THE
DESTINATION
NEWS THAT TRAVELS

ABC Certified Vol. 11, Issue No. 157 Pages 8 Rs. 25

Editor: Aamir Rafique Butt

Saturday | 14 November, 2026 | 03 Jumadi-ul-Akhirah, 1448ah | Islamabad | www.dailythedestination.com | Regd. No. 34303



Pakistan Boosts Mining Operations Security Framework To Attract Global Investors

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan has promised a stronger mining operations security framework to protect mine sites, transport routes and skilled workers. Petroleum Minister Ali Pervaiz Malik shared this message at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 on Friday.

He said special arrangements had been made to keep mining projects safe. The aim, he added, is to give investors a calm and steady place to work.

The minister said the government of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif is also investing in better geological data. Investors cannot judge project risks without trusted scientific facts, he explained.

More than 40 mineral exploration licences were recently given in Chagai and Khuzdar in Balochistan. He said this shows that private companies are showing growing interest in strategic and critical minerals.

The government is also building roads to link the mineral-rich Chagai belt with Gwadar Port. Thar coal fields will be connected with power plants as well. These links will help move minerals to world markets.

Pakistan has long sold raw ore and imported finished goods. The minister said this is now changing. The country is moving ahead with copper smelting to earn more value from mining to finished metal.

Geological mapping is also moving faster. Detailed surveys at a scale of 1:50,000 are helping find new mineral sites across the country.

Exploration is focused on copper and gold in Chagai and western Balochistan, lithium, tin and tungsten in Gilgit-Baltistan, and antimony and base metals in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.



Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir speaks at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026.

PM tells minerals moot Pakistan will join top tconomies before 2050

● Harnessing Pakistan's mineral wealth a national objective: CDF

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

PM Shehbaz tells minerals moot that Pakistan is ready to grow into one of the world's major economies before 2050. He spoke on Friday at the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026.

He said the economy is moving toward growth and change with fresh confidence. He also quoted Goldman Sachs, which has forecast that Pakistan could become the sixth-largest economy in the world by 2075.

The prime minister said the country does not want to sell raw minerals abroad. Instead, it wants to use them in its own industries. "The day is not far" when this will happen, he said.

He spoke about the Reko Diq project, one of the largest undeveloped copper and gold deposits in the world. It stayed stalled for two decades, he said, but is now moving toward the working stage.

PM Shehbaz said a National Minerals Data Centre will be set up. Geological records will also go digital, so investors can get true and trusted information.

He promised that federal and provincial governments will work as one team. He said protecting investors is the government's own protection. He also said the support of local people is key to the success of every mining project.

The government, he added, must protect workers, assets and supply routes. Reliable electricity, water and communication links are also needed. He assured investors that stuck files would move as fast as possible.

He called the youth a valuable asset, describing them as educated, talented and determined.

Army Chief Promises Security

Chief of Defence Forces and Chief of Army Staff Field Marshal Asim Munir said on Friday that Pakistan was aiming to become a competitive destination for long-term mineral investment.

He made the remarks while addressing the participants of the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 in Islamabad, according to state-run Radio Pakistan. Delegations, exhibitors and attendees have arrived from across the world to attend the event.

As the two-day event opened on Thursday, Pakistan showcased its vast mineral resources, ranging from coal and salt to gold and critical minerals, to attract international investment, promising predictable, investor-friendly policies, institutional support and security.

On Friday, CDF Munir said all possible measures were being taken to ensure the security of the entire mining ecosystem. He said mines and miners, investments, industries, projects and all associated people would be provided adequate protection, the Radio Pakistan report said.

DPM Dar for professional, global standard restructuring of PNSC

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Senator Ishaq Dar on Friday chaired a meeting to review the restructuring of the Pakistan National Shipping Corporation (PNSC), wherein he emphasised that the process must be anchored in professionalism and aligned with global standards

He directed the authorities concerned to engage world-class shipping and financial consultants to devise a forward-looking roadmap to maximise commercial returns, strengthen Pakistan's maritime trade logistics and safeguard our national economic interests.

The participants of the meeting discussed transforming PNSC into a competitive, commercially viable and globally recognised maritime entity, besides reviewing proposals to enhance operational efficiency and align corporate governance with international best practices.

The meeting was attended by Federal Minister for Maritime Affairs, SAPM Tariq Bajwa, the Secretary of the Ministry of Maritime Affairs, and senior officials from relevant ministries and departments.

Islamabad to go fully cashless by December 31

● State minister says all ICT and CDA departments to stop accepting cash payments after November 30

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The federal government has decided to make Islamabad the country's first fully cashless city, with December 31 set as the deadline.

Chairing a meeting in the federal capital, Minister of State for Interior Talal Chaudhry said consultation and suggestions from all stakeholders are important for the successful implementation of the cashless Islamabad initiative.

The minister said no cash payments will be accepted at any department of Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT) or the Capital Development Authority (CDA) after November 30.

He said the government aims to bring all merchants in Islamabad into the cashless payment system by December 31. He said around 26,000 merchants in Islamabad have already been connected to the digital payment system.

Talal Chaudhry said digital payment facilities will be provided at every level, from street vendors to major business centres.

President House Denies Provinces Discussed In Naqvi Meeting

● Zardari Naqvi Meeting Focused On National Security Only

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

The President House on Friday refuted media reports about yesterday's meeting between President Asif Ali Zardari and Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi, saying that discussions focused on national security and regional situation.

The clarification comes after several media reports emerged claiming that Naqvi and the president had discussed the formation of new provinces during a meeting in Nawabshah on Thursday night. No official handout was issued about the meeting.

"There is no truth to media reports suggesting that matters concerning the provinces were discussed during the interior minister's meeting with the president," the President House said in a statement.

"Matters concerning national security and the regional situation were discussed during the meeting. However, no discussion took place on matters related to provinces," the statement added.



The security czar has whipped up a political storm over the past few months since he called for the formation of new administrative units in the country, saying the current "system" of governance had "collapsed" and needed a "reset".

Earlier this week, Naqvi reaffirmed his stance on the creation of new provinces or administrative units. He suggested that political parties should hold a referendum to gauge the public's opinion on this matter, terming it the "solution" to the ongoing debate.

However, the PPP, which rules Sindh and is also an ally of the PML-N government at the Centre along with MQM-P, has strongly opposed the suggested move for new provinces.

In September, the Sindh Assembly adopted a resolution rejecting all attempts to divide the province or create new administrative units, with the CM Murad declaring that "there will be no compromise on Sindh's geographical unity".

Meanwhile, PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari has called for a "full stop" on the debate surrounding new provinces and also a "political reset", wherein all political parties must unite for the sake of the country rather than indulge in "unnecessary debates".

In his remarks on Thursday, Naqvi contended that he and Bilawal were "nearly on the same page".

"He [Bilawal] said that political matters are about to be reset, while my suggestion is that overall matters are about to be reset," Naqvi said.

Security Forces Neutralise 74 Militants In Intelligence-Based Operations across KP, Balochistan

● ISPR says operations in Quetta, Mir Ali and Orakzai also led to a large recovery of weapons and explosives

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

BALOCHISTAN/KP

Security forces neutralise 74 terrorists in several intelligence-based operations across Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the military said on Friday.

The Inter-Services Public Relations (ISPR) shared the details in an official statement. It said the operations took place in Kurram area of Quetta district, and in Mir Ali and Orakzai areas of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In Quetta, forces began a large area clearance operation on November 3. The targets were militants linked to Fitna al-Khawarij and Fitna al-Hindustan. The ISPR said 31 militants were killed after several clashes at their hideouts.

Weapons, ammunition and explosives were also recovered from these locations.

In a separate set of operations, forces killed 43 militants over the past 48 hours. The ISPR said 35 were killed in Mir Ali and eight in Orakzai.



The military described the clashes as intense. It said the action dealt a major blow to militant networks in both areas.

Security forces also recovered a large stock of weapons and ammunition. This included homemade explosives and improvised explosive devices. The ISPR said these materials were meant for future attacks.

Clearance operations are still going on to find militants hiding in these areas. The military said its campaign under Azm-e-Istehkam will continue at full speed.

Violence has risen in Pakistan, mainly in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Balochistan, since the Afghan Taliban took power in 2021.

IHC Suspends Islamabad LG Election Schedule Over ECP Notification

● Islamabad has had no elected local government since February 2021

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Islamabad High Court (IHC) on Friday suspended the upcoming local government elections in the federal capital, putting the Election Commission of Pakistan's (ECP) latest election schedule on hold until the next hearing.

Last week, a writ petition was filed by Chaudhry Amjad Ali, who had challenged the ECP's short order and the subsequent election schedule, both dated Oct 21, 2026, for holding local government elections in the Islamabad Capital Territory (ICT).

He argued that the polls, scheduled for Dec 20, could not be held until the legal status of the existing constituency delimitation was conclusively determined.

A single-member bench comprising Justice Umair Majeed Malik granted the interim relief while hearing the writ petition on Friday.

"Operation of the impugned order dated Oct 21, 2026, and the impugned election schedule dated Oct 21, 2026, as revised by the Election Commission, shall remain suspended until the next date of hearing," the court order read.

The court also issued notices to the respondents, directing them to submit their reports and para-wise comments before the next hearing, scheduled for Nov 26, 2026.

Advocate Barrister Qazi Adil Aziz appeared for the petitioner, along with Malik Talha and Muhammad Yaseen Iqbal.

They argued that under Articles 140-A(2), 218(3) and 219(d) of the Constitution, the ECP was "duty-bound to hold local government elections honestly, justly, fairly and in accordance with the law".

The counsel contended that the election programme had become legally compromised due to legislative changes between the original Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Act, 2015 (LG Act 2015), and the subsequent Islamabad Capital Territory Local Government Ordinance, 2026 (LG Ordinance 2026).

Tecno, Infinix maker eyes component manufacturing in Pakistan

● Aurangzeb Meets Transsion Chief On Manufacturing Expansion



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chinese conglomerate Transsion Holdings has discussed expanding its manufacturing operations in Pakistan beyond smartphone assembly towards component manufacturing and deeper localisation.

Finance Minister Muhammad Aurangzeb met with George Zhu, Founder and Chairman of Transsion Holdings, a multibillion-dollar conglomerate in China, along with his delegation, to discuss the company's ongoing operations in Pakistan, future investment plans and opportunities to strengthen local manufacturing and Pakistan's export potential, the Finance Division said on Friday.

Transsion Holdings is the parent company of smartphone brands such as Tecno and Infinix. In Pakistan, Transsion Tecno Electronics operates as a CPEC-based assembly unit, which is a joint venture between China and Pakistan. The finance minister welcomed Transsion Holdings' continued investment and expansion interest in Pakistan and its contribution to the country's manufacturing sector.



DHO to organize diabetes awareness walk on Nov 14

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The District Health Office (DHO) Islamabad, in collaboration with the Ministry of National Health Services, Regulations and Coordination, will organize a 'Walk & Run to Defeat Diabetes' on November 14 (Saturday) to raise public awareness about diabetes prevention and promote healthy lifestyles.

The event will be held at F-9 Park, Islamabad, from 2:30 pm to 5:00 pm, on the occasion of World Diabetes Day, with participants invited to take part in 2.5-kilometre and 5-kilometre races.

According to the organizers, online registration has been opened through the official event portal, while participants will also have the facility of on-site registration at F-9 Park before the event. The starting point will be Bara Dari, near the F-10 Gate of F-9 Park.

The initiative aims to encourage physical activity, promote healthier lifestyle choices and highlight the importance of preventing and managing diabetes through regular exercise, balanced nutrition and timely health screening.

River Yasin In Ghizer: Van Plunge Kills 11 Near Noh Bridge

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

GB



A passenger van fell into River Yasin in Ghizer, and at least 11 people lost their lives. Three others were hurt. The crash happened near Noh Bridge in Gilgit-Baltistan, rescue officials said.

The van was going from Gilgit to Hundur. Hundur is a village in the upper part of Yasin Valley. The vehicle dropped into the river on the way.

At first, rescuers reported five deaths and some injured people. But the number kept growing as more bodies were pulled from the water.

So far, teams have recovered 11 bodies and three injured people. The injured were taken to a hospital in Gahkuch, the main town of Ghizer District, for treatment.

The search is still on. Rescuers want to be sure nobody else was inside the van.

Darkness is making the work hard. A water rescue team from Gilgit has also been called to help search the river.

This crash comes only days after another deadly road accident. On November 7, a bus from Hunza to Rawalpindi hit a trailer near Havelian Interchange on the Hazara Motorway. Eight people died and 30 were injured. Police have started an investigation.

Sadly, such accidents have happened before in the region. In 2018, seven men died when a van fell into a ravine near Hoper valley. In May 2024, at least 20 people were killed and 21 injured when a bus from Rawalpindi went off a narrow mountain road in Diamer district.

The National Highways and Motorway Police have promised stricter checks on public transport. They will look at overloading, fitness certificates, route permits and driving licences.

In March 2026, the force began a special campaign against overcharging and overloading. Passengers riding on bus roofs would be removed, and vehicles with faulty tyres would not be allowed to continue their trips.

Free Hepatitis C screening continues in federal capital

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Free Hepatitis C screening, diagnosis and treatment facilities are being provided to citizens in the federal capital under the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C.

According to an official of the Prime Minister's National Programme for the Elimination of Hepatitis C, Ministry of National Health Services, citizens can avail themselves of these facilities free of cost at different health facilities across Islamabad.

He said the initiative aimed to strengthen early diagnosis, ensure access to free treatment and move towards a Hepatitis C-free Pakistan.

He urged citizens to undergo Hepatitis C screening, emphasizing that early diagnosis was essential to prevent liver damage caused by the disease, which could remain undetected for years without showing noticeable symptoms.

He stressed that a simple screening test could help detect the infection at an early stage and protect individuals and their families from serious health complications.

The ministry highlighted that many people avoided testing because they felt healthy and believed they had no symptoms, while Hepatitis C could silently damage the liver for years before becoming noticeable.

Citizens have been advised to take advantage of the free facilities and encourage their family members to undergo screening without delay.



ISLAMABAD: Men load dried tree branches and wood onto a vehicle for domestic use as fuel for cooking and heating in the Federal Capital.

Pakistan Water Week 2026 Draws Overwhelming Response In Capital

● Water Conference Calls For Action On Water Security

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan Water Week 2026, a five-day international conference, received an overwhelming response in the Capital, drawing around 350 participants in person and more than 800 online.

The conference, themed "Commitments to Action: Advancing Water Security and Achieving Climate-Resilient Food Systems in Pakistan," was organised by the International Water Management Institute (IWMI) and the CGIAR Policy Innovations Science Program, in collaboration with the Pakistan Council of Research in Water Resources (PCRWR)

and the Ministry of Water Resources.

The event was supported by UNICEF, ICIMOD, FAO, EU and partners.

Federal and provincial officials, researchers, development partners, civil society, journalists and international experts took part in 26 sessions. The aim was to bring science, policy and practice together to identify priorities, determine responsibilities and establish mechanisms to track progress on water security and climate-resilient food systems.

The question that shaped the week was posed at the inaugural session by Senate Chairman Yousaf Raza Gilani, who asked what the commitments made would change for a farmer in Thar, a family living along the Ravi or a child in Quetta waiting for clean water. He pledged parliamentary support through legislation, oversight and budget allocations and called water security a national priority.

Johan Gély, IWMI's Asia Director for Research Impact and Thematic Area 1 Lead (Policy to Practice), said "the week's central finding was about coordination rather than policy. We need named, accountable institutions at both levels, and evidence that shapes public investment rather than merely accompanying it," he said.

He added that progress should be judged by results. "Outcomes, not expenditure, must become the measure of progress, through indicators such as water service reliability, agricultural productivity, groundwater levels and community resilience. A legal framework for groundwater governance, backed by investment in aquifer recharge, should be a priority," he said.

Gély's agenda for action also called for a greater role for nature-based solutions such as wetland restoration and floodplain management, and for a regional Himalayan commission on monitoring and early warning in the upper Indus Basin.

Digital monitoring reviewed to strengthen HPV vaccination drive



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Directorate of Immunization (FDI) has reviewed the progress of the ongoing Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccination campaign in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, with a focus on strengthening digital monitoring, vaccine management and data-driven decision-making.

Dr. Ryan, Senior Program Manager at Integral Global (IG) Headquarters, visited the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) Pakistan Control Room to review the Vaccine Logistics Management System (VLMS) dashboard and receive an update on HPV vaccination activities across the province.

The visit was conducted in line with the vision of Dr. Musa Khan, Director General, Federal Directorate of Immunization, who has emphasized the importance of digital solutions, real-time monitoring and effective oversight of immunisation activities.

During the visit, Dr. Majid Salim of IG-CDC/FDI and Mr. Asim Zaki of FDI gave a detailed demonstration of the VLMS dashboard, highlighting its digital monitoring features, real-time data visualisation and role in improving vaccine logistics management.

The visiting delegation was also briefed on the progress of HPV vaccination activities in different districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Anmol alias Pinky, two co-accused indicted in Karachi drug case

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

A provincial anti-narcotics court in Karachi has indicted Anmol alias Pinky and her two co-accused in a drug recovery case, but all three suspects pleaded not guilty.

The case was heard at the provincial anti-narcotics court located in Karachi's jail complex, where charges were formally framed against Anmol alias Pinky, Ibad and Azizur Rehman in a case registered at the Defence Police Station.

During the hearing, the court read out the charges to the accused. However, all three denied the allegations and refused to plead guilty.

The court subsequently summoned prosecution witnesses for November 23 to proceed with the trial.

GOVERNMENT OF GILTGIT-BALTISTAN
DIRECTORATE OF HIGHER EDUCATION COLLEGES GILGIT BALTISTAN
No.DE-13.(74)/PEEF/2025
Scholarship for Deserving and Talented Students of Gilgit-Baltistan for the Year 2026-27 Dated:- 12th November, 2026

NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Punjab Educational Endowment Fund (PEEF) is providing fifty (50) scholarships out of which 30 for Intermediate and 20 for Graduation (BS/ADP) to deserving and talented students of Gilgit-Baltistan. These scholarships are available for students enrolled in intermediate 1 Year and Graduation (BS/ADP) Part-1 level programs with following eligibility criteria.

Eligibility Criteria:

I. Gilgit-Baltistan Domicile/Form-B/CNIC.
II. Passed Matriculation or intermediate Examination conducted by the respective Board of Intermediate and Secondary Education (BISE) in 2026 (Annual).
III. Passed these examination trough Government School/Colleges.
IV. Secured at least 60% marks in the above mentioned examination.
V. Secured admission in a regular Educational Institution as a full time student in the current academic year (2026-27)
VI. For Special Quota Scholarship, the student must fall in at least one of the special quota categories. (Attach relevant Documents)
- Orphan children (Death Certificate of Father issued by UC/Hospital/NADRA).
- Children of Government Servants in BPS 1-7 (Pay Slip/Pension Book of current BPS or equivalency certificate).
- Children belong to minority religion. (Minority certificate from relevant authority)
- Special Children (Disability Certificate from PHQ/DHQ/RHQ Hospital)
- Children of civilians martyred in terrorist attacks. (Attack death certificate of Father/Mother issued by UC/Hospital/NADRA/Any authority with case of death)
- Children of Divorced mother. (Divorced Certificate issued by UC/Court Decree/Magistrate)

VII. Declared monthly income of parents (from all sources) is equal to or less than Rs. 100,000/-(Attach the original income affidavit printed on legal stamp paper amounting to Rs.100/-attested by Gazetted officer as per specimen in come affidavit.
- Children of Govt. employees in BPS 1-7 are exempted from condition of income, if salary is only source of income.
- Children of civilians martyred in terrorist attacks are exempted from income limit.

VIII. Not availing any other Educational scholarship during the current academic year(Certificate must be provided by Head of Institution).

Ineligible:

i. Marks improvers or students who have passed examination in supplementary session
ii. Students who have passed the aforementioned examination in with grace marks (*)

For further information, candidates may contact the Directorate of Higher Education (Colleges GB PEEF Scholarship Application form must be submitted at the office of Directorate of Higher Education Colleges GB Sakwar Gilgit by 15th March, 2027, Scholarship Application form and specimen of income affidavit is available at PEEF web site https://www.pref.org.pk/other-provinces

Focal person PEEF:
Mr. Abdul Wadood
DD(B&A) Higher Education Colleges Gilgit-Baltistan
03555212008/03448908242

(IDGB-654/26)

Gold, Copper Reserves Found In Balochistan's Chagai District Near Reko Diq

● Mari Energies informs the Pakistan Stock Exchange about a new mineral discovery by its subsidiary, Mari Minerals

FINANCE REPORTER

CHAGAI



Gold, Copper reserves have been found in Chagai district of Balochistan. Mari Energies shared the news with the Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) in an official letter.

The company said its subsidiary, Mari Minerals, made the discovery. The letter gave details about the location and the work done so far.

The site lies about 50 kilometers east of the Reko Diq project. It is also around 25 kilometers northwest of Naukundi.

Mari Energies said drilling has reached 25,000 meters in total. Every drill hole is 500 meters deep and vertical.

Samples from the site were tested by SGS Pakistan. The company told the PSX that the lab checked the samples as part of the process.

The reserves are spread across an area of 1.4 square kilometers. This makes the find a notable one for the region.

Chagai is already known for its mineral wealth, and the Reko Diq project has drawn wide attention. A new find so close by adds to that interest.

The news may bring fresh hope for Balochistan's mining sector. More details are expected as the company shares further updates with the exchange.



KARACHI: Minister of State for Finance,Bilal Azhar Kayani, meeting with the presidents, chief executive officers and chief digital officers of banks at the Pakistan Banks Association (PBA) to discuss progress under the Prime Minister's Cashless Pakistan Initiative and promote wider adoption of digital payments.

KP Secretary Tourism directs for early completion of 14 new tourists destinations

FINANCE REPORTER

PESHAWAR

Secretary Department of Tourism, Culture, Archaeology and Museums Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Raja Fazal Khaliq said that instructions have been issued to accelerate measures on priority basis for promotion of tourism and culture in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, to introduce adventure tourism at international level and to benefit youth from it to the maximum. Measures should be accelerated for early construction of 14 new tourist destinations in the province and construction of rest areas at tourist places.

He expressed these views during his visit to the office of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority KP CTA. On this occasion, Director General Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Culture and Tourism Authority Shahid Khan Mohmand gave him a detailed briefing.

He was accompanied by Additional Secretary Rahimullah Mehsud, Chief Planning Officer Abdul Basit, Director Admin and Finance Shahryar Mahmood and other staff.

During the briefing, Secretary Tourism Department Raja Fazal Khaliq, while speaking, said that like Tirich Mir Summit, Falak Sair Summit should be introduced at international level.

Pakistan records third Consecutive first-quarter fiscal surplus in FY2027

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Pakistan has maintained its fiscal surplus for the third consecutive year during the first quarter of FY2027, extending a trend of fiscal surpluses after 23 consecutive years of first-quarter deficits.

The country recorded a fiscal surplus of Rs1.274 trillion, equivalent to 0.9 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), during the July-September quarter of FY2027.

The primary surplus stood at Rs2.974 trillion, or 2.1 per cent of GDP, exceeding the budget target by Rs239 billion, or 8.7 per cent, said a data issued by Ministry of Finance here on Friday.

Pakistan recorded fiscal surpluses of Rs1.896 trillion in the first quarter of FY2025 and Rs2.119 trillion in the corresponding period of FY2026, followed by Rs1.274 trillion in FY2027.

The first quarters of the last three fiscal years also recorded the three highest primary surpluses in at least 26 years, with each exceeding Rs2.9 trillion.

The fiscal performance follows further improvements in FY2026, when the fiscal deficit narrowed to 2.6 per cent of GDP, its lowest level in 22 years.

The primary surplus reached 2.9 per cent of GDP in FY2026, marking its highest level since at least FY2001. Pakistan also recorded primary surpluses in each of the three fiscal years from FY2024 to FY2026.

Meanwhile, interest payments declined by 22 per cent during FY2026, reflecting a reduction in debt servicing costs.

The fiscal surplus during the first quarter of FY2027 was achieved despite tax relief measures introduced in the federal budget. Expenditure controls helped maintain fiscal discipline during the period.

New ICCI President Pledges To Resolve Business Issues

● Zakaria Zia Vows Support For Islamabad Traders Communit

MUDASSER IQBAL

ISLAMABAD



Newly elected President of the Islamabad Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ICCI), Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia, has pledged to work closely with relevant institutions to resolve traders' and industrialists' issues and promote economic growth in the federal capital.

The President ICCI,made these remarks at a dinner and reception hosted in his honour by prominent social figure Chaudhry Iqbal Yousaf Wahla.

The event was attended by ICCI President Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia, Founder Group Chairman Tariq Sadiq, prominent businessman and CEO of Madina Cash and Carry Hafiz Noorul Haq, and Multi-Professional Cooperative Housing Society Islamabad President Muhammad Nawaz Lali, said a release issued here on Friday.

Prominent business personalities, Arshad Dawood, Ashfaq Chattha, Ijaz Abbasi, Khalid Javed, Waseem Chaudhry and Shaukat Masood also attended the gathering, along with industrialists, traders, ICCI office-bearers, Founder Group members and representatives of the business community.

Participants congratulated Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia on assuming the leadership of the ICCI and extended their best wishes for his tenure.

Addressing the gathering, the newly elected president thanked Chaudhry Iqbal Yousaf Wahla and members of the business community for organising the reception.

The President said he would make every effort to meet the expectations of Islamabad's business community and fulfil the trust placed in him.

He said the chamber would work with all relevant institutions to address the concerns of traders and industrialists, facilitate business activities and contribute to the economic development of Islamabad.

Zakaria described the business community as the backbone of the national economy, saying that resolving its issues and ensuring a business-friendly environment would remain among the chamber's top priorities.

President ICCI also pledged to strengthen the chamber and make it more effective by taking all traders and industrialists on board.

Speaking on the occasion, host Chaudhry Iqbal Yousaf Wahla congratulated the newly elected president and expressed confidence that his leadership would meet the expectations of the business community.

He said, President ICCI Muhammad Zakaria Akbar Zia as an energetic and capable businessman, saying his experience and abilities would help address the issues faced by traders and industrialists.

He stressed the need for unity among Islamabad's business and trading community to play an effective role in the economic development of the city and the country.

Japan Gives $4.3 Million To Boost Pakistan's Polio Programme Fight

● New funding will help buy over 28 million vaccine doses as Pakistan works to stop the virus by 2027

WEB DESK

JAPAN



Japan has announced a $4.3 million grant to support Pakistan's polio programme. The money will help buy more than 28 million doses of the polio vaccine.

The Japanese embassy shared the news in a statement. It said the grant is larger than the help Japan gave last year.

The embassy also shared the latest case numbers. Pakistan reported 74 polio cases in 2024. This fell to 31 cases in 2025.

So far in 2026, eight cases have been reported. Six of them are from southern Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

The statement said more than 45 million children get vaccinated in each nationwide polio campaign. These drives reach homes, schools and health centres across the country.

Pakistan wants to stop the spread of the poliovirus by the end of 2027. The new vaccine doses will help health teams reach more children in time.

The Japanese ambassador said Japan fully supports Pakistan's goal to end polio. He said his country will stay a close partner in this effort.

Health experts say every child must be vaccinated to keep the virus away. Regular campaigns and strong public trust remain very important.

Japan has long supported health work in Pakistan. This new grant adds to that help and gives the national campaign a useful boost.

Dollar rises against rupee in open market, Euro and Pound lose value

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The US dollar gained 4 paisa against the Pakistani rupee in the open market on Friday, reaching Rs278.27, while it edged down in the interbank market.

According to the Exchange Companies Association, the euro fell by 70 paisa to Rs309.22, and at the same time British pound declined by 83 paisa to Rs369.70.

The UAE dirham also dropped by 1 paisa to Rs76.09, whereas the Saudi riyal remained unchanged at Rs74.36.

Meanwhile, the US dollar lost 1 paisa against the rupee in interbank trading, closing at Rs276.60 compared to the previous closing rate of Rs276.61, according to the State Bank of Pakistan.



Turkish minister highlights cooperation opportunities with Pakistan in mining sector

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Deputy Minister of Energy and Natural Resources of Türkiye Ahmet Berat Çonkar on Friday said Türkiye and Pakistan had considerable opportunities to strengthen cooperation in mining technology, local mineral processing, vocational training and industrial development.

Addressing the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26), he said Türkiye's experience showed that a successful mining industry required a predictable investment environment, strong institutions, modern infrastructure and a clear vision to transform natural resources into lasting economic value.

He said Türkiye was working to strengthen its regulatory framework, streamline administrative procedures and enhance investment security through transparent licensing procedures and effective coordination among public institutions.

He said reliable energy supplies, transportation networks and logistics infrastructure were also essential for reducing operational costs and making mining projects commercially viable.



Highlighting the importance of geological knowledge and institutional capacity, he said exploration was the foundation of the mining industry, while reliable geological information helped reduce investment risks and exploration costs.

He said Türkiye's General Directorate of Mineral Research and Exploration (MTA) played a critical role in geological research and mining exploration. The country had also established TÜVEK, its National Geoscience, Data and Core Sampling Information Centre, to improve access to geological information and support informed investment decisions.

Çonkar said Türkiye focused on developing the entire mining value chain rather than concentrating solely on mineral extraction.

He said that of approximately 90 minerals traded commercially worldwide, 77 existed in Türkiye, while the country currently produced nearly 60 of them.

He said Türkiye aimed to create greater economic value through domestic processing, refining, the production of intermediate and finished products, and the development of mining technologies and equipment.

He said this required cooperation between governments and the private sector, technology transfer, research and development, and stronger domestic industrial capabilities.



Quota for sale

By Abdul Hannan Mansoor

The Punjab Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities Act 2022 promised to bring persons with disabilities into the workforce.

Section 31 is where that promise is made in law. It requires every establishment to ensure that at least 3.0 per cent of its workforce consists of persons with disabilities. In practice, the section has become a duty an employer can settle with a monthly payment, which was never its purpose.

The text itself is clear. Under section 2(m), an establishment is a government, commercial or industrial establishment that employs 30 or more people at any time in a year. Section 31(1) says not less than 3.0 per cent of those employed 'shall' be persons with disabilities. Section 31(2) divides the reserved posts equally among visually impaired, hearing impaired, otherwise physically disabled and intellectually impaired persons. Section 31(4) requires establishments to employ registered persons who are declared fit to work, and section 31(5) guarantees them terms no less favourable than those of colleagues in similar posts.

What happens when an establishment does not comply is dealt with in section 32. It must pay into the Persons with Disabilities Rehabilitation Fund, every month, the greater of the notified minimum wage or what it would have paid a disabled employee. Section 33 gives the Punjab Employees Social Security Institution the monitoring role and allows unpaid sums to be recovered under the Social Security Ordinance 1965. Section 32 is written as the consequence of failing section 31, and nothing in the text makes it an alternative to employment.

Yet that is how it looks from the boardroom. A company with 1000 employees has 30 reserved posts. Filling them means advertising through the District Welfare and Rehabilitation Units, recruiting, training, adapting workplaces and managing people in ways the company has never had to. Not filling them means a monthly payment that, for a large employer, is a modest line in the accounts. A rational company pays. The quota becomes a price, and the price is low.

The Supreme Court has noted that employers often assume workers with disabilities will underperform, or feel that accommodating them means an unwarranted investment (Malik Ubaidullah v Government of Punjab, 2021 PLC (CS) 65, para 9). Section 32 lets them act on that assumption at a discount.

However, the deeper problem is that money is not employment. The Council administers the Fund, and the units can give financial assistance from it under section 24(3)(h). That has value, but it is welfare, while the Act's stated purpose is the effective inclusion of persons with disabilities in the community. A disabled person who



receives assistance from a fund financed by an employer's decision not to hire is no closer to a job. The wage meant for a disabled worker goes into the Fund, and the worker stays unemployed, which is the very outcome section 31 was written to prevent.

Pakistan is bound to more than that. Article 27 of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, ratified in 2011, recognises the right to work on an equal basis with others in a labour market that is open, inclusive and accessible, and calls on states to promote private-sector employment through measures that include affirmative action. The Act itself makes implementing the convention a function of the Council (section 20(2)(k)). A fee paid to stay out of the workplace does not open anything.

This persists partly because the Act leaves a gap in enforcement. On a plain reading, there is no penalty aimed directly at a breach of section 31. Section 36 fines contravention of the regulations or the Code, and section 39 punishes failure to furnish information.

The only real consequence of non-employment is the section 32 payment, which is exactly what makes buying out so cheap and easy. The state is not setting an example either.

Recently, the Lahore High Court has directed the Punjab government to strictly observe the 3.0 per cent quota in public sector jobs, in a case where the petitioner said posts for disabled persons had not been advertised since 2022. If government departments lag, private employers have little reason to take the quota seriously.

Stricter enforcement does not require a new statute. Most of it can be done through rules, regulations and administrative practice, though some may need amendment. The first step is to make section 32 conditional on effort. Payment in place of employment should be accepted only on proof of documented advertisement through the Unit, interviews with registered candidates and recorded reasons for rejection.

Section 32 also sets a floor, not a ceiling, so a graduated scale that rises with each consecutive year of non-compliance is arguable under the rule-making power, and if it is not, an amendment would settle the point. That amendment, or the rules, could also attach a direct penalty to a breach of section 31 so that the quota carries its own consequence.

A quota that can be bought out is not a quota. Section 31 says employers must hire. Section 32 was meant to deal with those who do not, but as it works today, it lets them pay and move on. Punjab needs the existing law enforced as written: employment first, and payment only as a last resort with a real cost attached.



By Syed Asad Ali Shah

Business as usual for 80 years



Pakistan enters its 80th year with a familiar routine: another IMF programme, another stabilisation declared a success, and multiple reform plans gathering dust. The script has barely changed in decades. Only the cast has. Countries once poorer than Pakistan rewrote theirs and moved ahead.

Pakistan has never been short of ideas or reform plans. What it lacks is the willingness to question established arrangements and challenge powerful interests. Nobody sat down to design all the dysfunctions we live with today. They persist because those with the power to change them see little benefit in doing so, while successive governments and centres of power have found business as usual more convenient than fundamental reform.

Pakistan's economic history tells a disturbing story. GDP grew by an average of 6.8 per cent annually in the 1960s and 6.5 per cent in the 1980s. Growth declined to 4.6 per cent in the 1990s and around 4.0 per cent over the following two decades. Over the nine years ending June 2026, it averaged just over 3.0 per cent, among the weakest sustained periods in our economic history. Against the 2.55 per cent annual population growth recorded by the 2023 census, improvements in income per person have been painfully slow.

The consequences are reflected in human deprivation. The Planning Ministry's preliminary estimate for FY2024-25 puts 28.9 per cent of Pakistanis, about 70 million people, below the national poverty line. Seventy-seven per cent of ten-year-olds cannot read and understand a simple text. Households struggle with expensive, unreliable electricity and inadequate access to clean cooking fuels. Income, learning and energy poverty reinforce one another, depriving people of the means to improve their lives.

The Labour Force Survey 2024-25 reports unemployment of 6.9 per cent, rising to 12.6 per cent among young people. Around 72 per cent of non-agricultural employment is informal. Average monthly wages increased from Rs24,000 to Rs39,000 between the last two surveys, while consumer prices rose by more than 80 per cent. Pakistanis earn more rupees but can afford less.

Investment remains around 14 per cent of GDP, while bank credit to the private sector has declined to around 9.0 per cent. External shocks explain occasional crises. They cannot explain decades of diminishing economic dynamism.

The deeper explanation lies in how power is exercised and accountability avoided. Pakistan has never allowed democracy to evolve into a stable system in which elected representatives exercise authority, institutions respect constitutional boundaries and voters hold governments accountable for outcomes.

Repeated interruptions and prolonged hybrid governance arrangements have blurred the distinction between authority and responsibility. Elected governments carry responsibility for outcomes they do not fully control, while unelected centres of power influence major decisions without facing electoral accountability.

UK company law recognises the concept of a 'shadow director': someone whose instructions a company's board habitually follows and who can consequently bear directors' duties and liabilities. The principle is instructive: those exercising influence should also bear responsibility. In Pakistan's governance arrangements, influence and accountability are too often separated.

Political parties have accommodated these arrangements when convenient, protected their own interests and neglected institutional development. Parliamentary oversight has progressively weakened, while elected local governments remain inadequately empowered despite constitutional requirements.

When authority is dispersed, responsibility becomes transferable. Governments change, policies are abandoned, each administration blames its predecessor and accountability for outcomes disappears. Without clear accountability, there is little incentive to pursue difficult reforms, improve public services or accept responsibility for economic failure.

This culture extends throughout public administration. Consider two civil servants. One takes a considered decision that subsequently fails and spends years answering audit objections, inquiries or accountability proceedings. Another avoids difficult decisions, follows established procedures and retires without controversy. The lesson is obvious: doing nothing is invariably safer than taking a calculated risk.

Our economic incentives reinforce this behaviour. Tariffs and concessions protect favoured industries. Loss-making state enterprises recorded Rs833 billion in losses during FY2024-25, while the sector received Rs2.1 trillion in fiscal support. Government borrowing absorbs savings that could finance productive enterprise.



By Ambassador G R Baluch

Washington at a crossroads



The American electorate has delivered a sharp verdict. By winning control of both chambers of Congress, Democrats have turned the 2026 midterms into a rebuke of US President Donald Trump and his administration.

But an electoral wave is only an opening. Its meaning will depend on whether Democrats can translate voters' discontent into a credible programme for change.

The first indication from the White House is ominous. Days after the defeat, Trump appointed Stephen Miller to replace Susie Wiles as chief of staff. The choice suggests he intends to double down on his governing style and the policies voters have rejected. Miller is a principal architect of the administration's hard-line immigration agenda. That appointment comes as families continue to face high prices, strained finances and medical care beyond the reach of many. The immigration crackdown has also prompted concern over arbitrary enforcement and the use of force by federal agents. The AP Voter Poll found that about six in ten voters believed immigration enforcement had gone too far; a separate measure found similar disapproval of ICE's handling of its responsibilities.

The election reflected several sources of discontent: economic insecurity, concern about democratic checks and balances, opposition to the immigration crackdown and unease about the military action against Iran. About seven in ten voters told the AP Voter Poll that Congress should do more to check presidential power. Democrats should read the result as a demand for accountability and change, not as an unlimited mandate. Their coalition includes voters with different priorities, from affordability and healthcare to immigration and foreign policy.

The first test is economic. For many voters, political competence is measured by the cost of groceries, housing, healthcare, utilities and transport. Exit polling found that inflation had caused hardship for many families and that voters who felt worse off were more likely to support Democratic candidates. Democrats should explain how they will lower healthcare costs, widen access to housing, protect workers' earnings and ease pressure on household expenses. A few clear measures with recognisable effects will matter more than a long catalogue of promises. Democrats must show that they understand the strain on ordinary families and can respond.

Democrats will soon have the power to investigate, subpoena and block parts of Trump's agenda. They should use those powers firmly, but with discipline and a clear public purpose. Oversight must be grounded in evidence and presented as accountability, not revenge.

The White House appears to be preparing for confrontation. Trump has called himself a potential "Mr Veto", while Miller's appointment offers little indication that the administration plans to moderate its approach. The Democrats must not let the administration dictate every exchange. If each provocation produces an equally theatrical response, they may energise their base while alienating voters who gave them this majority.

The party must also govern as a coalition. Progressives, centrists, labour supporters, young voters, minority communities and independents may share a desire for change without agreeing on every policy.

Democrats need a common programme centred on economic security, accountable government and equal protection under the law. If intraparty disputes dominate the opening months, voters may conclude that Democrats were better at opposing Trump than at governing.

Congress should use its majority to propose legislation that restores its role in decisions to use military force. The War Powers Resolution requires consultation and reporting, but disputes over presidential authority have weakened congressional checks. New legislation should require clear authorisation for sustained hostilities, narrow emergency exceptions and set firm reporting and time limits. Congress should also state that funding military operations does not, by itself, authorise war.

Immigration enforcement needs comparable safeguards. Congress should strengthen rules governing ICE's authority to question, detain and use force. No citizen should be detained on immigration grounds; mistaken detention should trigger prompt verification, release and an accessible remedy.

Legislation should set enforceable standards for detention conditions and the use of force. It should require access to legal review, preserve body-camera and operational records, and mandate public reporting of serious injuries and deaths in custody. Allegations of abuse should receive independent investigation, with meaningful consequences for proven violations.

Foreign policy will be another defining test. Hearings and subpoenas can compel the administration to disclose the costs, objectives and legal basis of its decisions. Used strategically, they can test whether policies are working and build public support for a different course.

The Iran war should be among the first subjects of scrutiny. Democrats should demand clear answers about its objectives, authorisation, regional risks, costs and endgame. If continued military action does not advance a defined national interest, Congress should use its War Powers and appropriations authority to press for an end to the war and a return to diplomacy.



By Irtija Ahmad

Rocks or refineries?

November could be a turning point in the global minerals race. On November 10, the one-year pause on China's sweeping October 2025 rare earth controls is set to expire, and no extension has been announced as of yet.

The April 2025 controls on seven rare earth minerals were never really suspended, a reminder of the leverage Beijing still holds over the minerals the US needs. Aware of that leverage, Washington has made its interest in Pakistan's minerals clear. With Pakistan hosting its Mineral Investment Forum on November 12-13, many are now looking at the country as the next arena of the US-China competition.

The framing carries some weight. In September 2025, US Strategic Metals (USSM) and Pakistan's Frontier Works Organisation (FW) signed two memoranda of understanding targeting $500 million. As a result, the first shipment of antimony, copper concentrate, neodymium and praseodymium left for the US on October 2. Beijing dismissed the reports of the shipment as "misinformed, invented, or designed to drive a wedge" and said Pakistan has reassured it that US engagement would "never undermine China's interests".

The US Export-Import Bank approved a $1.25 billion loan for the Reko-Diq copper-gold project in December 2025. In August 2026, US diplomats met with Khyber Pakhtunkhwa's leaders to discuss critical minerals. Beijing dismissed the reports of the shipment as misinformed.

China and the US have always had different approaches in their alliance with Pakistan. While Washington's relations with Pakistan have been security-driven, Beijing's have been built on investment and economics. Today, China takes about 95 per cent of Pakistan's copper ore and concentrate exports and roughly 98 per cent of copper matte. Chinese firms also hold stakes in four out of six active critical mineral projects. The USSM deal, in contrast, remains "not yet actionable" in the words of the same CSIS analysis.

The deeper problem is not who buys Pakistan's ores, but who processes them. Rare earth minerals are only useful once they are separated into individual metals, which is a rigorous, intricate and polluting process. The US, once the world's leading producer, let that industry go. For decades, China followed Deng Xiaoping's dictum to "hide your strength and bide your time", quietly building processing capacity the West abandoned. Today China controls around 90 per cent of global rare earth refining and separation and 94 per cent of sintered magnet production. Its export controls show it is no longer hiding.

Beijing now guards the know-how itself after banning exports of rare earth extraction and separation technology in December 2023. So, even if the US succeeds in importing a majority of the critical minerals, it cannot break China's hold because the US has only a fraction of the separation capacity needed to turn that ore into useful metals. The real prize is not Pakistan's minerals, but the opportunity to build processing capacity there, and only Pakistan can award that prize.

Indonesia shows how a middle power can do this. Owning about 42 per cent of the world's nickel, it banned exports of raw nickel ore in January 2020, telling investors that access to its nickel is contingent on building smelters at home.

The condition led Indonesia to go from two smelters before 2014 to 43 by mid-2023, with processing investments tripling between 2019 and 2022.

THE DESTINATION
Editor's Mail
Send your letter for Letter to Editor THE DESTINATION
Masawat Building, Zero Point, G-7/1, Islamabad
Email: dailydestinationnews@gmail.com
Letters should be addressed to the Destination exclusively
https://dailythedestination.com/
Mudasser Iqbal — **Cheif Editor**
Tahir Chudhary — **Resident Editor Lahore**

UN nuclear watchdog urges Iran to take 'steps' towards inspections

● IAEA Demands Urgent Access To Iran Nuclear Sites



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

UN

The UN's nuclear watchdog urged Iran to take "incremental steps" to allow inspectors to return to key nuclear facilities in the Islamic republic, adding such access was "critical" in a report seen by AFP Friday.

The International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) has not had access to key nuclear facilities in Iran since Israel, joined by the United States, launched a 12-day conflict in June 2025 that included strikes on nuclear sites.

Nuclear facilities have also been hit in the latest war, which erupted on February 28, and the IAEA has repeatedly called for access.

In its report, the agency said that it was "critical" for it to conduct "verification activities in Iran without further delay".

"The director general encourages Iran to consider technical and gradual measures by which conditions are achieved that allow for the return of agency inspectors to Iran," the report said.

The IAEA "acknowledged that the military attacks on Iran's nuclear facilities and sites created an unprecedented situation".

But because of a lack of cooperation "the agency is not able to conclude that there has been no diversion of declared nuclear material from peaceful nuclear activities in Iran", the report said, raising "serious proliferation concern" that "needs to be rectified with the utmost urgency".

The IAEA board in September referred Iran to the UN Security Council, marking the first time Iran has been referred to the UN top body in 20 years for failing to comply with its nuclear reporting obligations.

- US reward for information -

Before the June 2025 strikes, the IAEA calculated that Iran possessed approximately 440 kilograms of uranium enriched to 60 percent, nearing the 90 percent needed to make a bomb and well above the 3.67-percent limit set by a now-defunct 2015 agreement with Iran.

Since June 2025, the fate Iran's nuclear stockpile has remained uncertain.

Iran has long denied striving to develop a nuclear bomb.

IAEA head Rafael Grossi said in June that the "widespread impression" was that the stockpile remains where it was before June 2025 near to the Isfahan Fuel Enrichment Plant (IFEP).

In its report, the agency said it was "increasingly concerned" about a lack of information and access to the plant.

"The agency does not know IFEP's exact location, status for safeguards purposes, or whether it contains nuclear material," it said.

IAEA inspectors were able to visit Iran's Bushehr nuclear plant in September, but have had no access to other key facilities.

The report detailed correspondence in recent weeks between the IAEA and Iran.

In a letter on Thursday, IAEA told Iran it would "protect.... all confidential information" after Tehran informed the agency about the United States' $20 million reward for information on its nuclear programme.

Iran on Wednesday hit out at the reward announced by the US military last week and urged the IAEA and the UN Security Council to condemn it.



GENEVA, SWITZERLAND: Federal Minister for Board of Investment, Qaiser Ahmed Sheikh, held a productive meeting with Soren Toft, Chief Executive Officer of Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC), at the company's office in Geneva, Switzerland, to discuss potential investment opportunities and avenues for expanding MSC's engagement with Pakistan.

Pakistan Denounces Houthi Attacks On Saudi Arabia At UN Security Council

● Ambassador Syed Haider Shah reaffirms support for Saudi Arabia and Yemen's sovereignty while calling for an immediate end to the attacks

WEB DESK

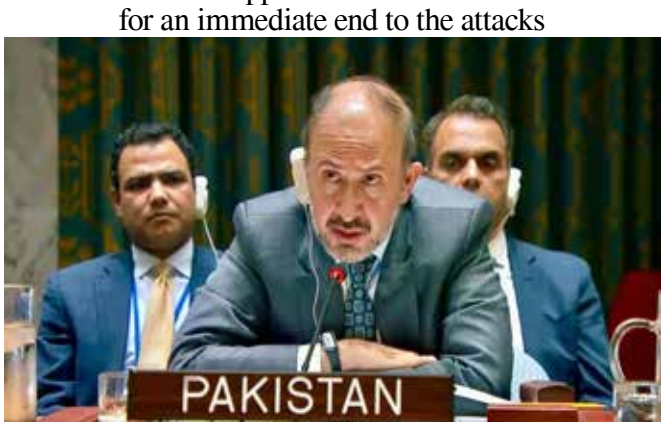
UN

Pakistan denounces Houthi attacks on Saudi Arabia and has called for them to stop at once. The message came from Pakistan's top envoy at the United Nations on Friday, according to an official statement.

Ambassador Syed Haider Shah spoke at the UN Security Council after members adopted a new resolution. The resolution renews the sanctions set up under resolution 2140 (2014). It also extends the mandate of the Panel of Experts that supports the 2140 Committee.

Shah welcomed the decision. He said the committee's work matters for peace, security and stability in Yemen.

He condemned the Houthi attacks on the kingdom in the strongest terms. He asked for an immediate and unconditional end to them.



The warning comes a day after the Houthis claimed new strikes. They said they hit a pumping station on the East-West oil pipeline, an oil facility in Yanbu, and an Aramco building in Riyadh.

The Saudi-led coalition said it stopped two drones on Thursday. One was destroyed in the Riyadh region and the other in the Eastern Province.

Shah said Pakistan stands fully with the leadership and people of Saudi Arabia. He backed the kingdom's right to defend its land and protect its people under the UN Charter and international law.

Pakistan also reaffirmed its support for Yemen's sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity. Shah thanked the United Kingdom for leading the talks on the resolution.

He said Pakistan voted yes to show how much it values the committee's work. Holding to account those who threaten Yemen's peace is key to lasting stability, he added.

The envoy also said the Panel of Experts must work within its mandate. It should act with professionalism, fairness and consistency, he said, so its work stays credible.

Shah urged support for a UN-led political process owned and led by Yemenis. He said Pakistan is ready to back efforts that bring peace and ease the suffering of Yemen's people.

Ties between Pakistan and Saudi Arabia have grown stronger in recent years. They signed a bilateral defence agreement in September 2025.

In August 2026, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement. Under it, an attack on one of the three is treated as an attack on all.

US Treasury's Bessent says he won't be cowed by death threats

NEWS DESK

WASHINGTON

US Treasury Secretary Scott Bessent said on Friday that he would not be cowed by Iranian threats against his life, after recently moving from his Washington, DC, residence to a US military base.

"Why am I going to be afraid when our, the brave military personnel in the Gulf, President (Donald) Trump, constantly receive death threats?" Bessent said in an interview on CNBC.

Iran has denied plotting to attack officials and people on US soil.

But Bessent added that Iran was acting "like a dangerous cornered animal. So I follow Secret Service instructions and have moved from my home to a military base."

Bessent said he had to move in part because the Wall Street Journal published an aerial photo of his Georgetown home in January 2025.

"Highly irresponsible and dangerous, and things like that have to stop," he said.

A senior intelligence official in the Trump administration warned in a memo seen by Reuters late last month that Iranian plots against US personnel and American citizens had reached an advanced stage.

Bessent has led the US sanctions and economic pressure campaign against Iran, dubbed Operation Economic Outcast, since August to try to push Tehran to end attacks on shipping and reopen the Strait of Hormuz.

Crude Oil Prices Head For Second Weekly Drop As Iran Fears Ease

● Oil heads for a second weekly loss as traders weigh Middle East attacks, a firm US stance on Iran, and a surprise rise in American stockpiles

SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

IRAN

Crude oil prices moved in a mixed pattern on Friday, but they are still set for a second weekly drop in a row. Traders feel a little calmer because the US looks ready to keep limits on Iranian oil shipments.

By 10:19 am PST, Brent crude futures were down 0.37% at $95.45 a barrel. West Texas Intermediate (WTI) fell $0.60, or 0.68%, to $88.14 a barrel.

The US plan to keep its blockade on Iran has lowered the chance of a big military clash. That clash could have put oil supplies in the region at risk. Still, attacks on ships and energy sites keep worries alive, as CNBC reported.

The week stayed jumpy. Hopes for calmer talks between the US, Israel and Iran were met with strikes on Saudi energy sites and oil tankers leaving the Gulf.

Brent is on track to lose 2.4% this week, after a sharp 16% fall last week. WTI is heading for a 2.5% weekly loss, following a 13% drop the week before.



Prices eased after President Donald Trump said a deal with Iran was not needed to end the conflict. He signalled that the US would keep the blockade, along with trade curbs and other sanctions.

On Thursday, Iran's military said four oil tankers were hit by blasts in the Strait of Hormuz after they ignored warnings. Reuters could not confirm this claim on its own.

Yemen's Houthis, who are aligned with Iran, also claimed attacks on a pumping station on Saudi Arabia's East-West pipeline. They also named an oil site in the Red Sea port of Yanbu and an Aramco building in Riyadh.

US data added more pressure on prices. The Energy Information Administration said crude stocks rose by 4.7 million barrels to 414.4 million barrels in the week ended November 6. Analysts had expected a 1.1 million barrel fall, based on a Reuters poll.

Delhi Overtakes Lahore As World's Most Polluted City As Air Quality Plunges



WEB DESK

LAHORE

Delhi overtakes Lahore as world's most polluted city on Friday, as heavy smog wrapped the Indian capital and pushed air quality to hazardous levels.

More than 20 million people live in the city. Many woke up to a thick grey haze that made it hard to see far ahead.

Swiss group IQAir rated Delhi's air quality index (AQI) at 334, which is hazardous. That made it the most polluted major city in the world today.

For comparison, an AQI reading up to 50 is considered good, with little or no risk to health.

India's own Central Pollution Control Board gave a higher reading of 403 and called the air "severe."

The two numbers differ because each group uses its own AQI scale and method to measure and classify pollution.

Videos from news agency ANI showed cars and motorcycles slowly coming out of dense smog. The haze also hid street lights on the main roads.

Iran's Guards Say They Destroyed US Radar System In Bahrain

● The Revolutionary Guards say the strike was a reply to an air attack on a telecom tower in Sirik. Bahrain and the United States have not confirmed it

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN

Iran's Guards said on Friday that their forces hit a US early warning radar on the island of Bahrain. The claim was shared by Iranian state media.

There was no quick word from Manama or Washington. Neither side has confirmed that any strike took place.

The Guards' aerospace unit said its fighters destroyed the radar a few hours earlier. They called it a reply to an air attack on a telecom tower in Sirik, a port city in southern Iran.

The statement was posted on Telegram by the state broadcaster. It was written as a clear warning to the United States.



"This is a serious warning to the aggressor enemy to stop its aerial provocations," the Guards said. They also named what they call oil smuggling in the Strait of Hormuz.

US Central Command said last month that it had helped Gulf states export 1.5 billion barrels of oil since summer. All of it moved through Hormuz, a key energy route.

The war began on February 28, when the United States and Israel attacked Iran. It is now in its eighth month.

Gulf states took the heaviest hits in return. Iran limited ship traffic in Hormuz. It also struck airports, seaports, energy sites and American assets across the region.

Early in the war, the United States put a blockade on Iranian ports. In August, it began what it called an "economic asphyxiation" campaign. The plan aims to cut Iran's trade and money flows.

Lately, Washington seems to have eased its threats of new strikes. This came after President Donald Trump's Republican party lost in the midterm elections. The war's low public support played a part.

India blocks over 100 speakers from opposition democracy summit

WEB DESK

MUMBAI

India blocked more than 100 international speakers from attending a democracy summit organised by the opposition Congress party, a senior opposition politician said on Friday.

Those denied visas included a Norwegian journalist who had previously questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi about press freedom.

Shashi Tharoor, a Congress MP and former senior United Nations official, said 115 of the 315 speakers cleared by India's foreign ministry were subsequently refused entry or had their visas cancelled, "apparently on the instructions" of the home ministry. "It is completely unclear under what provision of law the government has taken such a drastic step," Tharoor wrote on X.

"What a shame that a proud democracy has become so insecure that it must stifle any voices it fears will be critical!" he added.

Norwegian journalist Helle Lyng said on Wednesday that her visa was cancelled shortly before she was due to travel to India, where she had been invited to speak on media and press freedom. She had questioned Modi at a press briefing during his visit to Oslo in May. The Editors Guild of India condemned the cancellation and said the move smacked of "bureaucratic overreach" and called on the government to disclose its reasons and reverse the decision.

14 killed, 30 injured in road accident in UAE's Fujairah



WEB DESK

FUJAIRAH

Fourteen people were killed and 30 injured in a road accident involving 18 vehicles and five trucks in the UAE emirate of Fujairah, the Ministry of Interior said.

The ministry said the preliminary death toll was 14. It added that emergency teams were continuing operations at the scene.

Medical teams are providing treatment to the injured, while specialist authorities are investigating the circumstances of the crash.

The ministry said further information would be released once verified.

Fujairah is one of the UAE's seven emirates. It lies on the country's eastern coast along the Gulf of Oman, east of Dubai.

The ministry offered condolences to the families of those killed and wished the injured a speedy recovery.

It urged the public to rely on official sources and avoid sharing unverified information.

Faysal Quraishi responds to 'Mango Jutt' criticism

● Actor says social media feedback is part of the process

SHOW BIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Film festivals are not just about watching movies; they also provide filmmakers, artists and enthusiasts an opportunity to connect, exchange ideas and learn about the process of filmmaking.

Speaking on the sidelines of the World Culture Festival, Pakistani filmmaker said that film enthusiasts look forward to such festivals every year, as they offer more than just screenings. Filmmakers from different countries also attend to represent their work, making the event an opportunity for meaningful interaction and discussion.

He said that such gatherings allow filmmakers to understand how projects are initiated and how the filmmaking process begins. The initial discussions and exchange of ideas are particularly important for those working in the industry.

"These festivals also inspire young people. If they want to pursue filmmaking, they get to see different pathways and understand how they can move forward and create better work," he said.



Asked about the audience response after his film was screened at the cinema and later at the World Culture Festival, as well as the criticism it received on social media following its release, the filmmaker said that many viewers had enjoyed the film.

"Not every film is going to be liked by everyone. Even after watching a film like The Odyssey, some people come out saying, 'What did I just watch? What kind of film was that?' So, our film can also have shortcomings. There is nothing unusual about someone not liking it," he said.

Faysal Quraishi is one of Pakistan's highest-paid actors. He is the recipient of more than 20 nationally recognised awards. He first gained recognition for playing the leading role of Boota in the television series Boota from Toba Tek Singh (1999) and has been a part of more than 200 projects. Quraishi hosted a morning show called Muskurati Morning with Faisal Qureshi from 2010 to 2014. From 2016 to 2019, he hosted the morning show Salam Zindagi. He made his film acting debut in 1992. He became a producer in 2017 with the production house Connect Studios, and owns a film production house named Faysal Quraishi Films.

He added that social media had given everyone a platform to express their opinions, and he was open to both appreciation and criticism.

"Some people praised the film, while others did not like it. That's fine. It is good that people are sharing their feedback," he said.



Rambo gets emotional recalling mother's final moments

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Filmstar and comedian Afzal Khan, popularly known as Rambo, became emotional while recalling the final moments of his late mother, sharing how he helped her recite the Kalma shortly before she passed away.

In an emotional account, Rambo recalled standing beside his mother when her eyes were rolling back and a doctor was trying to attend to her.

Noticing her condition, he gently moved the doctor aside and called out to her, saying, "Ami."

He said his mother then focused her eyes on him and looked directly at him.

Sensing that her condition was deteriorating, Rambo leaned close to her ear and gently prompted her to recite the Kalma, saying, "Ami, padhein La ilaha..."

According to Rambo, his mother responded by reciting the complete Kalma, "La ilaha illallah Muhammadur Rasulullah," clearly and repeatedly.

He recalled that she recited it three times, making the moment deeply emotional for him.

Rambo further shared that when he turned around, he saw around 10 to 12 relatives standing nearby, waiting to hear about her condition.

His father was away offering namaz at the time, and Rambo immediately informed the family that his mother had passed away after reciting the Kalma.

Zoya Nasir weighs in on Shahvir Kadwani's 'Parchi' debate

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani actress Zoya Nasir has shared her thoughts on nepotism in the entertainment industry, highlighting the difference between receiving opportunities through family connections and earning recognition through talent and hard work.

In her Instagram Story, Zoya reflected on how family connections can open doors in different fields, including entertainment, politics and corporate culture. However, she stressed that qualities such as talent, conviction and credibility cannot simply be inherited.

She also suggested that newcomers should be willing to begin with supporting roles and gradually build their experience and reputation before taking on leading projects.

Zoya's message comes as Shahvir Kadwani, son of producer Abdullah Kadwani, continues to face discussion over his role as Zarrar in the drama serial Mohabbat. Some social media users have questioned his casting and described him as a "parchi", a term commonly used for someone perceived to have benefited from influential connections.

The actor has also faced criticism over his acting, dialogue delivery and Urdu pronunciation.

The discussion gained momentum after a scene in which viewers questioned his pronunciation of the word "fakhar".

Shahvir has also received support from fellow artists. Actress Sanam Saeed and producer-actress Javeria Saud, among others, have spoken against harsh personal attacks and urged audiences to give the newcomer time to develop his acting skills.



Amar Khan points to a rare portrayal of first wife in Pakistani TV

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Pakistani actress and writer Amar Khan has highlighted what she considers a historic moment in Pakistani television, drawing attention to a drama scene from Mitti De Baway, in which a first wife acknowledges another woman's emotional place in her husband's life.

During an interview, Amar discussed a dialogue in which the first wife tells the other woman not to abandon her position, saying, "Apni jagah na chhod, tu pehli zarani, pehli biwi hai."

She then points out that, for the first time in television history, a first wife says she is not the first, but the other woman is.



Explaining the emotional depth behind the scene, Amar noted that the character recognises how, despite being married and sharing significant moments of life with the man, his heart had always belonged to his first wife.

His presence during the birth of her child, in her room and through family tragedies had not changed that emotional reality.

Amar observed that Pakistani dramas have traditionally portrayed first wives as hostile towards second wives, often showing them confronting or attacking the other woman.

Nida Yasir hired a student counselor to resolve disagreement with Yasir Nawaz

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistani television host Nida Yasir has revealed how she sought professional help to resolve a disagreement with her husband, filmmaker Yasir Nawaz, over their daughter's education and future career.

During a talk show appearance, Nida shared that Yasir wanted their daughter to become a doctor, a profession he had once hoped to pursue himself but could not.

According to Nida, he had even encouraged her to select O-Level subjects with a medical career in mind.

However, Nida said neither she nor the children agreed with making that decision for their daughter.

Describing herself as a friendly mother who understands her children's interests, she felt their daughter should have the freedom to choose her own path.

When her efforts to convince Yasir did not work, Nida decided to arrange a meeting with a professional student counselor.



She took her husband along, where the counselor explained subject choices, degree options and career planning through research, data and detailed discussions.

Nida revealed that the structured guidance eventually changed Yasir's perspective, helping him understand the importance of considering their daughter's own interests and choices.

A Farewell Painted with Love: Pakistani Student's Portrait Brings Swedish Artist Domi Forest to Tear



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

A heartwarming moment filled with art, affection and emotions unfolded at the 3rd World Culture Festival Karachi 2026, organized by the Arts Council of Pakistan Karachi, when Fine Arts second-year student Shayan Ahmed Khan presented a beautifully crafted portrait of Swedish artist Domi Forest as a farewell gift on her departure from Karachi.

The portrait, created with remarkable artistic expression and personal warmth, was more than just a painting — it was a gesture of admiration, respect and appreciation for the bond developed through art and cultural exchange.

Deeply touched by this thoughtful gesture, Domi Forest became emotional and was moved to tears upon receiving the portrait. The heartfelt moment brought a wave of emotions among those present, reflecting the beautiful human connections that transcend geographical and cultural boundaries.

Appreciating Shayan Ahmed Khan's artistic talent and heartfelt gesture, Domi Forest expressed her gratitude, describing the portrait as a truly special and memorable gift. She conveyed that the love and warmth she received in Karachi would remain close to her heart and that she would cherish this beautiful memory.

The touching exchange highlighted the true spirit of the World Culture Festival, demonstrating how art goes beyond colours and canvases to create lasting friendships, emotional connections and unforgettable memories between people from different parts of the world.

A portrait that captured more than a face — it captured a bond, a farewell and the warmth of Karachi that Domi Forest will carry with her.

Hadi's romantic getaway with Sheely shocks 'Rutba' fans



SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE

Hadi's latest actions in drama Rutba have sparked a debate among viewers, with some blaming Meer and Sheely for manipulating him while others believe he is equally responsible for putting his marriage with Mahnoor at risk.

Written by Umera Ahmed and directed by Haseeb Hassan, Rutba stars Talha Chahour as Hadi, Hiba Bukhari as Mahnoor, Mehwish Hayat as Sheely and Zahid Ahmed as Meer. The drama explores power, corruption and complicated personal relationships.

In Episode 11, Hadi's growing involvement with Sheely took another turn when the two went away together. His decision came despite his earlier promises of love and commitment to Mahnoor, who was left waiting for him and trying to contact him throughout the night.

The episode hinted at a possible intimate encounter between Hadi and Sheely, leaving viewers to question whether he had finally crossed a line in his marriage. However, the exact nature of their relationship remains a subject of discussion.

The situation also raised questions about Meer and Sheely's plan. Some viewers believe the two are using Hadi's growing attraction to Sheely to trap him and gain control over him. Others argue that Hadi cannot escape responsibility for his own choices simply because he may have been manipulated.

The audience reaction was particularly critical of Hadi, with one viewer commenting, "Mard humesha muun martay hain." Another suggested that he had been honey-trapped by Meer and Sheely, while a third expressed disappointment, writing, "So after all his claims, this is what Hadi did."

Hadi's behaviour has also changed how some viewers see his character. His earlier claims about being devoted to Mahnoor are now being questioned, while sympathy for her situation continues to feature in the discussion.

With Hadi's relationship with Sheely becoming increasingly complicated, viewers are now waiting to see whether he will recognise the consequences of his actions.

Three decades of memories! Sania Saeed gets nostalgic with Atiqa Odho

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI

Veteran Pakistani actress Sania Saeed has taken a trip down memory lane after resharing a series of photographs featuring herself alongside fellow actress Atiqa Odho, capturing their moments together in 1992, 2017 and 2026.

Sharing the post on her Instagram Story, Sania tagged Atiqa and added a heartfelt note, writing, "Wow, it's been three decades."

The photographs offer a glimpse into the actresses' journey over the years, reminding viewers of their memorable on-screen partnership and long association.

Sania Saeed and Atiqa Odho first appeared together in the much-loved drama Sitara Aur Mehrunissa, in which Atiqa played Sitara while Sania portrayed Mehrunissa. The drama became popular among television audiences, and their characters remain memorable for many viewers.

The actresses reunited on screen in Pyari Bitto in 2017, marking their return together after 25 years. Their reunion brought the familiar pairing back to television screens.

Interestingly, Sania also appeared on Atiqa Odho's podcast, In Conversation with Atiqa Odho, where the two veteran actresses sat together to discuss their experiences, perspectives and outlook on life.

From Sitara Aur Mehrunissa to Pyari Bitto, the photographs reflect more than three decades of memories shared by two actresses whose work has remained part of Pakistani television.



Pakistan, Sri Lanka play out draw in weather-hit opening Test

● Five Pakistan batters score half-centuries in opening innings

MUDASSAR IQBAL

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan and Sri Lanka played out a draw in the weather-hit opening Test at the Rawalpindi Cricket Stadium on Friday after the hosts declared their second innings at 284-8, extending their overall lead to 272 runs.

Experienced batter Saud Shakeel narrowly missed out on a century, falling for 97 as Pakistan consolidated their position before both teams agreed to a draw.

The hosts resumed their innings in the final session with Shakeel closing in on his fifth Test century. However, Lahiru Kumara ended his impressive knock by clean bowling the left-hander for 97 off 210 deliveries, including seven boundaries.

Razaullah remained unbeaten at the other end as Pakistan declared their innings at 284-8, after which both teams agreed to a draw.

Earlier, Shakeel and Ghazi Ghori continued Pakistan's batting charge in the second session, putting together a crucial 92-run partnership to take the hosts' lead beyond the 200-run mark.



Shakeel registered his 13th Test half-century, while Ghori provided valuable support before Milan Rathnayake broke the partnership by dismissing the latter for 35 off 69 deliveries, including three boundaries.

Arafat Minhas joined Shakeel and contributed to a 44-run stand, taking Pakistan past the 250-run mark. However, Dhananjaya de Silva ended the partnership by dismissing Minhas for 16 off 29 deliveries after hitting three boundaries.

Earlier, Pakistan resumed day five at 57-1, holding a 45-run lead, but suffered a top-order collapse. Azan Awais fell for 22 to Lahiru Kumara, while Asitha Fernando dismissed Mohammad Taha for 24.

Babar Azam and Shakeel then added a valuable 50-run partnership before Rathnayake removed Babar for 34 and Salman Ali Agha for 13, reducing the hosts to 125-5.

Earlier in the match, Sri Lanka recovered strongly after Pakistan's bowlers made early inroads. However, debutant Saqib Khan's sensational seven-wicket haul helped the hosts regain control, although the visitors secured a 12-run first-innings lead.

In reply to Pakistan's first-innings total of 434-9 declared, Sri Lanka were reduced to 65-3 before Kamindu Mendis scored 58 and shared a 90-run partnership with Dhananjaya de Silva.



Saud Shakeel joins unwanted Test record after missing centuries in both innings

SPORTS DESK

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan middle-order batter Saud Shakeel has become part of an unusual and unwanted record in Test cricket history after narrowly missing centuries in both innings of the Rawalpindi Test against Sri Lanka.

Shakeel scored 93 in Pakistan's first innings and followed it up with 97 in the second, becoming only the fifth batter in Test history to be dismissed in the nervous nineties in both innings of the same match.

In nearly 150 years of Test cricket, this has happened only six times. Former West Indies great Gordon Greenidge is the only batter to have suffered the disappointment twice.

Before Shakeel, Sri Lanka's Mahela Jayawardene was the last player to achieve the unwanted distinction. He scored 92 and 96 against New Zealand in Colombo in August 2009.

Greenidge first experienced the feat against Pakistan in Georgetown in March 1977, scoring 91 and 96. He repeated it three years later against New Zealand in Christchurch, making 91 and 97 in February 1980.

England's Frank Woolley also features on the list after scoring 95 and 93 against Australia at Lord's in June 1921.

The first such instance dates back to January 1902, when Australia's Clem Hill scored 98 and 97 against England in Adelaide.

Hill's combined tally of 195 runs remains the highest by any batter dismissed in the nervous nineties in both innings of a Test.



Pakistan chase SAFF Cup history

SPORTS DESK

KARACHI

Pakistan will look to make history by reaching the SAFF Championship final when they face hosts Bangladesh in a high-stake semi-final at the National Stadium in Dhaka on Saturday (today.

The visitors will have added strength for the knockout encounter with five overseas-based players including Abdullah Iqbal, Easah Suliman, Ali Akbar Khan, Adil Nabi and Abdul Samad Shahzad joining the squad ahead of the November 14 clash.

The players missed Pakistan's group-stage fixtures because they fell outside the FIFA international window. Their arrival, however, gives coach Nolberto Solano additional options against a Bangladesh side that has yet to concede a goal in the tournament.

Pakistan advanced to the semi-finals as Group B runners-up with three points and a goal difference of plus two. They scored five goals and conceded three across their two matches, finishing behind India, who collected six points from two victories.

Pakistan began their campaign with a 3-2 defeat against India despite showing attacking promise. Suhail Ahmad Bhat scored twice, while Kipgen added a third in the 32nd minute.

Pakistan to host FIH Nations Cup

● Ten nations are likely to feature in the tournament

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

Pakistan will host the next FIH Nations Cup, with ten international teams expected to compete in the tournament as the country steps up efforts to revive its fortunes in hockey.

International Hockey Federation's (FIH) President Tayyab Ikram made the announcement at an event in Islamabad focused on the revival of Pakistan hockey.

The federal government also pledged its full support to the national federation.

Ikram said the Nations Cup was a major international competition, ranking among hockey's biggest events after the World Cup and the Olympic Games.

He also announced that the Naseer Bunda Hockey Stadium in Islamabad had been approved as an official FIH High Performance Centre, a move expected to support player development and improve training facilities.



The FIH president stressed that Pakistan needed to improve its hockey governance structure and invest in the national team's preparations if it hoped to return to the top level of international competition.

He said players needed financial support, modern training facilities and access to coaches who met international standards. Ikram also said India should come to Pakistan to play hockey.



Mike Hesson, Dhananjaya de Silva reflect on first Test after weather hit draw

SPORTS DESK

LAHORE

Pakistan head coach Mike Hesson has praised his team's performance in the first Test against Sri Lanka, especially the impressive efforts of debutants Saqib Khan and Ghazi Ghouri.

In a post-match press conference today, Hesson said Pakistan's batters continued to score runs despite poor light and maintained a run rate of more than three runs per over.

He explained that the team declared its innings to give bowlers enough time to take all 20 Sri Lankan wickets.

The head coach gave special praise to Saqib Khan, saying it would have been difficult to expect a better performance from the young bowler on his Test debut.

Saqib took seven wickets in the match.

He also appreciated wicketkeeper Ghazi Ghouri for his excellent work behind the stumps, particularly his catches.

Hesson said playing conditions had a big impact on Test cricket.

He also pointed out that Babar Azam had scored runs at an average of more than 50 in Test matches this year, the highest among all players.

Talking about poor light, Hesson said using a pink ball could be considered for future matches, but it could not be introduced in the middle of a series.

Sri Lankan captain Dhananjaya de Silva also expressed satisfaction with his team's performance.

He said the pitch helped bowlers and made batting difficult.

He added that more than 100 overs were lost because of poor light, which stopped the match from producing a result.

De Silva also praised Saqib Khan for taking seven wickets on his debut, saying the young bowler had performed well in the practice match too.

He said playing for Pakistan was a matter of great pride for Saqib and that his achievement would be remembered.

Usman Nurmagomedov sentenced to six months in prison after attacking Merab Dvalishvili

● Khabib Nurmagomedov's cousin also faces hefty fine and deportation following Abu Dhabi hotel brawl

SPORTS DESK

UAE

Russian mixed martial arts (MMA) fighter Usman Nurmagomedov attacked the former UFC bantamweight champion Merab Dvalishvili and now the 28-year-old has reportedly been sentenced to six months in prison.

The videos of the incident went viral on social media and the people involved in the fight were arrested, including those who filmed the incident.

The Abu Dhabi Criminal Court on Friday, convicted 10 individuals involved in the altercation at a hotel on Yas Island.

According to The National, six individuals were sentenced to six months in prison, fined 300,000 UAE dirhams (approximately $82,000) each and ordered to be deported after serving their sentences.

Interestingly, two individuals who filmed and circulated footage of the incident received identical punishments for violating privacy laws.



Meanwhile, Dvalishvili and his friend Saba Lazishvili were reportedly released from custody after being fined 50,000 dirhams each.

Why did Usman Nurmagomedov attack Merab Dvalishvili?

The Georgian fighter was giving an interview in the lobby of the Yas Hilton hotel on Wednesday when Nurmagomedov and his associates approached him from behind.

Footage shows Nurmagomedov striking Dvalishvili, triggering a brawl that left the Georgian with a bloodied face.

Pegula wins thriller at WTA Finals, Gauff eliminated

SPORTS DESK

CALIFORNIA

Jessica Pegula saved a match point en route to a gritty 7-6(2) 4-6 7-5 win over Linda Noskova to advance out of her round-robin group at the WTA Finals and send fellow American Coco Gauff packing from the season-ending championships.

Pegula had a career-high 16 aces while Wimbledon champion Noskova had a career-high 15 double faults in a see-saw battle that spanned 2 hours and 45 minutes at the tournament, which was moved from Riyadh to Indian Wells due to the US-Israeli war on Iran.

"I've learned that sometimes the serve feels good and sometimes it doesn't, and how to manage the days when it doesn't and to ride it when you are serving well," Pegula told reporters.

"I don't think I served that well in my first couple matches and I served great today. Sometimes there's no rhyme or reason."



Beardman, Marsh lead Australia to crushing win over England

SPORTS DESK

PERTH

Mahli Beardman took 6-24 on debut before Mitchell Marsh smashed a 29-ball 50 as Australia crushed England by seven wickets in the first ODI in Perth on Friday.

After Marsh won the toss and chose to bowl, 21-year-old Beardman tore through the England batting as the visitors slumped to be all out for 131 off just 33.4 overs.

Marsh then put the game beyond doubt with a devastating half-century, hitting four boundaries and clearing the fence another four times to the delight of his home crowd.

Earlier, Beardman bowled with real pace and aggression to record the best ODI bowling figures by an Australian on debut.

Marsh said Beardman was one of a number of young pace bowlers ready to step up when the ageing trio of Pat Cummins, Mitchell Starc and Josh Hazlewood retired.

"It's a fantastic start to his career," Marsh said.

"It's a glimpse into the future. There's some really good young talent around the country and hopefully we see them get an opportunity at some stage." Beardman tore through the England upper order, most of whom fell to poor shots, playing at balls they didn't need to.

He was well supported by left-armer Spencer Johnson, who took 3-42 as England fell apart on the drop-in wicket at Optus Stadium.

"We've spoken a lot about adaptability and how we want to adapt to different surfaces," England captain Harry Brook said.

"We prepared really well, we knew certain shots weren't going to work on this wicket, but the Australian attack bowled extremely well.

Cristiano Ronaldo ventures into TV industry, begins production of debut series

SPORTS DESK

PARIS

Portuguese football superstar Cristiano Ronaldo has embarked on a new journey beyond the football field, announcing the start of production on his first television series, titled Day 1s.

According to foreign media reports, Ronaldo shared the news on Instagram, confirming that production of his debut TV series had begun and that further details would be announced soon.

Day 1s is a football-themed drama series that will explore the business operations, power struggles, contracts and personal relationships within a major football agency.

British actor Damian Lewis is set to play football agent Stanley Dalton, while former French footballer Thierry Henry and British rapper Dave are also associated with the project. Henry is expected to make a brief appearance in the series.

Ronaldo is serving as an executive producer on the project and is also expected to make his acting debut in a scripted television drama.

The series is being produced by a production company founded by Ronaldo and British filmmaker Matthew Vaughn in 2025.

NCCIA investigation into Rizwan, Imam-ul-Haq nearing completion: Naqvi

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE

The National Cyber Crime Investigation Agency's (NCCIA) investigation into Pakistan cricketers Mohammad Rizwan and Imam-ul-Haq is nearing completion, while the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is preparing to announce new central contracts, Chairman Mohsin Naqvi said.

Speaking to the media in Lahore, Naqvi said he had contacted the NCCIA, which had sought further clarification from Rizwan before finalising its findings.

He said the investigation was expected to conclude within a few days, although he could not provide an exact timeline.

The PCB chairman confirmed that both players had been allowed to resume domestic cricket despite the investigation remaining pending.



Rizwan and Imam came under scrutiny following allegations that confidential information and dressing-room matters were leaked during Pakistan's 0-3 Test series defeat in England.

Regarding the central contracts, Naqvi said the new agreements had been finalised or would be completed by the following day, adding that their announcement would be made soon.

The announcement is already around three months behind schedule, as the previous central contracts expired on July 31.

Punjab approves development projects worth Rs1267bn

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Punjab government has approved 11 development projects worth Rs126.668 billion to improve hospitals, education, traffic management and basic facilities in cities across the province.

The approvals were given during the 13th meeting of the Provincial Development Working Party (PDWP), chaired by Planning and Development Board Punjab Chairman Dr Naeem Rauf on Friday.

Under the approved plans, Rs6.881 billion was allocated for the second phase of the MPA Hostel in Lahore, while Rs3.246 billion was approved for a new Traffic Management and Command Centre at Qurban Police Lines in Lahore.

In the health sector, Rs1.507 billion was approved for a 50-bed hospital in Bhurban, Murree, and Rs10.143 billion for a children's hospital in Rawalpindi.

The Punjab University of Technology, Rasul, in Mandi Bahauddin, will receive Rs18.862 billion for better buildings, classrooms, and other facilities.

The meeting also approved Rs3.979 billion for setting up aquaculture malls across Punjab and Rs4.063 billion for improving Jhika Gali Chowk in Murree.

The biggest allocation of Rs75.987 billion was approved under the Punjab Development Programme to improve sewerage and drainage systems and pave streets in different cities.

The work will be carried out in Mailsi, Abdul Hakeem, Ferozewala, Daska, Mandranwala, Jamkay Cheema, Kamoke, Kot Abdul Malik, Muridke, Alipur Chatha, Hazro, Renala Khurd and Mian Channu.



ISLAMABAD: Rows of national flags stand tall along Rawal Dam Chowk, showcasing the patriotic spirit and national pride of the Federal Capital.

Gilani Stresses Fair Wages And Youth Empowerment Today

● Senate Chairman Calls For Global Skills Development Collaboration

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Chairman Senate Syed Yousaf Raza Gilani on Friday emphasised that fair wages, decent working conditions, and investment in youth development are essential to sustainable economic growth and social progress.

He expressed these views during a meeting at Parliament House with a delegation from the Global Fair Pay Foundation and London Tea Exchange, led by Professor Sheikh Aliur Rahman.

Welcoming the delegation, the Chairman of the Senate appreciated the Foundation's efforts to promote workers' rights and fair remuneration globally, particularly its initiative aimed at lifting three million tea workers out of extreme poverty by 2030. He also acknowledged the contributions of . Asif Bajwa, Charter Ambassador for Pakistan, and Mr. Farhan Farhani, Co-Chair of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group, towards strengthening Pakistan–UK parliamentary engagement.



Highlighting Pakistan's demographic potential, Chairman Senate observed that nearly 60 percent of the country's population comprises young people, describing them as its greatest national asset. "Our youth must be equipped not merely to seek opportunities, but to compete, innovate and succeed in the global economy," he remarked.

He underscored the importance of market-driven skills development, particularly in information technology and emerging sectors, to enhance employability and create sustainable economic opportunities.

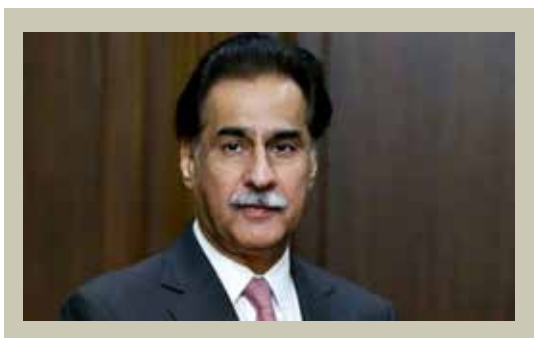
The Chairman Senate called for enhanced cooperation between the Senate, Global Fair Pay Foundation and the United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) in vocational training, human resource development and labour welfare.

He also welcomed the proposed training centre and model tea plantation initiatives, encouraging exploration of similar approaches to benefit Pakistan's agricultural workforce and informal economy.

Referring to Multan's rich cultural heritage, he highlighted its internationally renowned blue pottery and mangoes as examples of Pakistan's potential to promote indigenous craftsmanship and agricultural products in global markets.

The delegation briefed the Chairman Senate on the Foundation's objectives and ongoing initiatives and expressed willingness to explore training opportunities for Pakistani youth. The delegation thanked the Chairman Senate for his warm welcome and support for greater international collaboration.

Chairman Senate reaffirmed the Senate's commitment to advancing workers' welfare, equitable economic opportunities and inclusive development.



Ayaz lauds security forces for eliminating 74 Fitna al-Hindustan terrorists

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Speaker of National Assembly Sardar Ayaz Sadiq on Friday paid rich tribute to the security forces for eliminating 74 terrorists belonging to Fitna al-Hindustan during successful counter terrorism operations in Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

In a statement, the Speaker lauded the professional expertise, operational capabilities and courage demonstrated by the security forces in the successful operations against terrorists.

He said the sacrifices and achievements of the security forces in the war against terrorism were highly commendable.

Ayaz Sadiq said the brave operations being carried out by the security forces to completely eliminate terrorism from the country were a matter of national pride.

He emphasized that the entire nation stood shoulder to shoulder with the security forces in the fight against terrorism.

The Speaker said terrorists and their facilitators would never succeed in achieving their nefarious designs.

He also appreciated the unwavering commitment of Pakistan's armed forces and law enforcement agencies to eradicating terrorism from the country.



Morocco seeks stronger mining cooperation with Pakistan

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Morocco on Friday expressed its willingness to strengthen mining cooperation with Pakistan, highlighting opportunities for partnerships, investment and the exchange of expertise in the mineral sector.

Secretary General of Morocco's Ministry of Energy Transition and Sustainable Development Mohamed Ouhmed, addressing the Pakistan Minerals Investment Forum 2026 (PMIF26), said the forum provided an opportunity for both countries to exchange experiences and explore new avenues for cooperation and partnerships.

He said Morocco had a long mining history and significant mineral potential, with a wide range of mineral resources.

Highlighting Morocco's experience in the mining sector, he said the country was one of the world's leading phosphate producers and had developed a strong industry that met international standards.

The industry covered the entire value chain and had developed strong local expertise, he said, adding that Morocco had established partnerships with several countries in Africa, the Americas and Asia, including Pakistan.

Beyond phosphate, Morocco also had considerable geological potential and held an important position in the global production of several minerals, he said.

Citing World Mining Data 2026, Ouhmed said Morocco ranked first globally in phosphate exports, with production reaching about 35 million tonnes in 2025.

He said Morocco ranked first in Africa and fourth globally in barite production. It also ranked fourth in Africa and 13th globally in cobalt production, while standing first in Africa and 17th worldwide in silver production.

He said Morocco's experience in phosphate production could also be extended to other areas of mining, creating opportunities for investment, industrial development and new value chains.

Rain brings relief from smog in Lahore as AQI drops to 111

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

Rain and drizzle in several cities across Pakistan have intensified the cold weather, while rainfall has also brought some relief from air pollution in Lahore, reducing the city's average Air Quality Index (AQI) to 111.

According to the Meteorological Department, winds blowing since last evening and light rain in different areas have contributed to a slight improvement in air quality.

The provincial capital is expected to remain cloudy today, with chances of light drizzle at scattered places during different parts of the day.

Weather data shows that Lahore's maximum temperature is expected to reach 29 degrees Celsius, while the minimum is likely to remain at 17 degrees Celsius. Humidity has been recorded at 70 per cent, with winds blowing at a speed of five kilometres per hour.

Meanwhile, the air pollution situation in Bahawalpur remains extremely alarming, with the AQI reaching 520.

In another development, the first winter rainfall and snowfall in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Gilgit-Baltistan have brought a sharp drop in temperatures, making the weather extremely cold.



Heavy snowfall at Babusar Top has forced the closure of roads beyond Baisar, leaving two oil tankers stranded due to adverse weather conditions. Snowfall has also been reported in the mountains of Upper Hunza and at Khunjerab Pass.

The Meteorological Department has forecast further rain and snowfall across the country over the next 24 hours.

Pakistan Vaccinates Over 24m Children Against Polio

● Nationwide Polio Drive Reaches Millions Of Young Children

STAFF REPORTER

RAWALPINDI

Pakistan has vaccinated more than 24 million children under five during its latest nationwide polio campaign, demonstrating the continued commitment of health authorities and frontline workers to protecting children against the crippling disease.

According to the Pakistan Polio Eradication Initiative (PEI), the fifth nationwide sub-national vaccination campaign of 2026 was conducted from November 2 to 8 across 97 districts, with more than 200,000 frontline polio workers taking part in the drive.



The workers administered oral polio vaccine (OPV) drops through door-to-door visits, schools, fixed vaccination centres and transit points to ensure maximum coverage of children.

The campaign achieved coverage of over 9.196 million children in 13 selected districts of Punjab and approximately 7.104 million in 20 districts of Sindh.

In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, around 4.697 million children were vaccinated across 27 districts, while Balochistan reported vaccination of more than 2.236 million children in 31 districts.

27 illegal housing societies detected on Kashmir govt's lands in Punjab



STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The federal government has assigned Punjab government the duty to reclaim encroached Kashmir state properties from land grabbers.

Following the direction, the provincial government has set up a committee comprising officials from Punjab as Azad Kashmir as members to vacate illegal occupation across Lahore.

Lahore Development Authority (LDA) now will carry out a crackdown on illegal occupants at Jail Road, Icchra, Rehmanpura, Sultanpura and Bordering area Wahga.

According to the reports, as many as 27 illegal housing societies have been established on land belonging to Jammu and Kashmir State.

The Committee will meet after every 14 days to review progress in the operations launched illegal occupation on Kashmir land.

Kohistan Scandal: NAB Peshawar Approves Rs513 Million Plea Bargain

● Former bank cashier to walk free after returning embezzled funds, faces lifetime ban from public office

STAFF REPORTER

KOHISTAN

Kohistan scandal took a major turn on Friday when the National Accountability Court in Peshawar approved a plea bargain worth Rs513.138 million. The deal closes out one chapter of a case that has drawn attention for years due to the sheer scale of the missing public money.

The accused, Musharraf Shah, once worked as a cashier at a bank involved in the case. He admitted to unlawfully gaining Rs490.23 million, which grew to Rs200.7 million in profit over time. Rather than face a lengthy trial, he chose to settle through the plea bargain option available under accountability law.

Acting under Section 15 of the Plea Bargain rules, the court ordered his release once he deposits the full penalty amount. However, this is not a clean exit. The judge made clear that Shah will carry the status of a convicted and disqualified person going forward.

This outcome stems from Sections 9(a) and 15 of the Accountability Ordinance of 1999. Under these rules, anyone who takes a plea bargain is treated as convicted on record. They are freed from further liability only after handing back the proceeds of their crime. On top of that, they lose the right to hold any public office for life.

Cases like this one shine a light on how plea bargains work in Pakistan's accountability system. They offer a quicker path to recovering stolen public funds, though critics often argue that such deals let offenders avoid harsher punishment. For now, the Kohistan embezzlement case stands as another example of how these settlements play out in practice.



Published by Muhammad Mudasser Iqbal, Musawaat Building Zero Point, Printed by Rohani Art Press, Sohan Expressway, Islamabad