



**Ahsan urges value-added exports to achieve self-reliance at Gulfood 2026**



**Amir Muqam slams PTI governance in KP, hails federal & Punjab initiatives**



**Syedaal Khan meets British MP Imran Hussain**

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## PM announces Rs 4.04 per unit power tariff cut for industry, incentives for exporters

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday announced major relief measures for the industries and exports sectors, including a reduction in electricity tariffs by Rs 4.04 per unit and wheeling charges to less than Rs 9 for industry, alongside a significant decrease in the export refinance scheme rate from current 7.5 percent to 4.5 percent and the issuance of blue passports for the leading exporters for two years.

He said the government had allocated Rs 1,052 billion for the export refinance scheme, of which Rs 900 billion had already been utilized, adding that under the scheme, exporters were availing three percent relief on the State Bank of Pakistan's policy rate, which had

now been further reduced to 4.5 percent.

Addressing the award ceremony of top exporters for the year 2024-25, he said the government would offer blue passports to exporters who were awarded during the ceremony for a period of two years as part of its efforts to facilitate and incentivize export-led growth. The prime minister said that Pakistan's economic revival and long-term stability depend on export-led growth and foreign direct investment (FDI) in export-oriented projects, stressing that the business community must play a central role in driving sustainable development. He said stabilization alone was not enough and the country must now transition towards growth that is sustainable, competitive.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif addresses a ceremony to honor the services of leading exporters from all over the country.

## 41 Indian sponsored terrorists killed in two separate IBOs: ISPR

PEAK POINT



RAWALPINDI: Security Forces killed 41 terrorists belonging to Indian proxy, Fitna al Khwarji and Fitna al Hindustan in two separate operations in Balochistan. "An intelligence based operation (IBO) was conducted in outskirts of Hamai District on reported presence of Fitna al Khwarji. During the conduct of operation, own troops effectively engaged the hideout, and after an intense fire exchange, 30 Indian sponsored Khwarji were sent to hell. Large cache of ammunition and explosives were also recovered from the killed Khwarji & destroyed on the spot," said a press release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR). Another IBO was conducted in Panjgur District in which, a terrorist hideout was busted and 11 Indian sponsored terrorists of Fitna al Hindustan were neutralized. Besides weapons and ammunition, looted money from bank robbery in Panjgur on 15 December 2025 were also recovered from the killed terrorists. The terrorists were involved in numerous terrorist activities in the past, it was further said. "Sanitization operations are being conducted to eliminate any other Indian sponsored terrorist.

## CDF Munir, Turkiye's chief of general staff discuss regional security landscape and defence cooperation

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) and Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Asim Munir on Friday discussed the regional security landscape and bilateral defence cooperation with Turkiye's Chief of General Staff General Selcuk Bayraktaroglu, according to the military's media affairs wing.

In a statement, Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) said General Bayraktaroglu called on CDF Munir at the General Headquarters in Rawalpindi. "Upon his arrival at the General Headquarters, he was presented with the guard of honour by a smartly turned contingent of the



Pakistan armed forces," the statement said. "During the meeting, besides dilating upon matters of mutual interest, prevailing regional and global security landscape, and prospects for strengthening bilateral defence and military cooperation were also discussed," the statement said.

It added that the two also expressed satisfaction with the current trajectory of Pakistan-

armed forces and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral military-to-military relations," it added.

The statement said that General Bayraktaroglu expressed gratitude for the warm reception and appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan armed forces.

"He reaffirmed Turkiye's resolve to deepen defence cooperation, including training, joint exercises, and capacity-building initiatives," it said.

"The visit reflects the enduring strategic partnership between Pakistan and Turkiye and their shared commitment to regional peace, stability, and security," the statement concluded.

## WHO sees low risk of Nipah virus spreading beyond India

PEAK POINT

DUBAI: There is a low risk of the deadly Nipah virus spreading from India, the World Health Organisation (WHO) said on Friday, adding that it did not recommend travel or trade curbs after two infections were reported by the South Asian nation. Pakistan, Hong Kong, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam are among the Asian locations that tightened airport screening checks this week to guard against such a spread after India confirmed infections. "The WHO considers the risk of further spread of infection from these two cases.

## ECP reinstates two Punjab legislators upon submission of asset statements

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has restored the membership of two Punjab Assembly lawmakers after they submitted mandatory asset declarations for the financial year 2024-25. Malik Athar Khan (PP-5, Attock) and Muhammad Dawood Khan (PP-273, Muzaffargarh) had been suspended on January 16, 2026, for failing to comply with Section 137(1) of the Elections Act, 2017, which requires legislators to file annual statements of assets and liabilities by December 31.

## KP CM Afridi approaches SC, seeks meeting between Imran, personal doctors

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi on Friday arrived at the Supreme Court (SC), urging Chief Justice Yahya Afridi to help arrange a meeting between jailed PTI founder Imran Khan and his personal physicians. Speaking to the media, Afridi said the entire nation was worried about the health of what he called the country's most popular leader. He added that he was seeking the chief justice's assistance to ensure Imran Khan could be examined by his own doctors. The KP chief minister warned that if efforts to meet Khan failed even after approaching the apex court, the PTI would announce its next course of action. He expressed frustration over what he termed a lack of

justice, saying that despite court proceedings continu-



ing, their concerns were not being addressed. Afridi claimed that cases involving Khan and Bushra Bibi had not been scheduled for hearings for the past year. He asserted that if the cases were listed and justice provided, Khan, Bushra Bibi and other party leaders would be released within half an hour.

Saying that all other options had been exhausted, Afridi remarked that approaching the Supreme

Court was the only path left. When asked about end-

ing the protest outside Adiala Jail, he said his presence at the Supreme Court should be seen as part of that effort.

On Thursday, Afridi rushed to Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi after reports emerged that Imran Khan had been briefly taken to Pims hospital for a medical procedure. He had announced plans to spend the night outside the prison along with PTI Secretary General Salman Akram

Raja and other party leaders. However, the group left the area around 3am.

Since assuming office in October last year, Afridi has repeatedly sought permission to meet the imprisoned former prime minister but has been unsuccessful. In recent weeks, he, along with Imran Khan's sisters and legal team, has been barred from meeting him, leading to frequent sit-ins and protests near the jail. On several occasions, police have used force to disperse protesters camped at Factory Naka.

Earlier, the PTI had raised concerns over Khan's health. Information Minister Attaullah Tarar confirmed that the former premier had undergone an eye-related medical procedure at the Pakistan Institute of Medical Sciences in Islamabad. Commenting on this,

## Trump says 'hopefully' no need for military action against Iran

PEAK POINT

WASHINGTON: US President Donald Trump said on Thursday he hoped to avoid military action against Iran, which has threatened to strike American bases and aircraft carriers in response to any attack. Trump said he is speaking with Iran and left open the possibility of avoiding a military operation after earlier warning that time was "running out" for Tehran as the United States sends a large naval fleet to the region. When asked if he would have talks with Iran, Trump told reporters: "I have had, and I am planning on it." "We have a group headed out to a place called Iran, and hopefully we won't have to use it," the US president added, while speaking to media at the premiere of a documentary about his wife, Melania.



# SPORTS



## PCB announces Future Stars talent hunt trials nationwide



**PEAK POINT** ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has announced open trials across the country under its Future Stars Talent Hunt Programme to promote cricketing talent at the grassroots level.

The trials will be held in 15 cities from February 11 to May 1, through which around 350 players will be selected and inducted into the country's 16 regional academies.

The trials will be supervised by a selection panel comprising former Test cricketers, including PCB Director High Performance

Aaqib Javed and National Cricket Academy coaches Misbah-ul-Haq and Abdul Razzaq. The programme will commence at the PCB Ground in Sukkur, where players from the Larkana region will showcase their skills.

In the first phase, open trials will be conducted in Abbottabad, Bahawalpur, Faisalabad, Hub District, Hyderabad, Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Muzaffarabad, Peshawar, Quetta, Rawalpindi, Sialkot, and Sukkur.

The selection panel will choose up to 24 players from each region, who will then attend a four-week specialised training camp at their

**PCB FUTURE STARS TALENT HUNT PROGRAMME**  
**OPEN TRIALS SCHEDULE**

DATE	VENUE	REGION
11 FEBRUARY	PCB GROUND, SUKKUR	LARKANA
12-13 FEBRUARY	NAZ STADIUM, HYDERABAD	HYDERABAD
15-16 FEBRUARY	KOCCA STADIUM, KARACHI	KARACHI
25-26 MARCH	DRING STADIUM, BAHAWALPUR	BAHAWALPUR
28-29 MARCH	MULTAN CRICKET STADIUM	MULTAN
1-2 APRIL	IQBAL STADIUM, FAISALABAD	FAISALABAD
4-5 APRIL	LCCA GROUND, LAHORE	LAHORE
7-8 APRIL	FARUZ STADIUM, SIALKOT	SIALKOT
10-11 APRIL	RAWALPINDI CRICKET STADIUM	RAWALPINDI
13-14 APRIL	MARGHZAR CRICKET GROUND	ISLAMABAD
16-17 APRIL	ABBOTTABAD CRICKET STADIUM	ABBOTTABAD
19-20 APRIL	IMRAN KHAN CRICKET STADIUM, PESHAWAR	PESHAWAR
22-23 APRIL	HAYATABAD CRICKET STADIUM, PESHAWAR	HADA
25-26 APRIL	MUZAFFARABAD CRICKET STADIUM	AIJK
28-29 APRIL	BUGTI CRICKET STADIUM, QUETTA	QUETTA
1 MAY	HUB STADIUM, LISBELA	DM JAMALI

respective regional headquarters. Top-performing players from the regional camps will be invited to the National Cricket Academy, where they will undergo a one-year skills development programme. Cash prizes will also be awarded at each venue to the best fast bowler, spinner, and batter during the trials.

## USA announces squad for ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026



**PEAK POINT**

NEW YORK: The United States has officially announced its squad for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, confirming a balanced selection that blends experience with emerging talent as the team prepares for the global tournament. The squad includes a mix of seasoned campaigners and rising players who have featured prominently in the USA's recent progress in T20 cricket. Among those named are Shayan Jahangir, Jasdeep Singh, Sateja Mukkamalla, Saurabh Netravalkar, Andries Gous, Sanjay Krishnamurthi, Ali Khan, Shaheen Jeyarajaya, Harmeet Singh, Mohammad Mohsin, Milind Kumar, Nosthush Kenjige, Shubham Ranjane and Shadley van Schalkwyk. USA cricket has made notable strides in the shortest format over the past few years, with improved performances at international level and growing depth within the squad. The latest selection reflects continuity in team planning while also rewarding players who have delivered consistent performances in domestic and international competitions. The announcement comes as preparations gather pace for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2026, which is scheduled to begin on 7 February. The tournament will run until 8 March, with India and Sri Lanka set to co-host the event.

## President, PM congratulate Green Shirts on win in first T20 over Australia

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday congratulated the national cricket team on their win over Australia in the opening



match at Gaddafi Stadium in Lahore, where Pakistan defeated Australia by 22 runs in the opening game. In their separately issued statements, the president and prime minister commended the players' efforts, strategy, discipline, and exemplary teamwork which made the victory possible. President Zardari said that the victory highlighted Pakistan's positive image in sports and congratulated the Pakistan Cricket Board, especially Chairman Mohsin Naqvi.

## Pakistan Davis Cup team announced for the Tie against Senegal

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistan Tennis Federation (PTF) has officially announced the national squad that will represent Pakistan in the upcoming Davis Cup tie against Senegal, scheduled to be held on 6-7 February 2026 at the Pakistan Sports Complex, Islamabad. The selected team is a combination of experienced and emerging players, with the aim of delivering a strong performance on home soil. Pakistan Davis Cup Team Officials: Captain Mushaf Zia - Aqeel Khan-Player Coach Muhammad Muzammil Murtaza - Player Muhammad Shoaib-Player Yousaf Khalil (Reserve) Rashid Malik - Captain Mushaf Zia - Aqeel Khan-Player Coach Muhammad



Khalid - Coach Shahzad Khan - Coach M. Arshad Javed - Trainer Muhammad Shahid-Physio Col.Zia-ud-din Tufail -Team Manager The Pakistan Tennis Federation extends its best wishes to the team for success in this important Davis Cup tie and is confident that the players will make the nation proud.

## ICC T20 World Cup trophy arrives in Lahore for official tour



## ICC names Shahid Afridi's 2009 heroics among most iconic T20 World Cup performances

**PEAK POINT**

LAHORE: The International Cricket Council (ICC) has released a list of the most iconic performances in the history of the ICC T20 World Cups, with Pakistan's former all-rounder Shahid Afridi earning a prominent place for his match-winning role in the 2009 edition.

According to the ICC, Afridi's outstanding all-round performance during the 2009 T20 World Cup has been declared iconic.

Afridi played a decisive role in Pakistan's title-winning campaign, producing match-winning displays in both the semi-final and the final.

In the semi-final, Afridi scored a crucial 51 runs and also claimed two key wickets, guiding Pakistan into the final.

He then rose to the occasion once again in the final, smashing a match-winning

54 off just 40 balls to help Pakistan clinch their maiden T20 World Cup title.

His calm yet aggressive leadership with the bat remains one of the most memorable moments in Pakistan's T20 history.

From later tournaments, the ICC highlighted Sunil Narine's 3 wickets for 9 runs in the 2012 World Cup, Rangaana Herath's five-wicket haul in the 2014 semi-final, and Carlos Brathwaite's four consecutive sixes in the 2016



The ICC's list also features several other legendary performances, including Yuvraj Singh's six sixes in an over during the inaugural 2007 T20 World Cup, and Michael Hussey's blistering 60 off 24 balls against Pakistan in the 2010 edition.

More recent iconic knocks include Mitchell Marsh's 77 in the 2021 final, Ben Stokes' 52 against Pakistan in the 2022 World Cup, and Virat Kohli's brilliant 76 runs in the 2024 T20 World Cup.

## ICC releases official song for Men's T20 World Cup 2026





# PIA Privatization, Airport outsourcing, and Budget constraints spark tough questions in Senate Panel

**NADEEM TANOLI**  
ISLAMABAD: Sharp questions over the pace, transparency, and future impact of privatization dominated a Senate review as lawmakers scrutinized the handling of Pakistan International Airlines, warned against weak oversight in airport outsourcing, and questioned whether the privatization machinery itself is adequately equipped or quietly under-resourced to manage high stakes public asset sales. The concerns surfaced in a meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Privatization, where members examined budget utilization, staffing capacity, and post privatiza-

tion outcomes. Senators pressed officials on whether the current approach risks repeating past failures, particularly as sensitive national assets and passenger-facing services move toward private control. At the center of the discussion was the privatization of Pakistan International Airlines Corporation Limited, a transaction the committee was told is nearing completion within a compressed timeline. While the chair praised the ministry and the Privatization Commission for steering the airline through the process, members demanded clarity on what exactly is being transferred, especially the assets held by the airline's

holding company. Questions were raised about hangars, spare parts, and technical infrastructure, amid concerns that incomplete disclosure could weaken parliamentary oversight of a deal with long-term national implications. The committee also confronted the Privatization Commission over its request for a higher operational budget to hire market based experts. Officials argued that the existing workforce cannot simultaneously handle multiple complex transactions and that sector-specific expertise is critical, particularly for power distribution companies. Some senators challenged this justification, pointing out that the PIA

transaction was concluded without such hires and questioning whether new appointments would genuinely accelerate privatization or simply expand bureaucracy. The chair agreed in principle with strengthening capacity but signaled that scrutiny over outcomes would continue. Attention then turned to the outsourcing of services at Islamabad International Airport, where lawmakers openly criticized the deteriorating state of passenger facilities. Senators described poor food services and unsatisfactory restrooms as emblematic of broader governance failures, arguing that commercial operations have been mismanaged under gov-

ernment control. While officials confirmed that outsourcing is being pursued as a priority, members cautioned that privatization without safeguards could expose passengers to exploitation and data misuse. A particularly contentious point was the proposal to bundle outsourcing at major airports with smaller regional airports. Supporters argued that this approach could prevent uneven service quality and neglect of less profitable routes, while critics warned that without strict contracts and monitoring, smaller airports could still be sidelined. The committee chair instructed officials to fast-track the process but

stressed that passenger data protection must be treated as a non-negotiable requirement, not an afterthought. The discussion underscored a deeper tension running through Pakistan's privatization agenda: pressure to move quickly versus the need for transparency, institutional strength, and public safeguards. Senators made it clear that while privatization and outsourcing may be inevitable, the credibility of the process will depend on how rigorously the government protects public interest, workers' rights, and service standards once control shifts to private hands.

# PM Youth Programme, Chinese firm sign LoI to train 50,000 youth

**PEAK POINT**  
ISLAMABAD: The Prime Minister's Youth Programme (PMYP) signed a Letter of Intent (LoI) with China Pakistan TVET Cooperation and TANG Chinese Education & Technology (Pvt) Ltd at the Prime Minister's Office to strengthen China-Pakistan collaboration in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET), aiming to train 50,000 youth and develop 2,000 master trainers in

line with domestic and global skills requirements. The LoI signing ceremony is witnessed by Chairman Prime Minister's Youth Programme Rana Mashhood Ahmad Khan, underscoring the government's commitment to equipping young people with market-relevant and future-ready skills. Senior officials from both sides attended the ceremony, including Li Jinsong, President and Founder of TANG Chinese Education & Technology Ltd., and Ms.



Xanib Abdul Rehman, Section Officer, Prime Minister's Youth Programme, along with their respective delegations. The agreement reflects a shared commitment to advancing demand driven vocational and digital education.

It envisages the development of advanced training standards, joint certification mechanisms, and institutional linkages between Pakistan and China to enhance the quality, relevance, and international competitiveness of technical education. Under the initiative, large scale capacity building efforts will be undertaken, including the training of approximately 2,000 master trainers, who will subsequently provide skills training to over 50,000 youth

across the country over a five year period. The programme will focus on high growth sectors such as digital technologies, e-commerce, fintech, artificial intelligence, media, tourism, and entrepreneurship. The cooperation further aims to establish smart digital training centres, promote international exposure through digital skills competitions, and create pathways for productive employment in Pakistan and abroad.

# Opinion & Editorial

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## Gaza's future

AS the second phase of US President Donald Trump's peace plan for Gaza unfolds, questions remain about the future of the Strip, as well as the rest of the occupied territories, particularly their right to self-determination. Hamas, which ruled Gaza before the Israeli genocide began following the group's 2023 attacks, has said it is ready to hand over power to the National Committee for the Administration of Gaza, the body of Palestinian technocrats formed under the Trumpian plan. Yet the issue of the group's arms remains unresolved, and could remain a sticking point that could scuttle the ceasefire, which Israel has violated at will by killing hundreds of Palestinians since last October. Moreover, the Rafah crossing with Egypt is also due to open. But here too Tel Aviv has sinister plans; it reportedly wants to ease the exit of Palestinians from Gaza, but make their re-entry to their homeland from Egypt increasingly difficult. This supports the claim that Israel wants to ethnically cleanse the held territory. Also, Mr Trump's son-in-law Jared Kushner unveiled a plan for a "New Gaza" in Davos recently. Many have rightly asked if Palestinians will have a place at all in this garish real estate scheme, apart from roles of servitude.

## Deeper effort needed

**FAISAL BARI**  
SCHOOLING has changed a lot over the last three decades. Teachers engage students more; the curriculum is constantly updated; books and teaching material are more interesting and even interactive; new ways of teaching and engaging students have been introduced; technology has made its way into education in a big way; corporal punishment is officially banned and frowned upon if still practised; it is widely accepted that children need to learn through doing and exploring rather than just listening to lectures; and last but not least, it is recognised that learning should not be a drudgery and should be enjoyable. There is no reason why learning cannot be enjoyable. Bigger changes from outside have also had impacts. Online content has made access to quality material easier for teachers, parents and students. Online teaching and learning is opening new doors to ways of how children can be educated. It also improves access to subjects and areas that might not be available locally. Students can now participate in international competitions and other interactions from their schools or homes. AI has only just begun to have an impact. It is hard to see where it will take us but it will have a significant impact in multiple educational domains. Social media has changed access issues, and is shaping

the brains, minds and habits of children for good and for bad. The impact is already significant and will be more so over the next decade. When I talk to children, teenagers and young adults, it is clear that most of them enjoy school or college more than how much my friends and I enjoyed school. These changes need to be built on. There is no reason why any child should not have an enjoyable and fruitful learning experience. Education and learning are part and parcel of human existence. How does it make sense to not work on making this important part of life enjoyable? At the same time, I have observed certain things over my 30-year or so teaching career that too need to be given some thought. Social media has been shown to have negative impacts on child development. It is not just trolling and peer pressure that are of concern but also how social media and electronic gadgets tend to hard-wire children's brains. A few countries have already started limiting access to social media and internet during school hours. Some have even put age limits on when children can access social media. We need to think this through. The technology is having an impact on student concentration, attention spans and even on how children learn. There is no reason why learning should not be an enjoyable and fruitful experience. Learning should be

enjoyable but it is also the case that hard things require a lot of effort to learn. Memory usage and sharpness, concentration, grit and resilience need hard work to build. In a bid to make learning enjoyable, some schools end up making things too easy. Students are not able to stay with difficult problems for long. They get bored or frustrated far too easily. But there are definitely hard problems we need to tackle and students need to be able to build "muscles" for the hard work needed. Multiplication and division, introduced around Grade 3 and 4, are hard concepts to understand and work out. I have seen too many teachers only demonstrate the method for doing multiplication and/or long division and then just relying on examples and exercises to get students reasonably comfortable. There is little to no effort to engage with the concepts behind them. More importantly, there is little attempt to work on memory, grit, concentration, resilience and other desirable attributes when working on explaining the concepts. Learning multiplication tables "by heart" might not be needed anymore as students have access to calculators and computers all the time (though I do feel memorisation gets a bad rap when learning poetry, tables, etc, is excellent practice).  
Courtesy Dawn

## The politics of delay

**AMNA HASHMI**  
Power in international politics is mostly linked with acts of decisiveness, or military intervention, sanctions, vetoes, recognition or denial. Yet one of the most influential powers of the present day is in a much less obvious form: delay. Waiting, increasingly, is not an accident of global governance but a technique of it. In a global order where coercion is not overt, time is a fine but powerful tool of power. Delay is political since it is administered. Who is waiting on a visa application, who is on ceasefire talks without a timeline, who is on sanctions are under review, whose IMF tranche is released or not, is determined by someone. Such choices are hardly reflected as rejections. They are instead in the form of procedures, assessments and technicalities. And, in IR, the controlling procedure is frequently controlling the outcome. This logic is not new. Imperial powers governed colonies not only through force but through slow courts, postponed reforms and bureaucratic bottlenecks that drained resistance without triggering revolt. Even time itself became a disciplinary tool. The only difference is that this reasoning has shifted to international organisations that boast of neutrality, legality and humanitarian interests. Let's consider contemporary asylum regimes. When refugees leave conflict zones, they may have to wait years before being granted legal status either in the host countries or through UNHCR procedures. At this place of waiting, they are in legal limbo — they cannot work wholly, they cannot go back, they cannot plan. There is no official rejection, but life is practically suspended. The lack of decision becomes the decision. In IR terms, we call it governance without accountability: states have the benefits of retaining control without bearing the political costs of refusal.  
Courtesy Tribune

## Ahsan urges value-added exports to achieve self-reliance at Gulfood 2026



PEAK POINT

DUBAI: Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal has stressed the need for value addition and export expansion to achieve economic self-reliance, saying the government was prioritizing export-led growth under Uraan Pakistan, during his visit to the Pakistan Pavilion at Gulfood 2026.

"We are committed to promoting productivity, quality and innovation

so that 'Made in Pakistan' becomes a global symbol of quality and our products are visible on every shelf across international markets," the minister said while interacting with Pakistani exhibitors.

The minister toured various stalls at the Pakistan Pavilion and met exporters representing different food and agro-based sectors.

He encouraged them to focus on enhancing exports, improving product standards and increasing value-added offerings to compete effectively

in international markets.

Expressing satisfaction over Pakistan's strong participation, Ahsan Iqbal appreciated the efforts of the Trade Development Authority of Pakistan (TDAP) and the country's mission in Dubai for organizing a vibrant and well-represented pavilion at the global food exhibition.

"I am very happy to see that Pakistani exporters have set up a large number of stalls at the Gulfood Expo," he said, adding that such international platforms created vital opportunities for market access, branding and business partnerships.

Highlighting the government's policy direction, the minister said that under Uraan Pakistan, increasing exports was the foremost national priority to steer the economy towards sustainable growth and reduce dependence on external borrowing. "If we are to permanently free ourselves from reliance on the IMF and foreign debt, there is only one way forward - promoting and expanding our exports," he remarked.

## Amir Muqam slams PTI governance in KP, hails federal & Punjab initiatives

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Federal Minister for Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan and SAFRON, Engineer Amir Muqam, on Friday strongly criticized the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf government in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa calling it misgovernance, corruption and complete failure to deliver basic services to the people. Addressing a large public gathering in Rawalpindi, the minister highlighted several key government policies and development initiatives being undertaken by the federal government and the Punjab government. He said the federal government under Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif has taken decisive steps for economic recovery, providing public relief, developing backward regions and giving special attention to Kashmir, Gilgit-Baltistan and the



merged districts. He also praised the leadership of Chief Minister Punjab Maryam Nawaz Sharif for introducing people-friendly reforms in health, education, infrastructure and social welfare including free education and healthcare, laptop distribution, scholarships and youth incentive programmes. He said that Punjab was setting an example of excellent performance and delivery on promises, while the people of KPK were demanding the same kind of development and facilities that are being provided in Punjab.

## Pakistan, Saudi Arabia agree to strengthen cooperation in energy, minerals sectors

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum Ali Pervaiz Malik and Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy on Friday discussed areas of mutual cooperation and further strengthen bilateral relations between the two brotherly countries.

During the meeting, both sides reviewed ongoing collaboration and explored new avenues for cooperation, particularly in the energy and minerals sectors, said a news release.

They reaffirmed their commitment to enhancing economic partnership and promoting mutually beneficial investment opportunities. Ambassador Al-Malkiy appreciated Pakistan's active participation in the Future Minerals Forum held recently in Riyadh and highlighted the importance of continued engagement between

the two countries to advance cooperation in the minerals sector.

Ali Pervaiz Malik congratulated the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia on the successful organization of the Future Minerals Forum and noted that the platform offers significant opportunities for regional collaboration.

He emphasized that Pakistan and Saudi Arabia possess vast potential to deepen cooperation in both minerals and energy sectors.

The Minister expressed confidence that the longstanding brotherly relations between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia would translate into tangible outcomes, fostering investment, technology exchange, and sustainable development initiatives for mutual benefit. Both sides agreed to maintain close coordination to further strengthen economic and strategic cooperation in the coming period.

## President, PM laud security forces for anti-terror operations in Balochistan, KP

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari and Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday paid tribute to the security forces for carrying out successful operations in Balochistan and Bannu city of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa against the foreign-sponsored terrorists. In their separately issued statements, the president and the prime minister said that the effective actions against the terrorists manifested the state's unshakeable resolve against the terrorists backed by Fintatul Hindustan and Fitna al Khawarij.

"The anti-terror actions against terrorists under the Azm-e-Istehkam would continue for country's peace and stability. The vigilance of security forces and law enforcement agencies is commendable for the complete elimination of proxy terrorism in the country," President Zardari remarked. Prime Minister Shehbaz appreciated the security forces for eliminating 41 terrorists of Fintatul Hindustan in the said operations and said that the forces were achieving huge successes.

## BOI minister meets Silkway Impex, Chinese BRI delegation to advance strategic investment Cooperation

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held a meeting with a delegation of Silkway Impex Pvt. Ltd. and a high-level Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) delegation, led by Mr. Deng Yubin, Head of BRI for Yunnan Province, to discuss enhanced bilateral investment cooperation between Pakistan and China.

Welcoming the delegation, the Federal Minister stated that Pakistan-China friendship has a long history and continues to grow stronger through close economic and strategic cooperation. He emphasized that both



ISLAMABAD: Deputy Chairman of the Senate, Syedaal Khan Nasir on Friday met British Member of Parliament Imran Hussain at Parliament House, Islamabad. The meeting was also attended by Federal Minister and Chairman Parliamentary Committee on Kashmir, Rana Muhammad Qasim Noon, along with a 15-member delegation. The delegation included Imran Hussain's father, a former Member of the British Parliament, the Country Director of Orphans in Need, Muhammad Faisal Ishaq, and the Head of Fundraising of the organization. During the meeting, detailed discussions were held on Pakistan-UK parliamentary, economic and trade relations, the role

of the Pakistani diaspora in the United Kingdom, development of underprivileged areas of Pakistan, and the Kashmir issue. Representatives of Orphans in Need briefed the Deputy Chairman Senate about the organization's welfare initiatives, stating that it currently supports over 120,000 orphan children in 14 countries worldwide. The organization is actively working on projects related to education, social welfare, and community development.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Petroleum, Mr Ali Pervaiz Malik, met with H.E Nawaf bin Saeed Ahmad Al-Malkiy, Ambassador of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to Pakistan.

## NA Committee recommends govt bill to enhance 33% women representation in all federal boards & others

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The National Assembly (NA) Standing Committee on Federal Education and Professional Training recommended the Government Bill titled "The Islamabad Capital Territory Private Educational Institutions (Registration and Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2026" to ensure 33% women representations in all Federal Boards, Statutory Bodies, Public Sector Organizations, and Allied Committees under the Federal Government during the 21st Meeting. The meeting was held under the Acting Chairmanship of Mr. Abdul Aleem Khan, Member

National Assembly (MNA) at Conference Room of Federal Urdu University of Arts, Sciences & Technology, Islamabad.

Earlier, The committee deferred consideration of the Private Members' Bills presented during the meeting. The committee asked the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training to formulate a comprehensive strategy in addressing the operational challenges pertaining to the Private Educational Institutions Regulatory Authority (PEIRA). This strategy should encompass the regulation of fee structures within private educa-

tional institutions and propose measures to enhance the Authority's capacity for the effective discharge of its mandated functions.

The Committee expressed serious concern over the occupation of buildings belonging to the Directorate General of Special Education (DGSE) and called for their immediate vacation by the occupying entities. The Committee emphasized that these facilities must be restored to their original purpose and utilized exclusively for the welfare and education of children with disabilities.

The committee was informed that out of the 25.3

million out-of-school children aged 5-16 in Pakistan, with 89,127 in Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), the Ministry of Federal Education & Professional Training launched a non-formal education (NFE) initiative in 2023, implemented through partners like NCHD, BECS, and NGOs, which has enrolled 71,005 students in ICT via community schools and Accelerated Learning Program centers that target marginalized groups through models using local spaces and teachers. The program operates under a policy framework aligned with SDG-4 and Article 25-A, emphasizing inclusive

access, data-driven planning, and community engagement, funded by federal allocations, community contributions, and public-private partnerships, and is supported by a coordination cell for quality assurance, teacher training, standardized assessment, and a comprehensive monitoring system resulting in improved access, teacher capacity,

learning outcomes, and successful mainstreaming of students into formal education.

The National Vocational and Technical Training Commission (NAVTTTC) informed the committee that its total sanctioned strength comprises 332 posts, of

which 245 are currently filled by a mix of regular employees and officers appointed on deputation, while 85 posts remain vacant.

The committee observed that prolonged deputations often give rise to perceptions of favoritism and preferential treatment, adversely affecting morale and efficiency within the organization.

The Committee was informed that, in pursuance of the recommendations of the Committee constituted by the Ministry of Federal Education and Professional Training regarding the regularization of employees, a summary was submitted to the Federal Cabinet.