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Gaza Board of Peace Meets in Washington: Donald Trump Praises Shehbaz Sharif and Asim Munir

Washington, Feb 19 (Daily Dusk) - The first formal session of the Gaza Board of Peace was held in Washington, D.C., hosted by U.S. President Donald Trump. Pakistan's PM attended that meeting. This meeting brought together leaders and diplomats from several countries to discuss peace, reconstruction and stabilization efforts in Gaza. The US President once again praised the PM of Pakistan and the Field Marshal . Trump once again mentioned the downing of 11 costly jets of India in the fighting between India and Pakistan.

Five countries committed troops for an international security force for Gaza: Indonesia, Morocco, Kazakhstan, Kosovo and Albania & two countries committed to train police - Egypt and Jordan, said International Stabilization Force commander Army Major General Jasper Jeffers said.Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, addressing the gathering, called for strict adherence to the ceasefire and emphasised the need for a just and lasting peace in the region. Pakistan's participation remains diplomatic, with no formal announcement regarding troop deployment.



HEC Makes AI Compulsory For All Degree Programs from 2026

Islamabad, Feb 19, 2026 — The Higher Education Commission (HEC) has made a three-credit-hour course on Artificial Intelligence (AI) mandatory for all undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes across Pakistan from the 2026 academic session.

According to an official notification, the directive applies to all public and private sector universities. Institutions have been instructed to incorporate the compulsory AI course into their curricula without delay.

The commission stated that the course may be offered as an elective, an interdisciplinary subject, or as a supporting

course within the programme structure. However, its inclusion will be compulsory for every degree programme.

The HEC emphasised that integrating AI into academic curricula is no longer optional but essential in today's fast-evolving world.

16 Killed as Gas Explosion Triggers Building Collapse in Karachi's Soldier Bazaar



KARACHI, Feb 19, 2026 — At least 16 people, including women and children, were killed and 18 others injured after a gas explosion caused part of a residential building to collapse in Gul Rana Colony, Soldier Bazaar, early Thursday morning.

Officials said the explosion occurred around 4:15am during Sehri on the first floor of a ground-plus-three-storey building constructed on a small plot in a congested locality. The blast destroyed the structure, trapping residents under the rubble. The injured and deceased were shifted to Civil Hospital Karachi.

Rescue 1122 spokesperson Hassaanul Haseeb Khan said teams carried out the operation manually due to narrow streets and limited access for heavy machinery. Authorities ruled out sabotage, with bomb disposal officials confirming the explosion was caused by a gas leak triggered by a lit match. Faulty gas fittings and plastic pipes were reportedly installed in the building.

Police surgeon Dr Summaiya Syed confirmed that most victims died due to severe head and crush injuries. Rescue officials stated the structure was in a dilapidated condition and not a legal construction.

Murad Ali Shah took notice of the incident, directed authorities to ensure immediate rescue and medical assistance, and ordered an investigation. The provincial government has also arranged temporary rehabilitation and relief for affected families.

Separately, Asif Ali Zardari and Shehbaz Sharif expressed grief over the loss of lives and called for strict enforcement of building safety regulations to prevent similar tragedies.

PMDC Seeks Report on Student Death at Fatima Jinnah Medical University

ISLAMABAD, Feb 19, 2026 — The Pakistan Medical and Dental Council (PMDC) has taken notice of the alleged suicide of a 22-year-old medical student at Fatima Jinnah Medical University (FJMU), Lahore, and sought a detailed report from

the institution within seven days. The student reportedly died after falling from the fourth floor of a hostel building on Tuesday night. She was a resident of Azad Jammu and Kashmir and was living in the university's government hostel. In a letter addressed to the FJMU principal, the PMDC registrar directed the university to provide details of the incident,

including the circumstances, any inquiry or fact-finding committee formed, its initial findings, and the expected timeline for completion of the report. The council also asked for information regarding steps taken to strengthen student mental health support and hostel safety measures.

Sindh Textbook Board Rolls Out Free Textbooks for 50 Lakh Students For Academic Year 2026-27



KARACHI, Feb 19, 2026 — The Sindh Textbook Board has officially launched the distribution of free textbooks for the 2026-27 academic year, covering students from Early Childhood Education to Grade 10. The launch ceremony was held at Government Girls Lower Secondary School, Neelum Colony, Clifton, with Syed Sardar Ali Shah attending as the chief guest.

The textbooks, published under the “Shaheed Mohtarma Benazir Bhutto Textbook Series”, include 195 titles in Sindhi, Urdu, and English. A total of 50 lakh textbook sets have been prepared, ensuring that all students have access to learning materials before the new academic year begins on April 1, 2026.

Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah praised the Sindh Textbook Board for completing the publication process on time, noting that the board has demonstrated renewed responsibility and efficiency. “After years of delays, the board is now back on track, ensuring textbooks reach students on schedule,” he said.

Speaking at the event, the minister highlighted key educational reforms being implemented in the province. Secondary schools will now enjoy financial decentralisation, allowing them to manage their own resources and funds. Starting August 2026, schools will receive performance-based funding, incentivising better management and results.

The minister also emphasised the importance of improving learning outcomes beyond rote memorisation. Students will be encouraged to think critically, ask questions, and solve problems, particularly in subjects like mathematics. Transparency and accountability in fund utilisation will be ensured, with school heads and leaders taking responsibility for financial decisions.

Furthermore, the Sindh Textbook Board will continue monitoring textbook quality, correcting errors, and ensuring content is suitable for students’ learning needs. This initiative reflects the government’s ongoing commitment to free, quality education, providing timely textbooks while supporting systemic reforms to strengthen Sindh’s education sector.

Sindh's Free Textbook Initiative — A Step Towards Transformative Education

The recent launch of free textbooks by the Sindh Textbook Board for the 2026-27 academic year marks a significant milestone in the province's education sector. Covering students from Early Childhood Education to Grade 10, and encompassing 195 titles in Sindhi, Urdu, and English, the initiative ensures that 50 lakh students will have access to essential learning resources before the new academic year begins on April 1, 2026.

The launch ceremony, attended by Sindh Education Minister Syed Sardar Ali Shah, not only celebrated the timely publication of textbooks but also highlighted a broader vision for educational reform. Minister Sardar Ali Shah rightly acknowledged the board's renewed efficiency after years of delays, signalling a return to accountability and responsibility. The timely distribution of textbooks is more than just an administrative success; it is a critical step in guaranteeing equitable access to education, especially for students in underserved areas.

Beyond the distribution of textbooks, the minister's remarks underscored systemic changes that could have a lasting impact on education in Sindh. Financial decentralisation for secondary schools empowers institutions to manage their own resources, while performance-based funding, starting August 2026, will reward effective management and innovation. This move is likely to foster a culture of accountability and motivation among school leaders, ensuring that funds are utilised for tangible improvements in learning environments.

Perhaps most importantly, the minister emphasised the shift from rote memorisation to critical thinking and problem-solving, particularly in mathematics and other core subjects. In a world where knowledge alone is no longer sufficient, encouraging students to ask questions, analyse problems, and develop reasoning skills is essential for preparing future generations to navigate complex challenges.

The Sindh Textbook Board's commitment to monitoring textbook quality, correcting errors, and updating content further reflects a proactive approach to education. Ensuring that textbooks are accurate, relevant, and accessible strengthens the foundation for meaningful learning. It demonstrates a recognition that quality education requires constant oversight and adaptation.

This initiative, while centred on textbooks, represents a broader commitment to transformative education in Sindh. It combines timely resource provision with governance reforms, pedagogical improvements, and institutional accountability. If implemented effectively, these measures could significantly enhance learning outcomes and prepare students not just to pass exams but to engage critically with the world around them. In conclusion, Sindh's textbook distribution is more than a logistical achievement — it is a tangible manifestation of the government's commitment to free, quality education for all.

The challenge ahead will be to sustain this momentum, ensuring that financial autonomy, performance-based accountability, and pedagogical reforms are fully integrated into the educational ecosystem. If done right, Sindh could set a benchmark for progressive educational policies across Pakistan, shaping a future where students are not merely recipients of knowledge but active participants in their own learning journey.