



Judicial facilities must reach every citizen, especially in remote districts, CJP



PTI always runs away from dialouge: Amir Muqam



Govt pushes export-led economy, says Rana Tanveer

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PM Shehbaz, UAE President discuss investment, energy and trade cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and United Arab Emirates President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan on Friday discussed the broad spectrum of bilateral relations between the two countries.

The two leaders reviewed the long-standing partnership between the two countries and assessed progress on cooperation across multiple sectors. Discussions focused on strengthening existing ties and exploring new avenues to further expand engagement at both governmental and institutional levels.

PM Shehbaz Sharif and President Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed examined opportunities to enhance collaboration in key areas

including investment, energy, information technology and other priority sectors. Both sides stressed the importance of increasing bilateral trade and deepening economic cooperation to unlock mutual growth.

The meeting also covered major regional and international developments, with the two leaders exchanging views on issues of shared concern. Pakistan and UAE leadership underlined the need for continued coordination on regional stability and global challenges. Both sides expressed satisfaction over the positive trajectory of Pakistan-UAE relations and reaffirmed their commitment to close cooperation in pursuit of shared goals of peace, stability and sustainable development.



Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif meets the President of UAE H.R.H. Mohamed bin Zayed al-Nahyan.

Jordan's army chief, COAS Asim Muneer wants defense ties enhanced

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff (CJCS) of the Jordan Armed Forces, Major General Yousef Ahmed A. Al Huneiti called on Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI

(M), HJ, Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) here Thursday at General Headquarters (GHQ). During the meeting, both sides discussed matters of mutual interest, regional security dynamics, and avenues for enhanced bilateral defence and military cooperation, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan Armed Forces and lauded their contributions towards regional peace and stability.

Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening defence ties with Jordan and emphasized the importance of collaborative efforts to address evolving security challenges. The meeting concluded with a shared resolve to further deepen military-to-military cooperation between the two brotherly countries.

Pakistan summons UK high commissioner after 'provocative' Bradford demonstration

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) on Friday summoned the United Kingdom high commissioner in connection with a protest outside the Pakistani consulate in Bradford, where "provocative" statements were made against Pakistan's civil and military leadership.

FO spokesperson Tahir Andrabi said that the UK high commissioner was summoned and issued a demarche.

"The demarche was issued after provocative statements were made against Pakistan's civil and military leadership from British soil," said the FO spokesperson said.

The FO urged the UK to "hold responsible elements accountable in

accordance with the Finance Bilal Azhar law". Kayani confirmed that



Earlier, two ministers of state from the PML-N said that the Pakistan government had written a letter to the UK authorities, seeking action against over "inciteful" statements, particularly in reference to a video that was circulating on social media.

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry and Minister of State for

development to Geo News, with the latter particularly mentioning that "the head of armed forces was threatened" in the video.

Kayani also mentioned the opposition PTI's involvement in the matter, naming the party, which Chaudhry didn't.

In the video, a woman appears to be wishing ill on a person

without taking any name, saying that they should be "blown up in a car". The woman can be seen surrounded by people holding PTI flags. When asked about the video, Chaudhry said, "Pakistan has formally written to the UK, expecting them to act according to their laws and justice system."

He maintained that Pakistan had the right to take legal action against those "targeting its institutions".

Chaudhry recalled that there had been complaints before as well regarding the "use of social media platforms to incite hatred against state institutions and political figures".

"The footage of the incident is available," he added.

Security forces kill 5 terrorists during IBO in Balochistan's Kohlu: ISPR

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces killed five terrorists in an intelligence based operation (IBO) in Balochistan's Kohlu district, the military's media affairs wing said on Friday. According to a statement issued by the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), the operation was conducted on December 25 on the "reported presence of terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Finaal-Hindustan". The state has designated Balochistan-based terrorist groups as Finaal-Hindustan to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.

Trump says US struck IS targets in Nigeria after group targeted Christians

PEAK POINT

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla: President Donald Trump said Thursday that the U.S. launched a "powerful and deadly" strike against Islamic State forces in Nigeria, after spending weeks accusing the West African country's government of failing to rein in the persecution of Christians. In a Christmas evening post on his social media site, Trump did not provide details or mention the extent of the damage caused by the strikes. A Defense Department.

Tajikistan says 5 killed in armed clash on border with Afghanistan

PEAK POINT

TAJIKISTAN: Five people were killed in an armed clash on the border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, Tajik state media said on Thursday.

Citing a statement by the Border Troops of the Tajik State Committee for National Security, state news agency Khovar reported that three people crossed into the country late on Tuesday in the Shamsiddin Shohin district of the country's southwestern Khatlon region, and were later located on Wednesday.

"The terrorists refused to obey orders from Tajik border guards to surrender and offered armed resistance. They intended to carry out an armed attack on one of the border posts of the Border Troops of the

State Committee for and border crossing" from National Security of the Afghanistan in the past



Republic of Tajikistan," the statement said.

"As a result of the combat operation, all three terrorists were neutralised," the statement said, adding that two Tajik border officers were killed during the clashes.

According to the statement, this was the third "armed attack, terrorist act,

hope that the Afghan administration will "apologise to the people of Tajikistan and take additional effective measures to ensure security on the border with Tajikistan". Afghanistan did not immediately comment on the development.

Earlier this month, Tajikistan said five people were killed and five others injured in two previous cross-border attacks from Afghanistan.

On Wednesday, Tajik President Emomali Rahmon commissioned four new border outposts, as well as a training range for tanks at the Harb-Maidon training ground near the Tajik-Afghan border, as part of efforts to bolster border security amid growing concerns over cross-border attacks.

Third consignment of Chinese flood relief arrives in Karachi



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has received relief goods from China, including boats, tents, and blankets, in a third consignment that underscores Beijing's continued assistance efforts. Delivered by sea to Karachi, the latest consignment comprises 100 boats, 5,000 tents, and 8,000 blankets, which were moved from the port to the NDMA warehouse for distribution according to assessed needs. Third consignment of Chinese flood relief arrives in Karachi

Earlier, the first consignment received on September 28, 2025, comprised 9,000 blankets and 300 tents, while the second consignment, which arrived on October 4, 2025.



SPORTS



PSL franchises guaranteed Rs850 million from central pool for next five editions



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has guaranteed a minimum share of Rs850 million from the central pool of income to each franchise for the next five editions of the Pakistan Super League (PSL), starting from the 11th edition in 2026. According to clause 6.4 of the agreement — available with Dawn — signed between the PCB and the PSL franchises, if a franchise's share from the central pool in any of the five editions falls below the guaranteed amount, the PCB will cover the shortfall. "If the Central Pool Income share of the Franchisee in respect of a

Tournament is less than the Minimum Central Pool Income Guarantee (Rs850 million), the PCB shall make good the shortfall," the clause states. The provision has largely eased concerns over potential losses for three franchises — Quetta Gladiators, Islamabad United and Peshawar Zalmi — whose franchise fees are significantly lower than those of Karachi Kings, Lahore Qalandars and Multan Sultans. According to sources, Quetta Gladiators are valued at Rs360 million, Peshawar Zalmi at Rs480 million, Islamabad United at Rs490 million, Karachi Kings at Rs650 million, Lahore

Qalandars at Rs670 million and Multan Sultans at Rs1.8 billion. Meanwhile, the base price for the two new teams — to be auctioned in Islamabad on Jan 8 — has been set at Rs1.3 billion each, according to sources. All franchises are required to spend \$1.4 million each on players' fees, accommodation and travel during the league. As a result, the overall cost for five franchises — the two new teams along with Multan Sultans, Karachi Kings and Lahore Qalandars — remains high and close to the guaranteed minimum of Rs850 million, compared to Gladiators, United and Zalmi. This disparity was cited by

the PCB. Subsequently, the PCB did not renew ownership rights for the Sultans' previous owner, while the owners of the remaining five franchises were renewed. Despite the varying costs of franchises, their respective shares from the central pool remain equal. Under the financial model, 95 per cent of the central pool income is distributed among the franchises, with the remaining five per cent retained by the PCB.

Pakistan Under-19 team to face Afghanistan in Harare tri-nation series opener



PEAK POINT

HARARE: Pakistan's Under-19 cricket team will play their first match of the tri-nation series against Afghanistan on Monday in Harare.

The series, featuring Pakistan, Afghanistan and hosts Zimbabwe, got underway earlier but its opening fixture ended without a result due to persistent rain.

The Pakistan Under-19 squad arrived in Harare late on Sunday after a long journey. Led by Farhan Yousaf, the team enters the tournament as the reigning Under-19 Asia Cup champions and will be aiming to build momentum ahead of a major international assignment.

The opening match of the tri-nation series, played between Afghanistan and Zimbabwe, was repeatedly interrupted by rain and was eventually abandoned without a result. Weather conditions are expected to play a key role as the tournament progresses, with teams hoping for clearer conditions in the remaining fixtures. The tri-nation series is scheduled to conclude with the final on January 6. Following the tournament, Pakistan's Under-19 team will shift focus to the ICC Under-19 World Cup, which is set to be hosted jointly by Zimbabwe and Namibia.

National Games winners demand better facilities



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: High-level coaching and training facilities on a regular basis are required to shape up the talented athletes of little popular sports like table tennis, wushu and fencing, to bring them at par with the international standard. It is quite possible if the authorities concerned move ahead with a vision and adopt long term policies.

National Games, held in December in Karachi. The Punjab contingent, after a long period of 35 years, showed the best performance at the National Gala and returned with 16 gold, 38 silver and 72 bronze medals and earned fourth position among 14 participating units. Surprisingly, Punjab earned gold medals in table tennis, wushu and fencing despite having more professional opponents from the Army, Navy, Pakistan Air Force, Railways and

Police. economic challenges Zaib Hasnain they braved for their notched up a gold medal while beating Sajid Ali, a strong rival from the Army in the final. Speaking to Dawn, he says: "I want regular training facilities under an international coach. I did two months training in Thailand at my own expenses of Rs2m because I have passion for my sport. I also lost my private job due to that two-month course and sold my bike to meet the expenses."

He says the Sports Board Punjab also held a two-week training camp which served as a lot for preparations for the National Games but the wushu players need regular training facilities to compete with the strong rivals of Army, Wapda and other departments, he says. Athletes spell out economic challenges they braved for their achievements. Zaib hopes that for winning a gold medal, he would also get a monthly stipend from the sports endowment of the Sports Board Punjab (SBP). Maryam Rafique, who too seized a gold medal in wushu on a regular basis. "I have better opportunities for the athletes on a regular basis. She says that SBP provided best facilities during the training camp and best food but the athletes require such things on a regular basis. "I have six sisters and one brother and I want to become an earning member of my family to help out my father. Hopefully, I will get a monthly stipend from the endowment fund of the sports board," she says.

Ex-minister Mir Khalid Lango honours taekwondo prodigy Syed Abu Huraira Shah with one lakh cash award



Australia lead England by 46 after 20 wickets fall on crazy day at MCG

PEAK POINT

AUSTRALIA: An astounding 20 wickets fell on a frantic day one of the fourth Ashes Test on Friday with Australia all out for 152 before storming back to dismiss England for 110 and leave the clash on a knife-edge.

England skipper Ben Stokes won a key toss on a green track and his quicks feasted after sending in the hosts under overcast skies in front of 94,199 fans at the Melbourne Cricket Ground. It was the biggest cricket crowd ever at the cavernous arena, exceeding the 93,013 who watched the 2015 World Cup final, and they witnessed the home side collapse with Josh Tongue grabbing 5-45.

But England fared even worse, slumping to 16-4 and never recovering, leaving Australia to face one over before stumps, which night-watcher Scott Boland safely

negotiated with Travis Head at the other end.

Australia were 4-0 at the close with Boland on four, 46 ahead, with Head yet to face a ball.

"I feel like anyone could have taken a 'five-fer' today,"

hard. "If we get the ball in the same areas tomorrow we can get them three of four wickets down in the first hour."

Australia bowler Michael Neser, who took 4-45, was not making any predictions



said Tongue, who became the first Englishman to take five wickets in an innings in a Test at the MCG since Dean Headley and Darren Gough in 1998.

"When I'm at my best I'm bowling at that fuller length. Stokes has spoken to us quite a bit about it, going a touch fuller but hitting the pitch

for the second innings after a day when the ball dominated the bat. "We saw how tough it was when we batted. The ball was nipping around and we needed to bowl in the right areas," Neser said. "You need to put pressure back on their bowlers. You need to find the perfect balance between defence and attack."

Fatima Jinnah Team wins Quaid-e-Azam Girls Basketball Festival match





HPV vaccination crisis turns into global success after Minister's intervention

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan's HPV and cervical cancer vaccination campaign narrowly escaped failure after an initial collapse driven by misinformation, weak coordination and public mistrust, lawmakers were told during a Standing Committee on National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination meeting, where officials disclosed that a live televised intervention by the Health Minister reversed a seventy percent refusal rate and turned the drive into an internationally recognised success. The committee was informed that the HPV vaccination campaign was carried out in Punjab, Sindh and

Islamabad, with vaccines supplied by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization. Officials confirmed that the campaign has not yet been launched in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa or Balochistan, despite public demand from areas such as Quetta. The Health Minister clarified that no official doses have been administered in those provinces so far. The campaign faced criticism from committee member Ms Shaista Pervaiz, who described the rollout as poorly coordinated and deeply flawed in execution. She told lawmakers that there was a complete lack of coordination between federal and provincial authorities and that key stakeholders, includ-

ing tertiary care hospitals and pediatricians, were not properly involved. She warned that excluding medical professionals weakened credibility at a time when public trust was already fragile. Concerns were also raised over the consent process, with the member stating that most vaccinations took place in government schools, while private schools largely refused participating or were not meaningfully engaged. She argued that parents in public sector settings often feel pressured rather than informed, further fueling mistrust around the vaccine. According to her, the campaign became controversial from the outset due to widespread skepticism toward government-led

health initiatives. The Health Minister told the committee that the situation deteriorated rapidly after a coordinated wave of fake news spread on social media. Activists circulated misleading videos showing girls fainting during unrelated protest incidents and falsely claimed they were suffering adverse reactions to the HPV vaccine. As a result, refusal rates surged to seventy percent within the first four days, and schools that had initially agreed to participate began withdrawing under pressure from parents. The Minister described the situation as heading toward becoming another failed vaccination drive. Facing the collapse of the campaign, the Minister said

conventional advertising and official messaging proved ineffective against emotionally charged misinformation. In a decisive move, he chose to publicly vaccinate his own daughter on live television. He told the committee that convincing his family to appear on camera took considerable effort, but he believed visible action was necessary to counter fear and restore confidence. The impact of the televised vaccination was immediate. Officials reported that within hours, refusal rates began to fall sharply, bringing acceptance levels to a break even point. Momentum continued to build, and by the conclusion of the campaign, acceptance reached between nine-

ty and ninety-two percent, transforming a near-failure into a successful public health intervention. The turnaround drew international recognition. The World Health Organization classified the campaign as successful on its monitoring map, while GAVI presented Pakistan's experience as a global success model during its board deliberations, highlighting the recovery from widespread resistance to high acceptance. The committee concluded that the HPV vaccine episode exposed both the vulnerability of public health campaigns to fake news and the power of visible leadership in restoring trust.

CAIDS-2025 concludes at Riphah International University

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The 3rd International Conference on Recent Advances in Computing, Artificial Intelligence, and Data Science (CAIDS-2025) has concluded successfully at Riphah International University (RIU), Islamabad. The event brought together national and international experts to discuss emerging trends in computing, artificial intelligence, and data science. The conference was formally inaugurated by Prof. Dr. Anis

Ahmad, Vice Chancellor, Riphah International University, alongside Dr. Najeebullah Marwat, Member (Science, Technology & ICT), Planning Commission of Pakistan. The event was further graced by the presence of Dr. Muhammad Israr, Secretary, Higher Education Department (HED), Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, according to a press release. CAIDS-2025 served as a premier international platform for researchers, aca-



demicians, policymakers, and industry professionals to present innovative research and exchange ideas. The conference was jointly organized by the University of Science & Technology Bannu, Riphah International University Islamabad, University of

Lakki Marwat, Gomal University, KIWI Bannu (Pakistan), and Multimedia University (MMU), Malaysia. The objective was to foster collaboration between academia, industry, and government institutions, with a particular focus on research-driven solutions relevant to Pakistan. The conference received substantial financial and technical support from its organizing partner institutions. It was also supported by the Pakistan Science Foundation

(PSF) under the competitive research grant titled "Political Pulse: An Explainable AI-Based Deep Learning Platform for Detecting and Analyzing Multilingual Disinformation on Social Media" (Project No. PSF-CRP/TUBITAK-IV/AI/KPK-GU (33)). Support from the Higher Education Commission of Pakistan (HEC) is currently in process. Selected papers presented at the conference will be considered for publication in MMU Press journals (Malaysia).

Opinion & Editorial

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A broader spectrum

REALITY appears to be finally sinking in for the state's policymakers. The ECC decision on Tuesday to approve the auction of over 600MHz of spectrum — the largest such offering in the country's history — signifies an admission that chronic under-allocation lies at the very heart of Pakistan's mobile telephony and internet woes. The government plans to distribute additional spectrum within two months followed by its rollout, including 5G services, by mobile operators in five to six months. The finance and IT ministers' argument for greater spectrum availability to support the country's digital, financial and economic transformation underscores a shift in policymakers' thinking. The move is an admission that the mobile networks operating with just 274MHz of spectrum for their entire suite of mobile services — or less than half of what many comparable regional countries use, and well below international standards for a population of 240-250m — are working with one hand tied behind their back. This compares with 600MHz available to the 175m people of Bangladesh, and is the major reason for internet traffic congestion and associated problems in Pakistan. The low spectrum means that we are using two lanes for traffic which requires six or eight lanes for smooth flow.

From Occupation to Apartheid: How Israel Institutionalizes Human Rights Violations

The term "occupation," which has its roots in international law and refers to Israel's control over Palestinian territories it captured in 1967, has been used to frame the Palestine issue for decades. However, international human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, and even the United Nations Special Rapporteurs have taken things a step further in recent years. They contend that Israel operates an apartheid system, which is illegal under international law, in addition to being an occupying power. The recognition that Israel's violations are systemic, entrenched, and purposefully intended to uphold Jewish supremacy over Palestinians in all areas under its control is reflected in this change in language, which goes beyond semantics.

Defining Apartheid Beyond Occupation
According to the 1973 International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid and the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court (ICC), apartheid is defined as an inhuman act carried out with the intention of establishing and upholding racial dominance and systematic oppression.
According to the historic 2022 report by Amnesty International, Israel enforces this kind of system "wherever it has control over Palestinians' rights." Similarly, Israel's policies "amount to crimes of apartheid and persecution," according to Human Rights Watch's 2021 report "A Threshold Crossed."
The occupation has spread into a permanent system of dominance, depriving Palestinians of equal rights and self-determination, according to multiple Special Rapporteurs, including Michael Lynk and Francesca Albanese, even within the UN.
The Oppression Machine
The behind of apartheid is based on the totality of Israel's actions in several areas:
Palestinian People and Land Disintegration
There are distinct legal, geographical, and political classifications for



SIDRA SADOZAI
Resident Editor

create a system of racial dominance that goes far beyond occupation.
The Global Consensus Changes
Western governments vehemently opposed the term "apartheid" for many years, dismissing it as political rhetoric rather than a fact of law. The results of reputable, well-known human rights organizations, however, have altered the conversation.
Israel's treatment of Palestinians "crosses the threshold" into apartheid, according to Human Rights Watch.
Israel's system, according to Amnesty International, is "cruel" and "pervasive," affecting Palestinians in Israel, the occupied territories, and even refugees overseas.
These evaluations have been confirmed by UN experts, and reports detailing systematic oppression similar to that of the former South African regime have been sent to the Human Rights Council.
The most reputable rights monitors in the world have come to this conclusion, so activists are no longer the only ones using it.
Western Silence and Israel's Reaction
Not surprisingly, Israel has categorically denied these reports, calling them politically motivated and antisemitic. It argues that its security concerns justify restrictions on Palestinians and that apartheid is an inaccurate comparison.
Yet, the refusal to engage with substantive allegations speaks volumes. Israel and its allies criticize the messengers' legitimacy rather than the evidence.
Fearing political repercussions, Western nations, especially the US and EU, have been reluctant to use the term "apartheid." They still use the concept of "occupation" to justify Israel's abuses, implying that it is a transient state that can be ended through dialogue. However, the fiction of temporariness is no longer credible in the face of 56 years of occupation, steadily growing settlements, and overt annexation efforts.
Implications for International Law
The ramifications are severe if Israel's actions qualify as apartheid:
Legal Responsibilities: States are required to take action against apartheid

because it is a crime against humanity. Governments are prohibited by international law from recognizing or supporting an apartheid regime.
International Criminal Court (ICC): After the Palestinian Authority ratified the Rome Statute, the ICC gained jurisdiction over Palestine and was able to look into and bring charges against those who committed apartheid-era crimes.
Boycotts and Sanctions: Civil society movements advocate for boycotts, divestments, and sanctions (BDS) to hold Israel responsible, much as international pressure helped end apartheid in South Africa.
The Significance of This
Calling Israel's system apartheid reframes the conflict and is not merely a semantic choice. It shifts the focus from contested borders to basic human rights. It emphasizes that the Palestinian people are subject to a permanent system of dominance rather than just a brief occupation.
The world community cannot claim ignorance. The evidence is overwhelming, and the reports are unambiguous. More abuses are only made possible by continuing to view the matter as a political disagreement rather than a human rights emergency.
Conclusion: Dismissing the Silence
The transition from occupation to apartheid illustrates both Israel's consolidation of power and the international community's inability to hold it responsible. Palestinians are still ensnared in a system that aims to deprive them of dignity, destroy their identity, and split up their communities.
We cannot overlook the voices of the United Nations, Human Rights Watch, and Amnesty. Apartheid must be just as unacceptable in Palestine as it was in South Africa. Being silent is complicity. The international community has a clear moral and legal obligation to end apartheid, protect human rights, and bring justice to the Palestinian people.
Until then, the dream of Palestinian freedom will remain postponed and the promise of international law will remain void.

Judicial facilities must reach every citizen, especially in remote districts, CJP



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Chief Justice of Pakistan, in his capacity as Chairman of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan (LJCP), chaired a high-level meeting in Peshawar to review and accelerate initiatives aimed at strengthening judicial infrastructure and improving public facilitation in underserved and remote districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

According to a press note released here Friday evening, the meeting was attended by the Chief Justice of the

courtsrooms and include modern facilitation centres, with particular emphasis on gender-responsive and women-friendly infrastructure.

The forum was briefed on nationwide initiatives being implemented under the Access to Justice Development Fund (AJDF), administered by the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan. It was informed that bar rooms within judicial complexes have formally been included as beneficiaries of core interventions, including solar energy systems, e-libraries, water filtration plants, and women-centric facilities identified through stakeholder consultations. Regarding Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the meeting was told that province-wide coverage under these initiatives would require an estimated Rs. 688 million. Of this, the Law and Justice Commission has already allocated Rs. 390 million from the AJDF and Grant-in-Aid, while the remaining amount will be met through provincial funding. The Peshawar High Court undertook to execute women-centric.

Peshawar High Court, the Chief Secretary Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Secretaries of Finance, Planning and Development, and Law of the provincial government, along with the Secretary of the Law and Justice Commission of Pakistan.

Expressing serious concern over inadequate judicial infrastructure in far-flung areas, the Chief Justice of Pakistan stressed the need for targeted, citizen-centric interventions to bridge regional disparities in access to justice. He underscored that future judicial facilities must go beyond traditional

ECP extends deadline for Islamabad LG poll nominations

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) on Friday extended the deadline for filing nomination papers in the capital's local government elections to December 30, 2025.

Under the revised schedule, candidates may submit nomination papers to returning officers between December 22 and 30, excluding Quaid-e-Azam Day and Sunday. The deadline, originally set for December 27, has now been extended to accommodate maximum candidates.

An Election Commission spokesperson said the extension was aimed at facilitating prospective candidates and ensuring a smooth nomination process. The upcoming Islamabad local government elections are part of broader efforts to strengthen local governance in the federal capital.

The Commission has urged candidates to file papers within the revised timeframe to avoid disqualification.

Serutiny of nomination papers will take place from January 1 to 6, 2026, excluding

Sunday. Appeals against acceptance or rejection may be filed between January 7 and 10, with appellate authorities scheduled to decide cases from January 12 to 15. The revised list of candidates will be issued on January 16, while January 17 has been set as the deadline for withdrawal of candidature. Election symbols will be allotted on January 19, followed by publication of the final list of contesting candidates the same day.

Polling for the local government elections in the federal capital is scheduled for February 15, 2026, a Sunday. Consolidation of results will be carried out from February 16 to 19.

The Election Commission has clarified that its offices, along with those of district returning officers and returning officers, will remain open on public holidays if electoral activity is scheduled.

All proceedings will be conducted during office hours, while polling will run from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.



ISLAMABAD: First Lady Bibi Aseefa Bhutto Zardri, MNA, paid homage at the mausoleums of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, Shaheed Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shaheed Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto and offered prayers for national security and public prosperity.

First Lady Asifa pays tribute at Bhutto Family Mausoleums in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh

PEAK POINT

GARHI KHUDA BAKHSH: First Lady and Member of the National Assembly, Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari, arrived in Garhi Khuda Bakhsh on Friday to pay homage to the martyrs of democracy.

During her visit, Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari offered fateha at the mausoleum of Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto, the Daughter of the East, and prayed for her eternal peace.

She also visited the mausoleum of Shaheed Quaid-e-Azam Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, where she offered fateha and paid rich tribute to his services for the country and democracy, a Presidency's news release said.

The First Lady also laid wreaths at the graves of Shaheed Mir Murtaza Bhutto and Shaheed Mir Shah Nawaz Bhutto, remembering their sacrifices.

At the mausoleum of the martyrs of democracy, Bibi Asifa Bhutto Zardari offered special prayers for public prosperity, national security, and the stability of the country.

Govt pushes export-led economy, says Rana Tanveer

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Federal Minister for National Food Security and Research Rana Tanveer Hussain said on Friday that government is pushing export-led economy, adding that a single-digit policy rate is expected in a year.

Talking to business community here at Lahore Chamber of Commerce & Industry (LCCI), he said, "Prime Minister is worried over declining exports and he has directed us to go to the business community to extend the every possible support for a turnaround in exports." LCCI President Faheem ur Rehman Saigol welcomed him at LCCI, while, Senior Vice President Tanveer Ahmed Sheikh, Vice President Khurram Lodhi and Executive Committee members Ahad Amin Malik, Shoab Akhtar, Amir Ali and Iftikhar Ahmed were also present.



The Federal Minister said that Pakistan's exports have declined by 36 to 38 percent, which is a very serious and worrying situation. He acknowledged that high production costs, expensive energy and a complicated tax system are creating major problems for exporters. He said Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is in close contact with the business community and that during the last two years, consultation with businessmen has been more extensive than ever before. The Federal Minister said that the Prime Minister.

PTI always runs away from dialouge: Amir Muqam

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister and Pakistan Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) Khyber Pakhtunkhwa President Engr Amir Muqam on Friday said that PML-N was the only political party whose tenures witnessed record completion of development projects across the country, along with significant improvement in Pakistan's economic stability and diplomatic standing.

Addressing a political gathering in Mardan on the occasion of prominent politician Malik Bashir joining PML-N along with his supporters, Engr Amir Muqam welcomed the new entrants and said their decision reflected confidence in the leadership of PML-N President Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.



He said that whether it was the network of motorways, Danish Schools System, universities or hospitals, every sector experienced remarkable progress during PML-N governments that brought positive changes in people's lives. He added that former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif made Pakistan a nuclear power, while Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif successfully steered the country away from economic collapse after poor policies of PTI Govt during 2018-2022. Engr Amir Muqam recalled.

Naqvi condemns Takhti Khel terror attack, praises KP police for swift action

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi on Thursday strongly condemned the terror attack carried out by militants in Takhti Khel area of Lakki Marwat, terming the assailants "Khawarij."

Expressing deep sorrow over the death of a civilian in the incident, the minister offered condolences to the bereaved family and prayed for the swift recovery of those injured.

Naqvi lauded the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Police for their timely and effective response, which resulted in killing five militants and foiling their "malicious designs."



He said the professionalism and courage displayed by the police force deserved high praise. "I pay tribute to the brave sons of the KP Police," he stated, adding that the force had written a new chapter of bravery and sacrifice in the country's war against terrorism.

CM approves Rs 3 bn, 600-bed Larkano hospital project, to be completed in two years

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Sindh Chief Minister Syed Murad Ali Shah on Friday approved the progress, design, scope, and financial framework of a 600-bed hospital in Larkano, describing it as a major healthcare project for upper Sindh. The hospital is expected to be completed within two years.

The groundbreaking ceremony is planned for March 2026, with the first tower scheduled for completion within one year and the second tower in the following year. The chief minister

issued these directives to the Planning & Development (P&D) and Health departments. The meeting was attended by Health Minister Dr Azra Fazal Pechuho, Chief Secretary Asif Hyder Shah, Chairman Planning & Development Najam Shah, Finance Secretary Fayaz Jatoi, Secretary to the CM Raheem Shaikh, Health Secretary Rehan Baloch, Dr Saeed Qureshi, and Project Director Hospital Kashif Khuuro, while the Commissioner Larkano participated via video link. The chief minister said that the



hospital project had been taken up on the instructions of Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. In line with the chairman's vision, the facility will provide quality healthcare to the people of Upper Sindh.

Briefing the meeting, officials informed the CM

that the Larkano hospital will be a six-storey facility with a basement, to be constructed in two phases. It will have a total capacity of 596 beds and will function as a 600-bed tertiary care hospital.

The hospital plan, as approved by the chief minister, will be completed in two phases. Phase I of the project includes a six-floor tower with a basement and will provide 288 nursing-care beds, 92 emergency beds, and 48 intensive-care beds. Phase II will add 144 nursing-care beds and 14 ICU beds, bringing the total capacity to 432

nursing-care beds, 92 ER beds and 72 ICU beds in the second tower.

The CM said that the hospital will feature modern emergency services, outpatient departments, radiology, dialysis, laboratories, a blood bank, endoscopy, day-surgery units, eight operating theaters, pre- and post-operative wards, recovery areas, and specialised medical and surgical ICUs.

Rehabilitation services, administrative offices, and attendants' waiting areas are also included in the design. The basement will house

essential support facilities, including kitchen and staff dining areas, CSSD, laundry, mortuary, medical gas plant, waste-management system, storage areas, and loading-unloading docks.

On the ground floor, major components will include emergency triage, radiology, outpatient departments (medical and surgical), pharmacy, dialysis unit, ER observation wards for male and female patients, rehabilitation, and administration.

The chief minister was briefed that the total estimated cost of civil works.