



Gilani calls for locally manufactured Pakistani-brand vehicle, economical electric bikes



NHA to connect Kartarpur, Nankana Sahib with motorways



Muqam vows implementation of JAAC agreement in Azad Kashmir

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EU Ambassador calls on PM Shehbaz, assures effort to strengthen bilateral ties

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the European Union, Raimundas Karoblis Thursday called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif here at the Prime Minister's House and assures his efforts to strengthen Pakistan-European Union relations on all spheres. The prime minister was assisted by Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Advisor to the Prime Minister Dr. Syed Tauqir Shah, SAPM Tariq Fatemi and Foreign Secretary Amna Baloch, a Prime Minister's Office news release said. Welcoming the EU Ambassador, who recently assumed his responsibilities in Pakistan, the prime minister reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthen cooperation

with the EU in all areas of mutual interest, particularly trade, investment, development, security, migration and climate change. The prime minister emphasized upon the critical role of the GSP Plus scheme in enhancing trade between Pakistan and the EU, and said the Government of Pakistan is committed to working closely with the EU on mutually beneficial trade enhancement initiatives, especially through the GSP Plus. The prime minister also expressed satisfaction at the 7th round of Pakistan-EU Strategic Dialogue held in Brussels in November last year, where the Pakistan side was led by Deputy Prime Minister & Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar. The EU Ambassador expressed his gratitude.



ISLAMABAD: H.E. Mr Raimundas Karoblis, Ambassador of the European Union to Pakistan, calls on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif.

KP CM Afridi reaches Rwp in yet another attempt to meet PTI founder Imran Khan

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Thursday reached a police picket, established near Adiala jail in Rawalpindi, in yet another attempt to meet the incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan. CM Afridi's visit comes a day after an Islamabad court issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for him in a case wherein he had been accused of making misleading statements against state institutions. Speaking to reporters at the Factory Naka near the prison, the KP chief minister said he had "serious reservations" about the former premier's health. CM Afridi's visit comes after the PTI on Tuesday raised concerns about Imran's health, saying he was ailing from a serious eye issue. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Thursday confirmed that the PTI founder underwent a medical procedure for an eye ailment at a hospital in Islamabad on Saturday night. Referring to Tarar's statement, Afridi insisted the government was previously denying that Imran had been taken to a hospital and said the PTI would "respond strongly". The chief minister further said his party did not "trust even a single statement" made by Tarar.

COAS visits Bahawalpur Garrison, witnesses Field Exercise 'Steadfast Resolve'

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Army Staff (COAS) and Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ visited Bahawalpur Garrison and witnessed a high-intensity Field Exercise "Steadfast Resolve," at Khairpur Tamewali (KPT) encompassing integration of niche technologies like unmanned aerial systems (drones), advanced surveillance assets, Electronic Warfare assets and modern command-and-control mechanisms, reflecting the Armed Forces' focus on technology-enabled multi-domain operations.

COAS visits Bahawalpur Garrison,



witnesses Field Exercise 'Steadfast Resolve'

The COAS was briefed on various operational, training and administrative aspects of the Corps, with special focus on preparations for multi-domain warfare, said a press release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

While addressing the troops, the COAS lauded their high morale, professional compe-

tence and operational preparedness.

He reaffirmed that the Pakistan Armed Forces remain fully prepared to defend Pakistan's sovereignty and territorial integrity against all threats, emphasizing the need to maintain optimum readiness to meet the requirements of future Battle field and security challenges. The COAS highlighted that Pakistan Armed Forces

are undergoing major transformation in multiple domains. Character of war has evolved massively, with technological advancements driving the evolution, dictating huge mental transformation at all tiers.

In future, technological manoeuvres will replace physical manoeuvres and will fundamentally alter the way offensive and defensive operations are undertaken.

Imran Khan underwent '20-minute medical procedure' at Islamabad's Pims: Tarar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Information Minister Attaullah Tarar on Thursday confirmed that incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan underwent a medical procedure for an eye ailment last week at a hospital in Islamabad. Tarar said the former premier, who is imprisoned at Rawalpindi's Adiala jail, was taken to the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences (Pims) in Islamabad for a "20-minute" medical procedure on the night of January 24. "Eye experts,

Trump weighs Iran strikes to inspire renewed protests, sources say

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump is weighing options against Iran that include targeted strikes on security forces and leaders to inspire protesters, multiple sources said, even as Israeli and Arab officials said air power alone would not topple the government. Two US sources familiar with the discussions said Trump wanted to create conditions for "regime change" after a crackdown crushed a nationwide protest movement earlier this month. To do so, he was looking at options to hit commanders and institutions that Washington holds responsible for the violence.

Pakistan not part of Abraham Accords, clarifies FO spokesperson

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Foreign Office (FO) spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi on Thursday clarified that Pakistan would not become part of any Abraham Accords and had no connection whatsoever with the Abraham Accords. During the weekly briefing, the FO spokesperson said that Pakistan would not join the International Stabilization Force (ISF). He clarified that the Board of Peace and the Stabilization Force were entirely separate entities, and that Pakistan became part of the Board of Peace under mutually agreed governmental rules. Commenting on concerns about the possibility of war involving Iran, the spokesperson said Pakistan has always advocated for the peaceful resolution of issues. "We do not support

the use of force or economic sanctions, and we hope that

Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan, during



peace will prevail," he added. Responding to a question regarding a trade agreement between India and Europe, Andrabi said Pakistan enjoys good relations with Europe, with bilateral trade exceeding 12 billion euros. He added that discussions have taken place regarding India's agreements with European countries. He further informed that President Asif Ali Zardari met UAE President

Abu Dhabi's Supreme Council for Financial and Economic Affairs emphasized exploring new investment opportunities in Pakistan and reviewing ongoing projects. Both countries agreed to take joint measures to enhance investment through flagship projects and expand trade relations.

The briefing also highlighted that joint efforts are underway to resolve issues

swiftly. This week, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar held telephone conversations with the foreign ministers of Iran and Bangladesh to discuss the regional situation. Additionally, delegation-level talks were held with Ghana on bilateral relations. President Zardari's visit was described as a significant milestone for promoting investment, trade, economic cooperation, and people-to-people contacts.

According to the Foreign Office spokesperson, the Prime Minister also attended the World Economic Forum in Davos this week, where he met several global leaders. Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar accompanied him during the visit. After returning from Davos, Ishaq Dar visited the United Arab Emirates, where discussions,

Pak Navy takes over command of Combined Task Force-150

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Navy took over the command of Combined Task Force-150 (CTF-150) for the 14th time during a change of command ceremony held at the Headquarters of Combined Maritime Forces (CMF), Bahrain. Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir of Pakistan Navy assumed command from Commodore Fahad S. Al Joaid of the Royal Saudi Naval Forces (RSNF), said a press release issued by Directorate General Public Relations (Pak Navy). While addressing the audience, the incoming Commander CTF-150 assured that his team is fully prepared to shoulder this prestigious responsibility and contribute towards maritime security and stability across the region. Commodore Muhammad Yasir Tahir also reaffirmed Pakistan Navy's resolve.



SPORTS



Saim's all-round show takes Pakistan past Australia in first T20



PEAK POINT
LAHORE: Saim Ayub gave an outstanding all-round performance, taking two wickets after a blistering 40-run knock as Pakistan defeated Australia by 22 runs in the first Twenty20 International at Lahore's Gaddafi Stadium on Thursday.

This is Pakistan's first T20I victory against Australia in more than seven years.

Winning the toss and batting first, Pakistan scored 168 runs at the loss of eight wickets in the allotted overs.

Despite Sahibzada Farhan's duck in the first over, Saim and

skipper Salman Ali Agha managed to anchor Pakistan's innings with a 74-run partnership.

Returning to Pakistan's T20 side after a troubled Big Bash League season, Babar Azam could score only 24 runs before losing his wicket to Adam Zampa.

For Australia, spinner Adam Zampa grabbed four wickets, including the crucial ones of Babar, Saim, and Salman. Xavier

Bartlett and Mahli Beardman also took a couple of wickets each for Australia. While defending the target, Pakistan's decision to include

four spinners proved to be vital in dismantling the Australian batting

lineup. Saim took the wicket of fiery-looking Australian Travis Head, who scored 23 runs, with two sixes and two fours. He also took the wicket of Matthew Short in his first over of the innings.

Pakistan's Abrar Ahmed also joined hands with Saim, taking two wickets, while other spinners, Mohammad Nawaz and Shadab Khan clinched a couple of wickets together.

Australia's Cameron Green and Xavier Bartlett made 36 and 34 runs respectively. Two of their batters also flung their wickets with perplexing run-outs.

Pakistan restricted the

Australian side to 146 runs with eight wickets in 20 overs.

Saim, who earned the Player of the Match award, said after his side's victory that "conditions were a bit challenging, but our plan was to dominate with the new ball as much as possible"

During the batting powerplay, the goal was to dominate sensibly by calculating the innings, watching the ball, and enjoying the process, he said.

On Pakistan's bowling strategy, Saim said, "We knew that if we hit a good length consistently, it wouldn't be easy for the batters to score. That was the strategy".

PSB announces \$115 daily allowance for each national hockey team player



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan Sports Board (PSB) on Thursday announced that it would pay a daily allowance of \$115 per player to members of the national hockey team, directing the finance department to release the payments ahead of the team's departure in order to ensure players do not face any inconvenience during their international assignment.

Talking to the media, Director General PSB Muhammad Yasir Pirzada said the daily allowance had been approved in line with the government-sanctioned budget and that the decision covered Pakistan's participation in the FIH Pro League. He said the PSB had managed the payments by reallocating funds saved from various heads, despite financial constraints, to facilitate the team's foreign tour and ensure smooth arrangements for the players. Pakistan hockey team captain Aamjad Butt welcomed the announcement and thanked the DG PSB for personally addressing the players' concerns. He said that discussions held earlier on various matters had yielded positive results. He said the revised rate approved under the current government budget was reasonable. "It is not bad at all. More importantly, the daily allowance issue has been settled," he said.

Amid uncertainty over Pakistan's T20 World Cup participation, Iceland quips it is 'unavailable' to replace Green Shirts



PEKA POINT
ICELAND: Amid uncertainty about Pakistan's participation in the upcoming T20 World Cup, Iceland has quipped that its team is unavailable to replace the Green Shirts in the tournament.

Pakistan is expected to make a final decision by next week, over the cricket team's participation in next month's Twenty

20 World Cup, keeping open the possibility of a boycott over Bangladesh's withdrawal from the tournament.

Amid the uncertainty, Iceland Cricket had earlier quipped that it needed Pakistan to decide on its participation soon, saying they were "ready to take off". It is worth mentioning that Iceland is not a member of the International Cricket Council.

However, on Thursday, Iceland Cricket's X account — known for its wisecracks — said: "It is with a heavy heart that we now announce our unavailability to replace Pakistan in the upcoming T20 World Cup. Regardless of whether [Pakistan] they now withdraw, the short timescales ensure it is impossible

for our squad to prepare in the professional manner necessary to compete effectively in this global cricketing spectacle," it said.

Referring to ICC's decision to replace Bangladesh with Scotland, upon their refusal to travel to India, it said, "We are not like Scotland and able to turn up on a whim, with no kit sponsor."

"Our players are from all walks of life and cannot simply drop their occupations to fly halfway around the world to experience temperatures only normally felt in Finnish saunas," the post said. "Our captain, a professional baker, needs to attend to his oven, our ship captain needs to steer his vessel.

Cricket fans urge PCB chief to improve stadium facilities ahead of PSL 11



Clarke, Finch question Haris Rauf's omission from Pakistan's T20 World Cup squad

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Former Australia captains Michael Clarke and Aaron Finch have voiced surprise over Pakistan's decision to leave out fast bowler Haris Rauf from the T20 World Cup squad, despite his strong showing in the Big Bash League (BBL).

Reacting to the selection, Finch said he was "quite surprised" by Rauf's exclusion, describing him as an "X-factor" bowler. While acknowledging that Rauf can sometimes be expensive, Finch stressed that wicket-taking bowlers are vital in T20 cricket, particularly on flat pitches and across all phases of an innings.

Michael Clarke also expressed his astonishment, but pointed to differences in playing conditions as a possible reason behind the decision. He noted that conditions in Australia vary significantly from those in Sri Lanka or India, and teams often select players based on

conditions anticipated at the World Cup. He added that current form plays a crucial

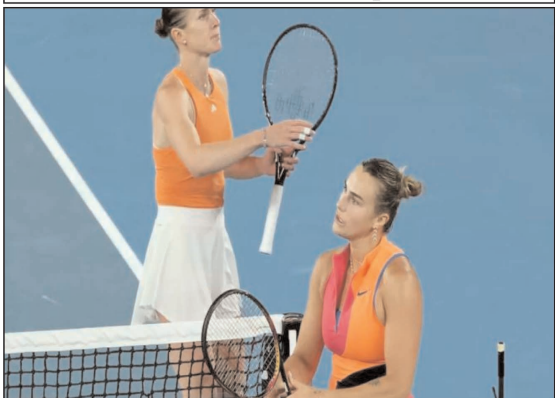


the environments they expect to face and the specific roles required.

Clarke suggested that the role Rauf performs in the BBL may not align with the

role in World Cup selection, with selectors aiming to ensure players arrive at the tournament in good rhythm and capable of delivering consistent performances.

No handshake, no mercy: Sabalenka storms into Australian Open final





NA body seeks probe into CDA land litigation, development charges

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly Standing Committee on Government Assurances on Thursday directed the Capital Development Authority (CDA) to conduct a high-level inquiry into prolonged litigation over land acquired for new residential sectors, observing that allottees should not be penalised for the authority's negligence. The committee, which met at Parliament House under the chairpersonship of Nuzhat Sadiq, also unanimously endorsed the report

of its sub-committee on the levy of development charges in underdeveloped sectors of Islamabad. The committee was informed that most CDA sectors remained entangled in litigation for decades, while legal proceedings showed serious delays and inaction on part of the authority's legal team. Members expressed concern over the absence of the CDA chairman from the sub-committee meeting despite prior notice, terming it disrespect to the parliamentary forum. The committee recommended a



thorough inquiry to identify lapses and delays in the legal process relating to land acquisition. Meanwhile, the committee disposed of the assurance regarding delay in the operationalisation of sewerage pipelines in Bani Gala after being informed that the system had been made functional. Officials said a PC-1 to

include other areas of Bani Gala in the sewerage network had been submitted to the DDWP for approval. The committee also disposed of an assurance by the minister for communications regarding overcharging by vendors on motorways after the National Highways Authority submitted documentary evidence of action taken against the offenders. While discussing the assurance given by the minister for information regarding payment of minimum wages, the committee accepted the ministry's reply but directed

that minimum salaries must also be ensured for workers hired through outsourced services. The committee further discussed the assurance by the minister for federal education on the non-provision of laptops to students of Allama Iqbal Open University and directed the ministry to create a special provision for students from erstwhile tribal areas under the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme. Officials informed the committee that distribution had begun and 1,800 laptops had already been provided to AIU students.

Potato farmers in distress as parliamentary panel warns of market failure, export barriers, and policy paralysis

NADEEM TANOLI
ISLAMABAD: A parliamentary committee has warned that Pakistan's potato farmers are facing an acute economic crisis due to collapsing market prices, rising production costs, export bottlenecks, and weak government intervention, cautioning that continued inaction could deepen rural distress and undermine food security. Lawmakers signalled that the situation has reached a level where direct federal intervention may be unavoidable, including state backed procurement to protect growers from financial ruin. The alarm was raised

during a meeting of the Standing Committee on National Food Security and Research, where members openly questioned the effectiveness of current agricultural market management. The committee took up a point of order on the potato crop crisis, describing it as a failure of pricing mechanisms, logistics planning, and export facilitation at a time when farmers are already burdened by high input costs. Briefing the committee, growers' representatives explained that despite higher production, farmers are unable to recover even basic costs due to

depressed market prices. Export opportunities, which could have absorbed surplus supply, remain constrained by transport hurdles, lack of cold storage, visa complications, delays in phytosanitary certification, and slow administrative coordination. Members noted that these obstacles persist year after year, raising questions about institutional accountability. Officials from the Department of Plant Protection acknowledged that potato exports have improved compared to the previous season but conceded that favorable weather

driven overproduction has pushed prices downward. The Ministry of Commerce told the committee that export-related issues had been taken up with relevant authorities following concerns raised by Punjab, but lawmakers criticized the response as reactive rather than strategic. Calling the situation "grave," the committee unanimously agreed to escalate the matter to the prime minister, seeking urgent engagement at the highest level to address the crisis and prevent further losses for farmers. Several members urged the govern-

ment to consider market intervention through direct purchase of potatoes from growers at fair prices, arguing that historical precedents show such measures can stabilize markets and protect agricultural incomes during periods of distress. Beyond potatoes, the committee also turned its attention to the proposed deregulation of the sugarcane sector, warning that poorly managed reforms could expose farmers to delayed procurement, unfair pricing, and non-payment by mills. The Ministry of Industries and Production briefed members on steps

taken to enforce compliance by sugar mills, but lawmakers remained skeptical, pointing to repeated instances where growers' interests were compromised despite formal assurances. In a sharp rebuke, the committee advised the Ministry of National Food Security and Research to abandon a crisis-driven approach and adopt forward-looking agricultural planning. Members stressed that waiting for markets to collapse before responding reflects weak governance and leaves farmers vulnerable to shocks that could have been anticipated and mitigated.

Opinion & Editorial

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Regression, not justice

ASIF DURRANI
THE announcement by the Afghan Taliban regime of a new penal code to govern their country's criminal justice system should concern not only the Afghans but anyone who is attentive to the relationship between law, power and social order. What has emerged from Afghanistan through official statements and media reporting is not a coherent legal framework aimed at justice or social stability. Rather, it reflects a deliberate regression towards pre-modern norms that institutionalise inequality, undermine accountability and legitimise coercion under the guise of religious authority.

A penal code is intended to be the backbone of the legal system. As such, it defines crimes and prescribes punishments. But most importantly, it signals who is equal before the law. Against that measure, the proposed framework fails at the foundational level. A most disturbing feature of the code is the apparent exemption given to religious scholars and the ruling elites from prosecution, or their insulation from ordinary judicial processes. Not only is this kind of selectivity incompatible with the principles of modern constitutionalism, it also contradicts the very Islamic legal tradition that the Afghan Taliban claim to uphold. Classical Islamic jurisprudence is rooted in the principle that no individual, regardless of his or her status

or piety, is above the law. The insistence of the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) on equality before justice is a well-established axiom across Islamic legal schools. By putting clerical authorities beyond legal scrutiny, the Taliban are not reviving religious law but are transforming it into an instrument of clerical absolutism. Historically, legal systems that fuse unchecked religious authority with political power have tended towards arbitrariness and abuse. The law is no longer a mechanism of justice; instead, it turns into a means of enforcing obedience.

The Afghan Taliban's new penal code reveals a troubling philosophy of governance. What is just as troubling is the reported recognition of social categories that resemble 'slaves' or, in other words, permanently subordinate classes that are subject to differential punishment. This kind of stratification goes against the fundamental principles of justice across legal traditions. While historical Islamic societies grappled with the legacy of slavery, Islamic jurisprudence evolved mechanisms which were aimed at restriction and gradual elimination — and not the creation of new, legally entrenched underclasses. From a sociological perspective, penal systems that codify inequality generate deep and lasting instability. They erode social cohesion, delegitimise authority, and foster resentment. No society

in the modern world has achieved stability by formally declaring that some people are less protected by the law than others. Perhaps the most alarming element of the Taliban's penal framework is the declaration that nine-year-old girls are legally women eligible for marriage. While child marriage has existed in Afghanistan's past (as it has in many traditional societies) the decision to codify it into a contemporary legal system is not cultural inevitability; it is political choice. Scholarly discourse in Islam does not equate biological age with moral or legal adulthood. Classical jurists emphasised *rushd* (intellectual maturity), welfare (*maslaha*) and consent as essential components of marriage. Contemporary Muslim scholarship has overwhelmingly recognised that child marriage is harmful and not aligned with religious ethics. The Taliban's interpretation represents a selective reading of tradition, stripped of its moral safeguards. The economic context matters. In many parts of Afghanistan, the practice of *walwar* (whereby families receive money in exchange for marrying off daughters) has long commodified girls. Afghan reformers, clerics and civil society actors have criticised this practice for decades. Enshrining it in law does not preserve culture; it perpetuates exploitation and poverty while entrenching gender-based violence.

Pluribus and Islam

IMRAN JAN
Pluribus is the latest show by Vince Gilligan, the creator of Breaking Bad. As best as I understand, Pluribus is about a future when AI has taken over the planet or has become the overwhelmingly large presence in humanity's lives or whatever is left of it. It is indeed a bleak future, rendering humanity's existence as a reflection of AI. In the show, all humanity has become one-minded, which knows everything and is in complete harmony with everyone. Every human being unquestioningly does what he or she is required to do, without complaining, and without any opinion. There is zero individualism. All human beings exist as one human being, and they know all the knowledge available to consume. They also are not capable of lying. I pray 5 times a day, but I also like to ask questions when I do not understand Islamic truths. This show, which sounds like it is going to be another masterpiece by Vince Gilligan, has answered two fundamental questions I always had from Islamic scholars: One, why aren't we allowed to ask deep-seated questions when Allah Almighty created us as intelligent beings? Two, why do we have free will when we would be judged by the choices we make due to our free will? In the absence of free will and the ability and the desire to ask questions, humanity becomes one complete, harmonious yet meaningless body. The show has some interesting things it highlights. At night, they turn off all the city lights to save power because there are no crimes being committed. All human beings in all cities and villages across the world sleep in giant sports stadia, each on a small mattress next to another person in order to save power and space. Nobody whines about not having privacy or comfort. Life is all about being rational and not emotional at all.

In limbo

WITH the political situation softening somewhat, and both treasury and opposition benches signalling renewed openness to a political resolution to their longstanding differences, the PTI has started mulling a return to formal parliamentary politics. It would not be a bad move, especially now that there is an opening, albeit a small one, for some normalisation in national politics. If returning to the parliamentary committees may help that process, the PTI should be encouraged. Indeed, an informed source in the National Assembly Secretariat has told this publication that Speaker Ayaz Sadiq is supportive of the idea, and has even encouraged the PTI to return to the committees with the assurance that any such move would be welcomed. This is a positive gesture. However, as ever, the PTI remains beholden to incarcerated former prime minister Imran Khan's wishes, and since the PTI chief has been incommunicado for weeks, it is unlikely that the party will be making a decision anytime soon. The fact that every political decision remains contingent on Mr Khan's wish remains a major stumbling block for the PTI. While it cannot, in fairness, be faulted for its stubbornness in demanding that family, lawyers and other counsel be allowed to meet the jailed leader, the party should by now have adapted. Instead, it seems to become catatonic every time Mr Khan's access to the outside world is cut off. From reports, it seems that most of the current leadership understands that a return to parliamentary committees is necessary and can, in fact,

Gilani calls for locally manufactured Pakistani-brand vehicle, economical electric bikes



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Acting President Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani on Thursday stressed the need to introduce locally manufactured made-in-Pakistan vehicle under a Pakistani brand, as well as economical electric bikes aimed at promoting affordable mobility and strengthening domestic manufacturing.

He was talking to Chief Executive Officer of the Engineering Development Board (EDB), Hamad Ali Mansoor who called on him at the Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Hamad Ali Mansoor briefed Mr. Gilani on the role and mandate of the Engineering Development Board, an apex body under the Ministry of Industries and Production, established in 1995 to strength-

en Pakistan's engineering sector. He outlined EDB's key initiatives to promote industrial growth, enhance exports, support research and development, improve technical skills and align the sector with international standards.

The CEO also apprised the acting president of ongoing policy measures, including long-term strategic planning, tariff rationalisation, industrial development frameworks, automobile and electric vehicle policies, as well as efforts to foster innovation, technology adoption and human resource development in the engineering industry.

Mr. Gilani appreciated the proactive role of the Engineering Development Board in advancing Pakistan's engineering sector. He emphasised the importance of transitioning to electric vehicles in view of environmental.

Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 to open new chapter in Pakistan-Rwanda trade ties: Jam Kamal Khan

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce, Jam Kamal Khan, on Thursday said that the "Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 in Pakistan" will give a new dimension to cultural and trade partnership between Pakistan and Rwanda, reflecting a growing commitment to strengthening bilateral economic ties.

Speaking in his keynote address at the Rwanda Coffee Festival, the Minister emphasized Pakistan's keen interest in expanding trade relations with Rwanda, particularly through increased imports of coffee and tea.

He noted that such initiatives would help foster closer business and economic cooperation between the two countries.

Highlighting Pakistan's export strengths, Jam Kamal Khan stated that Pakistani rice, especially "Basmati" is regarded as one of the best in the world, a view echoed by Rwanda's Minister of Commerce in his address.

He added that Pakistan is ready to explore greater market access for its agricultural prod-

ucts in Rwanda and across Africa.

Rwanda Coffee Festival 2026 to open new chapter in Pakistan-Rwanda trade ties: Jam Kamal Khan

The Commerce Minister announced that Pakistan and Rwanda are working toward establishing a direct import-export supply line and expressed Pakistan's intention to soon sign a Trade Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Rwanda to formalize and expand trade cooperation.

Referring to Pakistan's recently launched Africa Policy, Jam Kamal Khan said that Pakistan has already initiated engagement with African countries through single-country exhibitions held in Egypt and Ethiopia.

He reiterated Pakistan's commitment to strengthening connectivity with East African nations and appreciated the role of the Rwandan Ambassador to Pakistan, Harerimana Fatou in promoting business-to-business collaboration.

The Minister highlighted Africa's vast market of approximately 1.5 billion.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Commerce Jama Kamal Khan and Rwanda's Minister of Trade and Industry Prudence Sebahizi jointly cut the ribbon to inaugurate the Rwanda Coffee Festival in Islamabad, marking a new chapter in Pakistan-Rwanda trade and economic cooperation.

Laptop Scheme reflects PM's vision of meritocracy; says Hanif Abbasi

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Railways Muhammad Hanif Abbasi has described the Prime Minister's Laptop Scheme as a clear symbol of merit and performance, and emphasized that it rewards deserving and qualified students for their hard work.

Addressing a ceremony for the distribution of laptops under the scheme in Pir Mehr Ali Shah Arid Agriculture University Rawalpindi (PMAS-AAUR) on Thursday, the minister said that the current leadership

takes pride in tangible achievements and performance over mere slogans.

He highlighted that the laptop scheme was originally initiated when Shehbaz Sharif served as Chief Minister of Punjab and has now been reintiated at the federal level under Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif.

"Its core objective is to equip the youth with modern tools and align them with contemporary demands", he added.

Abbasi stressed that merit prevails in all aspects of the scheme, ensuring laptops go



to qualified and high-achieving students who are honored for their efforts.

Highlighting the achievements in Pakistan Railways, the minister said that Pakistan Railways recorded

Interior minister praises security forces for eliminating three militants in Bannu

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi has lauded the police and security forces for a successful operation against militants belonging to the "Fitna-e-Khawarij" group in the Bannu region.

"I commend the police and security forces for sending three terrorists to hell," Naqvi said, paying tribute to the personnel involved in the joint operation.

The minister noted that the timely and coordinated action of the police and security forces thwarted the terrorists' malicious plans. He praised their professionalism, saying that their expertise continues to play a crucial role in maintaining peace across K h y b e r Pakhtunkhwa.

"We highly appreciate the joint efforts of the police and security forces for the restoration of peace in the province," Naqvi stated.

He added that with the support of the nation, militants of the "Fitna-e-Khawarij" group.

Muqam vows implementation of JAAC agreement in Azad Kashmir

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Engr Amir Muqam on Thursday chaired a meeting to review implementation status of the agreement with Joint Awami Action Committee, AJK.

The Federal Minister Engr Amir Muqam expressed satisfaction over the progress achieved to date and directed all concerned departments to further speed up the implementation work, said a press release here on Thursday.

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 imple-



mentation of the agreement with the Joint Action Committee would be ensured. Coordinator to Prime Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Shabir Ahmad Usmani, Secretary Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit Baltistan and SAFRON Zafar Hasan, Chief Secretary Azad Jammu & Kashmir, Khushhal Khan and Additional Secretary Kamran Rehman Khan also attended the meeting.

Officials from relevant ministries and departments briefed the meeting on the steps taken so far.

Ahsan Iqbal lauds outstanding student Badria Rafique's performance of GU

PEAK POINT

QUETTA: Federal Minister for Planning and Development, Ahsan Iqbal appreciated outstanding student Badria Rafique's performance of Gwadar University (GU).

He expressed these views while holding a special meeting with Gwadar University (GU) students and encouraged them during a seminar arranged at Gwadar Port.

The minister especially lauded the exceptional performance of Gwadar University student Badria Rafique, who recently performed brilliantly by winning the first position in the English speech competition among all Pakistan universities in the Uraan Pakistan National Debate



Competition, bringing the title of Best Speaker Debates to herself and the University of Gwadar.

While talking to the students, Federal Minister Ahsan Iqbal emphasized the importance of achieving success through education and hard work.

He said that education has the power to change lives, this university is your golden opportunity to move forward.

He mentioned that no matter how difficult the journey is, your hard work.

NHA to connect Kartarpur, Nankana Sahib with motorways

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications, Abdul Aleem Khan has announced a landmark decision to link the holy sites of Kartarpur and Nankana Sahib with the national motorway network.

Presiding over a high-level meeting, Federal Minister directed the National Highway Authority (NHA) to commence construction on the Sialkot-Kartarpur Motorway which will be named the "Guru Nanak Expressway," said a press release issued on Thursday.

Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted that 3-star, 4-star, and 5-star hotels will be developed



along the Highway to facilitate pilgrims. To encourage investment from the global Sikh community, the NHA will launch international marketing campaigns in London, Canada and the USA.

The minister emphasized that these projects would be showcased in international roadshows to attract foreign direct investment.

ties. He informed the audience that 70 railway stations have been digitized, with Wi-Fi now available at stations and on premier trains.

"Additionally, around 7.0 million people are utilizing POS, internet services in trains and stations, and all trains are expected to be equipped with Wi-Fi by June 30", he said.

He went on to inform that cleanliness and upgrades have been prioritized, with Rawalpindi Railway Station already modernized as a "smart station."

The minister revealed plans to export railway coaches and wagons to five countries including Chile, Argentina, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, and Nepal which reflect Pakistan's manufacturing capabilities on the global stage.

Abbasi announced that the Hazara Express will commence operations from Havelian by December this year. He also highlighted that no new broad-gauge track had been laid since 1886, but new projects are now underway, including tracks from Karachi to Rohri and beyond to enhance connectivity.