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Country sees \$3.5b surge in agri exports: Jam Kamal

Founded By:
(Late) Rehmat Khan

ABC CERTIFIED

Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
Website: www.peakpoint.pk

Executive Group Editor
Arif Mehmood Khan



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PM Shehbaz relaunches Sehat Card Scheme for 10 million people in Islamabad, AJK and GB

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday relaunched the state-run health insurance initiative, widely known as the Sehat Card Programme, restoring free healthcare coverage for residents of Islamabad, Azad Jammu and Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan.

Addressing the launch ceremony in Islamabad on Friday, the prime minister said access to healthcare was a fundamental right of every citizen and stressed that medical facilities must reach people at their doorsteps. He said the revival of the Sehat Card marked another swift step by his government to serve the public.

PM Shehbaz said the scheme was the

same initiative first launched in 2016 under the leadership of Nawaz Sharif, recalling that it was initially introduced in Punjab, Balochistan, the then Federally Administered Tribal Areas, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and the Islamabad Capital Territory, with plans for gradual expansion.

The programme was later reintroduced in 2019 by the PTI-led government under the name Sehat Insaf Card, with changes that included health coverage of up to Rs720,000 per family per year. Individuals earning less than Rs150,000 annually were also included, provided they contributed a nominal amount towards the insurance plan.

"Nothing is more valuable than health," the prime minister said.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif presenting a symbolic health card to a resident of Azad Jammu & Kashmir to mark the launch of PM's Health Card Scheme.

Social media posts case: Court directs Islamabad DIG to arrest Imaan, Hadi 'within 24 hours'

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad district sessions court on Friday issued directions to law enforcement authorities to arrest lawyer and activist Imaan Mazari-Hazir and her husband,

Hadi Ali Chattha, "within 24 hours", warning them of contempt in case of non-compliance.

Mazari and Chattha have been facing legal proceedings in a case on accusations of inciting divisions on linguistic grounds through social media posts and creating the impression that the armed forces were engaged in terrorism within the country.

During today's hearing, Additional District and Sessions Judge Muhammad Afzal Majoka issued strict orders to the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Islamabad, Jawad Tariq, to arrest Mazari and her husband within 24 hours.

"Take them from Pakistan, India or Afghanistan. You have 24 hours. I don't know whether they are at sea or in the sky. Wherever they are, arrest Imaan Mazari and Hadi Ali Chattha within 24 hours, otherwise contempt of court proceedings will be initiated.

Bushra Bibi's daughter moves LHC for permission to meet her in Adiala Jail

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The daughter of Bushra Bibi has approached the Lahore High Court for permission to meet her mother in Adiala Jail. Mubashra Khawar Maneka filed a petition through Advocate Asif Niswana, who is the president of the Lahore High Court Bar. The petitioner named the Punjab government, the Superintendent of Adiala Jail, and others as respondents. The petitioner contended that Bushra Bibi has currently been imprisoned in Adiala Jail. She is Bushra Bibi's daughter. According to jail,

Achakzai named opposition leader in National Assembly after months-long delay

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: After a months-long delay, Tehreek Tahafuz Ayeen-i-Pakistan (TTAP) chief Mahmood Khan Achakzai was appointed leader of the opposition in the National Assembly on Friday.

Incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan had named Achakzai for the opposition leader's slot in the NA in August last year.

The notification, seen by Dawn, read: "Honourable Speaker has been pleased to declare Mr Mahmood Khan Achakzai, member of the National Assembly, as leader of the opposition in the NA, with effect from January 16, 2026."

"The notification has been issued under Rule 39 of the Rules of Procedure and Conduct of Business in

the National Assembly, speaker's chamber while 2007," said a statement the acting speaker presided



issued by the National Assembly Secretariat.

Prior to the notification being issued, NA Speaker Ayaz Sadiq summoned PTI Chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan and Chief Whip Amir Dogar to his chambers, stating that he had a "notification to give" them.

"Come to my chamber, I have a notification to give," said Sadiq while addressing Gohar. The three proceeded to the

speaker's chamber while the acting speaker presided

right, we received it today after a long delay," he further said.

Former opposition leader Omar Ayub Khan congratulated Achakzai on the appointment, voicing optimism that he will "fulfil his responsibilities brilliantly".

In a post on X, Ayub said, "Heartiest congratulations to Mahmud Khan Achakzai sahib, who has been officially declared as the 'Leader of the Opposition National Assembly'.

"It is a great singular honour, and Mahmud Khan Achakzai sahib will, InshahAllah, fulfil his responsibilities brilliantly," he said.

PTI MNA Ali Muhammad Khan also congratulated Achakzai.

In a post on X, the PTI leader said,

over the lower house session.

After emerging from the speaker's chamber, the PTI chairman announced that the opposition leader had been appointed.

Gohar said that the "notification was supposed to be issued yesterday; however, it was not, due to some issues."

"Today, it has finally been issued," he added.

"Although it was our

At UN, Pakistan voices hope for early normalisation of situation in Iran, rejects any external interference

PEAK POINT

NEW YORK: Pakistan has told the UN Security Council that it hopes for an early normalisation of the situation in Iran, warning that the UN Charter and international law prohibit external interference in the internal affairs of states.

"The UN Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against other states' territorial integrity or political independence, or interference in matters essentially within the domestic jurisdiction of states," Ambassador Asim Ahmad, Pakistan's permanent representative to the UN, told an emergency meeting of the 15-

member Council on Thursday evening.



The United States convened the Security Council meeting to discuss the situation in Iran, with the country's Ambassador Mike Waltz criticising the actions taken against Iranian protesters and assuring them of President Donald Trump's support. In his remarks, the Pakistani envoy said, "We have been carefully observ-

ing developments in Iran and the region in the interests of Pakistan, the region and beyond, he said, adding that his country has full confidence in the wisdom of the Iranian people and leadership, rooted in the country's culture, history and resilience.

Ambassador Asim Ahmad highlighted that the fundamental principles of the United Nations Charter are inviolable and sacrosanct, noting that the Charter prohibits the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of states. Any external interference in the internal affairs of states, he added, is inconsistent with international law and the principles.

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DPM Dar reviews progress on Pakistan-Indonesia cooperation in health sector

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar on Friday chaired the inter-ministerial meeting following the visit of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, Prabowo Subianto to Pakistan on 8-9 December 2025. The meeting reviewed progress on Pak-Indonesia cooperation in health sector and discussed opportunities to enhance health collaboration between the two countries. The deputy PM emphasized the importance of further.

Security forces kill 12 terrorists, thwart hostage attempt in Kharan: ISPR



PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Security forces have killed 12 terrorists and effectively thwarted their attempt to create a hostage situation in Balochistan's Kharan district during multiple operations, the military's media wing said in a statement.

According to the Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR), on January 15, "approximately fifteen to twenty Indian-sponsored terrorists of Fina Al Hindustan carried out multiple terrorist activities in Kharan City, District Kharan." The state has designated Balochistan-based terrorist groups as Fina Al Hindustan to highlight India's alleged role in terrorism and destabilisation across Pakistan.



SPORTS



Under-19 World Cup: Pakistan bowled out for 173 as England secure 37-run win



PEAK POINT
HARARE: England secured a 37-run victory over Pakistan in their Under-19 World Cup encounter after bowling the Green Shirts out for 173 while defending a target of 211 in Harare on Friday.

Chasing 211, Pakistan's batting lineup struggled to build sustained partnerships and were dismissed for 173. Captain Farhan Yousaf stood out with a fighting 65, anchoring the innings amid regular wickets at the other end.

However, his effort was not enough to take Pakistan over the line. Sameer Minhas was dismissed for 10, Ahmed Hussain made 12, Huzayfa Ahsan scored 17, Abdul Subhan contributed 14, and Umar Zaib added 10 before being sent back. Pakistan's lower order failed to mount a recovery as England's bowlers maintained discipline and control.

Earlier in the day, Pakistan captain Farhan Yousaf won the toss and elected to field in the

fourth match of the tournament, banking on favourable conditions at the Harare venue.

England, batting first, were bowled out for 210 in 46.5 overs. Caleb Falconer led the scoring with a well-compiled 66, while Ben Dawkins added 33. Ralphe Albert scored 25, Ben Mayes made 20, Farhan Ahmed contributed 15, Thomas Rew scored 14, and Joe Moores was dismissed for seven.

Pakistan's bowlers produced

a collective effort to restrict England. Ahmed Hussain claimed three wickets, while Ali Raza, Abdul Subhan, and Momin Qamar picked up two wickets each to prevent England from posting a bigger total.

Despite a competitive bowling display and a determined innings from their captain, Pakistan were unable to chase down the target, handing England a crucial win in the Under-19 World Cup.

Babar upset as Smith denies last-ball single



PEAK POINT
SYDNEY: Pakistani star Babar Azam expressed frustration during a Big Bash League match when teammate Steve Smith refused a single on the last ball. The incident occurred while Sydney Sixers faced Sydney Thunder, leaving Babar visibly unhappy on the field. Fans quickly shared clips of the disagreement on social media.

The situation arose in the 11th over, where Babar had played three consecutive dot balls and aimed to take a single to retain strike. Smith chose not to run, wanting to face the next over himself and target the bowler. This decision disappointed Babar, who had hoped to continue his strike momentum.

Despite the disagreement, Smith delivered a powerful performance, scoring 100 runs off 42 balls. He hit multiple boundaries and sixes, including 32 runs in the very over that caused the conflict. Babar scored 47 runs off 39 balls during the innings.

Sydney Sixers comfortably chased down Sydney Thunder's target of 190 runs in the 18th over. The team's overall performance highlighted strong batting depth, with both Babar and Smith contributing significantly despite the on-field tension.

Pakistan futsal teams make history with maiden international wins at SAFF Championship 2026



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Pakistan men's and women's futsal teams etched their names into the country's sporting history by securing their first-ever international victories at the SAFF Futsal Championship 2026, marking a significant milestone for a discipline still in its develop-

mental phase in Pakistan. Defying longstanding challenges such as the absence of dedicated futsal infrastructure, limited domestic exposure, and minimal international experience, both national teams delivered spirited performances to announce Pakistan's arrival on the regional

futsal stage. The Pakistan women's futsal team registered a thrilling 3-2 victory over Sri Lanka, showcasing resilience, tactical discipline, and composure under pressure to seal a landmark win. The result not only boosted team morale but also underlined the growing potential of futsal to greater heights in the country. Meanwhile, the men's futsal team produced an equally impressive comeback, overturning an early deficit to defeat Bhutan 4-2. The performance highlighted Pakistan's attacking intent and adaptability, as the players responded strongly after falling behind to claim a memorable win. Reacting to the historic achievements, Pakistan Football Federation (PFF) President

Mohsen Gilani praised the determination and commitment shown by the players and coaching staff. "Our players and coaches have made history. These victories are a proof of their resilience, belief, and hard work despite limited resources," Gilani said. "We will build on this foundation to take futsal to greater heights and, God willing, make Pakistan a competitive force in futsal." Beyond results on the court, Pakistan's participation in the SAFF Futsal Championship also yielded important off-field gains. Pakistani referees and coaches successfully completed international futsal certification courses held alongside the tournament, strengthening the country's technical and officiating capacity for the future.

Qasim Ali Khan leads Alfalah Amateur Golf Championship at Gymkhana



Pakistan launch U19 World Cup quest against England in Harare

PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Asian champions Pakistan U-19 will open their ICC Men's U19 Cricket World Cup 2026 campaign against England today (Friday) at the Takashinga Sports Club in Harare, marking the beginning of another high-stakes journey for one of the tournament's most decorated sides. Fresh from a dominant run in age-group cricket, Pakistan enter the 16-team global event brimming with confidence after lifting the ACC Men's U19 Asia Cup in Dubai, highlighted by a thumping 191-run victory over arch-rivals India in the final, and clinching the U19 tri-series in Zimbabwe with a comprehensive nine-wicket win over the hosts.

Two-time world champions, having claimed the title in 2004 and 2006, Pakistan will be aiming to reclaim



The group stage will determine progression to the Super Six, set to be played in Bulawayo and Harare from January 24 to February 1. The top four teams from the Super Six round will advance to the semifinals on February 3 and 4, with the final scheduled for Friday, February 6, at the iconic Harare Sports Club.

In the lead-up to the marquee event, Pakistan U19 have undergone extensive preparation, including structured training sessions and warm-up fixtures designed to fine-tune their combinations and acclimatise to local conditions. Their first warm-up match against Bangladesh was curtailed by rain, allowing only 36.3 overs of Bangladesh's innings. However, Pakistan made a strong statement in their second warm-up encounter, defeating the United States by 69 runs.

Afghanistan rocked as star bowler misses T20 World Cup





ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan in a meeting with German Ambassador.

Pakistan, Germany eye expanded youth cooperation

PEAK POINT ISLAMABAD: Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan met German Ambassador Ms Anka Lepel at the Prime Minister's Office to discuss strengthening bilateral cooperation on youth development, education, skills training, and international opportunities. Both sides agreed to advance collaboration through policy engagement, vocational initiatives, academic exchange, and climate focused youth programmes. Chairman Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, held a detailed meeting with German Ambassador Ms. Anka Lepel to explore long term avenues of cooperation between Pakistan and Germany aimed at empowering youth and expanding global linkages. During the meeting, both sides examined potential areas of collaboration, particularly in education, skills development, vocational and technical training, and international exposure for Pakistani youth.

Lawmakers seek clarity as Interior Minister responds on rehab, NADRA, and Safety

NADEEM TANOLI ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly's question hour featured a briefing by the Minister for Interior and Narcotics Control, Syed Mohsin Raza Nagvi, covering a broad range of issues including drug rehabilitation services, contractual appointments at NADRA, women's safety in the federal capital, cybercrime management, and ongoing urban development projects. Responding to a question on substance abuse treatment in Islamabad, the minister informed the House that the Anti-Narcotics Force

appointed seven Model Addiction Treatment and Reintegration Centers across the country. The Islamabad facility, established in 2005 with a capacity of 45 beds, has treated 7,696 patients to date. He added that Rs. 49.26 million has been allocated under the Drug Demand Reduction Programme for the current financial year, and efforts are underway to expand rehabilitation services, including facilities for women and juveniles. On appointments at the National Database and Registration Authority, the minister shared that 500 officers were appointed on a contractual basis over the past three years, including 315 fresh recruits and 185 re-employed officers. Salary structures for different grades were also placed on record. Members used the opportunity to seek further clarity on recruitment practices and long-term workforce planning. Addressing questions related to urban transport and sustainability, the minister stated that there is currently no proposal to introduce an electric taxi service in Islamabad, though feasibility work is ongoing for other mass transit options. On water resources, he confirmed that Simly Dam remains the only dam constructed by the Capital Development Authority, while proposals for additional dams are being explored to meet future needs. Women's safety in private hostels and residential facilities was another key topic. The Interior Ministry outlined monitoring measures through digital record systems and cited steps such as women facilitation desks, mobile policing units, and technology enabled police stations. The

minister acknowledged the seriousness of reported incidents and said preventive and corrective mechanisms continue to be strengthened. The House was also briefed on infrastructure upgrades, including improvements to passport and NADRA centers in Sargodha, with combined allocations exceeding Rs. 38 million, and plans for a new Islamabad Convention, Expo and Exhibition Centre. The project is expected to be completed within 24 months and is intended to enhance Islamabad's capacity to host major national and international events. On cybercrime, the minister reported that the National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency received 150,542 complaints during the year, with functional rules notified and internal disciplinary processes underway where required. He emphasized the government's focus on strengthening institutional frameworks to respond effectively to digital crime. Some questions were noted as pending replies, which members said would be followed up in subsequent sessions.

Opinion & Editorial



Arif Mehmood Khan
 Group Editor: 0333-5366814
 Samra Athar Kakakhel
 Resident Editor
 Nadim Tanoli
 Joint Editor: Mob-0301-7777874
 Email: editor.peakpoint@gmail.com
 www.peakpoint.pk

Visa freeze

THE US government's decision to suspend immigration visas for nationals of 75 countries, including Pakistan, marks an extraordinary escalation in Washington's immigration policy. The move raises questions about proportionality, legality and intent. Applicants can still submit forms and attend interviews, but with no visas being issued, the policy ends up targeting legal immigration rather than illegal border crossings. The administration says the pause is meant to ensure immigrants are financially self-sufficient and do not rely on public welfare. But the visas affected — family-based, employment-based and diversity visas — already involve lengthy screening, background checks and financial requirements. If the real concern is illegal immigration, freezing lawful pathways makes little sense. The policy's selective nature adds to the confusion. Student, tourist and business visas are unaffected, meaning Pakistanis may study or visit the US but cannot settle permanently or reunite with family members. India is reportedly not among the affected countries, though no official list has been released. Without clear criteria or timelines, the step appears arbitrary rather than rules-based. The use of the public-charge rule further weakens the policy's credibility.

Faith and action

GHULAM SHABBIR THE Quran repeatedly says that on the right side of history are those who attain faith and do constructive deeds. Hence, one can see that there is an umbilical connection between faith and action as both are integral and indispensable to each other. Being symbiotically related and organically conjoined, both live and die together. So, faith divorced from action is not faith at all, as per the Quran (6:158).

Actions are transitory in nature yet their effects assume permanence as action, rather than inner states or dispositions, affects the human self, tenaciously clinging to the rational soul. Upon death, a person's wealth and possessions go to his inheritors while his deeds are 'inherited' or passed on to God (19:80). So men are not what they think or know but what they do.

The early Islamic community was well aware of the inseparability of faith and action. They knew their duty lay in believing and in carrying out what they believed with sincerity of purpose. This sense of responsibility raised their behaviour from mechanical obedience to the law to a realm of moral activism, which turned their character into an epitome of transparency and excellence, where private and public life coalesced. The fusion of faith and action in their conduct and the resultant cumulative moral genius brought them to

the fore of global affairs; shepherds and simple desert dwellers assumed the reins of history and reoriented the moral dimensions of the world.

However, later both internal and external challenges tore apart the union of faith and action. Kharijism's over-inflated idealism put the existence and integrity of the state and community at risk while Murjism's overblown optimism paved the way for a laissez-faire morality and culminated in an Islamic replica of the Christian doctrine of justification by faith, ie, man is justified by faith apart from deeds.

Men are not what they think but what they do. Externally, Hellenism, the Hellenised Judaic-Christian tradition and an influx of other alien ideas distorted the very essence of the message.

Muslim philosophers and Sufis saw the Quran through the lens of Greek thought. With minor adaptations and adjustments, they became prisoners of Greek logic. Both concurred that the goal of human life is knowledge.

Philosophers accepted the idea of the eternity of the universe and said that destructibility — the eternity of the objects of knowledge — bestowed 'immortality' on the subject. Al-Ghazali in his esoteric works admitted philosophical doctrines which he rejected in his works meant for the public. Speculative thought, mystic deliriums and subjective poetry substituted the scien-

tific statements of the Quran, and the fusion of faith and action vanished into thin air.

It was Ibn Taimiyya who, using Quranic principles, balanced the extremes of Kharijism and Murjism, Asharism and Mutazila. He undertook the systematic refutation of Greek logic to purge Islam of alien imprints and revived the basic principles — the Quran and Sunnah.

The severity of his language and volume of his intellectual roar were equated with the plight and decadence of his community. He said the goal of human life is neither the philosophical contemplation of God nor the mystic type of love for Him, as God is not something to be merely perceived, admired and cherished. The purpose of life is the knowledge of God's will and its implementation in life. Man is the bearer of moral responsibility, which the entire creation had refused. It requires an all-out human endeavour to establish a relentless egalitarian world order. Thus, organic fusion rather than the mechanical juxtaposition of faith and action come alive in his scheme of thought, but his words went unheeded for centuries. He found full expression in Sheikh Ahmad Sirhindi, who tested the verities of his statements through Sufi methods, in turn endorsing and enhancing the same.

Courtesy Dawn

The quiet erosion of professional integrity

DR INTIKHAB ULFAT

Many people today remain formally employed in one institution while quietly building small parallel ventures, including freelance work, consultancies, private teaching, online businesses or other income streams. The phenomenon is often defended as entrepreneurship or self-reliance, yet it also raises uncomfortable questions about sincerity, loyalty and the gradual loss of professional efficiency within institutions already under strain. There was a time when loyalty to an institution was understood as a shared moral contract. An employee gave time, focus and a sense of belonging, and in return the institution offered stability, professional growth and dignity. In the public sector, especially, this relationship carried a social dimension: teaching and service were not merely jobs, but responsibilities toward students and society. Today, however, that old contract has weakened. Short-term thinking, limited resources, delayed incentives and uncertainty have transformed workplaces into transactional spaces rather than communities of purpose. It would be intellectually dishonest to describe every side project as a moral failure. Many colleagues pursue additional work out of necessity rather than greed. Salaries often lag behind living costs, research funding is scarce and professional growth paths are uncertain. In such circumstances, people build safety nets. What looks like disloyalty from the institution's perspective may feel like self-preservation from the individual's point of view. This reality must be acknowledged, especially in public universities operating under chronic financial pressure. Yet acknowledgement does not mean moral neutrality. The ethical problem begins when parallel work silently erodes the core responsibility for which one is paid. If teaching preparation becomes superficial, research engagement weakens, availability to students declines or institutional duties are treated as interruptions to personal projects, then something fundamental is lost.

Courtesy Tribune

Pakistan shifting focus of relations with US from geopolitics to geo-economics: Ambassador Rizwan



PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: Ambassador of Pakistan to the United States, Rizwan Saeed Sheikh said that from a national security perspective, Pakistan's focus is shifting from geopolitics to geo-economics, adding that the scope of the bilateral cooperation would be further expanded in 2026.

Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh said this during a meeting with Chairman of the US House Armed Services Committee, Congressman Mike

Rogers, a press statement issued on Friday said.

He characterized the past year as one of significant achievements, setting a positive trajectory for the partnership.

The envoy expressed confidence that the coming year would see a deepening of collaboration across mutually beneficial areas.

Drawing attention to the events of May 2025, Ambassador Rizwan Sheikh stated that due to India's irresponsible and aggressive posture, the security situation of the region faced

grave threats. "In a conflict between two nuclear-capable states, the scope has moved beyond conventional war to the use of cutting-edge technology."

He said the use of dual-capability weapons like the BrahMos missile in a region home to 1.7 billion people is extremely concerning.

"Any decision based on apprehensions and misperceptions can be detrimental to regional peace and security", he said adding that the events of May 2025 proved that despite its declared Indo-Pacific posture, the bulk of India's military capability remains oriented against Pakistan.

Regarding the management of the May crisis, the political acumen and personal interest of the US President is commendable, he added.

The ambassador said the fundamental and pressing issue requiring resolution between Pakistan and India is the right to self-determination of the Kashmiri people. "For sustainable regional peace and stability, the continued engagement/

Naqvi, CM Bugti laud FC's role for establishing peace in Balochistan

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti on Friday appreciated the valuable role of Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan North in establishing peace in the province.

They expressed these views while visiting the headquarters of Frontier Corps (FC) Balochistan (North).

On this occasion, a colorful contingent of FC Balochistan North presented a salute to the Federal Interior Minister and the Chief Minister.

Inspector General (IG) Frontier Corps Balochistan North Major General Muhammad Atif Mujtaba introduced the senior officers to Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi and Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.



The Federal Interior Minister and Balochistan Chief Minister visited the Yadgar-e-Shuhada, laid a wreath and offered Fatch.

They prayed for the elevation of the ranks of the martyrs of FC Balochistan North and paid tribute to their eternal sacrifices.

IG FC Balochistan North gave a briefing on the force's training, operational preparedness and professional capabilities.

Federal Minister for Interior Mohsin Naqvi and Chief Minister Balochistan Mir Sarfraz Bugti appreciated the valuable role of Frontier Corps Balochistan North in establishing peace.

Govt taking measures to create investor friendly environment: Gilani

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Friday emphasized that the government was taking effective measures to create an investor-friendly environment in the country. He underscored that cooperation between the public and private sectors is indispensable for achieving sustainable national development. Talking to a delegation comprising leading businessmen, traders, investors, industrialists and other prominent figures from various walks of life at the Parliament House, the acting president urged the business community to actively promote business and investment activities to contribute to economic stability, national development and prosperity. The delegation included Ahsan Bhatti, Haroon Nasir, Umar Hussain, Owais Khattak, Hatim Tibani, Shahid Khan, Shoaib Zafar, Aamir Iqbal, Hamza Rehman, Usman Shaukat, Najam Sahar and others, according to a press statement issued by the President House media wing. During the meeting, a detailed discus-

sion was held on the overall economic situation of the country, with particular focus on trade, investment, business activities and the performance of various industrial sectors. The members of the delegation appraised the Acting President of the challenges and issues faced by the business community in Pakistan and shared their views and suggestions for promoting trade, industrial growth and investment. The acting president was also briefed on developments in the construction sector, the use of energy-efficient control glass in residential and commercial buildings, the real estate sector, and the healthcare industry. The delegation highlighted the potential of these sectors in attracting investment and contributing to sustainable economic growth.

Speaking on the occasion, Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani said that traders, investors and industrialists play a pivotal role in improving the country's economy. He emphasized that the growth of these sectors not only strengthens the national economy but also generates.

SAPM Haroon meets industrialist SM Tanveer, discusses economic policies

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Special Assistant to the Prime Minister (SAPM) on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Friday held a meeting with prominent Pakistani industrialist and business leader SM Tanveer with his delegation and discussed the country's economic policies and the prevailing economic situation. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on national economic policies, industrial growth, and measures to further strengthen Pakistan's economy, said a news release. Haroon Akhtar said that under the leadership of Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's economic growth is showing positive improvement.

He emphasized that the government is committed to accelerating industrial growth through a new industrial policy, aligned with the Prime Minister's vision. He added that effective and forward-looking policies are being formulated to promote industries and attract investment.

Seafood exports surge 22% to \$253 million in first half of FY26: Junaid Anwar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The marine fisheries sector posted strong growth in the first half of fiscal year 2025-26, with seafood exports rising to 122,629.11 metric tons valued at \$253.24 million between July and December 2025, Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry said on Friday. Commenting on data released by the Marine Fisheries Department, the minister said the performance reflects the growing competitiveness of Pakistan's marine fisheries in global markets, noting sustained export momentum throughout the period, said a press release. Compared with the corresponding period of FY2024-25, when exports stood at 102,942.05 met-



ric tons worth \$208.25 million, the sector recorded a year-on-year increase of 19.1 percent in volume and 21.6 percent in value.

Minister Chaudhry described fisheries as a vital pillar of the national maritime economy, supporting hundreds of thousands of livelihoods in coastal communities along the Arabian Sea, particularly in Sindh and Balochistan. Historically contributing around one percent to GDP, the sector has rebounded from pandemic-era disruptions.

USF continues to expand telecom facilities in remote areas: Senate told

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Dr Tariq Fazal Chaudhry on Friday apprised the Senate that the Universal Service Fund (USF) continues to expand telecom facilities in remote regions of the country.

Responding to various questions during Question Hour, the minister said that temporary internet and mobile service suspensions in some areas were imposed solely due to security concerns. "These suspensions are very limited and strictly in the national interest," he said, adding that the government had already ensured that data packages would not



expire during such suspensions.

Regarding telecom issues at Parliament Lodges, the minister said that a survey was already under way. "If any block or area has weak service, we will verify it. The minister said that telecom services were being provided nationwide without political bias. "It is not the case that areas of our own party receive better signals while opposition areas.



ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani in a group photo with delegation of businessmen, traders, investors and industrialists at the Parliament House.

Country sees \$3.5b surge in agri exports: Jam Kamal

PEAK POINT

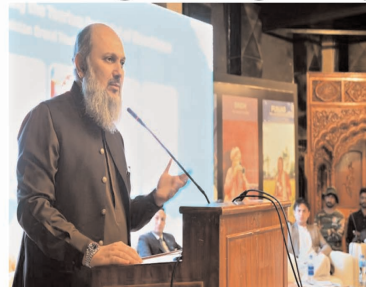
ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jam Kamal Khan on Friday said agriculture remained a major component of Pakistan's trade as country witnessed a significant surge in agricultural exports last year, with exports increasing by around \$3 to \$3.5 billion compared to the previous year.

Responding to a Calling Attention Notice moved by Ms. Aliya Kamran, Ms. Naeema Kishwar Khan, Ms. Shahida Begum and Muhammad Usman Badini in the National Assembly, the minister said that the growth in agri-exports was largely

driven by favorable international market conditions and timely response by Pakistani exporters.

He explained that a key reason for this increase was India's absence from international markets for three to four years, which created an opportunity for Pakistani traders. "Our exporters capitalised on this gap, resulting in an increase of around \$1.5 to \$2 billion in exports," he said.

Jam Kamal added that maize and sesame seed alone contributed approximately \$700 to \$800 million in additional export earnings, while overall the agriculture sector recorded an export increase



of nearly \$2.5 to \$3 billion during the period.

However, the minister said the current season posed challenges as India had re-

turned to the international market with competitive and discounted pricing, backed by heavy subsidies of around \$4 to \$5 billion for its agricul-

ture sector. He said this had particularly impacted Pakistan's exports of non-basmati (short-grain) rice, where competition was more intense, though Pakistan still retained some space in basmati and specialty varieties.

Similar trends, he noted, were being observed in maize, sesame seed and other agricultural commodities, where exports had declined due to intensified competition.

Despite challenges in agriculture, Jam Kamal said Pakistan had witnessed growth and relative stability in other sectors, including textiles, services and information technology, over the

past one to one-and-a-half years. He acknowledged that while growth was gradual, it reflected improving stability.

Jam Kamal also pointed to challenges faced by manufacturers, businessmen and traders, including issues related to taxation. He said some of these were linked to commitments made with the International Monetary Fund (IMF), which could not be altered frequently. "Policy consistency is essential for business confidence," he added.

He said the prime minister had constituted around eight working groups over the past six months, led by the private sector.