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Gwadar-Oman ferry service approved to boost trade, tourism; announces Junaid Chaudhry



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Justice Amin-Ud-Din takes oath as first CJ of Federal Constitutional Court

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Justice Aminuddin Khan on Friday was sworn in as the first Chief Justice of the newly formed Federal Constitutional Court (FCC) under the 27th Constitutional Amendment. President Asif Ali Zardari administered the oath to Justice Aminuddin at the Aiwan-e-Sadar today, a day after he approved his appointment to the key post on the advice of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif. The president made the appointment under clause (3) of Article 175-A, read with Article 175-C of the Constitution. It added that it would come into effect from the date that Justice Aminuddin took his oath. The oath-taking ceremony was attended by Field Marshal Asim Munir, Pakistan Navy and Pakistan Air Force chiefs,

Pakistan Peoples Party Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari and federal ministers including DPM Ishaq Dar, Ahsan Iqbal, Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb and other dignitaries and officials. Justice Aminuddin, whose legal practice started around four decades back, was previously serving as the head of the now-dissolved constitutional bench, which was formed as a result of the 26th Constitutional Amendment last year. The Ministry of Law has also issued a notification for the appointment of six judges to the FCC. The judges include Justice Syed Hasan Azhar Rizvi, Justice Aamer Farooq, Justice Ali Baqar Najafi, Justice Muhammad Karim Khan Agha, Justice Rozi Khan Barrech and Justice Arshad Hussain Shah. Meanwhile,



ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari administering the oath to Justice Aminuddin Khan as Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court at Aiwan-e-Sadr. Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif and Chief Justice of Pakistan Justice Yahya Afridi are also present.

Tajikistan's Defence minister calls on COAS Syed Asim Munir



PEAK POINT
RAWALPINDI: Minister of Defence of Tajikistan Colonel General Soborzoda Emomali Abdulrahim called on Chief of Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir, NI (M), HJ, here on Friday at General Headquarters (GHQ).

During the meeting, matters of mutual interest, regional security, and bilateral defence cooperation were discussed, said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR).

Both sides expressed their resolve to enhance the existing military-to-military collaboration, particularly in the areas of training, counter-terrorism, and regional security.

The visiting dignitary appreciated the professionalism of the Pakistan Army and acknowledged its role in promoting regional stability and peace. The COAS, while emphasizing the importance of collective efforts for regional stability and prosperity, reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to strengthening defence and security ties with Tajikistan.

Pakistan rejects negotiations with terrorist groups

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Foreign Office Spokesperson Tahir Hussain Andrabi has made it clear that the Pakistan will not engage in negotiations with any terrorist groups, following recent statements from the Afghan regime.

During a weekly briefing in Islamabad, Andrabi strongly rejected the idea of talks with groups engaged in terrorism. He called the Afghan Taliban's assertions nothing more than "hollow claims."

He stated that the situation has worsened since the Taliban's takeover



of Afghanistan, with a marked increase in terrorist activities targeting Pakistan. "Pakistan has shown considerable restraint, but the terrorist groups operating within our borders are linked to Afghan factions," he said.

The spokesperson emphasized that there should be no tolerance or leniency towards those who support terrorism.

He urged the Afghan Taliban to ensure that their territory is not used for terrorist activities and expressed hope that the Taliban would take decisive action against the Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) operating in Afghanistan. He said Pakistan remains committed to resolving issues through dialogue and peaceful means.

The spokesperson announced that the King of Jordan would be visiting Pakistan for a two-day trip, signaling the strengthening of bilateral ties between the two nations.

Andrabi also responded to statements from the Afghan government, which he criticized as ineffective and unsubstantiated.

Four terrorists arrested in Islamabad Judicial Complex suicide attack case

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: Four members of Fitna-al-Khawarij, involved in the Islamabad Judicial Complex suicide attack, arrested on Friday.

According to details, the arrests were made in a joint operation by the Intelligence Bureau (IB) and the Counter-Terrorism Department (CTD).

During the investigation, Sajidullah alias "Sheena", the handler of the suicide bomber, confessed that TTP/Fitna-al-Khawarij commander Saeed-ur-Rehman.

No-confidence motion moved against AJK PM Chaudhry Anwarul Haq

PEAK POINT
MUZZAFARABAD: A no-confidence motion has been filed against Azad Jammu & Kashmir Prime Minister Chaudhry Anwar-ul-Haq.

The motion was submitted by members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) in the AJK Legislative Assembly, with signatures of more than 17 members.

Lawmakers who submitted the motion include Javed Ayub, Qasim Majeed, Rafiq Naeri, Malik Zafar, and Ali Shan Soni.

Meanwhile, the PPP has nominated Faisal Rathore as its candidate.

Senate approves armed forces Amendment Bills 2025

PEAK POINT
ISLAMABAD: The Senate has approved Pakistan Army, Navy, and Air Force Amendment Bills 2025 on Friday, after the National Assembly passed them a day ago. In the session, chaired by Senate Chairman Yusuf Raza Gilani, Deputy Prime Minister and Senator Ishaq Dar presented the Army Act Amendment Bill. Members of Upper House passed the Pakistan Army, Navy, Air Force Amendment Bills 2025 with a majority vote.

While the bills received broad backing, some senators voiced concerns. JUI-F's Hamayun Mehmood requested the bills be referred to a committee for further scrutiny. Despite this, the amendments were passed with majority. The Pakistan Air Force Act Amendment Bill 2025 intro-

duces significant changes, question hour, Senator including the deletion of Danish Kumar raised con-



cerns over transparency regarding SOE officers' allowances under the Ministry of Finance. Minister of State for Finance Bilal Kayani assured senators that all questions are addressed, and further details would be provided in committee proceedings. He noted that 21 officers are posted under

SOEs and appointments are made based on merit.

The bills were present in the Senate today, following the 27th Constitutional Amendment and the approval of the Army Act 2025 by the National Assembly.

Under the amended law, a fresh notification will appoint the Army Chief as Chief of Defence Forces, restarting the Army Chief's tenure. The Chief of Defence Forces will oversee the restructuring and integration of all branches of the army, while the Commander National Strategic Command will be appointed for a three-year term, renewable once. Notably, the legislation stipulates that the Chairman Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee position will be abolished from November 27, 2025, marking a major restructuring of Pakistan's military.

CGS Lt Gen Syed Aamer calls on Saudi Armed Forces Chief



PEAK POINT
RAWALPINDI: Chief of General Staff (CGS) Pakistan Army Lieutenant General Syed Aamer Raza called on General Fayyadh Bin Hameed Al-Rowaily, Chief of General Staff, Royal Saudi Armed Forces, at Riyadh.

During the meeting, matters of mutual strategic interest were discussed, with a special focus on strengthening bilateral defence cooperation, enhancing interoperability and advancing collaboration under the Strategic Mutual Defence Agreement (SMDA), said a news release issued by Inter Services Public Relations (ISPR) here. Both sides reaffirmed their commitment to further deepening the long-standing fraternal ties between Pakistan and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, contributing towards regional peace.



SPORTS



Ton-up Babar takes Pakistan to series-clinching victory over Sri Lanka



PEAK POINT

RAWALPINDI: Babar Azam finally ended his 807-day wait for a One-Day International century, scoring an unbeaten 102 to lead Pakistan to an eight-wicket victory over Sri Lanka in the second match at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday, sealing the three-match series with a game to spare.

The former Pakistan skipper, under intense scrutiny after 83 innings without a three-figure score, struck eight boundaries in a 119-ball innings that blended patience with poise.

He reached his milestone in the 47th over, pulling pacer Pramod Madushan to midwicket for a single, before collapsing to his knees in pros-

tration and embracing Mohammad Rizwan at the non-striker's end. The Rawalpindi crowd erupted, having waited long for this moment.

Rizwan played the ideal supporting role, remaining unbeaten on 51 off 54 balls, including five fours and a six. The pair added an unbroken 112 for the third wicket, guiding Pakistan across the finish line two balls into the 49th over.

The chase began explosively. Openers Saim Ayub and Fakhar Zaman raced to 77-0 in the Powerplay. Saim smashed 33 off 25 balls (five fours and a six) before holing out to mid-off off pacer Dushmantha Chameera in the 10th over. Fakhar, dropped thrice, anchored

with 78 off 93 balls (eight fours and six) before falling to a superb low catch by Janith Liyanage at short mid-wicket off Chameera in the 31st.

Sri Lanka's fielding lapses proved decisive. Fakhar survived a skier spilled by substitute Pavan Rathnayake, a miscued loft dropped by Asitha Fernando at long-off off Charith Asalanka, and an earlier edge. These errors allowed Pakistan to maintain momentum on a pitch offering little after early swing.

Chameera was Sri Lanka's only wicket-taker, finishing with 2-58 in 10 overs. The rest struggled: Asitha Fernando leaked 66 in 8.2 overs without success, Pramod Madushan conceded 62 in eight, while Wanindu Hasaranga, usually a threat, went

wicketless for 35 in 10. Captain Asalanka's part-time spin and Janith Liyanage's medium pace offered no control.

Babar, initially cautious, grew in confidence. He reached fifty off 66 balls with a short-arm jab through point, then accelerated with trademark cover drives and pulls. Rizwan, joining at 177-2, rotated strike expertly before raising his fifty with a steer to deep midwicket.

The winning runs came off Asitha in the 49th over — Babar guiding a low full toss to cover. The pair walked off grinning, series sealed.

Earlier, having started with the ball in the opener, Haris Rauf was at it again as Pakistan restricted Sri Lanka to 288-8.

PCB confirms six-city shortlist for two new PSL teams



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The two new franchise teams of the Pakistan Super League (PSL) will be named from among Hyderabad, Rawalpindi, Faisalabad, Gilgit, Muzaffarabad and Sialkot, the country's cricket board announced on Friday. The list was finalised after the valuation reports for the two new teams were received by the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB), the board said in a press release, adding that the tender process for the sale of ownership rights "will be formally initiated shortly".

The PCB also confirmed that the independent valuation process for the existing PSL franchises and other commercial assets has been completed. Following the conclusion of this exercise, the board said, "renewal offers reflecting the new franchise fees for the next 10 years have been formally shared with all compliant PSL franchisees, requesting them to revert with their decision within the stipulated timeline". "To ensure full transparency and facilitate a clear understanding of the valuations, the PCB has also arranged collective and individual meetings between franchise representatives and the independent valuer (EY MENA)," the statement added. "These sessions will allow the franchisees to review the valuation methodology and discuss any queries."

Pakistan Shaheens face Oman in Men's Rising Stars Asia Cup opener today



PEAK POINT

LAHORE: Pakistan Shaheens are set for Men's Rising Stars Asia Cup challenge as they take on Oman in the opening match of the T20 tournament today (Friday). The eight-team competition will be played at the West End Park International Cricket Stadium in Doha. Pakistan Shaheens led by Muhammad Irfan Khan are placed in Group B alongside Oman, India 'A' and UAE. Group A com-

prises Afghanistan scheduled for Sunday, 'A', Bangladesh 23 November. Before the team's departure on 12 November, Pakistan Shaheens underwent a four-day training camp at the Hanif Muhammad Centre in Karachi on 16 November, before playing their final group fixture against UAE on Tuesday, 18 November. According to the tournament format, the top two teams from each group will qualify for the semi-finals on 21 November, while the final is

Ahmed Jnr, head coach of Pakistan Shaheens said: "Our camp in Karachi went very well where the players were fully focused, disciplined and the sessions were well-structured. Before arriving in Doha, we observed the local conditions and noted that the pitches here tend to play a little low, so we defined clear roles for each player and worked on specific game plans accordingly. "Today was our first training session in Doha and the practice wickets are quite similar to the main pitch. We are preparing according to our strengths, focusing on consistent bowling lines and lengths and on smart shot selection in batting.

Shaheen Afridi ruled out of ODI series against Sri Lanka



National Women's One-Day Tournament commences yesterday

PEAK POINT

LAHORE: The five-team National Women's One-Day Cup will roll into action today (Friday) in Faisalabad. The

champions, having defeated Conquerors by five wickets in the final of the previous season's One-Day Tournament. The other three teams are Challengers,

with the winner and runner-up pocketing PKR 1.5 million and PKR 1 million, respectively. The Player of the match in each game will get PKR 25,000, while the player of the

T20I tri-series tickets go on sale

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SAT	22-NOV-25	PAK V SL	600	500	300	200	1200	10000	8000
SUN	23-NOV-25	PAK V ZIM	600	500	300	200	1200	10000	8000
TUE	25-NOV-25	SL V ZIM	500	400	300	200	1000	8000	7000
THU	27-NOV-25	PAK V SL	500	400	300	200	1000	8000	7000
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tournament will be played in a double-league format, with each team facing each other twice, culminating in the top two teams squaring off in the final.

The 21-match event will be live-streamed, with Stars entering the field as the defending

Invincibles, and Strikers. The 20-member squads of the teams will train at the Iqbal Stadium and the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) High Performance Center Ground before being trimmed to 15 members. A total of PKR 3.55 million has been announced,

tournament will take away PKR 200,000. All matches will be played at the Iqbal Stadium and PCB High-Performance Centre Ground, except for one fixture between Challengers and Strikers on 22 November, which will be held at the Jawad Club Cricket Ground.



Pakistan's University admissions rise despite severe systemic failures, federal data reveals stark inequalities

NADEEM TANOLI

ISLAMABAD: Fresh federal data has dispelled the perception that university enrollment in Pakistan is declining, revealing instead a steady rise in admissions across both public and private universities. However, the same dataset exposes deep structural cracks in the country's higher education system ranging from chronic underfunding and affordability barriers to capacity shortages and academic irrelevance raising urgent questions about long term sustainability. The figures were shared in response to a parliamentary query seeking clarity on the state of university admissions. According to the official record, first semester admissions across public and private Higher Education Institutions continued to

climb, reaching more than seven hundred fifty thousand students in the latest cycle. Private sector admissions grew at a significantly faster pace than public universities, reflecting widening disparities in access and affordability. Public universities admitted more than six hundred thousand students a modest 4.4% rise over three years while private universities saw a sharp 16.1% surge, pointing to a growing shift toward fee based education. The combined intake shows a 6.3% nationwide increase, contradicting claims of enrollment decline. Overall enrollment across the entire university system also continued its upward trend, surpassing two million students. But the increase of just over three percent remains far below what experts consider

necessary for a young and rapidly expanding population. A provincial breakdown, however, paints a troubling picture of uneven opportunity and declining access in several regions. Punjab posted the strongest growth with a 10.6% rise in fresh admissions, while Sindh and the Federal Area recorded moderate gains. In stark contrast, Gilgit Baltistan suffered an alarming 11.9% decline in admissions, with Balochistan and Azad Jammu & Kashmir also registering drops. These disparities reinforce longstanding concerns about geographic inequality and the widening gap between education-rich and education poor regions. The government's own explanation for these trends reads like a catalogue of systemic neglect. Pakistan's public spending

on higher education remains far below that of neighboring countries, creating persistent funding shortages that ripple across the sector. Millions of students are priced out of universities due to tuition fees, hostel charges, and basic transportation costs, even as scholarship programs remain inadequate for national needs. Economic pressure is forcing students particularly those from low income households to abandon education in favor of early employment. Capacity constraints within universities further limit access, with many institutions lacking the seats needed to accommodate rising demand. Professional councils impose additional restrictions on admissions in regulated fields, narrowing pathways even further. The report highlights more struc-

tural failures. Universities continue to offer programs misaligned with market needs, fueling a growing disconnect between education and employment. Weak industry academia linkages translate into limited job opportunities for graduates, diminishing the perceived value of higher education. Female enrollment remains suppressed due to social norms and safety concerns, while language barriers hinder students who come from Urdu or regional language educational backgrounds. A significant number of students, the document notes, remain entirely unaware of available degree programs, scholarships, or career options because of weak information dissemination systems. In several disciplines most notably arts and

humanities the scarcity of job opportunities further discourages enrollment. While the government data emphasizes that the number of university entrants is rising, the underlying factors point toward an education system struggling under financial strain, uneven development, and outdated structures. The sharp growth in private sector admissions, contrasted with stagnation in public capacity, signals a shift that risks turning higher education into a privilege rather than a right. The findings raise a pressing question for policymakers: despite enrollment growth, is Pakistan building a higher education system capable of meeting future economic and social needs or simply counting students while structural problems deepen?

Sindh Cultural music night thrills massive crowds as Lok Mela reaches new heights of celebration

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Lok Mela drew huge crowds as its cultural showcase reached new levels of excitement, with audiences experiencing a full day of vibrant performances, traditional crafts, and the rich artistic expressions of Pakistan's diverse heritage. The festival continued to attract thousands of visitors, promising one of its most successful editions

yet. The Government of Sindh's Culture Department, under the leadership of Syed Zulfiqar Ali Shah, Minister for Culture, Tourism & Antiquities, delivered an exceptional presentation at the Sindh Pavilion. Guests were welcomed with traditional crafts, Ajrak printing, folk music, cultural dances, and an immersive display of Sindh's authentic cultural identity. The pavilion remained one

of the most visited attractions, reflecting the deep artistic roots and cultural pride of the province. The highlight of the day was the much-anticipated Sindh Cultural Music Night held at Lok Virsa's Open Air venue. The event delivered a powerful blend of folk and Sufi music, captivating a massive audience gathered to celebrate the soulful rhythms and poetic melodies of Sindh. The star line-

up featured renowned Sufi and folk singer Sanam Marvi, whose spiritually rich renditions deeply moved listeners. Sindh folk-rock icon Saif Samejo energized the audience with his contemporary fusion of traditional melodies. Tufail Khan Sanjrani brought authentic rhythmic power through a classic folk performance, while Asghar Khoso captivated the crowd with his emotional and

soul-stirring Sindh singing. Their combined performances offered a stunning musical journey, showcasing the depth, diversity, and cultural richness of Sindh's musical heritage. The Sindh Cultural Music Night drew thousands of festival-goers, adding to an already packed celebration of music, dance, handicrafts, and traditional foods enjoyed by families, youth, artisans, and

international visitors. Lok Virsa Executive Director Dr. Muhammad Waqas Saleem praised the Sindh Culture Department for presenting an engaging and authentic cultural showcase. He acknowledged the dedication of artisans, performers, and organizers whose work continues to elevate Lok Mela as one of the most vibrant and successful cultural festivals in Pakistan.

Opinion & Editorial



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Sindh's struggle for survival

BY DR NAAZIR MAHMOOD

The Sindh Rural Support Organisation (SRSO) has quietly become one of Pakistan's most effective engines of resilience. In a country where bureaucracy often confuses motion with progress, the SRSO has distinguished itself through the rare combination of compassion and competence. It began modestly, with the idea that communities - especially women and the poor - should not merely receive help but shape it.

Over two decades, it has turned that principle into practice across Sindh's flood-prone districts. When the province was submerged in 2022, the SRSO turned its field offices in Shikarpur, Jacobabad, Larkana, Khairpur and Sukkur into lifelines. They distributed food and medicine, but also wages and dignity. 'Cash-work' schemes rebuilt roads and morale. Women artisans revived embroidery clusters that became symbols of both income and identity. Even housing reconstruction acquired a climate-conscious twist: elevated eco-homes designed to resist the next deluge rather than commemorate the last one.

The publication of 'Mausamyati Tabdili Ain Sindh' (Climate Change and Sindh) marks the SRSO's entry into the intellectual arena. The 152-page volume is less a vanity project than a statement of intent: that the climate debate must be written and read in Sindh if it is

to matter. In that, it continues the SRSO's evolution from a relief agency to a knowledge institution - one that translates floodwater into public policy. The volume's compiler, Zubair Soomro, embodies the bridge between activism and analysis. A development worker turned editor, he understands that people are more likely to act on ideas they understand. Hence his insistence on linguistic ownership: climate literacy, he argues, cannot survive translation into bureaucraticese.

The essays he curates draw their imagery from the Indus delta, the Kotri barrage, the Thatta mangroves and the brittle rhythms of fishing and farming life. The result is a body of writing that feels lived rather than borrowed. Soomro's editorial hand ensures diversity without dilution. The 17 contributions range from scientific exposition to moral argument. They avoid the twin traps of despair and technocracy that often plague environmental writing. Instead, they weave empirical evidence with cultural intuition - what might be called Sindh's environmental vernacular. This, more than anything, is Soomro's quiet triumph: turning climate change from a donor-driven slogan into a people's conversation. No such conversation would be complete without Naseer Memon, the province's most persuasive chronicler of rivers and rights. His career - spanning civil society, journalism and

research - has made him both witness and conscience. Memon's writings have long argued that the Indus Delta's decline is not an act of nature but of neglect. His notion of the 'right of rivers to exist' predates global debates about ecological personhood and makes a philosophical claim with practical urgency: if the Indus dies, so does Sindh. In 'Mausamyati Tabdili Ain Sindh', Memon contributes three essays that distill decades of thought. He reimagines the river as a living being, dissects the politics of Pakistan's flood mismanagement and explores how the erosion of land erodes identity itself. Few writers connect hydrology to history with such clarity. Together, Soomro and Memon have forged an intellectual alliance that transforms climate anxiety into cultural critique. Where one edits from within the development sector, the other writes from the margins of power. Between them, they map a new moral geography for Sindh - one where environmentalism is as much about justice as it is about weather. 'Mausamyati Tabdili Ain Sindh' opens with forewords by Durrani and Kalhor, both of whom anchor the collection in lived experience rather than abstract concern. They remind readers that climate change, in Sindh, is not a forecast but is yesterday's floodwater still standing in today's fields.

Courtesy The News

Smog control in Punjab

Raja Jahanqir Anwar

NATION-building takes years, sometimes generations. Environmental rebuilding takes no less. It took us decades to poison our skies with unmanaged dust, unchecked exhaust, adulterated fuels, and unplanned sprawl. However, corrective measures have begun, not with promises, but with systems. This shift has been possible under the political direction of the Punjab chief minister, whose government has placed environment at the centre of the province's development agenda, and the administrative follow-through of chief secretary Punjab who ensured coordination across departments. The first principle of any reform is simple: you cannot manage what you cannot measure. The province, which had just three functional air quality monitoring stations donated in 2007, today operates 75 with 10 mobile units roaming hotspot districts. Twenty-five more will be live by the end of 2025, creating the most extensive environmental monitoring network ever attempted in Pakistan. Measurement has also enabled precision forecasting. An artificial intelligence model, developed with satellite support, now predicts seven-day smog patterns, allowing the authorities to prepare before the crisis peaks. This is complemented by a central monitoring room - the Smog War Room - linking divisional weather rooms, enforcement units, and dashboards that track real-time operations, from fog cannon deployment to vehicle testing and industrial compliance. It is pertinent to mention here that smog is not a single-source problem. Punjab's source apportionment study, being conducted through Suparco, has indicated fugitive dust as one of the largest contributors to particulate matter during winter. It emanates from unpaved roads, dry construction sites, and neglected public works. To respond, the province has deployed 15 high-capacity mist cannons mounted on trucks with water bowsers.

Courtesy Dawn

Gaza mission

WHILE some had touted Donald Trump's Gaza plan as a masterstroke that would transform the face of the devastated Palestinian territory, and lead to an era of peace in the Middle East, the reality, more than a month after the ceasefire came into effect, is more sobering. Though the American president's scheme may have halted the immediate Israeli genocide - although Tel Aviv continues to target Palestinians in both Gaza and the West Bank - the follow-up to the ceasefire, specifically the deployment of the so-called international stabilisation force in the occupied territory, is proving trickier. Many of the Muslim states that were initially part of the plan are reportedly having second thoughts about deploying their troops in Gaza. Moreover, the Arab states and Pakistan, which is among the countries that could send troops, have apparently demanded that any UN resolution authorising the deployment of troops must reaffirm the Palestinians' legitimate demands, namely their right to statehood. UNSC permanent members Russia and China have similarly called for any foreign force in Gaza to be under UN oversight. The fact is that demands for UN supervision of the Gaza force, as well as a clear roadmap for Palestinian statehood, should be unambiguous parts of any resolution aimed at addressing the Gaza question.

27th Constitutional Amendment to make judiciary, democracy stronger: Ahsan Iqbal



PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday described the passage of the 27th Constitutional Amendment as a "landmark achievement," saying it would strengthen the country's judicial system, deepen federal harmony and make the democratic process more inclusive.

Talking to the media after presenting the 'Monthly Development Update November-2025,' he said the amendment fulfilled a long-standing

commitment made under the Charter of Democracy (CoD), signed in 2006 by Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto and Quaid Muhammad Nawaz Sharif and endorsed unanimously by all political parties, including the opposition parties of the time.

"The constitutional court envisaged in the CoD was meant to strengthen national cohesion by ensuring representation from all provinces in the adjudication of major constitutional matters," he said.

Ahsan Iqbal said the idea of a constitutional court had enjoyed

national consensus for nearly two decades and was recognised as an important reform to remove any sense of deprivation among provinces regarding legal matters.

"From 2006 to 2025, no one has ever argued that this proposal weakens the judiciary. It was always acknowledged as a roadmap for a stronger, more inclusive judicial system," he added.

He rejected criticism from certain quarters that the amendment undermined judicial independence, terming such objections "politically motivated."

"Justice will only become stronger, not weaker. This reform increases trust among the federating units and enables the Supreme Court to function more efficiently by reducing unnecessary burdens on regular benches."

The minister said the establishment of a constitutional court would help streamline the judicial process, allowing the Supreme Court to focus on day-to-day cases.

Khawaja Asif assails SC judges for stepping down, says 'conscience awakened only after monopoly curtailed'

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Defence Minister Khawaja Asif on Friday criticised two Supreme Court judges for tendering resignations following the passage of the 27th constitutional amendment a day earlier, saying their "consciences only awakened after their monopoly was curtailed."

Justices Mansoor Ali Shah and Athar Minallah handed in their resignations, hours after the contentious 27th Constitutional Amendment was signed into law by President Asif Ali Zardari on Thursday.

Speaking on the floor of the National Assembly today, Asif accused the judges of having "selective amnesia," saying that they had "forgotten their past" and were now becoming "guardians of democracy."

"Four to five years ago — in



fact, eight to 10 years ago — when the process to remove Nawaz Sharif from his post started. I want to tell you about the history of our SC judges at that time. The conspiracy created against Nawaz before that and the role our judiciary played in turning that conspiracy into reality," Asif said, amid chants of 'kon bachayega Pakistan; Imran Khan, Imran Khan' [who will save Pakistan; Imran Khan, Imran Khan] by the opposition.

"The entire process started with the Panama case when Chief Justice Saqib Nisar formed.

Tajikistan bridge to heart of Central Asia, Pakistan equally it's gateway to international waters: Zardari

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: President Asif Ali Zardari on Friday amid terming Tajikistan as a bridge to the heart of Central Asia called Pakistan equally it's gateway to international waters, as the two states can play a significant role in promoting peace and stability in the region.

The president made these remarks during a call-on paid by Defence Minister of Tajikistan, Colonel General Sabirzoda Emomali Abdulrahim here at Aiwan-e-Sadr, a Presidency's news release said.

The president welcomed the delegation and said that Pakistan greatly values its multifaceted relationship with Tajikistan, embedded in common history, culture and linguistic affinity, with Pakistan being one of the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Tajikistan in 1992. He said that the two states should further enhance political, cultural and people-to-people contacts.

President Zardari highlighted the vast potential of bilateral trade and investment,

especially in the energy sector and said that this must be further explored. Pakistan is fully committed to the timely completion of the flagship project CASA-1000, he added.

The president expressed satisfaction over the expanding defence cooperation between the two states, manifested through the frequent exchange of visits of the leadership of the two armed forces. Successful organisation of the Dosti-II exercise is a testimony to the historic defence ties between the two brotherly states, he said.

The Tajik Defence Minister expressed Tajikistan's interest in strengthening bilateral cooperation with Pakistan across multiple sectors.

Ambassador of Tajikistan to Pakistan, Sharifzoda Yusuf Tohir, Col Rasulzoda Karim Abdurasul, Maj Gen Hakimzoda Zarif Yunusi and Maj Gen Amonullozoda Aminjon Amonullo were also part of the delegation.

Senator Sherry Rehman and Senator Saleem Mandviwalla were also present during the meeting.

SAPM Haroon reaffirms govt's commitment to strengthen small businesses

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Industries and Production Haroon Akhtar Khan on Friday reaffirmed the government's commitment to strengthening small businesses through targeted reforms and policies. The SAPM held a meeting with the Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) Cluster of Rawalpindi, where pharmaceutical SMEs briefed him on their challenges and operational constraints, said a news release. Haroon assured participants that the government is fully committed to addressing their concerns in line with the vision of prime minister. The meeting was attended by the President Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and Industry Usman Shoukat, Acting CEO of SMEDA Nadia J. Seth, and representatives from the Ministry of Industries and Production.

Haroon said that the prime minister's priority is to align SMEs with modern technology, strengthen their role in the economy, and enhance their contribution to employment generation and exports.

Gwadar-Oman ferry service approved to boost trade, tourism; announces Junaid Chaudhry

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: The Pakistani cabinet has approved the launch of a passenger and cargo ferry service between Pakistan and Oman, a move aimed at strengthening maritime connectivity and boosting bilateral trade and tourism.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry announced the development, noting that both countries would soon sign a Memorandum of Understanding to formalize the ferry link, and an Omani delegation will visit Pakistan soon to finalize the arrangements, said a press release issued here Friday.

The initiative follows a high-level meeting in July 2025



between Minister Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Oman's Ambassador Fahad bin Sulaiman bin Khalaf Al Kharusi in Islamabad, where both sides discussed ways to enhance economic and maritime collaboration.

Minister Chaudhry emphasized the strategic importance of establishing a direct ferry route from Gwadar to Oman, highlighting its potential to generate significant economic benefits through expanded trade, increased investment inflows.



ISLAMABAD: Colonel General Sabirzoda Emomali Abdulrahim, Defence Minister of Tajikistan, called on President Asif Ali Zardari at Aiwan-e-Sadr.

Govt simplified tax regime to ensure long-term economic stability: Bilal Azhar

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Minister of State for Finance Bilal Azhar Kayani on Friday said the government was actively pursuing a comprehensive consultative process with chambers of commerce, trade associations, and exporters to boost export-led growth and strengthen the country's economic foundations. Responding to questions in the National Assembly, he said the Prime Minister personally chaired extensive interactions with the business community, including a recent three-hour session with representatives from major sectors to obtain feedback and guidance from those "directly engaged in economic activity".



He said, on the Prime Minister's instructions, he held monthly meetings with presidents of major chambers across the country to resolve issues related to taxation, energy costs, and business facilitation. "Exports remain our top priority, and sustainable economic recovery will only come through export-led and private sector-driven growth," he added.

Pakistan Rises to 33rd in Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025 Pakistan Ranks 33rd among 100 countries in Global Tobacco Industry Interference Index

SAMAR Launches 5th Pakistan Tobacco Industry Interference Index 2025

PEAK POINT

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan has shown improvement in its global ranking on the Tobacco Industry Interference (TII) Index 2025, prepared and launched by the Society for Alternative Media and Research (SAMAR) on Friday, despite a slight increase in its overall score. According to the report, Pakistan now ranks 33rd out of 100 countries, an improvement from 32nd out of 90 countries in 2023. The country's score rose from 53 to 54,



suggesting minor setbacks caused largely by increased interactions between the tobacco industry and certain non-health government sectors. The report highlights the role of the Tobacco Control Cell (TCC) at the Ministry of

National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, which resisted strong lobbying attempts by the tobacco industry to amend existing tobacco control laws. SAMAR described this as a key example of institutional resilience

in the face of industry pressure. The Index, however, stresses the need for Pakistan to adopt a formal Code of Conduct to guide all government departments in their dealings with the tobacco industry, in line with Article

5.3 of the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). SAMAR recommended that the Tobacco Control Cell should lead and monitor the implementation of this code to ensure transparency and consistency across all sectors. Speaking at the event, Mazhar Arif renowned journalist and Executive Director SAMAR said this is a timely report. We hope the government will implement its recommendations. It will also be helpful in Pakistan's preparations for the upcoming COP

and MOP meetings. He further reaffirmed their commitment to supporting the government and civil society in safeguarding tobacco control policies from industry influence and ensuring Pakistan's continued progress toward a tobacco and nicotine free future. The launch event was attended by the government officials and health experts including Director Tobacco Control Cell Dr Nadia Nooreen, Project Manager Tobacco Control Cell, Aftab Ahmad, tobacco control experts, and civil society representatives.