



NA speaker meets son, daughter of late Khaleda Zia for condolence



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PM Shehbaz, Saudi Crown Prince discuss regional developments, stress peace through dialogue

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Wednesday held a telephone conversation with Crown Prince and Prime Minister of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Prince Mohammed bin Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud, and discussed and exchanged views on the regional situation and current developments.

While expressing Pakistan's complete solidarity with the Kingdom, the prime minister said that it was imperative to maintain regional peace and stability through dialogue and diplomacy.

The prime minister also emphasized upon the need to maintain unity and harmony among the ranks of the Ummah, in the

midst of various current challenges, according to a press statement issued by the PM House.

During their very warm and cordial discussion, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif conveyed his respectful regards and good wishes for the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques His Majesty King Salman bin Abdulaziz Al Saud as well as for His Royal Highness the Crown Prince. Prime Minister thanked Saudi Crown Prince for his warmth and affection towards Pakistan.

Both leaders reaffirmed their shared commitment to further strengthening of the long-standing fraternal bonds between both countries, that had attained new heights during recent months.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malki, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

Tarar warns KP, advisor over disrespectful comments

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Information and Broadcasting Attaullah Tarar on Wednesday cautioned Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister's Advisor on Information Shafiqullah Jan to exercise restraint and show respect towards women, warning that failure to do so would invite an appropriate response. Reacting strongly to a remark made by the Adviser about PML-N leader Azma Bukhari, the minister wrote on X: "Otherwise, we also know how to ensure respect is accorded." "Extremely inappropriate language."

Field Marshal Asim Munir addresses 18th National Workshop on Balochistan's development and security

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, Chief of Army Staff and Chief of Defence Forces, engaged with participants of the 18th National Workshop on Balochistan at General Headquarters (GHQ) on Wednesday. The session focused on exploring the province's socio-economic development and strategic significance for Pakistan. During his address, the top military commander praised the resilience and patriotism of Balochistan's people while underlining the province's critical role in Pakistan's prosperity. He highlighted initiatives by



federal and provincial agencies that could hinder long-term development. He emphasized that Balochistan's future must be guided by sustainable growth for all communities. Gen Asim Munir noted ongoing security threats, stating that Indian-backed proxies continue to disrupt development and propagate violence in Balochistan. He reaffirmed that the Armed Forces are

committed to countering terrorism and ensuring stability across the province. Reiterating Pakistan's commitment to regional peace, Field Marshal Asim Munir emphasized that any violation of Pakistan's territorial integrity – direct or indirect – will be met with a decisive response. The armed forces remain dedicated to protecting the lives and well-being of all citizens. The workshop concluded with a candid question-and-answer segment, where Field Marshal Asim Munir provided further insights into ongoing measures for Balochistan's security and development.

Afghans returning from Iran, Pakistan face different challenges: UN report

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Findings of UNHCR's "Afghanistan post-return monitoring survey report" released on Tuesday highlighted different challenges for Afghan returnees from Iran versus Pakistan: those from Iran often have more education, better food security, and housing, while returnees from Pakistan face severe economic hardship, relying more on daily wages, and carrying heavier debt burdens. The returnees from Iran were less likely to have income-generating employment, and more often reported barriers to girls' education. Those returning from Pakistan after April found more casual income opportunities but struggled to afford rent and maintain sufficient food. According to the survey, across all groups, returnees continue to settle in areas with fragile conditions marked by deepening poverty and limited access to essential services. Many cannot return to their areas of origin due to lack of shelter, land, or livelihoods. Over half of households surveyed reported missing essential civil documentation, restricting access to education, healthcare, and housing.



DPM Ishaq Dar to visit China from Jan 3 to 5

PEAK POINT

BEIJING: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Mohammad Ishaq Dar will visit China from January 3 to 5, 2026, China's Foreign Ministry announced on Wednesday.

Dar's visit is at the invitation of Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, during which the two sides will hold the Seventh Round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue. The Sixth Round of China-Pakistan Foreign Ministers' Strategic Dialogue, held in August 2025 at Islamabad, reaffirmed the "All-Weather.

Bangladesh mourns ex-PM Khaleda Zia with state funeral

PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Bangladesh bade farewell on Wednesday to former prime minister Khaleda Zia in a state funeral drawing vast crowds, mourning a towering leader whose career defined politics for decades.

Khaleda, the first woman to serve as prime minister in the South Asian nation of 170 million people, died on Tuesday aged 80.

Flags were flown at half-mast, and thousands of security officers lined the streets as her body was carried through the streets of the capital Dhaka in a vehicle in the colours of the national flag.

Large crowds had gathered outside parliament — many waving national flags or those of Khaleda's Bangladesh Nationalist



Party (BNP) — where the funeral prayers were held at around 3pm local time, according to Dhaka-based Daily Star.

Khaleda was laid to rest alongside her late husband, Ziaur Rahman, who was assassinated in 1981 during his time as president. The burial took place at around 4:30pm local time, Daily Star reported. Seventy-year-old retired govern-

ment official Minhaz Uddin, who was attending Khaleda's funeral, said he had never voted for her, but came to honour the three-time prime minister. "I came here with my grandson, just to say goodbye to a veteran politician whose contributions will always be remembered," he said, watching from behind a barbed wire barricade as her body passed by.

"Khaleida Zia has been an inspiration," mourner Sharmina Siraj told AFP, adding that "it is difficult to imagine women in leadership positions anytime soon". The 40-year-old mother of two said stipends introduced by Khaleda to support girls' education "had a huge impact on the lives of our girls". National Assembly Speaker Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, who is in Bangladesh for the funeral, visited the residence of the former Bangladeshi prime minister, where he met her son and daughter.

According to a statement issued by the NA Secretariat, Sadiq expressed his condolences at the passing of their mother. "In this hour of grief and sorrow, the government and the people of Pakistan stand with you," he was quoted as saying.

Iran Envoy calls for stronger Pakistan-Iran media, cultural links



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Iran's Ambassador to Pakistan Reza Amir Moghaddam has stressed the need to expand cooperation between Pakistan and Iran in areas of shared interest, with a focus on media, culture and public contacts.

The ambassador said closer engagement can support better understanding between the people of both countries.

The ambassador shared these views during a meeting with Director General Radio Pakistan Saeed Ahmed Shaikh at the Pakistan Broadcasting Corporation headquarters in Islamabad. He said Pakistan and Iran share long-standing links based on history.



SPORTS



PCB's domestic cricket structure delivers growth and opportunity in 2025



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Pakistan's domestic cricket structure continued to strengthen in 2025 with a clear focus on youth development and performance-based progression, Director Domestic Cricket Operations Abdullah Khurram Niazi said while reviewing the year.

Reflecting on key initiatives, Abdullah Khurram Niazi mentioned that 2025 marked a landmark year for youth cricket. "For the first time, school cricket was introduced across Pakistan and played on different

tiers," he said, explaining that the pathway now connects school cricket at U15 to U17 levels to U19, first-class cricket, Pakistan Shaheens and ultimately the national team. "Our entire pyramid is connected with purpose and clarity."

National-level tournaments for age-group were complemented by training camps, while senior cricket saw active club competitions, successful inter-district events, Mohammad Trophy, Quaid-e-Azam Trophy and departmental tournaments, with over 28 departments participating at

Grade-II level. Director Domestic said the shift to a performance-based system, aligned with Chairman PCB Mohsin Naqvi's vision, delivered encouraging results. "We have moved away from a culture-based system towards performance and the response has been very positive."

He also termed live-streaming and broadcast of domestic competitions a breakthrough. "For the first time, key domestic tournaments were live-streamed, allowing stakeholders to closely monitor player quality."

Looking ahead, he revealed

plans to establish 16 regional academies, alongside strict fitness benchmarks across age group, regional and departmental cricket. "Only players who meet minimum fitness standards are allowed to compete," he said.

Abdullah Khurram Niazi emphasised the PCB's holistic approach through the National Cricket Academy and high-performance centres, benefiting players, officials and support staff. "Domestic cricket is improving with every season, with one clear goal to take Pakistan cricket to the top."

Huge foreign investment pledged to PFF for launch of Pro League



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) has taken a major step forward in its efforts to develop professional football league in the country, as several foreign investment companies prepare to engage with the federation in the introductory meetings. PFF President Syed Mohsen Gilani expressed optimism about the development, saying that the federation has already received introductory proposals from potential investors and will soon shortlist the most suitable companies to move forward. "This is the confidence demonstrated in the elected body of the PFF, which will elevate the standard of football in Pakistan through international investment." The PFF president added: "These initial proposals reflect strong interest in supporting the growth of professional football league in Pakistan. We are carefully evaluating each one to ensure they align with our vision and long-term strategy." The federation plans to hold working sessions and workshops with shortlisted investors, where detailed discussions will be conducted on operational modalities, strategic planning, and collaborative opportunities. Gilani emphasised that the engagement with international partners represents a pragmatic and forward-looking approach to enhancing the PFF Professional Football League and improving professional football infrastructure nationwide.

No Pakistani player in Cricinfo's T20, ODI teams for Year 2025



PEAK POINT
LONDON: The cricket website Cricinfo has announced its T20 and One-Day International (ODI) Teams of the Year for 2025, with no Pakistani cricketer included in either lineup. According to Cricinfo, Pakistan does not feature in the T20 Team of the Year 2025. The squad includes three players

each from India and England, two from the West Indies, and one player each from Australia, Afghanistan and South Africa. The T20 Team of the Year features Abhishek Sharma, Phil Salt, Jos Buttler, Nicholas Pooran and Dewald Brevis. The lineup also includes Tim David, Sam Curran, Jason Holder, Varun Chakravarthy and Jasprit Bumrah.

The ODI Team of the Year includes Rohit Sharma,

Matthew Bruntzke, Virat Kohli, Joe Root, Shai Hope, Glenn Phillips, Mitchell Santner, Adil Rashid, Jofra Archer, Matt Henry and Jayden Seales. The absence of Pakistani players from both teams is likely to spark debate among fans, especially given Pakistan's presence on the international stage during the year.

Pakistan women's cricket completes active year across international and domestic fronts

PEAK POINT



LAHORE: The year 2025 proved to be a landmark period for Pakistan women's cricket, marked by sustained international activity, a successful ICC Women's World Cup qualification campaign, notable individual milestones and a strengthened domestic and pathways structure under the Pakistan Cricket Board. At the international level, the highlight of the year was Pakistan women's emphatic performance in the ICC Women's World Cup Qualifier, hosted in Lahore in April. Competing against Bangladesh, Ireland, Scotland, Thailand and West Indies, Pakistan won all five of their matches to qualify for the ICC Women's T20 World Cup in India and Sri Lanka. Pakistan Women's U19 also made a strong statement by winning their

five-match T20 series in Bangladesh against regular match exposure to players. Pakistan national women cricketers are currently undergoing a camp in Karachi, which will assist the selectors in finalising squad for next year's tour to South Africa in February-March. Speaking about the ongoing women's T20 Tournament, National camp, Pakistan Women's One-Day women's team coach Wahab Riaz said.

6th Allama Iqbal Polo Cup 2025 begins, paying tribute to Sufi Haris



Sindh Police win in wing 999 Inter Departmental cricket league tournament

PEAK POINT

KARACHI: Due to fine batting by Shahzad Khan 91 with 11 boundaries and a Six and deadly bowling by right arm leg spinner Farooq Hassan 4/43 Sindh Police beat Mesol Solar by 30 runs in the Wing 999 Inter Departmental Cricket League Tournament at CAA Cricket Stadium. Aaish Malik also Brilliant fighting Unbeaten Century 110 and Medium Pacer Abdullah Danish bowled well 4/26 but could note save



their defeat. Scores in Brief: Sindh Police beat Mesol Solar by 30 runs at CAA Cricket Stadium. Sindh Police 290/7 in 40 overs.

Shahzad Khan 91 11x4 1x6, Zohaib Abid 63 8x4 2x6, Farooq Hassan 45 8x4 1x6, Noman Khan 26, Ejaz Sawati 26 not out, Zakir Ali 19. Abdullah Danish (rb) 4/26. In reply Mesol Solar 260/8 in 40 overs. Aaish Malik 110 6x4 3x6, Abdullah Javed 51 9x4, Jawe ur Rehman 43 6x4 1x6, Abdullah Danish 23. Farooq Hassan (rls) 4/43, Afnan Ahmed 2/43. Photo Caption: Karachi: Aaish Malik of Mesol Solar Unbeaten 110 against Sindh Police.



PILDAT releases its Assessment of the Quality of Democracy in Pakistan 2025

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT) has released its Assessment of the Quality of Democracy in Pakistan 2025, finding that while democratic institutions remain intact in form, their functioning has become increasingly constrained by a security-driven governance paradigm. 2025 was characterised by the consolidation and normalisation of the hybrid governance model rather than its disruption. The security-driven

environment, particularly since the brief but intense Pakistan-India armed conflict in May 2025, has further entrenched the security establishment's influence over all matters, including democratic institutions and governance in Pakistan. This "hybrid" model has the full endorsement of the civilian government, which increasingly views democracy through the lens of state survival. Regional security developments, including tensions with India and Afghanistan, alongside persistent inter-

national insurgencies and intense political polarization, have all contributed to Pakistan's reversion to becoming a security-centric state. PILDAT assessment highlights that 2025 marked the institutionalisation of a hybrid governance model in which democratic institutions operate within parameters increasingly defined by security threats and priorities as they now override democratic norms and principles. PILDAT's assessment highlights the following institutional developments during 2025:

As Parliament passed the consequential 27th Constitutional Amendment with limited debate and consensus, PILDAT observed Parliamentary representativeness and oversight were also weakened by continuing vacancies in the offices of Leader of the Opposition in both Houses. Executive authority remained formally civilian but substantively constrained. The Prime Minister and Defence Minister's statements regarding governing in collaboration with the establishment exemplified

the formalisation of the hybrid model. Judiciary experienced significant structural changes during 2025 as the constitutional amendment created a new Federal Constitutional Court, continued operation of military courts for civilians as well as high-profile accountability proceedings conducted under exceptional conditions collectively raised concerns regarding due process. Security establishment's role in national decision-making became even more prominent after major terrorist incidents,

continued instability along the western border, and the India-Pakistan confrontation in 2025. This was reflected in the restructuring of the military command through constitutional amendment, the elevation of the COAS to rank of Field Marshal and increasing commentary by representatives of security institutions on governance and political issues. Electoral processes continued through by-elections but low voter turnout, boycotts and political disengagement limited their capacity to restore public trust.

NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq extends New Year greetings, calls for unity, peace and democratic commitment

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Speaker of the National Assembly, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq, has extended warm New Year greetings and best wishes to the nation on the advent of 2026, expressing hope that the coming year will bring renewed opportunities for progress, stability and prosperity for Pakistan. In his message, the NA Speaker said the New Year offers an impor-

tant opportunity to reflect on past experiences and move forward with a clear and purposeful vision. He reaffirmed that Parliament will continue to fulfill its constitutional responsibilities with dedication, focusing on the promotion of democratic values, the supremacy of law and the welfare of the people. Referring to the challenges faced by Pakistan during 2025, including

regional tensions and war-like situations, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq noted that Pakistan's principled and responsible stance following the conflict with India earned international recognition and respect. He added that the country achieved notable diplomatic successes during this period, further strengthening Pakistan's global standing and national prestige. The NA

Speaker also urged the oppressed people of Palestine and Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu and Kashmir, who continue to face grave human rights violations. He highlighted the worsening humanitarian situation in Gaza due to war and extreme weather conditions, including heavy rains, and expressed hope that the New Year would

bring justice, peace and freedom to the people of Palestine and Kashmir. Emphasizing the need for national stability and sustainable development, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq stressed the importance of tolerance, social harmony and cooperation. He underlined that promoting interfaith harmony in Pakistan's diverse and multi-religious society is essential for strengthen-

ing unity, mutual respect and lasting peace. Concluding his message, the NA Speaker called upon all citizens to contribute with unity, diligence and a sense of responsibility towards building a strong, peaceful and prosperous Pakistan, and to make the New Year a catalyst for collective progress and national betterment.

Opinion & Editorial



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Scrappy new year?

MAHIR ALI
I WISH you ... every happiness for the new year," Karl Marx wrote to Friedrich Engels in December 1861, before adding: "If it's anything like the last one, I ... would sooner consign it to the devil." Marx might mainly have been referring to his personal economic woes, but a century and a half later we live in a world where his contempt for the previous 12 months tends to resonate each December, while his clarifying 19th-century critique of capitalism continues to do so. And for all his foresight, Marx might have struggled to imagine circumstances in which a mere 56,000 or so people control three times more wealth than half of humanity.

Similarly distressing statistics abound in this month's World Inequality Report 2026, but what's perhaps even more appalling is the insouciance of governments across every continent. Of course, there are innumerable other horrors, but they are hardly likely to be front of mind for the vast segment of humanity whose primary concern each morning is to wonder where the next meal will come from. What a wonderful world.

Israel's leading war criminal was preceded by a visit from Volodymyr Zelensky, but it ended with little progress towards peace between Ukraine and Russia. Apparently, a key roadblock is Vladimir Putin's insistence on controlling even the narrow strip of Donbas that Russian troops have failed to occupy. Kyiv has already effectively conceded almost a fifth of Ukraine's territory, but Moscow is half-hearted about give-and-take. It is dedicated only to the latter half of the concept, and Trump's extended phone conversations with Putin have thus far yielded no perceptible result. Zelensky reportedly sought a 50-year security guarantee from the US; Trump agreed to 15. Will European leaders, many of them preparing for war with Russia, offer to make up the difference? None of them dares to openly challenge the US president, even as the juvenile delinquents in the Trump administration bolster the far-right forces slithering towards power across much of Europe. By tilting towards extremes on issues such as welfare, immigration, and asylum, the so-called liberal democrats have only encouraged this tendency. As ever, the US stands out as an exemplar of the West's worst tendencies, with its elected kakistocracy aspiring towards a template that ranges from curbs on free thought and speech to deporting immigrants whose ideas or skin colour offend the ruling white supremacists.

Judicial independence on trial

DR SYED AKHTAR ALI SHAH
An emotive and intense debate has followed the unceremonious removal of Justice Tariq Mehmood Jahangiri of the Islamabad High Court by a Division Bench of the same court headed by its Chief Justice. The decision has sharply divided legal circles. While a section of the bar has welcomed the verdict as swift and necessary to eliminate quackery and deception from the judiciary, a much larger segment has condemned it as an act of witch-hunting, targeting judges who refuse to bow before the executive and insist on independent decision-making. For many, the controversy transcends the fate of one individual judge. It raises serious constitutional questions regarding judicial independence, institutional overreach and adherence to the procedure explicitly laid down in the Constitution of Pakistan for the removal of judges.

Critics of the judgment draw an unsettling parallel with a dark episode in Pakistan's judicial history: the treatment meted out to Justice Ghulam Safdar Shah during the martial law regime of General Zia-ul-Haq. Justice Shah had dissented from the majority judgment that upheld the death sentence of former Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto. The consequence was swift and punitive. His matriculation certificate was declared bogus, his credibility questioned, and his position rendered untenable, forcing him into exile. The signal was clear: judicial independence would not be tolerated where it conflicted with power. In a disturbingly similar fashion, the LLB degree of Justice Jahangiri has now been declared bogus, leading to his removal. While the political contexts differ, one under martial law and the other within a constitutional framework, the method and its implications are uncomfortably familiar. The use of academic credentials as a tool to silence inconvenient judges undermines institutional credibility and erodes public confidence in the judiciary.

Touring CM

OUR leaders have developed a strange tendency to be everywhere other than where they need to be. The KP chief minister recently descended on Punjab, along with his entourage, ostensibly to catalyse a 'street movement' on behalf of his party. His trip, as has by now been well documented, went rather poorly, with the Punjab government leaving no stone unturned to let the visiting official know just how unwelcome he was in their jurisdiction. Yet, instead of being dissuaded, it seems that Punjab's boorish treatment has convinced CM Sohail Afridi to try his luck in Sindh and Balochistan as well. While Mr Afridi is welcome to go anywhere he likes, and at any time, this project seems to be an unnecessary distraction from his considerable responsibilities. It would seem, from the news, that he has much more pressing problems to deal with, which should be taking up all of his energy and time. The mobilisation of workers is usually best left to local leaders, who have the lay of the land and can accomplish it more effectively. The worsening security crisis in KP requires Mr Afridi's constant attention, as do the many financial and administrative issues his government faces. The KP government cannot afford to be distracted in the midst of these challenges, as the consequences can, quite literally, prove deadly for those it is supposed to watch over.

Naqvi announces major welfare reforms during visit to National Police Foundation



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Wednesday paid an official visit to the National Police Foundation (NPF) in Islamabad, where he chaired a high-level meeting and reviewed the institution's ongoing welfare initiatives for police personnel. The visit marked a significant step toward expanding support programs for members of the police force across Pakistan. During the briefing, Acting Managing Director of the National Police Foundation, Ali Nasir Rizvi, presented a detailed overview of the foundation's overall performance, develop-

ment projects, and welfare schemes aimed at improving the lives of police employees. He highlighted recent achievements and ongoing reforms that have helped strengthen the institution's capacity and financial standing. In a series of major announcements, Minister Naqvi unveiled new welfare measures designed to support police officers at all ranks. He approved a plan to provide residential plots on easy, low-installment plans to Assistant Superintendents of Police (ASPs) currently undergoing training at the National Police Academy. The initiative aims to provide young officers with long-term financial security early in their careers. The Minister also announced that 10 Inspectors, Sub-Inspectors, and Assistant Sub-Inspectors (ASIs) from various regions of Pakistan will be sent abroad each year on fully funded scholarships to attend specialized courses focused on policing and security. This step is expected to enhance professional development and bring international best practices to the

country's police force. In another key welfare measure, the National Police Foundation will cover the complete educational expenses of 15 sons or daughters of constables who secure admission to Pakistan's top-ranking universities. This initiative seeks to provide equal academic opportunities to the children of lower-ranked police personnel. Furthermore, Naqvi approved an annual scholarship program under which five SP and SSP-rank officers will be sent abroad to pursue advanced degrees in Artificial Intelligence (AI), a move aimed at modernizing policing methods and promoting the use of emerging technologies in law enforcement. Calling for a comprehensive plan to further expand the foundation's resources, the Interior Minister emphasized the need for sustainable financial growth. He commended the NPF management for successfully steering the institution out of deficit and generating a surplus, noting that this positive shift reflected

NA speaker meets son, daughter of late Khaleeda Zia for condolence

PEAK POINT

DHAKA: Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Wednesday visited the residence of former Prime Minister of Bangladesh, the late Begum Khaleeda Zia, in Dhaka to offer condolences on her passing. Speaker Ayaz Sadiq met Begum Khaleeda Zia's son, Tarique Rahman, and her daughter, and expressed his profound grief and heartfelt sympathies over the demise of their mother. He conveyed that in this moment of sorrow, the government and people of Pakistan stood in solidarity with the bereaved family and the people of Bangladesh. While speaking to Tarique Rahman, Ayaz Sadiq said that Pakistan deeply shared the pain and loss of the family and the people of Bangladesh. Late Khaleeda Zia's son and daughter thanked the Speaker



for visiting them, offering condolences, and attending the funeral prayers. The Speaker also met Bangladesh's National Security Adviser, Khalilur Rahman, during his visit. Additionally, he conveyed messages of sympathy and condolence from the President Asif Ali Zardari and the Prime Minister Shabbaz Sharif to the Bangladeshi leadership. Separately, Sardar Ayaz Sadiq also held a meeting with Bangladesh's Legal Adviser, Asif Nazrul, where matters of mutual interest were discussed, reflecting the continued engagement and cordial relations between the two countries.

Environmental protection central to Pakistan's new port development strategy: Minister

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry stressed balancing economic growth with robust environmental protections in developing new deep-sea ports along coastline. Chairing a high-level, multi-agency committee meeting on developing new deep-sea ports along Pakistan's extensive coastline, the minister stressed that such ports are essential to accommodate growing industrial activity, regional transit trade, and rising shipping volumes, said a press release. Junaid Chaudhry stressed the importance of developing small, business-model ports alongside major ports to ease pressure on existing facilities, and called on all stakeholders to work together in preparing for the next century of maritime expansion and economic transformation in the national interest. The meeting, attended by representatives from 10 relevant organizations including Ministry of Maritime Affairs' Technical

Advisor, Jawad Akhtar, briefed the minister on the committee's performance, site identification factors, study processes, and methodology. Participants outlined an assessment framework for Port 1, Port 2, and Port 3, focusing on technical feasibility. This included analysis of natural depth, marine access, and coastal conditions to determine operational suitability and long-term viability of each site. The framework also examined land availability and future expansion potential, along with environmental sensitivity. Key considerations included the presence of mangroves, protected areas, and potential impacts on local communities and livelihoods to ensure environmentally responsible development. In addition, participants assessed hinterland connectivity through road, rail, and logistics networks, as well as the overall economic and strategic value of each port. This covered trade facilitation, regional development, and redundancy.

Ahsan Iqbal assures market-competitive salaries for TTS faculty

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives, Professor Ahsan Iqbal said here on Wednesday that the salaries of teachers recruited under the Tenure Track System (TTS) would be revised and made market-competitive, a move aimed at retaining competent and talented faculty in educational institutions. The minister was chairing the 7th meeting of the Task Force established to review the pay scale system for recruitment in higher educational institutions. He said that during the tenures of Pakistan Muslim League (N) governments, substantial funds were provided to the Higher Education Commission; however, provincial governments would also need to assume greater responsibility in the higher education sector. Ahsan directed that an effective strategy be developed to provide performance-based incentives to capable and talented teachers, adding that concrete measures are also being taken to retain talented faculty.

Pakistan ASAN Khidmat Centre to deliver services of Int'l standards, says Shaza Fatima

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for IT and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima said on Wednesday that the Pakistan ASAN Khidmat Centre will deliver services in line with international standards, in accordance with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's digital vision. The minister made the remarks during a visit to the Pakistan ASAN Khidmat Centre in Islamabad's G-9 sector, which is being established with the cooperation of Azerbaijan. During the visit, Shaza Fatima was briefed on service delivery mechanisms, integrated public services, and technology-based facilitation at the center. Expressing satisfaction with the project's progress, she described the initiative as a major milestone in ensuring efficient, transparent, and reliable government service delivery. She said the project marks the beginning of a new era of public services, digital reforms, and modern governance. The minister further noted that the facilitation center will offer up to 80 government services under one roof. In order to strengthen the digital governance model of Pakistan, the establishment of such a facilitation centre was crucial, she added.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry chairing a high-level meeting on developing new deep-sea ports.

Federal Minister launches roadmap for quality education in FDE schools

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Federal Minister for Education and Professional Training, Dr Khalid Maqbool Siddiqui, launched the FDE quality education and innovation roadmap based on five interconnected pillars. Federal Secretary for the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training Nadeem Mahbub, Director General, Federal Directorate Education (FDE), Syed Junaid Akhlaq, along with senior officials and representatives of the Project Coordination Unit (PCU), were also present on the occasion, said a press release. Speaking on the occasion, Federal Secretary Nadeem



Mahbub stated that the roadmap is aligned with the national vision of ensuring equity and quality in education. He explained that the roadmap is structured around five interconnected pillars designed to ensure systemic and sustainable reforms. These pillars included Digital and Innovative Learning, Policy Formulation and Review, Enabling Learning Environment.

Amir Muqam reviews progress on AJK Joint Action Committee agreement

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON Engineer Amir Muqam on Wednesday chaired a meeting to review progress on the implementation of the agreement reached with the Joint Action Committee of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). Officials from relevant ministries briefed the meeting on the steps taken so far, while the Chief Secretary



AJK shared a detailed update on the implementation process, said a press release here. The federal minister expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved to date and directed all concerned departments to speed up the implementation work. He said that Azad Jammu and Kashmir

is a top priority of the Prime Minister and providing relief to the people is a joint responsibility of the federal and AJK governments. Engineer Amir Muqam assured that, in line with the Prime Minister's instructions, full and effective implementation of the agreement with the Joint Action Committee would be ensured. The meeting was attended by senior officials from the Kashmir Affairs Division, AJK government.



LAHORE: Participants of the 2nd National Sepaktakraw Workshop pose for a group photo with Chief guest at concluding session here on Wednesday.