THE
DESTINATION
NEWS THAT TRAVELS

ABC Certified Vol. 11, Issue No. 171 Pages 8 Rs. 25

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Saturday | 28 November, 2026 | 17 Jumadi-ul-Akhirah, 1448ah | Islamabad | www.dailythedestination.com | Regd. No. 34303



JUI-F Claims Maulana Fazl Arrested In Lahore, Police Deny Claim

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The JUI-F claims Maulana Fazl arrested near Thokar Niaz Baig, but Lahore police have strongly denied the report, leading to conflicting statements on Friday.

JUI-F Deputy Secretary Information for Lahore, Hafiz Zain, said party chief Fazlur Rehman was detained near Thokar Niaz Baig. He alleged that Lahore CCPO Bilal Siddique Kamyana and DIG Operations Faisal Kamran were behind the action.

The DIG Operations rejected this claim. He said Maulana Fazl was not arrested and had already returned to his residence with his convoy.

The police official also said traffic on Multan Road and the motorway was moving smoothly.

The two sides gave different accounts amid rising tension over JUI-F protests. Party officials say restrictions have been placed on the party's planned activities in Punjab.

Earlier, the JUI-F alleged that Fazlur Rehman's movement was being limited in Lahore. The party then approached the Lahore High Court (LHC), saying he was kept confined. Police, however, denied arresting him or placing him under house arrest.

In the petition, the petitioner said police had surrounded Fazl's residence and stopped him from moving. According to the plea, this was the same as house arrest.

The petitioner added that the JUI-F chief was due to attend an all-parties conference (APC) organised by the Lahore High Court Bar Association. The court was asked to order his recovery and to hold an immediate hearing.



ISLAMABAD: Group photo of Deputy Prime Minister/Foreign Minister Senator Mohammad Ishaq Dar, Foreign Minister of the Republic of Türkiye, Hakan Fidan, Saudi Arabia's Foreign Minister Prince Faisal bin Farhan Al Saud, Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) Chief of the Army Staff (COAS) Field Marshal Syed Asim Munir and high level civil and military officials before the 2nd meeting of the Strategic Political and Defence Committee (SPDC) Makkah Defence Alliance.

Makkah Defence Pact Nations Meet In Islamabad Over Yemen Conflict

● Defence and foreign ministers from Saudi Arabia, Turkiye and Pakistan will meet in the capital, while a local holiday has been declared in Islamabad and Rawalpindi

STAFF REPORTER/WEB DESK

ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is hosting a meeting of the Makkah defence pact apex committee today, and talks are expected to focus on the conflict between Saudi Arabia and the Houthis in Yemen.

The pact brings together Pakistan, Saudi Arabia and Turkiye. The three countries signed it in August and promised to help each other if any of them is attacked.

Defence and foreign ministers from all three nations will attend the meeting. Defence Minister Khawaja Asif confirmed this on Thursday.

Asif said the ongoing turmoil south of Saudi Arabia would be one agenda point. He called it very important for the alliance.

He also made the position of the pact clear. "Any threat to Saudi Arabia is a threat to Pakistan and Turkiye," he said on Wednesday.

Asif praised how Riyadh has handled the Houthi conflict. The Houthis control large areas of Yemen, including the capital, Sanaa.

Saudi Arabia has faced repeated attacks from the group. The Houthis have targeted cities, oil facilities and shipping since fighting in Yemen's civil war grew in July.

Those attacks came as the wider Middle East war expanded. That war began with US-Israeli strikes on Iran in February and has since pulled in many countries.

The defence minister said the pact is still at an early stage. He said the members need to meet often so everything is in place within a couple of months.

He did not say how the alliance would react if Iran attacked Saudi Arabia directly. However, he named Israel as a possible threat in the region and urged regional countries to stand together.

Pakistan has also played a role in peace efforts. It brokered a June accord that briefly stopped fighting between the United States and Iran.

That truce later collapsed, and both sides blamed each other. Qatar and Pakistan have since led months of shuttle diplomacy to revive the ceasefire.

Asif said Pakistan had played a very constructive role. But he warned that the outcome is still fragile and peace is not yet firmly in place.

Local holiday in Islamabad and Rawalpindi

Meanwhile, authorities have declared a local holiday today in the Islamabad Capital Territory and Rawalpindi.

Essential services will stay open during the holiday. These include the Metropolitan Corporation Islamabad, the Capital Development Authority and the ICT administration.

Islamabad Police, IESCO, SNGPL and hospitals will also keep working as usual.

The alliance

The three countries signed the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement on Aug 7. The pact provides that an armed attack on any one member will be considered an attack on all, obliging the other two to extend assistance through available means, including military support.

The SPDC, which brings together the foreign and defence ministers and chiefs of defence staff of the three countries, is the alliance's principal decision-making forum.

A permanent secretariat has been established in Riyadh to coordinate its work, with Pakistan's retired Lt Gen Nauman Mahmood appointed as its first secretary general for a three-year term. A working committee comprising officials from member countries is also functioning.

PM calls for effective guidance for SMEs seeking financial support

● Calls for review of prudential regulations governing bank lending to SMEs; banks committed to achieving target of Rs2tr in loans to SMEs by June 2028

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif on Friday called for better guidance for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) seeking financing from banks, enabling access to loans through simplified procedures.

Presiding over a meeting on facilitating access to credit for SMEs, the premier termed these enterprises the "backbone" of the country's economy.

"Facilitating them will boost economic activity, employment and business opportunities," the prime minister said.

The prime minister directed the provision of effective guidance and support to SMEs to improve their access to financial resources, prepare business documentation and benefit from opportunities in the export sector.



He called for further simplification of the procedures for SMEs to obtain loans.

"SMEs with export data available through the Pakistan Single Window, or those integrated into supply chains through Exim Insurance and digital invoicing, should be considered for loans against these records as collateral," the prime minister said.

He also directed that banks consider SMEs' cash flows as an alternative measure of collateral for lending.

PM Shehbaz called for a review of prudential regulations governing bank lending to SMEs. He further directed that banks be granted access to relevant data held by government institutions to expedite the lending process for these companies.

To facilitate SMEs, banks should not only provide loans but also assist them in issuing letters of credit (LCs) and providing bank guarantees, the PM said at the meeting. He added that banks achieving their prescribed SME lending targets would be encouraged.

The meeting was informed that banks were taking steps to strengthen their institutional capacity to accelerate lending to SMEs.

The banks expressed their commitment to achieving a target of providing Rs2 trillion in loans to SMEs by June 2028 and increasing the number of SME borrowers to 775,000.

The target includes the disbursement of Rs886bn in new loans and the provision of financial facilities to 449,000 new borrowers.

Tarar Criticises Fazl And Bilawal Over Protests And Referendum Debate

● Information minister urges JUI-F chief to step back from confrontation and questions the PPP chairman's stand on a referendum for new provinces

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Information Minister Attaullah Tarar criticises Jamiat Ulema-e-Islam-Fazl (JUI-F) chief Maulana Fazlur Rehman over his party's call for protests. The protests disrupted traffic in several cities across the country.

Tarar spoke on Geo News programme "Aaj Shazeb Khanzada Kay Saath" on Thursday. He said the disruption was not as big as it looked. He asked Fazlur Rehman to avoid confrontation and find a way forward instead of blocking roads.

The minister claimed the JUI-F chief wanted a clash, even though some members of his own party tried to change his mind.

Tarar also made a sharp remark about the party. He compared its conduct to that of a militant group. He asked whether Fazlur Rehman stood with Pakistan or with Afghanistan and the Taliban.

"The maulana should step back and find a way forward," he said. He added that things could improve if the channels of talks stayed open.

Most of the affected routes have reportedly reopened after the protests.

Questions for Bilawal on referendum

The information minister also targeted PPP Chairman Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari. He said Bilawal should not be afraid of asking the public about new provinces. In his view, people must get a chance to share their opinion.

Tarar also did not agree with Bilawal's description of PTI founder Imran Khan as a political prisoner. He said Bilawal should argue the case in court if he believed so. He added that the PPP chairman was mixing political and legal arguments.

Pakistan Yet To Verify Reports Of Migrant Boat Capsizing Off Libya: FO

● Foreign Office says Pakistan embassy in Tripoli pursuing matter with Libyan authorities and IOM,At least 25 people from Bajaur feared dead or missing



MUDASSAR IQBAL

ISLAMABAD

The Foreign Office (FO) said on Friday that reports of a boat carrying Pakistani migrants capsizing off the coast of Libya had yet to be "independently verified," adding that the Pakistan Embassy in Tripoli was "actively pursuing the matter to ascertain the facts."

The statement comes amid reports of a migrant boat capsizing near Libya, with families and local sources expressing concern over the fate of 35 young Pakistanis reportedly aboard the vessel, trying to illegally reach Europe in hopes of a better future.

Responding to a query regarding the reported incident, FO spokesperson Sajjad Haider Khan said the ministry was aware of media reports suggesting that a boat had capsized off the Libyan coast.

"There has been no independent verification of such reports so far. We hope and pray it is not true," the spokesperson said in a statement.

Khan said the Pakistan Embassy in Tripoli was working to establish the facts, including whether any Pakistani nationals were aboard the boat.

He added that the embassy had contacted the relevant Libyan government authorities, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and other relevant stakeholders in this regard.

ADB approves $468mn to boost Pakistan's agriculture

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Friday approved two loans totalling $468 million to improve water and agriculture management in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa and Punjab.

According to the bank, the financing will strengthen community resilience to shocks related to the changing climate, boost rural livelihoods and enhance food security for about 728,000 people.

In a statement, the ADB said these included a $208m concessional loan for the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Resilient Irrigated Agriculture Livelihoods Development Project that will help scale up agricultural productivity and increase incomes for smallholder farmers in Nowshera, Swabi, and Upper Chitral districts through resilient irrigation systems and modern agricultural technologies.

Additionally, the project would provide livelihoods training for women, while supporting measures to increase the role of women in water governance, it said.

The statement said that another $260m concessional loan for the Integrated Hill Torrent Management Project would help mitigate flash flood risks and enhance floodwater harvesting in hilly areas of Punjab.

"The project in KP will construct and rehabilitate irrigation systems to be more resilient to disasters," the statement said.

Governor Kundi reviews initiatives for youth skills development, employment

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi on Friday reviewed a series of initiatives aimed at promoting technical education, skills development and employment opportunities for the youth of the province.

The review came during a meeting at which Secretary Industries, Commerce and Technical Education Department Lt. Retd. Sultan Tareen and Managing Director KP-TEVTA Mian Abdul Qadir Shah briefed the Governor on key programmes designed to enhance vocational training and improve employment prospects for young people.

The Governor was informed about the proposed China–KP Dual Diploma Programme being launched in collaboration with TANG Chinese Technology Ltd., under which students would complete one year of training in China and two years at KP-TEVTA institutes. The programme would also include Chinese language courses, soft skills training, scholarships and faculty exchange opportunities.

The meeting was further informed that 64 youth from Khyber Pakhtunkhwa had been selected against 100 vacancies announced nationwide for employment in the tailoring trade in Tajikistan, reflecting growing overseas employment opportunities for skilled workers from the province.

Officials also briefed the Governor on a proposed province-wide programme to provide market-driven technical skills to 10,000 youth in priority sectors with a focus on improving employment opportunities both within Pakistan and abroad.

The Governor was also apprised of plans to organize KP-TEVTA's first-ever Diploma of Associate Engineering (DAE) convocation in December 2027 to honour position holders from 19 DAE technologies and promote the positive image of technical and vocational education.

Petrol price falls by Rs1 per litre, diesel price remains unchanged

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The government has reduced the price of petrol by Rs1 per litre, setting the new rate at Rs312 per litre, according to an official notification issued on Friday.

The price of high-speed diesel has been kept unchanged at Rs346 per litre.

The revised prices of petroleum products have come into effect and will remain applicable until November 30.



Chipurson residents build winter-ready homes following January earthquake

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Families displaced by persistent seismic activity and a January earthquake in Gilgit-Baltistan's Chipurson Valley are leading the construction of weather-resilient, thermally insulated homes ahead of the harsh mountain winter.

Following immediate emergency relief including tents, food, bedding, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) support, joint seismic assessments were conducted with the Geological Survey of Pakistan to identify safer reconstruction zones.

Under the "RUSHAN Chipurson 2026–2027" project, implemented by Focus Humanitarian Assistance Pakistan (FOCUS) along with the Ismaili Imamat, Ismaili Councils, government bodies, and partner agencies, local residents are contributing labor and materials to build lightweight prefabricated shelters, said a press release issued here on Friday.

From Ideas to Impact: NUML Startup Idea Contest 2026 Champions Student Innovation and Entrepreneurship

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The National University of Modern Languages, through its Business Incubation Center (BICON), in collaboration with the Department of Accounting & Finance, successfully organized the Startup Idea Contest 2026, providing a dynamic platform for students to transform innovative ideas into promising business ventures.

The competition attracted 135 teams, of which 35 teams were shortlisted for the final pitching rounds. A total of 27 teams presented their business ideas before a distinguished jury comprising professionals from banking, industry, entrepreneurship, corporate leadership and the business sector.

The pitching sessions provided students an opportunity to showcase their creativity, problem-solving skills, entrepreneurial thinking and business potential while receiving valuable feedback and professional insights from experienced industry experts.

Team Kicks secured first position, followed by Team RepSight, while Team PlantCare secured third position. The winning teams were recognized for the quality of their ideas, innovation and presentations.

In addition to the official prizes, jury members extended special appreciation awards to promising ventures, reflecting their encouragement and commitment to nurturing the entrepreneurial potential of NUML students.

Awareness seminar, walk on combating Antimicrobial Resistance held

STAFF REPORTER

PESHAWAR



The College of Veterinary Sciences, in collaboration with the Office of Research, Innovation and Commercialization (ORIC) and Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) organized an awareness seminar and walk titled "One Health, One Action: Prevent AMR Now."

The event aimed to raise awareness regarding the growing global threat of Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and its impact on human health, animals, agriculture, and the environment. Professor Dr. Murad Ali Khan, Principal of the College and the focal person for the seminar, welcomed the participants and highlighted the significance of the "One Health" vision.

He emphasized that collaborative efforts are essential for safeguarding human and animal health, as well as ensuring a secure environment.

He noted that, according to the vision of Vice-Chancellor Dr. Imran Khan, improved public health and economic stability can only be achieved through food self-sufficiency and the sustainable development of the livestock sector. During the technical session, Dr. Asad Ali, former Director of Animal Health and an FAO representative provided a detailed overview of the scientific mechanisms and the evolution of antimicrobial resistance in microorganisms.

Kiyal Akmatbek, Country Director for the FAO, highlighted the organization's pivotal role in curbing AMR within food-producing animals, a crucial step toward protecting public health. In his concluding remarks, Professor Dr. Abdul Rehman, Dean of the Faculty of Animal Husbandry and Veterinary Sciences, commended the organizers, the FAO team, and ORIC for their efforts in successfully conducting the event.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi poses for a group photo with participants during the inaugural ceremony of Lok Mela 2026 at Lok Virsa, The festival celebrates Pakistan's rich cultural heritage, traditional crafts, folk music and diverse cultural expressions.

CDA, NUST Agree Joint Efforts To Tackle Smog

● Islamabad Plans Smog Fund, EV Push, Stricter Monitoring To Fight Pollution Now

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Capital Development Authority (CDA) and the National University of Sciences and Technology (NUST) have agreed to collaborate on measures to combat smog and environmental pollution in Islamabad, including research initiatives, improved road infrastructure and stricter monitoring of pollution sources.

The understanding was reached at a meeting chaired by CDA Chairman and Chief Commissioner Islamabad Sohail Ashraf at CDA Headquarters on Friday. Member Environment Abdullah Khurram Niazi, Additional Deputy Commissioner Islamabad Dr Anam Fatima, NUST senior faculty member Prof Dr Muhammad Fahim Khokhar and other officials attended the meeting.



The meeting agreed to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the CDA and NUST to promote research and development, strengthen environmental protection measures and develop an effective strategy to address smog in the capital.

It was also decided to establish a dedicated fund for smog mitigation, environmental improvement and research projects. A committee comprising representatives of NUST and the CDA's Environment Wing will oversee the initiatives and submit fortnightly progress reports. The participants also discussed changes to road infrastructure to minimise dust pollution. The design of newly constructed roads and kerbstones will be revised to improve water drainage and prevent the accumulation of soil and debris along roadsides.

The meeting also considered measures to promote electric vehicles, identify and take legal action against waste-burning sites, and issue smog alerts through mobile applications.

Other proposed steps included water sprinkling at construction sites to control dust and camera-based monitoring of industrial units in sectors I-9 and I-10 and other areas. The meeting further discussed enforcing Euro-5 fuel standards, modernising solid waste management, establishing modern landfill sites, expanding the environmental monitoring network and shifting brick kilns to zigzag technology.

IESCO notifies power suspension programme



STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Islamabad Electric Supply Company (IESCO) on Friday issued a power suspension programme for Sunday on various feeders due to ongoing development works being carried out by the district administration.

According to an IESCO spokesperson, electricity supply will remain suspended in Islamabad Circle from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, F-6/2, PM Secretariat, CBR, P.M. Staff Colony, Blue Area, OGDC, Quaid-e-Azam University, Saudi Embassy, Residential Saudi Embassy, Feeders.

In Rawalpindi City Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Tehmasma Abad, Dhoke Hukamdad, Khanna Road, A.P.H.S, feeders, from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM, B.B.H, Gangal, Sector 4, feeders.

Similarly, in Rawalpindi Cantt Circle power supply will remain suspended from 09:00 AM to 02:00 PM, Tipu Road, Chaklala, Rawalpindi-III, CNC, Humayun Road, RCCI-VII, Jhangir Road, Multi Story Flats, Rahimabad, Takbeer-1, Gulistan Colony, Topi Pump, Dhoke Farman, Feeders, from 09:00 AM to 05:00 PM, New GHQ, Feeder, from 11:00 AM to 01:00 PM, RIC, Chaklala Garrison, Macca Chowk, Rehmatabad-II, Feeders.

Naqvi visits CDA Hospital, assures nurses of early resolution of staff shortage

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Federal Interior Minister Mohsin Naqvi on Friday visited CDA Hospital to review medical facilities for patients, inspect hospital wards and discuss issues faced by doctors and nursing staff.

During the visit, the interior minister inspected the emergency department and other wards and met patients receiving treatment.

He inquired from patients about the medical facilities available at the hospital and asked about the treatment being provided to them. The patients expressed satisfaction with the healthcare services and facilities available at the hospital.



Mohsin Naqvi also met doctors and nurses and asked about the issues they were facing while performing their duties.

PPSC announces results of vacant posts

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE

The Punjab Public Service Commission announced the results of different vacant posts in various departments in the province.

According to the details, 67 candidates were declared successful for the 15 vacant posts of Secretary Market Committee.

The names of the candidates are Sartaj Shah, Aroosa Fatima, Sidratul Muntiha, Mohammad Younus, and Naqash Ahmad.

41 candidates were declared successful for 9 vacant posts in the Secretary Market Committee Class A.

The names of the successful candidates are Urooj Fatima, Hafiz Sultan Raza, Mohammad Abid, Zain Jabbar, and Abdul Rehman.

407 candidates passed the examination for 24 vacant posts of Office Assistant in the Prime Minister's Inspection Team.

The successful candidates are Erum Naz, Amina Bibi, Loiza Khan, Anum Abbas and Amina Noor.

10 candidates were declared successful for 4 vacant posts of Motor Vehicle Examiner in the Provincial Transport Authority.

GOVERNMENT OF GILGIT-BALTISTAN
OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER BUILDING DIVISION GB C&WD GILGIT

C&WD GB

No. Notice/B&R/Cash/SSOE/2025-26/

Dated 27th November 2026

CORRIGENDUM NOTICE INVITING TENDER

The Gilgit-Baltistan Communication & Works Department invites sealed tenders for the following work from the eligible Firms/Contractors licensed by Pakistan Engineering Council in appropriate category/code valid upto 30th June, 2027: -

S.#	Name of work	Estimated Cost	Bid Security	Cost of T/Form	Closing Date & Time	Venue
1	Const of 16.5 Feet wide shingle Road from KKH to Existing Road at Upper Guru	25618699/-	512374/-	10000/-	14-12-2026 12:00 PM	Office of the Executive Engineer B&R Division C&WD near Eidgah Korodass Gilgit

2. The interested prospective eligible bidders can obtain a complete set of Bidding documents from office of the Executive Engineer B&R Division near Eidgah Konodass Gilgit on submission of a written application and production of following original documents personally for the specific work duly deposited the cost of bidding documents as mentioned above against each work, immediately after the advertisement published in the newspapers & PPRA Website: -

I. PEC valid registration upto 30th June, 2027 Category C-05 and above.
II. Renewal Fee for CFY 2026-27.
III. CNIC of the prospective bidder.
IV. Bid security in shape of CDR from scheduled bank of Pakistan clearly mentioning the name of contractor/firm.
V. No sick scheme and no litigation certificates issued by Chief Engineer C&WD Gilgit Baltistan

OTHER TERMS & CONDITIONS: -

I. The original contractor himself for collection of tender/bidding documents. In case of Joint Venture, only the lead and Associate partner mentioned in partnership deed is allowed. Authorization/attorney will be entertained subject to provision of Judicial stamp paper for specific work duly signed by owner and attested from the Public Notary.
II. All bid securities/CDRs will be retained till acceptance of tender/bid and will be refunded after acceptance of tenders/bids.
III. The information provided by the bidders if found ambiguous will be verified and in case of fake one, the tender of firm will be cancelled and face immediate/appropriate penal action as per Rules/Laws.
IV. GB C&WD authorities reserve the right to reject any or all the bids or proposals at any time prior to acceptance of a bid or proposal under GB PPRA Rules.

In case of any public/local holiday or surprise engagement of the undersigned the same will be opened on next working day.

(ENGR. INTIKHAB ALI))
Executive Engineer
B&R Division GB C&WD Gilgit

IDGB-672/26

SNGPL Reports 42% Growth In Pre-Tax Profit, Approves 30% Cash Dividend For Shareholders

● Sui Northern Gas Pipelines Limited reports stronger earnings, lower gas losses and a better first quarter at its 62nd Annual General Meeting

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE



The shareholders, at 62nd Annual General Meeting of the Company, approved the annual audited financial statements for the financial year ended June 30, 2026. The Company posted a profit before levy and income tax of Rs. 34,656 million, an increase of approximately 42% over Rs. 24,446 million in the preceding year, and a profit after tax of Rs. 14,809 million, translating into earnings per share (EPS) of Rs. 23.35, compared to a profit after tax of Rs. 14,592 million and EPS of Rs. 23.01 recorded in FY 2024-25.

The shareholders also approved the final cash dividend of Rs. 3.00 per share (30%) for the year ended June 30, 2026 on the recommendation of the Board. They also approved the appointment of M/s. A.F. Ferguson & Co., Chartered Accountants, as external auditors for the financial year 2026-27.

During the year, overall UFG volumetric losses dropped from 29,521 MMCF to 27,848 MMCF, a reduction of 1,673 MMCF, reflecting the Company's continued efforts towards improving operational efficiency and curbing gas losses.

First Quarter FY 2026-27: The Company posted a profit after tax of Rs. 3,612 million for the quarter ended September 30, 2026, up 4.82% from Rs. 3,446 million in the same period last year, with EPS rising to Rs. 5.70 from Rs. 5.43. The improvement was mainly due to lower UFG losses, which fell to 3.53% from 4.67%, and a reduction in the super tax rate.

An interactive session was held with the shareholders, during which valuable suggestions were noted and each query was addressed to their complete satisfaction.



LAHORE: Pakistan Sugar Mills Association (PSMA) Chairman, Asim Ghani Usman, held a press conference in Lahore on Friday to discuss pressing issues confronting the sugar industry. The event, attended by media representatives, focused on current challenges and future prospects for the sector. The discussion aimed to provide insights into the economic impact of sugar production and potential policy measures. Muhammad Rafique and other key figures were present, contributing to the dialogue on strategic industry developments. These discussions are crucial for shaping industry policies and addressing economic concerns.

PSX turns bearish, loses over 396 points



FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Pakistan Stock Exchange (PSX) witnessed a bearish trend on Friday, with the benchmark KSE-100 Index losing 396.79 points, a negative change of 0.22 percent, to close at 177,663.90 points against 178,060.69 points recorded in the previous trading session.

The ready market witnessed a trading volume of 717.779 million shares, compared to 618.812 million shares traded in the previous session. The traded value of the ready market stood at Rs19.515 billion, up from Rs18.204 billion a day earlier.

Meanwhile, total market capitalisation decreased to Rs19.299 trillion from Rs19.363 trillion recorded in the previous session.

Out of 495 companies that traded in the ready market, 156 posted gains, 309 suffered losses, while 30 remained unchanged.

Pervez Ahmed Co led the volume chart with 83.811 million shares, followed by Yousuf Weaving with 57.716 million shares and Agha Steel Industries with 52.734 million shares.

Among the top gainers in the ready market, Tandlianwala Sugar Mills Limited surged by Rs48.41 to close at Rs532.55, while The Premier Sugar Mills advanced by Rs36.32 to settle at Rs486.33.

SBP injects over Rs 651 billion to maintain liquidity in the market

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI



The State Bank of Pakistan (SBP), on Friday, injected Rs 651.8 billion through Reverse Repo Purchase and Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based Open Market Operations (OMO) for maintaining liquidity in the market.

The central bank conducted the Open Market Operation, Reverse Repo Purchase (Injection) for 7 and 14-day tenors on November 27, 2026, and injected Rs 375.9 billion against 10 quotes while other Rs 275.9 billion were injected through Shariah Compliant Mudarabah based OMO.

The central bank, for the Reverse Repo Purchase of 14-day tenor, received 8 bids cumulatively offering Rs 970.7 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.06% to 12.09%. The SBP accepted Rs 360 billion against 7 quotes at 12.07% rate of return. The total amount offered at 12.07% was Rs 751 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 290 billion on a pro rata basis.

Moreover, the SBP also received 3 bids for the 7-day tenor, cumulatively offering Rs 15.9 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.04% to 12.07 %. The SBP accepted all the 3 quotes with the entire amount at 12.04% rate of return.

Meanwhile, SBP also conducted Shariah Compliant Mudarabah-based Open Market Operation for the 7 and 14-day tenors. The central bank received 4 bids for the 7-day tenor, offering Rs 93.9 billion at the rate of return ranging between 12.06% to 12.07%. SBP accepted all the 4 quotes with the entire amount at 12.06% rate of return.

The central bank, for the 14-day tenor, received 6 quotes offering Rs 257.8 billion at rate of return ranging between 12.06% to 12.07%.

SBP accepted an amount of Rs 182 billion against the 6 quotes at 12.06% rate of return. The total amount offered at 12.06% was Rs 255.8 billion, out of which SBP accepted Rs 180 billion on a pro rata basis.

Ahsan Pushes Major CPEC Projects In China Talks

● Pakistan Seeks Gwadar Shipping Revival, Duty-Free Market Access From China Today

FINANCE REPORTER

BEIJING



Federal Minister for Planning, Development and Special Initiatives Professor Ahsan Iqbal on Friday discussed a wide-ranging agenda of infrastructure, energy, industrial and trade cooperation with Vice Chairman of China's National Development and Reform Commission (NDRC) Zhou Haibing, seeking early progress on key projects under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC).

During the meeting, the minister also sought duty-free access for all Pakistani goods to the Chinese market through a non-reciprocal arrangement, separate from the existing bilateral free trade agreement and modelled on China's zero-tariff access for African countries.

Highlighting the trade imbalance, he pointed out that Pakistan's imports from China stood at $22.34 billion in 2025-26, compared to exports of $2.71 billion.

He proposed bilateral technical talks on product coverage, rules of origin and an implementation timetable.

The minister called for early completion of the financing agreement for the 102-kilometre Thor Nullah–Raikot section of the Karakoram Highway (KKH), the first priority under the wider Rs576 billion Thakot–Raikot realignment project.

The realignment is aimed at keeping the highway operational in areas where the existing route is affected by hydropower projects on the Indus River.

He also discussed Chinese participation in upgrading the ML-1 railway beyond the Karachi–Rohri section, for which Pakistan is exploring Asian Development Bank financing. He called for progress on four joint road feasibility studies, including the Babusar Tunnel project.

On Gwadar, Ahsan Iqbal sought Chinese support for restoring regular shipping services, including through engagement with COSCO, and proposed a joint study on strategic petroleum storage at the port.

The discussions also covered the Gwadar Free Zone, the second phase of the Eastbay Expressway and a proposed corridor linking Chagai's mining areas with Gwadar for mineral processing and exports.

Under the second phase of CPEC, the minister sought progress on the Kohala and Azad Pattan hydropower projects and proposed joint work to assess the feasibility of converting selected power plants from imported coal to locally available Thar coal.

He also sought Chinese approval for the Siah Diq copper project and proposed jointly developing two to three model special economic zones (SEZs).

Pakistan further proposed adding three private-sector projects to the CPEC industrial agenda, including an aluminium complex at Port Qasim, a fertiliser plant in Thar and a refinery and fuel storage complex at Dhabeji.

The meeting also covered implementation of two existing agreements on artificial intelligence, a proposed 1,500-kilometre fibre-optic link from Rawalpindi to Karachi and a jointly financed programme to provide 10,000 doctoral scholarships over 10 years.

Discussing agricultural cooperation, the minister explored Chinese partnerships in farm modernisation and proposed establishing food processing zones to reduce post-harvest losses and support exports.

Zhou Haibing described CPEC as a pillar of China-Pakistan economic cooperation and highlighted its tangible gains.

inDrive Outlines Comprehensive Safety Measures For Passengers Drivers

● AI, Real-Time Monitoring, Share Your Ride Feature Protect Pakistan Ride-Hailing Users Daily

FINANCE REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Global ride-hailing platform inDrive has outlined a comprehensive range of safety measures aimed at protecting passengers and drivers in Pakistan, highlighting the role of artificial intelligence, advanced technology, real-time monitoring and human oversight in ensuring safer journeys.

Passenger and driver safety remains a top priority as ride-hailing services continue to expand across Pakistan. The platform is implementing safety measures at every stage, from booking and journey completion to handling emergency situations, said a news release issued here on Friday.

The indrive said drivers must undergo mandatory verification procedures before being allowed to accept rides. These include verification of official documents, vehicle inspections and facial recognition technology to match the photograph on the driver's national identity document with their profile picture. Artificial intelligence is also used to identify fake and duplicate accounts.

Driver verification continues even after registration. If potential risks are identified, drivers may be asked to complete additional selfie verification and submit vehicle photographs to ensure that only verified drivers use approved vehicles.

Before confirming a booking, passengers can view the driver's name, profile photograph, user ratings and number of completed rides. Similarly, drivers can review a passenger's profile picture, rating, previous ride history and complete destination details before accepting a trip, enabling them to make informed decisions.

To protect users' personal information, inDrive keeps passengers' and drivers' phone numbers private and provides secure in-app calling and messaging facilities.

The platform also uses artificial intelligence and machine learning to monitor profile names, photographs, comments and chat messages to detect abusive language, inappropriate behaviour, sexually explicit content and other prohibited activities. Accounts involved in serious violations may be restricted, while cases are referred to human safety specialists for further review.

Pakistan to export 15,000 tonnes of rice to Kenya

FINANCE REPORTER

KARACHI

Pakistan's RB International has signed a $7.5 million agreement with Kenya's Fana Investment to supply 15,000 metric tonnes of rice, marking the biggest rice export deal concluded at the FoodAgro 2026 exhibition.

The agreement is being seen as a significant development for Pakistan's rice exports, with FoodAgro Pakistan 2026 providing a platform for strengthening trade ties and promoting Pakistani products in international markets.

According to experts, FoodAgro Pakistan 2026 has emerged as an effective platform for strengthening commercial relations, showcasing Pakistani products globally, and expanding export opportunities.



Islamabad Excise Suspends Physical Inspection Of Punjab Vehicles

● Punjab Buyers Must Travel To Islamabad For Vehicle Ownership Transfer Again Now

FINANCE REPORTER

LAHORE

Residents of Punjab who have bought Islamabad-registered cars or other vehicles are reportedly facing a hurdle regarding the online transfer of ownership facility, as the Islamabad Excise Department has suspended the facility for physical inspection of such vehicles in Punjab.

The online inspection facility, which allowed vehicle owners to complete the physical verification process at designated excise offices in Punjab, has been discontinued.

The facility was introduced around two years ago to make the transfer of Islamabad-registered vehicles easier for buyers residing in Punjab.

Under the arrangement, vehicle owners could present their cars at relevant Excise Department offices in Punjab for physical inspection.

Officials would then upload photographs and other vehicle details to an online portal.

Islamabad Excise authorities would subsequently verify the uploaded information and complete the biometric verification process before proceeding with the ownership transfer.



Reports said the Islamabad Excise Department has suspended the vehicle transfer facility through its online inspection portal without prior notice.

Following the decision, Punjab residents purchasing Islamabad-registered vehicles will now have to travel to the Islamabad Excise Office to complete the physical inspection and transfer formalities.

The Sanction That Never Comes: AFSPA And Sexual Violence

By Muhammad Waleed Akhtar

"…if an offence is committed even by Army personnel, there is no concept of absolute immunity from trial by the criminal court constituted under the Cr.P.C."

Supreme Court of India, Extra Judicial Execution Victim Families Association v. Union of India (2016)

On the night of 23 February 1991, Indian forcces entered the villages of Kunan and Poshpora in Kupwara district of Indian-Occupied Jammu and Kashmir. According to survivors, as recorded by the UN human rights office (OHCHR) in 2018, they gang-raped around 23 women, and attempts to seek justice were "denied and blocked over the years." A magistrate ordered further investigation in 2013. The High Court stayed that order on the Army's petition in 2015. No one has been tried.

This article does not claim that Section 7 of the Armed Forces (Jammu and Kashmir) Special Powers Act, 1990 (AFSPA) blocked a trial at Kunan Poshpora. The public record does not show that sanction was ever sought there. The claim is wider. Impunity for sexual violence in Indian-Occupied Kashmir follows from a legal design as much as from failed investigations: Section 7 bars prosecution for anything done or purported to be done under the Act without the previous sanction of the Central Government.

Indian authorities say the provision shields personnel acting in good faith from malicious prosecution, and that soldiers can be court-martialed. The Army and the Government deny the Kunan Poshpora allegations, a 1991 Press Council of India committee rejected them, and India's foreign ministry dismissed OHCHR's report as "fallacious, tendentious and motivated." The record allows each of these positions to be tested.

On 1 January 2018 the Minister of State for Defence told the Rajya Sabha that the Jammu and Kashmir Government had sent fifty requests between 2001 and 2016 for sanction to prosecute armed forces personnel. Forty-seven were denied, three were pending and none was granted. The stated reason was "lack of sufficient evidence to establish a prima facie case," which is a judgment about evidence that a court would ordinarily make. Four requests concerned sexual offences, three of them rape. All four were denied. The table names no cases and cannot be matched to Kunan Poshpora, but it shows how requests that reach Delhi end.

Courts have narrowed the shield without removing it. In General Officer Commanding v. CBI (2012), the Supreme Court held that "institution" under Section 7 means a court taking cognizance, not an agency filing a charge sheet. A completed investigation can therefore still stall at the threshold. In 2016, ruling on



Manipur, the Court rejected absolute immunity but left the sanction requirement standing.

Outside scrutiny is limited too. In February 2020 the Defence Ministry told the Central Information Commission that sanction cases are processed in a "single file system originating from Army Headquarters," where the files are held. In June 2020 the Commission refused access to the 47 case files, holding that the State's larger public interest "prevails over that of the alleged victims," though it ordered release of the Ministry's refusal communications. The Central Government decides, but the file begins and stays with the institution whose personnel stand accused.

Article 4(c) of the 1993 Declaration on the Elimination of Violence against Women, which 25 November commemorates, requires states to investigate and punish violence against women "whether those acts are perpetrated by the State or by private persons." In 2014 the CEDAW Committee flagged AFSPA's prior-authorisation rule and a "reportedly high risk of reprisals" against women who complain about security forces in conflict-affected regions, including Kashmir, and urged India to remove the requirement. In 2024 the Human Rights Committee noted that India has declared no public emergency under Article 4 of the ICCPR. It described "a climate of widespread impunity" and told India to abolish mandatory prior authorisation.

Britain's own record is poor: in 2021 the Victims' Commissioner found that military rape convictions were four to six times lower than civilian ones. Even so, commanding officers cannot dispose of sexual offences summarily, and the Ministry of Defence says its prosecutor acts independently of the chain of command. Britain's problem is conviction. India's starts earlier, at the gate.

Parliament has already drawn the line elsewhere. In 2013 it provided that Section 197 of the Code of Criminal Procedure requires no sanction for public servants accused of rape and other listed sexual offences, yet left AFSPA untouched. Three steps would close the gap: remove sanction for sexual offences by security personnel, as the Justice Verma Committee urged in 2013 and CEDAW in 2014; publish reasons for every refusal; and let a civilian court, not the executive, test whether an act has any link to official duty.

A safeguard that, by the Government's own 2018 account, granted none of fifty requests cannot show that it separates false accusations from true ones. Only a trial can do that, and

The River Of Lost Reunions: The Tragedy Of Irfan Hassan Shah

By Altaf Hussain Wani



The Neelum River does not just carry water; it carries the weight of a million shattered dreams and the ghosts of divided families. Recently, its cold, churning currents swallowed another father, Irfan Hassan Shah. But to call this a "drowning" is to ignore the systemic slaughter of the human spirit. Irfan did not simply fall into a river; he was pushed into the abyss by a political line that has sliced through the hearts of Kashmiris for decades.

Irfan's story is a microcosm of the Kashmiri tragedy—a cycle of hope, betrayal, and forced separation. In the mid-90s, he crossed into Azad Kashmir with the dream of freedom. He built a life in Muzaffarabad, married, and raised three children. But the cruelty of the "divide" is that it never lets you truly settle. In 2012, driven by the filial piety of an aging son, Irfan returned to his ancestral village in Rafiabad to serve his parents in Indian occupied Kashmir.

That act of love was rewarded with two years of detention and torture by Indian agencies. Yet, he persisted. He worked tirelessly to ensure his children had the education he ever dreamed of—one to be a lawyer, the other a doctor and the other one a computer engineer . He wanted to build a bridge of knowledge and success for his children, even while the physical bridge to his family remained guarded by guns.

Then came the horror of May 2025. Under the guise of the Pahalgam incident, the Indian government unleashed a campaign of mass detentions and forced deportations. In a heartless stroke of administrative cruelty, families were ordered to return to Azad Kashmir. Wives were torn from husbands; children were ripped from their fathers' arms. Irfan's family was thrown back into the uncertainty of Muzaffarabad, leaving Irfan behind in a land where his very existence was viewed with suspicion.

Imagine the psychological torture of a man who cannot even call his children without risking a prison cell. Imagine the agony of a father who sees his children growing up through a telescope, knowing that the only thing separating him from them is a "Ceasefire Line" that acts as a wall of death.

The anxiety of the divided family is a slow-acting poison. It is the depression of knowing that your children are in a different world, and the only way to reach them is to gamble with your life. When the state denies a passport—turning a basic human right into a weapon of control—it leaves a desperate man with only one choice: the river.

Irfan chose the Keren sector. He didn't see a border; he saw a path to his children. He didn't see a ceasefire line; he saw a reunion. But the river, indifferent to human suffering, became his grave. His body was fished out by the disaster management team at Atmaqam—a reunion not of flesh and blood, but of a corpse and a grieving family.

Who is responsible for this death?

The blood is on the hands of those who maintain this artificial divide. It is on the Indian government that uses deportation as a weapon of war. It is on the "collaborators" who prioritize political optics over human lives. And it is on the United Nations, which continues to recite the script of "self-determination" and "human rights" while the world ignores the screams of Kashmiri families.

The UN Charter promises the right to family life, yet in Kashmir, the family is the first casualty of the conflict. When a family is torn apart in Europe, the world mourns. When a Kashmiri father drowns trying to hug his children, the world calls it a "security incident."

Irfan Hassan Shah is gone, but his death leaves us with a haunting question: How many more fathers must the Neelum River swallow before the world realizes that a line drawn on a map should not be a line drawn through a human heart?

Until the "Line of Control" becomes a line of peace, the waters of the Neelum will continue to run red with the blood of those who only wanted to go united with their families and loved ones.

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The Architecture Of Erasure: From Accession To Dismantling

By Altaf Hussain Wani

The tragedy of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh is not merely a chronicle of territorial dispute, but a systematic study in betrayal. For decades, the Indian state has deployed a sophisticated machinery of political manipulation, "legal terrorism," military repression, and calculated societal division to dismantle the collective identity of a people. What began as a contested accession under duress has evolved into a comprehensive project of erasure—a deliberate effort to strip a region of its agency and a people of their history.

The seeds of this instability were sown in 1947. The promises made to the Kashmiri leadership—most notably the "Sheikh-Nehru nexus"—were designed to lure the region into a union predicated on autonomy and the eventual fulfillment of UN resolutions. However, India's engagement with the international community was a performance of compliance masking a policy of obstruction. To maintain this facade, New Delhi introduced Article 370 and 35A, granting a veneer of special status. In reality, this "autonomy" functioned as a tactical leash; whenever local leadership sought genuine self-determination, they were systematically dethroned, discredited, or imprisoned.

Central to this project of erasure has been the mastery of "divide and rule." The state has meticulously fractured the political voice of the region by pitting the Kashmir Valley against Jammu, and the Shia community of Kargil against the Buddhists of Leh. This fragmentation was not limited to regional borders; it was pushed deeper into the heart of Jammu. By fueling grievances and creating artificial hierarchies, the state drove wedges between the Pir Panjal and the Chenab Valley, ensuring that the marginalized voices of these highlands remained isolated and disconnected from the broader struggle for dignity.

This fragmentation was further weaponized through a calculated linguistic divide. By imposing a rigid, external linguistic framework and marginalizing indigenous tongues and dialects, the state sought to sever the organic connection between the people and their land. Language, the primary vessel of culture and collective memory, was transformed into a tool of stratification. By prioritizing a state-mandated linguistic identity over the pluralistic, vernacular heritage of the region, New Delhi effectively muted the nuances of local identity, replacing a rich tapestry of indigenous expression with a sterile, homogenized narrative of "integration."



Furthermore, the state weaponized the concept of "reservation" and quotas—not as a tool for genuine social justice, but as a mechanism of communal competition. By pitting different communities against one another in a desperate scramble for limited resources, New Delhi transformed systemic poverty into a zero-sum game. These quotas served as a psychological barrier, ensuring that the populace remained preoccupied with internal disputes over privileges rather than uniting against the external force of their erasure.

The culmination of this strategy arrived on August 5, 2019. The abrogation of Article 370 was not an act of "integration," but a surgical strike against identity. By stripping the state of its statehood and carving out Ladakh as a Union Territory without a legislature, New Delhi transitioned from governance to direct colonial rule. Initially, some in Ladakh celebrated this, viewing it as liberation from the Valley—the final triumph of the divide-and-rule policy. That euphoria quickly turned to mourning as Ladakhis realized they had been handed over to a bureaucratic whim that views their land as a strategic asset and their people as subjects to be managed.

Today, the crisis in Ladakh mirrors the repression in the Valley. The state is dismantling the fragile ecological system and cultural heritage of the high-altitude desert to favor corporate interests. When the people demanded the Sixth Schedule to protect their land and culture, the state responded with the National Security Act (NSA). The ordeal of Sonam Wangchuk—detained for demanding democratic accountability—proves that in the eyes of the state, a plea for fundamental rights is treated as a security threat. Even the rush to conduct LAHDC elections in the dead of winter is a calculated maneuver to "tick a box" of normalization while the people are stifled by frost and isolation.

The failure of talks between the Leh Apex Body (LAB), the Kargil Democratic Alliance (KDA), and the Ministry of Home Affairs confirms a grim reality: the state has no intention of restoring agency.

To the people of Jammu, Kashmir, and Ladakh: you must recognize that you are all victims of the same predatory logic. Whether through military boots in the Valley, bureaucratic erasure in Ladakh, the linguistic silencing of your heritage, or the calculated social fracturing in the Pir Panjal and Chenab valleys, the goal remains the same: the destruction of your collective political voice.

For too long, the wedges driven between you—whether through regional animosity, linguistic divides, or the bait of reservation quotas—have served only the interests of the oppressor.

Your divided voices have allowed the state to dismember your land, disempower your leadership, and disintegrate your identity. Your strength lies in unity. Only a united voice can challenge this architecture of erasure; divided, you are merely strategic obstacles to be managed. Together, you are a people demanding their dignity back.

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Grand Theft Auto VI and COP31

By Dr Khalid Waleed

On November 19, 2026, while climate negotiators in Antalya were struggling to agree on the wording of a global climate declaration, Grand Theft Auto VI finally arrived after 13 years of anticipation.

The comparison may appear unusual, but the evolution of Grand Theft Auto offers a useful way to understand international climate negotiations. Both have become more complex as competing interests have multiplied. The difference is that delays in releasing a video game disappoint consumers, whereas delays in climate action impose economic and human costs.

Grand Theft Auto began in 1997 as a game of missions in a fictional economy shaped by money and power. GTA III introduced a three-dimensional world in 2001. Vice City explored ambition and influence in 2002, San Andreas expanded the geography in 2004, and GTA IV examined institutions and inequality in 2008. GTA V, released in 2013, brought financial speculation and competing protagonists into an interconnected world.

Climate negotiations have followed a similarly incremental trajectory. Each major agreement has expanded the architecture, introduced new mechanisms and attempted to correct the limitations of its predecessor. Yet the fundamental challenge remains: how can countries with different economic structures, historical responsibilities and development priorities agree on who should reduce emissions, how quickly, and who should pay?

The first COP took place in Berlin in 1995, following the adoption of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change in 1992. The Kyoto Protocol of 1997 introduced binding emission reduction targets for developed economies. But the US never ratified it, and incomplete participation constrained its effectiveness.

The Copenhagen conference in 2009 exposed these weaknesses. Expectations of a comprehensive agreement were high, but the outcome fell short of the legally binding settlement many anticipated. Paris in 2015 redesigned the system through nationally determined contributions (NDCs). Instead of imposing identical obligations, countries defined their own mitigation pathways within a common framework of transparency and progressively stronger ambition.

Paris was climate diplomacy's equivalent of moving from a restricted game environment to an open world. Countries acquired greater freedom to determine their pathways, but collective ambition now depended on the willingness and capacity of individual governments.

COP28 in Dubai acknowledged the need to transition away from fossil fuels in energy systems. COP29 in Baku established a finance goal of at least $300 billion annually by 2035, alongside a broader $1.3 trillion mobilisation ambition. COP30 in Belem advanced implementation discussions but did not deliver a negotiated fossil-fuel roadmap. By Antalya, the problem was the widening distance between commitments, finance and delivery.

The evolution of the COP31 draft illustrated how negotiations can move backwards even as scientific urgency increases.

The November 16 presidency text brought together competing proposals on fossil fuels, finance, trade, adaptation and carbon capture. The November 19 revision removed explicit fossil-fuel transition language and diluted financial provisions. Two further versions on November 22 sought compromise through indirect references to previous decisions and softer language on carbon capture. Neither secured consensus.

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Hackers Breach US Air Force Flagship Cloud One Computing Platform



SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT

PENTAGON

Hackers breach US Air Force systems, according to a Reuters report that has raised serious worries about military data safety. The attack hit Cloud One, the Air Force's main cloud computing platform.

Three people familiar with the matter shared the news with Reuters. They said the intrusion was found within the past month during an upgrade of the system.

The discovery has caused disruption across the platform. Reuters could not confirm who the hackers are. It also could not say how far the breach went or whether any data was stolen.

The Air Force gave a short reply. It said it does not comment on the security or operational status of specific networks. It added that it takes careful steps to protect its systems and missions.

What Is Cloud One?

Cloud One began in 2017. It was built as a one-stop shop for the Air Force's technology needs. It uses the resources of four companies: Microsoft, Amazon, Oracle and Alphabet.

The platform runs many applications. These include systems for personnel data, pay, logistics and maintenance. Two key tools also depend on it.

One is the Cloud-Based Command and Control system, which gathers air defence radar data from across North America. The other is the Theatre Integrated Combat Munitions System, which tracks bombs and missiles at over 200 Air Force sites worldwide.

SAIC was the main contractor until 2025, when Leidos took over. SAIC did not reply to a request for comment. Leidos sent questions to the Air Force.

Disruption and Possible Risks

Sources said plans to move back-office applications to Cloud One have been paused. Updates to apps already on the platform were also blocked.

This means staff cannot apply fixes, just as new software weaknesses have been reported across the tech industry. Another source said some users lost their administrator rights.

One source said the hackers used a software flaw to reach the control plane. The source compared it to a universal remote. In theory, intruders could use it to check the status of military aircraft or track spare parts. It is not clear if they did so.

Investigators have called in Cyber Command, the US military's cyber force, to assess the damage. One source said, "A breach here is a big deal." All five sources asked not to be named.

A String of Recent Hacks

The news comes during growing fear of AI-powered attacks. Cloud networks are especially open to them, because AI tools can quickly find weak spots across large systems.

The US government is already dealing with at least six other recent cyber incidents. These include two at the FBI, a past hack of Pentagon data, a leak of Homeland Security staff information, a breach at two spy agencies and a hack at the Treasury Department.

Cloud One has long been a target. In a 2023 commentary, its leaders said they had a perfect record in stopping a huge number of attempts. They also stressed that security leaves no room for error.



ISLAMABAD: Federal Minister for Economic Affairs Ahad Cheema in meeting with Mr. Imad N. Fakhoury, Regional Vice President for the Middle East and Central Asia at the International Finance Corporation (IFC).

CASS Examines the Role of Institutions in Pakistan's Economic Challenges

● Experts Urge Institutional Reforms, Accountability To Boost Pakistan Economic Growth And Stability

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) organised a Catalyst Conversation on 24 November 2026 titled 'Institutions, Governance, and Economic Growth in Pakistan'. The session examined how political and economic institutions shape national prosperity, economic performance and political stability. As an independent think tank, CASS regularly convenes such forums to advance informed policy discourse on issues of critical national and international significance.



Dr Aqdas Afzal, Director CASS, moderated the session and framed the discussion around the relationship between institutional structures, economic stagnation and political instability. He highlighted the importance of examining the role of institutions in shaping Pakistan's economic trajectory, particularly in the context of its recurring boom-and-bust cycles, policy discontinuity and challenges to institutional autonomy.

The keynote speaker, Dr Tariq Banuri, former Chairman of the Higher Education Commission (HEC), observed that economic literature has long explored why some countries prosper while others remain poor. Before the 1980s, economic growth was largely attributed to functional markets. However, subsequent scholarship increasingly highlighted the role of institutions in economic development. In Pakistan, Dr Banuri noted, the colonial legacy of extractive institutions has hindered meaningful reform. He emphasised that prosperity required transforming institutional culture, as introducing policies alone was insufficient. He stressed that all state institutions must uphold the 1973 Constitution as sacred, without amendments, and underscored accountability as a prerequisite for institutional effectiveness. He concluded that good governance was fundamental to economic development.

In his concluding remarks, President CASS, Air Marshal Javaid Ahmed (Retd), highlighted the importance of strengthening institutions as a prerequisite for sustainable economic development and stability. He emphasised the need for realistic, sequenced institutional reforms and effective leadership to restore public trust, strengthen governance and create an enabling environment for inclusive and sustained growth.

Journalist Arrested After Exposing Iran's Secret Death Sentences For Two Prisoners

NEWS DESK

TEHRAN

A journalist arrested in Iran is now at the center of a growing press freedom crisis. Mehdi Mahmoudian was detained in Tehran on 25 November, only hours after he made public a court document about two political prisoners facing execution.

The two prisoners are linked to Iran's "Woman, Life, Freedom" movement. They were sentenced to death on 24 November. Without Mahmoudian's report, the public would not have known about it.

His story caused strong public anger. According to the lawyer of one prisoner, the authorities later suspended the sentence. The government also said that the death sentences had not been cancelled.

Officials then blamed a "media-legal" pact for blocking the work of the courts. They also warned that journalists would be watched closely.

Police went to Mahmoudian's home on 25 November. They arrested him and took away his equipment.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) says he was badly treated in detention. The group confirmed that he was beaten so hard that he lost consciousness. He was taken to hospital first. After that, he was moved to Greater Tehran Prison, also known as Tehran Bozorg.

Bangladeshi Media Delegation Visits Lawrence College Murree Today

● Pakistan, Bangladesh Explore Student Exchange, Academic Cooperation Through Historic College Visit Today

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

tA 13-member Bangladeshi media delegation, visiting Pakistan to explore avenues for strengthening bilateral relations, visited Lawrence College Murree as part of its ongoing programme.

Accompanied by officers of External Publicity Wing , Ministry of Information and Broadcasting the delegation was welcomed by the college administration and briefed on the institution's rich history, educational philosophy and academic traditions.

During the visit, the delegation toured the college's historic buildings, academic sections, boarding facilities and architectural landmarks, gaining insights into its educational environment and residential schooling system.

The delegation also interacted with Principal Brigadier Jawad Ahmad Zaka (Retd), SI(M), who responded to their questions and discussed potential avenues of academic cooperation, including student exchange programmes, inter-school sports fixtures, teacher training and other academic and co-curricular initiatives.



The visiting journalists appreciated the college's historic heritage, vibrant boarding life and the warmth and hospitality of its students.

The visit concluded with a luncheon hosted by the college, during which the Principal presented souvenirs to the visiting delegates.

The engagement provided an opportunity to explore educational linkages and people-to-people contacts between Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Pakistan Consulate in Melbourne hosts APWA community awareness event 'The Colour of Pain'



WEB DESK

MELBOURNE

The Consulate General of Pakistan in Melbourne hosted a community awareness event, organised by the Australian Pakistani Women's Association (APWA), under the theme "The Colour of Pain."

The event brought together community members and professionals to raise awareness about issues affecting women, promote informed conversations and highlight pathways to support and assistance.

The programme featured contributions from professionals working in mental health, social work, psychology and legal services, as well as representatives of Victoria Police.

In his remarks, High Commissioner of Pakistan Irfan Shaukat reaffirmed the importance of collective responsibility, community solidarity and continued efforts to foster a safe, informed and supportive environment for women.

125 Pakistani Brands To Be Honoured At Awards

● Islamabad To Host 18th Brand Of The Year Awards On Sunday November

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The 18th Brand of the Year Awards 2026 (Northern Edition) will be held in Islamabad on Sunday, November 29, to recognize 125 of Pakistan's most popular, preferred and trusted brands for their excellence in quality, innovation and consumer confidence.

The prestigious ceremony, being organized by Brands Foundation under the banner "An Honour Like No Other," will take place, Islamabad, according to a press release issued by the foundation.

Governor Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Faisal Karim Kundi will grace the occasion as chief guest and deliver the keynote address, while Coordinator to the Prime Minister Ikhtiar Wali Khan will address the gathering as a distinguished guest speaker.

The annual awards ceremony will bring together leading corporate figures, business executives, brand representatives and other stakeholders to celebrate the achievements of Pakistani enterprises that have demonstrated a strong commitment to quality, innovation and customer satisfaction, said a release issued here on Friday.

The 18th edition of the awards will recognize 125 leading brands across various sectors, highlighting their contribution to strengthening consumer confidence, promoting business excellence and enhancing Pakistan's commercial standing.

Brands Foundation, the organizer of the event, holds the distinction of being Pakistan's only organization with Accredited Permanent Observer Status at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), a specialized agency of the United Nations.

The foundation is also affiliated with the World Fair Trade Institution, reflecting its engagement with international platforms promoting intellectual property rights, fair trade practices and responsible business development.

The foundation maintains that its international affiliations and accreditation reinforce the credibility of its brand-recognition platform and its commitment to transparent evaluation standards.

Speaking ahead of the ceremony, Brands Foundation Founder and Chief Executive Officer Shaikh Rashid Alam said strong and credible national brands were essential for sustainable economic growth and international competitiveness.

New Zealand's Ruling Coalition Misses Parliamentary Majority By Just One Seat

WEB DESK

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand's ruling coalition has fallen one seat short of a majority in parliament. The result follows a campaign shaped by a weak economy and unhappy voters.

Official results released on Friday show the government now needs the support of the centrist Opportunity Party to stay in power. If the two sides cannot reach a deal, the country may have to vote again.

Prime Minister Christopher Luxon's National Party won 40 of the 130 seats. Its partners, ACT and New Zealand First, won 13 and 12 seats. Together they hold 65 seats, one fewer than needed.

The Labour Party took 36 seats and the Greens won 17. Te Pāi Māori, which speaks for Māori interests, secured five. Even with the seven seats of Opportunity, the left-leaning bloc cannot form a government.

Luxon said the talks may be hard and will take time. He added that voters would not thank leaders for a rushed deal that falls apart, or for sending them back to the polls.

Labour leader Chris Hipkins said his party ran a strong campaign, but it has no power to negotiate.

OPEC+ Facing Tricky Talks On 2027 Output And Capacity Targets

WEB DESK

VIENNA

OPEC+ facing tricky talks is the clear picture as ministers of the oil alliance prepare to meet online on Sunday. They will try to agree on production quotas for next year. The US war against Iran has shaken oil markets worldwide and left little clarity about the road ahead.

Ministers will also fix a maximum capacity level for each member country. The aim is to make the oil industries of members more open and transparent. These levels will become the base for future output quotas.

The new numbers came after two years of study by an outside firm, the US-based DeGolyer and MacNaughton. Even so, some of the alliance's 21 members are already unhappy with them.

OPEC Secretary General Haitham Al Ghais defended the process in mid-November. He said that, for the first time, maximum sustainable capacity has been judged through an independent and fair method.

Iraq has reportedly rejected its figure as too low. It says it can sustainably produce 5.2 million barrels per day, not the 5 million set in the study, according to a Bloomberg News report this week.

Iraq is one of the Gulf states hit hardest by the near shutdown of the Strait of Hormuz by Tehran since the war began in February.

Celebs celebrate 'man of the hour' over historic achievement

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

LAHORE



Pakistani actors Zahra Noor Abbas and Sheheryar Munawar have joined the celebrations over Mohammed Zeeshan Ali's historic achievement of becoming the first foreign national to board China's Tiangong space station and the first Pakistani citizen to reach Earth's orbit, expressing immense pride in the milestone.

Zahra Noor Abbas took to her Instagram story to reshare a video posted by a Chinese news channel, highlighting Zeeshan's remarkable accomplishment. Sharing the clip with her followers, the actress called him "the man of the hour" and added, "So, so proud," conveying her excitement over the achievement.

The milestone holds special significance for Pakistan, as Zeeshan's journey into Earth's orbit represents a remarkable moment of national pride and places a Pakistani name among those making history in space exploration.

Zahra's reaction reflected the sense of honour and excitement surrounding the achievement, which has brought international attention to Pakistan.

Sheheryar Munawar also took to his Instagram story to celebrate Zeeshan's accomplishment, sharing the same video and expressing his admiration with the words, "So proud."

However, the actor added a humorous twist to his message by bringing his ongoing drama Dar-e-Nijaat into the conversation. "Wonder if he gets to catch up on his Dar-e-Nijaat episodes there," Sheheryar jokingly wrote, adding "lol" to make his playful remark clear.

The actors' reactions add to the celebrations surrounding Zeeshan's achievement, which has become a significant moment for Pakistan. His journey to Earth's orbit has brought the country's name into the international spotlight, highlighting the importance of scientific progress and Pakistani representation in space exploration.



Turkish stars Ozcan Deniz, Burcu Ozberk, Deniz Cakır detained in Istanbul drug probe

- Turkish Stars Ozcan Deniz, Burcu Ozberk Among Actors Released Under Judicial Control

SHOWBIZ NEWS

ISTANBUL

Turkish actors Ozcan Deniz (popular series Karagul/Khali Hath), Burcu Ozberk (Muhtesem Yuzyil/Mera Sultan) and Deniz Cakır (Iffet/Mera Sultan) were among several entertainment industry figures detained in Istanbul as part of an ongoing investigation involving drug related offences.

The operation took place on November 24, 2026, after the Istanbul Chief Public Prosecutor's Office issued detention warrants for 35 suspects.

Authorities took 24 people into custody, including television presenter Murat Ceylan and director Cem Karcı, who were also named in the investigation.

Following their detention, the suspects under went medical examinations as part of the legal procedure.

The investigation reportedly covers allegations involving drug use, possession and supply, with authorities examining digital evidence, witness statements and forensic findings.

A criminal judgeship of peace subsequently ordered the release of nine suspects, including Ozcan Deniz, Burcu Ozberk and Deniz Cakır, under judicial control.

The three actors have also been prohibited from travelling abroad while the investigation continues.

Meanwhile, singer Ceylan Kaya was remanded in custody in connection with a money laundering charge, while 14 other suspects remained in detention, according to reports.

The investigation is still underway and the allegations against those involved have not been established in court.

Mahira cheers Hina Aridi's fierce performance in Mitti De Baway

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Pakistani actress Mahira Khan has showered fellow actress Hina Aridi with praise for her powerful performance in the currently airing drama serial Mitti De Baway, particularly applauding a fierce scene in which Hina's character, Qamar, grabs a gun to protect her son from a group of threatening men.

Taking to her Instagram story, Mahira reshared a post featuring the intense sequence from the drama and expressed her admiration with a brief but enthusiastic caption. Referring to Hina by her character's name, she wrote, "Qamarrrr," followed by a firing emoji, reflecting her excitement over the character's bold act.

Mahira did not stop there and went on to share a more personal note, revealing that the particular scene was her favourite from Hina's performance.

"Hinaaa my favourite scene of urs, uffff," she wrote, making it clear how much the powerful moment had impressed her.

In the scene, Qamar finds herself caught in a tense confrontation as men threaten her family. Refusing to let anyone harm her son, she retrieves a handgun from a drawer and steps forward to confront them. As she points the weapon at the men, she delivers a stern warning: "Khabardar jo mere bete ko haath lagaya to..." (Beware if anyone lays a hand on my son).

One of the men, however, attempts to mock her courage, questioning whether she intends to frighten them with a children's toy. Despite the taunt, Qamar remains determined to protect her son. The emotionally charged sequence ends with her pulling him into a tight, tearful embrace, making the scene a striking blend of a mother's fierce determination and vulnerability.

The scene has also highlighted Qamar's fearless side, with the on-screen caption describing her as a "Desi queen" who is fierce with a chimta and fatal with a trigger.

Meanwhile, Mitti De Baway continues to draw attention for its gripping family drama and compelling performances. Mahira's public appreciation has added another moment of recognition for Hina Aridi's portrayal of Qamar.

Sanam Saeed asks audiences to be kinder with criticism as she makes a statement at Netflix event

- The actor urged audiences to offer constructive criticism as Pakistan's Netflix original series prepares for release

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Actor Sanam Saeed urged audiences to approach criticism with kindness and an open heart as Pakistan prepares for the global release of its first Netflix original series, Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo.

Speaking to an interviewer during the series' promotional activities in Karachi, Sanam addressed the criticism that entertainment productions often receive from viewers, emphasising the considerable effort, time and resources that go into bringing a project to life.

"I wouldn't say to not take out complaints and problems in things ever but please have an open heart because a lot of effort, time, patience, money and obstacles have to go through to get to this point," she said.

She further encouraged audiences to be mindful of how they express their opinions, adding, "Be nice with your comments and constructive with your comments."

Asim Azhar performs with Zeb Bangash at Netflix's Pakistani original launch

- Azhar performed with Zeb Bangash at Netflix's JBHSSL launch, marking a proud moment for Pakistani music and arts

SHOWBIZ DESK

DUBAI



Singer Asim Azhar was among the performers bringing music to Netflix's much-anticipated launch event for its first Pakistani original series, Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo, joining Zeb Bangash for a live performance celebrating a significant moment for the country's entertainment industry.

Taking to Instagram, the singer offered fans a glimpse into the evening, sharing a series of photographs and behind-the-scenes videos from the star-studded event. Dressed in a striking red suit, Azhar later appeared in a red jacket paired with a matching tie and black formal trousers, embracing the occasion in style.

One of the highlights of his Instagram carousel was a video of the singer performing alongside Zeb Bangash, giving audiences a glimpse of the musical celebrations that accompanied the series' launch. He also shared a behind-the-scenes 'Get Ready With Me' (GRWM) video, taking followers along as he prepared for the evening.

Reflecting on the occasion, Azhar expressed his gratitude and excitement at being part of the project, writing: "honoured. proud. blessed."

Welcoming Netflix to Pakistan, he described the evening as a special moment for everyone involved, adding that he felt fortunate to contribute to the soundtrack of the country's first Netflix original series.

The singer also revealed that his track, Kashish, marks his first song for the streaming platform.

"Mera bhi pehla gana hai for netflix," he wrote, expressing hope that audiences would enjoy the song and that the series would mark the beginning of Pakistani art reaching greater international heights.

Azhar concluded his message with an optimistic note, writing that he hoped the project would become the beginning of Pakistani art conquering the world, adding, "InshaAllah."

The event celebrated the trailer and soundtrack launch of Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo, held at Karachi's historic Mohatta Palace. The evening brought together prominent names from Pakistan's entertainment industry, including members of the show's ensemble cast, filmmakers and other guests.

Based on Farhat Ishtiaq's bestselling Urdu novel of the same name, the series follows interconnected relationships and love stories spanning three generations and two countries. The story centres on themes of love, heartbreak, emotional wounds and the complexities of human relationships.

Durefishan & Urwa hail Pakistan's global success, slam critics

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Pakistani actresses Durefishan Saleem and Urwa Hocane have voiced their pride in the country's entertainment industry, celebrating the growing international recognition of Pakistani artists and storytellers amid the controversy surrounding Pakistani content in India.

Taking to their Instagram stories, both actresses shared messages highlighting Pakistan's artistic achievements and the global reach of its entertainment industry, with particular attention to the country's first Netflix collaboration, Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo.

Durefishan reshared a post featuring a list of Pakistani artists, actors and filmmakers who have earned recognition on international platforms. The post opened with the statement, "Pakistan. The world is watching," before highlighting the achievements of several Pakistani visual artists whose work has been showcased at international exhibitions.

It also celebrated the international recognition received by the film Lali, the global reach of Dar-e-Nijaat and the performances of Pakistani actors in the currently airing drama Mitti De Baway.

The post highlighted Jo Bachay Hain Sang Samait Lo, featuring Mahira Khan, Fawad Khan, Sanam Saeed, Hania Aamir, Khushal Khan, Iqra Aziz, Ahmad Ali Akbar and Bilal Abbas Khan, describing it as Pakistan's first Netflix collaboration.

Durefshan's story further included an achievement beyond the entertainment industry, mentioning Pakistani astronaut Zeeshan Ali and his journey into Earth's orbit, presenting it as another milestone adding to the country's growing list of accomplishments.

Meanwhile, Urwa Hocane also shared a strongly worded message celebrating the Netflix milestone, describing it as a victory for Pakistani storytelling and talent despite what she termed hatred and political insecurity in the neighbouring country.

Calling the achievement a significant moment for the industry, Urwa wrote, "I mean it's a milestone only because some excellent storytelling and talent just won in the face of such hatred and political insecurity/instability of the sore losers we live next to!"

She further maintained that the collaboration was not something Pakistani artists needed to prove their worth, but an opportunity for audiences on the streaming platform to experience the quality of storytelling that had already earned international appreciation.

"Forever proud to be a Pakistani and to be a part of this powerhouse Pakistani Film & TV industry!" she added.

The actresses' messages come amid growing controversy over Pakistani entertainment in India, following cancellations and banning of Pakistani dramas and content .

The reactions also reflect a broader sentiment among Pakistani entertainment figures that the country's artists and creative industry should be recognised for their work and international achievements rather than being drawn into political disputes.

Talha Chahour praises Umera Ahmed's writing after emotionally powerful scene in Rutba

- The actor shared how Hadi's inner conflict stayed with him long after filming

SHOWBIZ REPORTER

KARACHI



Actor Talha Chahour praised writer Umera Ahmed for crafting an emotionally compelling scene in the drama serial Rutba, revealing that his character Hadi's internal conflict continued to resonate with him long after filming.

Taking to his Instagram Story, the actor shared his appreciation for the sequence, describing it as one of the most powerful moments in Pakistani television dramas.

"One of the boldest and most thought-provoking scenes in the history of Pakistani dramas!" he wrote, adding a broken-heart emoji.

Chahour went on to applaud Ahmed's writing, particularly her portrayal of Hadi as a deeply flawed individual struggling with his conscience.

"How beautifully Umera Ahmed has portrayed Hadi's character in Rutba — a reflection of human weakness, greed, guilt, and the consequences of our own choices," he wrote.

The actor also shared a personal reflection on the scene, writing: "This scene and Hadi's conflict stayed with me long after we shot it."

The sequence centres on Hadi confronting his own shortcomings at a deeply personal moment. Despite being regarded as someone capable of guiding others, he finds himself struggling to seek guidance for his own life.

His admission, "I need guidance myself," becomes particularly poignant as he grapples with the weight of his decisions and the distance between the person he appears to be and the person he has become.

The scene's emotional impact lies in its exploration of guilt and accountability rather than relying on dramatic confrontations. It presents a man forced to confront the consequences of his choices, suggesting that professional achievements and social standing cannot necessarily bring inner peace.

Chahour's appreciation also highlights the strength of Ahmed's characterisation. Rather than presenting Hadi as an uncomplicated protagonist, the writer allows him to make mistakes, experience remorse and confront the uncomfortable realities of his own behaviour.

The actor concluded his appreciation by giving credit to the writer, writing: "All credit to Umerajee for writing a scene that lets guilt speak louder than words."

Gordon Ramsay welcomes 1st grandchild as daughter Holly gives birth

- The celebrity chef, 60, shares six children with his wife, Tana, whom he married in 1996

WEB DESK

LOS ANGELES

The celebrity chef's daughter, Holly Ramsay-Peaty, gave birth to her first child with her husband Adam Peaty, announcing the happy news on Instagram the next day and revealing the baby girl's name: Daphne June Ramsay-Peaty.

Celebrating the news, Gordon wrote, "Welcome Miss Dapne… congratulations to Adam & Holly and thank you for the perfect early Christmas present… grandpa & grandma Finally."

In her own announcement post, Holly shared a beautiful picture of her in the hospital bed with her newborn in her arms. "Welcome to the World… You'll forever be our beautiful baby girl and George's baby sister," she wrote, referring to her husband's 6-year-old son with his former partner, Eirianedd Munro.

The MasterChef judge, 60, shares six children with his wife Tana, whom he married in 1996. The couple are parents to daughter Megan, 28, fraternal twins Holly and Jack Scott Ramsay, 27, daughter Matilda Ramsay, 25, and sons Oscar James Ramsay, 7, and Jesse James Ramsay, 3.

At his Hollywood Walk of Fame ceremony on November 18, Gordon had shared that the family was expecting the arrival soon.

"We welcome our first grandchild in a couple of days from now," he told the crowd.

After the ceremony, the Kitchen Nightmares host revealed he hoped to be called "Papa G."



PCB Awards Central Contracts To Eight Women Cricketers For 2026-27

● Fatima Sana and Sadia Iqbal land Category A deals as Pakistan names its women's contract list until June 2027

SPORTS REPORTER

LAHORE



The PCB awards central contracts to eight women cricketers for the 2026-27 season, with Fatima Sana and Sadia Iqbal placed in Category A.

The Pakistan Cricket Board shared the news in a press release issued in Lahore on Friday morning. The contracts will stay valid until 30 June, 2027.

Muneeba Ali Siddiqui, Nashra Sundhu and Sidra Amin have been placed in Category B. The board said the trio earned their spots for steady performances across all formats.

Ayesha Zafar, Gull Feroza and Sadaf Shamas have been included in Category C. Ayesha is an experienced player, while Gull and Sadaf are the opening pair who have shown strong form lately.

The board said their inclusion reflects good recent results at home and abroad. It also considered what the team will need in the future.

Fatima Sana, 24, has been rewarded for her all-round skills with both bat and ball. She recently became the first Pakistan woman cricketer to play in The Hundred in England and the Women's Big Bash League in Australia.

Sadia Iqbal has kept her place among the country's top performers. The left-arm spinner has also reached the top of the ICC Women's T20I bowling rankings in the past.

The PCB said it set the categories after checking each player's recent form and fitness. Fitness tests will be held on a regular basis. Every contracted player must meet the set standards for the full contract period.

The full list of contracted players is given below.

- Category A: Fatima Sana, Sadia Iqbal
- Category B: Muneeba Ali Siddiqui, Nashra Sundhu, Sidra Amin
- Category C: Ayesha Zafar, Gull Feroza, Sadaf Shamas



Majestic Malinin breaks short programme world record

SPORTS DESK

JAPAN

American Ilia Malinin said skating without expectations had helped him break the short programme world record on Friday with a stunning score of 114.81.

The three-time world champion gave a majestic performance at the NHK Trophy in Japan to beat the previous highest score of 113.97, set by American Nathan Chen at the 2022 Beijing Olympics.

Malinin was the hot favourite for gold in his first Olympic appearance at this year's Milan-Cortina Games, but flamed out in a disastrous performance and finished eighth.

He said previous experience had taught him not to try too hard, and he reaped the benefits in Tokyo.

"Coming to this competition, I just wanted to enjoy the moment of figure skating, enjoy the environment," said the 21-year-old, who is nicknamed "Quad God" for his audacious quadruple jumps.

"Because the last few seasons I've always been trying to do my best, trying to appreciate how high I could score.

"Here, I just came to enjoy figure skating, and I think it helped me to be really calm and in the right mindset to skate my best."

Skating to "Cantata Memoria" by Karl Jenkins, Malinin put in a flawless performance in front of a rapt Tokyo crowd.



Messi, Ronaldo could play together for first time at Carlos Tevez's farewell match

SPORTS DESK

MIAMI

Football icons Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo could feature together on the same team for the first time in history during former Argentine forward Carlos Tevez's upcoming farewell match.

According to international media reports, Messi has confirmed his participation in the exhibition game—titled "Apache's Last Dance"—while Ronaldo has also received an invitation to play. The match is scheduled to take place on December 20 at Buenos Aires' iconic La Bombonera stadium.

Tevez, 42, retired from professional football in 2022 after ending his playing career at his boyhood club, Boca Juniors. Over the course of his career, he shared the pitch with Messi for the Argentine national team and played alongside Ronaldo at Manchester United.

If the Portuguese star accepts the invitation, it will mark the first time the two longtime rivals line up as teammates. While Messi's appearance is official, Ronaldo's participation has yet to be confirmed due to his club commitments with Saudi side Al-Nassr.

Several other football legends are also slated to appear in the match, including Gianluigi Buffon, Juan Román Riquelme, Rio Ferdinand, Sergio Agüero, Martín Palermo, and Gabriel Batistuta. Roberto Mancini and Carlos Bianchi will serve as managers for the two competing sides.

Bangladesh A set 233-run target for Pakistan Shaheens in Asia Cup Rising Stars Semis

● Bangladesh A post 232-8 against Pakistan Shaheens as Muqeem takes three wickets in a tense semi-final

SPORTS DESK

OMAN



Bangladesh A set Pakistan Shaheens a target of 233 runs in the Asia Cup Rising Stars semis. They scored 232-8 in their 50 overs after choosing to bat first.

Shahadat Hossain was the hero of the innings. He stayed not out on 103 runs and kept his side alive when wickets fell around him.

The start was poor for Bangladesh A. Ali Raza took both openers inside five overs. Mahmudul Hasan Joy made nine runs, while captain Saif Hassan scored only two. The score was 15 for two.

Hossain then took charge. He built a strong 95-run stand for the third wicket with Mahidul Islam Ankon. Ankon scored 42 runs from 78 balls before Muqeem removed him on the first ball of the 28th over.

Muqeem struck again in his next over. He dismissed Afif Hossain for five and Shabbir Rahman for a duck. Bangladesh A dropped to 118-5 and were in trouble.

SM Meherob gave Hossain good support at the other end. The two added a useful 52 runs for the sixth wicket and steadied the innings.

Hasan Nawaz broke that stand in the 41st over. He removed Rubel, who made 28 runs from 36 balls with two fours. Nawaz then got another batter caught behind in the same over.

The score fell to 170-7.

Cricket Australia Widens Sandpapergate Forum To Include 2017-18 Ashes Series

● The independent forum will also look at ball-management practices, but it will not reopen the probe or hand out new sanctions

SPORTS DESK

PORT ELIZABETH



Cricket Australia has widened its independent Sandpapergate forum to cover the Ashes series against England that came before the South Africa tour. The governing body also promised to publish the findings and its own response.

The board has ruled out reopening its original investigation into the 2018 ball-tampering scandal. The issue flared up again this month. Instead, it has offered a voluntary forum where players, coaches and staff from that tour can share their own versions of events.

In a surprise move, the terms of reference now include ball-management practices during the 2017-18 season. That covers the home Ashes series, which Australia won 4-0. The hosts kept getting reverse swing in that series, and England's bowlers could not work out how.

Former England captain Alastair Cook was part of that side. This month he was asked whether the team suspected Australia of tampering. He said they did, a little, especially in Perth when the outfield was wet. The matter went no further at the time.

Senior counsel Fiona McLeod will lead the forum. It will stay open for six weeks. She will look at the Ashes, all four Tests in South Africa, the events of March 24, 2018, when Cameron Bancroft was caught with sandpaper, and how Cricket Australia handled its own probe.

Champion Marc Marquez to retire after 2026 season

SPORTS DESK

PARIS

Marc Marquez will bring the curtain down on his MotoGP career after this weekend's season-ending Grand Prix in Valencia, following a historic season in which he won his record-equalling eighth title.

Spaniard Marquez claimed his eighth title in the premier class of motorcycling last weekend at the Portuguese Grand Prix, his second in as many years for Italian team Ducati.

"It is official. @marcmarquez93 has decided to retire from @motogp, and the 2026 Valencia Grand Prix will be his final race as a professional rider and with the #DucatiLenovoTeam," said Ducati on social media on Friday.

Marquez then relayed his own message, via a video recorded on the paddock at the Ricardo Tormo circuit, with a series of placards held up to the camera.

Pakistan's Rana Irfan wins World Cup of Snooker title

SPORTS DESK

MUSCAT



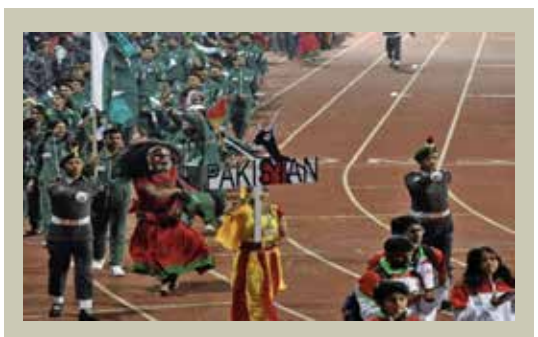
Pakistani cueist Rana Irfan delivered a commanding performance to win the IBSF World Cup title, defeating compatriot and former world champion Muhammad Asif in a one-sided all-Pakistan final in Muscat, Oman.

Competing in the title clash, Irfan dominated proceedings from the outset, sweeping past Asif with a comprehensive 5–0 victory.

Irfan maintained complete control across every frame, leaving the former world champion unable to get on the scoreboard despite determined efforts.

With both finalists hailing from Pakistan, the tournament underscored the country's strong standing in international snooker, while the triumph marked a major milestone in Irfan's career.

Sports circles have hailed Irfan's victory as a proud achievement and a major boost for national snooker.



POA announces revised schedule of 14th South Asian Games

SPORTS DESK

RIYADH

Pakistan will host the 14th South Asian Games from September 18 to 27, 2027, the Pakistan Olympic Association (POA) announced on Friday after securing agreement from all participating national Olympic committees.

The revised dates follow the postponement of the regional multi-sport event, which was originally scheduled to take place from April 3 to 11 across Islamabad, Lahore and Peshawar.

The POA said the decision was taken following consultations and formal concurrence from all South Asian national Olympic committees, with the rescheduling of the 6th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games in Riyadh a key consideration.

"The revised dates take into account the rescheduling of the 6th Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, with the welfare and well-being of athletes remaining paramount and ensuring opportunities for their participation in both events," POA secretary general Muhammad Khalid Mahmood said in a statement.

The association said the consensus among regional Olympic bodies reflected solidarity and cooperation within the South Asian Olympic movement.

The participating committees also extended their best wishes to the organising committee and Pakistan's Olympic and sporting community for successfully staging the competition.

Pakistan had earlier been expected to announce a September window after the original dates clashed with the Asian Indoor and Martial Arts Games, scheduled to be held in Riyadh from March 28 to April 8, 2027.

The indoor and martial arts competition had itself been postponed from December 2026 because of security concerns.



Ex-champion boxer Linares released by US immigration authorities

SPORTS DESK

US

Former world boxing champion Jorge Linares has been released by US immigration authorities pending proceedings for his removal from the country, the government said.

The 41-year-old Venezuelan, a three-division world champion, was detained on November 15 in El Paso, Texas, for overstaying his visa, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) said in an email late Thursday.

It said Linares had entered the United States in October 2023 on a temporary permit.

"But in defiance of our nation's laws, he overstayed his welcome," the statement said.

Linares was released Wednesday by an immigration judge and is wearing a GPS tracking device pending the outcome of his removal proceedings, ICE said.

"Our friend and former WBA world champion Jorge Linares is back with his family," World Boxing Association president Gilberto Mendoza posted on X.

At the time of his arrest, Linares's lawyers said he was "authorized to be in the United States, and he has cooperated fully with immigration authorities."

Linares, who is widely regarded as one of the most skilled fighters of his generation, won world titles at featherweight, super featherweight and lightweight during a 21-year career.

Nicknamed "The Golden Boy," he won his first world title in 2007.

He retired in 2023 following defeat to Britain's Jack Catterall in Liverpool, finishing his career with a record of 47 wins, 29 by knockout, and nine defeats.

Ex-NFL Cornerback Alphonso Smith Jr Cause Of Death Now Revealed

● A new police report shares details about the final hours of the former Wake Forest star, who died in September at age 40

SPORTS DESK

FLORIDA



Ex-NFL cornerback Alphonso Smith Jr died by suicide, according to a new police report seen by TMZ. He was 40 years old.

Smith died on September 2, 2026. He was at his home in Pahokee, Florida, at the time.

The report says a woman at the house heard him crying and praying. He was also speaking with several people on a conference call.

She tried to comfort him, but he asked her to go upstairs. Later, the mother of his children arrived at the home.

Both women were present when the tragedy happened, the report states. Smith was taken to a nearby medical facility and then flown by air ambulance to St. Mary's Medical Center.

Doctors pronounced him dead at 3:19 p.m. Lab results also found marijuana (THC) in his body.

On the day he died, Smith wrote a long post on Facebook. He asked people not to cry for him and said he had fought hard against his inner struggles.

He also said he was sorry to those he had hurt and wrote that he had needed help.

JI postpones Nov 29 public rally in Lahore

STAFF REPORTER

LAHORE



Jamaat-i-Islami (JI) announced the postponement of its public rally, which was scheduled for November 29, 2026, at Minar-e-Pakistan in Lahore.

Sources said that Jamaat-e-Islami will now hold its public rally on December 6, 2026, at Minar-e-Pakistan.

Sources further revealed that the decision to postpone the public rally was taken keeping in view the Sikh Yatree's Besakhi Festival.

Jamaat-e-Islami will hold the public rally against the imposition of a levy on petroleum products.

On November 26, 2026, a delegation of Jamaat-e-Islami led by Ameer of Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeem ur Rehman called on Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif in Islamabad.

During the meeting, Prime Minister Muhammad Shehbaz Sharif announced the formation of a committee to further review and implement proposals presented by Jamaat-e-Islami (JI) aimed at improving the economy and providing relief to the people.

He assured that the government would consider the proposals seriously and ensure their implementation with good intent, sincerity, and speed.

The JI delegation was led by Ameer Jamaat-e-Islami Hafiz Naeemur Rehman, and also included Liaqat Baloch and Inayatullah Khan. The prime minister thanked the delegation and said consultations with the party had been continuing since previous meetings.



ISLAMABAD: National flags of Saudi Arabia, Pakistan and Türkiye are displaying along roadsides across the Federal Capital ahead of high-level trilateral talks scheduled for November 27–28 to discuss the implementation of the Makkah Joint Defence Agreement.

Qari Ilyas From Morocco Wins International Qira'at Competition

● Islamabad Hosts Global Quran Recitation Contest, Celebrates Muslim Unity Peace And Brotherhood

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



The Second International Qira'at Competition concluded in Islamabad. Qari Ilyas Lamhaque from Morocco won the competition and secured first position with a cash prize of five million rupees.

Similarly, Qari Abdul Quddus Al-Baaz from Pakistan came second and received a cash prize of three million rupees, while Dzaniyal Muhammad Chubaibillah from Indonesia secured the third position and received a cash prize of two million rupees.

Deputy Prime Minister Ishaq Dar was the chief guest on the occasion, who, along with Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf and Minister for Poverty Alleviation and Social Safety Syed Imran Ahmad Shah, distributed the awards among the winners.

Earlier, addressing the closing ceremony, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Ishaq Dar underscored that the Holy Quran offers guidance for promoting peace, justice, compassion and mutual respect.

He stressed the importance of understanding its teachings and putting them into practice in individual and collective life.

Reaffirming Pakistan's commitment to unity, solidarity and cooperation within the Muslim Ummah, he emphasized the need to resolve differences through dialogue, wisdom and mutual respect.

The Deputy Prime Minister congratulated the successful reciters and commended the Ministry of Religious Affairs and Interfaith Harmony and the organizers for promoting Quranic teachings and strengthening bonds among Muslim countries.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Religious Affairs Sardar Muhammad Yousaf said that it was an honour for Pakistan to host the Qira'at Competition. He said that the Holy Quran teaches the values of brotherhood, love, harmony and peace.

He emphasised the importance of incorporating the teachings of the Holy Quran into our daily lives. He added that the Ministry of Religious Affairs is committed to promoting the teachings of the Holy Quran and strengthening ties among Muslim countries.

Sardar Muhammad Yousaf also expressed his gratitude to all the departments concerned for their cooperation in successfully organising the Qira'at Competition.

ECP rules out role in allocation of tickets to women

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Election Commission of Pakistan (ECP) has clarified that political parties have the exclusive authority to allocate tickets to women candidates on general seats under existing electoral laws, and the commission cannot intervene in their internal decisions or direct them to award tickets for constituencies where women have better chances of winning.

In a clarification issued on Friday, the ECP spokesperson responded to a news report published in an English-language newspaper regarding directions allegedly issued by a parliamentary committee, asking the commission to ensure that political parties allocate the mandatory five per cent quota for women under Section 206 of the Elections Act to general constituencies where their victory is more likely.

The reported directions also called on the ECP to make arrangements for filling 563 vacant seats in various local governments.

The spokesperson said the commission had already informed the parliamentary committee that, under the existing electoral framework, the allocation of party tickets to women candidates rested solely with political parties.

The ECP was neither authorised to interfere in this process nor empowered to decide which constituencies should be allocated to women candidates, the spokesperson added.

He said the distribution of tickets among constituencies was an internal matter of political parties. If the committee wanted women to be fielded on general seats where their chances of winning were higher, an amendment to the existing law would be required, as the authority to legislate rested with Parliament.

Regarding the 563 vacant local government seats, the spokesperson said the committee had also been informed that the ECP had issued election schedules on several occasions to fill these vacancies.

Mauritius turns Iqbal Day into a landmark celebration of cultural diplomacy

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD



Mauritius has given a new international dimension to its annual commemoration of Allama Dr Muhammad Iqbal, transforming Iqbal Day 2026 into a significant platform for cultural diplomacy, intellectual exchange and stronger bilateral relations with Pakistan.

The celebrations, spearheaded by Mauritius High Commissioner to Pakistan H.E. Munsoo Kurrimbaccus, brought together a distinguished Pakistani delegation led by Mr. Walid Iqbal, grandson of the renowned philosopher and poet, for a series of cultural activities and high-level engagements with the Mauritian leadership.

Traditionally observed on November 9 by organisations including Friends of Pakistan, Iqbal Day in Mauritius had largely remained a modest commemorative occasion with limited public visibility. However, High Commissioner Kurrimbaccus envisioned a broader initiative that would introduce Allama Iqbal's universal philosophy to a wider Mauritian audience while strengthening the longstanding friendship between the two countries.

Zong secures mandate to develop Pakistan's National Unified Super App

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

Zong has secured the mandate to develop and deliver Pakistan's National Unified Super App under the Digital Economy Enhancement Project (DEEP), marking a significant milestone in the country's digital transformation journey.

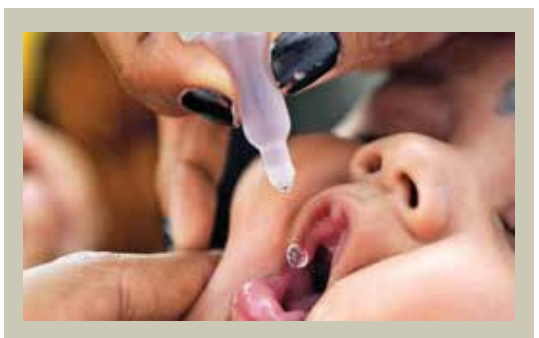
The initiative aims to bring more than 100 services offered by federal ministries and government bodies onto a single, secure digital platform, paving the way for more integrated, intelligent and citizen-centric public service delivery.

Leveraging China Mobile's global technological expertise and developed in partnership with Alibaba, the solution combines international technology capabilities with Zong's local infrastructure, enterprise expertise and understanding of Pakistan's digital landscape. The collaboration is expected to provide a strong foundation for delivering scalable digital solutions at the national level.

Moving beyond fragmented government portals and standalone applications, the National Super App aims to transform how citizens access and interact with public services.

Through a unified interface and social messaging suite, citizens will be able to chat, share images and videos, access government services, submit applications, make payments, track requests and communicate with relevant departments.

The platform is designed to reduce administrative hurdles, minimise physical visits and make public services more accessible, convenient and transparent. Available round the clock across devices and in multiple regional languages, it will also seek to improve inclusivity and bring government services closer to citizens.



Kalat DC reviews preparation measures for polio drive to be started on Dec 12

STAFF REPORTER

QUETTA

Deputy Commissioner (DC) Kalat Engineer Ayesha Zehri on Friday chaired a meeting regarding preparation of district polio campaign to be started on December 12, 2026.

The meeting was attended by Additional Deputy Commissioner Shahnawaz Baloch, District Health Officer Dr. Abdul Malik, MS Dr. Somar Khan, Zain-ul-Abideen (DMP, PPHI), DSP Kalat Shakeel Umrani, as well as heads of the Kalat Health Department and other relevant departments, and representatives from the World Health Organization (WHO).

Discussions were held regarding the upcoming polio campaign. Providing a detailed briefing, the District Health Officer stated that the campaign will commence on December 12, 2026, and continue for four days, concluding on December 15, 2026. During this campaign, polio drops will be administered to 40,269 children across 19 Union Councils in the two tehsils of Kalat District. Polio teams will visit all Union Councils in the district to administer the drops to children ranging from birth to five years of age. Deputy Commissioner of Kalat, Ayesha Zehri said that polio is a debilitating disease, and administering polio drops is essential to protect children from it, a healthy society could only be built if its children are healthy.



Man rescued 54 hours after Karachi building collapse

STAFF REPORTER

KARACHI

A man has been rescued 54 hours after the collapse of an under-construction six-storey building in Karachi's Administration Employees Cooperative Housing Society (KAECHS), which left eight people dead, while 10 people remain missing and 12 injured.

It comes hours after rescue teams recovered the body of the eighth victim, identified as Allah Ditta, from beneath the rubble. The other seven dead persons were identified as Mohammad Naveed son of Saeed aged 22, Farhan son of Saeed aged 35, Mohammad Arsalan son of Ghulam Mohammad aged 17, Najeebullah son of unknown, Abid son of Mustafa aged 25 and Bilal son of Ramzan aged 24.

All the bodies were shifted to Jinnah Post Medical Center (JPMC) in Karachi by ambulance.

Rescue teams are continuing the search for people trapped beneath the rubble near Baloch Colony, with rescuers prioritising manual searches over heavy machinery amid concerns that the use of equipment could damage bodies and destabilise the remaining structure. Rescue 1122 said teams were exercising caution during the operation and had created pockets in the debris to access areas where people could be trapped.

Officials said manual searching was being prioritised because heavy machinery could damage bodies buried beneath the rubble and potentially cause further collapse of the building's structure.

According to the spokesperson, 13 injured people were discharged after receiving medical treatment, while one person remains in hospital.

Police registered a case over the building collapse, invoking charges related to murder, negligence and carelessness, among other offences.

Police said ten people have been nominated in the case, four of whom have been arrested.

Provincial emergency services had said in a statement on Wednesday they had "retrieved three bodies and 14 injured people from the rubble", after media saw huge piles of wreckage and twisted metal at the site of the collapse in Karachi's Baloch Colony area.

Lok Mela 2026 Opens With Grand Cultural Celebration

● 522 Stalls, 1500 Artisans Showcase Pakistan's Heritage At Lok Virsa Festival Islamabad

STAFF REPORTER

ISLAMABAD

A vibrant celebration of Pakistan's cultural diversity, folk traditions and indigenous craftsmanship opened in Islamabad on Friday, bringing together hundreds of artisans and artists from across the country at Lok Mela 2026, inaugurated by Federal Minister for National Heritage and Culture Aurangzeb Khan Khichi.

With 522 stalls and around 1,500 artisans and artists participating over 10 days, the festival at the National Institute of Folk and Traditional Heritage (Lok Virsa) offers a national platform for showcasing the country's rich cultural heritage, traditional skills, regional identities, folk music, dance and indigenous crafts.

Held under the theme "Naqoosh-e-Watan: Our Heritage, Our Future," the festival features representation from Punjab, Sindh, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Balochistan, Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Jammu and Kashmir, alongside participants from friendly countries.

Addressing the inaugural ceremony, Federal Minister Aurangzeb Khan Khichi described Lok Mela as an expression of Pakistan's cultural identity and national cohesion, saying it provided artisans and artists with valuable opportunities to demonstrate their talent and promote traditional skills.

He said Pakistan possessed immense talent and craftsmanship, adding that the need was to provide skilled people with opportunities to showcase their abilities and improve their livelihoods.



Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for National Heritage and Culture Huzaifa Rehman said Lok Mela brought together the cultural colours of Pakistan, from Khyber to Kashmir and Gwadar to Peshawar, under one roof.

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