



First Digital, Print Daily of Balochistan

Editor: Asim Khan.

QUETTA VOICE



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 Yangtze 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 by providing high-resolution imagery for critical applications such as national development planning, natural resource management, and environmental monitoring.

The satellite will also sup-

port urban expansion efforts, disaster management, climate analysis, and strategic decision making.

SUPARCO officials hailed the launch as a key achievement, emphasising the EO-2's addition to Pakistan's satellite fleet will improve data continuity, coverage, and precision. The successful development and launch of EO-2 underlines 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 Shahid Khaqan Abbasi congratulated the team 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 support, saying the partnership with the country "continues to scale new heights, including in space technology, including in space technology."

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".



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

"The government should not say that the PTI founder should be given preferential facilities compared to other prisoners," the chief justice said. "Everyone should be treated equally," CJF 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 a facility of eye treatment 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 visited the PTI leader 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 a 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 Suleman and Dr Asim Yousaf, 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 in cell to combat 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 Mulazi, Dalsora, Charminar, Margha, Zakrazi, Shahr-e-Khanzai and Khanza, 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 decision would be extended 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 inter-city 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 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.

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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, 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, forward-thinking 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 photos 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.

When climate change threatens livelihoods, Balochistan does not need unnecessary construction projects or decorative infrastructure.

It needs a large-scale, province-wide ownership—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 photos sessions held.

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.

BUITEMS Organizes Open Day to Inspire Students Across Balochistan

Syed Dara

Shikoh Amir:

BUITEMS Vice Chancellor Prof. Dr. Khalid Hafeez reaffirmed the university's mission of inclusive education and knowl-

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

tions provided students with insights into BUITEMS' 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, BUITEMS has fur-



agement Sciences

BUITEMS opened its doors to thousands of college students from across the province

by hosting a vibrant "Open Day".

BUITEMS is the university of every student in Balochistan. Our classrooms, research opportunities, and resources are open for all so that no young learner in the province remains deprived of quality education."

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learners to strive for

academic success and

contribute to the

province's development.

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, while the deed 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 Hafizullah 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 drug-smuggling 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 by drug smugglers, 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 spills 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 Eradication 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 for 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: Bangladesh lined up outside its polling booths on Thursday as voting began in a pivotal election for the South Asian nation after the 2024 ouster of long-time prime minister 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 export.

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.

At the capital, people queued up outside voting booths before polls opened at 7:30 a.m. local time (0130

GMT), including eager participants like 17-year-old Jobair Hossain, 39, who said he last voted in 2008.

"I am feeling excited because we are voting a free manner after 17 years. However, we have to wait in line. 'Our votes will matter and have meaning.'

Hasina's Awami League is banned, and she remains in self-imposed exile in neighbouring India, opening the way 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 may be 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 is witnessed against long-standing anger, inequality, deprivation and injustice finds its constitutional expression in this election."

The public will be able to follow the results of the election through 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 term limit on the prime minister. Despite the crowded field and expectations of a close race, the campaign has been 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 to accept the result," said Thomas Kean, a senior consultant with the International Crisis Group. "If that happens, it will be the start of a new era, because 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. (1030 GMT). Counting will begin soon after, with early results expected and final results are likely to be clear by Friday morning. Election Commission officials said.

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

Russia sends 'hundreds' of missiles, drones at Ukraine

NEWS DESK: Russia pounded Ukraine with dozens of missiles and drones 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, heat and water," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Andriy Shevchenko 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 industrial buildings on both sides of the Dnipro River, selecting the city.

Frags had fallen near two residential buildings in one district, but no fire had broken out.

Reuters witnesses heard explosions resounding in the city.

Four people, including a baby boy and four-year-old girl, were hurt in a missile and drone attack on the southeastern city of Odesa in a nearby district, regional governor Oleh Lypak said in a Telegram post.

One person was hurt in a drone attack on

the southern city of Odessa on the Black Sea, hitting an infrastructure facility and an apartment building where a fire broke out in an upper floor, head of the city's military administration, Serhiy Lysak, said on X.

Lysak also said that the fire engulfed pavilions at one of the city's markets and damaged a supermarket building.

Regional Governor Oleh Lypak said that energy infrastructure was damaged in Odessa district.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said on Wednesday that the US must be forced to put more pressure on Russia if it wanted the war to end by summer.

"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," Syria's president said.

Ukrainian officials

have met Russian officials under US mediation in Abu Dhabi in the latest US push to end the war.

The US has been

targeting political opponents in efforts that have faced legal challenges and protests.

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 due to retire on Aug. 1.

"You are fired, Donald Kinsella,"

Deputy Attorney General Linda Blanca wrote on X. "Judges don't work for US Attorneys, @POTUS does."

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

Last month a federal

judge ruled that Sarcone was no longer fit to practice law in the state's capital of Albany and blocked his involvement in an investigation of state Attorney General

Letitia James.

On Wednesday, the department's website showed him listed as the "acting assistant US attorney."

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

She has said investigations against her are payback for suing Trump's family business.

Those moves were found to be unlawful in

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 serious health issues who killed her mother and stepbrother before attacking her former school, police said on Wednesday, but investigators are still trying to ferret out a motive for one of the worst mass slayings in Canadian history.

The killer, who police identified as Jade Van Rootseelaer, 18, died by suicide after the shooting on Tuesday in Tumbler Ridge, a remote community in the state's capital of 2,400 people in the Pacific province of British Columbia.

She revised the death toll down to nine, including

Van Rootseelaer, from the initially reported ten.

On more than one occasion, Van Rootseelaer had been apprehended under the provincial Mental Health Act for an assessment, said Deputy Commissioner Mark A. McDonald, commander of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police in British Columbia. She once attended the school but dropped out four years ago, he said, adding that (family) residence on multiple occasions over the past several years, dealing with concerns of mental health with respect to our suspect," McDonald said.

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

to maintain their composure. "We will get through this. We will learn from this," a visibly upset Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said at the scene.

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.

Carney said the killings

had left the school in shock and mourning.

"It is a town of miners, teachers, construction workers 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 Rootseelaer, who was born male but began identifying as female six years ago, had first killed her mother, 40, and 11-year-old stepbrother at their family home.

She then went to the school, where she shot a 39-year-old male teacher, 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 at the scene, two minutes after the initial call encountered gunfire, including rounds fired in their direction, according to authorities, before discovering Van Rootseelaer

dead from an apparent self-inflicted wound.

"We do believe the suspect acted alone ... it would be too early to say whether it was a lone wolf," 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 slow to emerge 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 accept some nuclear enrichment, Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan told the Financial Times in an interview published on Wednesday.

"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 Americans understand that the Iranians have certain limits. It's pointless to try to force them."

Washington has until the end of December to 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 Pezeshkan has said Iran would continue to enrich uranium through Oman media last week in an effort to revive diplomacy, after President Donald Trump said the US would not respond to the Iranian nuclear deal, raising fears of new military action.

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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 university leadership for building one of

Pakistan's leading academic institutions and underscored the pivotal role of youth in shaping Pakistan's future.

Referring United Nations Development Program 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 demographic force tomorrow. Speaking on the theme "Kashmir in International Law and

Pakistan's Strategic Narrative," Ambassador Khan stated that the Kashmir freedom movement predates 1947 and has honored root, enduring, and legitimate aspirations, and denial of fundamental rights faced by the

people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Ambassador Khan emphasized that the people of Jammu and Kashmir possess an inalienable 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 10, 2026, as Pakistan's Space and Upper Atmospheric Research Commission (SUPARCO) successfully launched the country's second locally developed and manufactured satellite, PRSC-EO2, into orbit from China's off-shore launch facility near Yantai.

The satellite was launched aboard China's Smart Dragon-3 launch vehicle, with all mission parameters reported to be optimal. SUPARCO officials confirmed that the 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 community and scientific 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 in February 2024.

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

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

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.

On February 10, 2026, a move that officials said demonstrated both technical innovation and commercial efficiency.

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Tree plantation drive starts in Gwadar

ISLAMABAD (INP): Gwadar Development Authority (GDA) has launched free plantation campaign on February 10 across the city in connection with the spring season. Saplings will be planted under the tree plantation drive in different areas of Gwadar during the current season. GDA Director Environment Rasool Baloch said that environment officer Hamza Dasti told Gwadar Pro that plantation campaign will target the areas including GDA School, Syed Zahoor Shah Hospital, GDA (Abbas Road), Marine Drive, along with various city circles and other important locations. On February 10, at the start of the tree plantation campaign, GDA officials, 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 invited the students and 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 gulls and other birds that eat the seeds, animals, due to which plants and trees often suffer damage.

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

The curriculum covers digital marketing, content creation, online 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 models.

A certificate distribution ceremony was held at the school to mark the completion of the training.

Officials from NESTS attended the event, while Deputy Director WAPDA Riaz Ahmed was the chief guest. Certificates were awarded to all 80 participants.

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Pakistan International Airlines (PIA) privatisation finalised

NEWS DESK: Rejecting all objections from workers' unions, the Minister 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 Hammad 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/objection 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

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 under Article 154 of the constitution, saying

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 authority 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 PIAC 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 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 ended stable on 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 \$5,658 per ounce, unchanged from the previous session.

In the local market, the price of gold per tola after a 1% premium was unchanged at Rs28,562. 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 Rs7,100. Spot gold and 0.5% lower at Rs5,524 per ounce by 0642 GMT. It closed Wednesday with a more than 1% gain.

US gold futures for April delivery lost 0.4% to \$1,077.30 per ounce.

Spot silver fell 0.6%

to \$33.49 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 local rupee posted a marginal rise of Rs0.01 to close at 279.66 in the interbank market.

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

In the local market, the price of gold per tola after a 1% premium was unchanged at Rs28,562, according to rates issued by the All-Pakistan Gems and Jewellers Sarafa Association. Similarly, the price of 10 grams of gold increased by Rs1,972 to Rs453,156.

Silver prices also moved upwards with the price of gold after strong demand by Rs1,200 on Rs8,732.

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 highs near \$1,118 but later retreated to \$1,077.30 per ounce, with support seen near \$1,000 and resistance near \$1,200.

He added that gold prices came under pressure after stronger-than-expected US non-farm payroll data reduced the likelihood of a near-term rate cut.

To address this critical challenge, the IHC chairperson proposed a series of strategic administrative and judicial reforms aligned with the policy directions of the National Judicial Policy and Management 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

specialised division benches were formed for this purpose. One bench was constituted by Justice Sattar and Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan, while another included Justice Muhammad Azam Khan and Justice Saeed Aslam. Justice Saman Rafat Imaiz also served on a tax bench with Justice Sattar, further strengthening the court's capacity to clear the backlog.

The report highlights that prolonged litigation and judicial delays in tax matters have caused vast amounts of delay and expense in courts, adversely affecting fiscal stability and economic circulation.

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and high labour input costs have weakened competitiveness.

Kamal observed that export-oriented industries could help restore industrial output while strengthening downstream industries, including textiles and yarn.

The meeting also reviewed corporate farming and mechanisation as long-term responses to productivity constraints, including production capacity, and strength value chains to unlock Pakistan's export potential and respond to grow-

ing regional demand in a sustainable, coordinated manner.

A central focus of this 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 in the coming years, combining PIA's production capacity with Saudi Arabia's capital, market access, and regional connectivity.

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PIA's meeting reflected strong interest in pursuing an investment-driven, partnership-based approach to economic cooperation. Both sides underscored the need to enhance PIA's production capacity with Saudi Arabia's capital, market access, and regional connectivity.

Rs506bn unlocked as IHC clears tax backlog

NEWS DESK: The Islamabad High Court (IHC) cleared the revenue backlog of Rs506.13bn.

Following a bench led by Justice Azam Khan and Justice Saeed Aslam, Justice Saman Rafat Imaiz also served on a tax bench with Justice Sattar, further strengthening the court's capacity to clear the backlog.

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According to bench-wise data, the bench led by Justice Azam Khan and Justice Saeed Aslam disposed of 178 cases, accounting for the largest share of revenue — approximately Rs 4.56, 1.8bn. The bench led by Justice Bahar Sattar, along with Justice Sardar Ejaz Ishaq Khan and Justice Saman Rafat Imaiz, collectively disposed of 610 cases, involving more than Rs49.9bn. The Adju-

dication of these cases resulted in the vacation of stay orders that had been issued by the FBR for enforcing tax recovery, thereby unlocking substantial funds that had remained tied up in the system. The high court noted that this intervention has significantly contributed to the early realisation of public revenue and the improvement of 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 intervention produces "tangible economic and institutional benefits within a relatively short period".

Beyond tax matters, the report highlights broader institutional reforms aimed at enhancing judicial efficiency. The court expedited the disposal of over 3,000 cases, including 1,000 cases within 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 case

Meanwhile, the Lahore High Court's (LHC) Environment 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 Justices Jawad Hassan and Justice Mirza Iqbal Rauf allowed sales tax reference and quashed the show-cause notice, order-injunction, 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 Javaid Kamran Khan and Assistant Minister of Investment of Saudi Arabia Ibrahim Al-Mubarak on Wednesday. The meeting reviewed and advanced the scope of participation in trade, investment, and joint engagement in regional markets.

An official announcement released after the meeting said 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 for the 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 areas such as cotton, fodder (including

alfalfa), meat, and selected agricultural products. Both sides also examined the potential role of Saudi financing institutions in supporting export-oriented agricultural and infrastructure projects in Pakistan, particularly those structured around guaranteed feedstock supply from Saudi Arabia.

Kingdom keen on investing in corporate farming, long-term rice supply

The meeting also reviewed corporate farming and mechanisation as long-term responses to productivity constraints, including production capacity, and strength value chains to unlock Pakistan's export potential and respond to grow-

ing regional demand in a sustainable, coordinated manner.

A central focus of this 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 in the coming years, combining PIA'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 investment 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 Bankers Association (BBA), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and Baltoro Capital.

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

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

He noted that protecting and expanding private sector remained essential for sustaining investment momentum and lowering reliance on state-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 stable economic environment.

He briefed the delegation on trade reforms, Aurangzeb outlined the government's tariff rationalisation and investment promotion measures to attract trade liberalisation over the past 18 months.

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

and local currency initiatives.

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

Energy sector reforms 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-wicket 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 bat-friendly pitch with five sixes and two fours, 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 fluent half-centuries, stitching together a 94-run stand for the third

wicket.

"After the last game, the manner in which I was dismissed, 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 four and two sixes.

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

Sri Lanka spinner Mahesh 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 Tasmanian 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 Rühr, 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 Ahmad pulled one back in the 41st minute before Raphael Hartkopf added another less than a minute later, making it 5-1.

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.

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 Rühr failed to convert, missing the target.

Pakistan showed resilience 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 Mohammad Abdullah and Tom Grambusch received yellow cards in the final seconds, forcing a hasty change.

Abdullah had earned a penalty corner with five seconds remaining, but the final hooter sounded before Pakistan could execute.

The defeat is 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 Arne Milicevic admitted that their women's team has fallen 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 lifting

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

"After the last game, the manner in which I was dismissed, 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

team coach of such a large country with a big population, our motivation 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, Milicevic 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 with the rest of the world."

Women's football in Europe is particularly booming, which

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

China's 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 defending Bangladesh on March 1.

Also in Group B are North Korea and Uzbekistan.

Von Allmen joins Olympic skiing greats



NEWS DESK: Swiss skier Franoj 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 parallel 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 with 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 Vladislav Heraskevych to not wear a balaclava and helmet to defend his victory of the war with Russia at the Games.

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

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.

Francesca Julia Simon delivered a perfect skiing performance as she clinched the women's 15km individual biathlon gold to add 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 Berlin's Olympiastadion on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, the first team had to settle for a 1-1 draw after extra time. After a goalless 90 minutes, Yuito 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 Paul Klempen's spot-kick to the shoot-out, and his side through to the semi-finals.

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

runners-up Freiburg 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.

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 shoot-out.





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

NEWS DESK: Former chief of army staff General (retd) 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 Guhamman.

"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," Guhamman said, adding that the former chief of army staff General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa was "100% out of danger" and that nothing in the video camera in his medical examination.

The military's media wing confirmed the incident.

"Former Chief of Army Staff General (retd) Qamar Javed Bajwa, Nishan-e-Umra (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 2021.

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 Aslam Leghari maintaining that the issue was about "fair pricing, not being anti-solar".

The power regulator on Monday changed the rules of conduct for all existing and future net-metered solar consumers — known as prosumers — to contain rising solar energy penetration and protect an effective and competitive solar power net-metering system.

Leghari said that 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 consultation".

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".

Leghari said that the proposed regulation had maintained the purchase rate for existing users at Rs27 due to "contractual obligations"; however, he noted that it had 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, oil, and thermal 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 minister to file a review petition to the regulator and limit the move".

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

He stressed that "you are going to incur any losses".

"If the electricity cost goes down by Rs1.5 for the general consumers and you still get a 37pc profit, then, can you say that the policy does not serve

public interest?" he asked.

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

The minister said that the prime minister had 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 move, saying that the blame to net-metering users for burdening the national grid.

"These consumers are the ones who followed the government's policies," the power minister added that the proposed regulation had maintained the purchase rate for existing users at Rs27 due to "contractual obligations"; however, he noted that it had sparked another debate.

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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 transported through a chartered flight from Allama Iqbal International Airport in Lahore to Egypt's Al-



Ariah airport for onward delivery to Gaza.

Israel, which controls all access to the Gaza Strip, denies withholding supplies for witholding 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 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 a 2-year-old boy in Abbottabad who lost his life while resisting the suicide attacker who targeted an imambara in Islamabad, it emerged on Thursday.

On February 6, a suicide attack ripped through the Friday congregation at the imambara Qasr-i-Khadjatul Kubra 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 hall, had abandoned his rituals and tried to tackle the attacker. However, he lost his life when the suicide bomber detonated by Abbas.

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

"He said 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-Shujahat.

He said that the award would "not only honour his memory with the dignity it deserves but would also serve as an enduring symbol of hope for young 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 to 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 the victim. The prime had also announced Rs 5m for each person martyred in the attack; Rs 3m for those critically injured and under treatment at the hospital; and Rs 1m for those with minor injuries who had been discharged.

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

NEWS DESK: Foreign Office (FO) spokesman Tahir Andrahi confirmed on 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 Ishaq Dar would also accompany him.

Andrahi's confirmation follows reports that said PM Shehbaz was expected to visit Washington, 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 in the US, as well as be accompanied by the deputy prime minister and foreign minister," Andrahi 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 if whether Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir would be included in the delegation, the FO spokesman reiterated: "We will share these details in



tion. I can confirm that both the prime minister and the deputy prime minister will be part of the delegation. This is the extent of information right now. We will come and update you in our due course."

Kundan is among the 14 countries that signed the charter of the World Economic Forum in Davos, becoming a founding member of the body.

The board was initially proposed in September 2022 and formally established last month. Under its charter, the US government serves as its official depository. President Trump has desig-

nated the Donald J. Trump Institute of Peace in Washington as the board's headquarters. A UN Security Council resolution adopted in mid-November 2023 authorised the entity, along with the entire states, to establish an international stabilisation force in Gaza following a ceasefire that began October 2023. A Trump-backed plan accepted by Israel and Hamas.

However, the ceasefire has remained fragile, with repeated violations by Israel. In Trump's plan unveiled late last year, the Board of Peace was originally intended to supervise Gaza's temporary government 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, consisting of a former president and a foreign secretary, 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. Highlighting this, the journalist asked: "How reliable would this Board of Peace prove to be for the people of Gaza?"

In his response,

Andrahi said: "We have joined the Board of Peace in good faith, as I highlighted in my previous statement."

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 and creation of a state of Palestine in accordance with the pre-1967 border with Al Quds Al Sharif as its capital."

"So, our engagement will continue, medium-term and long-term solution of the plight of the Palestinian people," he explained.

Asked about Israel joining the board, the FO spokesman said: "It is their decision. We are not obliged to offer any comment. We will engage with the Board of Peace in the spirit of our prime minister and as I said our prime minister will attend the Board of Peace meeting." "Shot down a number of Indian Rafale jets" Andrahi was also asked about Trump's recent claim that 10 aircraft was shot down during the four-day conflict between India and Pakistan in May 2025.