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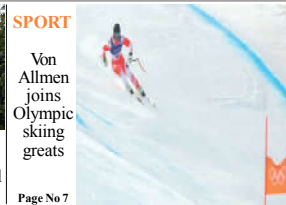
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First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

# QUETTA VOICE

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Website: www.quettavoice.com

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## Pakistan successfully launches its second indigenous Earth Observation Satellite

### NEWS DESK:

Pakistan marked a significant milestone in its space programme on Thursday with the successful launch of its second indigenous Earth Observation Satellite (EO-2) from China's Yangjiang Seashore Launch Centre.

Developed by the Space and Upper Atmosphere Re-

search Commission (SUPARCO), the EO-2 satellite is expected to enhance Pakistan's earth observation capabilities, providing high-resolution imagery for critical applications such as national development planning, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring.

The satellite will also support urban expansion efforts,

disaster management, climate analysis, and strategic decision-making.

SUPARCO officials hailed the launch as a major achievement, emphasising that EO-2's addition to Pakistan's satellite fleet will improve data continuity, coverage, and precision.

The successful development and launch of EO-2 underline Pakistan's growing technological self-reliance.

He also thanked China for its continued cooperation and

in advanced satellite technology, marking a key step in the country's space journey.

Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar

congratulated the nation on the development, saying it reflected Pakistan's steady progress in strengthening its national space capabilities and advancing technological self-reliance.

He also thanked China for its continued cooperation and steadfast support, saying the partnership with the country "continues to scale new heights, including in space technology".

FM Dar also commended SUPARCO and its scientists, engineers and entire team for their "tireless efforts in expanding Pakistan's indigenous space infrastructure and developing reliable, domestically engineered space systems for national development".

## SC orders access to personal physicians, phone calls for Imran Khan in Adiala Jail

### NEWS DESK:

The Supreme Court of Pakistan on Thursday ordered that Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder and former premier Imran Khan be granted access to his personal physicians in Adiala Jail and allowed telephone contact with his sons, Kasim and Sulaiman.

A two-member bench comprising Chief Justice of Pakistan Yahya Afridi and Justice Shahid Bilal Hasan heard the case. During the hearing, Chief Justice Afridi summoned Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan to the rostrum and reviewed reports submitted to the court.

PTI leaders Senator Faisal Javed, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, Salman Akram Raja and Khan's sister Aleema Khan also attended the court proceedings.

The chief justice observed, directing the attorney general: "Please read paragraph number 21 of the report."

According to the report submitted by Barrister Saifdar, the PTI founder expressed satisfaction with the protective and security arrangements in jail. It further stated that he was satisfied with the food facilities available to him. However, the report noted that the PTI founder described the medical facilities as unsatisfactory.



The PTI founder is currently in state custody, the chief justice said, adding that all prisoners, including Khan, should receive equal medical facilities.

"We will absolutely not say that the PTI founder should be given preferential facilities compared to other prisoners," the chief justice said. "Everyone should be treated equally," CJP Afridi added.

Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan said that they are ready to provide access to expert eye specialists.

The government is in a good mood, the PTI founder should also be given the facility of telephone contact with his children," the chief justice said.

On Tuesday, the Supreme Court appointed Saifdar as a friend of the court to submit a report on Khan's living conditions at Adiala Jail. Saifdar said he met with the PTI founder and also visited his cell as per the court's orders.

The report itself, Saifdar revealed, consists of seven pages and 22 paragraphs, and has been submitted to the Supreme Court. "My first responsibility was to submit the report," he said, stating that he had fulfilled his duty. He added that he praised Attorney General Mansoor Usman Awan in the report, and has also commended the administration of Adiala Jail.

The report on the facilities available to the PTI founder in jail had recommended an immediate eye examination. The PTI founder requested that he be examined by his personal doctors, Dr Faisal Sultan and Dr Asim Yousuf, the report said.

It also recommended that his medical examination could be conducted by any specialist doctor. The report suggested that books be provided to the PTI founder, citing his solitary confinement and lack of access to television. In the report, Saifdar recommended that immediate and effective steps be taken to control mosquitoes and insects in the jail cell of Imran Khan.

## National Highway Blocked at Khanozai as Residents Renew Demand for Karizat District Status

### Asmat Hanafi:

Khanozai — A large number of people from three tehsils, including areas such as Bostan, Gawal Khanai, Khushab, Zarghoon, Khanuzai, Rod Mulazai, Dalsora, Charniyan, Margha, Zakrizai, Sham, Balozai and Nighanda, on Tuesday blocked the National Highway at Khanozai to press for the restoration of Karizat's district status.

The protesters announced an open-ended strike, stating that the highway would remain closed to all types of traffic until the government reinstates the district notification that was issued three years ago and later withdrawn.

The blockade has caused serious inconvenience to commuters and transporters, with intercity travel and goods movement coming to a halt. Protesters said the decision to shut down the main highway was taken after repeated requests and appeals to the authorities failed to yield any response.

They questioned the government's stance, asking why Karizat was declared a district three years ago if it did not meet the required criteria, and why the notification was later withdrawn without consulting local representatives. Demonstrators said the ongoing disruption was not their preference but a result of the government's continued rigidity, leaving residents with no



option but to take to the streets. The protesters urged the government to immediately engage in dialogue with local elders

and the Karizat Action Committee to resolve the issue peacefully. They warned that the protest would continue until a formal notification restoring

Karizat's district status is issued. They further stated that any hardship faced by travelers and

nearby residents due to the road closure would rest solely with the authorities if the issue remains unresolved.

## QUETTA VOICE

Editor: Asim Khan

## Balochistan's Tree Plantation Drive Must Go Beyond Ceremonies



## Editorial:

Every spring, usually between February and March, Balochistan witnesses the launch of tree plantation campaigns. Saplings are planted at official ceremonies, photographs circulate on social media, and hopeful statements are issued about a greener future.

While these efforts matter, they fall short of what the province truly needs.

Balochistan is one of the most climate-vulnerable regions in Pakistan and ranks among the hardest-hit areas globally by climate change.

Rising temperatures, recurring droughts, shrinking water resources, and disappearing wildlife are no longer distant threats—they are daily realities for communities across the province.

In such circumstances, tree plantation cannot remain a symbolic activity limited to headlines and hashtags.

What is required is a serious shift toward sustainable plantation. Planting a sapling is only the first step.

Ensuring its survival—through protection, irrigation, monitoring, and community ownership—is what makes a difference. The success of plantation drives should be measured by how many trees survive after one, three, or five years, not by the number of photo sessions held.

The Forest and Wildlife Department must move beyond publicity-driven campaigns and focus on long-term environmental impact.

Native and drought-resistant species should be prioritized, while schools, universities, and local communities must be made partners in protecting and nurturing plantations.

At a time when climate change threatens livelihoods, Balochistan does not need unnecessary construction projects or decorative infrastructure.

It needs a large-scale, province-wide plantation initiative—similar to a plantation tsunami—with clear targets aimed at reducing the effects of global warming, improving air quality, and restoring ecological balance.

A genuinely sustainable tree plantation campaign can help secure Balochistan's future. The province's environment cannot wait for another season of symbolic planting; it needs action that takes root and grows.

## BUIITEMS Organizes Open Day to Inspire Students Across Balochistan

Syed Dara Shikoh Amir: QUETTA: The Balochistan University of Information Technology, Engineering and Man-

agement Sciences (BUIITEMS) Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez reaffirmed the university's mission of inclusive education and knowl-

edge sharing. He stated: "BUIITEMS is the university of every student from across the province by hosting a vibrant 'Open Day', showcasing its modern academic facilities, innovative programs, and lively campus culture."

The event attracted an enthusiastic response, with more than 2,000 students from 18+ colleges attending. Visiting students and their teach-

ings provided students with insights into BUIITEMS' wide-ranging degree programs, research prospects, and campus life. Many participants

strengthened the bridge between the university and youth across Balochistan.

By holding this large-scale Open Day, BUIITEMS has fur-



ther solidified its reputation as a center of excellence in higher education.

Innovation, and student empowerment in Balochistan, encouraging young learners to strive for academic success and contribute to the province's development.

Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez applauded the organizing team for successfully conducting the Open Day, adding that such outreach efforts

praised the initiative, calling it a valuable opportunity to connect with higher education and future career options.

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## South-West Asia and the War Against Narcotics: Where Does Pakistan Stand?

By Dr. B. Sultan: Lady Macbeth once remarked that "a little water clears us of this deed" after the assassination of the King. Yet, with time, she remained haunted, obsessively rubbing her hands in an attempt to cleanse the imagined stains of blood. The persistence of narcotics production and trade in South-West Asia resembles this unending struggle—a dark reality that cannot be easily washed away.

Afghanistan has long been recognized as the world's largest producer of opium, with its roots tracing back to the early 1900s. Over the decades, the repercussions of this industry spilled into neighboring Pakistan and Iran. In the late 2000s, Taliban leader Mullah Omar imposed a strict ban on poppy cultivation through threats, forced eradication, and severe punishments. However, as revealed by the UNODC Opium Survey 2007, the ban primarily targeted cultivation while the trade continued. After the fall of the Taliban, opium again became a major source of funding for logistics, weapons, and militia payments.

In 2022, the Taliban leadership once again announced a ban on poppy cultivation, with Hibatullah Akhundzada officially declaring significant reductions. Some Western reports, supported by satellite imagery, showcased de-



clining poppy fields in southern Afghanistan. However, this raises critical questions: Can Afghanistan realistically abandon such a central economic resource while facing sanctions? And what consequences does this shift have for Pakistan? While certain

international outlets hastily claim that Pakistan has become a new hub for narcotics, such narratives ignore key realities. The issue is not a simple matter of "shifting sands" but a complex regional security challenge. The porous border between Pakistan and Afghani-

stan, coupled with cross-border networks of drug traffickers, means temporary shifts in cultivation are often strategic rather than permanent. Moreover, Afghanistan's pivot towards methamphetamine production—highlighted by satellite

evidence of expanded ephedra processing hubs—reflects adaptive strategies of traffickers rather than genuine eradication. In Pakistan, however, the situation is markedly different. Since 2001, the country has largely maintained its "poppy-free"

status, despite sporadic spillovers from Afghanistan. Following the Taliban's 2022 ban, some illicit cultivations did emerge in border areas, particularly within Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Yet these were swiftly addressed through

Pakistan's Poppy Elimination Campaign (PEC-2025). This multi-agency effort, led by the Anti-Narcotics Force (ANF) and provincial administrations, successfully destroyed thousands of acres of illegal poppy fields. Over 250 FIRs were registered,

dozens of arrests were made, and awareness campaigns were launched across educational institutions. Importantly, independent surveys after March 2025 confirmed the effectiveness of these eradication drives.

Pakistan's determination to combat narcotics often remains under-reported internationally, overshadowed by outdated or selective portrayals.

The fact remains: Pakistan continues to fight this menace not only for its own stability but also for global security.

What is urgently needed is greater recognition of these efforts by the international community and enhanced cooperation from agencies such as the UNODC.

As South-West Asia remains at the heart of global narcotics trade routes, Pakistan's role is both frontline and decisive. Balochistan, in particular, holds the potential to transform from a vulnerable transit zone into a hub of opportunity, stability, and resilience. Just as Lady Macbeth's imagined guilt could not be washed away with water, the global community cannot absolve itself of responsibility by ignoring Pakistan's sacrifices and achievements in this ongoing struggle. The fight against narcotics requires collective recognition, support, and action—not selective narratives.



## Bangladesh votes in landmark election after Gen Z uprising

**NEWS DESK:** Bangladeshis lined up outside polling booths on Thursday as voting began in a pivotal election for the South Asian nation after the 2024 ouster of long-time premier Sheikh Hasina in a Gen Z-driven uprising.

Analysts say a decisive result is crucial for steady governance in the nation of 175 million, as the deadly anti-Hasina protests triggered months of unrest and disrupted key industries, including the huge garments sector, the world's second-largest exporter.

It is the world's first election after an uprising led by under-30s, or Gen Z, to be followed by Nepal next month.

The contest pits two coalitions led by former allies, the Bangladesh Nationalist Party (BNP) and the Islamist Jamaat-e-Islami, with opinion polls giving an edge to the BNP.

In Dhaka, the capital, people queued up outside voting booths before polls opened at 7:30 a.m. local time (01:30

GMT), including eager participants like Mohammed Jobair Hossain, 39, who said he last voted in 2008.

"I am feeling excited because we are voting in a free manner after 17 years," Hossain said as he waited in line. "Our votes will matter and have meaning."

Hasina's Awami League is banned, and she remains in self-imposed exile in long-term ally India, opening the window for China to expand its influence in Bangladesh as Dhaka's ties with New Delhi deteriorate.

Elections were held during Hasina's tenure, but they were marred by opposition boycotts and intimidation, critics have said.

This time, more than 2,000 candidates, including many independents, are vying for 300 seats in the Jatiya Sangsad, or House of the Nation. Voting in one constituency has been postponed due to the death of a candidate. At least 50 parties are contesting in total, a national



record.

"This election is not just another routine vote," Nobel laureate Muhammad Yunus, head of an interim government installed after Hasina's ouster, said

this week.

The public awakening we witnessed against long-standing anger, inequality, deprivation and injustice finds its constitutional expression in this elec-

tion." In parallel, there will be a referendum on a set of constitutional reforms, including establishing a neutral interim government for election periods, restructuring

parliament into a bicameral legislature, increasing women's representation, strengthening judicial independence and imposing a two-term limit on the prime minister.

Despite the crowded field and expectations of a close race, the campaign period remained largely peaceful, barring a few incidents. "The crucial test for Bangladesh now will be to ensure the election is

conducted fairly and impartially, and for all parties to then accept the result," said Thomas Kean, a senior consultant with the International Crisis Group. "If that happens, it will be the strongest evidence yet that Bangladesh has indeed embarked on a period of democratic renewal."

Around 958,000 personnel from the police, army and paramilitary forces were deployed throughout the country on election day, the Election Commission said. Police and army personnel were stationed outside most polling booths.

Polling closes at 4:30 p.m. (10:30 GMT). Counting will begin soon after, with early trends expected around midnight, and results are likely to be clear by Friday morning. Election Commission officials said.

Nearly 128 million people are registered to vote, 49% of them women. But only 83 female candidates are contesting.

## Russia sends 'hundreds' of missiles, drones at Ukraine

**NEWS DESK:** Russia pounded Ukraine with dozens and ballistic missiles overnight on Thursday, targeting energy systems and injuring at least seven people in the capital Kyiv, and the cities of Dnipro and Odesa, officials said.

"Hundreds of drones and ballistic missiles targeted energy systems, depriving people of power, heating, and water," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Sybha said in a post on X.

Two people were hurt in a "massive" attack on Kyiv, which also hit various buildings, Mayor Vitali Klitschko said.

Klitschko said on Telegram there had been hits on both residential and non-residential buildings on both sides of the Dnipro River bisecting the city. Fragments had fallen near two residential buildings in one district, but no fire had broken out.

Reuters witnesses heard explosions resound in the city. Four people, including a baby boy and a five-year-old girl, were hurt in a missile and drone attack on the southeastern city of Dnipro and surrounding district, regional governor Oleksandr Ganza said on Telegram.

One person was hurt in a drone attack on the southern city of Odesa on the Black Sea, which also damaged an infrastructure facility and an apartment building where a fire broke out at an upper floor, head of the city's military administration, Serhiy Lysak said.

Lysak also said that a fire engulfed pavilions at one of the city's markets and damaged a supermarket building. Regional Governor Oleh Kiper said that energy infrastructure was damaged in Odesa district.

"Blow to peace efforts" "Each such strike is a blow to peace efforts aimed at ending the war. Russia must be forced to

take diplomacy seriously and de-escalate," Sybha said.

Ukrainian officials have met Russian officials under US mediation in Abu Dhabi in the latest US push to end the war. But the talks so far have failed to resolve differences over Ukraine's eastern

Donetsk region, sources say, and Russia has pressed on with attacks often focused on Ukrainian energy facilities in the depths of a harsh winter.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said on Wednesday the U.S. needed to put more pressure on Russia if it wanted the war to end by summer.

"You are fired, Donald Kinsella," Deputy Attorney General Todd Blanche wrote on X. "Judges don't pick U.S. Attorneys, @POTUS does."

Kinsella, who could not immediately be reached for comment, has decades of experience in criminal and civil litigation and was previously an assistant U.S. attorney and the criminal chief of the Justice Department.

Last month a federal judge ruled that Sarcone was unlawfully serving as the top federal prosecutor in the state's capital of Albany, and blocked his involvement in an investigation of state Attorney General

## Trump administration moves to fire new US attorney appointed by judges

**NEWS DESK:** The Justice Department moved to fire the new US attorney for the northern district of New York on Wednesday, the same day that federal judges unveiled his appointment to replace a prosecutor allied with President Donald Trump's administration.

Trump has drawn criticism from rights and political experts for what they call his administration's targeting of political opponents in efforts that have faced legal challenges and protests.

In a ceremony on Wednesday, the Northern District of New York Board of Judges appointed Donald Kinsella to replace John Sarcone, who had been serving on an acting basis and was disqualified by a court.

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reached for comment, Letitia James. On Wednesday, the department's website showed him listed as the "first assistant US attorney."

The DOJ used a series of procedural maneuvers to retain Sarcone as acting US attorney for the northern district after a federal court declined to extend his 120-day interim appointment.

Those moves were found to be unlawful in court, similar to other court rulings that rejected appointments in California, Nevada and New Jersey.

The Trump administration has particularly targeted James, an elected Democrat and one of the Republican president's top political antagonists.

James, who has said investigations against her are a "payback for suing Trump's family business,"

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## Canadian police identify 18-year-old woman as suspect in mass school shooting

**NEWS DESK:** The suspect in a deadly school shooting in western Canada was an 18-year-old woman with mental health issues who killed her mother and stepbrother before attacking her former school, police said on Wednesday, but investigators did not offer a motive for one of the worst mass slaughters in Canadian history.

The killer, who police identified as Jesse Van Rootselaar, died by suicide after the shooting on Tuesday in Tumbler Ridge, a remote community of 2,400 people in the Pacific province of British Columbia.

Police revised the death toll down to nine, including Van Rootselaar, who had initially reported ten.

On more than one occasion, Van Rootselaar had been apprehended under the provincial Mental Health Act for an assessment, said Deputy Commissioner Dwayne McDonald, commander of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in British Columbia. She once attended the school but dropped out four years ago. "Police had identified that (family) residence on multiple occasions," he said.

The US State Department and the White House did not respond to a request for comment outside regular business hours.

The Turkish foreign minister, however, cautioned that broadening the Iran-US talks to ballistic missiles would bring "nothing but another war."

Trump on Tuesday said he was considering sending a second aircraft carrier to the Middle East, even as

Washington and Tehran prepared to resume negotiations. The Turkish foreign minister, however, cautioned that broadening the Iran-US talks to ballistic missiles would bring "nothing but another war."

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to maintain their composure. "We'll get through this. We will learn from this," a visibly upset Prime Minister Mark Carney told reporters. Carney, who at one point looked close to tears, postponed a trip to Europe and ordered flags on all government buildings to be flown at half-mast for the next seven days.

Hours later, legislators in the House of Commons observed a minute's silence and ordered flags on all government buildings to be flown at half-mast for the next seven days.

Carney said the killings had left the country in shock and mourning. "It is a town of miners, teachers, construction workers — families who have built their lives there, people who have always shown up for each other there ... Tumbler Ridge represents the very best of Canada," he said.

McDonald said Van Rootselaar, who was born male but began identifying as female six years ago, had first killed her mother, 39, and 11-year-old stepbrother at the family home.

She then went to the school, where she shot a 39-year-old woman teacher as well as three 12-year-old female students and two male students, one aged 12 and one aged 13. Police recovered a long gun and a modified handgun.

Dozens were injured, and two severely wounded victims, aged 12 and 19, remain in hospital. Police officers who arrived at the scene two minutes after the initial call encountered active gunfire, including rounds fired in their direction, according to authorities, before discovering Van Rootselaar

dead from an apparent self-inflicted wound.

"We do believe the suspect acted alone ... it would be too early to speculate on motive," McDonald told a press conference, saying police did not have information to suggest that anyone had been specifically targeted.

Several prominent world leaders sent messages of condolence. King Charles, Canada's head of state, said he was "profoundly shocked and saddened" by the deaths.

Shooting among deadliest in Canadian history Details about some of the victims were slowly emerging on Wednesday.

In an anguished Facebook post, Abel Mwansa said his 12-year-old son, also named Abel, had died in the shooting.

## Turkiye's foreign minister says US and Iran showing flexibility on nuclear deal, FT reports

**NEWS DESK:** The United States and Iran are showing flexibility on a nuclear deal, with Washington appearing "willing" to tolerate some nuclear enrichment, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told the Financial Times in an interview published Thursday.

"It is positive that the Americans appear willing to tolerate Iranian enrichment within clearly set boundaries," Fidan, who has been involved in talks with both Washington and Tehran, told the FT.

"The Iranians now recognise that they need to reach a deal with the Americans, and the Americans understand that the Iranians have certain limits. It's pointless to try to force them."

Washington has until now demanded Iran relinquish its stockpile of uranium enriched to up to 60% fissile purity, a small step away from the 90% that is considered weapons grade.

Iranian President Masoud Pezeshkian has said Iran would continue to demand the lifting of financial sanctions and insist on its nuclear rights including enrichment.

Fidan told the FT he believed Tehran "genuinely wants to reach a deal agreement" and would accept restrictions on enrichment levels and a strict inspection regime, as it did in the 2015 agreement with



the US and others. Washington and Tehran prepared to resume negotiations.

The Turkish foreign minister, however, cautioned that broadening the Iran-US talks to ballistic missiles would bring "nothing but another war."

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## Kashmir's right to self-determination anchored in int'l law: Masood Khan

ISLAMABAD (INP): Ambassador Masood Khan, former President of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and former Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, China, and the United Nations, said that Kashmir's right

to self-determination is firmly anchored in international law, moral legitimacy, and historical justice, and Pakistan will continue to advocate this cause with full conviction and strategic restraint. Addressing a

large gathering of nearly 300 students and faculty members at the National University of Computer and Emerging Sciences (FAST), Ambassador Khan congratulated the university leadership for building one of

Pakistan's leading academic institutions and underscored the pivotal role of youth in shaping Pakistan's future. Referring to United Nations Development Programme statistics, he noted that nearly 64 per-

cent of Pakistan's population is under the age of 30, making the youth not only the majority but also the principal decision-makers of tomorrow. Speaking on the theme "Kashmir in International Law and

Pakistan's Strategic Narrative," Ambassador Khan stated that the Kashmiri freedom movement predates 1947 and has historical roots extending over two centuries. He traced the origins of Kashmiri resis-

tance to oppressive regimes beginning in the mid-eighteenth century and elaborated on successive phases of political repression, economic exploitation, and denial of fundamental rights faced by the

people of Jammu and Kashmir. Ambassador Khan emphasised that the people of Jammu and Kashmir possess an inherent and inalienable right to self-determination.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif met with delegation of Turkish Agricultural Technologies Cluster TUME.

## Pakistan expands space capabilities with successful EO-2 satellite launch

ISLAMABAD (INP): Pakistan marked another milestone in its space programme on Thursday, February 12, 2026, as Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmosphere Research Commission (SUPARCO) successfully launched the country's second locally developed remote-sensing satellite, PRSC-EO2, into orbit from China's offshore launch facility near Yangjiang.

The satellite was launched aboard China's Shuanglong-3 launch vehicle, with all mission parameters reported to be optimal. SUPARCO officials confirmed that the PRSC-EO2 satellite has been placed into its intended and

stable orbit, marking a fully successful mission. The EO-2 satellite is expected to play a critical role in national planning and resource management. SUPARCO officials said the addition of EO-2 to Pakistan's satellite fleet would enhance the continuity and accuracy of Earth observation data, supporting disaster assessment, environmental monitoring, and long-term strategic planning.

SUPARCO described the launch as a significant symbol of Pakistan's growing space capabilities and increasing self-reliance in satellite design and development. The PRSC-EO2 satellite was designed and built

locally by SUPARCO and is equipped with a high-resolution optical payload capable of collecting detailed remote-sensing data. According to official details, launch services were provided by the China Great Wall Industry Corporation (CGWIC) under a multi-launch agreement signed with SUPARCO in 2022.

The mission marked the first time China has launched a Pakistani satellite using a sea-based mobile launch platform, a move that officials said demonstrated both technical innovation and commercial efficiency.

Beyond launch services, CGWIC also supplied key satellite systems, including pro-

pulsion components, and provided tracking, telemetry, and command support during the launch and early orbit phase.

The satellite's data will be used across a wide range of sectors in Pakistan, including land mapping, agriculture assessment, urban and rural development, environmental protection, disaster monitoring, and natural resource management.

Officials from both countries described the successful launch as a reflection of the long-standing and all-weather strategic partnership between Pakistan and China, further strengthening cooperation in advanced space technology.

## Tree plantation drive starts in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has launched tree plantation campaign on February 10 across the city in connection with the spring season. Around 2000 saplings will be planted under the tree plantation drive in different areas of Gwadar during the current season. GDA Director Environment Rasool Bakhsh Baloch and Environment Officer Hamal Dashti told Gwadar Pro that plantation campaign will target the areas including GDA School, Syed Zahoor Shah Hashmi Road (Airport Road), Marine Drive, along with various city circles and other important locations. On February 10, at the start of the tree plantation campaign at GDA School, students of the school, along with Principal GDA School Dr. Muhammad Muzaffar Noor, participated enthusiastically and planted various types of saplings and trees. On this occasion, the principal highlighted

the importance of tree plantation for making the city and surroundings green and lush, and for environmental protection, while addressing the students. GDA has appealed to the general public to actively participate in the tree plantation campaign and not only plant trees but also play their role in the protection, care, and irrigation of the planted saplings. According to GDA, in a coastal and semi-desert area like Gwadar, the biggest challenge after plantation is protecting saplings from grazing by stray and domestic animals, due to which plants and trees often suffer damage.

Therefore, citizens have been requested to cooperate in effective prevention of animals, protection of plants, and maintenance of green spaces so that the benefits of the plantation campaign may prove to be long-lasting and the vision of making Gwadar a clean, green, and beautiful city can be realized.

## WAPDA wraps up digital skills training under Dasu Hydropower Project

ISLAMABAD (INP): WAPDA has completed a digital marketing, freelancing and e-commerce training program for youth from project-affected communities in Upper Kohistan under the Dasu Hydropower Project (DHP), the authority said.

A certificate distribution ceremony was held at the school to mark the completion of the training. Officials from NESPAK attended the event, while Deputy Director WAPDA Riaz Ahmed was the chief guest. Certificates were awarded to all 80 participants.

In his closing remarks, Ahmed highlighted the long-term value of such initiatives, saying that "skill-based training programs are a critical need for the future and play a key role in youth empowerment and sustainable development."

The curriculum covered digital marketing strategies, social media marketing, content creation, and advertising, use of

freelancing platforms and e-commerce business models, according to the statement.

Participants were trained to build online brands, explore freelancing opportunities and manage e-commerce ventures.

A certificate distribution ceremony was held at the school to mark the completion of the training. Officials from NESPAK attended the event, while Deputy Director WAPDA Riaz Ahmed was the chief guest. Certificates were awarded to all 80 participants.

In his closing remarks, Ahmed highlighted the long-term value of such initiatives, saying that "skill-based training programs are a critical need for the future and play a key role in youth empowerment and sustainable development."



HYDERABAD: Employees of Faram Water Management hold a protest rally in the favor of their demands.

## SC orders Imran Khan's eye check-up, phone talk with sons

ISLAMABAD (INP): The Supreme Court (SC) on Thursday directed the government to arrange an eye examination for former prime minister Imran Khan and to facilitate a telephonic conversation between him and his sons.

The court, with the government assuring the court that both directives would be implemented before February 16, 2026.

During the hearing of a petition concerning Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) Founder Imran Khan's health, the chief justice ordered

Referring to the report placed before the court by Barrister Salman Safdar as a 'Friend of Court' yesterday, after holding a three-hour-long meeting with Imran Khan in jail, Chief Justice Afridi remarked that the PTI founder's health appeared concerning and required proper medical attention.

However, the Supreme Court rejected a request seeking that the medical examination be conducted in the presence of Imran Khan's family members (sons and sisters).

The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court maintained that while

medical care was essential, the presence of family members during the examination was not warranted. In addition to the medical directives, the chief justice ordered that arrangements be made to allow Imran Khan to speak with his children over the phone.

The Attorney General of Pakistan assured the court that both the eye examination and the telephonic contact would be facilitated before Sunday, February 16.

It is also worth mentioning that the security has been tightened in and around Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi as a

scheduled meeting between PTI leaders and party founder Imran Khan is set to take place today.

PTI coordinator Salman Akram Raja had submitted a list of six party leaders to jail authorities a day earlier for approval. The approved list includes Imtiaz Sheikh, Musharraf Afridi, Azhar Ghazwani, Muhammad Abdul Salam Afridi, Fazal Hakim Yousofzai, and Owais Younis.

The leaders named in the list are expected to arrive at Adiala Jail today to meet the PTI founder, who remains incarcerated at the high-security facility.

## CPEC metro train serves nearly 1 million passengers during Basant

LAHORE (INP): During the 3-day Basant (Kite-flying festival), around 904,036 passengers travelled on the Orange Line Metro Rail (OLMT) in Lahore, the first electric railway transportation project under China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

Approximately 305,179 passengers on February 6, 299,674 passengers on February 7 and 299,183 passengers on February 8 enjoyed the journey on the metro train facilitating kite-flying enthusiasts to mark days with festive celebrations, Gwadar Pro reported on Tuesday.

The CPEC metro train in Lahore also continued its efficient and uninterrupted operations symbolizing the strong and growing friendship between Pakistan and China.

On all three days, a profuse rush of people was witnessed at the 27-km metro train stations. As an affordable,

convenient and high-tech commutation experience, kite-flying revelers used the metro train to reach nearby markets to buy their favourite kites and strings.

"It happened due to the metro train that I visited my uncle's home swiftly and comfortably to attend his electrified kite-flying activities that filled my mood with joy," Rabia Atif told Gwadar Pro.

"Many means of transportation were expensive. Transporters kept fares skyrocketing just to rip off the passengers."

During the Basant festival, the Orange Line Metro Train played a significant role in providing safe, comfortable, and free rides to commuters and festival-goers, he added.

He further said that all three days recorded the highest ridership since the start of operations in 2020, crossing a

remarkable milestone of nearly one million. "Due to extensive kite-flying activities, kites, strings, and other foreign objects accumulated along the tracks. Our dedicated teams worked tirelessly throughout the night to clear the tracks and ensure safe operations for the following day."

Before the first ray of light and the departure of the first passenger train, commissioning teams were run to confirm full track clearance; only then did the Orange Line begin its daily service to join in the Basant festivities," he explained.

Beyond mobility, the Orange Line also offered passengers a unique and scenic journey, offering views from modern transportation infrastructure to the vibrant revival of Lahore's cultural heritage and Basant festivities, Gwadar Pro's report added.



ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Standards & Quality Control Authority (PSQA) and the Controller General of Accounts (CGA) have formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the implementation of the Financial Accounting and Budgeting System (FABS).

## Salman Safdar report recommends examination of PTI Founder's eyes

ISLAMABAD (INP): A report submitted by Barrister Salman Safdar to the court after his visit of Adiala jail for meeting with the PTI's founder, recommended an immediate examination of eyes of the party's founder.

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) founder Imran Khan has demanded examination of his eyes by Dr. Faiz Sultan and Asim Yousof, a detailed report of seven pages submitted by Salman Safdar to the court read. "He didn't try to address the health condition," Barrister Salman Safdar said in his report to the court.

"His eyesight of both eyes was normal three to four months ago," PTI leader told the

visiting lawyer. "He felt blurredness of eyes later and he repeatedly complained to the Jail Superintendent Abdul Ghafoor Anjum," according to report.

"The jail officials didn't take any step to address the complaint, later the right eyesight went off completely," report read.

"Later the PIMS ophthalmologist Dr. Muhammad Anif examined his eyes. The eyesight of his right eye remained only up to 15 percent," Salman Safdar said in his report.

It is worth noting that the Supreme Court had ordered arrangements for Salman Safdar to meet the PTI founder in jail. The court granted Barrister Salman Safdar

permission to meet him and appointed him 'a friend of the court'.

The court directed Barrister Safdar to visit Adiala Jail in his capacity as a judicial representative and commissioner. He was instructed to submit a detailed written report regarding Imran Khan's current condition in custody, the facilities available to him, and his living conditions inside the prison.

The Chief Justice issued clear instructions that Safdar should not be made to wait outside the jail and that no obstacles should be placed in the way of the meeting. In case of any difficulty, he was directed to immediately contact the Chief Justice's personal staff officer.



## CM Bugti Launches Balochistan Plantation Campaign 2026

**NEWS DESK:** Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Tuesday formally launched the Balochistan Plantation Campaign 2026 by planting a sapling at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Quetta.

The province-wide tree plantation drive has been initiated to mark the arrival of spring, with saplings set to be planted across Balochistan in the coming weeks.

The campaign aims to promote environmental protection, increase green cover, and raise public awareness about the importance of forests in addressing climate change and improving air quality.

Speaking on the occasion, the chief minister emphasized that tree plantation is a shared responsibility and called upon citizens, especially the youth, to actively participate in efforts to make Balochistan greener and more climate-resilient.



Provincial ministers, members of the provincial assembly, and Secretary Forests Imran Gichki were also present at the ceremony.

Officials from the Forest Department briefed the chief minister on the targets and implementation plan of the plantation campaign.

The Balochistan government has announced that thousands of saplings will be planted during the spring season at public spaces, educational institutions, roadsides, and government offices across the province as part of the 2026 plantation drive.

## PPP Leader Haji Ali Madad Jatak Meets Party Workers and Community Representatives in Sariab to Discuss Public Issues and Development Projects

**SARIAB:** Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) central leader and Provincial Minister, Haji Ali Madad Jatak, held an important meeting at his residence with party leaders, workers, and representatives from various walks of life belonging to Sariab.

The meeting was attended by respected community elders, social figures, and local office-bearers of the party. Discussions focused on key public and regional issues facing Sariab and its surrounding areas, ongoing development projects, municipal matters, and the overall political situation of the region.

He emphasized the need for timely action to address public grievances, water supply, and other civic necessities.

The government's commitment to ensuring the provision of essential services and promoting comprehensive regional development was also discussed.

Public and actively highlighted community issues to ensure timely resolution. He reiterated that the development, prosperity, and

the Pakistan Peoples Party in the region. During the meeting, visiting delegations highlighted pressing concerns of their respective localities, including the provision of basic facilities, improvements in education and healthcare services, road infrastructure development, clean drinking

water supply, and other civic necessities. Provincial Minister Haji Ali Madad Jatak attentively listened to all delegations and assured them that practical and effective measures are being taken to resolve public issues across Sariab and adjoining areas. He reaffirmed

the government's commitment to ensuring the provision of essential services and promoting comprehensive regional development. He stated that the Pakistan Peoples Party strongly believes in public service and is determined to utilize all available resources to meet the expectations and trust of the people.

Haji Ali Madad Jatak also urged party leaders and workers to maintain strong engagement with the welfare of the people of Sariab remains his top priority.

Keywords: Haji Ali Madad Jatak, Sariab news, Pakistan Peoples Party, PPP leader meeting, Balochistan development, public issues in Sariab, development projects in Sariab, provincial minister statement.

## Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran Holds Open Court in Barkhan, Reaffirms Commitment to Peace and Development

**BARKHAN:** Provincial Minister Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran held a public open court (Khuli Kachehri) in the Baghoo area of District Barkhan, where he directly listened to citizens' complaints and reviewed key issues concerning peace and development.

The open court was attended by Colonel Barkhan Muhammad Younis, officers from all relevant district departments, tribal elders, and a large number of local residents. Discussions focused on the overall law and order situation, progress on ongoing development projects, promotion of educational activities, and resolution of public grievances.

Issuing clear directives, the Provincial Minister stated that no negligence or delay in



addressing public issues would be tolerated and instructed all departments to further improve their performance and service delivery.

Addressing the gathering, Sardar Abdul Rehman Khetran said that certain banned outfits are attempting to extort money from development projects and spread fear in the region.

He asserted that such elements will not be allowed to sabotage progress under the guise of so-called "freedom."

He described their actions as a conspiracy aimed at halting development in the area rather than any legitimate struggle.

He urged the public to stand shoulder-to-shoulder with state institutions and discourage disruptive elements.

"We are Pakistanis, we stand with Pakistan, and our armed forces and security agencies are always ready to defend the country and maintain peace," he stated, paying tribute to recent security operations that have contributed to stability in the region.

Colonel Muhammad Younis briefed participants on the law and order situation, stating that all security agencies are working under a coordinated strategy to ensure sustainable peace and safeguard ongoing development projects.

During the session, citizens raised concerns regarding education, healthcare, road construction, clean drinking water, and other basic facilities.

On-the-spot directives were issued to the relevant officials for immediate redressal of the complaints. Concluding the open court, the Provincial Minister reiterated that peace, education, and

## Chief Secretary Balochistan Launches Spring Tree Plantation Drive in Quetta to Combat Climate Change

**QUETTA:** Chief Secretary Balochistan, Shakeel Qadir Khan, formally inaugurated the Spring Tree Plantation Campaign on Thursday by planting a sapling, reaffirming the provincial government's commitment to environmental protection, pollution control, and ensuring a healthy environment for citizens.

The initiative is part of a broader provincial strategy aimed at expanding green spaces and addressing the challenges of climate change.

The campaign seeks active participation from government officials, the general public, and youth across Balochistan to promote sustainable environmental practices.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan emphasized that protecting forests and the environment is not solely the government's responsibility but a collective duty of all citizens.

He urged the public to actively participate in the tree plantation drive and contribute to making the province greener and cleaner.

He highlighted that while planting new saplings is important, equal attention must be given to nurturing and protecting them until they grow into strong, mature trees.

Plantation without proper care defeats the purpose. Ensuring the survival of newly planted saplings is crucial for long-term environmental sustainability," he stated.

The Chief Secretary also directed the concerned authorities to ensure proper maintenance and monitoring of newly planted trees so that the objectives of the plantation campaign can be fully achieved.

Secretary Forests Imran Gichki and other senior officials were also present at the launch ceremony.

Keywords: Spring Tree Plantation Campaign, Balochistan, Chief Secretary Shakeel Qadir Khan, Quetta tree plantation drive, environmental protection in Balochistan, climate change initiative, Pakistan, Secretary Forests Imran Gichki, green campaign Quetta.

## Harnai District Observes International Day Against Community Violence and Extremism

**HARNAI:** A special ceremony was organized at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Harnai to mark the International Day

and highlighted the importance of the day in raising awareness against violence and extremism.

The event provided an opportunity to renew the commitment of all stakeholders to work together toward building a peaceful, stable, and progressive society in Harnai.

At the conclusion of the ceremony, Deputy Commissioner Arshad Hussain Jamali emphasized the purpose of the observance, stating that the eradication of extremism requires collective action from all segments of society.

He underlined the critical role of community collaboration, education, and social harmony in countering violent ideologies and fostering peace.

Participants agreed that sustained efforts at the community level are essential to protect society from extremism and to promote a peaceful and balanced environment.

The event brought together officers from various government departments, religious scholars, tribal elders, students, representatives of minority communities, media personnel, and prominent political and social figures.

Participants shared their views, presented suggestions, and highlighted the importance of the day in raising awareness against violence and extremism.

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## Quetta DC Holds Meeting on Price Control and Ramadan Bazaars to Ensure Affordable Essentials

**QUETTA:** Under the leadership of Deputy Commissioner Quetta, Mehruallah Badini, a high-level meeting was

held to discuss price control measures and ensure maximum relief for the public by setting up Ramadan Sasta Bazaars

without discrimination. The Quetta district administration has assured that during

the meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner (General) Mehruallah Badini, price control, and ensure strict compliance with official rate lists.

He emphasized that effective measures must be taken to provide maximum convenience to citizens during Ramadan, and strict action should be taken against viola-

stalls across all subdivisions of Quetta. Deputy Commissioner Mehruallah Badini directed officials to closely monitor the Ramadan Sasta Bazaars, including sugar, and ensure strict compliance with official rate lists.

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## Kech District Holds Ceremony on International Day Against Violence and Extremism to Promote Peace and Tolerance

**KECH:** Under the directives of Deputy Commissioner Kech, Captain (Retd) Juma Dad Khan Mandhel, a distinguished ceremony was organized in Kech to mark the International Day Against Violence and Extremism.

The event, chaired by Additional Deputy Commissioner Kech, Jar Allah Kakar, aimed to raise awareness about the harmful effects of violence and extremism and to promote peace, tolerance, mutual respect, and social harmony in the district.

The ceremony witnessed active participation from prominent figures across different sectors of society, including tribal elders, social personalities, religious scholars, educators, youth, and respected members of the Hindu community.

Participants emphasized that building a peaceful and stable society requires all schools of thought to collectively discourage violent and extremist tendencies.

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## Deputy Commissioner Ziarat Hosts Ceremony on International CVE Day, Emphasizes Unity, Peace, and Religious Harmony

**ZIARAT:** As special event was organized at the Deputy Commissioner's office in Ziarat to mark the International Day Against Community Violence and Extremism (CVE) under the chairmanship of Deputy Commissioner Ziarat, Abdul Qudus Achakzai.

The ceremony highlighted the Balochistan government's message promoting brotherhood, peace, tolerance, interfaith harmony, and equality for minority communities.

The event was attended by tribal elders, local leaders, students, civil society representatives, social media influencers, and members of minority communities.

Deputy Commissioner Abdul Qudus Achakzai emphasized that there is no space for sectarianism or linguistic divisions in Pakistan.

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## Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) privatisation finalised

**NEWS DESK:** Rejecting all objections from workers' unions, the Ministry of Privatisation has issued a speaking order for the completion of the process for the privatisation of Pakistan International Airlines (PIA).

In a detailed decision under directives of the Lahore High Court, Privatisation Secretary Hamid Hashmi wrote that the entire process leading to the privatisation of the national flag carrier was completed under the law, and none of the objections raised by the workers' union "Peoples' Unity" and others had any legal standing.

"None of the allegations raised by the petitioners/objectors establishes any constitutional violation, statutory breach, arbitrariness, mala fide, or infringement of fundamental rights."

The privatisation of PIACL has been undertaken within the bounds of constitutional authority, statutory mandate, and settled principles governing the privatisation process under the privatisation laws and regulations. These petitions are dismissed," he wrote, effectively closing all disputes.



Ministry rejects process under the privatisation laws and regulations. These petitions are dismissed," he wrote, effectively closing all disputes.

workers' objections, cites compliance with law

On Jan 23, the Lahore High Court had ordered the petitioners to appear before the privatisation

secretary who was required to hear them out and issue a speaking order.

The secretary rejected the objection

that privatisation should have been placed before the Council of Common Interest as required under Article 154 of the constitution, saying

the CCI approval was already in the field, given its inclusion in the sale list.

"The transaction squarely falls within the executive author-

ity of the Federation under Article 173 of the constitution, which expressly empowers the Federal Government to dispose of its property and to make

contracts," the order held.

Mr Hashmi also rejected the objection regarding a violation of Section 3(3) of the PIA Conversion Act 2016, saying the said section was removed by Parliament through an amendment in 2023.

The privatisation process, having been initiated after the removal of the statutory restriction, was, therefore, fully compliant with the prevailing legal framework.

The secretary also rejected the allegation of undervaluation of PIA's international and domestic slots.

The objectors had claimed a Rs270bn value for international slots and Rs19bn for domestic slots.

However, the secretary noted that these assertions were unsupported by any credible material, independent valuation report, or admissible evidence.

Bald figures stated in pleadings, without substantiation, cannot form the basis for judicial interference in a commercial transaction.

## Gold steady in global, local markets as silver gains

**NEWS DESK:** Gold prices remained stable in both international and domestic markets on Thursday, while silver extended its gains, according to market data.

In the international bullion market, gold held steady at \$5,058 per ounce, unchanged from the previous session. In the local market, the price of gold per tola also remained unchanged at Rs528,545. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of gold was steady at Rs453,156.

Silver, however, recorded further increases. The price of silver per tola rose by Rs90 to reach Rs8,825, while the rate for 10 grams increased by Rs78 to Rs7,560. Spot gold edged 0.5% lower to \$5,055.24 per ounce by 0642 GMT. It closed Wednesday with a more than 1% gain.

US gold futures for April delivery lost 0.4% to \$5,077.30 per ounce. Spot silver fell 0.6% to \$83.49 per ounce, after a 4% climb on Wednesday. Spot platinum shed 1.1% to \$2,109.45 per ounce, while palladium

rose 0.3% to \$1,705.25. Furthermore, on Wednesday, the Pakistani rupee posted a marginal rise of Rs4.01 against the US dollar to close at 279.66 in the inter-bank market.

Meanwhile, gold prices in Pakistan moved higher, tracking gains in the international bullion market, although global prices trimmed earlier advances after strong US employment data dampened expectations of an early Federal Reserve rate cut.

In the local market, the price of gold per tola rose by Rs2,300 to reach Rs528,562, according to rates issued by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association.

Similarly, the price of 10-gram gold increased by Rs1,972 to Rs453,156. Silver prices also moved upwards, with the per-tola rate increasing by Rs120 to Rs8,735.

Adnan Agar, Director at Interactive Commodities, said gold prices came under pressure after stronger-than-expected US non-farm payroll data reduced the likelihood of a near-term rate cut.

He noted that gold touched high near \$5,118 but later retreated towards the \$5,047 level, with support seen around \$4,800 and resistance near \$5,200.

The report highlights that prolonged litigation and judicial delays in tax matters have kept vast amounts of public revenue locked in courts, adversely affecting fiscal stability and economic circulation.

To address this critical challenge, the IHC chief justice introduced a series of strategic administrative and judicial reforms aligned with the policy directions of the National Judicial (Policy Making) Committee (NJPMC).

A central pillar of this reform agenda was the constitution of specialised division benches dedicated exclusively to tax and revenue cases — a step aimed at ensuring focused hearings, uniform legal interpretation and faster resolution of high-value disputes. Two

## Rs506bn unlocked as IHC clears tax backlog

**NEWS DESK:** The Islamabad High Court (IHC) enabled the recovery of about Rs506 billion in disputed tax revenue over the past year by deciding hundreds of long-pending tax and revenue cases and lifting stay orders that had blocked the Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) from collecting dues, according to the court's Annual Report 2025-26.

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specialised division benches were formed for this purpose. One bench comprised Justice Babar Sattar and Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, while another included Justice Muhammad Azam Khan and Justice Inaam Ameen Minhas. Later, Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz also served on a tax bench with Justice Sattar, further strengthening the court's capacity to clear the backlog.

LHC strikes down PRA sales tax case against Fauji Wind Energy on jurisdiction grounds between April 1, 2025, and Feb 4, 2026,

the specialised benches decided 788 tax and revenue cases, involving a total disputed amount of Rs506.13bn.

According to bench-wise data, the bench led by Justice Azam Khan and Justice Minhas decided 178 cases, accounting for the largest share of revenue — approximately Rs456.18bn. The benches headed by Justice Babar Sattar, along with Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Rafat Imtiaz, collectively decided 610 cases, involving more than Rs49.9bn. The adjudication of these cases resulted in the vacation of stay orders that had previously prevented the FBR from enforcing tax recovery, thereby unlocking substantial funds that had remained tied up in litigation for years. The high court noted that this intervention has significantly contributed to the early realisation of public revenue, strengthening the national fiscal stream and supporting broader economic objectives.

The annual report describes the initiative as a "targeted, result-oriented case management strategy", demonstrating "how judicial specialisation can produce 'tangible economic and institutional benefits within a relatively short period'."

Beyond tax matters, the report outlines broader institutional reforms aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency. The court expedited the disposal of over 3,000 bail applications during the year, facilitated by the establishment of a dedicated police cell within court premises to ensure rapid service of notices and timely production of records.

Fauji Wind Energy sales tax dispute.

Meanwhile, the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Rawalpindi Bench set aside a judgement of the appellate tribunal of the Punjab Revenue Authority (PRA) in a sales tax dispute involving Fauji Wind Energy, declaring the proceedings illegal and without jurisdiction. A Division Bench comprising Justice Javed Hassan and Justice Mirza Viqueas Rauf allowed sales tax reference and quashed the show-cause notice, order-in-original, and the appellate tribunal's order dated Feb 25, 2025.



## Saudi Arabia eyes Pakistan's rice sector

**NEWS DESK:** Saudi Arabia has shown interest in investing in corporate farming in Pakistan's rice sector to ensure a stable, reliable supply of rice through structured, long-term arrangements between the two countries.

The issue came up for discussion in a meeting between Commerce Minister Jam Kamal Khan and Assistant Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia Ibrahim Al-Mubarak on Wednesday. The meeting reviewed and advanced bilateral cooperation in trade, investment, and joint engagement in regional markets.

An official announcement released after the meeting noted that the Saudi side expressed interest in pursuing corporate farming in the rice sector. It was observed that Pakistan already meets the required quality standards, and that investment in corporate-scale farming, mechanisation, storage, and logistics could support steady rice exports to Saudi Arabia.

More broadly, discussions on agriculture and food security focused on cooperation in crops such as cotton, rice, fodder (including



alfalfa), meat, and selected agricultural products. Both sides also examined the potential role of Saudi financing institutions in supporting export-linked agricultural output while strengthening downstream industries, including textiles and yarn.

The meeting reflected strong alignment on pursuing an investment-driven, partnership-based approach to economic cooperation.

Both sides underscored the need to enhance competitiveness, expand production capacity, and strengthen value chains to unlock Pakistan's export potential and respond to growing

regional demand in a sustainable, coordinated manner.

A central focus of the discussions was the joint exploration of regional markets, particularly Central Asia, Africa, and ASEAN, which were identified as high-growth regions offering substantial opportunities for collaboration.

Both sides agreed that, by leveraging their respective strengths, Pakistan and Saudi Arabia can position themselves as complementary partners, combining Pakistan's production capacity with Saudi Arabia's capital, market access, and regional connectivity.

## FinMin solicits global investors

**NEWS DESK:** Finance Minister Senator Muhammad Aurangzeb on Wednesday held a series of meetings with international investors, development partners and foreign officials, focusing on private sector-led growth, capital mobilisation and Pakistan's ongoing economic reforms, according to statements issued by the Ministry of Finance.

In a meeting at the Finance Division, the minister engaged a high-level international investors' delegation comprising representatives of the International Finance Corporation (IFC), British International Investment (BII), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Baltoro Capital.

Discussions centred on channeling private sector participation, reducing sovereign risk exposure and strengthening investment flows through local currency financing mechanisms.

Aurangzeb acknowledged IFC and ADB as long-standing development partners and welcomed their increased engagement in private sector financing



and local currency initiatives.

He noted that protecting and expanding private sector exposure remained essential for sustaining investment momentum and lowering reliance on sovereign-backed funding.

The minister told participants that Pakistan had made notable progress in restoring macroeconomic stability over the past 18 months.

He cited improvements in currency stability and foreign exchange reserves, which are projected to reach coverage

of around three months of imports by the end of the year.

He added that government efforts were focused on narrowing the investment gap and creating a more predictable economic environment.

Briefing the delegation on trade reforms, Aurangzeb outlined the government's tariff rationalisation and broader trade liberalisation programme aimed at improving competitiveness and dismantling protectionist barriers.

He said the reform trajectory was intended to place Pakistan on a development path comparable to successful Southeast Asian economies, while pointing to continued growth in services exports.

Energy sector reforms, tax policy changes and steps to improve tax administration were also discussed.

The minister reiterated the government's commitment to broadening the tax base, improving collection efficiency and aligning fiscal policy with growth objectives.



## Shanaka fireworks as Sri Lanka thrash Oman at T20 World Cup

**NEWS DESK:** Dasun Shanaka hammered the fastest half-century by a Sri Lankan in T20Is as the co-hosts thrashed Oman by 105 runs at the World Cup on Thursday in Pallekele for their second win in Group B.

The 2014 champions piled up 225-5, the highest total of the tournament, before restricting an outclassed Oman to 120-9.

The 43-year-old Mohammad Nadeem waged a lone battle for Oman, compiling an unbeaten 53 to become the oldest player to score a fifty in T20 World Cups.

Having promoted himself up the order and under pressure to deliver, Sri Lanka skipper Shanaka smashed a 19-ball half-century.

It has been a bruising few months for the out-of-form Shanaka since reclaiming the captaincy late last year.



But on a batting-friendly pitch he smacked the Oman bowlers to all corners of the park, peppering

the stands with five sixes and two fours. Before that, Pavan Rathnayake and Kusal Mendis laid

the foundation as the pair each posted a half-century, stitching together a 94-run stand for the third

wicket. After the last game, the manner in which I was dismissed, it was disappointing," Rathnayake

said. "I wanted to make it count today, and glad I was able to score a half-century.

Pallekele is always good for batting and I enjoyed the outing. More importantly, the team is one more

step closer to the second round."

Once the platform was set, Kamindu Mendis applied the finishing touches.

Fresh from his match-turning cameo in the win over Ireland, the left-hander scored an unbeaten 19 off just seven deliveries, striking one four and two sixes.

Oman were never really in the game as they fell to a second defeat at the tournament.

Sri Lanka spinner Maheesh Theekshana shared the new ball with Dushmantha Chameera and they accounted for two wickets apiece.

"We are a better side than what we showed today," said Nadeem.

"On this pitch we should have kept them for 180, but 225 was too much. We have had two bad games now and it feels disappointing."

## Pakistan's woes continue with heavy loss to Germany



**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan suffered yet another defeat in the FIH Pro League as world champions Germany thumped the Green Shirts 5-2 at the Tasmania Hockey Centre on Wednesday.

The result once again exposed the national team's defensive frailties despite a vibrant second-half response.

Germany struck early through Christopher Ruhr, who slotted home in the fifth minute to give the Europeans a 1-0 lead.

The Germans

doubled their advantage in the 16th minute when Tom Grambusch converted a penalty corner, putting Pakistan on the back foot.

Pakistan found a lifeline just before half-time as teenager Mohammad Ammad pulled one back in the 18th minute with a well-taken finish, raising hopes of a comeback.

However, Germany restored their two-goal cushion before the interval when Benedikt Schwarzhaupt scored from a set-piece in the

24th minute, leaving Pakistan trailing 3-1 at the break.

The third quarter proved disastrous for Pakistan. Malte Hellwig extended Germany's

lead in the 41st minute before Raphael Hartkopf added another less than a minute later, making it 5-1.

Pakistan's misery was compounded when Ghazanfar Ali received a green card. Germany were then awarded a penalty stroke, but the 32-year-

old Ruhr failed to convert, missing the target.

Pakistan showed resolve in the final quarter.

Sufyan Khan, 21, converted a penalty corner in the 57th minute to reduce the deficit to 5-2.

The match ended in chaotic scenes as Pakistan's fifth consecutive loss in this year's Pro League, following four reverses in Argentina and Tuesday's narrow 3-2 defeat to Australia.

Pakistan face Australia again on Friday before concluding the second-leg against Germany on Saturday.

## China coach warns of 'gap' ahead of Women's Asian Cup title defence

**NEWS DESK:** China coach Ante Milicic admits that the country has fallen far behind the top sides in women's football as the Asian nation attempts to pull off a surprise with back-to-back continental crowns.

The Women's Asian Cup kicks off on March 1 with Japan, North Korea and hosts Australia chief among the title contenders.

China are reigning champions and the most successful team in the history of the competition, but the days when they were among the world elite are long gone.

Results since lift-

ing the trophy in India four years ago have been particularly disappointing.

They bowed out in the group stage of the 2023 Women's World Cup in Australia and New Zealand, failed to reach the Paris Olympics and were hammered 8-0 by England in November.

Milicic, who has been in charge since May 2024, said that recapitulating China's glory days was "a big responsibility".

China are 17th in the FIFA rankings, having once been as high as four.

"To be a national

team coach of such a large country with a big population that's passionate is a massive challenge," he told the Asian Football Confederation website.

Underlining the scale of the task facing China at the Asian Cup and beyond, the 51-year-old said: "The women's game is moving very quickly."

"There's more investment, more popularity, the levels have gone up higher. For countries like China, they have to keep up because the gap is there."

Women's football in Europe is particularly booming, which

was laid bare by China's heavy beating to England at Wembley.

"China and few other countries in Asia need to concentrate and focus on building players for national teams to play at a higher level," said the former Australia boss.

"The development in Europe has gone to a different level now and that's clear for everyone to see when you follow football in that region."

China open their title defence against debutants Bangladesh on March 3.

Also in Group B are North Korea and Uzbekistan.

## Von Allmen joins Olympic skiing greats



**NEWS DESK:** Swiss skier Franjo von Allmen joined the Olympic greats on Wednesday by winning his third gold medal of the Milan-Cortina Games.

On the slopes in Bormio, Von Allmen was victorious in the super-G event, adding that gold to his titles in the downhill and the team combined.

Von Allmen entered the pantheon of Olympic male alpine skiing greats to have three events at one Games, alongside Austrian Toni Sailer, at the 1956 Winter Games, and

France's Jean-Claude Killy in 1968. Croatia's Janica Kostelic is the only woman to have achieved the feat, at the 2002 Salt Lake City Winter Olympics.

Von Allmen hit speeds of 120km/h in the super-G, an event that combines the speed of downhill and the precise turns of giant slalom.

American Ryan Cochran-Siegle won silver in the event for a second successive Games while Switzerland's defending world champion Marco Odermatt

rounded out the podium, picking up a medal after his bitter disappointment at missing out in the downhill.

Meanwhile the International Olympic Committee said on Wednesday it will try to convince Ukrainian skeleton racer Vladyslav Heraskevych to not wear a banned helmet that depicts victims of the war with Russia at the Games.

However, Heraskevych has already said he has no intention of backing down and he was wearing the helmet

again in training at the Cortina Sliding Centre on Wednesday ahead of Thursday's heats.

"We will contact him today, and we will reiterate the many, many opportunities that he has to express his grief," IOC spokesperson Mark Adams said.

In the moguls competition, American freestyle skier Elizabeth Lenz won a surprise gold medal with two neat and quick runs in the Alpine town of Livigno.

Her victory put an end to 2022 champion Jakara Anthony's bid to become the first Australian to successfully defend a title at a Winter Games.

Anthony, who has dominated the discipline for the last four years, led from silver medalist American Jaelin Kauf after the first run but wobbled out of line on her second to finish last. Kauf won her second silver with a score of 80.77 and France's Perrine Laffont clinched bronze with 78 points.

France's Julia Simon delivered a powerful skiing performance as she clinched the women's 15km individual biathlon gold to add individual gold to a mixed relay victory.



## Freiburg make German Cup semi-finals

**NEWS DESK:** Freiburg squeezed into the German Cup semi-finals after a 5-4 penalty shootout win at Hertha Berlin on Wednesday, following a 1-1 draw after extra time. After a goalless 90 minutes, Yuto Suzuki finally broke the deadlock in extra time, only for Hertha captain Fabian Reese to equalise with a superb long-range strike.

Freiburg goalkeeper Florian Mueller then saved Pascal Klemens' spot-kick in the shootout to send his side through, joining Leverkusen and VfB Stuttgart in the last four.

Bayern Munich host RB Leipzig in the other quarter-final. Hertha welcomed

2022 runners-up Freiburg to Berlin hoping to reach a German Cup final on home soil for the first time in their history.

A close offside call ruled out an early effort from Reese, while the visitors did not have a solid chance until the 70th minute, when Vincenzo Grifo's deflected shot flew just wide.

Hertha welcomed

Six minutes into extra time, Hertha's Linus Gechter gifted Suzuki the ball with a poor back-pass, and the Japan international pounced to put the visitors in front.

Hertha hit back through Reese, who drilled in a magnificent strike from outside the area, but Freiburg ultimately had the final say in the shootout.





## Ex-army chief Bajwa hospitalised after fall at home, confirms ISPR

**NEWS DESK:** Former chief of army staff General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa has been hospitalised after suffering a fall in his home, according to a video posted on X by Bajwa's brother-in-law Naeem Ghumman.

"He was barefoot when he slipped and suffered a head injury," he said.

After the fall, he was moved to the Combined Military Hospital for treatment. "However many tests there are for the body, he has undergone

them," Ghumman said, adding that General Bajwa was "100% out of danger" and that nothing suspicious came up in his medical examination.

The military's media wing confirmed the incident.

"Former Chief of Army Staff General (ret'd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, Nishan-e-Imtiaz (Military), sustained an injury after falling at his residence,"

the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said. He is currently under treatment

at CMH, it added.

General Bajwa served as the 10th Chief of Army Staff (COAS) of the Pakistan Army for a tenure of over six years, from November 2016 to November 2022.

His appointment was made by then-prime minister Nawaz Sharif, and he was given an extended tenure of three years by former prime minister Imran Khan in 2019.

He officially retired on November 29, 2022, when his extended term came to an end.

## Net-metering changes are about 'fair pricing, not anti-solar', says power minister in NA

**NEWS DESK:** Tensions flared in the National Assembly as the house debated recent changes regarding net-metering, with Power Minister Sardar Awaiz Leghari maintaining that the issue was about "fair pricing, not being anti-solar."

The power regulator on Monday changed the terms of contracts for all existing and future net-metered solar consumers — known as prosumers — to contain rising solar energy penetration and protect an expensive and inefficient state-owned power network. The notification effectively terminated the existing net-metering regime and replaced it with net-billing for all.

A day earlier, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif directed the Power Division to file a review appeal against it after the action drew much criticism.

In response to a call to attention notice — regarding prosumer regulations — raised by PPP's Sharmila Faruqi during today's session, Leghari spoke in defence of the move. He began his address by presenting "some key facts".

He recalled that the issue had been under discussion for the "past 9-10 months", adding that when the matter was forwarded to the federal cabinet, PM Shehbaz "told us to engage in further deliberations".

The minister said that the total distributed solar generation in the country was estimated to be between 20,000 MW and 22,000 MW, out of which, "only 6,000-7,000 MW of solar systems were on net-metering".

He continued, "Out of these, only 2,200 MW are used by industrial units, while the number for commercial and do-

mestic consumers stood at 4,800 MW."

"Out of these, only 456,000 consumers use net-metering," the minister said, stressing that given the limited number of consumers, it was "false to say that the general public will suffer due to the move".

He maintained that only 8-10 per cent of the total solar consumers used the net-metering system. The minister stressed that the issue was not about "being anti-solar, but about fair pricing".

The minister added that the proposed regulation had maintained the purchase rate for existing users at Rs27 due to "contractual obligations", however, he noted that "this sparked another debate".

He said that the net-metering users complained, "if you buy it from us at Rs27, and then give it to us at the rates of Rs45-65. How is this fair?"

"I will tell you how it is fair, this is fair [...] because with all the hydel, solar, wind, nuclear, gas, and coal sources combined, the average price is Rs8.31, then how can you justify the rate of Rs27," the minister said.

He said that despite the "concessions", PM Shehbaz has directed the Power Division to "file a review petition to the regulator and limit the move".

The minister said that if the government were to continue with the policy, these 456,000 investors, their profit will go down from 50pc to 37pc per year. Is that so bad?"

He stressed that "no one was going to incur any losses".

"If the electricity cost goes down by Rs1-1.5 for the general consumers and you still get a 37pc profit, then, how can you say that the policy does not serve

public interest?" he said.

"Yet, the prime minister has directed us to wait until the NEPRA hearing," he added.

The minister said that the prime minister further directed the Power Division to develop a strategy to "lessen the burden on others caused by net-metering solar consumers".

MNA Sharmila Faruqi terms action 'daylight robbery'

Faruqi, in response to the minister's remarks, objected to the minister for "shifting the blame to net-metering users for burdening the national grid".

"These consumers are the ones who followed the government's clean energy policy," she said, stressing that the government had taken a "U-turn on their policies".

"Now they are justifying it by blaming people who were at the forefront of your policy," she said.

She maintained that the Power Division was "compensating for the cost incurred from line losses and transmission losses, their own inefficiency, inconsistency, corruption, line losses, capacity payments from the people".

She termed the action "broad daylight robbery".

In his response to Faruqi, the minister noted that the call to attention on the matter was no longer appropriate "since the prime minister has already said that the net-billing should be halted and the consumers will stay on net-metering for now".

Addressing the list of issues pointed out by Faruqi, the minister held that "while other issues existed, this is still an important issue that is raising the price of power for all consumers on the grid."

He added that information about other members of Pakistan's delegation and its engagements would be shared in due course of time.

Asked specifically whether Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir would be included in the delegation, the FO spokesperson reiterated, "We will share these details in due course."

I do not have the details — neither the itinerary, nor on the composition of the delegation.

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## Pakistan sends another humanitarian aid consignment to Gaza

**NEWS DESK:** Pakistan dispatched another consignment of humanitarian supplies to Gaza on Thursday as part of measures to provide Palestinians with life-saving aid following Israel's invasion of the enclave.

The latest aid consignment was dispatched by the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA), with the support of Al-Khidmat Foundation.

This is the second aid consignment sent by Islamabad within the last week. Earlier, on Monday, the 28th consignment was dispatched.

Pakistan had sent the first aid consignment, including medicines and tents, for the people of Gaza on Oct 19, 2023, days after the Israeli bombardment began.

The relief goods were dispatched through a chartered flight from Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore to Egypt's Al-



Arish airport for onward delivery to Gaza.

Israel, which controls all access to the Gaza Strip, denies withholding supplies for its two million resi-

dents.

Tel Aviv's two-year relentless onslaught on the Gaza Strip killed more than 71,000 Palestinians, displaced most of its

population and left much of the strip in ruins.

Israel faced tremendous international criticism over the resulting humanitarian

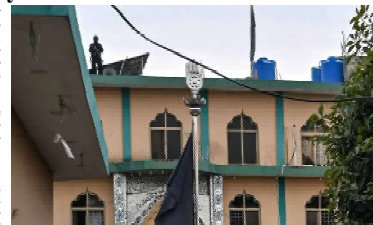
crisis in Gaza, with Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and experts declaring its actions in Gaza as a "genocide," which Tel Aviv rejects.

## In letter to PM, Kundi recommends posthumous civil award for youth who resisted Islamabad suicide attacker

**NEWS DESK:** Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Governor Faisal Karim Kundi has urged Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif to confer a posthumous national civil award on 22-year-old Oun Abbas, who lost his life while resisting the suicide attacker who targeted an imamabargah in Islamabad, it emerged on Thursday.

On February 6, a suicide bomber ripped through the Friday congregation at the Imamabargah Qasri-Khadajatal-Kutba on the outskirts of Islamabad. At least 38 people were killed in the incident, and more than 150 were injured. According to eye witness accounts, Abbas, who was praying inside the mosque, abandoned his rituals and tried to tackle the attacker. However, he lost his life when the suicide bomber detonated.

In those moments of terror and chaos, while many sought safety, this brave young man chose to confront the terrorist face to face," Kundi said, stressing that the



young man's courage prevented "a far greater tragedy" and led to the "saving of countless innocent lives".

"Tragically, he embraced martyrdom in this valiant effort," he said.

The KP governor called on the prime minister to confer "a posthumous national civil award, such as the Sitara-i-Shujaat or Tamgha-i-Shujaat".

He said that the award would "not only honour his memory with the dignity it deserves but would also serve as an enduring inspiration for the youth of Pakistan, affirming that courage, faith and sacrifice in service of one's community are the truest expressions of Pakistani nationhood".

The KP governor expressed faith that the prime minister would

consider the recommendation with the "utmost priority and urgency" it so clearly warrants and approve the award at the earliest possible instance as a fitting national tribute to his unparalleled courage and sacrifice.

Kundi had made a similar request earlier this week during a visit to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (PIMS), where the injured remained under treatment.

It is worth mentioning that a day earlier, PM Shehbaz had announced a sum of Rs 10 million for the heirs of Abbas. The premier had also announced Rs5m for each person martyred in the attack; Rs3m for those hadically injured and under treatment at the hospital; and Rs1m for those who had been discharged.

## PM Shehbaz to attend inaugural Board of Peace meeting in US, confirms FO

**NEWS DESK:** Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Tahir Andrabi confirmed Thursday that Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif would attend the upcoming Board of Peace meeting in the US, saying that Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishag Dar would also accompany him.

Andrabi's confirmation follows reports that said PM Shehbaz was expected to visit Washington on February 18 and represent Pakistan at the first meeting of US President Donald Trump's Board of Peace, which is scheduled for Feb 19 at the US Institute of Peace.

I can confirm that the prime minister will attend the upcoming Board of Peace meeting. He will be accompanied by the deputy prime minister and foreign minister, Andrabi said during a weekly briefing of the FO.

He added that information about other members of Pakistan's delegation and its engagements would be shared in due course of time.

Asked specifically whether Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir would be included in the delegation, the FO spokesperson reiterated, "We will share these details in due course."

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ated the Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace in Washington as the board's headquarters.

A UN Security Council resolution adopted in mid-November 2025 authorised the board, along with cooperating states, to establish an international stabilisation force in Gaza following a ceasefire that began in October under a Trump-backed plan accepted by Israel and Hamas.

However, the ceasefire has remained fragile, with repeated violations by Israel.

Under Trump's Gaza plan unveiled late last year, the Board of Peace was originally intended to supervise Gaza's temporary governance following a

ceasefire, before being expanded to address global conflicts.

Rights experts and scholars have, however, criticised the concept, arguing that a US-led board overseeing the affairs of a foreign territory resembles a colonial structure. The absence of Palestinian representation on the board has further deepened these concerns.

A journalist also pointed out during the FO briefing on Thursday that there was no representation from Gaza on the board.

US support for Israel as well, the journalist asked: "How reliable would this Board of Peace prove to be in the people of Gaza?"

In his response,

Andrabi said, "We have joined the Board of Peace in good faith, as I highlighted in my previous briefing."

He also pointed out that Pakistan had not joined the board in isolation and not as "one voice, but as collective voice of eight Islamic-Arab countries," which had worked with Trump on his Gaza plan.

"Our collective voice is resonating in the Board of Peace, and we will continue to strive for the rights, peace and prosperity of the people of Palestine, aimed at the long-term solution of the Palestine issue — to create a state of Palestine, in accordance with the pre-1967 border with Al-Quds Al-Sharif as its capital."

"So, our engagement is both for short-term and long-term solution of the plight of the Palestinian people," he explained.

Asked about Israel joining the board, the FO spokesperson said: "It is not a decision. We are not obliged to offer any comment. We will engage with the Board of Peace with positivity of intent, and as I said, our prime minister will attend the Board of Peace meeting."

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