis Mayor Jacob Frey welcomed the reduction in federal personnel but said on X that the US immigration operation in Minneapolis — dubbed Metro Surge — must end "immediately."

Minnesota Governor Tim Walz took a similar stance, calling for a "faster and larger draw-down of forces" and state-led investigations into the killings of the two Minneapolis protesters.

Federal agents shot and killed an unarmed woman, 37-year-old Renee Good, as she attempted to drive away from an encounter with ICE agents last month.



## India to sign trade deal with United States in March, minister says



**NEWS DESK:** India and the United States expect to sign a long-awaited formal trade deal in March, after which New Delhi will reduce tariffs on US goods, Trade Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday.

They will issue a joint statement in four or five days, prompt-

ing Washington to cut duties on Indian exports to 18% from 30%, he added, laying out the first official timeline for the adoption of the deal since it was unveiled on Monday.

President Donald Trump announced the surprise trade deal with India,

which slashes US tariffs on Indian goods in exchange for India putting a halt to Russian oil purchases and lowering trade barriers.

Goyal said India will import at least \$300 billion worth of energy, aircraft and chips, among other pur-

chases from the United States over the next five years.

Its orders from companies such as planemaker Boeing B.A.N could amount to \$70 billion to \$80 billion, he added.

If you add engines, it will probably cross \$100 billion," Goyal said.

## Israeli strikes kill three children, 18 others in Gaza

**NEWS DESK:** Israeli strikes killed at least 21 people in the Gaza Strip on Wednesday, as the Israeli military continues to violate a US-brokered truce that entered its second phase last month, according to Palestinian health officials.

The latest strikes occurred days after Israel partially reopened the Rafah crossing between Gaza and Egypt. The crossing serves as the primary gateway for Palestinians to the outside world that does not pass through Israeli territory.

Gaza's health ministry, which operates under Hamas authority, said 21 people were killed and 38 others were wounded in the series of strikes. Medical officials noted that three children were among the dead.

Aid shortage The casualties were distributed across several facilities. Three bodies were brought to Nasser Hospital following strikes on homes and tents for displaced persons in southern Khan Yunis, while 14 more bodies were transported



to Al Shifa Hospital in Gaza City.

"We also received dozens of wounded. The situation is extremely difficult in the hospitals of Gaza Strip due to the severe shortage of medicines and medical supplies," said Abu Salmiya, an official at Al Shifa Hospital.

The humanitarian crisis remains acute as Israel continues to scrutinise all aid entering the besieged coastal enclave. The current ceasefire originally took effect Oct 10 of last year, following two years of instability and conflict

that intensified in October 2023. Under reported pressure from the United States, Israel recently allowed the Rafah crossing to open, though passage is currently limited to patients and their companions.

Since Monday, sick and wounded Palestinians have been moving into Egypt for treatment. On Tuesday alone, 45 people crossed into Egypt, while 42 entered the territory, according to the Palestinian Red Crescent Society.

Funding issues On the diplomatic front, the US has yet to

secure funding for its ambitious Gaza reconstruction plan. Potential donors are reportedly hesitant to commit funds, citing concerns that disagreements over Hamas' disarmament could lead Israel to resume "full-scale war."

Under the plan proposed by the Trump administration, Hamas is required to lay down its weapons. The proposal calls for a staged Israeli withdrawal as the group disarms, with reconstruction overseen by a "Board of Peace" chaired by the US president.

## Ukraine and Russia resume US-brokered peace talks in Abu Dhabi

**NEWS DESK:** Ukraine and Russia started a second day of US-brokered talks in Abu Dhabi on Thursday, after a first day described as productive and positive by both Kyiv and Moscow.

Russian President Vladimir Putin's envoy, Kirill Dmitriev, said on Thursday that there was progress and a positive movement forward in talks on how to end the four-year war.

Ukraine's top negotiator, Rustem Umerov, said after Wednesday's meetings that the discussions were "meaningful and productive, focusing on concrete steps and practical solutions".

Announcing the start of the second day of talks, he said the officials would work in the same formats as during their first day - trilateral consultations, group discussions, and then again joint coordination of the positions.

"The second day of negotiations in Abu Dhabi has begun," Umerov said on the Telegram app.

Dmitriev said that active work was underway to restore Russia's relations with the United States, including within the framework of a US-Russia working group on the economy.

The war mongers from Europe, from Britain, are constantly trying to interfere with this process, constantly trying to meddle in it.

And the more such attempts there are, the

more we see that progress is definitely being made," Dmitriev said.

"There is positive movement forward," he said, in comments supplied by his press service.

Trump's pressure to find a compromise US President Donald Trump's administration has pushed both Kyiv and Moscow to find a compromise to end the war, but the two sides appear to remain far apart on key points despite several rounds of talks with US officials.

Ukrainian officials have said that this round of talks was different compared with previous attempts, as the Russian

delegation also included military teams.

The most complicated issues are Moscow's demands that Kyiv cede land it still controls in the eastern Donetsk region and the fate of the Zaporizhzhia nuclear power plant.

Europe's largest, which is in a Russian-occupied area. As a precondition for any deal, Moscow wants Kyiv to pull its troops from all of the Donetsk region, including a line of heavily fortified cities regarded as one of Ukraine's strongest defences.

Ukraine has said the conflict should be frozen along the current front lines and rejects any unilateral pullback

of its forces. Kyiv says it wants control of the Zaporizhzhia power plant.

Russia occupies about 20% of Ukraine's national territory, including Crimea and parts of the eastern Donbas region seized before the 2022 invasion.

Analysts say Russia has gained about 1.5% of Ukrainian territory since early 2024.

After heavy Russian airstrikes on Ukraine overnight on Tuesday, ahead of the talks, there were fewer reports of attacks on Thursday.

Kyiv's mayor said two people were injured in a drone strike overnight in the capital.



**HYDERABAD:** Workers of Jamat-e-Islami hold a rally to express solidarity with Kashmir on Kashmir Day outside Hyderabad Press Club(HPC).



## Governor Balochistan Jaffar Khan Mandokhail Highlights Role of NGOs in Public Welfare

QUETTA : Governor of Balochistan, Jaffar Khan Mandokhail, has said that alongside government departments, private development organizations also play a vital role in public welfare, and that both sectors can strengthen mutual co-ordination to bring real and positive change in society for the service of the people.

He expressed these views while talking to a delegation of Muslim Hands, led by Regional Head Malik Naeem, during a meeting at the Governor House Quetta. Ataulah Durrani and Jameel Ahmed were also present on the occasion.

The Governor appreciated the efforts of Muslim Hands in various districts of Balochistan, particularly in the fields of education, healthcare, and provision of clean drinking water, term-



ing their initiatives commendable and impactful.

Governor Jaffar Khan Mandokhail said that Balochistan has a sparse and widely

scattered population, making the provision of basic facilities a challenging task.

He urged international organizations and non-governmental

organizations (NGOs) to extend their support and guidance in delivering essential services to the people of the province, especially in remote and

underdeveloped areas.

He emphasized that development partners should expand their welfare and humanitarian activities to

rural regions, so that the people living there may also benefit from the outcomes of development initiatives and enjoy improved living standards.

## Grand Rally Held at Pakistan House Sui to Express Solidarity with Kashmir and Pay Tribute to Pakistan Army

SUI : A grand rally was organized today at Pakistan House, Sui, under the leadership of District Chairman Dera Bugti and tribal elder Wadera Ghulam Nabi Bugti, renowned tribal leader Wadera Shah Murad Khan Bugti, and Wadera Mir Muhammad.

The rally was held to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day (February 5) and to pay tribute to the courageous efforts of the Pakistan Army against terrorism in Balochistan.

The rally started from Pakistan House Sui and concluded at the central bazaar of Sui.

A large number of political figures, youth, and patriotic members of the Bugti tribe participated enthusiastically, sending a clear message of unity and national solidarity.

Participants reiterated that they stand firmly with the oppressed people of Kashmir and are shoulder to shoulder with the Pakistan Army against enemies of peace in Balochistan.

Speakers praised the Pakistan Army for its bravery, sacrifices, and unwavering determination, stating that its successful fight against terrorism is a source of pride for the entire nation.

During the rally, participants raised slogans in favor of Pakistan, Kashmir, and the Pakistan Army, while strongly condemning Indian-sponsored terrorism.

They affirmed that the people of Balochistan and the Baloch nation stand united with Pakistan and will continue to do so at all times.

## District Administration Holds Rally to Express Solidarity with Kashmiris

KHUZZAR : The District Administration Khuzdar, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq Sasoli, organized a solidarity rally with the people of Kashmir to mark Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The rally was attended by SSP Khuzdar Umar Abbas Babar, Assistant Commissioner Hafeezullah Kakar, District Education Officer Abid Hussain Baloch, District Manager PPHI Munir Ahmed Baloch, the President of Anjuman-e-Tajran Khuzdar, district officers, representatives of the Hindu Panchayat, and people belonging to various walks of life.

Participants of the rally raised slogans of "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" and "Pakistan Zindabad".

The rally started from the DC Office Khuzdar, passed through Maulana Muhammad Umar Deen



Puri Library, and concluded back at the DC Office. Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Razzaq Sasoli said that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and can never become a part of India. He stated that India has turned Kashmir into a military garrison, yet has failed to win the hearts of the Kashmiri people, whose hearts, he said, beat with Pakistan.

He added that ob-

serving Kashmir Solidarity Day across the country is meant to convey a clear message to the world that Pakistan stands firmly with the Kashmiri people and will continue to support them until they are granted their right to self-determination.

He reaffirmed Pakistan's moral and diplomatic support for the Kashmiri cause. The Deputy Commissioner urged the in-

ternational community to take serious notice of Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir and to play its role by pressuring India to allow Kashmiris their legitimate right to self-determination.

He concluded by saying that India can never erase Pakistan's love from the hearts of Kashmiris, and expressed confidence that Kashmir will one day be free, while India will ultimately face failure.

## DC Major (R) Ilyas Kubzai Chairs Evening Review Meeting on Final Day of Polio Campaign



SIBI : An evening review meeting on the final day of the polio vaccination campaign was held under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Sibi, Major (R) Ilyas Kubzai.

The meeting conducted a detailed review of cases involving still-missed children.

Non-Accessible (NA) areas, and children of refusal parents identified during the campaign.

During the meeting, it was decided that re-vaccination teams would be dispatched immediately to ensure that all missed children are administered polio drops without delay. In this regard,

Assistant Commissioner Sibi, Mansoor Ali Shah, visited various areas along with field teams to personally oversee coverage of missed children and ensure the administration of polio drops.

Addressing the meeting, Deputy Commissioner Major (R) Ilyas Kubzai issued strict instructions that all remaining children, including those of refusal parents, must be vaccinated the same day after providing proper awareness to parents.

He personally contacted parents of refusal cases by phone, held detailed discussions regarding the importance of polio vaccination, and en-

sured that teams were immediately sent to their homes to vaccinate the children.

The Deputy Commissioner made it clear that a zero-tolerance policy would be adopted for polio eradication and that 100 per cent vaccination coverage must be ensured at all costs, reaffirming the district administration's firm commitment to achieving a polio-free Pakistan.

## District Administration Holds Kashmir Solidarity Rally Led by DC Abdul Qudoos Achakzai

ZIARAT : The District Administration Ziarat, under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudoos Achakzai, organized a solidarity rally with the people of Kashmir in connection with Kashmir Solidarity Day.

The rally was attended by Assistant Commissioner Sajad-ur-Rehman, district officers, and people from various walks of life. Participants raised slogans of

"Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" and "Pakistan Zindabad". The rally started from the DC Office Ziarat, passed through different roads of the city, and concluded back at the DC Office. Addressing the rally participants, Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudoos Achakzai said that Kashmir is the jugular vein of Pakistan and can never become a part of India. He stated that although India has

turned Kashmir into a military garrison, it has failed to win the hearts of the Kashmiri people, whose hearts, he said, beat with Pakistan.

He added that the purpose of observing Kashmir Solidarity Day across the country is to convey a clear message to the world that Pakistan stands firmly with the Kashmiri people and will continue its moral and diplomatic support until Kashmiris are granted their right to self-determination.

The Deputy Commissioner urged the international community to take serious notice of Indian atrocities in occupied Kashmir and to play an effective role by pressuring India to grant Kashmiris their legitimate right to self-determination.

He emphasized that India can never erase Pakistan's love from the hearts of Kashmiris.

He said that Pakistan has always been a strong supporter of the long-standing rights of the Kashmiri people and remains firmly committed to raising its voice at the global level for their freedom and right to self-determination.

In his message, Mansoor Qazi emphasized that the struggle and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people will always be remembered in history, adding that feelings of solidarity with Kashmir live in the heart of every Pakistani.

He said that the people of Balochistan stand united with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to raise their voice for the protection of Kashmiri rights at every forum.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that Kashmir Solidarity Day is not limited to a single day, but represents an ongoing struggle and unwavering unity in support of the

## DC Mansoor Qazi Reaffirms Pakistan's Firm Support for Kashmiris on Kashmir Solidarity Day

PISHIN : Deputy Commissioner Pishin, Mansoor Qazi, on the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day,

said that Pakistan has always been a strong supporter of the long-standing rights of the Kashmiri people and remains firmly committed to raising its voice at the global level for their freedom and right to self-determination.

In his message, Mansoor Qazi emphasized that the struggle and sacrifices of the Kashmiri people will always be remembered in history, adding that feelings of solidarity with Kashmir live in the heart of every Pakistani.

He said that the people of Balochistan stand united with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to raise their voice for the protection of Kashmiri rights at every forum.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that Kashmir Solidarity Day is not limited to a single day, but represents an ongoing struggle and unwavering unity in support of the

Kashmiri people's right to self-determination.

He urged the public to actively participate in special events, seminars,

and educational activities to express solidarity with Kashmiris and to remind the international community that safeguarding

the rights of the Kashmiri people is a global responsibility. Mansoor Qazi further said that the Government of Pakistan and the local administration are fully committed to promoting peace, brotherhood,

and human rights, and will continue to demonstrate complete cooperation and solidarity with the Kashmiri people.

Concluding his message, he said that Kashmir Solidarity Day reminds us that our relationship with the Kashmiri people is not only emotional, but also a moral,

legal, and humanitarian responsibility, and reaffirmed Pakistan's resolve to continue its support for the just cause of the Kashmiri people.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day Rally Held Under DC Capt (R) Zulfiqar Ali Karrar

NASIRABAD : On the occasion of Kashmir Solidarity Day, and in compliance with the directives of the Chief Minister Balochistan and Chief Secretary Balochistan, a solidarity rally was organized under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Nasirabad, Captain (Retd) Zulfiqar Ali Karrar. The rally was taken out from the Deputy Commissioner Office, Dera Murad Jamali. Participants carried placards and banners inscribed with slogans against Indian atrocities in Indian Occupied Jammu and Kashmir (IOJK).

The air echoed with chants condemning the oppression by Indian forces, while slogans of "Kashmir Banay Ga Pakistan" resounded throughout the area.

The rally was attended by Assistant Commissioner Bahadur Khan Khoso, other government officers, political and social figures,



and a large number of schoolchildren, who actively participated to express solidarity with the Kashmiri people.

Addressing the participants, Deputy Commissioner Captain (Retd) Zulfiqar Ali Karrar said that a just resolution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute remains a central pillar of Pakistan's foreign policy.

He reaffirmed that Pakistan will continue to support the Kashmiri people until they achieve their right to

self-determination. He stated that lasting peace in the region can only be achieved when the Kashmir issue is resolved in accordance with the wishes of the Kashmiri people.

He added that the brave Kashmiri people, saying that despite decades of oppression, they have never retreated from their struggle for freedom, and their resilience and sacrifices deserve the highest respect and salute.

He said that the people of Balochistan stand united with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters and will continue to raise their voice for the protection of Kashmiri rights at every forum.

The Deputy Commissioner stated that Kashmir Solidarity Day is not limited to a single day, but represents an ongoing struggle and unwavering unity in support of the

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| <p><b>PUBLIC NOTICE</b></p> <p>Application for issuance of letter of Administration to Successor Certificate to the holder of the deceased's estate of deceased person (1) Name of deceased person: (2) Date of death: (3) Date of application: (4) Name of applicant: (5) Address of applicant: (6) Signature of applicant: (7) Signature of Successor Certificate holder: (8) Signature of District Commissioner: (9) Signature of District Magistrate: (10) Signature of District Judge: (11) Signature of District Collector: (12) Signature of District Engineer: (13) Signature of District Health Officer: (14) Signature of District Social Officer: (15) Signature of District Welfare Officer: (16) Signature of District Labour Officer: (17) Signature of District Agriculture Officer: (18) Signature of District Forest Officer: (19) Signature of District Fisheries Officer: (20) Signature of District Industries Officer: (21) Signature of District Transport Officer: (22) Signature of District Public Works 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## Pakistan must create 30m jobs over next decade: World Bank president

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan must create up to 30 million jobs over the next decade to turn its youth bulge into an economic dividend or risk instability and outward migration, World Bank President Ajay Banga has stressed.

Pakistan is entering the implementation phase of a 10-year Country Partnership Framework (CPF) deal agreed with the World Bank last year, while also working with the International Monetary Fund to stabilise its economy. But Islamabad is still facing mounting pressure to deliver sustained growth and jobs.

"We're trying to move the bank group as a whole from the idea of projects to the idea of outcomes," Banga said in an interview with Reuters in Karachi during a visit to Pakistan this week.

"Job creation is the North Star."

"Generational challenge" Pakistan needs to generate 2.5m to 3m jobs a year — roughly 25m to 30m over the next decade — as millions of young people come of age, Banga said.

Failure to do so could fuel "illegal immigration or domestic instability."

Banga said Pakistan's population

dynamics mean employment creation will remain a binding constraint on growth over the long term, rather than a secondary policy goal.

"This is a generational challenge," he said. The CPF commits around \$4 billion a year in combined public and private financing from the World Bank Group, with roughly half expected to come from private-sector operations led by the International Finance Corporation.

Banga said the reliance on private capital reflects a country where the government has limited spending capacity and 90 per cent of jobs are created in the private sector. Banga said Pakistan's job strategy rests on three pillars: investment in human and physical infrastructure, business-friendly regulatory reforms, and expanded access to financing and insurance, particularly for small firms and farmers that typically lack bank credit.

Infrastructure, primary healthcare, tourism and small-scale agriculture were labour-intensive sectors with the greatest employment potential, he said, adding that farming alone could account for about one-third of the jobs Pakistan needs to create by 2050.

Nearly 4,000 doc-



A growing pool of freelancers also highlighted Pakistan's appetite for entrepreneurship, but they need better access to capital, infrastructure and support to scale into job-creating businesses, he said.

The strain is readily visible in the exodus of skilled workers

Power first

Power first

Fixing Pakistan's power sector is the most urgent near-term priority, Banga said, noting that losses and inefficiencies in electricity distribution have limited growth despite improvements in generation capacity. Pakistan's power sector has long been plagued by growing debt from distribu-

tion losses, weak bill recovery and delayed government subsidies, which has strained public finances and discouraged private investment.

The debt has been a recurring focus of IMF-backed reform programmes, with successive governments struggling to contain

losses while keeping energy affordable.

He said rapid roof-

top solar adoption, while easing energy costs for households and businesses, risks creating grid instability if distribution reforms are not accelerated.

"Electricity is fundamental to everything — health, education, business and jobs."

Climate by design Banga said climate resilience should also be embedded into mainstream development spending rather than treated as a standalone agenda. Pakistan is among the world's most climate-vulnerable countries, hit repeatedly by floods, heatwaves and erratic monsoons.

Banga said climate-resilient investments should be integrated into infrastructure, housing, water management and agriculture to support jobs while reducing long-term risks.

"The moment you start thinking about climate as separate from housing, food or irrigation, you create a false debate."

Just build resilience into what you're already doing."

Asked how Pakistan fits into the World Bank's global portfolio, Banga said he does not see the country through labels such as fragility or crisis, but as a long-term job-creation opportunity.

## Gold, silver plunge in international market on firm dollar, broad market selloff

**NEWS DESK:** Gold and silver prices fell sharply in a broader market selloff on Thursday, as an advance in the dollar and a near two-week high and signs of easing US-China trade tensions added further pressure on the precious metals.

Spot gold declined 2.5 per cent to \$4,838.81 per ounce, as of 05:35am GMT (10:35am PST), retreating from a near one-week high hit earlier in the session.

US gold futures for April delivery dropped 1.9pc to \$4,855.60 per ounce.

"The dollar received a new lease of life with the (Kevin) Warsh nomination (as Federal Reserve chief), and the currency has been able to keep making forward progress," traders are more circumspect now on gold in light of recent extreme volatility," Tim Waterer, KCM chief trade analyst, said.

The dollar rose to a near two-week high on Thursday, making greenback-priced gold more expensive for other currency holders.

"Sentiment (has)

"The industrial demand has vanished at the higher levels."

Most of the industrial buyers have stopped buying silver, and even solar panel producers in China are looking for alternatives," Shah added.

On the geopolitical front, Iran and the US have agreed to hold talks in Oman on Friday, officials on both sides said. China is considering buying more US-farmed soybeans.

US President Donald Trump said, after what he called "very positive" talks with his Chinese counterpart Xi Jinping, on Wednesday.



**NEWS DESK:** The electricity consumers across the country are estimated to pay around 42 paise per unit additional charges for April to June mostly on account of capacity charges paid to power producers during the second quarter (October-December) of FY26.

The National Electricity Regulatory Authority (Nepra) has called a public hearing on Feb 17 at the request of ex-Wapda distribution companies (Discos) seeking recovery of Rs10.832 billion from consumers under the quarterly tariff adjustment (QTA) mechanism. The recoverable amount is estimated to be a positive QTA of about 42 paise per unit over three billing months.

It may be noted that consumers are currently paying about 33 paise per unit positive QTA on account of similar higher costs (Rs6.06bn) of the first quarter (July-September 2025) since December and expires by the end of the current month.

## Power consumers to pay 42 paise more in Apr-Jun

That would be replaced by fresh QTA for the following three months.

The Discos sought adjustments on account of capacity charges, transmission charges & market operator fee, the impact of incremental consumption package announced by the government for industrial

However, these are partly compensated through negative ad-

justments on account of almost all other factors, including variable O&M (Rs1.655bn).

Use of service charge (Rs3bn), impact of incremental package (Rs7.5bn) and FCA impact of system losses (Rs1.2bn), bringing down the total additional amount chargeable to consumers to Rs10.83bn.

Three out of eleven Discos have sought additional QTA for the second quarter.

These include Hyderabad, Peshawar and Quetta Electric Supply companies, seeking negative adjustment of Rs3.5bn, Rs5.1bn and Rs4.1bn, respectively.

On the other hand, Multan Electric has demanded a higher increase of Rs5.6bn, followed by Rs4.8bn for Gujranwala, Rs4.1bn for Lahore, Rs2.9bn for Sialkot, and Rs1.9bn for Faisalabad Electric. Newly created Discos Tribal Electric and Hazara Electric have sought Rs303 million and Rs140m additional recovery.

Once approved, the QTA would also apply to K-Electric.

However, the Quarterly Tariff Adjustments (QTAs), the Debt Service Surcharge (DSS), and negative FCAs are not applicable to eligible consumers of the government-announced special tariff package for incremental consumption.



## Fertiliser CPPs hit as govt extends gas levy



**NEWS DESK:** The gas exploration companies and utilities are facing a setback after the government imposed a levy on captive power plants (CPPs) operated by the fertiliser industry.

Industries, including textile and fertiliser, have long consumed natural gas to run CPPs for generating electricity for their own use.

As part of an International Monetary Fund-backed reform programme, the govern-

ment introduced the Off the Grid (Captive Power Plants) Levy Act, 2025, empowering the federal government to impose a levy on natural gas-based CPPs.

Earlier, the levy had been imposed on gas supplied by third parties to CPPs and was also applied to CPPs operated by the textile industry.

Sources said the government has imposed the levy on fertiliser plants using

domestic gas or liquefied natural gas (LNG) to operate captive power plants to meet their electricity requirements.

At present, Mari Energies has allocated around 200 million cubic feet per day (mcmd) of gas for the fertiliser sector, while exploration companies have also allocated low-pressure gas for fertiliser units.

Sources said the imposition of the levy would discourage the use of gas for captive power

generation in the fertiliser industry.

According to an official memorandum issued by the Petroleum Division in response to a query, Section 2(c) of the Act defines a captive power plant as an industrial undertaking or unit engaged in power production, with or without cogeneration, for self-consumption or for sale of surplus power to a distribution company or bulk power consumer.

## Returns on T-bills raised up to 39bps

**NEWS DESK:** In the first auction after a surprise status quo in the monetary policy, the cut-off yields on the treasury bills were increased on Wednesday by up to 39 basis points, bringing the returns close to the State Bank's policy rate of 10.50 per cent.

Before the monetary policy announced on Jan 26, returns on T-bills had mostly fallen to single digits, raising hopes of an interest rate cut of up to 100bps.

However, the interest rate remained unchanged, and some bankers cited that foreign investors were seeking high-yield bonds despite the higher risks.

The latest increase in yields could make T-bills attractive.

Foreign investors have shown some interest in domestic bonds this fiscal year, but the uncertain geopolitical situation remains the biggest obstacle hampering inflows.



The same was true of foreign direct investment, which fell sharply during the first half of this year.

The auction results show that the largest increase in T-bill rates was observed for the 12-month papers, with a 39bps increase to 10.39 per cent.

Similarly, the benchmark six-month papers offer 10.32pc, up from 9.94pc in the

previous auction, increasing returns by 38bps. The government raised the highest amount of Rs315 billion for this tenor.

The cut-off yields on three-month and one-month were increased by 30bps each to 10.19pc.

The government received total bids of Rs2.354 trillion, while it picked Rs2.3bn, including Rs318bn from the non-bidding proce-

dures. The target for the auction was Rs650bn while the maturity amount was Rs697bn.

Financial experts said higher T-bill rates would increase the government's burden, as interest payments would rise further.

The interest payment in FY26 would be around Rs8tr, the largest share of the budget for the current fiscal year.



## Steve Smith becomes most expensive player in PSL history

**NEWS DESK:** Steve Smith has become the most expensive cricketer in HBL PSL history.

The new franchise, Sialkot Stallionz, will pay him over Rs140 million, which is twice the amount Babar Azam receives. As per details, the 11th edition of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) will be held in March.

This time, the PCB allowed each franchise to sign one foreign player directly, provided that the player was not part of last year's PSL.

The new team, Sialkot Stallionz, has signed Australian star batter Steve Smith. Sources say he will be paid over \$500,000 US dollars,

which converts to more than Rs140 million, making him the highest-paid player in PSL history.

Another franchise was also willing to offer him \$500,000, but

eventually, a deal was finalized with Sialkot. It should be noted that Babar Azam's salary is Rs70 million, so Smith will be earning double that amount.

Meanwhile, with the inclusion of two new teams, the PCB has reduced the retention quota for old franchises from eight players to four, allowing them to retain one player from each of the four categories.

Recently, the list of retained players was released, followed by the details of their salaries.

Four out of five franchises have announced Rs7 crore as the salary for their platinum-category players, with others also receiving significant sums. However, sources revealed that some cricketers are actually being paid more than the declared figures, though only the officially announced amounts will be shown on record.



The addition of two new franchises this year has increased player demand, and many cricketers used offers from other

teams to negotiate higher pay with their current franchises. Mutaftizur joins Qalandars as a direct signing for the PSL-11.

Defending champions Lahore Qalandars have roped in Bangladesh pace bowler Mutaftizur Rahman as a direct signing for the PSL-11.

The Bangladeshis more. The signing was agreed at Rs6.44 crore. "Once a Qalandar, always a Qalandar. Mutaftizur is not just a player, he's a brother,

a key part of our family who never left," said Saneen Rana, Owner, Lahore Qalandars.

"We are thrilled to welcome him back to our dressing room. His talent, experience, and dedication will be invaluable as we aim to defend our title and make a statement in PSL-11."

Earlier, Qalandars had retained captain Shaheen Afridi, key batter Abdullah Shafique, dynamic all-rounder Sikandar Raza, and skilled youngster Mohammad Naeem.

This strategic move strengthens the team's core ahead of the big auction and sets the stage for a strong campaign.

With these signings, Lahore Qalandars aim to continue their legacy of excellence in PSL-11, determined to defend their title and give fans another season of high-quality cricket and unforgettable moments.

## Liverpool in 'good place' for years to come

**NEWS DESK:** Liverpool's recruitment of rising stars will put the club on a sure footing for years to come, according to manager Arne Slot despite a difficult season for the Premier League champions.

The Reds sit sixth in the Premier League after a difficult start to life at Anfield for a number of new recruits in a near £450 million (\$616 million) spending spree in the summer transfer market. Highly-rated French defender Jeremy Jacquet will also join for the start of next season after Liverpool agreed a deal with Rennes worth up to £60 million for the 20-year-old.

"Such a big talent and another example of the model we're using at this club," Slot said on Thursday.

"Young, very talented players, sometimes at the start of their careers or sometimes already a little bit a few years into their career, but always players that are young and can improve us in the short term but also definitely in the long term."

"We've signed a lot of them recently and the mid-long term future of this club, and even the short term, is in a very good place."

Hugo Ekitike and Florian Wirtz are two of the club's big money signings that are beginning to deliver returns on the near £200 million invested in signing them from the Bundesliga.

Ekitike scored twice in a 4-1 win over Newcastle last weekend for the season to 15, while Wirtz

has netted six times in 10 matches since ending a 22-game wait for his first Liverpool goal.

"As a manager, even if he is struggling a little bit at the start, you have to keep playing him because that is the only way he can improve," said Slot on Wirtz finding his feet in the Premier League.

"He didn't improve that much on the ball because from the start he was special."

Maybe now he has a better connection with his teammates because they've played more and more together.

"Off the ball is where I see the biggest improvement with him, and some others, and that combination makes you ready for the Premier League."

Liverpool host

Manchester City on Sunday in a match with huge ramifications for the title race and the battle to qualify for next season's Champions League.

City trail leaders Arsenal by six points and could find themselves nine adrift by the time they kick off with the Gunners hosting Sunderland on Saturday.

Liverpool could also be four points outside the top five, which should secure a place in the Champions League, should Manchester United and Chelsea win on Saturday.

Slot is keen to make amends for his side's 3-0 defeat to City in November.

"They were the better team and I think we want to show a different side of us this time."

## Pakistan to seek govt nod in potential India T20 finals clash



**NEWSDESK:** Captain Salman Agha said on Thursday that Pakistan will seek advice from the government if they reach the knockout phase of the T20 World Cup and meet arch-rivals India.

An acrimonious political build-up has marred the tournament after Bangladesh were kicked out of Pakistan refused to face co-hosts India in their Group A match.

However, a semi-final or final showdown between the uneasy South Asian neighbours is still a possibility.

"The India game is not in our control. It was the government's decision and if we have to play them in the semi-final or the final, we will go back to them and act on their

advice."

Agha told reporters in Colombo, Bangladesh refused to play in India, citing security concerns, as relations soured and were kicked out of Group C by the International Cricket Council, to be replaced by Scotland.

Pakistan backed Bangladesh's plea to have their games moved to Sri Lanka.

The government cleared the national team to take part but ordered them not to play in the marquee group match against India on February 15.

"It's sad Bangladesh are not here. They have a very good side."

Hopefully, they will support us," Agha said.

Pakistan and India have not played bilat-

eral cricket for more than a decade, and meet only in multinational events.

They will face Namibia, the Netherlands and the United States in the group stage.

"We're excited to play in this tournament."

We lost to USA in the last World Cup and we are determined to put that disappointment behind us and put a few things right," Agha said.

Pakistan will not only lose two points for forfeiting their India match but will also take a big hit to their net run rate.

Even losing one of their group games to bad weather could make it difficult for Pakistan to qualify.

"We know the margin for error is

small, but we can't control the weather. We are here to play good cricket and we're not bothered about the conditions," Agha said.

Pakistan, the 2009 champions, arrive after a 3-0 whitewash of Australia at home.

"We've been playing really good cricket. We haven't lost a series since the Asia Cup last year."

Everything is coming along nicely and we're confident of doing well," Agha said.

All of Pakistan's games will be played in Sri Lanka, where they toured in January.

"Very happy to play in Sri Lanka — it's a second home for us. This is my sixth visit, we know the conditions and we get a lot of support," Agha said.



## Algerian boxer Khelif says she is open to genetic testing by IOC for 2028 Olympics

**NEWSDESK:** Algerian boxer Imane Khelif said she will comply with genetic testing requirements as long as the tests are conducted by the International Olympic Committee (IOC), to be able to participate in competitions.

Khelif won gold in the women's welterweight division at the Paris Games in 2024 amid a gender dispute over her eligibility, after the International Boxing Association (IBA) disqualified her from the 2023 World Championships based on sex chromosome tests. World Boxing, which will oversee boxing competitions in the 2028 Olympics in Los Angeles after being granted provisional recognition by the IOC, last May announced mandatory sex testing for all box-

ers in its competitions. Khelif, who lodged an appeal to the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) over World Boxing's decision barring her from events unless she undergoes genetic testing, said she would

only undergo the testing if it is administered by the IOC.

"Of course, I would accept doing anything I'm required to do to participate in competitions," Khelif told CNN.

"They should protect women, but they need to pay attention that while protecting women, they shouldn't hurt other women."

"I'm not transgender. I'm a woman. I want to live my life. Please do not exploit me in your political agendas."

The 26-year-old was hopeful of getting justice from the CAS. "I will not surrender until I have justice because I know justice is on my side above all else," she said.

There are plenty of grounds in India where there could be a score of 300-plus," Brook told reporters on the captain's media day in Mumbai, when asked if he thought such lofty totals were possible.

The wickets are quite good, with rapid outfields and fairly short boundaries. "So, yeah, you've just got to go out there be fearless, not

## Brook predicts record 300-plus scores at T20 World Cup

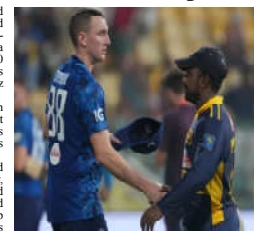
**NEWS DESK:** England captain Harry Brook said on Thursday that he believes it could be a record-breaking T20 World Cup, with fans treated to a batting blitz and 300-plus scores.

Sri Lanka's 260-6 in 2007 remains the highest total in the nine previous editions of the men's tournament.

The 2026 T20 World Cup begins Saturday, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, and England will play all their Group C matches at Mumbai's Wankhede stadium and Kolkata's Eden Gardens, both renowned as high-scoring venues.

There are plenty of grounds in India where there could be a score of 300-plus," Brook told reporters on the captain's media day in Mumbai, when asked if he thought such lofty totals were possible.

"The wickets are quite good, with rapid outfields and fairly short boundaries. "So, yeah, you've just got to go out there be fearless, not



worry about getting out and keep on trying to attack the ball."

England came into the World Cup heartened by a 3-0 T20 series win in Sri Lanka this week.

In the preceding ODI series against the same opposition, the explosive Brook bludgeoned 136 off just 66 balls. His team are expected to make the Super Eights from a Group C that also features two-time winners West Indies, debutants Italy,

Nepal and Scotland. Brook would not be drawn when asked whether the 2010 and 2022 champions England were among the favourites for the title ahead of their opening match, against Nepal at the Wankhede stadium on Sunday. "We'll take it game by game and see where we land in a couple of weeks," said Brook, who has been under intense scrutiny after an incident with a night club bouncer in New Zealand last year.



## UN rapporteurs alarmed by Imaan, Hadi convictions

**NEWS DESK:** Five United Nations experts have expressed alarm over the conviction of human rights activist Advocate Imaan Zainab Mazari-Hazir and her husband, Advocate Hadi Ali Chattha, on multiple charges in a case pertaining to controversial social media posts under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca).

On Jan 24, an Islamabad sessions court sentenced Ms Mazari and Mr Chattha to jail.

In a joint statement issued on Wednesday, UN special rapporteurs Margaret Satterthwaite, Ben Saul, Mary Lawlor, Irene Khan and Gina Romero noted that the two were convicted on multiple criminal charges, resulting in lengthy prison sentences "for simply exercising rights guaranteed by international human rights law".

"Lawyers, like other individuals, are entitled to freedom of expression. The exercise of this right should never be conflated with criminal conduct, especially not terrorism," they were quoted as saying, while also emphasising the vague definition of terrorism-related offences under Pakistan's counter-terrorism framework. "Doing so risks undermining and criminalising the work of lawyers and human

rights defenders across Pakistan and has a chilling effect on civil society in the country," the experts stated.

The experts observed that these were not the first prosecutions against the two lawyers, "who have been the subject of 10 criminal complaints since 2022, some of which remain pending", but were never previously convicted of wrongdoing.

"This pattern of prosecution suggests an arbitrary use of the legal system as an instrument of harassment and intimidation in order to punish them for their work advocating for victims of alleged human rights violations," they added.

The experts observed, "International standards provide a set of procedural guarantees that must be made available to persons charged with a criminal offence, but these appear to have been undermined in this case." "These violations seriously threaten the fairness of the trial and conviction," UN special rapporteurs are independent experts mandated by the UN Human Rights Council to report their findings. They do not speak on behalf of the United Nations itself.

According to the statement, the UN experts "have contacted Pakistan regarding their concerns".

## Ex-AJK premier questions govt mandate, warns of legal action

**NEWS DESK:** Former Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) prime minister and PML-N parliamentary leader Raja Farooq Haider on Wednesday accused the PPP government of overstepping its mandate, saying it was meant to function like a caretaker setup to facilitate elections but had instead indulged in political interference and patronage.

Talking to reporters in the opposition chamber of the Legislative Assembly, Mr Haider said that despite having 22 ministers, the government's "hunger for power has not diminished" that he claimed was evident from "undue interference in opposition constituencies and the replacement of elected representatives with party workers".

"This approach is

neither justified nor acceptable," he said.

Raja Farooq Haider irked by alleged sidelining of leaders by PPP ministers.

Mr Haider maintained that the PML-N had secured thousands of votes from every constituency in AJK and questioned why its ticket-holders were being sidelined. "In constituencies where PPP MLAs exist, consultations should also be held with PML-N ticket-holders," he demanded. Raising concerns over governance, the former premier called for the criteria for appointments up to Grade-5 to be made public. He also questioned the government's decision to launch development projects worth billions of rupees while claiming a shortage of funds.

"If the government does not act with fairness, we will be left with no option but to approach the courts," he warned.

Mr Haider also urged Prime Minister Faisal Mumtaz Rathore to uphold the neutrality of his office. "He should remember that he is the prime minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, not a representative of a political party," he said. Responding to a question, the former premier maintained that the office of the AJK president was the constitutional right of political parties and should not be assigned to non-political individuals. He said he fully endorsed the stance of PML-N President Shah Ghulam Qadir on the issue, adding that it reflected a unanimous position within the party.



## Field Marshal Reaffirms Unwavering Support for Kashmir During Muzaffarabad Visit

**NEWS DESK:** Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, visited Muzaffarabad today, the military's media wing said. Paying homage to the martyrs of the freedom struggle, he laid wreath at the Jammu and Kashmir Martyrs Monument and offered rich tributes to the Shuhada of Kashmir movement, acknowledging their enduring legacy of valour and selfless sacrifice.

Interacting with the notables and veterans, the COAS & CDF reiterated Pakistan's unwavering political, moral, and diplomatic support for the people of Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJK). He noted that Indian atrocities, unabated violations of



human rights, and Hindutva-driven excesses have failed to suppress the legitimate struggle and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Reaffirming Pakistan's steadfast support for the Kashmiri cause, COAS & CDF stated that Kashmir would soon witness the

dawn of freedom, in accordance with the will and destiny of the people of Kashmir. He further emphasized that Pakistan would continue to highlight the Kashmir issue at all relevant international forums, in complete solidarity with our Kashmiri brothers and sisters, until a just resolution of the dis-

pute is achieved according to the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

The COAS & CDF commended the unwavering dedication, high morale, professional excellence, and combat readiness of the officers and soldiers deployed in Kashmir despite challenging operational

conditions. He emphasized the imperative of maintaining peak operational preparedness, vigilance, and seamless synergy across all domains to effectively deter and decisively respond to any hostile provocation.

The COAS & CDF also visited a forward post, where he interacted with troops deployed on the frontlines. During the visit, he reiterated that any act of aggression would be instantaneously met with a swift and befitting response. He underscored that the Armed Forces remain fully prepared to counter both conventional and hybrid threats in an evolving security environment.

Earlier upon arrival, the COAS & CDF was received by the Commander Rawalpindi Corps.

## KP apex committee deems 'cooperation' with Centre, political parties vital for successful counter-terrorism policy

**NEWS DESK:** The Khyber Pakhtunkhwa apex committee has termed "consultation, cooperation and coordination" with the federal government and all political parties "essential" for the success of a comprehensive counter-terrorism policy, it emerged on Thursday.

KP Chief Minister Sohail Afridi chaired his first meeting of the provincial apex committee since assuming office on Wednesday.

The panel discussed the "general rise in terrorism incidents in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and an action plan to eradicate the menace of Fitna-al-Khawarij and establish complete peace and stability", as per a press release issued by the KP CM's office today.

Fitna-al-Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-ul-Taliban Pakistan (TTP).

During the meeting, the press release said, the committee agreed that "joint consultation, mutual cooperation, and



practical coordination between all political parties, public representatives, and the federal government will not hesitate to make any sacrifices".

The committee hoped that the "long-term strategy would identify all the causes of terrorism and eliminate them, and as a result, ensure the restoration of public confidence so that the government and the public can work together for the country's progress."

The government's agenda is that only good govern-

ance and public interest can unite the nation against terrorism," read the meeting's press release.

Under this agenda, it was decided that in the "first phase, areas affected by terrorism will be converted into model good governance districts". It further said "all government resources will be utilised to compensate for the lack in the provision of development, social services and economic growth in terrorism-affected areas."

The committee also announced a "special

package to provide security, education, employment, basic amenities and other services in these areas under an organised programme".

"The forum decided that the government will ensure complete care, rehabilitation, and the provision of basic needs for the welfare of the people affected in the areas where temporary relocation took place for sustainable stability, so that this temporary difficulty can form the base for peace, development and prosperity in the future," the statement read.

"Their dignified return is a top priority for the [KP] government," it stressed.

The federal and KP governments have recently traded barbs over who authorised the evacuation process after hundreds of Tahir residents vacated their homes ahead of a planned military action against terrorists.

Speaking during the meeting, CM Afridi stressed that the provincial government.

## Kashmir Solidarity Day: Pakistani leadership reaffirms support for Kashmiris' just struggle

**NEWS DESK:** The nation is observing Kashmir Solidarity Day today with a renewed pledge to support its just struggle of the Kashmiri people for their inalienable right to self-determination.

The day will feature rallies, demonstrations and seminars throughout the country. Human chains will also be formed at all entry points of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK).

One-minute silence was observed across the country at 10am to pay homage to the martyrs of the Kashmir freedom movement, state-run Radio Pakistan reported.

In his message to mark the occasion, President Asif Ali Zardari reiterated Pakistan's steadfast moral, diplomatic and political support for the Kashmiri people, reaffirming their "inalienable right to self-determination" as enshrined in the relevant resolutions of the United Nations Security Council (UNSC).

The president said the people of Pakistan across the globe stand united with their Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their just struggle.

He recalled that the observance of Kashmir Solidarity Day was initiated 36 years ago by ex-premier Benazir Bhutto following the historic Kashmiri uprising of 1989, a movement that continues to this day.

President Zardari urged the international



community to press India to end human rights violations in held Kashmir.

He said India had intensified efforts to entrench its control through "administrative and legislative measures, curbing media freedoms, incarcerating Kashmiri leadership and attempting to alter the demographic composition of the territory".

The president also highlighted what he described as grave human rights violations by Indian occupation forces, citing international reports that point to a rise in arbitrary detentions, collective punishment and punitive house demolitions.

He added that the "suppression of digital freedoms, including the blocking of thousands of social media ac-

counts, reflected attempts to conceal the realities on the ground".

In his message on the occasion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif called for the dispute's resolution in accordance with UNSC resolutions.

He urged the international community to play an effective role in getting the Kashmiri people their "inalienable right through a free and impartial plebiscite under the auspices of the United Nations".

He also announced that the government has increased the monthly per capita subsistence allowance of Kashmiri refugees to Rs5,000.

The government of Pakistan is conducting a pilot project to construct 750 residential houses at a cost of Rs3 billion," PM Shehbaz said. The premier said

the AJK government has provided land for the construction of these houses, exclusively meant for Jammu Kashmir refugees settled in the territory.

He said complete rehabilitation of the refugees of Jammu and Kashmir is a national duty, and Pakistan will stand with the Kashmiris until they achieve their right to self-determination.

PM Shehbaz visited a visit to Muzaffarabad to address the special session of the AJK Legislative Assembly, APP reported. Addressing the

AJK Legislative Assembly, the premier said, "Today, we have gathered here to stand in solidarity with our brothers in (occupied) Kashmir on behalf of the Pakistani people and the Pa-

kistani leadership. "Soon, the freedom and nation of our Kashmiri brothers and sisters [...] Kashmir will become a part of Pakistan."

The prime minister paid tribute to leaders of the Kashmiri freedom movement, including Burhan Wani, Asia Andrabi, Yasin Malik and All Parties Hurriyat Conference Chairman Mirwaiz Umar Farooq.

"History has shown that Kashmiris can sacrifice themselves or their children but will not compromise on their freedom," PM Shehbaz noted.

"Kashmiris show the world every day the mirror of reality. They announce every day that Kashmir has never been a part of India. It is not, and it will never be," he further said.