



**President Zardari welcomes Uzbek president's invitation, emphasises stronger ties**



**Govt to train one million non-IT professionals in AI: Shaza**



**Maryam Nawaz, Sarfraz Bugti vow joint efforts for peace in Balochistan**

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## PM Shehbaz lauds launch of Raqami Islamic Digital Bank as milestone for Pak-Kuwait economic ties

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif on Tuesday termed the granting of a commercial licence to Raqami Islamic Digital Bank a major milestone in Pakistan's evolving financial sector and a significant step toward deepening Pakistan-Kuwait bilateral economic cooperation.

Addressing the concluding session of the digital licensing ceremony, the prime minister said that strong political relations must be complemented by robust economic engagement, stressing that sustainable partnerships cannot flourish without trade, investment, and financial collaboration.

"Pakistan and Kuwait are brotherly countries bound by decades of strong cul-

tural, political, and people-to-people relations," Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif said, adding, "It is now time to further strengthen our economic and investment ties so that this relationship grows from strength to strength." The prime minister congratulated Raqami Islamic Digital Bank on becoming Pakistan's third licensed digital retail bank, expressing confidence that the institution would contribute to financial inclusion, innovation, and Shariah-compliant banking in the country. He said digital Islamic banking would play a key role in modernising Pakistan's financial ecosystem while remaining aligned with Islamic principles. Speaking on the occasion, the Kuwaiti ambassador congratulated the Raqami.



ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif warding license of 3rd Digital Retail Bank for Raqami Islamic Digital Bank to Chairman Abdullah Al-Mutari.

## Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-26 culminated at Karachi

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Maritime Security Exercise SEA GUARD-26 culminated at Karachi with a debrief session. Vice Admiral Raja Rab Nawaz, Chief of Staff, Pakistan Navy, graced the occasion as the Chief Guest, said a news release issued by the Director General Public Relations (Navy). During the debrief, representatives of participating organizations were presented with an analytical review of the conduct of the exercise, encompassing various scenarios executed to validate information-sharing and response mechanisms among stakeholders against maritime sector contingencies. The Chief Guest appreciated the effective conduct of the exercise and lauded the role of the Joint Maritime Information Coordination Centre (JMICC) in synergizing the efforts of all maritime stakeholders. He emphasized the importance of sustained engagement and collaboration, while reaffirming Pakistan Navy's proactive commitment to safeguarding Pakistan's maritime interests. Exercise SEA GUARD-26, the third edition of the series.

## International PATS competition concluded at Kharian

PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: The 9th International Pakistan Army Team Spirit (PATS) Competition successfully concluded at Kharian on 9 February 2026.

The closing ceremony was graced by the Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, COAS & CDF, as the Chief Guest, said an ISPR news release.

The Team Spirit Competition is a 60-hour-long patrolling exercise, designed to enhance professional military skills through the exchange of innovative ideas, tactical experiences and best practices among participating teams.

Conducted from 5 February 2026 onwards,

the exercise took place in the semi-mountainous terrain of Punjab, Pakistan, providing a realistic and challenging operational environment.



Over the years, PATS has evolved into a prestigious and highly competitive military exercise, recognized for promoting professional excellence and mutual learning among participating nations. The forum continues to

strengthen military-to-military cooperation and understanding, while fostering camaraderie and team spirit in a demanding operational setting. This year the competition featured wide-ranging participation from 19 countries including Bahrain, Bangladesh, Belarus, Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Malaysia, Maldives, Morocco, Nepal, Qatar, Sri Lanka,

Turkiye, United States of America and Uzbekistan. Indonesia, Myanmar and Thailand attended the exercise as observers. 16 domestic teams from the Pakistan Army and Pakistan Navy, along with observers from the Pakistan Air Force also participated in the event.

Video Player  
Addressing the closing ceremony, the COAS & CDF commended all participating teams for their exceptional professionalism, physical and mental endurance, operational competence and high morale displayed during the exercise. He emphasized the importance of such multinational engagements in enhancing collective preparedness and adapting.

## Shehbaz to attend US-led Board of Peace meeting on Gaza

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is likely to attend the first leaders' conference of US President Donald Trump's newly formed Board of Peace, sources said. They said the premier would travel to Washington on February 18 and attend the meeting the following day. The high-level meeting is set to take place at the United States Institute of Peace and will include heads of state, heads of government, and prominent international representatives. The inaugural session will centre on Gaza's post-conflict.

## Non-bailable arrest warrant issued for KP CM Afridi in Peca case

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: An Islamabad court on Tuesday issued a non-bailable arrest warrant for Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Chief Minister Sohail Afridi in a case pertaining to misleading statements against state institutions and damage to their reputation. The case was registered by the National Cyber Crime Investigation Authority (NCCIA) under the Prevention of Electronic Crimes Act (Peca), 2016, following allegations that the chief minister made false and defamatory claims against state institutions. During the hearing,

## Only purpose was to get respect for Bangladesh, says PCB chief Naqvi after talks with ICC

PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) Chairman Mohsin Naqvi on Tuesday said in the context of his recent engagements with Bangladesh Cricket Board (BCB) and International Cricket Council (ICC) officials that the purpose was to "get respect for Bangladesh". Naqvi said this while speaking to the media in Peshawar, a day after the government announced it was withdrawing its decision to boycott the group-stage match against India in the T20 World Cup, scheduled for February 15. The development followed protracted negotiations between the ICC, the cricket boards of Pakistan and Bangladesh, consultations among national leaders and interventions by friendly nations such as Sri Lanka and the United Arab



Emirates. The now-withdrawn decision to boycott several conditions that were reportedly put forward during the match against arch-rival India was announced by the government on February 1 after Bangladesh were replaced by Scotland in the tournament, following their refusal to tour India over safety concerns in the wake of soured political relations between the Asian neighbours.

The matter was raised during Naqvi's media talk in Peshawar on Tuesday, where he was asked about

ing his meeting with the ICC and BCB officials on Sunday. In his response, Naqvi said: "We did not discuss anything apart from Bangladesh; our only purpose was to get Bangladesh respect, to highlight the injustice done to them. And you saw that whatever demands Bangladesh made, they were accepted. That's it." He added, "We had no personal interest in the

meeting ... our task was purely related to Bangladesh. The government made the decision on that [basis]. When their demands have been accepted, and it has been acknowledged that injustice was done to them, we are playing after that."

The developments unfolded as the ongoing T20 World Cup, co-hosted by India and Sri Lanka, began on February 7. It was, however, overshadowed by an acrimonious political build-up after Bangladesh, who refused to play in India citing security concerns, were replaced by Scotland.

Bangladesh remained firm on not taking part in the event after the ICC rejected their request to move their matches to Sri Lanka. After mulling its stance, Pakistan gave its cricket team the nod to participate in the World.

## Imran Khan 'in good health,' lawyer says after meeting PTI founder in Adiala Jail

PEAK POINT



ISLAMABAD: Barrister Salman Safdar, appointed by the Supreme Court as a friend of the court, held a lengthy meeting with Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf founder and former prime minister Imran Khan at Adiala Jail in Rawalpindi, with a detailed report on the jailed leader's condition and facilities set to be submitted to the top court on Wednesday.

According to officials and court proceedings, the meeting lasted around three hours. After leaving Central Jail Rawalpindi, commonly known as Adiala Jail, Safdar avoided formal media talk and did not share detailed remarks about the discussion. In a brief exchange with journalists outside the prison, he confirmed that access.



# SPORTS



## Peshawar to host PSL 11 amid new security and governance measures in KP



### PEAK POINT

PESHAWAR: A decision has been made to hold Pakistan Super League (PSL) matches in Peshawar this year.

A high-level meeting was held at the Corps Headquarters in Peshawar to review the overall security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

During the review meeting, tributes were paid to civilians and security personnel who were martyred in terrorist attacks.

It was decided in the meeting that PSL matches will be organized in Peshawar this year.

The meeting also resolved that

in Malakand Division, the provincial government's governance model will be immediately implemented under the supervision of the provincial police and other provincial agencies.

Subsequently, this successful model will be gradually implemented in other affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, particularly in Khyber, Orakzai, and Kurram.

To ensure effective monitoring of all development projects in these districts and to review any military operations, a special sub-committee will be established under the leadership of the Chief

Minister, which will hold monthly review meetings. This special sub-committee will include elected representatives, the Peshawar Corps Commander, Chief Secretary, IG Police, provincial officials, and representatives of the federal agencies. The committee will not only monitor governance and development projects in these districts but will also create alternative employment opportunities to ensure sustainable income for the local population.

Additionally, the committee will make effective arrangements to address issues of temporarily displaced persons.

Through effective coordination between the federal government and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a unified stance and complete harmony will be maintained on major issues such as terrorism.

The meeting emphasized the creation of sustainable employment opportunities to prevent extremist thinking among youth and promote positive thinking.

It was also decided that strict actions against illegal activities such as unauthorized SIM cards, explosives, and extortion will continue. Furthermore, gradual profiling of non-custom-paid vehicles will be carried out.

## 'Cricket Wins', Shahid Afridi reacts to Pak-India T20 World Cup clash



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Former Pakistan captain Shahid Afridi has welcomed the decision allowing the national cricket team to face India in the upcoming T20 World Cup.

Afridi said the move upheld the spirit of cricket, noting that the Government of Pakistan's decision preserved the prestige of the T20 World Cup. He added that the decision also ensured stability in the global cricketing arena.

"Cricket has won, which highlights the role of the sport as a bridge to reduce distances and bring people closer," Afridi commented.

On Monday night, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced that following an ICC press release, Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif instructed the Pakistan team to play the group match against India on February 15 in the T20 World Cup.

Following the announcement, a spike in flight ticket prices from Mumbai and Colombo is observed.

## Pakistan beat USA by 32 runs in T20 World Cup Group A thriller



### PEAK POINT

COLOMBO: Pakistan defeated the United States by 32 runs in their ICC T20 World Cup Group A encounter at the Sinhalese Sports Club on Tuesday, ending a tense contest that had fans on the edge of their seats. Put into bat after losing the toss, Pakistan posted 190-9 in 20 overs, thanks to a spectacular innings from Farhan, who struck 73 off 41 balls.

Babar Azam contributed a steady 46 from 32 deliveries, while Shadab Khan's late flourish of 30 off 12 balls provided momentum in the death overs. Despite a few middle-order collapses, Pakistan's total proved sufficient against a competitive USA side.

Pakistan batting began cautiously. Saim managed 19 before being caught by Netravalkar off van

Schalkwyk. Farhan's counter-attacking innings steadied the ship, hitting boundaries at regular intervals and keeping the run rate healthy. Salman Mirza fell cheaply for 1, and Nawaz added just 5, while Shadab and Babar combined to push the total beyond 130. The lower order struggled, losing wickets at crucial stages. Faheem Ashraf (1), Usman Tariq (0), and Abrar

(0) fell cheaply, but Shaheen Afridi's unbeaten 9 helped push the score to a challenging 190-9. Pakistan also received 6 extras in total.

Van Schalkwyk's 4 wickets for 25 runs were the most successful for the USA, while Mohsin and Harmeet claimed one wicket each.

Netravalkar and Milind also chipped in with one each, keeping Pakistan under pressure at intervals. USA's chase of 191 for victory, the USA showed flashes of resistance but could never fully recover from early breakthroughs. Shayan top-scored with 49 off 34 balls, and Faheem Shubham made an impressive 51 from 30 deliveries.

## All-rounder De Leede takes Netherlands to big win over Namibia at T20 World Cup



## New Zealand thrash UAE by 10 wickets in T20 World Cup

### PEAK POINT

CHENNAI: New Zealand registered a commanding 10-wicket victory over the United Arab Emirates in the 11th match of the T20 World Cup, comfortably chasing a target of 174 in Chennai with several overs to spare.

Batting second, New Zealand overhauled the 174-run target in the 16th over without losing a wicket, producing one of the most clinical chases of the tournament so far. The opening pair dominated from the start and kept the required rate under control throughout the innings, leaving the UAE bowlers searching for breakthroughs.

Tim Seifert led the charge with an unbeaten 89 off just 42 balls, delivering a high-impact knock packed with attacking strokes. His innings included 12 fours and three sixes, as he repeatedly pierced the field and punished anything short or wide. Seifert maintained a rapid scoring tempo and rotated the strike effectively to deny the bowlers any relief.

Alongside him, Finn Allen played an equally influential role, scoring 84 not out in a fluent and aggressive display. Allen matched Seifert shot for shot during key phases of the chase, ensuring there was no slowdown in momentum. The pair's unbroken opening stand carried New Zealand all the way to the target and sealed the

result without any late drama. The UAE bowling unit struggled to make an impact despite having a competitive total on the board. None of the bowlers managed to take a wicket, and several attempts at changing pace and length failed to disrupt New Zealand's rhythm. Missed opportunities in the field added



backbone of the total and kept UAE in contention. Alishan Sharafu contributed 55 with a controlled and well-paced innings, while Mayank Kumar added 21 valuable runs to push the score towards a challenging level. UAE built useful partnerships but were unable to fully capitalise in the closing overs against tight bowling.

## Haider Ali carries Pakistan's Paralympic dream into Dubai Championship





# PMDC under senate fire over Rs 1.29 Billion MDCAT revenue and 50% weightage

**NADEEM TANOLI**  
 ISLAMABAD: The Senate Standing Committee on health questioned the governance of the Pakistan Medical and Dental Council after refusing to hear its agenda due to the absence of the PMDC President and Registrar, while lawmakers raised serious concerns over MDCAT revenues exceeding Rs 1.29 billion, vacant medical seats despite tens of thousands of eligible candidates, the legality and fairness of the 50 percent MDCAT weightage, and the exclusion of parliamentarians from the PMDC governing structure. The meeting opened with a confrontation when Senator Rubina Khalid objected to PMDC being represented by a Deputy Registrar, Dr Imdad, instead of the President or Registrar. She questioned how a Senate Standing Committee could be represented by an officer of that rank and termed it unacceptable. Despite an attempt by the chair to proceed, senators insisted the matter be deferred, accusing PMDC leadership of taking parliamentary oversight lightly. The chair agreed, noting that the absence reflected a lack of seriousness. During the discussion, Secretary Health Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh informed the committee that PMDC officials were engaged in a court hearing, but this explanation failed to satisfy members, who maintained that regulatory accountability to Parliament could not be sidelined. The committee also revisited the PMDC Amendment Bill

relating to the exclusion of parliamentarians from the PMDC council and board. Members questioned the rationale behind removing elected representatives while bureaucrats continued to sit on influential boards. Lawmakers rejected the ministry's written justification that cited Supreme Court observations on regulatory independence and freedom from external influence, calling it insulting and discriminatory. Senators argued that parliamentarians serve as the eyes and ears of political leadership and already sit on more than 30 policy boards, while conflicts of interest among bureaucrats were often ignored. The chair recalled that previously one MNA and one Senator were part of PMDC, describing the change as unacceptable. The debate intensified when PMDC officials briefed the committee on the Medical and Dental College Admission Test. The council reported that 140,143 candidates registered online for MDCAT and paid the prescribed fee, generating total revenue of Rs 1.29 billion. Senators questioned why around 5,600 registered candidates did not appear in the examination and why expenses were still charged against them. PMDC officials responded that preparatory arrangements had already been made for all registered candidates. On admissions, PMDC informed the committee that 86,247 candidates, representing 64 percent of those who appeared, qualified for MBBS by

scoring 55 percent or above, while the BDS cut off stood at 50 percent. The total national capacity for medical and dental education was stated to be more than 22,100 seats, including 18,165 MBBS seats and 3,957 BDS seats. Despite this, PMDC reported 350 vacant seats in Sindh and 426 vacant seats in Punjab, largely in the private sector. Officials attributed the vacancies mainly to socio economic constraints and lack of paying capacity, noting that no similar issues were reported in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, or Islamabad. Members questioned how seats could remain vacant when tens of thousands of candidates were eligible, calling it a policy failure. A major portion of the meeting focused on the MDCAT merit formula, particularly the 50 percent weightage given to the test, compared to 40 percent for FSc and 10 percent for Matric. Senators argued that students spend years preparing for board examinations, yet MDCAT preparation is largely dependent on expensive private academies charging fees ranging from Rs 60,000 to Rs 80,000 per month, with no government run institutions providing structured preparation. Lawmakers challenged PMDC's authority to assign such heavy weightage to a test that disadvantages students from lower income backgrounds. Secretary Health Hamed Yaqoob Sheikh defended the system, stating that MDCAT was intro-

duced through an Act of Parliament, that a question bank of over 6,000 questions had been developed, and that the latest examination was conducted without any paper leakage. He argued that no special preparation was required, a claim strongly disputed by senators who cited direct interaction with affected students and proposed calling candidates before the committee to testify. PMDC officials told the committee that the 50 percent MDCAT weightage is mandated under Section 17(3) of the PMDC Act, which requires MDCAT marks to constitute a minimum of half of the admission criteria. Senators questioned the provision's origin and signalled that Parliament could move amendments to revisit the law. The committee also demanded transparency regarding MDCAT finances and audits. The chair Senator Amir Waliuddin Chishti asked for a detailed audit of examination revenues and expenditures, noting that approximately Rs 26 crore remained unaccounted for. Lawmakers further raised concerns over private medical college fees, criticising PMDC for repeatedly citing sub-judice status even after disputes had reportedly been settled with the Pakistan Association of Medical Institutions. Members instructed PMDC to submit updated and accurate responses instead of relying on outdated legal positions.

# IRS report records Approx 700 raids and over 4,000 detentions in IIOJK in 2025



**PEAK POINT**  
 ISLAMABAD: The Institute of Regional Studies (IRS), Islamabad, launched its Annual Report 2025 on "Indian Occupied Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh" at a seminar held at its premises. Ms. Mushaal Hussein Mullick, Chairperson, Peace and Culture Organization, and former Advisor to the Prime Minister on Human Rights and Women Empowerment; Senator Asad Qasim, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Kashmir Affairs, Gilgit-Baltistan & SAFRON; Professor Dr. Muhammad Khan; Dr. Sundas Mustaqem; and Dr. Gul-i-Ayesha from NUST addressed the seminar. In his welcome remarks, Ambassador Jauhar highlighted the historical and diplomatic dimensions of the Kashmir issue, stating that it has remained on the United Nations agenda for decades and continues to demand a just and lawful resolution. He emphasized the need to re-energize diplomatic outreach and global awareness efforts. Senator Asad Qasim focused on the humanitarian costs of the prolonged conflict, drawing attention to detainees, divided families, and community-level trauma. He stated that regional peace and stability are closely linked to addressing the Kashmir dispute through credible international mechanisms. While speaking at the seminar, Mushaal Hussein Mullick described the situation as a continuing human tragedy affecting everyday life. She warned that the dispute remains a serious nuclear flashpoint and urged the international community to seize the moment to arrange an impartial and free plebiscite. All the panelists acknowledged that the report provides a comprehensive, evidence-based statistical and analytical overview of political developments.

# Opinion & Editorial

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## Poor commitment

**C**IVILIAN leaders go to great lengths to assert that parliament is "supreme"; and even enact legislation every now and then to privilege this branch of the state above the others. Yet, when the time comes to walk the walk, they have as little regard for the legislature as the institutions and individuals they routinely criticise. According to the Free and Fair Election Network, only 56 of the 332 MNAs maintained a perfect attendance record during the 23rd session of the National Assembly, held from Jan 12 to Jan 22. Only one member of the federal cabinet had the courtesy to attend all seven sittings during the session. Seven others did not bother showing up for even one. The prime minister and his elder brother, the former PM, did not attend a single sitting; neither, for that matter, did PPP chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. The PM's son, the Senate chairman's son and the defence minister's wife were seemingly similarly unbothered, skipping all seven sittings. Most of the House only showed up for the penultimate sitting, ostensibly to ensure that a bill aimed at preventing "unrestricted or excessive disclosure" of their assets would pass without a hitch. It is difficult not to be cynical when the people elected by the public to represent them in the National Assembly routinely fail to show up for work.

## Climate & policing

**Mohammad Ali Babakhel**  
**D**ESPITE much talk about climate change, developing societies have yet to improve their understanding of its dynamics and response. ADB says that Pakistan loses over \$2 billion a year on average due to climate disasters, making it one of the region's most climate-vulnerable countries. Climate change is changing policing roles. Besides crime, police are now also expected to handle disaster management, help with evacuation, rescue, control traffic, secure relief camps and distribution points, protect abandoned properties, provide public health support, mediate resource conflict, defend infrastructure and maintain order during climate shocks. Disasters increase security functions; police have to protect dams, water channels, power stations, telecom systems, hospitals, relief centres and supply chains. Climate change impacts policing in urban, rural, coastal and mountainous areas. Heatwaves impact public order; power outages and water shortages can result in angry crowds disrupting relief and food operations. Floods and earthquakes damage roads and bridges, impacting patrolling and further straining police resources. Climate-driven relocations create long-term needs for conflict mediation. In rural areas, floods cause crop damage, livestock

deaths and food depletion. Families may move from rural to urban areas, putting pressure on host communities and a greater burden on police to resolve disputes and address crime. Disasters damage communication infrastructure, complicating LEAs' search-and-rescue operations and coordination with disaster management authorities (DMAs). Emergency calls increase. Tourist safety during glacier melt must be ensured by police (last June, surging rivers killed marooned tourists in Swat). Climate change impacts crime patterns as complaints of water theft, land disputes, illegal mining and black-market trade in scarce resources increase. Extreme weather affects police stations, vehicles and communication systems, complicating response. Climate change is changing policing roles. Climate stress leads to greater timber smuggling, forest encroachment and wildlife hunting and smuggling — situations conducive to cyber fraud, fake NGOs, fraud in aid distribution, corruption in reconstruction contracts and theft in evacuated areas. Climate change intensifies conditions conducive to crimes like domestic violence. Floods destroy crops and livestock. Agriculture-related thefts increase, which may intensify conflict between upstream and downstream communities

and lead to post-flood encroachment in fertile areas. In developing countries, militant groups may fill gaps in government relief operations to win sympathisers, recruit members and raise funds. Special branches, CTDs and networking with communities must address this. Effective response needs collaboration with LGs and disaster, health and environmental authorities. Joint task forces including police, forest, wildlife, irrigation, LGs and DMAs can curb timber smuggling and riverbank encroachments. Dedicated police climate-security units can be created for rapid deployment, drone mapping, and coordination with NDMA and PDMAs. Police should integrate climate risk into SOPs for disaster response. A climate-related data system can help anticipate crime trends across seasons. Community policing can mobilise local volunteer networks to disseminate early warnings, assist the elderly and disabled in evacuation, monitor illegal activities like water theft and prevent panic. Improved response requires changes in police training to deal with crowd management, resource dispute mediation and climate migrants. Stress management, first aid, flood navigation, water rescue and environmental crime investigation training should be provided to officers in vulnerable areas.  
 Courtesy Dawn

## Finding harmony

**Dr Ali M Mir**  
**A** documentary titled Finding Harmony — A King's Vision was recently premiered at Windsor Castle, highlighting King Charles's lifelong and prescient philosophy on the interconnectedness of all life and the importance of living in balance with nature. The film offers both a personal portrait of the King's commitment to environmental stewardship and a broader reflection on the urgent need for humanity to rethink its relationship with the natural world. Throughout much of his public life, King Charles has urged us to see ourselves as part of nature, not apart from it, and has championed environmental causes long before they became mainstream. He has consistently emphasised the need to work with, rather than against, nature — reminding us that nature sustains us, that we are inseparable from it, and that what we do to the natural world ultimately affects our own well-being. His advocacy spans conservation, sustainable agriculture, climate action and community regeneration, reflecting a vision in which ecological balance, human prosperity and social responsibility are inseparably linked. The documentary is a timely call for practical action, especially as environmental challenges accelerate globally. It shows that humanity stands at the heart of nature and that environmental sustainability is rooted in restoring balance among people, ecosystems and communities. Among the many factors contributing to imbalances with nature, rapid population growth is particularly important to consider, especially in relation to the depletion of natural resources when growth intensifies competition for finite resources, pressures on land, water and biodiversity rise. In Pakistan, for instance, rising population density has contributed to shrinking arable land, declining marine biodiversity and accelerating loss of forest cover, with water scarcity as a particularly urgent challenge.  
 Courtesy Tribune

## Gilani meets UAE FNC Speaker in Abu Dhabi



**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD, Feb 10 (APP): Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani held a productive meeting with Speaker of the UAE Federal National Council (FNC) Saqr Ghobash in Abu Dhabi, during which both sides discussed bilateral relations and explored new avenues of cooperation.

The meeting, followed by a warm and cordial lunch, provided an opportunity for the two leaders to reflect on the long-standing history of Pakistan-UAE relations and identify areas for further collaboration, according to a news release.

During the meeting, the Chairman Senate and the Speaker FNC reaffirmed the strong bonds of friendship and cooperation between Pakistan and the UAE, rooted in shared values, mutual respect and a long tradition of close engagement. They expressed satisfaction over the progress made in

recent years, particularly in trade, investment and people-to-people ties. Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani thanked the Speaker FNC for the warm hospitality and welcomed the UAE's contributions to Pakistan's economic stability, including the \$10 billion investment commitment. He also extended an invitation to Saqr Ghobash to visit Pakistan, which was graciously accepted. "We are delighted to accept the invitation and look forward to visiting Pakistan soon," Speaker Ghobash said, adding that the visit would provide an opportunity to further strengthen parliamentary relations and explore new areas of cooperation. The meeting underscored the strong commitment of both sides to deepen collaboration in various fields, including parliamentary diplomacy, trade and investment. The two leaders also exchanged views on regional and international issues of mutual interest, with a focus on promoting peace, stability and prosperity in the region. The visit further cemented the strong bonds of friendship.

## President Zardari welcomes Uzbek president's invitation, emphasises stronger ties

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Tuesday said that Pakistan attached great significance to its close brotherly relations with Uzbekistan, underscoring the importance of effective follow-up on the outcomes of President Shavkat Mirziyoyev's recent historic and result-oriented state visit to Pakistan. The president said this while talking to Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev, who called on him at Aiwan-e-Sadr and handed over a letter from President Mirziyoyev. In his letter, the Uzbek President thanked President Zardari, the government and the people of Pakistan for the extraordinary hospitality and warm welcome extended to him during his visit. He also expressed gratitude for being conferred the Nishan-e-Pakistan, Pakistan's highest civil award, as well as the honorary professorship and doctorate. President Zardari reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening cooperation with Uzbekistan in

key sectors, including food and agriculture, mining, information technology, tourism, health and banking. He welcomed Uzbekistan's interest in importing halal meat, fruits and potatoes from Pakistan as a positive step towards enhancing bilateral trade. President Mirziyoyev reiterated his invitation to President Zardari, earlier conveyed during their tête-à-tête. The president accepted the invitation and directed the authorities concerned from the Pakistani side to coordinate with their Uzbek counterparts to finalise the visit later this year. He also conveyed his gratitude to President Mirziyoyev for his message of solidarity and support following the recent terrorist attack in Islamabad, and reaffirmed the shared resolve of Pakistan and Uzbekistan to continue their joint journey of peace, stability and development. Alisher Tukhtaev informed President Zardari of Uzbekistan's desire to develop Babur Park in the F-7 sector of Islamabad and said that a relevant Uzbek minister would visit Islamabad next week.



ISLAMABAD: Ambassador of the Republic of Uzbekistan to Pakistan Alisher Tukhtaev, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

## Syedaal Khan inaugurates "Safe Secure Pakistan", "POGEE Pakistan 2026" exhibitions

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: The Acting Chairman of the Senate of Pakistan, Syedaal Khan, on Tuesday said that in view of the prevailing global and regional circumstances, security is no longer the responsibility of a single institution or sector but has become a fundamental national necessity.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony of the 16th International Fire, Safety, Security & Power/Energy Exhibition "Safe Secure Pakistan" and the 19th International Power & Energy Industry Exhibition

"POGEE Pakistan 2026," he emphasised that Pakistan has faced persistent security challenges, making the use of modern, technology-driven security and firefighting equipment indispensable.

Syedaal Khan inaugurates "Safe Secure Pakistan", "POGEE Pakistan 2026" exhibitions

Syedaal Khan remarked that Pakistan and the region have long been confronted with evolving security challenges, as criminal elements continuously adapt their methods.

However, he noted with



satisfaction that advanced security technologies and systems are being introduced in Pakistan, which are playing an effective role in crime prevention and in safeguarding the lives and property of

## Flurry of activities planned to mark 75th anniversary of Pak-China diplomatic ties

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: As Pakistan and China prepare to celebrate 75 years of the establishment of diplomatic relations in 2026, the federal government has planned to organise a series of 72 activities throughout the year to mark this important milestone.

These initiatives aim to commemorate the rich history of bilateral relations while also setting the stage for future cooperation between the two countries. According to documents available with Wealth Pakistan, the federal government has established a special committee tasked with planning the anniversary events. The committee has prepared a list of 72 activities to celebrate the occasion, including the issuance of a commemorative coin and a stamp, symbolising the deep-rooted ties between Pakistan and China. The celebrations will span various sectors, including trade, cultural exchanges and technological advancement, showcasing the multi-dimensional partnership that has flourished over the past 75 years. More than two dozen Pak-China joint activities are also being actively.

## Maryam Nawaz, Sarfraz Bugti vow joint efforts for peace in Balochistan

**PEAK POINT**

QUETTA: Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif met members of the Balochistan cabinet and coalition parties at the Chief Minister's Secretariat in Quetta, alongside Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti.

She strongly condemned recent incidents of terrorism in the province and pledged full support from the Punjab government at all levels.

Addressing the provincial cabinet and assembly members, Maryam Nawaz Sharif praised the measures taken by CM Sarfraz Bugti for public welfare and peace restoration, describing them as a foundation for lasting stability and development.

She expressed pride that her first official visit as chief minister was to Balochistan, acknowledging the resilience and sacrifices of



its people for national unity and security. Maryam Nawaz reiterated Punjab's commitment to stand shoulder to shoulder with Balochistan in overcoming security and development challenges, stressing that terrorism can only be defeated through collective resolve, cooperation, and national solidarity.

Welcoming her visit, CM Balochistan said it symbolized brotherhood and strengthened inter-provincial harmony. He lauded Punjab's Rs10 billion financial assistance for security forces.

## Work on Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway to begin in May: Aleem Khan

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Communications Abdul Aleem Khan on Tuesday announced that construction work on the long-awaited Sukkur-Hyderabad Motorway (M-6) will officially commence in May this year, terming the project a top national priority. Chairing a high-level meeting of the National Highway Authority (NHA), the minister directed officials to take immediate, decisive steps to ensure the project proceeds without further delays, said a press release. Abdul Aleem Khan highlighted that both the Sukkur-Hyderabad and Karachi Motorways would be executed under a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) model to ensure efficiency



and sustainability and the work on all the sections may continue to simultaneously so that the whole project is completed in a timely manner.

The minister further said that the Sialkot-Kharian and Islamabad Motorway will now be constructed as a 6-lane Highway instead of the previously planned 4 lanes to better accommodate future traffic volumes. He underscored that the current administration is not merely building for today, but is developing.

## Govt to train one million non-IT professionals in AI: Shaza

**PEAK POINT**

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Information Technology and Telecommunication Shaza Fatima Khawaja on Tuesday said a nationwide programme to train one million non-IT professionals in AI skills will be launched to boost productivity and improve livelihoods. Speaking to students from various universities during Indus AI Week 2026 in Islamabad, the minister said the past two years had witnessed a revolutionary shift in emerging technologies, with artificial intelligence reshaping economies, education systems and employment structures worldwide. She said Pakistan had responded to



these changes through a "whole-of-government approach" under the leadership of the Prime Minister, aimed at ensuring coordinated planning and effective implementation. Shaza Fatima said Parliament passed the Digital Nation Pakistan Act last year, providing a comprehensive roadmap for the country's digital transformation. A major milestone under this framework.

and stabilise the country's economic and industrial growth.

He highlighted that participating companies could play a vital role in introducing modern and sustainable solutions in the fields of firefighting, workplace safety, emergency response, surveillance systems, and the energy sector.

The exhibition showcased state-of-the-art surveillance systems, firefighting equipment, bulletproof solutions, security cameras, and other advanced technologies. On the occasion, the Acting

Chairman underscored that neglecting effective firefighting systems could result in significant financial and human losses.

He added that modern security cameras have evolved beyond mere recording devices and now serve as powerful tools for crime prevention. He also noted the increasing importance of bulletproof vehicles in the current security environment, describing them as an essential requirement.

Syedaal Khan appreciated the efforts of various companies.