

Three terrorists killed, seven surrounded in ongoing Gwadar operations

STAFF REPORTER

GWADAR

Security forces killed three terrorists and surrounded seven others during ongoing operations after foiling an attempted attack on a construction company's empty camp in Gwadar, security sources said on Thursday.

According to the security sources, forces responded promptly to the attempted attack by terrorists belonging to Fitna al Hindustan and thwarted their bid to target the vacant camp.

Three terrorists were killed during the operation, while security forces surrounded three more terrorists at the location, the sources added.

Meanwhile, security forces were also conducting an operation against terrorists present inside a hotel located near the Gwadar highway following another attempted attack.

Four terrorists at the hotel had been surrounded by the security forces, according to the sources.

The security sources said the Gwadar General Officer Commanding (GOC) was personally leading the operation.

Pakistan has witnessed a sharp rise in cross-border terrorist incidents, particularly in KP and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban returned to power in 2021.

Pakistan recorded its highest monthly number of militant attacks in 12 years during September 2026.

Islamabad has repeatedly urged Kabul to prevent its territory from being used by militant organisations to carry out attacks inside Pakistan.



BALUCHISTAN Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited his ancestral district of Dera Bugti (North), where he held an Awami Katchery for more than six hours, met tribal elders and citizens.

CM Bugti holds six-hour public gathering in Dera Bugti

● Balochistan Stands With Forces Against Terrorism

STAFF REPORTER

QUETTA

Balochistan Chief Minister Mir Sarfraz Bugti visited his ancestral district of Dera Bugti (North), where he held an Awami Katchery for more than six hours, met tribal elders and citizens, and resolved several tribal disputes.

During the public forum, the chief minister interacted with tribal elders and local residents and discussed various matters affecting the community.

In his capacity as chief of the Bugti tribe, Mir Sarfraz Bugti also settled several tribal matters through

mutual consultation.

Speaking to tribal elders, Bugti said resolving disputes through mutual understanding and brotherly consensus was an important tradition of the tribal system that helped end longstanding feuds.

The chief minister said Baloch and Pashtun communities in Balochistan stood shoulder to shoulder with security forces in the fight against terrorism.

He said the sacrifices made by security forces in Balochistan would never be forgotten.

Bugti said every patriotic citizen of Balochistan stood firmly with the state and was committed to defeating what he described as India-

sponsored hostile elements.

Referring to development activities in the province, the chief minister said record development work had been carried out in underdeveloped areas, marking what he described as a golden chapter in the history of the Balochistan government.

He said thousands of young people had been recruited into various government departments over the past two years, providing employment opportunities to the province's youth.

Bugti said the provincial government had not merely announced a policy of merit-based recruitment but was utilizing all available

resources to ensure its complete implementation.

He said the government was making every possible effort to create employment opportunities for young people across Balochistan.

The chief minister said his government had given special attention to the health and education sectors over the past two and a half years.

He said the provincial government's achievements in these sectors had also received recognition at the national level.

Bugti said the provincial government remained committed to development, merit-based recruitment and employment opportunities for the people of Balochistan.

Sindh, UNIDO agree to Mobilise \$40m for development programme

● Sindh CM praises flood recovery program, highlights rural entrepreneurship and resilient housing



STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Syed Murad Ali Shah, the chief minister of Sindh, and Ms. Fatou Haidara, the deputy director general and managing director of the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), have agreed to strengthen their collaboration on inclusive economic growth, climate-resilient infrastructure, rural development, and job creation. UNIDO intends to raise about \$40 million for a special development program for Sindh under its Program for Country Partnership (PCP) 2025-2030.

The agreement was reached during a meeting at the CM House where the two parties discussed the expansion of successful development interventions, examined new areas of cooperation to improve livelihoods and create sustainable economic opportunities for vulnerable communities, and reviewed progress under the Poverty Alleviation and Inclusive Development Across Rural Sindh (PAIDAR) program funded by the European Union.

Provincial Minister for Labor Saeed Ghani, Minister for P&D Jam Khan Shoro, Special Assistant to CM on Investment Syed Qasim Naveed, Chairman of P&D Najam Shah, Secretary to CM Asif Jameel, Secretary for Social Protection Khadim Channa, and Additional Secretary for Investment Zahoor

Marri were present at the meeting.

Mr. Jie Zhao, Chief of the Asia-Pacific Region; Mr. Badar-ul-Islam, UNIDO Officer-in-Charge; and Mr. Farooque Ahmed Siddiqui, National Technical Advisor for PAIDAR, were among the members of the UNIDO delegation.

After the terrible floods of 2022, the Chief Minister greeted the delegation and expressed gratitude for UNIDO's ongoing collaboration with the Government of Sindh, especially its support for enterprise development, rural communities, and climate-resilient infrastructure.

Minister P&D Jam Khan Shoro informed the meeting that PAIDAR, implemented by UNIDO with a \$9.55 million grant from the European Union, is working across Thatta, Sujawal, Badin, Tharparkar, and Larkana districts to reduce poverty, strengthen local economies, improve public services, and create employment opportunities for women and young people.

The programme combines investment in rural infrastructure and community facilities with financial grants for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), technical assistance, and institutional capacity-building.

The Chief Minister appreciated the programme's contribution to rebuilding flood-affected communities through climate-resilient settlement planning in collaboration with the Sindh People's Housing for Flood Affecteds (SPHF).

Ji-led towns donate eight buses to Karachi University

● JI chief demands restoration of student unions, criticizes Sindh govt

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

Jamaat-e-Islami (JI)-led town administrations have donated eight buses to the University of Karachi to facilitate students' transportation.

At a ceremony held at the university on Thursday, JI Pakistan chief Hafiz Naeemur Rehman handed over the keys of the buses to Karachi University Vice Chancellor Dr Wasim Qazi.

Addressing the ceremony, Hafiz Naeem announced that another 10 buses would be donated to the university next year.

He said around 30,000 students at Karachi University lacked an adequate transport system, adding that the university needed greater attention to improve facilities for students.

Despite limited powers and resources, nine town administrations had demonstrated exemplary per-



formance, he said, adding that local governments lacked basic authority over water supply and sanitation.

Recalling the university's past transport facilities, Hafiz Naeem said it had 125 buses during the period when the Islami Jamiat-e-Talaba (IJT) had a student union.

He called for the immediate restoration of students' constitutional right to form unions, saying student representation was essential for improving the education system. Student unions have been banned in educational institutions across the country since 1984, he added.

The JI chief also expressed concern over the deteriorating condition of various university departments, blaming a lack of attention for their decline.

He said education was a key priority for his party and announced plans for a nationwide campaign to promote education. He urged people from all sections of society to unite in raising their voices for their rights.

Criticising the Sindh government, Hafiz Naeem alleged that the province's development was being undermined by corruption and a dysfunctional system.

LHC summons officials regarding Imran Khan's sisters' release plea

● Court summons Punjab home secretary, jail superintendent over Imran Khan's sisters' detention

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday summoned the Punjab home secretary and the superintendent of Kot Lakhpat jail in connection with a petition seeking the release of former prime minister Imran Khan's three sisters.

Imran's sisters — Aleema Khan, Noreen Niazi and Uzma Khan — were detained by authorities in September, under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, 1960, as the PTI geared up for a planned protest

march towards Islamabad. Their detention was ordered for 30 days.

A day earlier, Aleema's son, Shahrez Khan, filed a fresh plea challenging their detention. It stated that Imran's sisters remained at Lahore's Kot Lakhpat jail despite the lapse of the 30-day period of their detention.

Justice Abher Gul Khan took up the petition on Thursday.

Advocate Rana Mudassar Umar appeared on behalf of the petitioner and submitted that the detention orders of the three sisters had expired on Oct 19 and 20, but they had not been released.

Talal urges KP unity against terrorism

● Minister criticizes political hesitation hindering counterterrorism efforts

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry on Thursday said the federal government would provide Khyber Pakhtunkhwa with all necessary resources to combat terrorism, urging political forces in the province to unite behind security forces to restore lasting peace.



Speaking to journalists at Parliament House in Islamabad, Chaudhry said the federal government was committed to supporting Khyber Pakhtunkhwa in its fight against terrorism and would ensure the provision of resources required to address security challenges.

He called on all political parties and leaders in the province to stand united in support of security forces, stressing that political unity was essential to effectively combating terrorism.

Chaudhry expressed confidence in the capabilities of Pakistan's security forces, saying they possessed the strength and professional capacity to defeat terrorists within days.

However, he questioned how effective counterterrorism operations could be conducted when political figures showed what he described as cowardice and the political leadership maintained a soft stance toward terrorists.

The minister said political hesitation and reluctance to take a firm position against terrorism raised serious questions about efforts to restore peace in the province.

He said the federal government's sole objective was to establish peace in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and ensure that the province could overcome its security challenges.

Firdous Shamim Naqvi Resigns As PTI Additional Secretary-General

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) leader Firdous Shamim Naqvi has announced his resignation as the party's additional secretary-general, clarifying that his decision was not driven by any grievance or disagreement.



Naqvi also said he had not yet issued a show-cause notice to PTI Senator Mishaal Yousafzai, despite earlier instructions from party chairman Barrister Gohar Ali Khan.

The development comes two days after Gohar directed Naqvi to issue a notice to Yousafzai over an alleged violation of party discipline.

In his earlier statement, Gohar said Naqvi had been instructed to initiate the process in response to what he described as a breach of party rules.

"I have always supported the right of everyone to express their differences of opinion on the party platform," Gohar said, adding that he did not take disagreements personally when they were raised through the appropriate party forum.

However, he said action could become necessary in certain circumstances. Gohar accused Yousafzai of publicly commenting on the party's senior leadership in violation of party discipline and said she had previously been warned against such conduct.

Naqvi's resignation comes amid the reported disagreement over the proposed show-cause notice, although he has stated that his decision was not prompted by any grievance or dispute.

President Zardari embarks on three-day Germany visit to boost economic ties

● Pakistan and Germany mark 75 years of diplomatic relations

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

President Asif Ali Zardari departed for Germany on Thursday for a three-day visit aimed at strengthening bilateral ties as Pakistan and Germany prepare to mark the 75th anniversary of their diplomatic relations.



In a post on X, a spokesperson for the President's House said President Zardari was visiting Berlin at the invitation of his German counterpart Frank-Walter Steinmeier.

President Zardari's visit is of great significance as it will be the first visit to Germany by a Pakistani head of state in the past 23 years, read the statement.

During his visit, the president will hold meetings with the German counterpart as well as senior leadership and business leaders to discuss Pakistan-Germany bilateral relations, with a particular focus on economic and trade cooperation.

The visit is part of high-level exchanges between Pakistan and Germany and holds special significance in the context of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, being commemorated this year.

President Zardari's visit to Germany will help open new avenues for strengthening bilateral relations and enhancing mutual cooperation across various sectors.



Punjab Boards Announce 11th-Class Results Across Major Districts

● Lahore, Faisalabad and Rawalpindi Boards Announce First-Year Results

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Educational boards across Punjab, including Lahore, Faisalabad, Rawalpindi and Sargodha, have announced the results of the Intermediate Part-I (11th-class) annual examinations, with pass rates varying across the regions.

According to the Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) Lahore, 165,245 candidates appeared in the examinations, of whom 99,191 passed. The overall pass percentage stood at 60.03 per cent.

The Faisalabad Board reported that 105,663 students took the examinations, while 65,178 were declared successful, resulting in a pass rate of 61.68 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Rawalpindi Board recorded 55,834 candidates in the examinations. Of these, 30,280 passed and 25,554 failed, bringing the overall pass percentage to 54.23 per cent.

In Sargodha, 17,288 out of 25,166 candidates passed the 11th-class examinations, taking the overall success rate to 68.70 per cent.

A breakdown of the Sargodha results showed that students from public educational institutions recorded a pass rate of 63.25 per cent. Candidates from private educational institutions achieved a higher pass rate of 73.91 per cent, with 10,427 out of 14,107 students passing.

Private candidates appearing independently recorded a pass rate of 54.01 per cent, as 782 out of 1,448 candidates passed the examinations.



No appointment from waiting list after expiry of merit list, rules LHC

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Lahore High Court (LHC) on Thursday rejected the petition filed by a sub-engineer (mechanical) for his appointment on the basis of his name on the waiting list.

In its 14-page verdict, the LHC said that after the expiry of the term of the merit list, the candidate on the waiting list had no right to be appointed.

The high court thus threw out the writ petition filed by Habib Sultan and upheld the Public Service Commission's decision.

Assistant Advocate General Muhammad Usman Khan appeared on behalf of the Punjab government.

The court said that under the Regulation 63, merit list was valid only for 12 months.

It noted that the term of the merit list had expired on February 25, 2026, while the petitioner approached the LHC on May 16, 2026.

The court said that there was no extension in the term of the merit list after a seat fell vacant, and the fact that Ikramullah had resigned from his post did not mean that the seat had fallen vacant.

Suspected dacoit injured in accomplices' firing on Islamabad Police

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



A robbery suspect was injured when his alleged accomplices opened fire on a police team in an attempt to free him from custody in the limits of Sumbal Police Station, Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT), police said on Thursday.

An official told APP on Thursday that the suspect, identified as Shakaz Baig, was being brought back by a police team after the recovery of a stolen motorcycle on his identification.

During the return journey, two armed men riding a motorcycle, who were allegedly hiding along the route, suddenly opened fire on the police team in an attempt to free the arrested suspect.

Police said Shakaz Baig attempted to escape during the firing but was injured by bullets allegedly fired by his accomplices.

The police team remained unharmed due to bulletproof jackets and other protective measures. The officers managed to apprehend the injured suspect a short distance away and shifted him to a hospital for medical treatment.

Police said the suspect had a previous criminal record involving more than a dozen cases of robbery, street crime and other serious offences and was wanted by Islamabad Police.

A stolen motorcycle was also recovered on his identification, while the firing caused damage to an official police vehicle.



QUETTA: Jamiat Lawyers Forum Balochistan Leader Khalil Ahmad Addresses Media at Quetta Press Club.

Police, NAB, IB officers receive practical training in press briefings at ISA

● Press conference exercises improve police communication, response confidence, and public trust

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Officers from the National Police Academy, National Accountability Bureau (NAB), and Intelligence Bureau (IB) Academy received practical training on conducting press briefings, responding to journalists' questions, and sharing information with the public during a workshop held at the Information Service Academy (ISA) on Thursday.

The workshop, titled "Holding Press Briefings by Public/Police Officials", was attended by Executive Director General Ms. Samina Farzin and officers from the participating institutions.

Director ISA Ms. Mehrin Liaqat briefed the participants on the working of the Ministry of Information and Broadcasting and the role of the academy in providing professional training.

Deputy Director Mr. Adnan Akram Bajwa delivered a presentation on effective media management, explaining how officials could prepare for



press briefings, respond to challenging questions, and communicate accurate information to journalists and the public.

He highlighted the importance of remaining calm under pressure, keeping discussions focused on the main issue and providing clear, detailed and well-reasoned answers.

The participants were also advised to maintain friendly and professional relations with journalists and avoid unnecessary arguments during media interactions.

Videos of press conferences by the Inspector General of Punjab Police and other senior officers were also shown to demonstrate how officials

respond to questions, address public concerns and build public confidence through effective communication.

A mock press conference exercise was conducted in three rounds, allowing officers from different institutions to practise responding to journalists in challenging situations.

During one exercise, participants were given a fictional case involving allegations against police personnel and growing public criticism. The officers were asked to explain the department's position, respond to difficult questions and remain focused on the facts.

Associated Press of Pakistan (APP) crime and parliamentary reporter Roy Zia ur Rehman, court reporter Usman Zia, senior Urdu reporter Tabassum Gul and journalist Urooj Maryam facilitated the exercise by asking challenging questions and creating a realistic press conference environment.

Observers reviewed the performance of officers after each round, highlighting their strengths and areas where improvement was needed.

FGEHA investors receive awards, acceptance letters

● DG FGEHA promises investors facilitation, focal officers, prompt issue resolution



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Government Employees Housing Authority (FGEHA) organized a special Investors' Conference on Thursday, 22 October 2026, in honour of successful investors who participated in the recent auction. During the event, Acceptance Letters and Awards were distributed among the successful investors. The conference was attended by senior officials of FGEHA, members of the Auction Committee, and a large number of successful investors.

At the outset, Director Administration Tanveer Haider Khokhar welcomed the participants. Addressing the gathering, the Chairman of the Auction Committee congratulated the successful investors and stated that FGEHA considers investors not merely as purchasers but as valued business partners. He emphasized that mutual trust, transparency, and cooperation between the Authority and investors are fundamental to the success of future projects. He further stated that the confidence reposed by investors in FGEHA's policies and procedures was a source of satisfaction for the Authority, which would continue to take all possible measures to strengthen this trust.

Director General FGEHA, Capt. (Retd.) Zafar Iqbal, also addressed the conference and congratulated all successful investors. He stated that the enthusiastic participation of investors in the recent auction and the confidence they had demonstrated reflected the growing recognition of FGEHA's transparent procedures and investor-

friendly policies.

The DG FGEHA remarked, "You are not merely investors for us; you are our business partners. You have chosen FGEHA by placing your trust in us, and through our performance and practical measures, we will demonstrate that your decision was the right one."

He reiterated that providing maximum facilitation to investors and ensuring the prompt resolution of their legitimate concerns were among the Authority's key priorities. In this regard, he assured the participants that special facilitation would be extended to investors and that a designated focal officer or concerned officer would be assigned to each investor. This arrangement would enable investors to directly approach the relevant officer regarding any matter related to their investment, ensuring timely assistance and effective resolution of their issues.

Capt. (Retd.) Zafar Iqbal further stated that safeguarding investors' confidence remained one of the Authority's foremost priorities. FGEHA was committed to providing timely guidance, facilitation, and efficient services to investors. He added that the policies and payment procedures introduced by the Authority were aimed at ensuring greater convenience for investors, while further facilitation measures would continue to be introduced in the future.

The participating investors expressed their confidence in FGEHA's policies and transparent procedures. They stated that they had preferred FGEHA over other institutions in view of its transparent mechanisms, investor-friendly policies, and facilitation-oriented approach.

Seminar addresses Pakistan's population growth and human security challenges

● Pakistan's population growth is a national priority needing federal-provincial coordination and a societal approach

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Islamabad The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) Lahore, organised a seminar titled "Managing Pakistan's Population Growth: Dissecting

Demographic Pressures, Urbanisation and Human Security Challenges," on October 21, 2026. CASS Lahore organises academic events for scholars and practitioners interested in exploring the critical dimensions of security, technology, and policy within their broader context. Academics, intellectuals, and domain experts attended the event. Air Marshal Irfan



Ahmad (Retd), a Director at CASS, Lahore, delivered the opening address.

Mr Minhaj ul Haque, Chief Executive Officer of the Population Centre Pakistan, spoke on "Pakistan's Demographic Trends Driving Its Population Growth: Strategic Implications for the Country." He highlighted Pakistan's rapid population growth and

its growing pressure on public services, natural resources and socio-economic development. He urged stronger family planning, girls' education, women's empowerment, healthcare and skills development, emphasising coordinated population management and effective policies on education, employment and resource allocation for Pakistan's sustainable future.

Health minister, AJ Vaccines explore local vaccine production

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination Syed Mustafa Kamal met a delegation led by Jens Ulrik Als, Global Sales Director of AJ Vaccines, to discuss potential cooperation in local vaccine production and manufacturing in Pakistan.

During the meeting, the minister briefed the delegation on Pakistan's population of approximately 260 million, the challenges facing the



healthcare sector and the country's vaccine requirements.

He said the National Immunization Programme provides children with 13 types of vaccines to protect them against various prevent-

able diseases. The meeting also discussed opportunities to enhance local manufacturing capacity, reduce reliance on imported vaccines and promote self-sufficiency in vaccine production.

ACT alliance urges prosecution after FBR raids on illegal cigarette networks

● FBR Enforcement: ACT Alliance Calls for Action on Illegal Cigarette Trade

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

ACT Alliance Pakistan has welcomed the Federal Board of Revenue's (FBR) stepped-up enforcement against illegal cigarette manufacturing and distribution networks, calling for stronger investigations, timely prosecutions and penalties against those found guilty.

Mubashir Akram, Country Director of ACT Alliance, said the organisation appreciated the government's efforts to tackle illegal trade, smuggling, counterfeiting and tax evasion. He also commended Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's leadership and urged continued support for FBR enforcement teams.

"We appreciate the Prime Minister's leadership and the government's commitment to addressing the illegal cigarette trade and other criminal business networks," Akram said, adding that sustained enforcement

was needed to prevent illegal operators from re-establishing their presence in the market.

According to ACT Alliance's review of publicly available reports covering January 1 to August 31, 2026, the FBR's Inland Revenue Enforcement Network recorded 675 raids involving tobacco-related activities, including cases concerning raw tobacco.

The review also identified at least four separately reported registered cases relating to cigarette manufacturing, machinery violations or restricted manufacturing inputs. ACT Alliance clarified that these figures do not represent a complete national tally of criminal cases and that the number of raids should not be confused with prosecutions.

The organisation said its review found no publicly confirmed completed prosecutions resulting in convictions and punishments within the sources examined.

"The next area for improve-



ment concerns what follows a raid," Akram said. "Seizures and confiscations should be supported by thorough investigations, timely prosecutions, and penalties wherever due process establishes violations."

Illegal cigarette trade raises economic concerns

ACT Alliance said illegal cigarette sales posed challenges for government revenue, lawful businesses and fair competition. Industry estimates cited by the

organisation suggest Pakistan's annual cigarette market exceeds 80 billion sticks, with more than half sold through illegal channels.

The organisation argued that illegal trade and tax evasion undermine compliant manufacturers by allowing unlawful operators to compete without meeting the same regulatory and tax obligations.

Akram said fair competition was important for investor confi-

dence, warning that illegal business activity could discourage existing investors from expanding and deter prospective investors from committing funds to Pakistan.

"Illegal trade and tax evasion must therefore be addressed as national economic challenges, not merely sector-specific violations," he said.

ACT Alliance calls for stronger legal follow-through

ACT Alliance urged the authorities to improve coordination between investigators and prosecutors, ensure the secure custody and transparent disposal of seized goods, and preserve evidence throughout legal proceedings.

It also called for regular monitoring of registered cases from investigation through prosecution and final adjudication, alongside efforts to identify the organisers and financiers of illegal cigarette operations where evidence supports their involvement.

Development hinges on tech innovation

● Minister says EV charging facilities reflect private sector's efforts to promote clean energy

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



StarCharge and McDonald's Pakistan signed a Cooperation Agreement to bring convenient EV charging to suitable McDonald's locations, enabling customers to charge their vehicles while dining.

Federal Minister for Industries and Production, Rana Tanveer Hussain, graced the signing ceremony, joined by Mr. Jamil Mughal, Chief Operating Officer of McDonald's Pakistan, Mr. Omar Malik, CEO of StarCharge Pakistan, and representatives from both organisations. The Minister welcomed the collaboration and appreciated Omar Malik's efforts to advance EV charging infrastructure in Pakistan.

Pakistan Receives Only Two Qatari LNG Cargoes In October

● Qatari LNG Deliveries to Pakistan Drop Amid Lower Gas-Based Power Generation



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan received its second liquefied natural gas (LNG) cargo from Qatar on October 21, with the shipment docking at the Pakistan GasPort terminal, according to the provided information.

The latest delivery follows the arrival of the first Qatari LNG cargo of the month at Port Qasim on October 13. Pakistan has therefore received only two LNG shipments from Qatar in October, compared with eight during the same month last year.

The decline in deliveries extends beyond October. Since March, Pakistan has received just 20 LNG cargoes, against 72 recorded over the corresponding period last year, according to the report.

Reduced LNG supplies have also coincided with a significant fall in gas-based electricity generation. Pakistan recorded a 56 per cent decline in electricity generation from LNG during September.

The drop in LNG arrivals and power generation highlights a substantial year-on-year reduction in the country's use of imported liquefied natural gas. The figures also raise questions about the implications for Pakistan's fuel supply and electricity generation, although the available information does not establish the precise causes of the decline.

IMF sees 1.3% contraction in Pakistan, Middle East and North Africa in 2026

● Middle East conflict likely to abate in early 2027: IMF

NEWS DESK

DUBAI



The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Thursday forecast a sharp drop in economic output in the Middle East, North Africa and Pakistan this year due to the US-Israeli-led war against Iran, followed by a rebound to 6.6% growth in 2027, while warning that further energy production disruptions could worsen the outlook.

The IMF said the region's output was expected to contract by 1.3% as a result of the war's impact on energy production, shipping, tourism, trade and confidence. Economic output would increase sharply in 2027, but output in those economies would generally stay below pre-war projections.

The war's impact had been substantial, but uneven, with oil-exporting economies directly affected by disruptions to energy production and shipping hit harder, and oil importers proving to be more resilient, the IMF said in its regional outlook released on Thursday in Dubai.

The IMF said its baseline assumed that the conflict would abate in early 2027 and that trade would gradually normalise during the year, but it said the outlook remained clouded by "exceptionally high uncertainty."

"The main risks derive from further disruption to energy production and trade routes that could drive energy prices higher," the IMF said in a statement outlining its key messages, noting external financial conditions could also tighten.

External financial conditions could also tighten if investors reassess AI-driven productivity gains and interest rates rise further amid heightened concerns about inflation and fiscal positions, it said.

Oil importers had proven more resilient, with domestic demand supported by remittances and tourism flows, favourable financial conditions, and prompt policy responses that safeguard consumers from higher commodity prices, the IMF said.

World Bank warns Pakistan faces jobs crisis despite economic stability

● Millions Enter Pakistan's Job Market as Unemployment and Poverty Persist

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The World Bank has warned that Pakistan's economic stabilisation has yet to translate into sufficient jobs and rising household incomes, as unemployment and poverty continue to place pressure on millions of people.

According to the bank's latest assessment, Pakistan's economy grew by 3.7 per cent in fiscal year 2025-26, while the unemployment rate stood at 7 per cent in 2024. Around 3.5 to 3.6 million people enter the labour market each year, intensifying the challenge of creating enough productive jobs.

The World Bank's October 2026 economic assessment highlights a sharp rise in poverty. The national poverty rate increased from 22 per cent in 2018-19 to 29 per cent in 2024-25, reflecting declining real incomes, persistent inflation and weak productivity growth.

The report notes that Pakistan created 17.7 million net jobs between 2018 and 2024, but many were concentrated in low-paid, informal or less productive sectors. Annual labour productivity growth averaged just 0.4 per cent between 2014 and 2024, limiting the potential for higher wages and sustainable improvements in living standards.



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Women and young people face particularly difficult employment conditions, according to the assessment. The bank argues that economic growth alone will not meet the needs of an expanding workforce without reforms that encourage investment and private-sector job creation.

Growth and inflation outlook
Pakistan's economic growth is projected to reach 3.8 per cent in fiscal year 2026-27, while average inflation is expected to rise to 8.2 per cent. Growth could reach around 4.5 per cent over the medium term under current assumptions, but the bank says

faster structural reforms would be needed to achieve sustained annual growth of 6 per cent.

The assessment also warns that the conflict in the Middle East, the El Niño climate phenomenon, external financing pressures and limited fiscal resources could undermine economic recovery.

A prolonged regional conflict could increase Pakistan's energy import bill and place additional pressure on the country's external financing needs, imports and debt servicing. The bank has stressed the importance of maintaining economic stability while strengthening resilience against

external shocks.

World Bank calls for structural reforms

The report identifies reforms in the energy sector, improved public service delivery, skills development and a more business-friendly environment as key priorities for generating productive employment.

It also recommends broadening the tax base, addressing weaknesses in fiscal federalism and reviewing unnecessary energy subsidies. Better implementation of reforms could help raise productivity, attract private investment and create more sustainable employment opportunities.

The bank has also highlighted the importance of the National Finance Commission Award and improvements in how public resources are allocated and used.

Remittances support economy amid trade deficit

Remittances continued to provide an important source of foreign exchange, reaching \$41.6 billion during the previous fiscal year, according to the figures provided. However, Pakistan's trade deficit stood at \$33.7 billion, highlighting continued pressure on the external account.

The report also points to improved credit ratings and access to international bond markets as factors supporting the management of external financial pressures.

MG Pakistan Offers Free 7kW Home Chargers to HS Super Hybrid Owners

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE

Reinforcing its commitment to putting customers first, MG Motor Pakistan has launched a customer engagement campaign for MG HS Super Hybrid owners, offering selected participants the opportunity to win a complimentary 7kW home charger by sharing their genuine ownership experiences.

Running from 15 October to 15 November 2026, the initiative reflects MG Pakistan's focus on building lasting customer relationships and enhancing the ownership experience beyond the drive.

Through the initiative, MG HS Super Hybrid owners are invited to record a video sharing their personal experiences with the vehicle and publish it on their public Facebook or Instagram profiles. Participants must tag @MGMotorsPakistan and email the video link, along with the requested details, to info@mgmotors.com.pk, using the subject line "MG HS Super Hybrid Experience."



Participants must keep their profiles public until the verification process is complete.

Speaking about the initiative, Jianqiang Shao, CEO of MG Motor Pakistan, said, "Putting our customers first means looking beyond the vehicle itself and continuously finding ways to make their ownership experience more rewarding. Our customers' experiences and feed-

back matter to us, and this campaign is an opportunity to celebrate their journeys with the MG HS Super Hybrid. By offering selected owners a 7kW home charger, we also aim to add greater convenience to their plug-in hybrid ownership experience."

The campaign is designed to encourage customers to share their authentic experiences with the MG HS Super Hybrid, while giving prospective buyers an opportunity to learn from existing owners. The home chargers also complement the vehicle's plug-in hybrid capability by supporting convenient charging at home.

Winners will be selected by MG Motor Pakistan at its sole discretion, in accordance with the published campaign terms and conditions. The offer is valid until 15 November 2026, and the total number of chargers distributed will not exceed 50.

MG HS Super Hybrid owners can find the participation requirements and further details on MG Motor Pakistan's official social media channels.

FBR forms two committees for recruitment in grades 1 To 16

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Federal Board of Revenue (FBR) has formed two committees to oversee large-scale recruitment for government positions ranging from Basic Pay Scale (BPS) 1 to 16.

A three-member committee has been constituted to examine recruitment cases for BPS-11 to BPS-16, while a separate committee will review appointments in BPS-1 to BPS-10.

According to the report, the Chief Management and Secretary Management will handle recruitment cases for BPS-11 to BPS-16. Meanwhile, the Secretary Administration and Second Secretary Management will review cases involving positions from BPS-1 to BPS-10.

The FBR has also approved the formation of departmental selection committees to facilitate the recruitment process.

Under the approved arrangement, each departmental selection committee must include at least one female member. If a suitable female officer is unavailable, the Establishment Division will nominate a female member to ensure compliance with the requirement. The move comes as the FBR prepares for large-scale recruitment across various pay scales.



SOT Events' 20th "Possible Worlds" Tour

● Free and open to the public, the series opens in Islamabad on 24 October, followed by Lahore on 28-29 November and Karachi on 12 December 2026

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

SOT Events, the signature thought-leadership series of the Beaconhouse Group, has announced its twentieth edition, SOT Events XX: Possible Worlds. This year the conversation travels to three cities, opening at Ambiance Boutique Art Hotel in Islamabad on 24 October, before moving to Faletti's Hotel in Lahore on 28 and 29 November and concluding at the Beach Luxury Hotel in Karachi on 12 December 2026. All three events are free

and open to the public.

This year's theme, Possible Worlds, treats the future as a set of branching alternatives shaped by decisions being taken now. The programme is built around four worlds: the Automated World, the Warming World, the Divided World, and the Worlds We Choose.

SOT Events offers a rare space in Pakistan for critical, plural and forward-looking conversation. Each edition brings together educators, technologists, policymakers, journalists, artists, and communities to debate the ideas shaping tomorrow through panel discussions,

fireside chats, and debates. Alongside the conversations, audiences can expect live performances, interactive installations, and kiosks.

Chair SOT Events and CEO Beaconhouse, Kasim Kasuri commented on the upcoming edition saying, "At a time of extraordinary change, Possible Worlds invites everyone to consider different directions the future could take, and how the choices we make today will determine which possibilities become our realities. By taking the event to three cities, we look forward to bringing even more voices and perspectives into a

conversation that concerns us all."

Since its first edition in 2000, SOT has grown into one of Pakistan's leading platforms for public discourse. It has hosted more than 1,000 sessions and over 1,500 speakers across editions in Lahore, Karachi, Islamabad and Kuala Lumpur, as well as four virtual editions in 2020 and 2021. Free to attend since 2015, the series has welcomed over 200,000 attendees, with registrations from up to 87 countries and 4.7 million views on digital media.

Over the years, SOT has hosted prominent interna-

tional figures including Tun Dr Mahathir Mohamad, former Prime Minister of Malaysia; Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director-General of the World Health Organization; linguist Noam Chomsky; and authors Jeffrey Archer and Lesley Hazleton. National leaders such as former Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gillani, Former President Dr Arif Alvi and Hina Rabbani Khar have shared the stage with cultural voices including filmmaker Sharmeen Obaid-Chinoy, while musicians Atif Aslam and Ali Azmat have performed at past editions.



By Dr. Muhammad Tayyab Khan Singhanvi,

A State's commitment to the rule of law is tested not simply by its willingness to punish those found guilty of an offence, but by the fairness and transparency with which justice is administered. When a judicial decision ends in the taking of a human life, the evidence on which the verdict rests, the opportunity afforded to the accused to defend themselves, and the fairness of the proceedings become matters of exceptional importance. The execution of two Bangladeshi nationals in Saudi Arabia has brought these concerns into sharp focus, raising questions about criminal justice, consular responsibilities and the role of diplomacy when the lives of foreign nationals are at stake.

On 14 October 2026, Saudi authorities carried out the death sentences of two Bangladeshi nationals, Nazeer-ul-Islam Abdul Bashir and Siti Akhtar, in Makkah. According to a statement issued by the Saudi Ministry of Interior, both had been convicted of committing an immoral act inside a mosque, and the court had imposed the death penalty under its discretionary sentencing powers. The statement did not, however, explain the precise nature of the

offence, the circumstances in which it had occurred, or the evidence presented during the trial. Claims circulating on social media that the two were executed merely for kissing or displaying physical affection therefore go beyond what has been established publicly. The assertion that they were husband and wife also remains unverified. In a matter of this gravity, speculation cannot take the place of evidence, nor should sensational claims be repeated as established fact.

The circumstances surrounding the Bangladeshi Government's knowledge of the cases have added a diplomatic dimension to the affair. Shama Obaid Islam, Bangladesh's State Minister for Foreign Affairs, said that her Government had not received timely and sufficiently detailed information about the proceedings. Dhaka subsequently sought an explanation from the Saudi authorities and requested copies of the judgments and further details of the cases. On 18 October, Bangladeshi officials met Saudi Ambassador Abdullah bin Zafar H. bin Abiyah and handed him a copy of an earlier diplomatic communication. The Bangladeshi news organisation bdnews24.com, however, cautioned against describing the meeting as a formal summoning of the ambassador. That distinction matters. Diplomatic exchanges can be serious without necessarily amounting to a formal protest or summons, and accurate reporting must preserve the difference between the substance of an issue and the precise nature of the official response.

A report published by The Daily Star on 20 October raised further questions about the handling of the cases. Citing an internal communication from the Bangladeshi consulate, the newspaper reported that Nazeer-ul-Islam



had been detained on 1 August 2023 under Saudi Arabia's cybercrime legislation, while Siti Akhtar had been arrested the following day on an allegation of adultery. According to the report, a list of prisoners received by the consulate on 30 September included both names but did not indicate that either individual had been sentenced to death. The communication also left unanswered questions about the relationship between the allegations recorded at the time of arrest and the offences for which the capital sentences were ultimately imposed. The consulate sought copies of the judgments and details of the proceedings. These reported discrepancies warrant examination, but the full judicial record is needed before firm conclusions can be drawn.

Read Newspapers

There is little dispute over the general principle that foreign nationals must respect the laws of the country in which they reside or visit. A person's nationality does not ordinarily confer immunity from the criminal law of the host State. Yet the exercise of criminal jurisdiction

carries corresponding responsibilities. An accused person must be afforded a fair hearing, informed of the charge and given a genuine opportunity to challenge the evidence and present a defence. These safeguards are particularly important in capital cases, where an error cannot be corrected after the sentence has been carried out. The seriousness with which a society regards an alleged offence cannot, in itself, settle the question of whether the conviction and sentence were reached through a fair and legally sound process.

Consular notification is another important aspect of the matter. Article 36 of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations sets out provisions concerning communication between detained foreign nationals and their consular representatives, including notification of the relevant consular post in the circumstances specified by the Convention. Article 37(a) addresses notification in cases involving the death of a foreign national. These provisions must be considered in their proper legal context. Under Article 36, notification is particularly linked to a detained person's request for consular assistance, while Article 37(a) deals with a distinct set of circumstances relating to death. The Convention does not expressly impose an unconditional obligation in every case to notify a foreign government before a death sentence is carried out. Whether a particular obligation was breached can therefore be determined only after the relevant correspondence, judicial records and surrounding circumstances have been examined. A categorical allegation of a violation would be premature without that evidence.



By Hussain H Zaidi

Emergency or overreach?



As a matter of course, every constitution and international treaty that confers rights and obligations on the parties presupposes a stable environment for smooth operation. Paradoxically, however, change is the only permanent feature of the world we live in.

Aware of this basic truth, the framers of constitutions and treaties incorporate 'exception' clauses into the legal documents they draw up. Such provisions aim to allow a temporary departure from some guaranteed rights or stipulated obligations if an abnormal situation arises. The same may apply to the recent presidential proclamation of emergency in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

Federalism or provincial autonomy is a cardinal principle of the 1973 constitution. Executive, financial and legislative powers are distributed between the federation or the federal government on one hand and the provinces on the other. In the normal course of events, the federal government can't interfere with constitutionally mandated provincial autonomy, except in a few instances.

Article 148 (1), for example, stipulates that "The executive authority of every province shall be so exercised as to secure compliance with Federal laws which apply in that province". Clause (2) of the same article states: "It shall be the duty of the federation to protect every province against external aggression and internal disturbances and to ensure that the government of every province is carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution".

Likewise, Article 149 confers on the federal government the power to issue directions to the provinces to "ensure that executive authority of a province is exercised as not to impede exercise of the executive authority of the federation" and to "prevent any grave menace to the peace or tranquility or economic life of Pakistan" or any part of the country.

It follows that even in normal circumstances, the federal government is constitutionally mandated to protect the people of a province against both external aggression and internal disturbances. Leaving aside the phrase 'external aggression', the phrase 'internal disturbances' hasn't been qualified by an adjective, such as 'material' or 'grave' or 'serious'. This means that if we go by the text of the relevant provisions of the constitution, the federal government's mandate is triggered by any level of internal disturbance in a province.

The federal government is mandated not only to ensure that provinces are constitutionally governed, but also that they don't deviate from the constitution. Both these obligations are perpetual and don't need any upheavals to exercise them.

Arising from the federal government's dual mandate – protecting the provinces and ensuring constitutional governance therein – is the power to issue directions to the federating units on how they exercise their executive authority. For their part, the provinces must

obey all federal laws. It's understood that compliance with a law includes compliance with the policies and executive orders made under it.

The emergency powers of the president and the federal government primarily emanate from Articles 148 and 149. The constitution provides for three kinds of emergencies: national emergency (under Article 232), constitutional emergency (under Article 234), and financial emergency (under Article 235). The president has invoked Articles 232 and 234 to clamp an emergency and

the governor's rule on KP. So, we'll leave aside the provisions relating to financial emergency.

Article 232 states: "If the president is satisfied that a grave emergency exists in which the security of Pakistan, or any part thereof, is threatened by war or external aggression, or by internal disturbance beyond the power of a provincial government to control, he may issue a Proclamation of Emergency". The concisely framed text sets out two conditions for imposing a national emergency: the threat to the country's, or a part of the country's, security must be grave enough, and the situation must be beyond a province's capacity to respond effectively. If either condition isn't met, the proclamation of emergency is unwarranted.

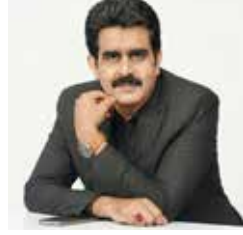
Article 233 empowers the federal government to suspend fundamental rights while a national emergency proclamation is in force. Such a situation arose in 1998 when a nationwide emergency was proclaimed following Pakistan's nuclear tests. The Supreme Court upheld the proclamation.

Article 234 provides that "If the president, on receipt of a report from the governor of a province, is satisfied that a situation has arisen in which the government of the province cannot be carried on in accordance with the provisions of the constitution", he may clamp emergency on that province. Here, again, two conditions are stipulated: a constitutional breakdown in a province, and that the provincial governor, as a representative of the federation, has apprised the president of it.

Per the notification issued by the federal government, all the relevant conditions for clamping emergency and the governor's rule on KP were met: One, there has been an 'alarming increase' in acts of terrorism and violence in the province. Two, the provincial government 'failed' to effectively respond to those acts. Third, the KP governor reported a 'constitutional breakdown' in the province.

The opposition, which ruled KP before the imposition of the emergency, has contested these claims, describing the proclamation as politically motivated and pre-planned and arguing that, instead of addressing the security situation, it would aggravate it. Thus, the question involved here is not primarily a question of law, as the federal government indisputably commands emergency powers, but a question of fact: whether the situation in KP had deteriorated to such an extent as to warrant intervention from Islamabad.

It may be argued that the federal government's executive powers in provinces in normal circumstances (Articles 148-149) and the emergency powers that arise out of those powers run counter to the principle of provincial autonomy. Be that as it may, the 18th Amendment, which shored up provincial autonomy and was enacted in 2010 with the consensus of almost all political parties, didn't do away with those federal powers. This may be interpreted to mean that, in principle, political parties agree on such powers.



By Mudassar Chuhdary

When The Pain Of Children Touched The Corridors Of Power

Sometimes, a few words spoken by a child can break the silence of the corridors of power. Sometimes, a tear in a child's eye can remind an entire nation of its responsibilities. Something of this nature unfolded at the inauguration of Danish School Islamabad on 18 October, when children who had battled deprivation, endured hardship and continued to dream of a better future shared their stories with Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif. As he listened to their accounts, the Prime Minister was visibly moved to tears. It was more than an emotional moment; it was a reminder of a painful reality: countless children in Pakistan possess the talent and determination to succeed, yet remain deprived of opportunities simply because their families lack the financial means to support their ambitions.

One child struggles to continue his education while collecting scrap from rubbish heaps. Another, the daughter of a hard-working tailor, overcomes considerable hardship on her journey towards becoming a doctor. The son of a martyr dreams of supporting his ailing mother, while an orphan from Balochistan looks to education as a means of finding his identity, purpose and place in society. These are different stories, yet they raise the same fundamental question: should a child's future be determined by the poverty of their parents, or should ability, hard work and determination determine how far that child can go?

The Danish Schools initiative seeks to offer an answer to this question. At the heart of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's educational vision is the belief that poverty should never become an insurmountable barrier between a talented child and a promising future. The real significance of this vision, however, lies not merely in the construction of educational institutions, but in the broader national principle that Pakistan's future depends on providing its children and young people with education, skills, confidence and genuine opportunities to succeed.

The Prime Minister's tears gave the ceremony a deeply human dimension. Yet the greatest hope associated with that emotional moment is that the children's aspirations will be translated into reality through sound policies, adequate resources and sustained action. The most meaningful expression of a leader's concern for the younger generation is to ensure that no talented child is left behind simply because their family cannot afford school fees, books or the cost of higher education.

The Danish Schools initiative was conceived around the idea that talented children from disadvantaged and underprivileged backgrounds should have access to quality education, regardless of their families' financial circumstances. The inauguration of Danish School Islamabad represents a further step in advancing this vision. It is not simply the opening of another educational institution; it is an affirmation of the principle that quality education must not remain the privilege of a particular social or economic class.

Across Pakistan, thousands of children possess remarkable intelligence, potential and determination but are unable to access quality education. Some are compelled to contribute to household expenses at an early age. Others struggle to afford books, uniforms and transport, while many girls are unable to continue their studies because their families cannot meet the associated costs. For



these children, an educational opportunity can represent the difference between a future constrained by poverty and one shaped by choice, dignity and achievement.

The educational vision associated with Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif rests on the principle that economic deprivation should not permanently obstruct a child's abilities. Poverty does more than limit material resources; it restricts choices, undermines confidence and narrows the horizons of young people. A child may possess intelligence, discipline and ambition, but without qualified teachers, suitable learning facilities, books and access to further education, that potential may never be fully realised.

This is where the role of the state becomes indispensable. The responsibilities of government extend beyond building roads, bridges and infrastructure. They also include nurturing capable, educated and confident citizens who can contribute meaningfully to the country's development. Investing in the education of a disadvantaged child is, in essence, an investment in Pakistan's future. Today's student may become tomorrow's doctor, engineer, teacher, scientist, entrepreneur or public servant.

The accounts shared at the inauguration of Danish School Islamabad revealed both the harsh realities of Pakistani society and the extraordinary resilience of its children.

The story of a child collecting scrap from rubbish heaps highlights the difficult choices facing families who struggle to meet even their most basic needs. For such a child, attending school is not an ordinary part of daily life; it is an ongoing struggle against circumstances that can make education seem like an unattainable luxury. The determination to continue studying despite such conditions is a powerful reminder of what young people can achieve when given the right support.

The journey of a tailor's daughter towards becoming a doctor demonstrates that a family's financial position should never be mistaken for a measure of a child's potential. When a girl receives the opportunity to pursue her education, the benefits extend well beyond her own life. She can transform her family's circumstances, inspire other girls and help break the cycle of poverty for generations to come.

The aspiration of a martyr's son to support his ailing mother offers another poignant perspective. Some children are forced to shoulder responsibilities far beyond their years. For them, education is not merely a route to a qualification or a well-paid job; it is a means of providing security for their families and living with dignity.

The story of an orphan from Balochistan carries a similarly important national message. Talent is not confined to major cities, nor is ambition the preserve of privileged communities. Children across every province and region have the potential to contribute to

Pakistan's progress. National unity becomes stronger when every child, regardless of geographical location or family background, feels that the state values their future and is prepared to invest in it.

These stories elevate the significance of Danish Schools beyond that of an educational programme. They represent the aspiration for a Pakistan in which a child's prospects are determined not by wealth, family connections or place of birth, but by ability, effort and character.

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's emotional response to the children's accounts was one of the most striking human moments of the ceremony. Their struggles and aspirations served as a reminder that behind economic statistics, development plans and policy announcements are real people whose lives are shaped by the decisions of those in power.

When a Prime Minister listens to the struggles of a child, he is also confronting a picture of the country's future. Among these children may be the doctor who will treat disadvantaged patients, the teacher who will educate future generations, the scientist who will advance research, or the entrepreneur who will create jobs and contribute to economic growth.

Yet the true value of a leader's tears lies in what follows. Emotion can reflect compassion and a genuine awareness of human suffering, but the demands of governance require that such concern be translated into lasting policies, effective institutions, transparent administration and measurable outcomes. Being moved by the plight of disadvantaged children is a meaningful human response; establishing a system that reduces their hardship is the practical responsibility that accompanies it.

The Prime Minister's reaction should therefore be viewed in the context of a wider national debate about the future of Pakistan's children. Their problems cannot be treated merely as statistics or administrative challenges. Every disadvantaged child represents a reservoir of potential that, given the right opportunities, could become an asset to society.

The lasting significance of the occasion will depend on whether the compassion witnessed at the ceremony is reflected in sustained efforts to improve educational access and outcomes across the country.

Pakistan's large youth population can become one of the country's greatest strengths. However, this demographic advantage will only translate into meaningful progress if young people receive quality education, relevant skills, practical training and access to employment.

Constructing a school building is not enough. Educational success also requires competent teachers, modern curricula, science and technology facilities, digital literacy, sports, extracurricular activities and the intellectual and moral development of students.

To be continued

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Ambassador Sheikh outlines shift toward technology in Pakistan-US relations



WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

The Embassy of Pakistan in Washington DC hosted the “Pakistan-US Tech Connect 2026” to facilitate direct engagement between leading Pakistani technology firms and their American counterparts, wherein Pakistan’s Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh called for pivoting from traditional security concerns toward technological alignment.

The event was held in collaboration with the Ministry of Information Technology & Telecommunication, OPEN Global, and the Pakistan Software Export Board (PSEB).

Designed as an executive networking forum, the event aimed to unlock potential partnerships across enterprise solutions, digital transformation, product development, and strategic IT collaboration. The delegation showcased senior leadership from 16 premier Pakistani tech companies operating in cutting-edge sectors, including artificial intelligence, cloud computing, data analytics, fintech, and healthcare technology.

The gathering drew prominent attendees, including Sindh Governor Syed Nehal Hashmi, representatives from major US technology and financial firms, multilateral institutions, government agencies, and leaders from the Pakistani American business community.

Through structured executive panel discussions and curated business-to-business (B2B) sessions, the initiative sought to convert Pakistan’s expanding IT export capacity into sustainable commercial relationships, elevating technology into a core pillar

of Pakistan-US economic engagement.

In his opening remarks, Ambassador Rizwan Saeed Sheikh welcomed participants and outlined the objective of the tech series as a pivotal move to position Pakistan as an impactful contributor and US partner within the fast-evolving global technological landscape.

“The current showcase focuses on presenting top-tier Pakistani firms and aims to display the ‘best and brightest’ from the Pakistani tech industry directly to stakeholders in Washington, D.C.,” Ambassador Sheikh said. “The showcasing aims to display Pakistani tech firms’ IT prowess and its ability to meet international standards in evolving fields like AI.”

Emphasizing the historical depth of bilateral relations between Pakistan and the United States, Ambassador Sheikh described the partnership as inherently consequential and presented IT partnership as the next promising prospect in that context.

“Each time Pakistan and the United States have come together, we have produced results, and results not only for ourselves in the bilateral domain, but results for the whole world,” he observed.

Underscoring a strategic shift in bilateral priorities, Ambassador Sheikh called for pivoting from traditional security concerns toward technological alignment.

“A key goal is to make a transition in the bilateral relationship from ‘CT to IT,’ moving from counterterrorism to information technology. This is what we have to work on because this is going to yield a mutually rewarding partnership in the future,” he added.



AZERBAIJAN: Hon'ble Chief Justice of the Federal Constitutional Court of Pakistan, Mr. Justice Amin-ud-Din Khan, Continues His Official Visit to Azerbaijan; Informational and Cultural Programmes Arranged in His Honour.

US orders embassy staff to leave Saudi Arabia amid escalating Houthi strikes

● Explosions reported in Iran’s Hormozgan province, near Hormuz

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON

Washington has ordered non-essential US embassy staff and their families to leave Saudi Arabia, the State Department said, as the kingdom faces sustained deadly attacks by Yemen’s Houthis.

The move came after a diplomatic source told AFP that “all American staff and their families have been ordered to depart from the US embassy” in the Gulf kingdom.

The source added that families of embassy staff had also been ordered to leave the United Arab Emirates, Jordan, Qatar and Bahrain, all of which have been targeted by Iran during the Middle East war.

US State Department spokesman Tommy Pigott subsequently confirmed the order in a post on X, but said it applied to “non-emergency US government employees and their family members in Saudi Arabia only”.



He linked the move to Houthi attacks on the country, including attacks on airports, saying that “the safety and security of Department personnel and their families remain our highest priority”.

Saudi Arabia has come under near-daily attacks by the Iran-backed Houthis this month, including a strike on Riyadh’s international airport that was the kingdom’s deadliest in years, as the conflict with the group

escalates.

On Wednesday, the Saudi energy ministry said falling debris from the interception of a drone targeting an oil facility had killed two people and injured two others.

“The attempted attack resulted in the deaths of two individuals, a Filipino and a Nepali, and injuries to two others,” the ministry said in a statement.

It did not identify who launched the drone targeting the

Shaybah oilfield near the border with the United Arab Emirates. Earlier on Wednesday, the Saudi-led coalition in Yemen reported intercepting six drones.

In June, a four-year truce in Yemen’s civil war collapsed, reviving a conflict that dates back to 2014. The Saudi-led coalition has backed the internationally recognised government since 2015.

Iran explosions

The US had previously ordered non-essential staff to leave the Gulf ahead of the start of its war against Iran, and again in July before US President Donald Trump called off a new wave of strikes.

Late on Wednesday, Iranian state media reported several explosions in the southern province of Hormozgan, overlooking the Strait of Hormuz, breaking a period of relative calm.

“A few minutes ago, the sound of several explosions was heard in the Karpan area of Sirik, in Hormozgan Province,” the official IRNA news agency said.

Unresolved Kosovo tensions threaten regional stability, Pakistan tells UNSC

UNMIK Head Urges Trust, Dialogue for Peaceful Coexistence in Kosovo

WEB DESK

UNITED NATIONS

Despite progress in forming Kosovo’s institutions, Pakistan has told the UN Security Council that ongoing inter-communal tensions and unresolved issues with Serbia continue to threaten stability, making it vital to curb these trends before they take root.

“We unequivocally condemn all actions directed against any people on the basis of their faith, belief or ethnicity, and hope that relevant authorities would take decisive action against such activities,” the Acting Permanent Representative of Pakistan to the United Nations, Usman Jadoon, said following a briefing on the activities of the UN Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Noting with concern the statements related to diversion of shared hydro resources, Ambassador Jadoon said trans-boundary waters between copartners should not be used for political point-scoring or to further any narrow geo-political aim.

Kosovo declared independence from Serbia in February 2008 follow-



ing years of ethnic tensions, but Serbia has not recognized the declaration. The European Union (EU) has since been facilitating dialogue between the parties on a range of challenges.

“We firmly believe that sustained and meaningful participation in the EU-facilitated dialogue, with earnest implementation of all agreements and understandings reached between the authorities in Belgrade and Pristina remains the only viable path for overcoming challenges, and to ensure last-

ing peace, and stability in the region,” the Pakistani envoy said.

In this regard, he called for trust-building between the two sides remains as an essential element for moving forward. B

Ambassador Jadoon also backed UNMIK’s efforts to promote harmony and foster the spirit of co-existence, and tolerance among various communities in Kosovo.

Pakistan, he said, enjoys friendly relations with Serbia and Kosovo and

remained a resolute supporter of a peaceful, stable and prosperous Balkans.

“We encourage both sides to work together in the spirit of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect, recognition of mutual sensitivities, and to safeguard social and economic rights of all peoples in the region.”

Briefing the Security Council, Peter Due, Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of UNMIK, said that the past six months saw increased tensions in Kosovo and the region, pointing out that peaceful June elections were followed by political uncertainty and heightened rhetoric.

Property disputes, stalled reintegration of Kosovo Serb judicial personnel and allegations of police ill-treatment have eroded trust and reinforced perceptions of unequal treatment, he said.

Reporting convictions of former President Hashim Thaci and three other former Kosovo Liberation Army leaders for war crimes, he expressed concern over legislative amendments limiting the Specialist Chambers’ powers. Judicial independence “must be respected”, he stressed.

Gilani meets Maldivian President Muizzu



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman of the Senate, Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani, met the President of the Republic of Maldives Dr Mohamed Muizzu in Islamabad on Thursday to discuss ways to strengthen longstanding bilateral ties, enhance trade and economic cooperation, and promote parliamentary diplomacy.

Senator Talha Mahmood, Chairman Senate Standing Committee on Defence; Senator Faisal Saleem Rehman, Chairman Standing Committee on Interior; Senator Agha Shahzaib Durrani, Chairman Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs; Senate Secretary Syed Hasnain Haider; and other senior officials attended the meeting.

Gilani said Pakistan and Maldives enjoy close, friendly relations based on mutual trust, respect and shared interests.

He noted that 2026 marks the 60th anniversary of diplomatic relations between the two countries, providing an important opportunity to further deepen cooperation.

He emphasised that parliamentary exchanges, friendship groups and closer coordination between standing committees could strengthen institutional ties and mutual understanding.

He also highlighted opportunities to expand

Pakistani exports to Maldives, particularly in pharmaceuticals, textiles, rice, cement, meat, fruits and vegetables.

*Improved air and maritime connectivity, he added, could further facilitate trade, investment and economic activity. President Muizzu agreed with the proposal and appreciated the suggestion.

Gilani also underscored the potential for cooperation in education, healthcare, youth development and human resource development, stressing that people-to-people and cultural exchanges would further strengthen friendship between the two nations.

Discussing regional and global developments, Chairman Senate said Pakistan remained committed to peace and stability.

He highlighted Pakistan’s role in efforts to ease tensions between Iran and the United States, stating that the country had demonstrated responsibility in promoting regional and international peace.

President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu reaffirmed Maldives’ strong commitment to its friendly relations with Pakistan and expressed interest in further expanding parliamentary, diplomatic and economic cooperation.

He highlighted investment opportunities in Pakistan and appreciated the country’s efforts to promote peace and reduce international tensions.

Pakistan pushes for legally binding space treaty to prevent outer space arms race

WEB DESK

UNITED NATIONS

With humanity’s survival increasingly tied to orbital infrastructure, Pakistan has warned that space weaponization has moved from theoretical doctrine to active deployment, making a legally binding treaty on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) more critical than ever.

“We must pursue a comprehensive approach that can preserve outer space as a domain free from conflict for future generations,” Pakistani delegate Husham Ahmed told the UN General Assembly’s First Committee (Disarmament and International Security) in its thematic debate on Thursday, pointing out that weapons in orbit



were officially acknowledged last month — for the first time.

He cautioned that integrating missile defence with space-based systems undermines global strategic stability, warning that such deployments risk triggering countermeasures and destabilizing international security through an unsustainable arms race.

While the window to prevent the weaponiza-

tion of outer space has not closed, the Pakistani delegate said, recent announcements have narrowed it and made it far harder to hold ajar, which is precisely why the international community must act now before deployments harden into irreversible facts.

In this regard, Husham Ahmed highlighted the urgent need to establish formal international frameworks to prevent

the militarization of space, warning that non-binding guidelines are no longer sufficient to secure the global commons.

The Pakistani delegate emphasized that while transparency and voluntary Open-Ended Working Group (OEWG) guidelines are helpful stepping stones, they cannot substitute for a formal treaty. He reiterated Pakistan’s concrete proposals outlining basic obligations for a potential, legally-binding PAROS treaty.

“The OEWG on PAROS in all its aspects offers a unique platform to bridge differences, where useful discussions are taking place,” Husham Ahmed pointed out.

“We must build on these discussions to lay the foundation for both legally and non-legally binding measures.”

Rahul Gandhi’s nephew says he was forced to remove protest artwork from Delhi exhibition

NEWS DESK

NEW DELHI

The nephew of Indian opposition leader Rahul Gandhi said he was forced to remove several pieces of art documenting youth protests from his exhibition at a government-run cultural centre in New Delhi this week, as they were deemed “objectionable.”

Raihan Vadra, 26, the son of Gandhi’s sister, lawmaker Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, said the management at Bikaner House forced him to remove the artwork just hours before his exhibition opened on Wednesday.

Youth protests, led by the Cockroach Janta Party (CJP), have emerged as a major challenge to Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s government.

A weeks-long sit-in forced the resignation of his education minister in July over exam paper leaks.

Demonstrations erupted again this month, with opposition groups led by Gandhi at the forefront, seeking the resignation of Chief Election Commissioner Gyanesh Kumar over a controversial revision of voter lists.

“The photos were of the youth protests in Delhi,” Vadra said in a post on social media. “Apparently the content is objectionable.”



SHARMEEN Obaid-Chinoy and the British Council celebrate five years of Patakha Pictures, honouring eight talented women filmmakers from across Pakistan and their work through the latest Claim The Frame cohort.

Hrithik Roshan And Saba Azad Spotted Together Amid Split Rumours

● Couple arrived at PVR Cinemas for a screening of Deadpool & Wolverine

SHOWBIZ DESK

MUMBAI

Bollywood actor Hrithik Roshan and his girlfriend, Saba Azad, were reportedly spotted enjoying a movie outing together in Mumbai, putting fresh focus on speculation about their relationship.

According to reports, the couple arrived at PVR Cinemas for a screening of Deadpool & Wolverine. Dressed casually and wearing face masks, they appeared relaxed as they made their way into the cinema.

Hrithik wore a black jacket over an olive-green T-shirt, blue jeans and a matching cap, while Saba opted for a loose blue shirt and black jeggings. The pair were also reportedly seen walking closely together, with Saba holding Hrithik's arm as they entered the building.

Rumours about a possible split had circulated after Saba was absent from several high-profile occasions, including the



wedding celebrations of Anant Ambani and Radhika Merchant. Speculation also grew when Hrithik was seen spending time with his children and former wife, Sussanne Khan, without Saba.

Some social media users also questioned the couple's relationship after noticing that Hrithik had not publicly promoted Saba's latest song, despite previously supporting her professional projects.

Their reported cinema outing has renewed discussion about the relationship, although neither Hrithik nor Saba has publicly confirmed or addressed the breakup rumours in the information provided.

At half a century, Senegal's Orchestra Baobab bets on new generation

WEB DESK

DAKAR

Sitting on a couch in their manager's office, three of the oldest members of Senegal's Orchestra Baobab, the legendary Afro-Cuban and west African fusion group, banter like family.

Several evenings later, their guitar and saxophone melodies conjured the same convivial chemistry, electrifying a Dakar nightclub and getting partygoers dancing cha-cha steps and swaying their hips -- as the band has done so many times in its half-century history.

The much-loved orchestra, which blends regional Wolof griot music, Congolese rumba, Senegalese mbalax, jazz and other traditions through an Afro-Cuban filter, will release "Made in Senegal", its first album of new songs in nearly 10 years, on Friday.

Like the mighty baobab tree it is named for, Orchestra Baobab remains standing despite its age, thanks in part to a new generation of musicians slowly



replacing its iconic veterans.

Two groups of the oldest then youngest members of the nine-person ensemble sat down with AFP to explain the enduring magic.

In the band's latest music "you can sense a freshness, something new, something exceptional, something people haven't really heard from the founders before", rhythm guitarist Yahya Fall, 76, told AFP.

The group's joyful swinging sound, produced across guitars, drums, saxophones and vocals, alternately rollicks and sways, at times highly energetic and at

others seducing listeners with lilting refrains.

The handful of new members, mostly in their 30s and 40s, say they aspire to sustain the band's historic soul and core sound, adding only a dash of their personal flavour.

Vocalist Korka Dieng, who started singing with Baobab in 2023, jolted the group into the 21st century as its first and only woman member.

The 44-year-old said she and the other younger musicians each bring their own touch, but try "to preserve the originality that brought the legendary

orchestra to where it is today".

The young members "will be able to ensure Baobab lasts a full century", 73-year-old percussionist Mountaga "Taga" Koite, the band's last remaining original member, told AFP with a twinkle in his eye.

The orchestra, which ruled Dakar's club scene and airwaves after its birth in 1970, eventually went on hiatus only to reemerge in the early 2000s and achieve international fame.

Trombone and tenor saxophonist Wilfried Zinsou, part of the new guard at 48, described the orchestra as a national treasure, touring across Europe and elsewhere when not performing in Dakar.

"People view Senegal through us, we bring Senegalese culture with us. Those unfamiliar with Senegal see the country through Orchestra Baobab," he told AFP.

The group is even planning a concert series outside their urban stronghold of Dakar, having never gone on tour in Senegal's regions, orchestra leader Thierno Koite, brother of "Taga", told a press conference Tuesday.

If I had to marry, it would have been Maheen Siddiqui: Sheheryar Munawar

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI

Pakistani actor Sheheryar Munawar has praised his wife, actress Maheen Siddiqui, saying he realised over the past few months that if he was ever going to get married, it had to be to her, otherwise he might never have married at all.

Speaking in podcast, Munawar described his wife as a wonderful person.

When congratulated on his marriage, the actor said he was grateful that married life had been going well so far.

Sheheryar said Maheen managed him very well, describing it as a significant task in itself.

The actor said the biggest chal-



lenge in marriage was spending time with the same person every day.

He said it was important to prepare oneself to spend 16 hours or even more each day with one person.

During the conversation,

Sheheryar agreed, saying nobody tells you beforehand that after marriage, someone will be around you all the time.

It is worth mentioning that Sheheryar Munawar and Maheen Siddiqui tied the knot in December 2024.

Ahmed Ali Butt remarked that the reality of marriage usually begins to sink in during the second week, when a person realises that their spouse will now be a permanent part of their life.

Cara delevingne reveals Taylor Swift's vision behind patient zero

SHOWBIZ DESK

NEW YORK

Taylor Swift's creative vision for "Patient Zero" has earned praise from supermodel Cara Delevingne, who described the singer as a "genius" while recalling how she shared the music video concept with her friends.

Delevingne revealed that Swift contacted her shortly after developing the idea for the video. Recalling her first reaction to hearing the song, she said she immediately wanted it released so she could listen to it repeatedly.

The supermodel also remembered Swift calling her while she was driving home to explain the music video concept.



She praised the singer's attention to detail, the scale of the idea and the Easter eggs incorporated into the project.

"The scope of it, the idea, every single detail, the Easter eggs, all of it," Delevingne said, expressing amazement at Swift's ability to bring so many elements together.

Her comments quickly gained attention on social media, where fans praised Delevingne for

her continued support of Swift. Others echoed her admiration for the singer's creativity, while some speculated that the video's Easter eggs might contain hidden clues.

Meanwhile, Swift recently showed her support for her husband, Travis Kelce, as the Kansas City Chiefs faced the Los Angeles Chargers on October 18 at Arrowhead Stadium in Kansas City, Missouri.

Rajab Butt's Land Cruiser seized over fake number plate



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Lahore's Sundar Police have impounded a Land Cruiser on Wednesday, linked to YouTuber Rajab Butt after discovering that the vehicle was carrying a fake and non standard number plate.

According to a spokesperson for the Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Operations, police intercepted the vehicle near the National

Fertilizer Corporation (NFC) Bridge.

The driver, identified as Musa Khan, reportedly failed to provide a satisfactory explanation for the suspicious number plate.

Police registered a case against the driver, while further legal proceedings are underway to establish the vehicle's ownership and investigate the number plate violation.

The incident comes after an ongoing Lahore Police crackdown on vehicles dis-

playing fake and non standard registration plates.

DIG Operations Faisal Kamran said that 1,508 cases had been registered as part of the campaign so far.

He stressed that the law applies equally to everyone and that no individual is exempt from legal action.

He added that authorities are continuing efforts to ensure the proper identification of vehicles and prevent criminal activities.

Ayesha Jahanzeb reveals career setback after speaking out about domestic abuse

SHOWBIZ DESK

KARACHI

Pakistani television host and actress Ayesha Jahanzeb says she lost her job after speaking publicly about her domestic abuse case.

During an appearance on Rise and Shine, hosted by Nadia Khan and Zohaib Hassan, she discussed how the experience affected her career and why she believes victim-blaming remains a problem in Pakistan.

Ayesha began her television career with Aftab Iqbal's show Khabarnak on Geo TV and later hosted Chocolate Times on A Plus. She said her work opportunities changed after she brought her personal struggles into the public eye.

"When I had put my case in front of the world, I paid its biggest price. I lost my job, and



since then I have been doing off-and-on projects," she said during the interview.

Ayesha added that she had worked on a show for Express and had also worked with Pakistan Television (PTV). However, she said she had not signed a new project at the time of the interview.

Speaking about the challenges women face after relationship problems become public, Ayesha said people often judge women without knowing the full circumstances. She argued

that women are frequently blamed when relationships end, with others assuming they must have done something wrong.

"When you become single, you become problematic," she said, explaining how she believes society's attitude can affect a woman's professional life.

She also described her experience of the entertainment industry, saying, "When something evil attaches to you, channels don't want to work with you."

Mahhi Vij takes a brutal jab at Arishfa Khan in Bigg Boss 20 house

SHOWBIZ DESK

NEW DELHI

Tension between contestants Mahhi Vij and Arishfa Khan seems to be growing, adding to the drama within the Bigg Boss 20 house. During their continued arguments, Mahhi made a blatant jab at Arishfa by referring to her as "kaleshi."

Mahhi was reported in the post as stating, "Kalesh karne aayi hai tu, kaleshi hai tu!" The two contestants appear to be having difficulty agreeing, and the scathing comment has added another confrontational moment to the season.

During a heated debate with Arishfa, Mahhi made the remark. Someone who is thought to frequently engage in debates or cause disagreement is referred to as "kaleshi."

The statement implies that the two housemates' argument is still unresolved.



ADHD Linked To 71% Higher Risk Of Early Death, Study Finds

● Researchers Highlight Need for Long-Term Support for People With ADHD

WEB DESK

WASHINGTON

People with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) may face a significantly higher risk of premature death than those without the condition, while prescribed medication could be associated with a lower risk, according to a review published in JAMA Network Open.

The review examined 19 studies involving nearly 16 million people across three continents to assess the long-term health risks associated with ADHD. Researchers analysed deaths from unnatural causes, including suicide and accidents, as well as natural causes such as heart disease and diabetes.

News subscription service The findings indicated that people with ADHD had an approximately 71 per cent higher risk of premature death overall. Their risk of death by suicide was 89 per cent higher, while the risk of dying from injuries, including road accidents, was 55 per cent higher. The risk of death from natural causes was also 27 per cent higher.

Researchers noted that several factors may contribute to these risks, including higher rates of smoking and substance use. Difficulties with executive functioning may also make it harder for some people with ADHD to manage chronic conditions, attend medical appointments regularly and follow treatment plans.



However, the review also identified a potentially encouraging finding. An analysis of three studies found that people taking prescribed ADHD medication had a 25 per cent lower risk of death from any cause than those who were not taking medication.

Senior author Joshua Stott, a professor at University College London, said ADHD does not necessarily have to limit a person's lifespan when appropriate care and support are available.

The researchers cautioned that the findings do not establish a direct cause-and-effect relationship because the studies were observational. They also stressed that the medication findings were based on only three studies and require further investigation.

The review highlights the importance of comprehensive, long-term support for people with ADHD, including appropriate clinical care and help managing other health conditions.

Sophie Cunningham Rejects Questions About Her Dating Life

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD



WNBA star Sophie Cunningham has firmly shut down questions about her dating life, making it clear that she is not willing to discuss her personal relationships simply because fans are curious.

The Indiana Fever guard recently faced a series of questions about her relationship status during an interview, amid growing speculation on social media about her private life.

When asked when she had last been on a "real" date, Cunningham responded bluntly: "Why? I'm not answering this."

Rather than offering details about her romantic life, the basketball star maintained her boundaries and refused to entertain the question.

Cunningham also spoke about her experiences with dating, saying that people rarely approach her in person.

"No one ever approaches me, you know I don't really date," she said, joking that she might give off an intimidating impression.

The athlete has developed a strong following both on and off the court, with fans often drawn to her outspoken personality and candid responses. Her latest remarks have added to the online conversation surrounding her private life.

Cunningham has previously discussed some of her dating preferences, including her preference for a partner taller than her. However, she has also made it clear that questions about intimate aspects of her life are not always welcome.

Despite continued online speculation about her relationship status, Cunningham has chosen to keep those details private, leaving it to her to decide what she shares and when.



QUETTA: The All Quetta Shuhadae 8 August Football Tournament 2026 was held in Quetta on Thursday, October 22, bringing together local football talent to honour the martyrs of August 8. Players competed on a sunny day at an outdoor green grass field, showcasing their skills in a spirited environment. The event, marked by community participation and vibrant play, underscores the importance of sports in fostering unity and remembrance. The tournament serves as a tribute to those lost, strengthening communal bonds through the universal language of sport.

Sri Lanka chase 430 to stun England

● Shanaka scores explosive 97 off just 50; Brook quickest ODI double ton goes in vain

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Sri Lanka produced a sensational batting performance to chase down England's mammoth target of 430 runs in the third ODI of the tri-nation series at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Thursday, completing a remarkable victory with one ball to spare.

Sri Lanka reached the target in 49.5 overs, pulling off what was billed as the second-highest successful run chase in ODI history after England had posted an imposing 429 for four in their allotted 50 overs.

Chasing a massive target of 430 runs, Sri Lanka secured a thrilling victory with just one ball remaining and two wickets in hand. The remarkable win marked the second-highest successful run chase in the history of Test cricket.

Sri Lanka endured a shaky start to their pursuit, losing opener Kamindu Mendis for 18 and skipper Kusal Mendis for a duck within the first five overs, leaving the team struggling at 24 runs.

However, Rathnayake



joined Fernando at the crease, and the pair launched a spirited counterattack against the England bowlers. Their third-wicket stand yielded 166 runs from just 137 deliveries, with both batters reaching their respective half-centuries.

The partnership was finally broken by Jamie Overton on the opening delivery of the 28th over, when he caught Fernando off his own bowling. Fernando departed after a brilliant 83-ball knock of 97, featuring 11 boundaries and two sixes.

Dasun Shanaka arrived at number five following Fernando's dismissal and combined with Rathnayake to maintain Sri Lanka's scoring

momentum. The pair added a rapid 133 runs for the fourth wicket, during which Rathnayake advanced from his half-century to register his second ODI hundred.

Sam Curran eventually ended Rathnayake's outstanding innings in the 41st over. The opener finished as Sri Lanka's leading scorer with 130 off 106 balls, striking 15 fours and three sixes.

Shanaka continued his aggressive approach in partnership with Janith Liyanage, adding another 40 runs for the fifth wicket. However, the all-rounder narrowly missed out on his maiden ODI century, falling for 97 to Liam Dawson. His explosive 50-ball innings

included six fours and eight sixes.

After Shanaka's departure, Liyanage took charge of the chase and guided Sri Lanka across the finish line. He remained unbeaten on 61 from just 27 deliveries, hitting seven fours and three sixes, as the visitors sealed victory on the penultimate ball of the innings.

For England, Josh Tongue led the bowling effort with figures of three wickets for 79 runs in 8.5 overs. Curran claimed two wickets, while Overton and Dawson picked up one wicket each.

Sri Lanka captain Kusal Mendis's decision to field first backfired as the Three Lions racked up 429/4 in their 50 overs, which was then the highest total in the host country, surpassing the previous best of 375/3, which the host nation Pakistan recorded against Zimbabwe in 2015.

England got off to a blazing start to their innings as their opening pair of Tom Banton and Ben Duckett shared a brisk 74-run partnership before both fell victim to Dunith Wellalage in the spinner's successive overs.

Pakistan's Haider Ali wins silver in discus throw at Asian Para Games

SPORTS DESK

JAPAN

Pakistan's para-athlete Haider Ali won the silver medal in the men's F37 discus throw event at the ongoing Asian Para Games in Nagoya, Japan, on Thursday.

The 41-year-old athlete secured second place with a best throw of 57.20 metres, finishing just 19 centimetres behind Uzbekistan's Kudratillo Khon Kholmatov, who claimed gold with a throw of 57.39 metres, setting a new Asian Para Games record.

India's Hani won the bronze medal with a throw of 57.04 metres in a closely contested competition.

Hailing from Gujranwala, Haider Ali has an impressive record on the international



stage. He won the gold medal in discus throw at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games and secured bronze at the Paris

2024 Paralympics.

His other major achievements include a silver medal in the long jump at the Beijing

2008 Paralympics and a bronze medal at the Rio 2016 Paralympics.

The silver medal in Nagoya

adds another significant achievement to Haider Ali's distinguished career and further highlights Pakistan's presence in international para-sports.

The world record of 59.75 metres in the F37 men's discus belongs to Uzbekistan's Khushniddin Norbekov, who set the mark at the Rio 2016 Paralympic Games.

Ali's silver added another podium finish to his decorated career in para athletics, as Pakistan secured a place among the medal winners in the event.

The 41-year-old has an illustrious career on the international stage. He won gold in the discus throw at the 2020 Tokyo Paralympic Games, silver in the long jump at Beijing 2008 and bronze in the long jump at Rio 2016.



Steve Smith Joins Australia's Elite With 11,000 Test Runs

● Steve Smith Becomes Third Australian to Score 11,000 Test Runs

SPORTS REPORTER

SYDNEY

Australian batter Steve Smith has become the third Australian to reach 11,000 runs in Test cricket, achieving the milestone during the fourth day of the second Test against South Africa.

The 37-year-old top-scored for Australia with 28 runs in the first innings, as South Africa's bowlers maintained pressure on the hosts.

Former Australian captains Ricky Ponting and Allan Border were the first Australians to surpass 11,000 Test runs. Ponting retired with 13,378 runs, while Border finished his Test career with 11,174.

Smith is the 12th batter overall to reach the 11,000-run milestone in Test cricket, further cementing his place among the format's most prolific run-scorers.



England's Harry Brook creates history with fastest double century in ODI cricket

SPORTS REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

England captain Harry Brook has set a new world record for the fastest double century in One-Day International (ODI) cricket history, achieving the remarkable feat against Sri Lanka in a tri-nation series match at Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium in Pakistan on October 22, 2026.

Brook reached the landmark in just 114 balls, surpassing the previous record held by India's Ishan Kishan, who scored a double century off 126 deliveries.

The England skipper was eventually dismissed for a magnificent 202 off 116 balls, becoming the first English batter to score a double century in ODI cricket.

Brook also broke the record for the highest individual score by an England batter in ODIs, eclipsing Ben Stokes' previous record of 182 runs.

His extraordinary innings marks a historic milestone in English cricket, as Brook etched his name into the record books with a breathtaking display of power hitting and batting brilliance.

He became the first England batter to score a double century in the 50-over format, surpassing Ben Stokes' previous national record of 182 against New Zealand in 2019.

Brook was particularly destructive against Eshan Malinga, taking 43 runs off the Sri Lankan bowler as England accelerated towards a formidable total.

The 27-year-old eventually departed for 202 when he was caught by Sahar Arachchige off Janith Liyanage's bowling, ending an innings that rewrote the ODI record books.

Gill had only recently claimed the record with his unbeaten 223 against the West Indies in Guwahati, reaching his double century in 117 balls during India's successful chase of 406.

However, Brook's explosive innings has pushed the benchmark even higher, underlining the increasingly aggressive approach adopted by batters in modern ODI cricket.

England's total of 429 for four leaves Sri Lanka facing a daunting chase as they attempt to respond to Brook's record-breaking performance.

Bruno Fernandes raises tactical concerns after Manchester United's 4-1 defeat

● Manchester United Captain Calls for Braver Play After Como Loss

SPORTS DESK

ISLAMABAD

Manchester United captain Bruno Fernandes has raised concerns about the team's tactical approach after a disappointing 4-1 defeat to Como in the UEFA Champions League, as the club's winless run extended to seven matches.

United conceded in the second minute and struggled to recover during Wednesday's match. Nico Paz opened the scoring before Tasos Douvikas doubled Como's advantage. Paz then struck again, while



Jacobo Ramon added a fourth. Joshua Zirkzee scored a late consolation goal for United. Speaking to TNT

Sports, Fernandes admitted that United struggled to build momentum after conceding early.

"We started on the wrong foot and they scored very early," the Portugal international said, pointing to a lack of

pressure on the ball and ineffective movement in possession.

Fernandes suggested that the early goal affected the team's confidence, making it difficult for the players to respond positively and take control of the match.

"Conceding early makes us go into the game with a mood of defeat," he said. "It's difficult to get out of that, trying to be brave, to have the ball and make something happen."

The United captain also highlighted the team's passive defending, arguing that Como had too much time and space to dictate play.

Noor Zaman stuns defending champion Gawad to book Silicon Valley Open quarter-final spot

SPORTS DESK

CALIFORNIA

Pakistan's Noor Zaman pulled off a major upset, defeating defending champion and world No. 4 Karim Abdel Gawad of Egypt 3-1 to advance to the quarter-finals of the PSA Gold Silicon Valley Open in California.

The 22-year-old overcame the second-seeded Egyptian 11-9, 11-7, 9-11, 11-6 in a 52-minute encounter at Squash Zone, delivering an impressive performance in the \$143,500 men's tournament.

"I was ready mentally and physically today, and I think now is the time for me to beat the top players," Noor said after his victory.

Ranked among the world's top 35 players, Noor had earlier secured his place in the last 16 with a 3-1 win over



American wildcard Bransen Ming. After dropping the opening game 3-11, the Pakistani recovered strongly to claim the next three games 11-5, 11-8, 11-9 in 41 minutes.

The Peshawar-born squash player, grandson of former world champion Qamar Zaman, is also the reigning 2025 U-23 world champion. He has enjoyed an impressive run in recent months, climbing into the world's top 30 and winning five Professional Squash Association (PSA) titles.



QUETTA: Members of the Pakistan Central Mines Labour Federation organised a protest at Quetta Press Club on Thursday, denouncing the planned privatisation of the Pakistan Mineral Development Corporation (PMDC). The demonstrators, primarily middle-aged and older men, gathered to express their opposition, holding banners with messages rejecting the privatisation move. The protest highlights growing discontent among labour groups regarding government policies affecting public institutions. This event underscores the tensions surrounding economic reforms in Pakistan, potentially impacting the livelihoods of workers in the mining sector.

Maldives President explores Pakistan's rich cultural heritage

● Lok Virsa showcases Pakistan's diverse heritage, fostering cultural understanding and hospitality

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

President of the Maldives, Dr. Mohamed Muizzu and First Lady, Sajidha Mohamed expressed keen interest in Pakistan's rich cultural heritage during their visit to the Lok Virsa Museum on Thursday, exploring the country's diverse regional traditions, indigenous craftsmanship and artistic legacy.

Executive Director Lok Virsa, Muhammad Waqas Saleem and other officials welcomed the visiting dignitaries and conducted their tour of the museum, briefing them on the cultural significance of its collections and the institution's efforts to preserve and promote Pakistan's folk and traditional heritage.

Moving through the museum's galleries, the Maldivian President and the First Lady viewed exhibits reflecting the distinctive identities of Pakistan's regions, from intricate embroidery and traditional textiles to pottery, woodwork and other forms of indigenous art.

The displays offered a glimpse into the creativity of local artisans and the cultural traditions that continue to shape communities across the country.

The distinguished guests took interest in the exhibits portraying traditional lifestyles, regional customs and artistic practices handed down through generations, gaining an insight into the cultural richness that defines Pakistan's national heritage.

Muhammad Waqas Saleem explained how Lok Virsa documents and

showcases the country's diverse cultural expressions, helping preserve traditional skills and ensuring that the knowledge and craftsmanship of local communities remain accessible to future generations.

Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, Muhammad Junaid Anwar Chaudhry and Minister of State for Federal Education and Professional Training, Wajiha Qamar were also present during the visit.

They joined the engagement with the visiting dignitaries and highlighted the importance of introducing international guests to Pakistan's cultural wealth and long-standing traditions of hospitality.

The visit offered a glimpse of Pakistan beyond its political and diplomatic engagements,

bringing its living traditions, regional diversity and artistic heritage into focus.

It also underscored the role of cultural interaction in fostering mutual appreciation and strengthening people-to-people ties between Pakistan and the Maldives.

Lok Virsa, also known as the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage, serves as a national repository of Pakistan's folk culture, preserving and showcasing the traditional arts, crafts and cultural practices of communities from across the country.

The visit formed part of President Dr. Mohamed Muizzu's three-day official visit to Pakistan. During the second day of his visit, the Maldivian President and the First Lady also visited the

Pakistan Monument and Faisal Mosque in Islamabad, exploring landmarks that reflect the country's national identity, history and architectural heritage.

Field Marshal Munir highlighted the long-standing and cordial relations between the two countries and reaffirmed Pakistan's commitment to further strengthening bilateral cooperation.

He also emphasised Pakistan's commitment to promoting regional peace, stability and security through constructive engagement, the military's media wing said.

President Muizzu commended the professionalism of Pakistan's armed forces and appreciated the country's continued efforts to promote regional peace and stability, according to the ISPR statement.

'Agenda more important than venue', says minister amid dialogue push

● KP emergency measures aimed at restoring peace: minister

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Minister for Parliamentary Affairs Tariq Fazal Chaudhry said on Thursday the agenda of a meeting between Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and the opposition leader was more important than its venue, reiterating the government's willingness to hold talks.

Speaking to Geo News, Chaudhry said the prime minister was ready to meet Opposition Leader in the National Assembly Mahmood Khan Achakzai to discuss matters of national interest and fulfil constitutional requirements.

Earlier today, opposition alliance Tehreek Tahaffuz Aiyeen-e-Pakistan (TTAP) proposed the Constitution Room in Parliament for a potential meeting between the premier and Achakzai.

"If the prime minister comes to the opposition chamber, we will take him to the Constitution Room," TTAP spokesperson Akhunzada Hussain told Geo News, adding that the opposition wanted negotiations to take place at a neutral venue without ego or stubbornness obstructing dialogue.

Achakzai had previously declined to participate in talks at the National Assembly speaker's chamber, saying he would attend if the negotiations were held at a neutral location.

The latest developments came as PM Shehbaz visited Peshawar and chaired a meeting of the federal apex committee to review the security situation in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP).

It was his first visit to the province since President Asif Ali Zardari proclaimed emergency and governor's rule on October 11 on his advice.

Addressing the meeting, the premier said the measures had been undertaken under "extreme compulsion".

Rejecting allegations that the federal government wanted to take control of KP for political reasons, Chaudhry questioned why the Centre would seek to assume control of a province facing terrorism and resource constraints. He said the emergency was imposed to restore peace and promote development.

Responding to Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) central leader Salman Akram Raja's remarks that Chief Minister Sohail Afridi, who is now dysfunctional after the Centre's emergency measures, was not responsible for the failure of negotiations, Chaudhry said the opposition delegation lacked the authority to make a final decision.

He claimed that four drafts had been finalised during the talks, but



opposition representatives repeatedly sought Afridi's approval. According to the minister, the delegation eventually backed away from the fourth draft, saying the chief minister did not agree to it.

Chaudhry said arrangements for doctors' access and meetings had also been clarified by Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi during the negotiations.

Chaudhry urged political parties to work together against terrorism, expressing confidence that peace and development would return to KP.

Govt-opposition talks collapse

The renewed push for dialogue follows the collapse of negotiations between the federal government and opposition in the early hours of October 4, after four rounds of discussions over counterterrorism cooperation in KP and access to incarcerated PTI founder Imran Khan.

The negotiations involved government representatives, opposition leaders and members of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP). Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi said the parties had reached agreement on most points but failed to settle differences over the final draft.

According to the government's account, the proposed agreement covered joint efforts against terrorism, condemnation of the outlawed Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and other militant groups, implementation of the national policy on Afghan refugees, and preventing Afghan territory from being used for attacks against Pakistan.

The draft also included increased funding for counterterrorism and police operations, alongside closer coordination between provincial authorities and security forces.

Naqvi had accused Afridi of backing away from commitments made during the negotiations, while the opposition disputed the government's account.

Following the breakdown, President Zardari proclaimed emergency and governor's rule in KP on October 11 under Articles 232 and 234 of the Constitution, respectively.

The federal government cited rising terrorist incidents and shortcomings in the provincial administration's counterterrorism efforts to justify the measures.

Ishaq Dar to represent Pakistan at R4-E3 meeting in Istanbul



NEWS DESK

ANKARA

Top European diplomats will hold talks in Istanbul Friday with their counterparts from Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Egypt for a meeting initiated by Ankara, sources in Pakistani and Turkish foreign ministries said on Thursday.

Foreign ministers from the so-called E3 group -- Britain, France and Germany -- will meet counterparts from the newly-created R4 group to discuss the Palestinian issue, developments in Yemen and the Strait of Hormuz, and ways to end the Russia-Ukraine war, the source said.

Turkish Foreign Minister Hakan Fidan will host the meeting, the first to bring together the two groups.

"The seven countries will come together for the first time in the R4+E3 format, at Turkey's initiative," the source said, indicating they would explore "opportunities for cooperation and coordination that could be

put into practice ... in the coming period."

In chairing the meeting, Fidan was expected to focus on the international community "increasing pressure on Israel" in response to its settlement expansion and its "encouragement of settler terrorism", the source said.

Fidan would also underline support for Saudi Arabia's security in the face of attacks by Yemen's Houthis, and stress the need for permanent freedom of navigation in the Hormuz and Bab el-Mandeb Straits.

And he would reiterate Turkey's ongoing "warnings and proposals" to prevent the Russia-Ukraine war from spreading to the Black Sea and to draw a line under the civilian deaths there.

The E3 was set up more than 20 years ago to advance diplomatic coordination over Iran's nuclear programme, while the R4 was formed this year and brings together Egypt with the signatories to the Mecca Defence Agreement -- a mutual defence pact set up by Turkey, Saudi Arabia and Pakistan in August.

Maryam orders crackdown on crimes against women, children

● Punjab CM directs enforcement of ban on smart glasses, other spy devices

CRIME REPORTER

LAHORE

Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz Sharif has given police officers four weeks to improve the overall law and order situation, particularly crimes against women and children, warning that officers concerned would be removed if the situation failed to improve.

Chairing a special meeting on law and order, here on Thursday, attended by regional police officers (RPOs) and district police officers (DPOs) through video link, the chief minister expressed serious concern over crimes against women and children and sought detailed briefings on the security situation in every division and district.

She directed police to intensify action against corruption within the department and take strict action against officials involved in corrupt practices. She also ordered effective measures to stop wheat smuggling in all districts, particularly areas



along provincial borders.

Expressing dissatisfaction with traffic management, the chief minister directed police to ensure strict action against overspeeding. She also ordered proactive operations against illegal weapons and directed authorities to ensure a ban on camera-equipped glasses and other surveillance devices.

CM Maryam Nawaz ordered visible police patrolling throughout the province to create a sense of security among citizens and deter criminal elements.

She directed police officers to personally contact the organizers of the Tablighi congregation and ordered the provision of motorcycles and other facilities to the Dolphin Force in Lahore to improve patrolling.

Expressing concern over the law and order situation in Rawalpindi Division, she directed all RPOs to hold weekly meetings to review crimes of all categories and submit reports on the performance of the relevant DPOs. She also received detailed briefings on

every serious crime, including the Multan incident.

Meanwhile, Punjab Chief Minister Maryam Nawaz has directed authorities to ensure a ban on camera-equipped glasses and other spy devices across the province, amid complaints regarding illegal surveillance through spying devices.

The directions come days after the provincial government decided to impose a ban on devices used for spying, including glasses, pens, watches and other gadgets equipped with hidden cameras and recording equipment.

A Punjab Home Department spokesperson had said that strict legal action would be taken against the use, purchase and sale of spying equipment and concealed electronic devices.

The decision has been taken to protect citizens' privacy and personal information, particularly to ensure the safety of women and children, the spokesperson added.

PSW, PHDEC partner for digital horticulture trade

● Digital trade readiness enhanced for Pakistan's horticulture sector through PSW-PHDEC partnership

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ISLAMABAD

Pakistan Single Window (PSW) has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Pakistan Horticulture Development and Export Company (PHDEC) to strengthen the horticulture sector's ability to participate in Pakistan's evolving digital trade ecosystem. The partnership aims to translate digital trade facilitation into practical capabilities for exporters and processors, helping businesses navigate regulatory requirements, manage export procedures more efficiently, and strengthen their readiness for international markets.

The collaboration reflects PSW's role in advancing trade digitalization through both



integrated infrastructure and the capabilities businesses need to use it effectively. By combining PSW's digital trade facilitation infrastructure with PHDEC's sector expertise and mandate to promote horticulture exports, the partnership establishes a frame-

work for addressing the practical challenges horticulture businesses face in adopting digital trade processes. PHDEC, a government-owned entity under the Ministry of Commerce, will work with PSW to deliver targeted capacity-building and awareness initiatives for horticulture export-

ers and processors. Training sessions, webinars, and workshops will cover PSW registration, system usage, documentation, and regulatory requirements, connecting these processes to businesses' day-to-day export operations.

A central priority is to ena-

ble exporters to manage their PSW registrations and related trade processes independently and confidently. Greater familiarity with digital procedures will help businesses exercise stronger oversight of their submissions and maintain control over sensitive commercial information. Awareness of data protection and privacy will form an integral part of these efforts, reinforcing secure participation in digital trade.

Speaking on the partnership, Syed Aftab Haider, CEO of PSW, said: "Digital infrastructure is a foundation for trade reform, but its impact depends on how effectively businesses can use it. Our partnership with PHDEC connects PSW's trade facilitation capabilities with the specific needs of Pakistan's horticulture sector.