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Deadly Explosion Hits Imambargah in Islamabad During Friday Prayers

Zeeshan Ali, News Desk:

Islamabad: At least 31 people lost their lives and 169 others sustained injuries after a powerful explosion struck an imambargah in Islamabad on Friday, according to officials from the district administration. The blast occurred at

Imambargah Khadijah al-Kubra in the Tarlai area while a large number of worshippers were present for Friday prayers.

The sudden explosion caused chaos inside the prayer hall, leaving the floor covered with debris, shattered glass, and personal belongings. Eyewitnesses described

scenes of panic as injured worshippers tried to escape the building, while others rushed to help those who had fallen.

Several wounded individuals were also found lying in the garden area outside the imambargah,

awaiting medical assistance as calls for help echoed across the premises.

Rescue teams and law enforcement agencies reached the site shortly after the incident and began shifting the injured to nearby hospitals.

Emergency measures were enforced at major medical facilities in the capital to handle the large number of casualties.

Authorities have cordoned

off the area and launched an investigation to determine the cause of the explosion.

Officials have urged the public to avoid speculation as verified information is being collected.

This remains a developing situation, and casualty figures may change as more details are confirmed.

PTI, TTAP 'will not compromise' on Imran's health

NEWS DESK:

The leadership of Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) and Tehreek Tahaffuz Ain Pakistan (TTAP) said on Thursday they would not compromise on the health of incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan and urged the nation to join a nationwide shutter-down strike scheduled for February 8 (Sunday).



During a meeting of the joint parliamentary committee at Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa House in Islamabad, opposition leaders expressed concern over the law and order situation in Balochistan and showed solidarity with the martyrs who sacrificed their lives for the country.

The meeting was attended by Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (K-P) Chief Minister Sohail Afandi, TTAP chief Mahmood Achakzai, PTI Secretary General Salman Akram Raja, and PTI stalwarts Asad Qaiser and Taimoor Saleem Jhagra, among others, according to a media report.

Addressing participants, Qaiser said the meeting had been convened because of Imran's health.

"Don't push us against the wall; otherwise, all options are open," he said. Speaking about Sunday's protest, he added, "Today, we pledge that we will make the protest successful."

He further said PTI would meet the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court on Friday (today). Qaiser said the meeting expressed concerns over the PTI founder's health and demanded that his visitation rights be restored.

Participants demanded steps to ensure the welfare of people in K-P's Tirah Valley.

They also condemned the arrest of party leaders and workers in Sindh and announced that rallies would be staged on February 8.

Police Officer Martyred in Attack on Polio Team in Chaman



Sardar Muhammad Khondai:

Chaman: A police officer was martyred on Friday after unknown assailants opened fire on a polio vaccination team in the Koghani area of Chaman, officials said.

According to initial reports, the polio workers remained un-

harmed during the attack.

However, a police officer assigned to provide security to the team sustained critical injuries as a result of the firing and later succumbed to his wounds.

Following the incident, security forces rushed to the scene and launched a search operation in the area.

The body of the martyred

officer was shifted to Chaman Civil Hospital for legal formalities. Authorities have condemned the attack and stated that investigations are underway to identify and apprehend those responsible.

Polio vaccination activities in the area have been temporarily reviewed as a precautionary measure.

Balochistan CM Condemns Suicide Attack on Imambargah in Islamabad

News Desk:

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti has strongly condemned the suicide blast that struck an imambargah in Islamabad's Tarlai locality during Friday prayers, describing the attack as a barbaric and cowardly act of terrorism.

In a statement issued on Friday, the chief minister expressed profound grief over the loss of innocent lives and extended heartfelt condolences to the families of the victims. He said that targeting worshippers during a sacred congregation reflected the ruthless mindset of terrorists linked to the Fima Khawarij, who aim to destabilize peace, religious harmony, and tolerance in the country.

Bugti reaffirmed that the people and government of Balochistan stand in full solidarity with the bereaved families and pray for the swift recovery of those injured in the attack. He added that such heinous acts



cannot shake the nation's resolve in the fight against terrorism.

The chief minister stressed that the entire nation and its security institutions remain united and determined to ensure lasting peace and stability across Paki-

stan. He vowed that the perpetra-

tors will not be allowed to achieve their malicious objectives, and that law enforcement agencies will continue their counterterrorism operations with full strength to ensure lasting peace and stability across Paki-

QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

A Step Forward, But Transparency Must Become the Rule in Balochistan



Editorial:

The recent initiatives taken by the Government of Balochistan toward transparency and reform deserve appreciation. Whether in climate governance, environmental planning, or administrative decision-making, the intent to move away from opaque practices sends a positive signal to a province long plagued by mistrust and institutional weakness.

Acknowledging challenges openly and taking the first steps to address them is not easy—especially in a region facing climate vulnerability, limited resources, and decades of governance deficits. Efforts such as structured planning, public engagement, and an emphasis on accountability reflect a growing recognition that business as usual is no longer sustainable.

However, appreciation must be accompanied by honesty. While these measures mark progress, a great deal still needs to be done to ensure true transparency and merit-based decision-making, particularly in the appointment of public servants across Balochistan.

For years, public perception has been shaped by allegations of favoritism, political influence, and non-merit appointments. These practices have not only weakened institutions but also eroded public trust and discouraged capable, educated youth who seek fair opportunities to serve.

If transparency is to become more than a slogan, it must be institutionalized across all departments, not limited to isolated initiatives. Recruitment

processes, promotions, postings, and policy decisions should be governed by clear rules, digital systems, and independent oversight. Only then can merit truly replace influence. Good governance is not built overnight. It is a continuous process that requires political will, administrative reform, and public vigilance. Balochistan stands at a critical point where small but sincere steps must now evolve into systemic change.

The people of the province do not expect perfection—but they do expect fairness. Strengthening transparency and merit in public service appointments will not only improve governance but also restore confidence in the state itself.

This is the path toward a stronger, more credible, and more hopeful Balochistan.

A Billion Dollar, Million Jobs Opportunity : Why Pakistan Must Recognize NGOs as an Economic Industry

by Gul Hassan Durrani

Pakistan today faces a convergence of serious challenges: rising unemployment, fiscal pressure, climate vulnerability, and widening social inequalities. While the state continues to pursue foreign investment in traditional sectors such as energy, mining, and infrastructure, a powerful and already existing engine of inclusive growth remains largely overlooked—the Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) and social development sector.

Globally, NGOs are no longer perceived merely as charitable entities. In advanced economies and developing countries alike, they function as professional service providers, innovation hubs, and major employers in education, healthcare, humanitarian response, climate adaptation, and social protection. If properly recognized and regulated, Pakistan's NGO sector alone has the potential to attract over one billion dollars annually in foreign funding and generate more than one million jobs nationwide, with transformative implications for underserved regions such as Balochistan.

In Pakistan, NGOs play a critical role in complementing government services, particularly in remote and marginalized areas where state capacity is limited.

They operate schools, health facilities, vocational training centers, disaster response systems, and climate resilience programs.

Through social mobilization, community engagement, and awareness raising, NGOs enhance ownership of public initiatives, strengthen accountability, and ensure sustainability at the grassroots level.

These functions are not peripheral; they are central to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). According to estimates from the United Nations and development partners, Pakistan receives more than USD



1 billion annually in foreign NGO assistance, making the sector a significant contributor to the national economy. Beyond funding inflows, NGOs are major employers. They provide direct jobs to teachers, doctors, nurses, field mobilizers, researchers, data analysts, engineers, and climate specialists, while indirectly supporting local suppliers, trainers, and entrepreneurs.

In low-employment provinces such as Balochistan, this job creation potential is especially critical.

Pakistan's development landscape already offers strong examples of NGO impact. Organizations such as the Edhi Foundation operate the world's largest volunteer ambulance network, while the Indus Hospital and Health Network delivers high-quality healthcare free of cost.

The Akhuwat Foundation has empowered millions through interest-free microfinance. Rural Support Programs including NRSP, BRSP, PRSP, SRSP and KRSP have transformed livelihoods through community-driven development. Advocacy and governance institutions such as Transparency International Pakistan, CPDI, SPO, and ROZAN

have strengthened democracy, accountability, and civic engagement. Women- and youth-focused organizations, including Today's Woman Organization (TWO) and the Christian Study Centre, have promoted peacebuilding, inclusion, and social cohesion.

Despite these contributions, the NGO sector continues to face systemic challenges. The regulatory environment is fragmented and opaque, involving multiple federal, provincial, and district authorities. Lengthy registration and renewal processes, overlapping mandates of regulators, arbitrary NOC requirements, and sudden funding suspensions discourage legitimate organizations and deter investment. Law-abiding NGOs are often treated with suspicion rather than as development partners.

Financial sustainability is another major constraint. Most Pakistani NGOs remain heavily dependent on short-term foreign funding, leaving them vulnerable to policy shifts and donor fatigue. Local philanthropy mechanisms remain underdeveloped, corporate social responsibility spending is inconsistent, and NGO endowment models are

NGO Service Contracts should be introduced, where NGOs deliver verified outcomes in education, health, nutrition, and climate services, and are compensated accordingly.

Third, a clear categorization framework is essential. NGOs should be classified as international, national, provincial, and local organizations, with proportional compliance requirements and funding thresholds. Such categorization would improve regulation, prevent monopolies, enable grassroots organizations to access funding directly, and support evidence-based planning by federal and provincial governments.

Public trust and transparency must also be strengthened. Mandatory disclosure of audits, governance structures, and project outcomes through a national online portal would allow citizens and donors to distinguish credible organizations from weak ones. Investment in digital transformation—mobile monitoring, shared service centers, and national impact data systems—would significantly improve efficiency and performance, especially for community-based NGOs.

Ultimately, strengthening Pakistan's NGO sector is not charity; it is sound economic and social policy. Development challenges today are too complex for any single actor to address alone. A tri-sector partnership model—combining public financing, private sector expertise, and NGO implementation—offers the most effective path forward.

If treated as a regulated, professional, and growth-oriented industry, Pakistan's NGO sector can become a billion-dollar contributor to the economy, a major source of employment, and a cornerstone of inclusive development. For Pakistan, and especially for Balochistan, this opportunity can no longer be ignored.

Addressing Poverty and Inequality: A Call for Sincere Leadership and Perpetual Reforms

By Amjad Rashid: Poverty and inequality, much like man-made disasters, afflict societies worldwide, including Pakistan. These are not natural phenomena but rather systemic issues rooted in human actions and policies. To eradicate this disease, national governments must craft comprehensive strategies aimed at safeguarding future generations from its scourge.

In Pakistan, the onus lies heavily on our political elite, spanning all parties, to recognize the gravity of the situation and redirect their efforts towards combating this man-made affliction. Without a collective awakening and a shift in approach, the cure will remain elusive. Moreover, at the international level, institutions such as the IMF, World Bank, and the UN must prioritize social and cultural rights over neoliberal agendas, especially as the global order undergoes significant decay.

The challenges of poverty alleviation, malnutrition, stunted growth, inadequate sanitation, and unemployment are pervasive across South Asia and Africa. Collaborative efforts between these regions, bolstered by partnerships



with nations like China, hold promise in addressing these issues.

However, reliance on the failing

neoliberal order is futile; instead, a paradigm shift towards sustainable solutions is imperative.

In Pakistan, the

establishment of robust local governance structures with financial decentralization is imperative.

Political elites pos-

sess a window of opportunity to empower local bodies and enact pro-poor policies.

The Chinese model serves as a

beacon of inspiration, demonstrating the efficacy of such strategies when implemented effectively.

Regional connec-

tivity, underpinned by a long-term vision, emerges as a viable solution. It necessitates moving beyond the romanticized no-

tions of democracy and socialism towards pragmatic approaches that address our unique challenges. Special economic zones,

coupled with initiatives for youth development and the expansion of remittances, offer short-term relief while perpetuating reforms to broaden the tax base and reduce dependency on electoral politics.

South Asia, in particular, requires a concerted effort towards regional connectivity, resource exploration, harnessing youth potential, and fostering transparent governance free from corruption. The path forward does not demand extraordinary intellect but rather sincere leadership committed to implementing existing solutions.

The concept of Basic Democracy warrants reevaluation, with a focus on strengthening local bodies to eradicate poverty and pursue enduring prosperity through perpetual reforms.

It is incumbent upon all stakeholders responsible for the nation's development to prioritize this agenda and steer Pakistan towards a brighter future.

PTI again approaches SC seeking Imran's medical report, visitation rights

ISLAMABAD (INP): PTI on Friday again approached the Supreme Court (SC) seeking party founder Imran Khan's medical report and visitation rights for his personal doctors and family members.

Days after reports regarding the treatment of Imran emerged in mainstream media, the government last week admitted that the former premier was treated at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS)

in Islamabad. Barrister Gohar Ali Khan, expressing concern over Imran's health, said that the party had submitted a memorandum to the registrar requesting access to Imran for his personal doctors, as well as

requesting his medical report. The memorandum reiterated the PTI's request that "immediate access to Mr Imran Khan be provided to his family, doctors, lawyers and friends". Gohar said that this was the "10th

time" the party was approaching the apex court about Imran and that they had approached the high courts 16 times as well. Gohar said that Imran's health was a "very important issue, not just for PTI's parlia-

mentarians but for the whole country and every Pakistani". The party chairman said that until now, they had not received information on Imran's medical reports and the procedure that he recently underwent.

"In the middle of this Tuesday and Thursday passed by," Gohar added. "Still, there was no meeting of Imran with either family members or lawyers, nor his personal physician or doctors." According

to Gohar, although National Assembly Opposition Leader Mahmood Khan Achakzai had written a letter to Prime Minister Sheikhbaz Sharif seeking his "personal intervention" for Imran's medical examination.



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari holds a one-on-one meeting with the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, H.E. Mirziyoyev Shavkat Mirmonovich, at Aitwan-e-Sadr.

What is it like to work in a green office building?

ISLAMABAD (INP): Early in the morning, Cai Heng walked into the headquarters building of China Construction Third Engineering Bureau Group Co., Ltd. As his footsteps echoed through the lobby, the lights above him gradually activated.

Outside the glass curtain wall, sunlight was already illuminating the 14,000-square meters of monocrystalline silicon photovoltaic panels installed on the rooftop and skybridges, according to a People's Daily report.

This headquarters building is one of the landmark structures in East Lake High-tech Development Zone, also known as the "Optics Valley of China", in Wuhan, central China's Hubei province.

Cai has worked here for many years and knows the building well. Yet since last year, he has begun to notice subtle changes. Stepping into the elevator lobby, Cai pressed the button for the 15th floor. "The elevator was a little jolty when starting and stopping. Now it runs much more smoothly," he said.

The improvement came from newly installed energy-regeneration devices. They not only make elevator operation smoother but

also convert potential energy generated during operation into electricity that is fed back into the grid, significantly reducing energy consumption.

Back at his workstation, soft natural light poured through the glass curtain wall and spread across Cai's desk. In 2024, a special heat-insulating film was added to the building's glass facade. It preserves a clear view of the scenery outside while greatly improving thermal insulation.

Shi Fei, executive manager of the integrated energy division at City Investment and Operation Co., Ltd., a subsidiary of China Construction Third Engineering Bureau Group Co., Ltd., explained that the film keeps out 72 percent of heat. In summer, it blocks much of the outdoor heat, while in winter it reflects long-wave far-infrared radiation back indoors to retain warmth. This single measure saves an average of 252,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by about 126 tons.

At 10 a.m., Cai's department held a project coordination meeting. Although more than a dozen people are seated in the small conference room, the air felt fresh

and comfortable. "Today's buildings are smart -- they can think," Shi said. With a self-developed zero-carbon smart operation platform, more than 3,000 parameters from systems such as photovoltaics, charging piles, air conditioning, and lighting are integrated. Using the Internet of Things and artificial intelligence, the ventilation system monitors indoor carbon dioxide levels and occupancy in real time, adjusting airflow through variable-frequency fans.

At lunchtime, Cai headed to the cafeteria on the basement level. Passing through the skybridge and the ground-floor lobby, he felt a pleasant warmth in the corridors. "In winter, there used to be a chilling draft here," he recalled. With better heat-insulating radiation back indoors to retain warmth. This single measure saves an average of 252,000 kilowatt-hours of electricity annually and reduces carbon dioxide emissions by about 126 tons.

Man electrocuted, seven injured as Basant shows its dark side

LAHORE (INP): Due to violations of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Basant Festival 2026, a man died and seven others wounded in Basant-related incidents in various parts of Lahore on Friday.

Incidents of aerial firing and use of chemical string in the Walled City were also reported.

According to Rescue 1122 officials, 25-year-old Ali Rashid was electrocuted to death when he climbed an electricity pole to claim a stray kite near the Sukh Nehar area.

The body was later handed over to the deceased's family after completion of legal requirements.

Rescue officials said that near the Sukh Nehar, Ali Rashid climbed up an electricity pole to retrieve a stray kite and was electrocuted, dying on the spot.

After midnight, seven people were injured in various Basant-related incidents. In the Gulshan Ravi area, eight-year-old Isha was injured when a kite string hurt her neck. In

the Ravi Road area, a man named Saqib was injured after falling from a rooftop while flying kites.

In the Lower Mall area, 12-year-old Abdul Wahid was injured while chasing a stray kite in the street. In Gulshan Ravi, 14-year-old Salman was injured while trying to claim a kite from a tree.

In Defence Phase-5, 21-year-old Rafi Tanveer was going to his home on motorcycle when he was injured after a kite string struck his neck.

In Gulshan Ravi, 45-year-old Shabbir was injured after a kite string cut his face and nose; he was immediately shifted to a hospital.

29-year-old Qasim Ali was also injured after a stray bullet hit his face in Ganga Shahu area. He was immediately rushed to Civil Hospital, where he was still under treatment. Later, the Punjab Home Department imposed Section 144 to prevent provocations. The security is on high alert at all entry and exit points of the City. A complete ban is imposed on the display of weapons and aerial firing in Lahore.

Animation alone contributed over 25 billion yuan -- nearly half of the market -- signaling a major industry shift, People's Daily reported on Friday.

Ne Zha 2, a fantasy adventure film based on the Chinese mythological character Ne Zha, stood out in particular. With a global box office of nearly 15.95 billion yuan, it became the highest-grossing animated film in global cinema history. It also marked the first Asian film ever to enter the global top 10 in box-office rankings, placing fifth on the all-time global box-office list. Other animated titles also resonated strongly with Chinese audiences. Domestic productions like Ne Zha 2, Zootopia 2, Boonie Bears: Future Reborn, and The Legend of Hei 2 all had earlier body and international

Kashmiris not alone in just struggle for self-determination: Masood Khan

MIRPUR (INP): Ambassador, Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir has stated that the people of Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) were not alone, emphasizing that Pakistan, the people of Azad Jammu and Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan, and the global Kashmiri diaspora stood firmly with them in their just struggle for self-determination.

Speaking at events marking Kashmir Solidarity Day and addressing students, policymakers, and international participants in the Federal metropolis, Ambassador Khan said that credible reports documenting human rights violations by India continued to surface, yet they remained largely ignored at the global level.

He noted with concern that the ground realities in Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) were still inadequately reported internationally, allowing systemic repression to continue without meaningful accountability.

Ambassador Khan stressed that Kashmir Solidarity Day was not merely a series of symbolic events but a strong and unequivocal reaffirmation of Pakistan's unwavering political, diplomatic, and moral support for the Kashmiri people.

He highlighted that advocacy for Kashmir was actively carried out in international parliaments, think tanks, universities, and public forums, while diaspora communities continued to organize demonstrations worldwide against Indian oppression.

He emphasized that it was the collective responsibility of Pakistan's government institutions, political leadership, civil society, and information platforms to consistently expose the realities of Kashmir, including extrajudicial killings, destruction

of property, demographic manipulation, and other violations of international law. He urged that Pakistan's engagement on Kashmir must remain a year-round effort rather than being limited to symbolic commemorations. Referring to the evolving global dynamics, Ambassador Khan observed that Kashmir had regained international attention amid broader geopolitical crises, including conflicts in Ukraine and Palestine.

He warned that Kashmir remained a nuclear flashpoint between two nuclear-armed states, making its peaceful resolution an urgent global priority.

He advocated for structured and sustained dialogue between Pakistan and India, facilitated by credible diplomatic channels, to address the dispute in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. Ambassador Khan reaffirmed that the

right to self-determination of the people of Jammu and Kashmir was firmly established under the Indian Independence Act of 1947 and multiple United Nations Security Council resolutions.

While acknowledging limitations in the UN's enforcement mechanisms, he pointed to comprehensive human rights reports issued by the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights in 2018 and 2019, as well as subsequent findings by UN special procedure experts, which documented grave abuses following India's unilateral actions of August 5, 2019.

He described the situation in JIOJK as one where the Kashmiri population had effectively been turned into a besieged society, subjected to arbitrary arrests, extrajudicial killings, property destruction, and widespread intimidation.

Safi pays tribute to unprecedented solidarity shown by people of Pakistan, AJK with IIOJK people

ISLAMABAD, Feb 06 (INP): Convener of All Parties Hurriyat Conference Azad Jammu and Kashmir (APHC-AJK) chapter, Ghulam Muhammad Safi has paid tribute to the unprecedented solidarity shown by the people of Pakistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir with the people of Indian-occupied Jammu and Kashmir.

Muhammad Safi in his statement issued in Islamabad expressed his heartfelt gratitude to the Government of Pakistan, the Armed Forces of Pakistan, all political parties

of Pakistan, religious and religious organizations, social and welfare institutions, student organizations, lawyers, journalist community, civil society and people belonging to all schools of thought for observing Kashmir Solidarity Day on February 5.

He said that the organized, peaceful and dignified manner in which the meetings, processions, rallies, seminars, conferences and other events were held throughout Pakistan and celebrations gave a clear message to the entire international community.

He added that the Kashmir Solidarity Day and will not withdraw support under any circumstances.

including India, that the Kashmir dispute was a living and unresolved international dispute, which could not be suppressed by force, coercion, demographic change, military siege and political tactics.

Ghulam Muhammad Safi said Pakistan stands at every level with the struggle of the Kashmiri people for their rightful, just and recognized right to self-determination in accordance with the resolutions of the United Nations Security Council and will not withdraw support under any circumstances.

He added that the Kashmir Solidarity Day and will not withdraw support under any circumstances.



CAMBODIA: Chairman Senate Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani receiving his counterpart at the high-level meeting in Cambodia.

Animated films lead China's cinema boom in 2025

ISLAMABAD (INP): China's film industry saw animated features deliver exceptional results in 2025, with nationwide box office revenue reaching 51.832 billion yuan (about \$7.37 billion).

Animation alone contributed over 25 billion yuan -- nearly half of the market -- signaling a major industry shift, People's Daily reported on Friday.

Ne Zha 2, a fantasy adventure film based on the Chinese mythological character Ne Zha, stood out in particular. With a global box office of nearly 15.95 billion yuan, it became the highest-grossing animated film in global cinema history. It also marked the first Asian film ever to enter the global top 10 in box-office rankings, placing fifth on the all-time global box-office list. Other animated titles also resonated strongly with Chinese audiences. Domestic productions like Ne Zha 2, Zootopia 2, Boonie Bears: Future Reborn, and The Legend of Hei 2 all had earlier body and international

releases, such as Zootopia 2 achieved significant commercial success.

Yu Zhou, president of Light Chaser Animation, a Beijing-based producer of animated films, noted that China's domestic animation market in 2025, blockbusters and top-tier titles played an especially pronounced role in driving overall performance. Early in the year, Ne Zha 2 attracted 324 million cinema visits. Many viewers watched the film multiple times, while a significant number were "new audiences" who had not visited movie theaters for years. Ne Zha 2 sparked strong audience interest in animated films and helped lift the performance of the entire animation sector throughout 2025, Yu said.

"Chinese audiences are becoming increasingly interested in animated films," said Peng Kan, a member of the theoretical and critical committee of the

China Film Association. Statistics illustrate this trend clearly. From 2011 to 2018, animated films accounted for around 10 percent of China's annual box office. Between 2019 and 2024, the figure rose to roughly 14 percent. By 2025, the share had climbed to nearly 50 percent. This shift aligns with demographic changes. Moviegoers born in the 1990s and 2000s now dominate cinema attendance. "Unlike earlier generations, they grew up with greater exposure to animation and show stronger acceptance," Yu explained.

An intellectual property (IP) adaptation strategy continues to fuel market growth. Among the animated films released in 2025, both domestic and international, the vast majority were adaptations of existing IPs.

Ne Zha 2, Zootopia 2, Boonie Bears: Future Reborn, and The Legend of Hei 2 all had earlier installments. No-

body was adapted from the animated anthology series Yao-Chinese folktales, while Curious Tales of a Temple drew on a classic work of Chinese literature.

"Animation possesses unique advantages for IP development," Peng observed. "It enables multidimensional expansion through sequels, merchandise, and cross-brand collaborations."

Recent co-branded products launched during film releases have not only enhanced films' visibility and influence, but also generated higher box-office returns and ancillary revenue.

This, in turn, helps create a stronger cinema-going atmosphere, build user loyalty, and expand consumption scenarios.

Industry insiders widely agree that the growing popularity of domestic animated films ultimately stems from improvements in quality. On the one hand, stories are becoming more diverse.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Climate Change and Environmental Coordination, Dr. Musadik Malik, addressed the launching ceremony of the Climate Finance Accelerator (CFA).

CM Balochistan's Aide Shahid Rind Condemns Suicide Blast in Islamabad, Calls It an Attack on National Security

QUETTA: Advisor to the Chief Minister of Balochistan, Shahid Rind, has strongly condemned the suicide bombing inside an Imambargah in Islamabad's Tarli area, terming it a direct attack on national security and social harmony.

In his statement, Shahid Rind said that such cowardly acts are aimed at spreading fear among the public and inciting religious hatred, but emphasized that hostile elements will never succeed in their malicious objectives.

He said that targeting a place of worship during Friday prayers clearly shows that terrorists have no connection with any religion, humanity, or moral values.

He added that elements like Fina-e-Khawarij are, in fact,



enemies of Pakistan's peace, stability, and interfaith harmony.

Shahid Rind stated that the entire nation stands united with the families of the martyrs in this difficult

time, while prayers are being offered for the speedy recovery of the injured.

He also appreciated the timely response of the concerned institutions and

the services of rescue teams, saying that state institutions possess complete capability to counter all forms of terrorism.

Condemning the incident, Shahid Rind

said that the Government of Balochistan strongly denounces this terrorist attack and reiterated its firm resolve to stand against terrorism in all its forms.

Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak Visits Family of Martyred Private Security Guard

QUETTA: On the directives of Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfaraz Bugti, Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak visited the residence of a private security guard who was martyred in a recent terrorist incident.

During the visit, the Provincial Minister expressed heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family and paid tribute to their patience, courage, and resilience in the face of tragedy.

Speaking on the occasion, Haji Ali Madad Jatak said that the Government of Balochistan stands shoulder to shoulder with the families of martyrs and will not leave them alone under any circum-



stances. He conveyed the Chief Minister's assurance of full support and assistance to

the family of the martyred security personnel. The Provincial Minister emphasized

that the sacrifices of martyrs will not go in vain, reaffirming the government's com-

mitment to combating terrorism and ensuring peace and security in the province.

Balochistan Finance Minister Mir Shoaib Noshervani Condemns Suicide Bombing at Imambargah in Islamabad

QUETTA: Provincial Minister for Finance and Minerals, Mir Shoaib Noshervani, has strongly condemned the suicide bombing at an Imambargah in the Tarli area of the federal capital Islamabad. He stated that targeting innocent worshippers during Friday prayers is the worst form of terrorism and a grave crime against humanity. Expressing deep sorrow and grief over the loss of precious human lives in the attack, the provincial finance minister said,

Such cowardly acts are aimed at spreading fear among the public and inciting religious hatred, but emphasized that hostile elements will never succeed in their malicious objectives. He said that targeting a place of worship during Friday prayers clearly shows that terrorists have no connection with any religion, humanity, or moral values.

He added that elements like Fina-e-Khawarij are, in fact,

enemies of Pakistan's peace, stability, and interfaith harmony. He stated that the entire nation stands united with the families of the martyrs in this difficult time, while prayers are being offered for the speedy recovery of the injured. He also appreciated the timely response of the concerned institutions and the services of rescue teams, saying that state institutions possess complete capability to counter all forms of terrorism. Condemning the incident, Mir Shoaib Noshervani said that the Government of Balochistan strongly denounces this terrorist attack and reiterated its firm resolve to stand against terrorism in all its forms.

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER (ROAD) CWP/PAH DEPARTMENT DISTRICT JAFFARABAD

NOTICE INVITING TENDER				
The procurement of works listed below for which Notice Inviting Tender on sealed percentage basis is invited from interested Contractors / Firms with detailed terms and conditions are given below. EARNEST MONEY 2% of the Bid cost in the shape of a call deposit and DATE OF COMPLETION 30TH JUNE 2020 for each work. The tender fee will be deposited through green challan in the National Bank of Pakistan Main Branch under the head of account C-02715 (Building CWP/PAH Receipt) at the rate shown against each work as mentioned below:-				
S/R	NAME OF WORK	ESTIMATED COST	Tender Fee	RELEVANT CATEGORY
I.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Community Hall For Kili Nigir Area, Orangraha Taluk, Kori District, Peshawar. TSE-2520299083	RS.10.00 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
II.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase II - Construction Of 2 Classrooms Along With Boundary Wall, Purgana District, Peshawar. TSE-2520299083	RS. 10.00 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
III.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of 3 Rooms And 2 Washrooms At Dops Syed, Daudkhel, Kili Dabari, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 10.00 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
IV.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Additional Classrooms For Girls High School, Mughliyan Taluk, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
V.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
VI.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
VII.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
VIII.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
IX.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above
X.	Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I - Construction Of Boundary Wall For Muzah Nawab, Baria-14102 (Sardardel). TSE-2520299013	RS. 0.80 Million	RS.1500/-	C-6 & Above

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-BUILDING Communication Works PPAH District Peshawar

Balochistan Food Authority Intensifies Crackdown on Unhygienic and Substandard Food Units in Quetta

QUETTA: On the special directives of the Chief Minister of Balochistan and the Provincial Minister for Food, the Balochistan Food Authority (BFA) has further intensified its crackdown against unsafe, unhygienic, and substandard food products across Quetta city. In this regard, BFA food safety teams conducted large-scale inspections in various areas of the provincial capital, including Airport Road, Samungli Road, Pashoonabad, Kasi Road, Alamar Road, Sahal Road, Joint Road, Nawani Kili, and Circular Road.

During the operation, more than 70 food units were thoroughly inspected. As a result of serious violations of food safety laws, two food units were sealed, while over 15 units were fined.

The sealed units included a well-known company and a jalabi manufacturing unit. During inspection of the distribution unit, authorities confiscated a manufacturing and expiry date printing machine along with a packing scale machine. Officials observed suspicious and erasable expiry dates on bakery products, poor storage conditions, lack of cleanliness and sanitation, and absence of pest control and waste management systems.

Meanwhile, the jalabi unit was found operating in an extremely unhygienic environment, with improper food handling, unsafe storage practices, untraceable cooking oil, and no valid BFA license, constituting major violations of food safety regulations. Additionally, during the crackdown, four units were fined, while six were issued improvement notices. Expired products, banned items,

NOTICE INVITING TENDER				
The Executive Engineer Public Health Engineering Division Quetta invites sealed percentage tenders based on composite schedule of rates 2023 Government of Balochistan and market rates for interested Contractors / Firms. DATE OF COMPLETION 30TH JUNE 2020 for each work. The tender fee will be deposited through green challan in the National Bank of Pakistan Main Branch under the head of account C-02715 (Building CWP/PAH Receipt) at the rate shown against each work as mentioned below:-				
S/R	NAME OF WORK	ESTIMATED COST	Tender Fee	RELEVANT CATEGORY
1.	Construction of Small Solar Water Supply Scheme at Shanzai Taluk, District Quetta (TSE-2520299083)	1742750/-	1500/-	C-6 & Above
2.	Construction of Small Solar Water Supply Scheme at Shanzai Taluk, District Quetta (TSE-2520299083)	938704/-	1500/-	C-6 & Above
3.	Construction of Small Solar Water Supply Scheme at Shanzai Taluk, District Quetta (TSE-2520299083)	291021/-	1500/-	C-6 & Above

NOTICE INVITING TENDER				
The procurement of works listed below for which Notice Inviting Tender on sealed percentage basis is invited from interested Contractors / Firms with detailed terms and conditions are given below. EARNEST MONEY 2% of the Bid cost in the shape of a call deposit and DATE OF COMPLETION 30TH JUNE 2020 for each work. The tender fee will be deposited through green challan in the National Bank of Pakistan Main Branch under the head of account C-02715 (Building CWP/PAH Receipt) at the rate shown against each work as mentioned below:-				
S/R	NAME OF WORK	ESTIMATED COST	Tender Fee	RELEVANT CATEGORY
I.	School Projects Package - I, Taluk Sargol, District Ziarat Under Balochistan Special Development Initiative Program (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Near Road Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
II.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - II, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
III.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - III, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
IV.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - IV, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
V.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - V, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
VI.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - VI, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
VII.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - VII, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
VIII.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - VIII, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
IX.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - IX, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above
X.	SCHOOL PROJECTS PACKAGE - X, TENSIL ZARAT, DISTRICT ZARAT, UNDER BALOCHISTAN SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE PROGRAM (BSID) Phase I (1) Construction of Boundary Wall of GHS Sargol 3. Additional room GHS Sargol, Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 5. Repair & renovation / repair GHS Sargol 6. Additional room GHS Sargol & Repair work GHS Sargol 7. Boundary wall of GHS Kili Bada & Repair work GHS Sargol. TSE-2520299083 (E-4)	RS. 69.00 Million	RS.3000/-	C-6 & Above

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER-BUILDING Communication Works PPAH District Peshawar

Karachi industrialists propose solar-powered charity model

NEWS DESK: Amid official efforts to tame consumer-oriented penetration of solar energy, Karachi-based industrialists and financial wizards have sought to introduce a not-for-profit "Social Net-Metering Unit" Donation Framework (SNM-DA) to divert surplus solar generation to the poor and deserving consumers.

The framework originally proposed by business leader and former Karachi Stock Exchange managing director Moin M. Fudda is now being pushed by the Korangi Association of Trade and Industry (Kati).

It is believed the proposal would reduce the government's subsidy burden, ease industrial tariffs from cross-subsidy pressures, and help improve recoveries and reduce system losses for distribution companies across the country.

The proposal has been formally submitted to the National Electric Power Regulatory Authority (Nepra), which may take it up for public and stakeholder comments on Friday (February 6).

The proposal, according to Kati President Muhammad Ikram Rajput, has been developed by Mr Fudda and Kati representatives.



Rohan Javed and envisaged "a voluntary, non-monetary, and regulator-supervised framework that allows net-metering consumers (prosumers) to donate a portion of their surplus electricity units, in kilowatt-hours, to low-income households registered with Not-for-Profit (NPOs) organisations duly certified by Pakistan Centre for Philanthropy (PCP)".

The proposal did not seek any change to existing net-metering rights or settlement mechanisms, but rather presents an optional social extension to the current regime.

Under the proposed framework, surplus units will be do-

noted as "Social Net Metering Units," credited directly against beneficiary electricity bills through NPOs, without monetisation, tradability, or commercial sale. "The mechanism is designed to be fully auditable, digitally tracked, and transparently reported, with clear safeguards to prevent

misuse," Mr Rajput reported. Framework allows net-metering consumers to donate surplus energy to low-income households, easing subsidy burden and industry costs.

From a system perspective, the proposal offers three key benefits. First, it would help reduce fiscal subsidy

burden on the government as "each donated unit replaces electricity that would otherwise require fiscal subsidy support, thereby reducing pressure on the federal budget and minimising the need for future subsidy injections".

Second, it would ease cross-subsidy pressure on industry, cur-

rently estimated at around Rs34 per unit. "By lowering the overall subsidy gap in the system, the framework helps reduce recovery pressure through tariffs and adjustments that are disproportionately borne by industrial and commercial consumers", it said.

Third, it would help

improve recoveries and reduce system losses as the targeted unit to be credited at slab-sensitive levels would improve bill affordability for vulnerable consumers, helping reduce arrears, disconnections, and theft-driven losses.

"The proposal is strictly voluntary, limited in scale through defined caps, and supported by a digital platform to ensure transparency, traceability, and regulatory oversight", Mr Rajput wrote, requesting Nepra to consider its feasibility and introduction "as a pilot-worthy, socially aligned, and fiscally responsible concept, without prejudice to any ongoing regulatory proceedings or tariff determinations".

Kati said that the country's electricity sector currently faced high tariffs, rising fiscal subsidies, and growing cross-subsidy pressure on industrial consumers, while rooftop solar adoption under net-metering had resulted in surplus generation settled through financial credits without addressing affordability or social equity.

Explaining the model, Kati suggested that prosumers be given the option to donate surplus units to an NPO on an annual basis through the licensee.

Gold, silver gain amid rout in global stocks, CME Group hiking margin requirement

NEWS DESK: Gold rose and silver was gripped by volatility on Friday amid a rout in global stocks, while US exchange operator CME raised margins on precious metals for a third time this year to mitigate risks.

Spot gold rose 2.3 percent to \$4,479.45 ounce by 05:52am GMT (10:52am PST), and was up 0.3pc for the week. US gold futures for April delivery added 0.2pc to \$4,897.20 per ounce.

Spot silver was up 3.8pc at \$27.91 an ounce on the day after falling about 10pc during early Asia trade to below the \$65-level, which is a more than 1-1/2-month low. It had plunged 19.1pc in the last session.

For the week, the white metal was down more than 13pc after shedding 18pc last week, its biggest weekly fall since 2011.

China's sole silver futures fund slumped by its 10pc daily limit on Friday, its sixth straight session of decline.

"There's all kinds of

evidence that risk sentiment in general is weakening. In this environment, gold is kind of holding its own and silver is caving in under the risk-off," said Ilya Spivak, head of global macro at LastVestly.

Global equities extended losses into a third session as a selloff on Wall Street intensified, with precious metals and cryptocurrencies gripped by wrenching volatility.

"The correction in gold and silver prices came at the right time, just before Chinese New Year. So we could see more buying by Chinese

consumers," said ANZ analyst Soni Kumari, adding that near-term volatility can continue until some unwinding of weak positions.

CME Group hiked margin requirements for gold and silver contracts on Thursday as the world's largest commodities exchange seeks to mitigate risks associated with heightened volatility.

Spot platinum added 0.4pc to \$1,993.95 per ounce after hitting an all-time high of \$2,918.80 on January 26, while palladium gained 2.2pc to \$1,651.74. Both were down for the week.



Customs warns KICT of legal action

NEWS DESK: Pakistan Customs has warned the management of Karachi International Container Terminal (KICT) of possible contempt of court proceedings and legal action over escalating operational disruptions that are delaying customs clearance, hampering trade activity, and affecting overall port performance.

In a letter issued by the Customs Appraisal Section West Collectorate to the KICT CEO, officials said operational delays at the terminal had intensified despite repeated written notices and daily verbal and telephonic coordination.

Customs authorities reported persistent delays in container grounding, examination processes, and freight clearance over the past several months.

Officials stated that consignment examination terminal operator efficiency, including timely grounding of containers, seal removal, and cargo availability.

Administrative shortcomings at the terminal have increased cargo dwell time and caused congestion at the

port. Customs data shows a continuous grounding backlog at KICT since December 2025.

During July-December 2025, import cargo volumes rose 13.54% year-on-year, while consignment examinations increased by 31.25%.

However, the terminal failed to proportionately expand operational capacity, storage space, trained manpower, and cargo handling equipment, according to the letter.

Customs also accused the terminal management of refusing to honour Delay and Detention Certificates issued under Section 14A(2) of the Customs Act 1969 which officials said constitutes a violation of Supreme Court directives.

Several cases recommended by legal forums and the Federal Tax Ombudsman for demurrage to port importers, remain unresolved.

Authorities further alleged non-compliance with the First-In-First-Out (FIFO) principle in container grounding and examination. Although additional space

at the Karachi Port Trust (KPT) West Wharf created capacity to handle around 100 containers daily, only 40-50 containers are being shifted due to security, labour availability, and procedural issues under Rule 554 of the Customs Rules, 2001. Customs has directed KICT management to immediately eliminate the grounding backlog, strictly enforce FIFO procedures,

and submit a comprehensive operational improvement plan aligned with rising cargo volumes to prevent further disruption to port trade.

Earlier, the Karachi Chamber of Commerce & Industry (KCCI), while expressing concern over the persistent backlog of nearly 50% cargo at KICT every day, cautioned that prolonged congestion was disrupting supply chains, inflating costs, and undermining ease of doing business.

In a statement, KCCI President Rehman pointed out that the primary cause of congestion at KICT was the acute shortage of staff, particularly for consignments marked for examination that needs to be raised to at least 25 staffers overseen by two senior officials.

"The examination process at KICT remains excessively slow, resulting in average backlog of around 50% containers each day," he said, adding that frequent rotation of staff further delays the clearance process.



Kazakh firm plans \$20m gold mining in G-B

NEWS DESK: Kazakh company has expressed its intention to invest \$20 million in placer gold mining projects in Gilgit-Baltistan (G-B), as discussions were held with the Board of Investment (BoI) on opportunities in Pakistan's mining sector, particularly in the northern region.

According to an official statement issued on Thursday, Federal Minister for the Board of Investment Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh held a meeting with a delegation of Elaman Group from the Republic of Kazakhstan to discuss potential investment in placer gold mining in G-B.

During the meeting, the delegation informed the minister that Elaman Group planned to immediately invest \$20 million in placer gold mining projects in the region, with prospects of further investment in subsequent phases. The group said it had already conducted preliminary studies of G-B and identified strong potential for placer gold exploration and development.



shared plans to introduce modern mining technologies in collaboration with Chinese partners, aimed at ensuring efficient, sustainable and environmentally responsible mining practices.

The meeting was also attended by Additional Secretary-I Board of Investment Zulfikar Ali. The federal minister assured the delegation of facilitation at both federal and provincial levels, including regulatory support, coordina-

tion with relevant authorities and assistance through the Board of Investment's single-window operations.

He said foreign investment in the mineral sector was important for economic growth, job creation and regional development, and encouraged investment initiatives that complied with Pakistan's legal and regulatory framework.

The Elaman Group highlighted its commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

and community development initiatives in areas surrounding the mining sites. The delegation said its proposed activities would focus on local employment, skills development and social uplift in G-B.

It was further shared during the meeting that discussions on a joint venture with local partners for the same period, according to provisional figures.

The Rs315 billion income tax payments by salaried individuals were

Salaried class paid Rs315b in Jul-Jan

NEWS DESK: Income tax contributions by Pakistan's salaried class further jumped by 10% to Rs315 billion during the first seven months of this fiscal year, as one out of every three Pakistanis who left the country last year in search of jobs and better salaries were skilled to highly-qualified people.

According to provisional data compiled by the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR), salaried individuals paid Rs315 billion in income tax during the July-January period of the current fiscal year.

This was Rs30 billion, or 10.5%, more than the already higher base of Rs285 billion recorded in the same period of the last fiscal year.

Tax contributions by salaried persons in both the public and private sectors remained more than double the taxes paid by the real estate sector during the same period, according to provisional figures.

The Rs315 billion income tax payments by salaried individuals were

exclusive of book adjustments. They were also exclusive of payments of the government's employees made under Section 153-B of the income tax law, the sources added.

Pakistan's salaried class remains unduly burdened and is a victim of the government's leathargic approach, which places the burden of tax collection on the existing pool of taxpayers, mainly salaried individuals and manufacturers.

The salaried class pays about 38% of its gross income in taxes,

which is significantly higher compared to regional countries and relative to the real estate sector and retailers.

However, there is mere lip service on the part of the government to ease the woes of salaried persons and, as a result, skilled to highly skilled and highly qualified people are leaving Pakistan to secure better jobs and earn salaries subject to lower taxes.

Pakistan's information technology — trained professionals are leaving for better destinations.

In the last calendar

year, out of a total of 762,000 people who left Pakistan, about 254,180 were either skilled, highly skilled or highly qualified, according to the Bureau of Immigration Overseas Employment.

About 222,171 skilled people left the country, while another 13,657 were highly skilled and 18,352 were highly qualified persons, according to the immigration bureau. The details showed that 6,659 chartered accountants and 3,795 doctors left Pakistan in 2025.



Spin woes, injury and poor form dog Australia

NEWS DESK: Captain Mitchell Marsh insists Australia can put their spin woes behind them at the T20 Cricket World Cup after a morale-sapping series defeat to Pakistan left their preparations in tatters.

The 2021 champions are title contenders at the tournament in India and Sri Lanka beginning on Saturday, but it has been a horror build-up. They capitulated to Pakistan in Lahore by 22 runs, then 90 and lastly by a crushing 111 - their heaviest-ever T20 defeat.

Outplayed by bat and ball, they were strangled by Pakistan's spinners.

Marsh defended the team's record in the spin-friendly conditions they will encounter, insisting they learned some lessons from their Pakistan thrashing.

"In isolation, purely in this series, we struggled," he said.

"But over the last 18 months I think as a team we've been one of the best teams in the world, and we've played spin really well."

"We'll take the learnings, we'll move on to the World Cup and we know we're a very good side in all conditions."

They were without high-rollers Tim David and Glenn Maxwell in Pakistan, both of whom have proven records against spin. Their return will be a welcome boost.

"We know that conditions can spin in Sri Lanka and we'll assess that when we get there," added Marsh, who will open with Travis Head.

"We've got some extremely good players of spin coming back and experience coming back."

Adding to their problems, Australia are missing star pacemen Pat Cummins and Josh Hazlewood for the whole tournament.

Cummins is still recovering from a lower back issue while the injury-prone Hazlewood has hamstring and Achilles problems.

Fellow speedster Nathan Ellis is also making his return from injury, while spinner Adam Zampa reportedly has a groin complaint.



Australia open their title bid against Ireland in Colombo on Wednesday. De'Vries logic They will have a spin-heavy squad at the World Cup, with left-armers Matt Kuhnemann and Cooper Connolly complementing Zampa, should he be fit, and part-timer

Maxwell Ellis, Xavier Bartlett and Ben Dwarshuis, a last-minute replacement for Cummins, provide the seam options, with Sean Abbott cover.

The batting will be spearheaded by Marsh, Head, David, Maxwell, Marcus Stoinis and Cameron Green, although none of them have fired in the game's

shortest format in recent years. Controversially, one of Australia's best batsmen against spin, a form player, will not be there.

Steve Smith was

overlooked despite his blistering Big Bash League form as an opener.

Selectors said there was no room for him given Marsh and Head occupy the top of the order.

"If a replacement is required, Steve is very much in contention and this has been communicated with him," said national selector Tony Dodemaide.

Calls have been building to parachute him in given the side's Pakistan struggles.

"It really does defy logic that Steve Smith is not in the World Cup squad," tweeted former great Mark Waugh.

Ex-Tes t wicketkeeper Ian Healy added: "I'd have him in the team."

After meeting Ireland, Australia will play 12th-ranked Zimbabwe, 20th-ranked Oman and co-hosts Sri Lanka with the top two progressing to the Super Eight.

"We're going to the World Cup to try and win it, and we're solely focused on that," said a defiant Marsh.

Ruthless City thump Newcastle to reach League Cup final

NEWS DESK: Omar Marmoush scored twice as Manchester City set up a League Cup final date with Arsenal after a comprehensive 3-1 second-leg victory over visiting Newcastle United secured a 5-1 aggregate win in their semi-final on Wednesday.

The home side were ruthless in the first half as Tijani Reijnders also got on the scoresheet and now face Arsenal at Wembley on March 22 in a battle between City manager Pep Guardiola and his protégé Mikel Arteta.

"We showed a very good mentality," Marmoush told Sky Sports. "We were together as a team, from the first minute we were very focused on the job. We showed our mentality and passion and are

very happy to reach the final.

"We are here to win trophies. We give our best every day to reach these finals and we will never. Hopefully we can do it for all the new players and also the players that were here."

Trailing 2-0 from the first leg, the last thing Newcastle needed was to concede early at the Etihad Stadium, but Marmoush's shot deflected off defender Dan Burn and into the net inside six minutes.

The Egypt international added a second on the night with a close-range header from Antoine Semenyo's cross.

Marmoush has now scored 12 goals for City and five have come against Newcastle at the Etihad Stadium. Arsenal have not

A rampant City scored a third before halftime and Semenyo was involved again as he created the chance for Reijnders to finish.

Newcastle pulled a goal back just past the hour-mark when substitute Anthony Elanga showed quick feet to work a shooting chance and curled his effort past James Trafford in the home goal.

Elanga missed two superb chances to reduce the deficit further, one scarcely believable from right in front of the goal, while Erling Haaland brushed the post at the other end.

City won four League Cup titles in a row between 2018 and 2021 and have eight in all, only Liverpool (10) have won more.

When you win something, it helps to win more. It's a pleasure to play against Arsenal, the best team right now in Europe and maybe the world.

Guardiola also expressed his opinion that their recent signing Marc Guehi should be allowed to play in the final, saying the club will ask organisers to reconsider eligibility rules.

"Why should he [Guehi] not play? Why not? We pay his salary, he is our player," Guardiola told reporters.

"You buy a player for a lot of money and he is not able to play, for a rule I don't understand."

Hopefully they can change it.



Lens cruise into French Cup quarters, Endrick sends Lyon through

NEWS DESK: RC Lens reached the quarter-finals of the French Cup on Wednesday courtesy of a 4-2 win over Troyes, while an Endrick-inspired Olympique Lyonnais fought past second-division Laval.

Goals by Florian Sotoca and Andrija Bulatovic, as well as a Abdullah Sima brace, saw surprise Ligue 1 title contenders Lens through their last-16 tie. Martin Adeline had levelled before half-time for second flight leaders Troyes before three goals in eight minutes early in the second period put Pierre Sage's side firmly in charge.

At home to Ligue 2 strugglers Laval, Lyon struggled to break down their opponents until a moment of individual excellence by Real Madrid loanee Endrick.

Following a surge

in run from midfielder Pavel Suzic, the 19-year-old Brazilian burst through a challenge before unleashing a rasping drive from the edge of the box to open the scoring in the 80th minute.

It was Endrick's fifth goal in as many outings for Lyon since arriving from the Santiago Bernabeu in late December.

"It's really important to have scored my first goal on our home turf. This start at Lyon is truly a dream come

true," the forward said.

Lyon wrapped up their 11th consecutive win in all competitions when Laval keeper Maxime Hautbois inadvertently turned Alfonso Moreira's effort into his own net late in added time.

Meanwhile, struggling Nice pulled off a remarkable comeback in their last-16 tie against Montpellier to win 3-2.

The hosts found themselves trailing 2-0 midway through the second half before Kail Boudache halved the deficit with 18 minutes remaining on the clock.

Antoine Mendy netted on 89 minutes and looked to have forced extra-time, until Sofiane Diop shaped a fine curling effort beyond Montpelier goalkeeper Mathieu Michel seven minutes into injury time.

Elsewhere, Lorient saw off fellow Ligue 1 outfit Paris FC with a 2-0 win thanks to a second-half goal by

Neoh Cadion and a late Moustapha Bbow goal. Toulouse beat Ligue 2 Amiens 1-0 with Yann Ochoa netting the winner six minutes before the interval.



Injury-hit Australia well prepared for World Cup, says Marsh

NEWS DESK: Australia remain confident of a strong showing at the upcoming ICC Twenty20 World Cup despite the absence of several front-line fast bowlers, captain Mitchell Marsh said on Thursday.

Pace spearhead Mitchell Starc has retired from T20 Internationals, while his new-ball partner Pat Cummins has been ruled out of the 20-nation tournament with a back injury.

Josh Hazlewood is also doubtful for the first 21 T20 Internationals. The tournament, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, begins on Saturday.

"We are well prepared for the World Cup and, yes, we will miss some of our key players, but we are confident that we have all bases covered," Marsh told reporters at the captains' briefing in Colombo.

Australia arrived in Sri Lanka after a 3-0 series drubbing in Paki-

stan, but Marsh dismissed concerns over their form.

"We have a few guys available here who didn't play in Pakistan and it's all about adapting to conditions," he said.

"We are confident that we will put up a good show in the World Cup."

The former world champions boast an impressive record since the last World Cup in the Caribbean and US in 2024, winning 17 of their 21 T20 Internationals.

The tournament, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, begins on Saturday.

SICKNESS HITS NZ CAMI: New Zealand batters Rachin Ravindra and Devon Conway have been struck down with illness ahead of the T20 World Cup but head coach Rob

Walter is hopeful of a clean bill of health before their tournament gets underway.

Walter said the duo were missing a warm-up against the United States in Mumbai while top-order batter Finn Allen was also rested as he recovers from a shoulder injury.

"There's a bit of illness in the camp unfortunately at the moment so Devon and Rachin are struggling with a viral infection which I suppose is part and parcel of touring," Walter told reporters on Thursday.

"Rachin's next door to me and it hasn't sounded good all night, so I think he might be struggling."

New Zealand launch their bid for a maiden T20 World Cup title against Afghanistan in Chennai on Sunday.

A 11-r o u n d e r Michael Bracewell

missed the recent 4-1 loss to India in the T20 warm-up series with a calf injury but Walter expects him to be fit for Afghanistan, along with Allen.

"Everyone's sort of on track at this stage to be fit and healthy for game one, which is good news," he said.

New Zealand have struggled to build momentum since arriving in the subcontinent, with Jimmy Neesham falling ill and paceman Lockie Ferguson coming back from injury.

While New Zealand lost the final T20 against India this week, Ferguson's two-wicket spell was a bright spot for Walter, with the last bowler expected to take a leading role in the absence of Adam Milne.

"He has worked incredibly hard to get himself ready for the World Cup," said Walter.

Inter eyeing chance to put pressure on title rivals Milan

NEWS DESK: Inter Milan visit Sassuolo this weekend with the chance to stretch their lead at the top of the Serie A table to eight points with title rivals AC Milan not in action.

Cristian Chivu's men extended their unbeaten run in the league to 11 matches last week, a streak which includes 10 wins, by seeing off Cremonese.

With AC Milan unable to use the San Siro this weekend due to the stadium hosting the Winter Olympics opening ceremony, Inter can extend their advantage in the title race when they visit Sassuolo on Sunday.

Inter are bidding to win back the Scudetto after Napoli's triumph last year, but striker Lautaro Martinez insists they can not be complacent despite their excellent form. "It's not a message to the rest of the league, it's a message to ourselves," said Martinez after their win over Cremonese.



"There's still a long way to go and it's a very evenly-balanced division."

Inter are still fighting on three fronts after beating Torino 2-1 on Wednesday to reach the Italian Cup semi-finals.

They also take on Bodo/Glimt in the Champions League knockout in 10 days later this month. "We had a busy January and will have an even busier February," Chivu said after the Cup quarter-final victory.

"I'm not talking

about league titles, trophies, or the Champions League - we just want to be competitive and be the best version of ourselves."

"We want to fight on all fronts."

Milan, despite not playing in Europe and being out of the Cup, will play three games in 10 days later this month due to the Olympics.

But Rossoneri coach Massimiliano Allegri says this week's break will be beneficial to his players.



Pakistan and Uzbekistan reaffirm resolve to expand trade, economic ties

NEWS DESK: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday said that ties between Pakistan and Uzbekistan from now onwards would be measured by trade flows, investment projects, industrial partnerships and people-to-people exchanges. Radio Pakistan reported.

According to the report, he made the remarks while addressing the Pakistan-Uzbekistan Business Forum in Islamabad alongside Uzbek President Shavkat Mirziyoyev, who is in Islamabad on an official visit.

In his remarks, the premier said that it was in this spirit that both countries had set an "ambitious yet achievable target of increasing our bilateral trade to \$2 billion", the report said.

He said the two countries had also signed a protocol, which would lead to the constitution of a working group to draft a five-year roadmap in order to promote trade, investment, and joint collaboration in research and development, information technology and agriculture, it added.

PM Shehbaz also said that tourism was another area in which both countries could benefit from each other's experience. "He expressed the confidence that business-to-business memoranda of understanding worth \$3.4bn are going to materialise," the report said. The premier also stated that Pakistan considered Uzbekistan not only a partner but a gateway to Central Asia with great potential for joint ventures with Pakistani entrepreneurs, it added. Meanwhile, the visiting dignitary urged

the business communities of both countries to come forward to tap the full trade potential between Pakistan and Uzbekistan.

"He assured a ten-year tax exemption to Pakistani businesses in addition to all possible facilitation. The Uzbek president emphasised that both countries have a great trade potential in diverse areas," the report said.

"Pakistan committed to boosting ties with Uzbekistan in diverse fields."

Separately, President Asif Ali Zardari said that Pakistan was committed to elevating bilateral relations with Uzbekistan to "new heights" through closer cooperation in connectivity, trade and people-to-people contacts, according to a separate report by Radio Pakistan.

According to the report, President Zardari met with Uzbekistan President Mirziyoyev and expressed the confidence that the visit would prove "productive and forward-looking." "President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to working closely with Uzbekistan to further strengthen cooperation in trade, connectivity, defence, security, culture and heritage," Radio Pakistan said.

He noted that direct air links between the two countries had brought the people of the two countries closer and underscored the importance of regional connectivity initiatives, including the Uzbekistan-Afghanistan-Pakistan Railway Project, while highlighting the need to address remaining challenges through collective efforts, the national

radio broadcaster said.

During the meeting, President Zardari highlighted the "steady growth in bilateral trade in recent years and underscored the need to realise the true economic potential of the relationship, with the shared objective of expanding trade to two billion dollars as agreed by the two sides," the report said.

"He also stressed the importance of enhancing people-to-people contacts, tourism cooperation and cultural exchanges, drawing on the rich historical and spiritual links between the two nations," it added.

President Zardari also expressed the need to extend collaboration and facilitation between the financial institutions, including banks, to support trade and investment flows, it added.

Radio Pakistan quoted Uzbek President Mirziyoyev as saying that the country attached great importance to strengthening friendship and the strategic partnership with Pakistan. "He noted with satisfaction the steady growth in bilateral contacts at various levels, including the expansion of trade, an increase in joint ventures, and the implementation of cooperation projects in priority sectors of the economy," it said.

It added that President Mirziyoyev directed his concerned minister to coordinate with the Pakistani counterpart in this regard.

The Uzbek president emphasised the need to further expand practical cooperation through closer political dialogue, stronger trade, economic and investment ties.

Security forces kill 24 terrorists in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa IBOs

NEWS DESK: Security forces killed 24 terrorists in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, said a statement by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) released on Friday.

"On 4-5 February 2026, twenty-four khawarij belonging to Indian Proxy Fina Al Khawarij were killed in two separate engagements in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province," said the statement from the military's media wing.

Fina-al-Khawarij is a term the state uses for terrorists belonging to the banned Tehreek-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP). Two intelligence-based operations were conducted in the provinces of Orakzai and Khyber districts.

During the operation conducted in Orakzai district, troops engaged the terrorists and killed 14. While in Khyber, during the conduct of another IBO, security forces killed 10 terrorists.

"On reported presence of khawarij, an intelligence-based operation



was conducted by the Security Forces in Orakzai District. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the khawarij location and after an intense fire exchange, fourteen khawarij were sent to hell," said the ISPR, adding that "ten more khawarij were effectively neutralised" in Khyber.

Following the engagements, security forces conducted sanitization operations in the areas "to eliminate any other Indian sponsored khawarij found in the area".

The military's media wing added that the counter-terrorism operation "under (the) vision of Azm-e-Istehkam" (as approved by Federal Apex Committee on National Action Plan) by the Security Forces and Law

Enforcement Agencies of Pakistan will continue at full pace to wipe out the menace of foreign sponsored and supported terrorism from the country."

Earlier in January, 11 terrorists were killed in two separate IBOs in KP. Pakistan has seen a surge in terrorism since the TTP ended its ceasefire deal with the government in November 2022, vowing to increase attacks.

Despite record militant deaths, Pakistan saw a sharp escalation in militant violence in 2025, with terrorist attacks rising by 34 per cent and terrorism-related fatalities increasing by 21 per cent year on year, according to a report released by the Islamabad-based Pak Institute for Peace Studies.

Sindh IG says operation has been launched against riverine bandits

NEWS DESK: Sindh Inspector General of Police Javed Alam Odho said on Friday that, on the directives of the provincial government, an operation was launched against riverine bandits last month.

Speaking at a press conference at the Central Police Office, the provincial police chief said since the launch of the operation, 113 encounters had taken place with criminals in which 27 kidnappers were gunned down, 82 others were injured, and 77 were arrested.

Flanked by Sindh Additional Inspector General of Police Iqbal Dara, Odho said 12 bandits had also surrendered before law enforcers as part of the government's policy.

"These were not ordinary criminals," he said. He further said that 15 people who had been kidnapped had been recovered safely. He lauded that some of the criminals rescued were in the custody of the bandits for up to three years.



In an oblique reference to past operations against riverine bandits that failed to deliver desirable results, Odho said a comprehensive plan had been chalked out in which socio-economic aspects were also included as part of the government's policy.

He vowed to continue the operation until the "total annihilation" of crime in riverine areas. The Sindh police chief

said the riverine areas where military-grade weapons were available would be de-weaponsised.

He said that under the plan, tribal feuds—which had remained nurseries for bandits in terms of provision of manpower and weapons—would be ended.

He said that these tribal feuds were the outcome of "egos, attempts to occupy government

lands and petty issues". Some tribal chiefs had cooperated with the law enforcers for eliminating the criminals, he noted, adding that those who refused to do so would be taken to task.

He further said that there would be "permanent presence" of police to prevent the re-emergence of the criminals. He declared that a "riverine police unit" would be set up for this purpose.

pose.

He claimed that recently hard-to-reach areas like Bagarji and Ranwati had been cleared of bandits, adding that notorious gangs were eliminated.

He further said that there would be a "socio-economic development" of the riverine areas. He hoped that with the completion of the Ghokhi-Kandhot bridge across the Indus River, law enforcers would get easy access to riverine areas. He hoped that the proposed bridge would help to eliminate criminals.

Odho also said that roads, dispensaries and schools would be set up in these areas. For this purpose, certain non-governmental organisations in Karachi had pledged to help set up educational institutions in the riverine areas, he said.

He said that with the help of oil and gas companies, socio-economic uplift projects were launched in Ghokhi district in 2003.

Murad inaugurates new facilities at MMI Hospital

NEWS DESK: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah inaugurated three new facilities — Ibn Sina and Ibn al-Haytham wards and Al-Shifa OPD — at the Memon Medical Institute (MMI) Hospital on Thursday.

Speaking at the ceremony, the chief minister described the expansion as an important milestone in strengthening quality healthcare services in the province.

"The facilities will help ensure patient care with greater comfort, dignity, and ease, reflecting dedication to public welfare," he remarked, while reaffirming the government's commitment to improving healthcare infrastructure.

Recalling his previous visit to the MMI Hospital in 2017, he said that MMI had emerged as one of the

largest private sector health facilities in Karachi after the Aga Khan University Hospital and Indus Hospital.

Mr Shah appreciated the dedication of doctors, nurses, staff, trustees, and donors, whose efforts, he said, reflected a strong spirit of service and social responsibility.

He noted that Karachi was widely known for advanced medical treatment facilities and emphasised that public-private partnerships played a crucial role in areas where the government couldn't directly deliver services.

"The MMI hospital's decision to provide free treatment to children born with hearing impairments is a significant welfare initiative," he said, while announcing government support for machinery and equipment for the newly inaugurated wards.

"The government will continue support for initiatives that promote compassion, excellence, and equity in healthcare," he said, adding public-private collaboration was essential to building a healthier Sindh.

Highlighting the importance of education and healthcare, he said that institutions like MMI Hospital not only delivered professional medical care but also supported vulnerable communities through welfare programmes.

The chief minister also recounted his association with MMI patron Shabbir Dewan, describing him as a longtime friend and announced that the government would collaborate with MMI on its proposed university project.

Senate amends its rule to curb judicial interference in parliamentary affairs

NEWS DESK: In a significant move to assert parliamentary supremacy, a Senate rule was amended on Friday with the aim to curb judicial interference in parliamentary affairs.

The amendment to rule 166(5) of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in the Senate was approved by the upper House of Parliament as it rejected the government's request to defer the matter.

A motion seeking the amendment to the rule was moved by PPP, PML-N and Muttahida Qaumi Movement (MQM) senators.

However, during the session, PML-N's Rana Sanaullah, who is special assistant to the prime minister on political affairs, conveyed Law Minister Azam Nazeer Tarar's request that the motion may not be taken up before the matter was discussed with him.

However, PPP Senator Saleem Memon said the move to amend the rule was also charring the session today, highlighted that the "interference of courts" in House committees' proceedings was the reason behind the need for the change in the rule.

"High courts granted stays on the cases and petitions admitted by the chairman," he pointed out, adding that there had been "back and forth on the amendment for



months". "We do not want to delay it any further."

But, Sanaullah asked what the agency said in response. Mandiwala said the functioning of the committees was getting affected. "The amendment is in the interest of Senate and its committees, and it has already been unanimously approved by the standing committee concerned," he contended.

Stressing that it was the desire of the House, Mandiwala said he had already discussed it with the law minister and the attorney general for Pakistan (AGP).

However, Sanaullah insisted that the matter be deferred till Monday. But, Mandiwala did not budge, asking that there had been "systemic concern, regulatory oversight and/or

"I have to proceed [with the session]," he said, asking Senator Abdul Qadir to move the motion, which was passed by the House by a majority vote.

Supporters of the amendment say the change will leave no legal room for the judiciary to interfere in the parliamentary matters.

The amendment expands the definition of public petitions that can be taken up by Senate committees.

It states that a public petition, submitted by a citizen or a group of citizens in the prescribed form under Rule 277, may be presented on "any matter of public importance", including grievances arising from disputes where circumstances disclose an element of public interest, systemic concern, regulatory oversight and/or

the protection of rights."

It further provides that, after consideration, the committee may issue: (a) observations or recommendations for systemic or regulatory improvements; and (b) facilitative guidance for resolution of the grievance and take necessary steps for disposal of the matter in accordance with relevant law.

A proviso added to the rule gives the Senate chairman broad discretion over whether a petition should proceed.

It reads: "Provided that, notwithstanding anything contained in this rule, the chairman of the Senate may, at his sole discretion, review, admit, pend, dispense with or decline to proceed with any petition, if in his opinion such action is necessary in the interest of propriety, parliamentary discipline, or to prevent

frivolous, vexatious or otherwise inappropriate proceedings."

Rule 166(5) in its previous form stated: "Public petitions may be presented on any matter connected with the business pending before the House or a committee, or any matter of general public interest which is primarily the concern of the government, provided that it is not one which falls within the cognisance of a court of law or tribunal, and it shall not directly relate to a matter pending before any court or other authority performing judicial or quasi-judicial functions."

The move follows a dispute last year over stay orders issued by the Islamabad High Court and Lahore High Court against proceedings of Senate standing committees.